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TOWARDS CULTURAL RESILIENCE? REIMAGINING URBAN CULTURES, SOCIABILITIES AND PARTICIPATION

ORGANIZAÇÃO
NANCY DUXBURY
GONÇALO CANTO MONIZ
CLAUDINO FERREIRA



Centro de Estudos Sociais
Universidade de Coimbra



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Universidade de Coimbra

Centre for Social Studies
University of Coimbra

cescontexto.ces.uc.pt

Colégio de S. Jerónimo

Apartado 3087

3000-995 Coimbra, Portugal

E-mail: cescontexto@ces.uc.pt

Tel: +351 239 855 573

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This volume of *Cescontexto* results from the International Conference “Towards creative resilience? Re-imagining urban cultures, sociabilities and participation,” which was held at the University of Coimbra, November 14-15, 2024, organized by the CES Thematic Line “Urban Cultures, Sociabilities and Participation” (CULTURS). The volume includes 25 papers that were originally presented at this Conference, peer reviewed, and revised for this publication. In addition, five papers were selected to be published in a Thematic Dossier of *Revista Crítica de Ciências Sociais* (RCCS), no. 138, entitled “Resiliência criativa e culturas urbanas e rurais emergentes.”

The Conference provided a platform for insightful knowledge exchanges among the 90 participants from 18 countries—Albania, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Germany, Ghana, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Slovenia, Spain, and Uganda. The participation of representatives from municipal councils in Portugal, such as Nuno Morais (Coimbra City Council) and João Silva (Barcelos City Council), also enriched the discussions.

We want to thank the Conference partners for their support of this event, namely, the projects TRANS-Lighthouses, IN SITU, Phoenix, Nets4Dem, CONVENTUS, CONCILIARE, and Greenarts; the CREATOUR Observatory on Culture and Tourism for Local Development; and the NBS Portugal HUB network. We also acknowledge support provided by the Department of Architecture of the Faculty of Science and Technology of the University of Coimbra and the Faculty of Economics of the University of Coimbra.

The conference programme included an exhibition, “Terra Propósito,” a result of the History of Architecture and Theory of Architecture disciplines of the Department of Architecture, in the Faculty of Sciences and Technology, University of Coimbra, based on research and the curatorial project of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of São Paulo, Brazil. We thank all the professors and students involved in this initiative.

The pre-conference masterclass, “Where Cultural Mapping Meets Cultural and Social Planning: Exploring and Critiquing Selected Models of Community-University Collaboration,” and post-conference seminar, “Making Sense of Community-Engaged Research Methods: Stories from the Field, For the Field,” were supported by Thompson Rivers University and Simon Fraser University, Canada, respectively.

The papers published in this edition of *Cescontexto* originated among the 80 presentations within an array of thematic sessions and roundtables proposed by members of CULTURS. These research topics and interests were fundamental to activate many important contributions and discussions. The coordinators of these thematic sessions and roundtables also conducted important peer reviews of the conference abstracts and of the final papers developed for this volume of *Cescontexto*. We thank them all for their thoughtful contributions.

The coordinators of the roundtables (in alphabetical order) were:

- *Creating resilient communities through collaborative heritage management practices* – coordinated by Catarina Almeida Marado (CES) and Lorena Sancho Querol (CES);
- *Creative resilience and Indigenous knowledge systems* – coordinated by Julius Heinicke (UNESCO Chair “Cultural Policy for the Arts in Development” at the University of Hildesheim, Germany) with UNESCO-Chair partners, and Nancy Duxbury (CES);
- *More than human art, ethics and politics* – coordinated by Patricia Vieira (CES), Alfredo Ramos (CSIC, Spain), and Giovanni Allegretti (CES);
- *Sociocultural urbanities* – coordinated by Carlos Fortuna (FEUC, CES);
- *Understanding “contemporary architecture”* – coordinated Márcio Valença (UFRN, CES) and Gonçalo Canto Moniz (CES);
- *Utopia/Dystopia – experiences in housing* – coordinated by Jorge Figueira (DARQ, CES), Bruno Gil (DARQ, CES), Gonçalo Canto Moniz (DARQ, CES), and Giovanni Allegretti (CES).

The coordinators of the paper sessions (in alphabetical order) were:

- *Co-creation of human-nature based solutions: research and practices for an inclusive urban and rural regeneration* – coordinated by Gonçalo Canto Moniz (DARQ, CES), Isabel Ferreira (CES), and Beatriz Caitana (CES);
- *Communities of practice in local cultural policy* – coordinated by Claudino Ferreira (FEUC, CES) and Jordi Baltà (Universitat Ramon Llull - Blanquerna, Spain);
- *Community-engaged research approaches with impact* – coordinated by Nancy Duxbury (CES), Sílvia Silva (CES), Cláudia Pato de Carvalho (CES), and Stuart Poyntz (Simon Fraser University, Canada);
- *Connecting cultural mapping and cultural strategic planning* – coordinated by Nancy Duxbury (CES) and Will Garrett-Petts (Thompson Rivers University, Canada);

- *Educational living labs: research and practices for an inclusive public space* – coordinated by Gonçalo Canto Moniz (DARQ, CES), Rita Campos (CES), Cláudia Pato de Carvalho (CES), and Isabel Ferreira (CES);
- *Financial turn in architecture: critical perspectives from Europe* – coordinated by Eliana Sousa Santos (CES);
- *Place-based innovation and regeneration: cultural actors as agents of change* – coordinated by Nancy Duxbury (CES), Sílvia Silva (CES), Paula Abreu (FEUC, CES), Sílvia Ferreira (FEUC, CES), and Anna Hildur Hildibrandsdóttir (Bifröst University, Iceland);
- *Rights-based governance models for cultural policy* – coordinated by Nancy Duxbury (CES), Isabel Ferreira (CES), and Jordi Baltà (Universitat Ramon Llull - Blanquerna, Spain);
- *Urban youth infrastructures* – coordinated by Cláudia Pato de Carvalho (FEUC, CES) and Stuart Poyntz (Simon Fraser University, Canada).

These scientific outputs were overseen and validated by the scientific committee, comprising: Alfredo Ramos (CSIC, Spain), Anna Hildur Hildibrandsdóttir (Bifröst University, Iceland), Jordi Baltà (Universidade Ramon Llull - Blanquerna, Spain), Julius Heinicke (UNESCO Chair, “Cultural Policy for the Arts in Development” at the University of Hildesheim, Germany) and the partners of the UNESCO Chair, Stuart Poyntz (Simon Fraser University, Canada), and Will Garrett-Petts (Thompson Rivers University, Canada).

The Conference’s local coordination team included Carlos Fortuna, Claudino Ferreira, Eliana Sousa Santos, Gonçalo Canto Moniz, Kátia António, Lorena Sancho Querol, Mehmooda Maqsood, Nancy Duxbury, Paula Sequeiros, Rui Lobo, Paulo Lemos, and Sílvia Silva. Special thanks to Sílvia who provided invaluable support to the committees and to the participants before and during the conference.

A final note of thanks to André Queda for designing the website and identity for the Conference and the cover of this volume, and to Antonieta Leite and Andrés Sponardi for their support in the organisation of this *Cescontexto* issue.

Gonçalo Canto Moniz, Nancy Duxbury, and Claudino Ferreira

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PRESENTATION

This collection originated with the International Conference “Towards a creative resilience? Reimagining urban cultures, sociabilities and participation,” which was held at the University of Coimbra, November 14-15, 2024. The conference aimed to critically and pragmatically explore the concept of creative resilience and its application in academic research, civic society, and public policy. We observed that the idea of resilience has been guiding contemporary public policies and interventions such as the Portuguese Recovery and Resilience Plan (2023-2026), the European Union’s Recovery and Resilience Facility, and other post-pandemic programmes internationally. The Conference reflected on this paradigm from a cultural perspective, emphasizing the catalytic role of cultural and creative agents in societal renewal and revitalization, and meaningful development and regeneration more broadly. It also acknowledged the need to reexamine culture–nature relations in our lives, to renew urban–rural cultural connections, and to inform public dialogue on resilience with contemporary research approaches and findings.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the terms *resilience* and *regeneration* have been ubiquitous, although definitions (and thus discourses) have been diversely constructed in a variety of contexts. In the academic and policy-making spheres, the idea of resilience has attracted growing attention, but a variety of interpretations, definitions, and considerable fuzziness surround the term (Pendall et al., 2010; Xue, 2022). A core shared aspect of the notion of *resilience* is the capacity of a system to better respond to change, with adaptive cycles influenced by forces exerted by both top-down and bottom-up processes (Xue, 2022). In terms of resilience, Folke (2006) argued that self-organization and learning are the most vital attributes of any adaptive or transformative system, implicitly pointing to the importance of collective participatory processes in the transformative projects and initiatives explored in this collection. Lew & Cheer (2018) contend that the resilience of communities is best conceived in terms of “sense of place, lifestyles, and cultural landscapes” (p. 320). This aligns with a key principle of regenerative tourism and development: stewardship of the resources of place, identity, and unique potential (Bellato et al., 2023; The Tourism CoLab, 2024).

From the perspective of creative development processes, the publication *Notebook of Creativity and Resilience*, published by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Lucena, 2021), speaks of the resilience shown by creative project leaders during the pandemic period—a “long period of instability and uncertainty”—who creatively developed solutions to respond to the specific circumstances of participants and sensitively create alternatives, often tailored to individual needs (p. 43). This capacity for creativity and flexibility with a sensitivity to place, circumstance, and participants underlines the research collected in this volume. It suggests that these traits are significant contributors to understanding the essence of *creative resilience* in the face of change—or, alternatively, as the critical capacities of a sociocultural actor-catalyst sensing a societal need to change, reimagining what’s possible, and leading collaborative approaches to design new strategies.

At the conference, the fluid concept of creative resilience, when taken up in place-embedded perspectives, proved to be evocative and forward-thinking, but also widely encompassing. It contextualized and contributed to thinking about the agency of cultural actors and practices, as well as the crucial need for equitable and inclusive civic participation in collective transitions aimed at regenerative and resilient strategies and actions. Through an interdisciplinary approach, the conference explored crucial issues for the future of cities, public space, and cultural and creative vitality and resiliency.

The International Conference was organized by the CES Thematic Line “Urban Cultures, Sociabilities and Participation” (CULTURS), which takes the city as a privileged territory for understanding societal multi-crises and for building socially just and effective strategies and interventions to deal with it. Within this context, CULTURS focuses on urban cultures and modes of organization and regulation of social, cultural, political, and economic life in urban territories of a variety of sizes. Conference partners included the projects TRANS-Lighthouses, IN SITU, Phoenix, Nets4Dem, CONVENTUS, CONCILIARE, and Greenarts; the CREATOUR Observatory on Culture and Tourism for Local Development; and the NBS Portugal HUB network. The Department of Architecture of the Faculty of Science and Technology of the University of Coimbra and the Faculty of Economics of the University of Coimbra also provided support for the event.

The event brought together more than 90 participants from 18 countries, including Albania, Germany, Brazil, Bulgaria, Canada, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Ghana, Netherlands, Hungary, Ireland, Iceland, Italy, New Zealand, Portugal, Republic of Korea, and Uganda. The participation of representatives from municipal councils, such as Nuno Morais (Coimbra City Council) and João Silva (Barcelos City Council), enriched the discussions with their perspectives and practical experiences on the future of cities and creative resilience. It was a point of interdisciplinary exchange and dialogue among research fields, aiming to contribute to advancing connections and co-learning opportunities between research, society, and policy.

The conference programme included a series of open sessions for discussion and sharing of research experiences, roundtables, thematic panels, and an exhibition, “Terra Propósito,” resulting from research/pedagogical proposals of the History of Architecture and Theory of Architecture disciplines of the Department of Architecture of the Faculty of Sciences and Technology of the University of Coimbra, based on research and the curatorial project of the Faculty of Architecture and Urbanism of the University of São Paulo, Brazil. To deepen the discussion on topics relevant to the event, the conference also offered a pre-conference masterclass, held on November 13th, which focused on cultural mapping in cultural and social planning and on community–university collaboration. A post-conference workshop, held on November 16th, explored community-engaged research methods across a range of disciplines and the key challenges in developing this type of research project. More information about the Conference can be found at <https://ces.uc.pt/culturs-ic/>.

This collection highlights 25 papers that were presented at the event, peer reviewed, and revised for this volume. Fifteen articles are published in English, nine in Portuguese, and one in Spanish. Reflecting the dominant themes emerging from and connecting these articles,

the collection is organized into five thematic sections, which synthesize the numerous themes of the sessions and roundtables:

- The agency of cultural actors and actions / cultural actors as agents of change
- Heritage, architecture, and citizen mobilization: Community-engaged research approaches
- Co-creation of human-nature solutions / culture, nature and public engagement
- Towards inclusive cities and spaces
- Policies, planning, and strategies for culture

THE AGENCY OF CULTURAL ACTORS AND ACTIONS / CULTURAL ACTORS AS AGENTS OF CHANGE

The first section focuses on how cultural actors and their actions can catalyze and propel social change and development trajectories. The integral potentiality of culture is a power that can be wielded strategically in many contexts. **Sinara Sandri's** research-action project, carried out in two suburbs of Porto Alegre, Brazil, demonstrates how territorialized/place-based photography, using a combination of art and space, can be effectively used to engage youth and enable them to tell their own stories. The artistic creation project, embedded in its territory, was guided by the concept of cultural citizenship, and shows the potential impacts of local artistic production on the dynamics of inclusion and self-identification. **Mawukplorm Harriet Abla Adjahoe** explains how she used biomimicry-based sustainable set design and the transformation of waste materials as catalysts for cultural expression and community engagement in Ghana, demonstrating creative resilience in urban theatre. By integrating eco-conscious design, circular economy principles, and participatory theatre-making, the case demonstrates how urban theatre can not only tackle environmental concerns but also enhance its aesthetic and cultural narratives. Beyond its environmental impact, she notes that this approach to sustainable scenography also “fosters community engagement, reflects urban realities, and contributes to cultural sustainability—strengthening social bonds, participatory storytelling, and ecological awareness.”

The next three articles are linked to the IN SITU project on place-based innovation of cultural and creative actors in non-urban areas across Europe. **Nancy Duxbury, Sílvia Silva, and Paola Di Nunzio** present an overview of the project focusing on how researchers are learning through interweaving research and practice. In the project, attention is directed not only to traditional economic development matters but also to the social economy and community-based actions that support the life and development of territories. Brief highlights from in-process research focus on the nature of innovation in non-urban areas, drivers of innovation in the cultural and creative sectors/industries, the importance of place, challenges faced by cultural and creative actors, and data challenges and knowledge constraints. **Mark Justin Rainey and Patrick Collins** discuss emergent placemaking through creative practice based on the actions of an IN SITU case study from Gort Arts, Ireland. Its community-involved activities, using a variety of spaces around the town, couples grassroots initiatives and creative practices in ways that initiate a re-imagining of place. This emergent placemaking observed

in Gort is set within the paradigm shift being witnessed by the IN SITU project in which non-urban areas are becoming recognized as important sites of cultural production and creative expression. **Anna Hildur Hildibrandsdóttir** examines an IN SITU case study from West Iceland, the “Yule Lads are from Dalir” initiative, from the perspective of cultural entrepreneurship as a driver of rural development. The Yule Lads folklore is central to the initiative, reimagined as a community-driven placemaking tool that promotes tourism, strengthens regional identity, and stimulates collaboration among local stakeholders to revitalize a geographically peripheral region. The paper highlights the significance of multi-skilled rural creatives, community empowerment, and hybrid strategies that combine traditions with innovation for resilient and sustainable rural futures.

Closing this thematic section, **Nancy Duxbury, Tiago Vinagre de Castro, and Sílvia Silva** explore three Portuguese projects that entangle culture and tourism, showing how grassroots practices can catalyse transformative local dynamics and inform the development of regenerative cultural policies in smaller communities. These local projects tend to combine local heritage, activation of public space, inclusive public participation, and development of new activities by cultural actors. However, such initiatives are often developed without longer-term cultural and tourism strategies, policies, and plans. The article highlights that policies to support such initiatives should be multidimensional and cross-sectoral in nature.

HERITAGE, ARCHITECTURE, AND CITIZEN MOBILIZATION: COMMUNITY-ENGAGED RESEARCH APPROACHES

This section turns a spotlight on the generative agency inherent in community-engaged research and mobilization regarding their built environment, particularly its heritage and architecture, and the need to rethink and redesign these spaces over time as their associated functions and society more generally evolves. To begin, **Ricardo Costa Agarez** reports on the *Arquitectura Aqui* project in Portugal and Spain, which involves a collaborative management approach of scientists and citizens coming together to co-develop a new knowledge base of architectural and urban design histories—“the life of everyday structures, as witnessed by those who use(d) them, and a solid account of their commissioning, funding, design, and construction processes.” The project seeks forms to collectively acknowledge the importance of collective-use facilities (built 1939 to 1985) in improving community life, its sustainability, and social resilience, and to empower local communities to participate in decision-making processes regarding their upkeep, reuse, and appropriation. Next, a team from the Architecture Department of the University of Coimbra—**Gonçalo Canto Moniz, João Mendes Ribeiroz, Carolina Coelho, Pedro Brígida, Duarte Miranda, Joana Correia, Valentina Leal Gutierrez, Catarina Raposo, Luis Alcoforado, and António Rochette**—presents the intermediate results of a research process through design, which reconciles intervention in modern heritage with citizen participation to rethink the spaces of a school, Coimbra Lyceum, to adapt it to contemporary learning methods, urban transformations, climate change, and the need to be more open to the city. The intervention and research process involved the participation of the community, with results then translated into architectural design lines and a pedagogical aspect critically reflecting on participatory and rehabilitation design.

Andréa Virgínia Freire Costa, Maria de los Angeles Somocurcio Holguin, Safiya Tabali, and María F. Carrascal provide an overview of three projects involving the use of participatory cultural mapping methodologies in research involving creative activity and heritage spaces in Seville, Spain. The article seeks to identify and explore a transversal methodological vector within these projects, which have developed transferable frameworks that incorporate participatory cultural mapping as a contribution to strategic urban planning. The article by **Blanca del Espino Hidalgo and Marta García de Casasola Gómez** focuses on the development of a methodology for incorporating community involvement in sustainable conservation and management processes of World Heritage cultural assets in Seville. The research project WHATS-UP World Heritage develops an approach to social sustainability while upgrading cultural values, and serves as the framework for this research. It introduces monitoring of identified values as a key tool for justifying planned conservation actions and taking into account citizen participation. The section closes with a reflective examination by **Catarina Almeida Marado and Lorena Sancho Querol** of the challenges of collaborative research in the Conventus project, carried out in Lagoa-Algarve, Portugal. Intertwining historical and architectural research in archives with biographical research of the community, the project is reconstructing the history of the material and immaterial dimensions (uses, meanings, values, and emotions) associated with this emblematic building, with the participation of the Lagoa community. The initiative assumes the role of a local memory agent, giving voice to living heritage through collecting testimonies of individual and collective memories and experiences, using multiple instruments. The process is both driven and challenged by community involvement, diverse knowledge, and the shared desire to bring this heritage to life.

CO-CREATION OF HUMAN-NATURE SOLUTIONS / CULTURE, NATURE, AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Acknowledging the need to reexamine culture–nature relations in our lives, this section explores various interconnections between culture, nature, and public engagement in the participatory co-creation, management, and governance of contemporary places. Within this sphere, some attention is placed on the cultural aspects integrated within these relations, from the influence of socio-cultural contexts to the development of inclusive culture and art environments. **Elena Dimitrova and Milena Tasheva-Petrova** discuss the role of the local socio-cultural context in efforts undertaken within the URBiNAT project to revitalize open public space, build capacity for ‘culture–nature’ interaction, and increase urban climate resilience in a large housing estate in Sofia, Bulgaria, by introducing nature-based solutions to address health and climate-related issues in the urban environment. **Mónica Guerra da Rocha** focuses on urban food landscapes in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, reflecting on how food landscapes can help to understand and transform urban dynamics, making the everyday life of cities more diverse, dynamic, and resilient. The research aims to bring public discussion about food closer to that of the production of urban space and urban cultures. **Vesela Kazashka, Tsvetomira Kazashka, and Kiril Velchev** explore connections between culture, art, climate change, and social issues, analysing their impact on artistic creation in Plovdiv,

Bulgaria. Their research on practices of permaculture, defined as “a scientific approach to designing of sustainable human habitats to create conditions for inclusive art in harmony with nature,” shows how this approach can build inclusive culture and art environments and inclusive public space.

The next two articles are based on research within the TRANS-lighthouses project. **Angelica Lundgren, Pedro Gouveia, Nathalie Nunes, and Rita Campos** explain how the TRANS-lighthouses project is developing a collaborative portfolio of participatory methods for the governance of nature-based solutions through a reflexive citizen science approach engaging youth, women, and other traditionally underrepresented communities. Turning to encounters with nature among tourists visiting the Azores archipelago, **Eduardo Marques, António Patrão, and Ana Rita Matias** present preliminary results of a quantitative exploratory study aimed at understanding visitors’ perceptions of risk on hiking trails, focusing on the case of the “Rota da Água-Janela do Inferno” trail on São Miguel island. In the context of growing environmental threats and intense tourist flow, better understanding of how risks—from unpredictable weather conditions to terrain hazards—are perceived within nature tourism is critical to understanding and managing risks appropriately, helping to inform safety plans and contribute to the sustainability of the activity.

TOWARDS INCLUSIVE CITIES AND SPACES

In the face of growing polarization, segregation, and inequalities in access across a variety of domains in contemporary cities, this section turns to the necessity of building trajectories towards more inclusive urban development. To begin, a team of researchers—**Raquel Ribeiro, Joaquim Pires Valentim, Ana Cordeiro Santos, Daniela Sofia Neto, Fernanda Jesus, Lina Coelho, Rita Campos, Rita Silva, Sheila Holz, and Tiago Castela**—presents the results of an interdisciplinary project on housing financialization in Portugal in the 21st century, focusing on social representations, practices, and political implications. The HOU\$ING project revealed how social representations and practices associated with housing have evolved in response to public policies that fostered homeownership through mortgage credit, in a first phase, followed by (inter)national investment in real estate, in a second phase. The article concludes by discussing the psychosocial and political implications of growing housing inequalities.

Gustavo D’Aversa’s article reports on his documentary, “My Whole City,” which examines the spatial dynamics of social inclusion and integration of individuals with psychiatric conditions in the inner areas of South-East Puglia, Italy, through a multidisciplinary research approach. The research and documentary explore the intersection of space, mental health, and cultural practices. The work foregrounds marginalized voices, and emphasizes the transformative potential of participatory governance in fostering social justice and inclusive urban regeneration. **Ana Carolina Louback Lopes’** paper then moves our gaze to peripheral cultural urbanities, examining the role of cultural production in the reshaping of socio-spatial-vulnerable urban territories on the peripheries of the cities of Lisbon and São Paulo. Focusing on forms of cultural production as dynamic axes of dialogue between different interlocutors

in these urban peripheries, the research seeks to understand possible impacts on the urban environment promoted through local artistic empowerment and to contribute to reflections on emancipatory public policies.

André Ramos presents an investigation of cultural and creative co-mapping through autoethnographic networks that stems from a 10-year curatorial experience in a corner shop-gallery in Porto's artistic quarter, to propose a critical reflection on the role of everyday experiences in urban flows and vitality. On the one hand, the article discusses the potential of autoethnography in constructing a co-mapping in a specific cultural and creative field and, on the other hand, argues that in this location a tangle of cultural and creative projects are spontaneously producing a dual process of both combating and promoting the expected course of gentrification and touristification. Closing this section, **João Borges da Cunha** presents an analytical essay at the crossroads of cultural theory and urban aesthetics to consider the cultural transformations produced through capitalist agency and the commoditization of urban places. He argues that this urban phenomenon ultimately leads to an elimination of boundaries between indoor and outdoor practices, leading to cityspaces as interior settings, that is, an inside out effect in the cities under new capitalism. This process, he points out, is simultaneously accompanied by a weakening of public institutions, diminished civic participation, low levels of informal trust, and high levels of anxiety.

POLICIES, PLANNING, AND STRATEGIES FOR CULTURE

The final section brings together four papers that examine strategies, structures, and dynamics of municipal and regional cultural planning and policy in four countries: Portugal, Czechia, Hungary, and Brazil, linked by a shared concern for participatory approaches to greater stakeholder and public involvement in these processes. The section begins with an extensive study of the challenges and opportunities facing strategic cultural planning in Portugal conducted by **Pedro Quintela, Elisa Pérez Babo, and Andreia Magalhães**. The authors argue for a new culture of planning within cultural planning, observing that, to date, approaches to cultural planning are relatively heterogeneous in Portugal, with no systematic practice of strategic planning for culture from plan development to monitoring its execution. Coupling this with the technical and political trend of increasing public involvement and participation in planning processes in Portugal, the article reflects on the current landscape of strategic planning for culture at the local and intermunicipal levels in Portugal, identifying the main challenges and opportunities as well as the limitations and constraints to applying new participatory and collaborative methodologies. Also concerned with how to encourage participatory approaches in the cultural sphere, **Kateřina Churtajeva** explores the application of communities of practice in regional cultural policy and management through three case studies from Czechia. The research highlights that communities of practice require active facilitation and engagement, and that integrating them into cultural policy processes can “enhance participation, generate innovative solutions, and reinforce a sense of community, ultimately shaping more inclusive and adaptive cultural ecosystems.” From the perspective of fostering sustainable urban transformations, **Kata Murányi** reflects on urban transformations and lessons learned from the case study of Pécs, Hungary, as a European

Capital of Culture in 2010, demonstrating how the concept of creative city was applied at the time and its impact on the city and its citizens several years later. The research contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between culture, socioeconomic environment, urban development, and community empowerment from a Central and Eastern European perspective.

Completing this section, and from a more macro perspective, **Layno Sampaio Pedra** presents an examination of the changing relations between neoliberalism and cultural policies in Brazil, and the recent oscillation from tax incentives to direct funding. As he outlines, historically, the process of expanding neoliberalism in Brazil led to tax incentives becoming the main mechanism of public power action in the field of culture. In recent years, however, due to the crisis generated by the COVID-19 pandemic and its impacts, emergency laws were created that transformed the State into the main agent of direct support for culture. Through the development of an array of laws and programmes, the possibility of a greater balance between tax incentive mechanisms and direct funding has emerged, based on criteria that go beyond corporate interests and that can broaden access to and the diversity of supported cultural initiatives.

IN CLOSING

The term *resilience* has guided contemporary public policies and interventions such as the Portuguese Recovery and Resilience Plan (2023-2026), the European Union's Recovery and Resilience Facility, and other post-pandemic programmes internationally. Support for independent cultural actors and cultural institutions has been an important part of these measures in many countries. However, this post-pandemic phase of support is soon to be closing or transitioning. At this point in time, it is imperative that the importance of the cultural aspects of urban life and societal development—including the powerful roles taken up by cultural agents—continue to be recognized, made visible, strongly expressed, and grounded in research and practice. Culture's importance to guiding local development, generating meaningful places, and propelling sociocultural relations and local vitality must continue to be demonstrated. This publication aims to contribute to these goals.

The articles within this collection speak to a variety of important elements of creative resilience, reflecting on the roles of cultural actors as catalysts, facilitators, and enablers; culture-nature relationships as they are nurtured in particular places; the need to recognize and strengthen urban-rural cultural connections; and the importance of enabling frameworks, contemporary public policies, and effective interventions that facilitate reflection and action. Underlying all these dimensions, community engagement and meaningful participation—frequently facilitated through culture-based approaches—is multi-layered, incorporating personal self-expression and empowerment, social connection and inclusion, and collective approaches to co-planning, decision-making, and monitoring change.

The collection illuminates how initiatives contributing to creative resilience play out in a wide variety of contexts, from different zones of cities (inner cities, periphery areas) to broader, non-urban territories. It also points to factors and influences that are less geographically defined but are impactful nonetheless. And it draws attention to the potential of the generative power wielded by cultural agents as catalysts of change, as well as by researchers who draw attention to important societal issues, provide new perspectives to understand changing contexts, pursue research-action initiatives that frequently engage vulnerable communities, and co-design frameworks to facilitate more participatory frameworks and processes to emerge and, perhaps, become enrooted in civic and political systems.

Nancy Duxbury, Gonalo Canto Moniz and Claudino Ferreira

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Nancy Duxbury, PhD, is a principal researcher, lead coordinator of the transdisciplinary thematic line "Urban Cultures, Sociabilities and Participation", principal coordinator of the CREATOUR Observatory of Culture and Tourism for Local Development at the Centre for Social Studies, and co-coordinator of the Doctoral Program in "Sociology - Cities and Urban Cultures" at the University of Coimbra. She is principal investigator of the Horizon Europe project *IN SITU: Place-based Innovation of Cultural and Creative Industries in Non-urban Areas* (2022–2026), and was lead researcher of the CES team in the H2020 project *UNCHARTED: Understanding, Capturing and Fostering the Societal Value of Culture*. Previously, she was principal investigator of the national project *CREATOUR: Creative Tourism Destination Development in Small Cities and Rural Areas* (2016–2020). ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5611-466X

Gonalo Canto Moniz is an associate professor in the Department of Architecture of the University of Coimbra, where he graduated in 1995 and obtained his PhD in Architecture in 2011. He is a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra, where he co-coordinates the thematic line Urban Cultures, Sociabilities and Participation. He is the co-principal investigator of two European projects: *URBiNAT* (H2020, 2018–2024) and *TRANS-Lighthouses* (Horizon Europe, 2023–2026). At DARQ-UC he co-coordinates the rehabilitation of the Jos  Falc o Secondary School. He is a member of DoCoMoMo ISC Education and Training. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1890-1953

Claudino Ferreira, PhD (Sociology, FEUC - 2006), is a professor of sociology at the Faculty of Economics of the University of Coimbra. He is a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra, where he co-coordinates the thematic line Urban Cultures, Sociabilities and Participation. He is the principal investigator of the Horizon Europe project *CONCILIARE: CONFidely ChangIng coLonial heRitagE* (2024–2027). He is also co-coordinator of the Doctoral Program in "Sociology - Cities and Urban Cultures" at the University of Coimbra. Areas of interest: Cities and urban cultures; Cultural and urban policies; Sociology of culture and the arts; Cultural and creative sector; Tourism, leisure and lifestyles; Social science methodologies. ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6826-588X

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THE AGENCY OF CULTURAL ACTORS **AND ACTIONS/CULTURAL ACTORS AS** **AGENTS OF CHANGE**

CULTURAL RIGHTS—MAKING ROOM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Sinara Sandri

Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra

sinara.sandri@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of the first phase of an artistic creation project aimed at young people and carried out in two suburbs of Porto Alegre, a city in southern Brazil. The initiative was proposed by a local cultural agent and sponsored by the federal government. Based on the concept of cultural citizenship (Chauí, 2021), the project used autonomous educational spaces to hold workshops on photographic language and creative writing. The focus was on stimulating the narrative capacity of the group and encouraging them to tell their own stories. The experience had a very collaborative dynamic and the results demonstrated the relevance of multi-level inputs and the potential of local artistic production on the dynamics of inclusion, making room for young people's self-identification.

KEYWORDS

community-engaged research, cultural rights, Porto Alegre, photography

INTRODUCTION

The construction of culture as a right, the need to develop cultural policies, and the importance of the people as actors in national processes entered the agenda of debate in Brazil after the slow and incomplete process of re-democratization that ended a 25-year period of military governments. Thus, the legacy that UNESCO had been promoted since the 1960s did not appear in the national legal system until the promulgation of the constitutional text in 1988 (Dias, 2023). This late incorporation equated culture with education and established the State's obligation to guarantee the full exercise of cultural rights and access to the sources of national culture.

It is important to note that the context of ambiguity that characterized the Brazilian democratic transition was reflected in the drafting of the Constitution and in the models advocated for the fulfilment of the State's obligations. The increase in the guarantee of rights was not accompanied by an increase in the responsibility for financing public services, in a model that envisaged the coexistence of private initiative in sectors such as health and education. In the specific case of culture, the constitutional text is vague on the sources of funding, favouring a funding model that relies heavily on private patronage and initiatives by local authorities to develop cultural actions.

The guidelines of the new constitution and its shortcomings were implemented during this first period of revitalization of democratic institutions, known as the New Republic. In that moment, the contribution of the philosopher Marilena Chaui, who was responsible for cultural management in the city of São Paulo, became a milestone for cultural actors in Brazil: the concept of cultural rights and cultural citizenship, which focused on facilitating access to cultural goods, improving cultural skills, and providing spaces for interaction, was implemented as public policy:

We will start from this division as a socio-cultural stigma, either to make it an integral part of a cosmopolitan vision of the city, or to make it an active intervention in the process of transforming the political culture of the city. We will embarrass what is done in the centre and what is done in the periphery, mixing the field of cultural experimentation and that of resistance that characterizes popular culture at its core. (Chaui, 2021, p. 92, author's translation)

The formulation emphasizes the potential of culture as an input for the inclusion of vulnerable populations in the social and political dynamics of cities. It is possible to say that Chaui's proposal has inspired countless initiatives over the decades, both by cultural agents and government initiatives, such as the current policy for the formation of Cultural Territories¹, which combines the qualification of cultural infrastructure, decentralization actions, and the creation of networks of community cultural spaces.

In addition to this tradition of combining academic thinking and cultural practice, social movements exert positive pressure with demands that stimulate the social engagement of cultural operators, making the idea of socially engaged art, as formulated by Helguera (2011), almost an expected consequence of this relationship. The author centralizes interaction as part of any socially engaged artwork, highlighting its hybrid and multidisciplinary character as a social action. Located in an intermediate space between artistic and non-artistic practice, the relationships created in the development of these experiences would have as their defining elements the constitution of a temporary community or social group and the constitution of multi-level participatory structures, signalling the role of art as an activator of social dynamics.

By mobilizing the contributions of Chaui and Helguera, it is possible to outline a framework that articulates support policies at the institutional level and parameters for the work of cultural agents, and to configure the environment in which the Territories of Photography/Retreating Stories proposal is developed by the Porto Alegre International Photography Festival as an initiative to decentralize the event. The budget comes from federal funds obtained through a public call promoted by Funarte (Fundação Nacional das Artes)² to encourage the organization of events in vulnerable communities. This line of funding is part of actions to re-invest in culture after a period of disorganization and drastic reduction of support to the sector during the Bolsonaro government.

The Territories of Photography/Retreating Stories cultural action was carried out in two communities in the city of Porto Alegre, where there is a lack of educational and cultural

¹ <https://www.gov.br/cultura/pt-br/assuntos/territorios-da-cultura/territorios-da-cultura/como-funciona>

² <https://www.gov.br/funarte/pt-br>

facilities and the poor quality of public spaces has been exacerbated in a context of extreme weather events. The region is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, and the damage to structures is not fixed. The precariousness of the neighbourhood makes it difficult for young residents to take part in social or leisure activities. In most cases, the only opportunities available are the result of voluntary or support actions promoted by civil society groups.

In this context, the work was developed and carried out in collaboration with two important local actors in the east of the city: the Bom Jesus Environmental Education Centre (CEA)³ and the Morro da Cruz Autonomous Collective⁴. The institutions have different typologies and play different roles in the community and in their relationship with the formal education system. While the CEA focuses on programmes to generate income from urban waste, the Autonomous Collective focuses on digital inclusion. Both emerged from autonomous community initiatives and work on social, educational, and environmental projects.

Participating in FestFoto's proposal to carry out this cultural action is part of these institutions' strategies to increase learning opportunities and to integrate artistic production into their daily activities, thus widening the range of activities offered to young people and creating spaces for socialising. Without pretending to make an exhaustive analysis, it is possible to consider that, by including artistic practices in their portfolio of activities offered, the two institutions create opportunities for learning and cultural creation, making room for coexistence, interaction, and inclusion for young people in situations of social vulnerability.

METHODOLOGY

The process of drawing up the programme of activities was shared with the teams from the institutions in a very participatory dynamic⁵. Planning took place during the first semester and the activities took place in June, July, and August 2024. Under the executive coordination of the festival team, local producers and workshop participants alternated between the roles of student, photographer, model, producer, and teacher. The local educators brought together the 15 participants from each of the two groups, which were predominantly girls (26 out of 30 members) aged between 15 and 18.

³ The CEA was created in 1996 from the Waste Sorting Centre, an initiative aimed at generating income for women victims of domestic violence by sorting and selling recyclable waste. It runs educational programmes for young people and is developing the CEA Communication Network project, with the installation of BONJA TV to expand the community's access to the digital world and generate its own content. <https://www.ceabomjesus.org>

⁴ Founded in 2019 to promote citizen education and digital inclusion. It develops environmental education projects, a Computer Reconditioning Centre, preparatory courses for the job market, and the development of social impact businesses such as carpentry. <https://coletivomdc.org/>

⁵ The photography workshops were coordinated by photographer Tiago Coelho. The creative writing workshops and the Images that Speak event were coordinated by poet Mika, a resident of Bom Jesus. The exhibition ReTratando Imagens was curated by photographer Erick Peres, a resident of the east side of Porto Alegre. The local teams were formed by Marina Schmitt and Alex Pantera (Bom Jesus) and João Batista (Morro da Cruz).

The aim of the photography workshops was to provide an elementary understanding of the audiovisual language and to encourage the participants to use images to tell a story. The programme covered the basics of photography and reading light, as well as image processing, mobile phone's photo resources, and the main photographic genres such as portrait and street photography. In addition to the theoretical lessons, the young people were encouraged to carry out practical exercises to produce images in their homes and during guided walks around the neighbourhood. The programme also included a collective discussion of the work and the selection of images for an exhibition.

The writing workshops took a feminist approach to literature, problematizing the writing of classic texts and providing a practical exercise for unlocking individual writing skills and valuing stories. Beginning with the delimitation of a semantic field by collecting a set of words/ideas that the participants associated with the term "Bonja" (an affectionate name used by the residents of the Bom Jesus community), the meeting culminated in the construction of a collective poem with the contribution of all the participants.

The photography and creative writing workshops culminated in two events held in public spaces in the two communities. The photographic exhibition (Re)Treating Stories was curated by a young local artist and was made using paper pasted directly onto the exterior walls of shops, markets, churches, and the homes of relatives and friends in the community. The mapping of the sites that received the works and the negotiation of permission to apply the material were carried out by the participants themselves.

In this way, the planning and implementation of the activities established a rich process of cultural exchange and debate about the content and the way of communicating the experience. Starting from the basic proposal for a programme aimed at providing holiday activities and involving young local artists, important adjustments and modifications were made. It is worth highlighting the change in the methodology of the creative writing workshop, which made the approach more incisive in its feminist critique of racism.

It was also remarkable the discussion to include images on the slam⁶. A slam is an event with a very specific format shared in a circuit of competitive events at local and national level. The proposal to use the images produced by the young people in the workshops as a trigger for text production was therefore poorly received, as it would change the typology of the event. It was feared that the mixture of languages could de-characterize and limit the freedom of the poets in constructing the texts. In the negotiation process, the discussion centred on emphasizing the importance of the photo festival commitment to the image and adapting the format of the event to a model that would be able to maintain the character of a public poetry performance, regardless of the name.

The solution was to change the name of the activity, replacing the idea of a photography slam with just a poetry meeting called Images That Speak, and to keep the prize, even though the event could not be considered part of the city's slam circuit. The event was organized by slammer Mika, a young local resident, and took place in the only square in the Bom Jesus

⁶ A poetic performance created in Chicago in the 1980s, it spread around the world as a movement of social criticism by young artists. In Brazil, there has been a circuit of events since 2011 (see Neves, 2017).

community. Students from Morro da Cruz came to visit and take part. The images were shown on a screen and the slammers presented the poems. It was a Saturday evening and 10 slammers took part in the competition. The event ended up being part of an agenda of activities promoted by the CEA, which focused on the cultural occupation of the square.

DEVELOPING NARRATIVE SKILLS—TELLING LIFE STORIES

Photography offers some specific aspects that allow it to trigger opportunities for creation and expression. It's an exercise in framing the world and experimenting with different points of view. The initial aim of the work was to improve the teenagers' narrative skills and encourage them to value their personal histories. This was reflected in the name (Re)Tratando Histórias | (Re)Treating Stories proposed by the local partners for the photo exhibition. In Portuguese, the word used to represent or portray is *retratar*. The word can be broken down into the prefix "re" and the radical "tratar". *Tratar* means to deal with or take care of. The prefix *re* means to do it again, to do something different. It is therefore not too hasty to conclude that the experience made it possible to realize that photography can serve as a narrative tool for revisiting and rewriting personal and collective histories.

The aim of this project was to stimulate a playful observation of everyday life and to practice a change of perspective to face the daily limitations imposed by a precarious environment. The traumas and violence suffered help to shape a perception of the world that doesn't always favour the discovery of potential and creative ways of dealing productively with difficulties. The invitation to find in photography a tool capable of helping to build a personal history implied not only technical learning, but also the courage to expose and share life stories. In this way, the big challenge for teachers and artists was to stimulate these young people to make the most of an everyday life that is not always perceived as stimulating. The team's aim was to convince young people that their stories matter and that only they can tell them properly.

The images produced offer an insight into the world of these young people and provide a, sometimes unexpected, panorama of the two communities, offering important information about their way of life. Some experiences can change our point of view and bring beauty to our ordinary lives, and photography is able to give materiality to these displacements. A series of apples left on the counter caught Evelyn's eye (Figure 1). The girl had learned to read light, understood colour temperature, and practised framing. In no more than three lessons, she was able to look into a corner of her living room and observe the manifestation of beauty in inanimate objects, a snapshot of the world created by human sensibility since antiquity.



FIGURE 1. *STILL LIFE*, BY EVELYN MEDEIROS

Source: (Re)Tratando Histórias, FestFoto exhibition 2024.

Portraits are also revealing moments in the construction of self-esteem, an extremely important process, especially during adolescence. The genre was extensively practised during the workshops, with a dynamic in which the participants (young people and educators) alternated roles in front of the camera, sometimes as models and sometimes as photographers. The public exhibition of these portraits (see Figure 2) had another level of impact, as in addition to the models and authors of the images, family members and neighbours were affected and expressed their joy, as in the case of a mother who contacted the organization via social networks to express her pride in her daughters' work. "How beautiful, it's my daughter", wrote the mother of the author and model of an expressive portrait displayed on the wall of the community supermarket, in a message full of emoticons.



FIGURE 2. GALLERY – PORTRAITS DISPLAYED ON THE WALL OF A SUPERMARKET IN MORRO DA CRUZ, PORTO ALEGRE

Source: (Re)Tratando Histórias, FestFoto exhibition 2024.

CONCLUSIONS

The implementation of the first phase of this project has created an environment for the exercise of cultural rights and the development of creative capacities, demonstrating that cultural production can be an opportunity for strengthening local actors, promoting the intersection of social policies, and creating opportunities for young people facing situations of exclusion. By combining educational strategies with opportunities for artistic creation, it is possible to offer these talents a way into the creative economy circuit and open up possibilities for professionalization.

The events brought together young people, their families, and neighbours. This potential for interaction was confirmed in both physical and digital spaces, as people noticed and reacted

to the artworks that were placed in high traffic areas in the community, and also on social media, where images and comments were posted.

The movement to activate community spaces is central as an opportunity to regenerate urban life and make the city less inhospitable and more liveable. Climate chaos, political instability, and urban segregation affect young people in particular and make art and culture even more vital for vulnerable communities. In this way, artistic occupation initiatives such as the one proposed by FestFoto are an important contribution to creating environments of creation and belonging where young people can come together and make their existential demands visible.

On the other hand, the results of the first phase of this work have made it possible to see the need and the challenge to improve the relationship with the formal educational institutions operating in the area, since the precariousness of this system can give NGOs an additional role in activating cultural and regenerative dynamics, making these spaces more attractive and potentially more identified as relevant by young people. In this endeavour, the creation of support networks capable of providing funding and sharing knowledge is also important in order to legitimize institutions, increase their visibility in the community and broaden their scope of action.

For researchers, agents, and cultural managers working on the implementation of publicly funded policies, it is important to understand that the roadmap for inclusion implies a dynamic of activating local circuits of inclusion that require inputs at multiple levels. In addition to contributing to the expansion of cultural and environmental literacy, providing contacts with artists and museums, and collaborating in the creation of green, inclusive, and beautiful common spaces, cultural action promoters must be aware that establishing effective collaboration means strengthening the role of local actors in the planning and implementation of activities, and may require the exercise of their own mediation skills in order to make productive the conflicts that arise from dialogue and the intersection of different individual and collective trajectories.

NOTE ON CONTRIBUTOR

Sinara Sandri is a journalist. She holds a PhD in Communication with research in urban studies and regenerative uses of public spaces, and is currently a post-doctoral researcher at CES (Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra). She is also an invited curator in FestFoto (@festfotopoa). @sinarasandri

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CREATIVE RESILIENCE IN URBAN THEATRE: SUSTAINABLE SET DESIGN AS A CATALYST FOR CULTURAL EXPRESSION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Mawukplorm Harriet Abia Adjahoe

University of Cape Coast, Ghana Mawukplorm
adjahoe@ucc.edu.gh / ablaboni@gmail

ABSTRACT

In the face of growing environmental and material challenges, creative resilience has become a crucial concept in sustainable set design for urban theatre. This paper examines my project which explores how waste materials can be transformed into artistic and functional theatre spaces, using biomimicry-based sustainable set design as a case study. By integrating eco-conscious design, circular economy principles, and participatory theatre-making, urban theatre can not only tackle environmental concerns but also enhance its aesthetic and cultural narratives. The research highlights how discarded materials can be repurposed into visually striking and structurally sound set designs, proving that sustainability and artistic innovation can go hand in hand. Beyond its environmental impact, sustainable scenography fosters community engagement, reflects urban realities, and contributes to cultural sustainability—strengthening social bonds, participatory storytelling, and ecological awareness. While challenges like material durability and resistance to change remain, the future of theatre design lies in embracing waste as a tool for resilience, regeneration, and artistic expression. By redefining the relationship between performance and sustainability, this study advocates for a more environmentally responsible and creatively adaptive approach to urban theatre-making.

KEYWORDS

eco-conscious set design, creative resilience, participatory storytelling, sustainable urban theatre, waste

INTRODUCTION

Urban theatre is a dynamic and ever-evolving art form that thrives on creativity, resourcefulness, and adaptability. In many African societies, theatre was performed in open courtyards, under trees and around fires, being rooted in ancestral traditions of storytelling, communal gathering and environmental harmony. These spaces not only nurtured performance but they also embodied indigenous philosophies of interconnectedness between people, place and nature. It serves as both a reflection of and a response to the

social, cultural, and political landscapes of contemporary cities. From small, experimental performances in unconventional spaces to large-scale productions in established venues, urban theatre continuously reinvents itself to engage diverse audiences and remain relevant in an increasingly complex world.

Yet in this reinvention, there is a need to reconnect with indigenous values that emphasize balance, circularity and respect for the land, as these values are frequently sidelined by modern material-intensive production methods. As theatre continues to innovate, it must also confront pressing global challenges, particularly those related to environmental sustainability and material scarcity.

Theatre production, particularly in urban settings, has traditionally relied on newly manufactured materials for set construction, costumes, and props. While these materials contribute to the visual spectacle of performances, they also generate significant waste, much of which ends up in landfills after a production concludes (Adjahoe, 2023). The transient nature of theatrical performances, where elaborate sets are often discarded after just a few shows, raises critical questions about the sustainability of conventional theatre practices. As cities strive to become more eco-friendly, theatre practitioners are increasingly called upon to adopt greener approaches that minimize their environmental impact without compromising artistic quality.

In response to these challenges, the concept of creative resilience has emerged as a vital strategy in contemporary theatre-making. Jackson (2011) describes resilience in the arts as “the endurance of practice under conditions of constraint” (p. 25), where artists must navigate limited resources, shifting political landscapes, and the precarity of public space. Beer (2021) asserts that a truly sustainable theatre is one that fosters ecological thinking, not just in its materials, but in its collaborative processes and social engagement. This perspective positions theatre not as a passive victim of material limitations but as a space for radical innovation—a place where waste materials, natural landscapes, and community-driven efforts can be woven into the creative process itself.

Similarly, Schechner (2002) argues that “theatre is a site of transformation—not just for characters, but for space itself” (p. 89). Sustainable set design follows this principle by treating discarded materials not as refuse but as raw artistic potential. This approach resonates with the traditional Akan philosophy of *sesa wo suban*—the belief in transformation, both of self and of one’s environment. In the traditional context, transformation is seen not as destruction, but as renewal—where broken calabashes become utensils, fallen trees become stools, and old cloths become patchwork quilts for storytelling. In a design context, it echoes the idea that what is broken or discarded can be reshaped into something purposeful and beautiful. In this instance, the transformation of space occurs for Efua Sutherland’s play, *The Marriage of Anansewa*, which has in the past been staged on a proscenium stage. Reimagining the cultural memory of storytelling and the influence of communal living which defined the pre-urban Ghanaian social landscape, I set out to design a compound house, in an out-door space interspersed with trees, allowing enough moonlight to seep through to mimic the natural setting for the age-old oral tradition of storytelling.

Urban theatre, in its essence, is not just a form of entertainment but also a medium for social commentary and transformation. It has the power to challenge societal norms, raise awareness about pressing global issues, and inspire change. However, if theatre itself is to be a force for positive transformation, its production methods must align with the values it seeks to promote. Traditional stage design often relies on short-lived materials that contribute to waste accumulation and ecological degradation. As cities work toward a greener and more sustainable future, the integration of eco-conscious design principles in theatre production is no longer just an option—it is a necessity. By returning to indigenous forms of communal creativity—where utility, beauty, and ecology coexist—theatre can revive traditional knowledge to address modern challenges. By leveraging discarded materials, urban theatre can not only address environmental challenges but also enhance its aesthetic, cultural, and conceptual significance.

BIOMIMICRY AND SUSTAINABILITY IN THEATRE

Theatre has always been a space of imagination and transformation, where ordinary materials can be turned into extraordinary worlds on stage. However, traditional set design often relies on newly manufactured materials—wood, plastics, metals, and synthetic fabrics—that are used for only a short period before being discarded. This reliance on disposable materials contributes to excessive waste generation and exacerbates environmental degradation. However, by reimagining waste as a resource, set designers can follow the principles of biomimicry and circular design to create efficient, sustainable, and regenerative theatrical spaces.

The saying goes that there is nothing new under the sun. And this Benyus (1997) confirms when she argues that “nature has already solved many of the problems we are trying to address. We just need to learn from its ingenuity” (p. 6). One of the most compelling examples of this nature-inspired efficiency is the spider web. The web presents a structure that is lightweight yet incredibly strong, adaptable yet durable. Inspired by this principle, I utilized plastic bottles, plastic sheets and waste paper sheets woven into interconnected patterns, mimicking the spatial logic of a spider’s silk.

Reframing waste as a resource aligns with broader sustainability movements, particularly the principles of the circular economy. A circular approach to set design prioritizes reuse, repurposing, and reintegration, ensuring that materials remain in continuous use rather than following a linear path from production to disposal. It is a sustainable structure that does not just reduce waste, it eliminates it by working in closed-loop systems (Pawlyn, 2019). This biomimetic approach draws inspiration from nature’s efficient systems, where waste is never truly wasted but instead becomes a source of renewal and regeneration (Benyus, 1997).

At the heart of this project lies creative resilience. As exciting as this project might sound, it was conceived during the COVID-19 period. The COVID-19 was a tough test of the resilience of existential structures of basic human life. The COVID-19 pandemic introduced unprecedented challenges to the creative industries, including theatre production.

Lockdowns, social distancing measures, and disruptions in supply chains made it difficult to access conventional set materials, let alone reclaimed ones. Lockdowns, social distancing measures, and disruptions in supply chains made it difficult to access conventional set materials, let alone reclaimed ones.

Some of the key challenges encountered due to the pandemic included:

- Limited access to discarded materials – with industries, businesses, and transportation hubs either closed or operating at reduced capacity, obtaining reclaimed materials such as shipping crates, construction scraps, and discarded furniture became significantly more difficult. Materials that would typically be salvaged from urban waste streams were no longer as readily available.
- Health and safety restrictions – even when waste materials were accessible, concerns over surface contamination and virus transmission made it necessary to disinfect and quarantine materials before use, adding an extra layer of complexity to the set-building process.
- Reduced community participation – one of the core principles of sustainable set design is community engagement, where local artisans, theatre students, and audiences contribute to the collection and transformation of waste materials. However, COVID-19 restrictions limited in-person collaboration, forcing a shift towards smaller-scale production teams.

Despite these obstacles, the COVID-19 period became a crucial test of creative resilience, demonstrating the ability of theatre practitioners to adapt, problem-solve, and innovate under severe constraints. The limitations imposed by the pandemic compelled a rethink of material access, experiment with new approaches, and embrace hyper-local sourcing methods. For example, materials were gathered from personal networks, household discards, and from some selected eateries. This shift reinforced the idea that sustainable theatre is not just about grand-scale environmental action but also about making do with what is immediately available and transforming scarcity into opportunity. By embracing waste as a resource and adapting to material scarcity, this project not only demonstrated the viability of sustainable scenography under crisis conditions but also reinforced the role of theatre as an innovative and resourceful art form. As theatre continues to evolve, integrating localized, adaptable, and community-driven approaches to sustainable set design will ensure that ecological responsibility remains at the heart of artistic innovation.

LEARNING FROM NATURE AND CULTURAL

BIOMIMICRY

The intersection of nature-inspired design and sustainability has opened up new possibilities for theatre production, particularly in urban settings where waste management and resource scarcity are growing concerns. My project on biomimicry-based sustainable set design explores how principles derived from natural ecosystems can guide the transformation of discarded materials into functional, aesthetic, and ecologically responsible theatre spaces.

Biomimicry, a design philosophy popularized by Janine Benyus (1997), encourages designers to study and replicate nature's solutions to complex challenges. In set design, this translates to creating structures that are lightweight yet strong, flexible yet durable, and beautiful yet functional—just as they exist in nature. Flexibility of the set does not lie in its malleability but in its re-configurability and reusability. Biomimicry emphasizes resource efficiency, and adaptability, making it an ideal framework for sustainable scenography.

SPIDER WEB-INSPIRED SET DESIGN: USING WASTE IN INNOVATIVE WAYS

Rather than relying on rigid, heavy structures, this project drew inspiration from spider webs, which are renowned for being lightweight yet incredibly strong, adaptable yet resilient. Of the wide array of types of webs, the triangle web was preferred simply because, the structure of the blocks for the scenery could be effortlessly visualized in the web pattern; and the web also presented with an easy-to-construct, easy-to-emulate character. This approach led to the development of web-like set structures that used minimal material while maintaining high tensile strength and flexibility.

The plastic bottles were woven into layered, web-like formations, mimicking the fine yet strong structure of a spider web. The overlapping materials created depth, translucency, and dynamic lighting effects, allowing the set to transform visually under different lighting conditions. Inspired by the way spiders reinforce their webs, structural elements were strategically strengthened using tightly wound waste paper rolls and interlaced plastic strips, maintaining the set's integrity while keeping it lightweight. Thin, flexible waste nylon cords were stretched and interconnected with the plastic bottles to mimic how spider silk distributes tension, ensuring the set could flex under movement rather than break under pressure. Rather than using freshly manufactured plywood, large sheets of discarded paper were layered, and stretched across the plastic-web-frame to create textured, organic surfaces reminiscent of cocoon-like enclosures or woven silk nests. These elements provided both visual interest and an immersive, tactile quality to the set. These were then used in constructing the "house" of the protagonist.

Just as spiders construct intricate yet resilient webs, the project utilized plastic sheets and paper-based materials to form tensile, interwoven set structures that provided both aesthetic appeal and practical durability. However, this biomimetic approach also draws inspiration from traditional Ghanaian architectural forms—the compound house. Elleh (1997) notes that “the compound house is an architectural embodiment of shared values, collective memory, and cultural continuity” (p. 121). Thus, in creating the courtyard, thin plastic waste, known as water sachet plastics were used to create opaque, layered panels, textured with sawdust to resemble an unplastered concrete wall—suggestive of the gradual transition into urbanization.



FIGURE 1. WASTE-DESIGNED SET DEMARCATING THE COURTYARD AS PERFORMANCE SPACE WITH THE BACK OF THE INTERIOR COURT IN VIEW

Source: Picture taken by Bismark Ofori (April 16, 2021) for Mawukplorm H. Adjahoe: waste designing (2021).

This sustainable set design and communal theatre-making align closely with the principles of design and function of the compound house. These principles emphasise firstly resource efficiency whereby the compound house relied on local materials (earth, wood, thatch) and waste-minimizing construction techniques that ensured materials were used cyclically. The second principle is the principle of shared space and community interaction. Instead of isolating individuals, the compound house encouraged collective engagement—a concept that can be reinterpreted in theatre by creating interactive, open-stage designs that dissolve barriers between performers and audiences. Lastly is the principle of integration with nature whereby pre-urban Ghanaian settlements were built around natural features like trees, rivers, hills, etc., fostering a harmonious relationship between human structures and the environment. This principle was central to the project’s outdoor, tree-integrated set design.

Quayson (2014) highlights how “urbanization in Ghana has replaced communal intimacy with fragmented social spaces, shifting from interconnected kinship networks to privatized living”

(p. 67). By staging performances in an open, tree-integrated outdoor space, this project seeks to reclaim lost communal experiences and reposition theatre as a shared cultural event rather than an isolated spectacle.

The saw-dust coated plastic sheets were joined at the hems by intersecting them on each leg of every other wooden frame bearing in mind the idea of no or minimal use of raw materials. This technique allowed for both aesthetic intricacy and functional durability. It equally created an impression of alternating angular and curvilinear outlines at the top which not only offset the rigid angular lines that predominantly characterized the set but also represented the peaceful co-existence of both the feminine and the masculine.

THEATRE AS ASSEMBLY AND PUBLIC SPACE

Theatre is not merely a performance space. It is a public arena where social narratives unfold. The decision to construct the set outdoors, interwoven with trees, was not only an aesthetic choice but a deliberate act of cultural reclamation. Using theatre as a “public assembly is not just about protest; it is about making presence felt, about transforming space into a site of collective meaning” (Butler, 2015, p. 23). By reimagining the compound house as a theatrical space, the project allows audiences to physically inhabit a structure that echoes Ghana’s historical modes of living, gathering, and storytelling.

In a similar vein, sustainable set design extends beyond its environmental benefits, it also plays a vital role in shaping the cultural and social dynamics of urban theatre. One of the most compelling examples of this is the use of sustainable set design to evoke the communal living structure of the compound house, a defining feature of pre-urbanized Ghanaian society. By designing sets that mimic the spatial organization and social interactions of the compound house, theatre can reignite cultural conversations about community, togetherness, and sustainable living in modern urban spaces.

The materials used, the structures built, and the aesthetics created all contribute to the stories being told on stage, reinforcing themes of identity, history, and communal interaction. In the context of urban Ghanaian theatre, sustainable set design can be particularly powerful in recreating lost architectural and social landscapes, offering audiences a visual and spatial experience that connects them to their heritage and collective memory. Additionally, Schechner (2002) reinforces this idea, stating that “performance does not take place in a vacuum—it interacts with the space, the environment, and the audience, redefining itself with each iteration” (p. 47). This aligns with the project’s interactive, communal staging, where the set is not static but evolves in response to audience movement and participation.

Before urbanization introduced individualized, nuclear-style housing, Ghanaian societies thrived in compound houses, which were multi-family dwellings built around a shared central courtyard. These architectural spaces were more than just residences—they were social, economic, and cultural hubs where extended families lived together, shared resources, and engaged in collective activities such as storytelling, cooking, and decision-making.

In this project, the set was deliberately structured to resemble a compound house, using waste materials to craft an environment that fostered a sense of belonging, shared experience, and collective identity. Some key design choices included enclosing the stage in a courtyard-like layout to surround the performers in a semi-enclosed, interactive space, much like how families gathered in a shared courtyard. Secondly, using waste materials to define social zones symbolized the multifunctional spaces of the compound house—from areas designated for storytelling to those resembling shared kitchens or workspaces.

Again, instead of a proscenium stage that separates actors from spectators, the set's layout invited audience members to engage with the performance, enhancing interaction between performers and audience by physically moving within the space, echoing how daily life unfolded in the compound house. This approach not only reinforced themes of communalism and sustainability but also redefined audience engagement, transforming passive spectators into active participants in the theatrical experience.

Recognizing that many urban theatre spaces lacked the flexibility needed for communal-style, immersive set design, this project overcame spatial limitations by staging the performance in an outdoor environment. This allowed for a more natural and culturally resonant recreation of the compound house, where nature and communal space coexist seamlessly. Instead of constructing an artificial set indoors, existing trees were used as structural anchors becoming integral parts of the stage design, mirroring how pre-urban Ghanaian compound houses were often built around central trees that provided shade and served as gathering points.

The set was interlaced with plastic strings, plastic sheets, and waste paper panels woven into the landscape, allowing the man-made elements to blend organically with the natural surroundings. This approach reflected both sustainability and the way pre-urban settlements incorporated found materials into their dwellings. Inspired by compound houses—designing the stage as a living, interactive courtyard—the outdoor performance area was structured around an open central space, encouraging storytelling circles under large trees, replicating how elders and children once gathered to share oral traditions; communal engagement, where performers and audience members interacted freely within the shared space; and a flexible stage layout, allowing movement between different sections as though transitioning between various rooms of a compound house.

Sustainable set design is not only about ecological innovation; it is also a reclamation of indigenous knowledge. This project connects ancient Ghanaian knowledge systems with modern environmental concerns by rebuilding the compound house out of discarded materials. The use of waste materials, the emphasis on community space, and the outdoor, nature-integrated staging all reflect the long-held ideals of interdependence, resourcefulness, and spiritual connection to the land—values embedded in Ghanaian cosmologies and built environments.

In this sense, creative resilience is consistent with the indigenous concept of *sankofa* which is the act of returning to reclaim what is helpful from the past to inform the present. Sustainable scenography serves as a place of cultural healing, reuniting urban audiences with

the rhythms, textures, and social architecture that once defined communal life. The communal layout, the immersive audience design, and the intergenerational storytelling structure not only reduced environmental impact but also invoked deep cultural memory.

Urbanization in Ghana may have fractured the spatial expressions of togetherness, but theatre—through indigenous philosophies—can serve as a living archive of communal values. Productions staged within such settings can explore such themes as of migration, displacement, and gentrification, addressing how urban expansion has eroded traditional social structures. Equally important to the quest of social transformation is the contrast between past and present forms of living, prompting audiences to reflect on what has been lost and what can be reclaimed; and the ideology of sustainability as a return to cultural wisdom, illustrating that modern eco-consciousness is not a foreign concept but something deeply rooted in Ghanaian traditions of shared living and resourcefulness

As urban theatre continues to evolve, it must look backward as much as it looks forward. Sustainable theatre can do more than tell stories; by embracing indigenous aesthetics, values and ecological intelligence, it can embody the very philosophies that once held communities and ecosystems in balance. Through this project, creative resilience and indigenous ideas converge to show that the future of theatre is not just in invention, but also in restoration.

CREATIVE RESILIENCE AS THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABLE THEATRE

Sustainable set design, particularly through the transformation of waste materials, embodies the very essence of creative resilience. It challenges theatre practitioners to rethink how performance spaces are constructed, how resources are used, and how theatre can engage with both environmental and cultural sustainability. More than just an aesthetic or practical choice, waste-designed scenography is a statement of innovation, adaptability, and ecological responsibility.

This project has demonstrated that creative resilience is not just about survival—it is about transformation. The ability to reimagine waste as a resource, constraints as opportunities, and limitations as catalysts for innovation is what defines sustainable theatre. By drawing inspiration from biomimicry, communal living traditions, and nature-integrated design, this project proved that theatre can thrive even under material scarcity, logistical obstacles, and changing artistic norms.

At its core, creative resilience is the future of sustainable theatre. Jackson (2011) states that “performance artists, when faced with economic or material scarcity, develop adaptive strategies that blur the lines between necessity and invention” (p. 102). The decision to integrate set design within outdoor spaces and natural environments was not just a spatial adaptation—it was a philosophical return to theatre’s origins as a communal, nature-immersed experience. In doing so, the project proved that sustainability in theatre is not merely about limiting waste but about reimagining space, storytelling, and audience engagement in ways that are deeply interwoven with both history and ecology.

NOTE ON CONTRIBUTOR

Mawukplorm Harriet Abla Adjahoe is a theatre stage designer who has a decade of experience to her credit, having designed for performances such as Ama Atta Aidoo's *Dilemma of a Ghost*, Efua Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Ray Cooney's *Run for Your Wife*, etc. She is also a Theatre Arts Lecturer at the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, and a researcher whose interest is in promoting ecofriendly practices within and without the theatre, and to negotiate the culture of sustainability through the practice to reflect and sustain the culture of the people. ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-0894-8869>

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PLACE-BASED INNOVATION OF CULTURAL AND CREATIVE WORK IN NON-URBAN AREAS: LEARNING THROUGH INTERWEAVING RESEARCH AND PRACTICE IN THE IN SITU PROJECT

Nancy Duxbury

Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra
duxbury@ces.uc.pt

Paola Di Nunzio

Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra
paoladinunzio@ces.uc.pt

Sílvia Silva

Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra
silviasilva@ces.uc.pt

ABSTRACT

Research and policy traditionally neglected the non-urban cultural and creative sector, leaving it vulnerable. The European project, “IN SITU: Place-based innovation of cultural and creative industries in non-urban areas”, aims to address this situation. Attention is directed not only to traditional economic development matters but also to the social economy and community-based actions that support the life and development of territories. This article introduces the IN SITU project and briefly presents some findings from in-process research, focusing on: the nature of innovation in non-urban areas, drivers of innovation in the cultural and creative sectors/industries, the importance of place, challenges faced by cultural and creative actors, and data challenges and knowledge constraints. Challenges remain significant but a shift in how we view non-urban regions as sites of creativity and hubs of cultural production is emerging.

KEYWORDS

cultural and creative actors, cultural and creative industries (CCIs), non-urban, place-based innovation, culture-based development

INTRODUCTION

The non-urban constituency of the cultural and creative sector has grown in visibility and significance over the last decade internationally but is still vulnerable due to the lagging attention of research and policy to its needs, characteristics, and potential. Research and policy attention on creative work has largely focused on cities, while cultural and creative actors, enterprises, and ecosystems in non-urban areas have been under-researched and under-recognized (Duxbury, 2000). This situation has led to significant knowledge deficits, data gaps, and ‘partial glances’ offering sparse, dispersed, and diverse approaches that examine singular places and times without comprehensive contextualization or longitudinal studies to align these efforts. It has also resulted in a lack of guidance for policy approaches and support for periphery-based creative and cultural organizations and agents that are adapted to the unique characteristics of their situations.

In parallel, the prevailing understanding of how innovation occurs, in general and in cultural and creative industries (CCIs), is derived from urban examples and processes and has an economic focus. A small but growing body of research is pointing out that innovation is taking place outside of cities, in peripheries and borderlands (Makkonen et al., 2020). Emerging ideas and observations are indicating that how innovation processes occur in rural areas differ from those in cities. Much of this innovation remains hidden because it falls outside the standard theories and metrics commonly used in economic studies. Additionally, how to conceptualize and measure innovation in CCIs remains an open question (Castaldi, 2018).

Within the cultural and creative sector, in recent years non-urban cultural practitioners have articulated and shared their concerns, ideas, and aspirations through a long-term process of open consultations and debates jointly led by four major European cultural networks: the European Network of Cultural Centres, Culture Action Europe, IETM (International network for contemporary performing arts), and Trans Europe Halles. Involving cultural stakeholders from 22 European countries, these initiatives sparked trans-European dialogue about key issues and needs, put forward possible solutions, and articulated collective values and aspirations. The initiatives indicated that while cultural and creative actors in non-urban areas aspire to contribute significantly to place-based economies and community well-being, they face numerous obstacles hindering their growth and impacts.

The IN SITU project was designed building on the work of both research and practice, aiming to bridge these perspectives and extend these efforts to deepen knowledge about the non-urban part of the cultural and creative sector in Europe. This article introduces the IN SITU project and presents some findings from in-process research, focusing on those topic areas that feature linkages between academic and practice-based knowledges.

ABOUT “IN SITU”

Aiming to address the issues presented above, the Horizon Europe-funded project, “IN SITU: Place-based Innovation of Cultural and Creative Industries in Non-urban Areas,” combines

research and experimental actions to advance the innovation-related practices, capacities, and potential of CCIs in non-urban areas. The four-year project (2022–2026) aims to promote the understanding of the forms, processes, and governance needs of cultural and creative actors located in non-urban areas of Europe and to foster their ability to act as drivers of innovation, competitiveness, and sustainability for the places where they are located.¹ In order to achieve these objectives, the project adopts a community-engaged research approach to inform and guide its work with local communities and CCIs as it creates a space for them to work in collaborative partnership with academic researchers.

Aiming to counter the fragmentation of cultural and creative work into separate spheres with limited cross-communication, the project's scope includes cultural and creative industries (CCIs), arts, and heritage-related initiatives, which together form cultural and creative ecosystems within and across territories. Similarly, aiming to look outside large metropolis or 'big city' contexts, non-urban areas incorporate rural, remote territories, and peripheral locations as well as towns, villages, and small cities that may serve as regional hubs for broader territories.

The project consists of three interlinked dimensions:

- **Research** – multidisciplinary and multi-layered research in the project incorporates: macro-research reports with an across-Europe scope, both quantitative and qualitative; community-engaged actions in each of the Lab areas, involving cultural and creative agents living and working in each area, and interested stakeholders such as local and regional public agencies and authorities; and close monitoring of 12 case studies throughout their project development journeys.
- **Capacity building** – workshops and mentorship programmes, developed in response to the expressed needs of cultural and creative actors located in non-urban areas, to build entrepreneurial skills and competencies to manage cross-sector collaborations of creative and cultural professionals; and
- **Policy and planning recommendations** – bridging culture, innovation, and rural and regional development areas to improve the milieu for cultural and creative work in non-urban areas, IN SITU will develop recommendations to inform place-based planning as well as innovation and cultural policy frameworks for the cultural and creative sector.

Led by the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, the IN SITU Consortium involves 13 partners over 12 European countries, including a partner in each of the Lab locations plus others contributing with expertise in the fields of innovation research, cultural policy development, the geography of the creative economy, and cultural entrepreneurship, among other fields. The partners include ten research and university entities, an innovation and entrepreneurship development centre, a national cultural foundation, and a European

¹ Reports and other resources of the IN SITU project are available on the website: <https://insituculture.eu/>

cultural network.² In addition, the project is linked to nine Outreach Partners internationally which help to make IN SITU a seed for broader discussions about the potential and issues facing cultural and creative workers in non-urban areas. An International Advisory Board provides insightful perspectives and advice on the project's research, and contextualizes its findings in the resonating issues and comparable situations internationally.

The core defining aspect of IN SITU is the interlinking of research and practice through six place-based IN SITU Labs (Figure 1), located in six non-urban areas in the peripheries of Europe:

- Azores archipelago, Portugal;
- Western coastal periphery, Ireland;
- West Region, Iceland;
- Rauma and Eurajoki, West Coast and Baltic Sea archipelago, Finland;
- Valmiera county, Latvia; and
- Šibenik-Knin County, Croatia.

² The IN SITU partners are: the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra (Coordinator) (Portugal); Bifröst University (Iceland); European Network of Cultural Centres (Belgium); Kultura Nova Foundation (Croatia); Latvian Academy of Culture (Latvia); Mondragon Innovation & Knowledge, Mondragon University (Spain); National Academy of Theatre and Film Arts "Kr. Sarafov" (Bulgaria); National Institute for Agriculture, Food and Environment (France); University of Galway (Ireland); University of Hildesheim (Germany); University of the Azores (Portugal); University of Turku (Finland); and Utrecht University (The Netherlands). Information about each of the project partners, the Outreach Partners, and the members of the International Advisory Board are available on the IN SITU website (<https://insituculture.eu/>), in the "About IN SITU" section.



FIGURE 1. THE SIX IN SITU LABS ARE LOCATED IN NON-URBAN AREAS OF PORTUGAL, IRELAND, ICELAND, FINLAND, LATVIA, AND CROATIA

Source: IN SITU project.

The Labs function as hubs for networking, capacity building, and research. Across the Labs, 12 initiatives involving creative responses that address key local issues were identified to be IN SITU case studies, two per Lab area (Figure 2).³



FIGURE 2. TWELVE IN SITU CASE STUDIES ARE LOCATED IN THE SIX LABS LOCATIONS

Source: IN SITU project.

The identification of the case studies occurred through a three-phase process carried out in each Lab, encompassing: 1) community mobilization; 2) ecosystem activation; and 3) mapping and evaluation—all conceived in line with the community-engaged research approach that permeates the entire IN SITU project. Local citizens contributed to articulating the place-based issues and various local actors were mobilized and actively participated in identifying and evaluating initiatives.

The projects identified aim to address the most pressing local issues in each Lab territory through community-engaged creative practices, and have the potential of bringing forth transformative effects in these regions. Through these case studies, IN SITU aims to demonstrate the innovative and transformative roles of cultural and creative organizations and professionals in responding to key place-based issues in each of the Lab locations. The initiatives, conducted within an organization's regular work and/or through specific projects,

³ Brief videos introducing each of the case study projects are available on IN SITU's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@insitu3127>.

will be monitored over two years (2024–2025) within the IN SITU project using collaborative monitoring approaches. These projects provide a first-hand understanding of the decisions and processes involved, the opportunities and the challenges encountered, and the learning experiences that accompany the design and implementation of the innovative place-based creative initiatives in these six non-urban contexts.

SPOTLIGHTS ON RESEARCH FINDINGS

THE NATURE OF INNOVATION IN NON-URBAN AREAS

Considerations of the links between culture and local development have traditionally emphasized local economic development and economic performance. Aligned with this, innovation has generally been conceptualized in a very technological way. Today, however, many researchers accept the idea that innovation in non-urban territories is, above all, of a social, organizational, or institutional nature (Torre & Filippi, 2024). Furthermore, the innovations that appear in these territories come largely from actions undertaken by local actors or groups. Thus, significant reflection must be given to the social economy and to the actions carried out by local individuals and groups, whose dynamics support the life and development of territories. However, the role played by cultural and creative agents in this dynamic is often still poorly studied and informed.

DRIVERS OF INNOVATION IN THE CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTORS/INDUSTRIES

A synthesis of research literature revealed that important drivers of innovation in the cultural and creative sectors/industries in non-urban areas include: geographical proximity and knowledge transfer, social capital, cultural heritage, and local demand (Aldazabal et al., 2024). Overlaying this literature with insights from practice (i.e., emerging from the case studies), understanding of these dimensions is widened and deepened. For instance, the importance of geographical proximity, knowledge transfer, and social capital to cultural and creative work and innovation translates into practice as a strong need for networks and platforms for relating, sharing, and cooperation—which often do not exist in non-urban areas. This suggests the need for greater attention to mediators who can bring different agents and organizations together. It also highlights the importance of catalyzing and maintaining both internal connections (within the cultural and creative sector, which is often fragmented by subsector as well as by geography) and external exchanges with other sectors. Cultural heritage often serves as a foundation and inspiration for creative work, but beyond appreciation and attention to place-specificities and resources, this connection can propel efforts to enhance place resources and engage in creative and regenerative place-making initiatives. Local demand for creative work also expands to incorporate and frequently prioritize community engagement as well as to consider tourism flows, although not usually as a primary concern.

LOCALIZING / EMBEDDING—THE IMPORTANCE OF PLACE

While we can only scratch the surface of thinking about relations between creative work and place in this article, the project's ongoing investigations into place-based development and planning focuses on how these can incorporate cultural and creative actors in meaningful ways that recognize the processes and needs of their work. Informed by literature (e.g., Drake, 2003), ongoing discussions with creative workers in each Lab area are revealing the nuances of working, creating, and interacting in each place. This encompasses the locality as a resource of visual materials and stimuli, the physical aspects of materiality and landscape; inspiration and support from place-based social and cultural activity, encompassing the community of the creative worker; and the reputation or traditions of a place, which can be a catalyst for creativity and influence the outcomes. These insights align with what Collins and Cunningham (2017) observed in peripheral areas of Europe:

Cultural production does not occur aspatially, what is produced, how it is produced and by whom relates directly to the place they inhabit. ... As such, culture and creativity are place based entities. This embeddedness results from how creatives use their environs (be it inspiration, geographic remove, reflection) as an active agent of production. This trend runs in direct contrast to the increasing placelessness of production in this hyper-globalised era. (p. 101)

Beyond place specificities influencing artistic/creative work, however, the flip-side is also important: this creative work provides value for the region itself. We are seeing how artistic and creative perspectives on place-specific resources can provide sparks of inspiration and new approaches to exploring, understanding, and building value from the local context. Artistic practices can also influence and expand our thinking about innovation. Artists and other creative workers produce and disseminate artistic and creative products and services that can generate wealth and new ideas. By leveraging place-based distinctiveness for localized development, they can strengthen local identity, attract investment, generate jobs, and build collective momentum (Beaudette, 2021).

CHALLENGES FACED BY CULTURAL AND CREATIVE ACTORS

Despite this potential, practitioners face a range of issues encroaching on their ability to sustain their work. The initial research phase of the IN SITU project included focus group discussions, interviews, site-visits, and cultural mapping exercises with cultural and creative actors in each Lab location. These inputs have revealed how cultural and creative actors in non-urban areas face an array of challenges, including connectivity, whether in terms of transport and infrastructure or links to cultural and creative agents in other regions nationally and internationally; a need for intra-regional networking among cultural and creative agents; and more robust strategic planning and effective policy-making in relation to the rural cultural and creative sector.

More specifically, key issues that have been identified in the research to date includes:

- **Limited recognition and support:** CCIs in non-urban areas often lack adequate government funding, policy attention, and recognition of their economic and social value. This results in underinvestment and limited opportunities for innovation and development.

- **Insufficient networking possibilities:** Challenges include fragmented value chains and limited strategic approaches for linking CCIs with other sectors, hindering cross-sectoral collaborations and growth, economic diversification opportunities, and sustainability of CCI businesses.
- **Limited access to training and capacity building:** Evidence suggests training programmes and opportunities are often lacking, which has significant consequences, including limited skills development, reduced innovation, and limited career advancement.
- **Gender disparities:** Gender inequalities persist in the sector, with women and LGBTQ+ individuals facing limited opportunities and challenges such as underrepresentation in leadership roles, limited access to resources/insufficient support for women-led creative projects, and abuse of power and sexual assault situations.
- **Limited recognition of diverse innovation:** Data analysis shows there is an overemphasis on technological innovation in policies like S3s, marginalising the social, cultural, and organizational innovation crucial in non-urban areas; and insufficient data on non-technological innovation, including the role of collective trademarks in non-urban areas. Altogether, this leads to limited support for socially oriented enterprises and innovations, despite their crucial role in fostering local development and resilience.

Overarching these issues, the IN SITU research teams have encountered data challenges and knowledge constraints. This lack of comprehensive and representative data on CCIs in non-urban regions limits understanding of their impact and unique characteristics, and hinders the development of effective policies. Challenges include limited categories (existing economic classifications fail to capture the full spectrum of CCIs in non-urban areas); a focus on official employment that neglects the crucial role of volunteer work in many non-urban CCIs; and a lack of regional disaggregation that restrains analysis of local variations and disparities. Furthermore, Community-Engaged Research approaches are underutilized, hindering the inclusion of place-based knowledges in academic and policy spheres.

CLOSING OBSERVATIONS

As the IN SITU project evolves, we are bearing witness to a paradigm shift in how we view and imagine peripheral regions as sites of creativity and hubs of cultural production. Established narratives that confine non-urban areas to a passive role in relation to urban centres are making way for new perspectives that recognize them as crucial contributors to social and economic development and innovation. This shift stems from recognizing the unique potentialities that these regions offer and how their combinations of cultural heritage, natural beauty, local practices, and distinctive resources can ignite new commercial and social ventures.

Many insights have emerged during the process of conducting and analyzing cultural mapping results involving focus groups and knowledge-development workshops with cultural and creative actors in the six IN SITU Lab areas, located in Portugal, Ireland, Iceland, Finland, Latvia, and Croatia. Ongoing discussions with cultural and creative actors, individually and in small groups, are integral components of many aspects of the research. This complements and extends beyond the close monitoring and mentoring of the project's case studies as they develop and evolve.

Awareness of both the importance and the complexities of building closer research–practice relations and capturing practice-based knowledge have underpinned this work. Previous reflections on these dynamics in the CREATOUR research-and-application project emphasized three strategic areas: developing spaces for ongoing knowledge exchange, enabling practitioners to take on the role of co-researcher, and fostering researchers' close attention to the application side of the project (Duxbury et al., 2019). That project highlighted how ongoing interactions over time are necessary to build relations, understanding, and trust, while flexibility and responsiveness are vital to address emerging issues. Within IN SITU, these actions are framed within a broader context of Community-Engaged Research which emphasizes establishing long-term relations and collaborative approaches to knowledge-building.

While the challenges for non-urban cultural and creative actors identified remain significant, possibilities can emerge through catalyzing discussions and iterative processes, which can generate opportunities for cultural strategies to build upon previous achievements. This involves close attention to local dynamics and specificities, tensions, confrontations, and negotiations, that is, real actions “on the ground”. It also acknowledges the active involvement of residents in the vitality and enhancement of local culture(s), and the sustained motivations and commitments of key organizations and successive governments. There is also a need to encourage transformative cultural policy and a holistic approach to all public policies that regards culture as a connective tissue for social processes—an experimental, innovative, and creative realm for sustainable and resilient solutions in the public interest of communities located in rural landscapes and ecosystems (Kegler et al., 2024).

Greater attention to the operational realities, challenges, and aspirations of cultural and creative actors in non-urban locations will contribute to unlocking the full potential of CCIs in non-urban regions, better enabling them to act as agents of change, development, and innovation in their communities and territories. The cultivation of enabling milieus and sustainable livelihoods for cultural and creative actors in non-urban areas comprises an important dimension of regional sustainability so culture can actively contribute to territorial development. Cultivating cultural vibrancy, continuance as well as adaptation and change over time are integral aspects of local sustainability. They are embedded in the active processes through which cultures are sustained. The IN SITU project, in interweaving multidisciplinary research findings with knowledge and experiences of practice, aims to generate rich insights and policy proposals that are informed and nuanced by the local realities of the Lab areas, their multifaceted resources as well as challenges, and to reveal opportunities for future development trajectories.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Nancy Duxbury, PhD, is a principal researcher, coordinator of the transdisciplinary research line “Urban Cultures, Sociabilities and Participation”, and principal coordinator of the CREATOUR Observatory at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra. She is the principal investigator of the Horizon Europe project *IN SITU: Place-based Innovation of Cultural and Creative Industries in Non-urban Areas* (2022-2026), and was lead researcher of the CES team in the H2020 project *UNCHARTED: Understanding, Capturing and Fostering the Societal Value of Culture*. Previously, she was principal investigator of *CREATOUR: Creative Tourism Destination Development in Small Cities and Rural Areas* project (2016-2020). ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5611-466X

Paola Di Nunzio is Research Manager of the Horizon Europe project *IN SITU: Place-based Innovation of Cultural and Creative Industries in Non-urban Areas* (2022-2026). She started her career as a Junior Researcher in the project *Atlantic Social Lab*, belonging to the Science, Economy and Society Research Group (NECES) at CES, followed by a period as Project Manager in a local NGO working with migrants, refugees, and asylum seekers, and as Consultant in a SME in the area of innovation and territorial development. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8447-1445

Sílvia Silva is a researcher and executive coordinator of the CREATOUR Observatory at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra. She has held research activities and developed projects, in cooperation and collaboration with public and private organizations. She was the Research Manager of *CREATOUR: Creative Tourism Destination Development in Small Cities and Rural Areas*, and researcher in the projects *UNCHARTED: Understanding, Capturing and Fostering the Societal Value of Culture* and *IN SITU: Place-based Innovation of Cultural and Creative Industries in Non-urban Areas*. She has co-facilitated consultation, ideation, and prototyping sessions in the areas of culture and tourism. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3952-6160

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EMERGENT PLACEMAKING AND CREATIVE PRACTICE: AN IN SITU CASE STUDY FROM GORT ARTS, IRELAND

Mark Justin Rainey
University of Galway
mark.rainey@universityofgalway.ie

Patrick Collins
University of Galway
p.collins@universityofgalway.ie

ABSTRACT

Gort Arts is a recently established creative collective in Gort, Ireland. It is also a case study for the Horizon Europe-funded IN SITU project that explores the role of the creative and cultural sector in the development of non-urban areas of Europe. This article tracks the work of Gort Arts and its varied use of spaces around the town that involve the community as both audience and participants. It suggests that Gort Arts offers an example of what we term *emergent placemaking*, which involves grassroots initiatives and creative practices that initiate a re-imagining of place. This *emergent placemaking* in Gort is set within the wider context of rural development policy in Ireland and the paradigm shift being witnessed by the IN SITU project in which non-urban areas are becoming recognized as important sites of cultural production and creative expression.

KEYWORDS

placemaking, Ireland, local development, non-urban, creativity

INTRODUCTION

On September 20, 2024, the Sonic Strings, a youth orchestra based in Gort, County Galway, Ireland, led a musical procession from the town's Market Square to the former Michael Kennedy Pottery Studio. Outside the studio, in the courtyard, hung paper lanterns made by members of the public during a series of workshops led by local artists. Inside was a multidisciplinary arts exhibition, which was curated by Conor Burke, the co-director of the 126 Gallery in nearby Galway City. Entitled "Beginnings", this was the first exhibition to be hosted by Gort Arts, a recently established arts collective in the town. Leila Doolan, a former national television presenter and producer, opened the exhibition to the gathered audience. The exhibition ran over the weekend with around 20 members of Gort Arts showcasing their work.

This coming together of creative practice and community—across public and vacant spaces, in a single event—is indicative of Gort Arts’ aim to simultaneously support and elevate the work of local creatives, in all their variety; engage with the residents of Gort; and make the arts more visible in the town and the surrounding area. The Gort Arts group was founded in 2022 and currently has 25 members from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and disciplines. The creative practices of the membership range from storytelling and oil painting, to filmmaking and puppeteering, among many other art forms.

Gort Arts is also a case study for the Horizon Europe-funded IN SITU project that explores the role of the creative and cultural sector in the place-based development of non-urban areas of Europe. The project examines the social and economic potential of arts and culture in shaping peripheral regions. IN SITU focuses on six regions in particular: The Azores, Portugal; West Region, Iceland; Galway, Ireland; Rauma and Eurajoki, Finland; Valmiera County, Latvia; and Šibenik-Knin, Croatia. Within these regions, the project supports two case studies in each area to gain insight into the everyday activities, experiences, challenges, and opportunities encountered by artists in non-urban areas as well as their connection to local development. In County Galway this includes Gort Arts.

This paper tracks the ongoing work of Gort Arts one year into its involvement in the IN SITU project. It suggests that Gort Arts offers an example of what we term emergent placemaking. Rather than being part of a “top-down”, formal design process or strategic intervention into the improvement of a locale, emergent placemaking involves grassroots initiatives and informal, community-based practices that offer novel and open-ended uses of space out of which new meanings and possibilities are created. Although distinct from more official forms of placemaking, emergent placemaking is not in opposition to them. Rather, emergent placemaking and its experimental practices can ultimately inform later strategic and formal processes of local development. This paper situates the notion of emergent placemaking and the creative practice of Gort Arts within wider development policy in Ireland, particularly in relation to rural towns and communities. In doing so, it gives account to the process through which Gort Arts was selected as a case study for the IN SITU project and the group’s links between local development and creative practice. This focus on an arts collective in a small town in the west of Ireland is ultimately part of a wider paradigm shift being witnessed by the IN SITU project in how we view peripheral regions as sites of creativity. Established narratives that confine non-urban areas to a passive role in relation to urban centres are making way for new perspectives that recognize them as dynamic areas of cultural production and creative expression.

GORT INSE GAUIRE

Gort is a small town of nearly 3,000 people located in the south east of County Galway, Ireland. Nestled between the ancient geological Karst landscape of The Burren and the Slieve Aughty hills, Gort is also a 20-minute drive to Galway Bay. The town is situated at the intersection of two regional roads which become Church Street and Crowe Street as they run through Gort. The M18 Motorway also passes near the town, connecting Gort to Limerick to

the south and Galway City to the northeast. The main road is lined with an array of shops, takeaways, and cafes. At first glance, Gort may appear to be your typical rural town in Ireland, defined by its crossroads. Yet this would belie its distinct cultural and social history and its unique present.

In the Irish language, the town's full name is Gort Inse Gauire which means "Gauire's island garden" and is a reference to Gauire Aidhne, the seventh century King of Connacht, who had one of his residences on an island in the River Gort which runs through the town. Gort is also home to the Coole Park nature reserve, which was once the estate of Lady Isabella Augusta Gregory who was a folklorist and playwright and key figure in the Irish Literary Revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. J. M. Synge, Sean O'Casey, George Bernard Shaw, W. B. Yeats, and other writers, poets, and artists all spent time at the estate. Between 1921 and 1929, W. B. Yeats took up summer residence in the restored Thoor Ballylee, a medieval tower nearby. Both Coole Park and Thoor Ballylee continue to attract visitors for their natural beauty, history, and connection to key figures in Irish literature.

Gort is also one of the most ethnically diverse towns in Ireland with over one third of its population being non-Irish citizens (Galway County Council & Gort Town Team, 2023, p. 17). In the 1990s, 600 workers arrived from Anapolis, Brazil, to take up employment in the Duffy Meat Processing plant. Although the plant has since closed, the Brazilian community remains part of the social fabric of the town, leading to Gort gaining the moniker of Ireland's "Little Brazil" (Galway County Council & Gort Town Team, 2023, p. 17). Visitors to Gort can stop by the popular Cake By Passion Brazilian bakery or the Real Brasil grocery store in the town centre. They can also visit the Tal Vez Mexican café with its adjacent art gallery while the Gallery Café down the road showcases local artists and has a menu featuring local ingredients. A visitor to Gort may also notice a number of murals around the town. Some are long-standing works of public art, like the stylized map of Gort on Crowe Road, while others, such as those along Kelly's Lane, are remade each year during the Gort Mural Jam organized by the Gort Tidy Towns initiative.

Yet Gort also faces a number of legacy and current issues that are also shared across other rural towns in Ireland, such as the loss of key industries and long-standing vacancies (Galway County Council & Gort Town Team, 2023, p. 19). Indeed, Gort has above average residential and commercial vacancy rates for the Northern and Western Region of Ireland, which has led to concerns over the state of the town's built environment (Northern and Western Regional Assembly, 2022, pp. 7, 14). There are also fears that the primary focus of the town will be as a thoroughway for traffic to and from the motorway (Galway County Council & Gort Town Team, 2023, p. 19). While rural towns such as Gort function as service and transport hubs for their hinterlands, this may attract people to supermarkets and other service points, but no further (Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation, 2025; Galway County Council & Gort Town Team, 2023, p. 19). Establishing a sense of place and bringing the "heart" back to the town centre is therefore essential to

improving Gort as both a place to live and visit (Galway County Council & Gort Town Team, 2023, p. 3).



FIGURE 1. MAP OF IRELAND WITH GORT

Credit: Creative Commons.

SPEAK OUT GORT AND GOVERNANCE IN IRELAND

In 2023, the IN SITU project carried out a series of Speak Outs in its six regions. Speak Outs are public forums where citizens present key concerns regarding local development and discuss the future of their region.¹ They serve to identify local issues and explore solutions and pathways for change. Importantly, in the IN SITU project, Speak Outs are linked to creative practice and following the events there was a call out to artists in each region to respond to the place-based issues that were collectively identified.

A Speak Out in Gort was held on March 23 2023, at the Lady Gregory Hotel. Around 25 people attended and seven speakers gave short presentations to the gathered audience. Topics included flood prevention and sustainability in Gort, active transport, and supporting and

¹ Speak Outs were first used as a form of public engagement during the successful Galway 2020 bid for European Capital of Culture (Varley, 2015). During the IN SITU project, the Speak Out format was expanded across the project's six Lab regions. For more information on the IN SITU Speak Outs, see Fraioli (2023).

enhancing the town's cultural heritage and natural spaces. A common thread running through the presentations was the importance of community organizing and the role community organizations can play in shaping the future of the town. This was particularly important as Gort had been the proposed site of a major biogas plant until the plans were dropped in the face of public opposition. It was seen to have a negative impact on quality of life, transport infrastructure, the public realm, and greenways, including Gort River walk.

Community concerns about local development in rural areas, such as those expressed in the Speak Out, take on considerable weight as Ireland faces a period of unprecedented change with the population expected to increase by 1 million over the next two decades, with 50 percent of this growth expected to take place across the nation's towns and regions (Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation, 2025). In view of this, Project Ireland 2040, which includes the National Planning Framework and National Development Plan, has emphasized the need for a more balanced and place-based approach to planning and development (Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation, 2025). This means tapping into the unique social, economic, and cultural potential of an area rather than relying on top-down and one-size-fits-all policies. Rural development and the renewal of Ireland's smaller towns and villages is a major focus of Project Ireland 2040 as over half the nation's population of 5 million people live outside its urban centres.

Yet despite this place-based turn in national policy, governance in Ireland remains highly centralized, leading to a democratic deficit at a local level (Collins et al., 2021). In Ireland, local authorities lack fiscal and organizational autonomy and the nation has a proportion of locally elected representatives to public of 1:4400 while the equivalent ratios in France and Germany are 1:120 and 1:350 respectively (Collins et al., 2021). Ireland ranks seventh from bottom on the Local Autonomy Index of 57 countries from the EU, Council of Europe, and OECD (Figure 4 in Ladner et al., 2023). This has left a void within local decision-making as local authorities lack the expertise and power to effect change, accentuating the need for creative approaches to place-based transformation (Collins et al., 2021). Following the Speak Out in Gort (and another Speak Out in Galway City), a survey of creative projects was conducted in both the County and City. Gort Arts was one of two projects selected from the respondents as a case study for the IN SITU project (Fraiola, 2023).² As well as supporting local artists, the group was placing community engagement at the forefront of its activities and encouraging creative interventions in the local area through the activation of underused and vacant spaces.

EMERGENT PLACEMAKING AND GORT ARTS

An image of a St. Brigid's Day celebration organized by Gort Arts fills the second page of the Gort Town Centre First Plan (Galway County Council & Gort Town Team, 2023, p. 2). Town Centre First is a Local Government Ireland initiative that encourages towns to identify key

² Full details about the case study selection process can be found in the IN SITU report, *Case Studies* (Fraiola, 2023).

areas for future, sustainable growth by recognising their unique strengths and opportunities. The use of the St. Brigid's Day event as a key image in the document speaks to importance given to cultural and creative expression in enhancing the town centre as well as the contributions made by Gort Arts in this endeavour.

St. Brigid is one of the patron saints of Ireland and the day—1 February—overlaps with Imbolc, the Gaelic festival marking the start of Spring. Since 2023, St. Brigid's Day has been a national holiday in Ireland. In the image used in the document, a crowd of varying ages has gathered in Market Square where a large St. Brigid's Cross has been crafted out of bundles of reed and set alongside the Square's Christ the King statue with the glow of the evening sunset in the background. The crowd will soon be serenaded by the Sonic Strings youth orchestra and entertained by fire-dancing acrobats before the musicians lead a procession down the street. The procession features a young person wearing a St. Brigid's Cloak, followed by members of the public carrying paper lanterns and others wearing traditional Strawboy hats, all of which were made in workshops organized by Gort Arts. The procession will finish at Hennelly's Bar which has an adjacent outdoor area where the event will conclude with storytelling, performance art, and a screening of a documentary which features the stories of local women. In the weeks leading up to and following the event, various shops in the town will display Brigid themed artwork from local creatives in their windows. The annual St. Brigid's Day celebration now serves as a sort of "mini arts festival" in Gort that not only showcases the work of Gort Arts, but also centres on the community, both as participants and audience. Like the Beginnings exhibition that took place in September 2024, the celebration was not confined to a single location or venue but spilled out into the streets and shopfronts, the Market Square, and other vacant and open spaces.



FIGURE 2. BRIGID'S DAY CELEBRATION 2024. GORT, IRELAND

Credit: Andreas Riemenschneider.

Ares Kalandides (2018) writes that both a “sense of place” and “community participation” are at the heart of placemaking (p. 150). In other words, it involves creating a sense of belonging and meaning through the making and re-making of places with the active involvement of citizens. The tradition of placemaking stretches back to Jane Jacob’s writing and activism in 1960s Greenwich Village, New York, and her upholding of neighbourhood life in the face of large-scale urban development (Jacobs, 1961). Placemaking is a multifaceted approach to improving, managing, and enhancing neighbourhoods, towns, and cities that emphasizes the importance of the public realm and everyday spaces such as streets, parks, and squares as well as the activities that take place in them. It also places the community at the front and centre of this process and recognizes the social, cultural, and material attributes of a place as important springboards for change and improvement (Kalandides, 2018; Courage, 2020a, 2020b). Placemaking can be top-down and “strategic” (Courage, 2020b). It can involve local authorities, spatial planners, professional designers, and developers who reimagine a place through planned and researched interventions with the involvement of the community. It can also be “bottom-up” or what we are referring to as *emergent placemaking*. This is the remaking of a place through grassroots initiatives and community-based practices and actions. This can be informal and provisional, but also involve novel and open-ended uses of space. New

meanings and relations are created through “tactical” and citizen-led interventions as well as unprogrammed, ad hoc, and “opportunistic” activities (Courage, 2020b). Emergent placemaking harnesses the inherent multiplicity of a locale and continually re-imagines space through a dynamic interplay of its elements, such as Gort Arts’ use of the square and street for performance and procession, shop windows for the display of art works, and vacant spaces for exhibitions and activities. Crucially, as the incorporation of images from the St. Brigid’s Day celebrations into the Town Centre First document indicates, such emergent placemaking practices can inform later formal improvement processes and strategies.

Alongside these “mini arts festivals” and exhibitions, Gort Arts has also organized a series of seven *Fite Fuaite* workshops with funding from Creative Ireland. These were either open to the public or engaged specific communities such as the residents of the Rosemont retirement home, people accessing the local Cancer Support Centre, and the Brothers of Charity who support adults with intellectual disabilities. Meaning “interwoven” in the Irish language, the *Fite Fuaite* workshops ranged from music and dry paint lessons, to crafting willow lanterns and making eco-art using found objects. Over 80 participants took part in the workshops.

Yet despite Gort Arts becoming a more prominent organization in the life of the town, challenges remain. Gort Arts is a relatively new organization with a growing membership. Running the group, as well as planning and implementing events, exhibitions, and workshops can place undue pressure on members who work on a voluntary basis. There is a risk of burnout for individuals. Members of Gort Arts are recognising the need for strengthened internal structures to ensure that people can step back from roles or step into roles if needed, without the loss of organizational knowledge, particularly with regards to funding opportunities and applications as well as contacts and relationships with local authorities. Two years after its establishment, Gort Arts is in a period of transition as its membership increases and it takes a leading role in the cultural life of the town.

CONCLUSION

During an interview conducted with members of Gort Arts, one member remarked that the town was on the cusp of change and that there was “potential for something new to happen”. He followed this by stating, “Gort Arts can be part of that”. The comment was indicative of a wider enthusiasm about the role arts and culture can play in the future of the town. Gort Arts was an organization established to support, promote, and nurture local artists but in its events, activities, and workshops it has also put into practice new ways of using and imagining spaces in the town, whether through processions and performances in Market Square and along the streets, or the use of shop fronts, open spaces, and vacant buildings for exhibitions and creative practice. Such *emergent placemaking*, which is community-engaged and experimental, is brimming with potential. It serves to deepen a sense of place in Gort and open up new, shared meanings and experiences at a time of wider rural transition in Ireland. The work of Gort Arts also reflects a broader paradigm shift being witnessed by the IN SITU project as rural and non-urban areas are being recognized as important sites of cultural production and creative expression that inform local development and change.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Mark Justin Rainey is a human geographer in the School of Geography, Archaeology and Irish Studies at the University of Galway where he serves as a researcher on the Horizon Europe IN SITU project and is a founding member of UrbanLab Galway. Mark has experience in the cultural and refugee justice sectors and has a PhD in Cultural Studies from the University of London. He has published on the topics of political geography, cultural theory, ethnography and migration. Most recently he has taken up an interest in the geographies of local development. His book, *Restless Justice: Asylum, Homelessness and Volunteering*, was published by Manchester University Press. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8676-0857>

Patrick Collins is an Economic Geographer and Associate Professor in the School of Geography, Archaeology and Irish Studies at the University of Galway. His research interests span broader global scales concerned with foreign direct investment patterns of the world's largest technology companies to the contribution of culture and creativity to place based development in non-urban areas. Pat is co-director of the newly formed UrbanLab Galway, a publicly facing research centre at the University of Galway that seeks to activate the voices and desires of citizens in sketching the future of places. Author of over 30 internationally peer reviewed journal papers, Pat's most recent book, *Galway: Making a Capital of Culture*, was published by Orpen Press. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3613-8912>

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CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A DRIVER OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY FROM ICELAND

Anna Hildur Hildibrandsdóttir

Bifröst University

University of Galway

annah@bifrost.is

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the transformative potential of creative entrepreneurship in rural development through a case study of the “Yule Lads are from Dalir” initiative in Dalabyggð, West Iceland. Originating at Erpsstaðir, a family-run dairy farm, the project leverages local folklore, traditional food production, and community collaboration to revitalize a geographically peripheral region. The study forms part of the EU-funded IN SITU research project, which explores place-based innovation within the cultural and creative industries across non-urban areas in Europe. By tracing Erpsstaðir’s evolution from a dairy farm to a multifaceted cultural and tourism enterprise, this paper illustrates how rural entrepreneurs can harness local heritage, storytelling, and design to generate sustainable economic and cultural value. Central to the initiative is the Yule Lads folklore, reimagined as a community-driven placemaking tool that promotes tourism, strengthens regional identity, and stimulates collaboration among local stakeholders. Supported by the DalaAuður programme under Iceland’s “Fragile Settlements” policy, the project aims to counter rural decline. The findings highlight the significance of multi-skilled rural creatives, community empowerment, and hybrid strategies that combine traditions with innovation, offering valuable insights into policy, resilience, and sustainable rural futures.

KEYWORDS

rural entrepreneurship, rural development, community collaboration, cultural heritage, place-based innovation

INTRODUCTION

This paper tracks the development of the “Yule Lads are from Dalir” project, initiated by the farmers at Erpsstaðir in Dalabyggð, West Iceland. It is one of 12 case studies in the European research project “IN SITU: Place-based Innovation of Cultural and Creative Industries in Non-urban Areas” (2022–2026). This article explores the impact of policies tailored for fragile settlements and highlights community-driven approaches that stimulate innovative ideas to enhance Dalabyggð’s image and overall welfare. By examining Erpsstaðir’s experience, this

study demonstrates how rural creative entrepreneurship, grounded in local heritage and resources, can lead to sustainable economic and cultural revitalization in peripheral regions.

Erpsstaðir farm, nestled in the Dalabyggð district of West Iceland (Figure 1) often referred to as Dalir, is operated by Þorgrímur Einar Guðbjartsson and Helga Elínborg Guðmundsdóttir, an enterprising farming couple (Figure 2). Both born and bred in Dalir, they fulfilled their dream to purchase and run a dairy farm in their home region. They bought the farm in 1997 with a herd of 30 cows.



FIGURE 1. MAP OF ICELAND; THE RED PART OF THE MAP IS DALABYGGÐ

Source: Wikimedia Commons (2019).



FIGURE 2. ÞORGRÍMUR EINAR GUÐBJARTSSON AND HELGA ELÍNBOG GUÐMUNDSDÓTTIR, FARMERS AT ERPSSTAÐIR IN DALABYGGÐ

Photo: Anna Hildur Hildibrandsdóttir.

A few years into their journey, they invested in a milking robot to modernize the farm and successfully doubled their herd. In 2009, when Iceland's dairy quota system led to milk surpluses, they transformed the challenge into an opportunity. Leveraging Þorgrímur's background as a dairy technologist, they began diversifying their production. Rather than letting 200 litres of surplus milk go to waste, they used it to craft their first batches of ice cream with flavours taken from local plants such as dandelion, elderflower, and rhubarb.

Interest in their work increased gradually, especially after they began producing *country skyr*, a traditional Icelandic dairy product known for its high protein content and widespread popularity. While larger producers had shifted toward industrialized methods, this small-scale farm stayed true to traditional practices, using an age-old skyr culture dating back to Iceland's settlement era. This commitment to authenticity gave them a unique position within the Icelandic food landscape. In 2009, Erpsstaðir was invited to participate in the

Matchmaking Farmers and Designers project.¹ Their public profile grew through collaborations with designers, notably with a skyr confection product showcased at Iceland's largest design festival in 2012. Originally a small-batch ice cream producer, Erpsstaðir has grown into an award-winning² popular destination offering a range of dairy products, Icelandic crafts from local people, local foods, and attractions like a petting zoo, farm tours, picnic areas, and playgrounds. Its success reflects the potential of rural entrepreneurship to create value not just through economic growth, but also by making strategic use of local knowledge, traditions, and resources. As Korsgaard et al. (2015) argue, while rural entrepreneurship may not always deliver rapid or large-scale growth, it offers distinct advantages by leveraging localized resources in a way that creates both social and economic value within the community. Erpsstaðir's use of native ingredients, traditional dairy techniques, and engagement with design and tourism demonstrates how a place-based approach can generate a unique and resilient rural enterprise.³

CREATIVE ENTREPRENEURSHIP ROOTED IN HERITAGE

Recent discussions in the field of creative entrepreneurship have emphasized a shift in how we view peripheral regions, recognizing them not just as passive recipients of external economic forces but as active players in driving innovation. Collins and Murtagh (2024) highlight this transformation, arguing that peripheral regions possess unique cultural and natural resources that, when harnessed, can spark innovative business ventures. These areas, often rich in local knowledge and heritage, have become increasingly attractive to entrepreneurs due to their lower operating costs and distinct regional advantages. In this context, Erpsstaðir farm exemplifies how rural areas, by capitalizing on local resources such as traditional Icelandic dairy practices, regional ingredients, crafts, and intangible cultural heritage, can thrive as creative entrepreneurial hubs.

Porgrímur is a storyteller by nature and loves keeping characters from the past alive by naming some of his products after them. He is knowledgeable about Sagas, history, and crafts and creatively explores ways to reignite intangible heritage with his entrepreneurial mindset.

¹ In 2009, the farmers joined the *Matchmaking Farmers and Designers* project, led by the Arts University of Iceland with support from Matís – Food Research, Development, and Innovation. This collaboration led to a skyr chocolate product, showcased at the 2012 DesignMarch festival, boosting their visibility (Matís, 2012, p. 62). Recognised for innovation in food tourism, the creamery later received the 2018 Fjöreggið award from the Icelandic Food and Nutrition Association and the Federation of Icelandic Industries (Harðarson, 2018).

² In 2023, the Minister of Agriculture awarded them the annual Agricultural Prize, praising the farmers' unwavering commitment to farming and their significant contributions to Icelandic agriculture. Their efforts to diversify and develop the farm, including expanding cultivated land, increasing their herd, and introducing dairy product processing, were highlighted. The award also recognized their role in promoting Icelandic food culture and tourism, as they now welcome thousands of visitors each year, offering them a taste of local products made under the *Rjómbúið á Erpsstöðum* brand (Stjórnarráðið, 2023).

³ A survey-based study, first done in 2007 and repeated in 2022, aims to evaluate how the West region is viewed by residents of other parts of Iceland and to help improve the region's appeal as a place to live and visit. From not being known at all in the research done in 2007, Erpsstaðir was mentioned by 4,2% of those responding to the survey in 2022 (Grönfeldt & Karlsson, 2023).

In 2021 he presented an idea to announce Dalabyggð as the land of the Yule Lads in Iceland. The Yule Lads (Íslensku jólasveinarnir) are 13 mischievous figures from Icelandic folklore, originally feared for their naughty behavior but later becoming gift-bringers during Advent. They were first named in 18th-century texts, and in 1932, Jóhannes úr Kötlum, a poet from Dalir, popularized them in his famous poem. Today, they are beloved figures who bring joy to children during Christmas (Björnsson, 2018). Þorgrímur's idea is highly community-oriented and -driven, bringing together various groups, local farmers, artisans, business owners, tourism operators, and the broader community around the shared goal of strengthening the region's economy through its cultural identity. By linking the Yule Lads with local traditions and businesses, the project emphasises collaboration and the use of local resources. Each Yule Lad will be publicly presented with a large column detailing their name and story. Each of the 13 Yule Lads will be adopted by local people located widely distributed, meant to spark the curiosity of visitors to find all of them, creating a district-wide treasure hunt.

Þorgrímur wants to announce Dalir as the Yule Lads' land due to its deep-rooted connection to Icelandic Christmas folklore. Having run an ice cream shop there for 15 years, he noticed tourists' fascination with handcrafted wooden decorations made by a local artist. She initially painted Santa Clauses on driftwood from Siberia, but after seeing visitors' interest, the farmer began sharing the story of Iceland's 13 mischievous Yule Lads. Realizing the potential to showcase Icelandic heritage, he asked the artist to adapt her work to feature the Yule Lads instead, which quickly gained popularity among visitors.

Wanting to preserve this tradition, the farmer conducted further research and consulted an expert in Icelandic Christmas history. He discovered that the Yule Lads' stories had survived largely due to poet Jóhannes úr Kötlum's writings and feared they might fade in modern times. With strong historical ties to Dalir, he now seeks to officially establish the region as the home of the Yule Lads, ensuring their legacy endures while attracting visitors eager to learn about Icelandic folklore.

This initiative highlights the role of the multi-skilled rural and creative entrepreneur as a catalyst for change, recognising their understanding of the value inherent in the landscape and in intangible cultural heritage.

DALIR'S GEO-CULTURAL CONTEXT: DALABYGGÐ, THE MOST NORTHERN DISTRICT IN WEST ICELAND

Dalabyggð is a sparsely populated but geographically vast municipality in Western Iceland. It has a population of 645 people as of January 1, 2025 (Statistics Iceland, n.d.) and covers an area of approximately 2,421 square kilometers. The district serves as a gateway to several other areas, including the Westfjords, Strandir, Húnavatn counties, Borgarnes, and Snæfellsnes. Dalabyggð is primarily an agricultural district, with most of its residents living in rural areas. The only urban center within the municipality is Búðardalur, which has a population of 247 people (Statistics Iceland, n.d.). It is a place where the past remains vividly

present not only in its landscapes and settlement patterns but in its mythos, memory, and storytelling traditions.

At its core, Dalabyggð is a fertile agricultural area whose physical and social landscape has been shaped for centuries by farming. The natural geography, featuring rolling valleys, fjords, and vast grazing lands, has supported generations of rural livelihoods. Yet agriculture is more than economic activity here: it is a cultural identity.

But the cultural significance of Dalabyggð reaches beyond agriculture. This is a region imbued with the living legacy of the settlement period, when Norse explorers and pioneers carved out new lives in uncharted territory. Dalir holds a unique place in this narrative. It was the home of Auður Djúpúðga (the Deep-Minded), a powerful settler matriarch known for her leadership, foresight, and Christian faith. Her journey from the British Isles to Breiðafjörður, and her role in establishing some of the earliest Icelandic communities, highlights how gender, mobility, and belief intersected in the early settlement era.

Dalabyggð's historical importance is further underscored by its connection to some of the most renowned medieval sagas. *Laxdæla saga*, for instance, is deeply rooted in the valleys of Dalir, telling stories of love, betrayal, kinship, and power among the early Icelanders. It is a rich literary source that intertwines local geography with universal human themes. Similarly, *Eiríks saga rauða* and *Vínlandssaga* link the region to broader narratives of exploration and colonial ambition. Eiríkur rauði, who later settled Greenland, and his son Leifur Eiríksson, credited with discovering North America (Vínland), both trace their lineage to this area. Although Dalabyggð is geographically peripheral by contemporary standards, medieval Icelandic sagas and historical accounts position it as a center of cultural and exploratory significance. Rather than viewing places like Dalabyggð as “left behind”, it is possible to frame them as cultural frontiers, rich with stories, traditions, and identities that provide resources for development.

Today, Dalir faces pressing challenges common to rural areas: declining population, limited employment opportunities, and geographic isolation. These factors have placed strain on infrastructure, education, and local industry. However, this adversity also provides an impetus for innovation rooted in the district's heritage.

THE ROLE OF DALAAUÐUR AND THE FRAGILE SETTLEMENT POLICY: CULTIVATING SUSTAINABLE GROWTH IN DALIR

In 2021 Dalabyggð applied for support from “Brothættar byggðir” (e. Fragile Settlements) under the auspices of Byggðastofnun (the Icelandic Regional Development Institute) (Byggðastofnun, 2022), Dalabyggð Municipality, and the Association of Local Authorities in West Iceland (Samtök sveitarfélaga á Vesturlandi). Their application was successful and DalaAuður, a collaborative initiative, was launched in 2022 as a three-year programme with funds to support emergent local development ideas and the possibility of a one-year extension. The programme will thus run to the end of 2026 and aims to revitalize Dalabyggð and its demographic and economic challenges.

The DalaAuður initiative sets out to address key challenges facing fragile rural communities through a holistic and community-driven collaborative approach. Its primary objectives include counteracting persistent population decline in Dalabyggð and strengthening their resilience in the face of demographic and economic pressures. Central to the project is the empowerment of local residents: it encourages grassroots initiative and collective action, while also providing structured opportunities for community members to actively participate in identifying and prioritizing local issues.

To foster this engagement, DalaAuður emphasizes collaborative governance, aligning the efforts of government agencies, municipal authorities, public institutions, and local businesses and residents in shared decision-making processes. This multi-stakeholder cooperation aims to create more inclusive responsive and sustainable development strategies tailored to the unique needs and assets of the region. Through this integrated approach, DalaAuður seeks to lay the groundwork for long-term social and economic revitalization in Dalabyggð.

It uses a “smart adaptation” approach that involves proactively adjusting policies, resources, and services to address the challenges of shrinking and ageing populations. In addition to financial support, the program creates space for locally driven creative initiatives that enhance rural vitality and build community resilience, placing “strong emphasis on citizen panels, which serve to foster local empowerment and strengthen residents’ sense of agency and advocacy” (Nordregio, 2023, n.p.). By recognizing and supporting creative entrepreneurship within this multi-scalar governance framework, rural communities are better equipped to tackle demographic and economic challenges through creative, locally rooted solutions. By fostering a network of creative professionals, Dalaauður has nurtured a dynamic environment where ideas can flourish, resulting in new economic opportunities and a deeper connection to Dalir’s cultural roots. For this case study, a conversation between Þorgrímur, the farmer, and the locally recruited manager of Dalaauður was conducted. The local Dalaauður manager, who acknowledged the potential inherent in the Yule Lads idea, provided confidence and boosted momentum in the development of the project. Subsequently, Dalaauður has provided funding for the project’s development three times and is revealing the first Yule-Lad, Skyr-gámur (e. Skyr-gobbler) at Erpsstaðir on April 27, 2025.

COLLABORATION AND ISOLATION IN RURAL CREATIVE ECOSYSTEMS

One of the paradoxes of rural creative entrepreneurship is the simultaneous need for collaboration and the experience of isolation. While rural entrepreneurs recognize the value of collaboration and actively seek out networks, they often contend with both geographic and professional isolation. This separation can limit access to the broader creative ecosystems that typically flourish in urban centers. In response, rural creatives frequently adopt a proactive approach, working diligently to build and maintain connections, both locally and globally, to sustain and grow their enterprises (Cunningham et al., 2023; Collins & Murtagh, 2024).

In regions where large commercial enterprises and public institutions are scarce, local governments, universities, and community organizations often step in as market organizers and facilitators of creative initiatives. These institutions act as the connective tissue of peripheral creative ecosystems, providing crucial infrastructure, mentorship, and support. Beyond resources, these networks also help foster a sense of belonging, which plays a critical role in alleviating the isolation that rural entrepreneurs commonly face (Cunningham et al., 2023).

Despite their remote settings, rural creatives often draw deep inspiration from their local environments and cultural heritage. Their work reflects the distinct traditions, landscapes, and histories of their regions, lending authenticity and a strong sense of place. Yet these creatives are not confined by geography. Digital technologies now allow them to transcend local limitations and engage with global audiences. Through the internet and social media, rural entrepreneurs can share their work internationally, facilitating cultural exchange that was once out of reach (Collins & Murtagh, 2024).

This combination of local rootedness and global reach is a defining feature of rural creative entrepreneurship. While firmly embedded in their communities, rural creatives can simultaneously engage with wider trends and markets, bridging the rural–urban divide. This global connectivity opens new avenues for collaboration, innovation, and long-term sustainability.

The EU-funded IN SITU research project underscores this potential by exploring the role of cultural and creative industries (CCIs) in non-urban regions across Europe. One of its key insights is that peripheral areas often hold dense layers of intangible heritage, community knowledge, and localized creativity. When supported through thoughtful policy and infrastructure, these assets can foster sustainable development and social cohesion. Similarly, Duxbury (2020) stresses the importance of understanding rural culture as relational and situated, deeply embedded in local identities, ecological knowledge, and collaborative practices that resist extractive economic models.

Creative entrepreneurs in places like Dalabyggð exemplify this embedded, adaptive approach. Rural creatives often need to be more entrepreneurial than their urban peers due to limited institutional infrastructure and fewer market intermediaries (Cunningham et al., 2023). In the absence of large public-sector organizations, production studios, or commercial partners, these entrepreneurs depend on local government, grassroots initiatives, and personal networks. This fosters a distinctive form of cultural and creative entrepreneurship marked by multi-skilling, portfolio careers, and place-based inspiration.

Such entrepreneurialism reflects not passivity but a high degree of agency and autonomy. Rural creatives often value the freedom to maintain artistic integrity while navigating economic constraints. Their careers are shaped by both necessity and conviction, driven by a desire to remain rooted in place while staying connected to broader communities, often through digital platforms (Cunningham et al., 2023).

Still, this hybridity of local embeddedness and global engagement brings its own set of challenges. Geographic remoteness can hinder collaboration and contribute to professional precarity. Yet, as the IN SITU project suggests, with adequate support, including investment in cultural infrastructure, targeted policy, and access to funding, rural creatives can turn isolation into innovation.

In this light, Dalabyggð's intangible cultural heritage emerges as a strategic asset. By investing in cultural institutions (such as a heritage or saga center), supporting place-based creative initiatives, and fostering networks that bridge local traditions with global practices, the region has the opportunity not only to preserve its identity but to shape its future proactively. This approach aligns with broader calls for rethinking regional development, not through the replication of urban models, but by cultivating context-sensitive, culturally driven pathways to resilience and renewal.

CONCLUSION

This case study underscores the transformative power of creative entrepreneurship in rural development. The Erpsstaðir Yule Lads project illustrates how local intangible cultural heritage, when creatively integrated with tourism and agribusiness in a community-oriented way, can revitalize community identity and attract outside interest. Through storytelling and placemaking, such initiatives not only generate economic value but also foster a renewed sense of pride and purpose within rural communities.

The Dalaauður program has played a pivotal role in enabling these developments by supporting networks of creative professionals and promoting collaborative, place-based innovation. Its success has not only redefined the perception of Dalir from a peripheral, under-resourced area to a vibrant cultural destination but also sparked broader discussions on the role of creative and cultural initiatives in rural policy and planning.

Ultimately, this case shows that rural regions with strong cultural assets can harness them for sustainable growth. Continued research is needed to assess the long-term resilience of these initiatives and to explore their adaptability across different rural contexts. As Dalir's experience demonstrates, investment in cultural infrastructure and storytelling can become a cornerstone of inclusive and sustainable rural futures.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTOR

Anna Hildur Hildibrandsdóttir is a PhD student in Geography at the University of Galway, researching entrepreneurial placemaking in peripheral regions with a focus on cultural heritage and innovation. She is an Assistant Professor and Programme Director of a BA study line in Creative Industries at Bifröst University, Iceland. With a background in documentary film and music export, her research integrates audiovisual and participatory methods. Anna is part of the Horizon Europe project IN SITU. ORCID: 0000-0001-9953-3760.

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TOURISM ENTANGLEMENTS IN SMALLER COMMUNITIES: ELEVATING GRASSROOTS PRACTICES TOWARDS REGENERATIVE CULTURAL POLICIES

Nancy Duxbury

Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra
duxbury@ces.uc.pt

Tiago Vinagre de Castro

Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra
tiagocastro@ces.uc.pt

Sílvia Silva

Centre for Social Studies, University of Coimbra
silviasilva@ces.uc.pt

ABSTRACT

In smaller communities, cultural initiatives and tourism are closely connected. In practice, socio-cultural entrepreneurs develop enmeshed culture–tourism activities frequently propelled by ideas and desires concerning local revitalization. Local projects tend to combine local heritage, activation of public space, inclusive public participation, and development of new activities by cultural actors. Such initiatives are often developed without longer-term cultural and tourism strategies, policies, and plans. Analysing culture–tourism initiatives in three smaller communities in Portugal linked to creative tourism, this article assesses how regenerative tourism principles and strategies can be translated into culture–tourism actions at the local level, recognizing that policies to support such initiatives should be multidimensional and cross-sectoral in nature.

KEYWORDS

local regeneration, small communities, culture–tourism initiatives, place-based development, cultural entrepreneurs

INTRODUCTION

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, “regenerative” has become a widely used term across a variety of contexts, often seen as a paradigm surpassing sustainability. However, its meaning and application remain unclear, leading to concerns about misuse and greenwashing. Efforts are

underway to clarify regenerative principles, particularly in the tourism field, which focus on local well-being and revitalization. Regenerative tourism is viewed as a transformative process that fosters holistic regeneration across social, cultural, environmental, and economic dimensions.

Emphasizing community improvement, regenerative tourism intersects with a growing interest in local realities in cultural policy research. Cultural policy is a dynamic process involving multiple stakeholders. It requires a situated approach, fostering cross-sectoral governance and leveraging local knowledge, for nuanced understanding and implementation (Durrer et al. 2023). Local cultural policy, especially in small cities, benefits from acknowledging non-economic resources, fostering participation, and enabling intersectoral collaboration.

In smaller communities, we observe socio-cultural entrepreneurs developing activities that enmesh culture and tourism, propelled by local revitalization ambitions. These initiatives involve local heritage, public space, and inclusive participation but often occur without cultural or tourism strategies, underlining the need for comprehensive aligned policies. This article explores three culture-tourism case studies in three Portuguese small cities—Abrantes, Caldas da Rainha, and Covilhã. These projects, rooted in creative tourism, reflect regenerative principles, enhancing local dynamics through collaboration and community involvement.

The research is guided by two research questions: How do grassroots culture–tourism initiatives contribute to local regenerative dynamics in smaller places? How can local policy frameworks support these cross-sectoral initiatives for local development? This work contributes to bridging theoretical insights and practical applications, emphasizing the importance of cultural sustainability and community engagement in local development strategies.

REGENERATIVE APPROACHES: COMMON PRINCIPLES AND STRATEGIES

As Du Plessis (2012) argues, “dominant sustainability paradigms are reaching the limitations of their usefulness due to their conceptual foundation in an inappropriate mechanistic worldview and their tacit support of a modernization project preventing effective engagement with a complex, dynamic and living world” (p. 7). In its place, new “regenerative” positions have emerged, catalyzed by the COVID-19 pandemic, premised on recovery, resilience, rebuilding, and questioning existing development patterns.

Regenerative tourism focuses on holistic development and a necessary change from current systems of extraction, envisioning living systems that:

facilitate encounters, create connections and develop reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationships through travel practices and experiences, uniquely reflecting tourism places. Regeneration occurs mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually, culturally, socially, environmentally, and economically. (Bellato et al., 2022, p. 1042)

Local place-based culture–tourism initiatives can incorporate all these aspects, nurturing regenerative processes that align with local cultural and natural patterns and development dynamics (Duxbury et al., 2021). The potential of places and communities is rooted in deep understandings of their unique histories and characteristics. Place-based processes in regenerative tourism “reflect, honour and enhance their unique social-ecological systems” (Bellato et al., 2022, p. 1037).

While current perspectives on regenerative tourism are fragmented, in their state-of-the-art review, Bellato and Pollock (2023) identify interconnected core themes aligning with a regenerative tourism paradigm. Bellato et al. (2023) and The Tourism CoLab (2024) are among few efforts to develop frameworks of principles for regenerative tourism. Across the two frameworks, two recurring dimensions resonate with a regenerative approach relevant to local cultural policy: (1) stewardship of the resources of place, identity, and unique potential and (2) collaboration, participation, and inclusion.

METHODOLOGY

Framed by the two cross-cutting dimensions of regenerative tourism scholarship—“stewardship of the resources of place, identity, and unique potential” and “collaboration, participation, and inclusion”—the study examined how these dimensions are embedded and operationalized in the grassroots practices of local cultural agents in small cities.

The research was guided by two research questions:

1. How do grassroots culture–tourism initiatives contribute to local regenerative dynamics in smaller places?
2. How can local policy frameworks support these cross-sectoral initiatives for local development?

The qualitative and exploratory case study research was based on three culture–tourism projects located in three small-cities in Portugal:

- “180 Creative Camp Abrantes”, developed by the Municipality of Abrantes in partnership with Canal 180, in Abrantes;
- “Bazar à Noite”, developed by Associação Destino Caldas/SILOS Contentor Criativo, in Caldas da Rainha; and
- “Wool é Cool/Rota da Lã Educa”, developed by the Wool Museum, in Covilhã.

These cities, peripheral to Lisbon and Porto, have distinct social, economic, and cultural contexts. Prior research within the CREATOUR project facilitated collaboration with local organizations, ensuring field access.

The research presented here is part of broader research within the INTERMEDIA project that included 27 interviews with local cultural and creative agents, 8 fieldwork visits to observe and participate in cultural projects and events, and 6 participatory sessions (2 per city) to map needs, ideate, and prototype community-based projects.

Qualitative data from the interviews and fieldnotes underwent thematic analysis, focusing on grassroots urban regeneration elements such as participation, community engagement, urban transformation, local commerce, heritage promotion, and culture–tourism connections. Through this thematic analysis, key points were identified and organized by the two cross-cutting dimensions. Then, points identified in individual cases were compared to articulate common areas of action or dimensions relating to a regenerative perspective. During this process, emergent issues and lessons learned in practice were also identified and incorporated into the analysis. This analysis anchored reflections for developing local policy that can support such culture–tourism initiatives.

CASE STUDIES

Abrantes is the smallest of the three case study cities, with circa 16,000 inhabitants. Located at the very centre of mainland Portugal, outside the densely urbanized and socioeconomically dynamic coastal area, the city deals with depopulation and difficulties in attracting and retaining people. To address this, the municipality has been investing in cultural infrastructure, such as the new Iberian Museum of Archeology and Art. “**180 Creative Camp Abrantes**” was co-developed by the **Municipality of Abrantes** in partnership with **Canal 180**, the first Portuguese television channel entirely dedicated to culture, arts, and creativity. The annual festival (2013–2018) worked as an experimental arts lab where participants engaged in co-creation projects through artistic training and collaboration using local culture and historical elements as inspiration. Public space was used for workshops, art installations, exhibitions, showcases, and small intimate concerts of emerging artists. The project was linked to urban regeneration and creative tourism, combining the cultural and economic dynamism of the territory with the capacity to attract tourists (Vinagre de Castro et al., 2020). Working on local heritage and identity in public spaces allowed locals and participants to meet each other and follow the work in progress. Each year, the art installations transformed and revitalized public space and created an informal art route. Some local young adults and cultural associations were engaged as volunteers and service providers. Initially, local residents were suspicious of the initiative and did not understand what ~100 young people were doing in Abrantes. By its final years, the local mindset shifted, with residents asking the organizers when the Camp would start and what art projects were expected. However, by that point the project was close to ending its 6-year run.

Caldas da Rainha is a small coastal city with around 30,500 inhabitants, located 90 km north of Lisbon, in the urbanized and densely populated coastal strip. Known for its thermal springs and ceramics, the city intertwines industrial heritage and rural features. Its renowned higher education arts school and a thriving cultural and creative community, supported the designation of a UNESCO Creative City for Crafts and Folk Art in 2019. **Destino Caldas Association (ADC)** is an NGO that works for the attraction and retention of creative human capital in Caldas da Rainha. It also operates **SILOS Creative Container (SILOS)**, a bottom-up creative hub established in a former flour mill that incorporates studios for creatives and cultural spaces. ADC/SILOS organizes cultural, scientific, and entrepreneurial events and has expanded its reach to creative tourism, local commerce activation, and urban regeneration.

Under this umbrella, they run “**Bazar à Noite**” (Night Bazaar), a 2-3 days monthly creative market during summer months plus a Christmas edition in December aiming to give visibility to the many authors and creatives in Caldas da Rainha. The event extends and reinforces the local commerce tradition, activates and revitalizes public space, and promotes the city’s arts and crafts heritage, in particular ceramics and design. At the event, local residents and visitors gather in a warm social ambience, combining trading with small cultural events and street food, all contributing to the revitalization of the historical centre, its community, and the local economy. In parallel, ADC/SILOS has been developing and implementing capacity-building workshops for the local cultural and creative community. The aim is to activate, diversify, and innovate local commerce and to help ensure the survival of creators by providing training in different professional areas such as intellectual property, communication, or business management.

Covilhã is located in the Serra da Estrela mountain range of Portugal, close to Spain, and has circa 33,500 inhabitants. Since the Middle Ages, the wool industry has driven the region and marked the history of the city and the lives of its inhabitants. It has a working-class nature and was once known as the factory city. Today, the textile industry continues to be one of the main economic activities in the region, placing it in a context of living heritage. The city has a public university, its campus integrated in the urban fabric through rehabilitated old industrial spaces, and a dynamic cultural and creative community. In 2021, the city was designated a UNESCO Creative City of Design. The **Wool Museum (MUSLAN)** of the University of Beira Interior is a dynamic cultural institution dedicated to safeguarding, conserving, researching, and disseminating the region’s wool industry heritage. Established in rehabilitated former industrial structures, MUSLAN develops and hosts activities often focusing on social inclusion through the arts. It also organizes several routes and guided tours within the city and the region, showing the city’s cultural DNA through its toponymy, the evolution of the urban structure, and the numerous landmarks that link the territory to wool production and industry (Pinheiro, 2009). MUSLAN recently established a full-year workshop programme named “**Wool é Cool**” (Wool is Cool) related to different techniques and stages of working the wool (such as carding, tainting, weaving, and knitting). Based on this, the “**Rota da Lã Educa**” (the Wool Route Educates) project was designed to link landscape and urban regeneration (the recovery of green areas and public space in the surrounding area of the museum) with engaging students and teachers in learning about the wool heritage and its preservation.

ANALYSIS

Dimension 1 – Stewardship of the resources of place, identity, and unique potential

In the literature, this dimension included identifying and emphasizing the unique potentials of a place, its residents, and its identity; promoting cultural revival and local endogenous knowledges and practices; and acts of stewardship for the place and its culture. Based on key factors identified in each case, and considering the three cases together, five areas of action

stand out as collectively contributing to revitalizing local resources, place identity, and building potential:

- Heritage stewardship;
- Encouraging place-inspired creative work;
- Building the capacity of locally-based creators;
- Reinforcing connections to place through tourism and a local economy approach;
- Using and improving public space.

Local actions focusing on heritage stewardship balance material and immaterial aspects, ranging from preservation and promotion to training on techniques and fostering intentional dialogues between tradition and contemporary expressions. These initiatives often lead to new place-inspired creative work strengthening community identity and local culture, while contributing to the continuity and evolution of local heritage. Efforts also prioritize building local capacities, such as empowering young creators, supporting local entrepreneurs, and fostering collaboration through creating frameworks for co-creation and community-building activities. Training programmes help develop skills across the community, and may include both residents and visitors.

A central element is strengthening connections to place through active immersion into the local context, such as intensive cultural tourism or creative participation programmes. This includes activities that highlight local heritage, promote local businesses, and encourage longer stays to foster social experiences and a greater knowledge of the place. Using, revitalizing, and potentially transforming public spaces emerges as a core part of these actions, either through urban regeneration projects or by creating art installations that iteratively transform the city's image. Actions in public spaces enable encounters and encourage interactions between creators and other members of the community in everyday settings, generating lasting traces of the new uses of a place which carry forward in memory.

Dimension 2 – Collaboration, participation, and inclusion

In the literature, this dimension included participative approaches, emphasizing inclusion, fostering a sense of community, and promoting collaborative actions to evolve and enact regenerative approaches, catalyse transformations, and contribute to local development. In each case study, collaboration, participation, and inclusion are core values that permeate the lead organization and how each functions within its community. Within the projects, intentional actions engage local creators, strengthen networks, and connect with external visitor-participants. Considering the broader local community, significant efforts to involve children and youth, and to foster intergenerational knowledge exchange are evident.

Regular collaboration between cultural organizations and other sectors helps foster a spirit and habit of cooperation and sharing limited resources. Local creatives are showcased through workshops, exhibitions, and other roles, with opportunities for young creators to build skills and promote their work. Moreover, these projects foster community building among local creators and enable networking between local creators, other community groups, and visitor-participants from outside.

Projects encourage intergenerational engagement, with older and younger generations sharing knowledge and experiences, and gaining new perspectives. Beyond workshop participation, local young people and associations are engaged in organizing the event itself. Fostering a sense of connection and ownership towards their cultural roots raises awareness and contributes to safeguarding and stewardship of local heritage. For example, former textile workers and fashion students in Covilhã collaborate in creative tourism, while in Caldas da Rainha, volunteers made flower crowns for market vendors, symbolizing unity between different social groups.

Public spaces play a key role by offering venues for gathering, learning, co-creation, and community engagement. Free outdoor events like workshops, concerts, and guided tours provide open access and create opportunities for the broader community's participation. Keeping actions porous and "in public view" means residents encounter activities in public places and may recognize project connections with the place and its heritage(s), all contributing to enhancing a sense of ownership and pride of place.

LESSONS LEARNED TOWARDS POLICY DEVELOPMENT

While cultural policy approaches that focus on small cities and rural areas are emerging, cross-sectoral connections, participatory place-based approaches, and the ways in which local transformations unfold and place-specific resources influence development tend to be neglected. With this in mind, four themes of lessons learned in the implementation of culture-tourism actions resonate:

1. Establishing a hub for collective energies to collaborate – Investing in a strategically chosen "flagship project" can launch a year-round, community-driven cultural programme with smaller complementary initiatives. These projects can promote collaboration among organizations and foster cross-sectoral cooperation, reinforcing their roles in the community, extending their scope of action, and enhancing resource sharing. A well-designed local strategy aggregates and articulates culture, tourism, and other activities, preventing scheduling overlaps. This approach requires inclusive governance and decision-making mechanisms that actively engage and encourage cultural organizations to collaborate, fostering collective participation.

2. Community engagement – This research found that fostering deeper and long-term community participation requires regular engagement. Strategic actions can gradually shift community mindsets and collaboratively address pragmatic questions and shared concerns. Involving the broader community enhances the value of activities, while projects blending tradition and modernity strengthen intergenerational connections. Actions must be context-specific, recognizing the unique specificities of local residents, their histories, motivations, and aspirations. Strategies should aim to empower locals, "refresh" local identities, value diverse cultural perspectives, and disperse benefits widely among community residents.

3. Time, space, and continuity – In a smaller city, a "regular" flow of cultural activities throughout the year must be planned and nurtured by combining flagship projects with

smaller activities, providing diversity, vibrancy, and tackling seasonality. Local policy and programmes need to ensure adequate time for projects to be designed, implemented, improved, and consolidated. Projects/activities need to be sustained over time to keep an evolving momentum and build capacity. Established cultural organizations with continuity (e.g., museums) enable long-term planning, and accumulative knowledge, relationships, and actions. These institutions can be collaborative hubs for smaller cultural organizations and professionals.

4. Legacies – The analysis revealed that a long-term planning and development mindset is fundamental. Projects, by nature, are not permanent structures and will eventually conclude; however, they can also evolve into an array of spin-off initiatives. In the case of flagship projects with a large local impact, it is crucial to consider alternatives in case a major project ends, for the local cultural ecosystem and a city's attraction capacity. A robust cultural development process implies a skilled and prepared cultural community. Capacity building programmes for local residents could encourage accessible upskilling and build inter-sectoral mediation skills. Accessible public spaces and inclusive locations should be used for activities to foster encounters. A community's connections to specific places can be strengthened and diversified by making public a plurality of experiences, perspectives, and stories, which can inspire and inform new projects and activities.

CLOSING REMARKS

Addressing the relative absence of culture in regenerative scholarship, this study examined the roles of cultural actors and actions within regenerative development. Informed by the two dominant frameworks for regenerative tourism (Bellato et al., 2023; The Tourism Colab, 2024), two cross-cutting dimensions were identified as relevant to local cultural policy and practice: “stewardship of the resources of place, identity, and unique potential” and “collaboration, participation, and inclusion”. Extending beyond general principles, this study sought to identify what regenerative approaches look like in practice, contributing to research on cultural work in small cities, particularly about the way local place-based transformations unfold, how collaborative spaces can be created, and how specific resources of “place” influence development trajectories.

How do grassroots culture–tourism initiatives contribute to local regenerative dynamics in smaller places? In the case studies examined, culture–tourism projects in small cities can contribute to regenerative micro-processes (urban, social, cultural, environmental, and/or economic) within the broader community. These practices can also actively foster a more vibrant and interconnected local cultural ecosystem. Through collaborative actions and strategies, cultural agents adopt “transformational roles that contribute to the regeneration of themselves, places and communities” (Bellato et al., 2022, p. 1037). Stewardship of the resources of place, identity, and unique potential is realized through five areas of action: heritage stewardship, encouraging place-inspired creative work, building the capacity of locally-based creators, reinforcing connections to place through tourism and a local economy approach, and using and improving public space. Permeating values of collaboration,

participation, and inclusion are operationalized in projects as intentional actions to engage local creators, build and strengthen local networks, and connect with visitor-participants. In the broader local community, there are significant efforts to involve children and youth, and to foster intergenerational knowledge and skill exchanges. However, local policy frameworks that could nurture these initiatives for long-term community benefit are often absent.

How can local policy frameworks support these cross-sectoral initiatives for local development? Inspired by regenerative tourism as an approach focused on stewardship of place and its resources, we envision an integrated approach involving holistic and long-term development perspectives that explicitly aim to provide value and well-being to the broad local community, nurture cultural vitality, and encourage care and stewardship of place. These local regenerative policies acknowledge the inherent multidimensionality and cross-sectoral nature of effective cultural strategies and the need for new development models.

This research is exploratory and still needs much refinement. More conceptual attention is required to advance a deeper understanding of culture within regenerative thinking. More experimentation is also needed in local cultural policy and practice to intentionally support culture–tourism initiatives within a cross-sectoral, ecosystemic approach. This should be accompanied by research to monitor and assess development processes, organizational collaborations, and impacts. Comparative research in different locations and contexts, as well as longitudinal experiments that can track changes and adjustments over time, would also be valuable.

Overall, community inclusion and collective investment in a regenerative approach must be emphasized, coupled with policy frameworks that prioritize the holistic sustainability and well-being of the community. Cross-sectoral collaboration is activated through close and ongoing dialogue, and this is also true between policymakers and local agents. Grassroots agents are attuned to challenges and realities of change-making in the local context, and can reinforce participatory processes to diagnose and design solutions for local issues. In Portugal, smaller municipalities have only recently begun designing local cultural policies and strategic plans for culture; indeed, the majority of the 308 municipalities do not have a specifically designed plan. Thus, a cross-sectoral policy perspective linking culture and tourism for local development could be embedded within the foundations of future policy-making.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Nancy Duxbury, PhD, is a principal researcher, coordinator of the transdisciplinary research line “Urban Cultures, Sociabilities and Participation”, and principal coordinator of the *CREATOUR Observatory* at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra. She is principal investigator of the Horizon Europe project *IN SITU: Place-based Innovation of Cultural and Creative Industries in Non-urban Areas* (2022–2026), and was lead researcher of the CES team in the H2020 project *UNCHARTED: Understanding, Capturing and Fostering the Societal Value of Culture*. Previously, she was principal investigator of *CREATOUR: Creative Tourism Destination Development in Small Cities and Rural Areas* project (2016–2020). ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5611-466X

Tiago Vinagre de Castro is a cultural manager, urbanist and researcher with 20-year experience in the cultural sector as producer, manager, creator and trainer. Cofounder of the NGO 4iS Inovação Social where he develops urban transformation and community development projects through culture and participation. He’s a researcher and executive coordinator of the *CREATOUR Observatory* at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, in the fields of creative tourism, culture, local development and urban regeneration. He’s a PhD candidate in Sociology – Cities and Urban Cultures with the research project “INTERMEDIA – Cultural intermediaries in urban regeneration in small cities”. ORCID ID: 0000-0001-6602-4054

Sílvia Silva is a researcher and executive coordinator of the *CREATOUR Observatory* at the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra. She has held research activities and developed projects, in cooperation and collaboration with public and private organizations. She was the Research Manager of *CREATOUR: Creative Tourism Destination Development in Small Cities and Rural Areas*, and researcher in the projects *UNCHARTED: Understanding, Capturing and Fostering the Societal Value of Culture* and *IN SITU: Place-based Innovation of Cultural and Creative Industries in Non-urban Areas*. She has co-facilitated consultation, ideation, and prototyping sessions in the areas of culture and tourism. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-3952-6160

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HERITAGE, ARCHITECTURE, AND CITIZEN MOBILIZATION: COMMUNITY- ENGAGED RESEARCH APPROACHES

COLLABORATIVELY MANAGING A DIFFERENT KIND OF HERITAGE: ARQUITECTURA AQUI IN PORTUGAL AND SPAIN

Ricardo Costa Agarez

ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon

ricardo.agarez@iscte-iul.pt

ABSTRACT

The Faro Convention (2005) entailed a more comprehensive understanding of what can be regarded as heritage in its many forms, including those built-environment related. Beyond the art-historical bias towards productions by and of the elites, its preconceived dichotomies and hierarchies, the output of everyday processes is essential in understanding the built frame of our lives, unexceptional yet meaningful. Its values combine materiality and aesthetic intent with layers of collective and individual memory and experience that determine its relevance. To address this output, its present and future pertinence, a new knowledge base is needed where scientists and citizens come together. The initiative *Arquitectura Aqui* tests such premises and asks how architectural and urban design histories can empower local communities to participate in decision-making processes regarding the upkeep, reuse, and appropriation of collective-use facilities designed and built in Portugal and Spain between 1939 and 1985, advancing an exercise of knowledge cocreation that weaves together the life of everyday structures, as witnessed by those who use(d) them, and a solid account of their commissioning, funding, design, and construction processes. Just as these structures were the result of (central and local) collective efforts to mitigate basic needs, we seek forms to collectively acknowledge their importance in improving community life, its sustainability, and social resilience.

KEYWORDS

architecture, collective-use facilities, citizen history, sustainability, public buildings

The fire brigade station in Alijó (Figure 1) is what could be dubbed an “invisible building”. Although sited in a central position in this small winemaking town in north Portugal, the building is characterized by a discreet design that announces, rather than disguises, the modesty of the initiative and its hard-earned materialization. Its volume is mostly taken up by a large multipurpose hall, with a clear front access from the town’s main thoroughfare; fire engines and other technical facilities are kept to the back of the plot. The hall has remained closed since the beginning of this century, when a more up-to-date, better equipped auditorium was built by the municipality, and after around two decades of service – with popular, occasionally sold-out cinema, music and theatre performances; recent instances of public reuse included catholic Sunday mass during the COVID-19 pandemic, while the fire brigade uses it to store vintage vehicles.



FIGURE 1. FIRE BRIGADE STATION IN ALIJÓ, 2023

Source: Ricardo Costa Agarez.

It is a sturdy, no-nonsense structure, typical of 1970s everyday architecture and dotted with subtle design details. Its demolition seems spurious, considering not only its material value and relatively short use life but also its significance for Alijó's community life: its architectural value might be disputed, and locals and visitors resent its run-down presence, but its historical role in providing the town with a modicum of cultural activities, when little else was available, is widely acknowledged. Today, as the hall's fortune is at stake, any decision regarding its maintenance, repurpose, or replacement must consider these factors and be participated by the community—a shared process that starts with the act of collecting information on the building's history and use life, and making it accessible, publicly available, legible, and appropriable by citizens at large.

What can we—those of us in academia who think of ways to extend the reach of scholarly work and strengthen its social relevance—contribute to such process?

The initiative *Arquitectura Aqui – Community, Proximity, Action: Collective-Use Facilities in Portugal and Spain 1939–1985*¹ (online at <https://arquitecturaaqui.eu>) was devised to seek answers to the following questions:

1. How can architectural and urban history be put at the service of more sustainable and resilient communities?
2. How can a novel kind of built environment history be collectively created, together with the communities and not only for them?

Concurrently, we aim to promote:

- a. A more sustainable built environment – with Retain & Reuse initiatives put before new-built ones and thus extend the “use life” of buildings and ensembles.
- b. More resilient communities – fostering well-informed, sustained community participation and engagement in built environment management actions.
- c. Stronger architecture and urban design – more socially relevant, closer to everyday life, more pertinent, more “complete”.

Our premise is that we all reside, work, study, convalesce, and enjoy ourselves in buildings we know little about. If we have better knowledge, and if this is collectively built—by those who research the buildings’ history and architecture together with those who created and experience them—we might contribute to better informed decisions on which structures to maintain, reuse, and replace. Today, as dwindling available resources, material and economic, must be rationally employed, repurposing and revalorising existing buildings is a priority over new built. These largely sturdy structures were the outcome of collective, community efforts across decades, expressing essential needs, and deserve to be better known to continue to serve all, with quality and dignity.

Arquitectura Aqui supports sustainable, resilient local communities with solid knowledge about the buildings and ensembles where our daily life unfolds. We follow the parallel, shared history of the Iberian countries from dictatorship to democratic transition and European integration, specifically looking at proximity structures devoted to welfare and medical care (health centres, homes), general and social services (council facilities, community centres, market halls), minimum-rent housing, security (fire and police stations), education (schools, creches), culture and leisure (museums, libraries, sports halls), and cooperative farming facilities. Originating in local and central initiatives, launched and supported by public and private entities with state technical support and funding, these structures often drew on non-governmental, philanthropic aid from foundations, groups, and individuals with strong community links.

¹ *Arquitectura Aqui* is an output of the research projects *ReARQ.IB – Built Environment Knowledge for Resilient, Sustainable Communities: Understanding Everyday Modern Architecture and Urban Design in the Iberian Peninsula (1939–1985)*, funded by the European Research Council (Starting Grant GA949686) and hosted by ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon, Portugal (PI Ricardo Costa Agarez); and *The Architecture of Need: Community Facilities in Portugal 1945–1985*, funded by Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (PTDC/ART-DAQ/6510/2020).

Arquitectura Aqui integrates detailed information and critical thinking on such objects, key in potential management and transformation initiatives, while advancing scientific and historical knowledge on the architecture and urban design in Portugal and Spain and reinforcing the social relevance and pertinence of these fields. Our platform combines knowledge drawn from the archives with the memories and experiences of stakeholders, creators and users, testimony to generations of living histories, co-creating a new narrative, plural and shared, to empower appreciation, maintenance, and change.

In short, our answer involves:

1. The creation of a platform – also in the sense of “an opportunity to voice one's views or initiate action”² – as an open laboratory for the collective production and dissemination of knowledge, accessible to different publics and constantly expanded.
2. The development of storytelling devices that combine our capacity to “read” the built environment as thinkers (i.e., researching, analyzing, structuring a discourse, and writing about buildings and ensembles) with the capacity of community members to “read” (experience) and elaborate on it, in ways other than those we are used to.

In Alijó, we find these premises at work, and one example of our pact with communities:

- a. Researchers, with their privileged access to primary sources and preparation to translate them into a relatable discourse, sift through (mostly previously unseen) archival documents, literature, visual material, and photographic surveys, and synthesize information about the commissioning and construction stages, made readily available and user-friendly.
- b. Community members, knowing from experience what we cannot possibly find in those sources, contribute a sense of what happened in, and to, the building since its opening, while depicting the social, economic, and cultural histories of the community since the mid-twentieth century.

The result is a reconstruction of the facility's social role, other than its architectural and urban meanings. Borne out of sheer necessity—after 50 years in temporary facilities and two failed, unachieved projects, in the 1940s and 1960s—the fire station was designed by a local architect almost pro-bono, co-funded by the State (as “one of the main aspirations” of Alijó citizens, with cultural and recreational purposes “where no facilities may be used to this end”³) and built over three stages, concluded in 1983 (Ruivo & Herrera, 2025c). Our co-created story shows it as the outcome of combined efforts and the site of relevant community service over decades.

Other stories speak of essential needs, collective efforts, public service, and spontaneous uses. In Bragança, a now-disused set of 1950s winemaking cooperative facilities (Figure 2)—a marker of former local economic strength—doubled as a neighbourhood playground outside working hours (Ruivo & Herrera, 2025a). In Montalegre, an emergency prefabricated

² Oxford Dictionary of English, accessed 22 January 2023.

³ Direcção de Urbanização de Vila Real, “Construção do Quartel dos Bombeiros Voluntários de Alijó” Processo n.º 434/MU/67”, assessment 101/76, 5 March 1976. AHOTDU, 434/MU/67.

1970s housing scheme—part of a national post-revolution rehousing initiative with north European development aid—still stands, the strength of its original comforts worn down by time and ownership (and maintenance) disputes between central and local authorities (Ruivo & Herrera, 2025b). In Miranda do Douro, the local and regional benefits of a state-of-the-art hospital were part of a quid-pro-quo for installing a national-interest hydroelectric power plant in the 1950s, whose construction workforce incurred life-threatening lung conditions. Such provision has since been narrowed to continuing and elderly care, responding to the needs of a predominantly aging, substantially diminished population (Ruivo & Herrera, 2025d).



FIGURE 2. WINEMAKING COOPERATIVE FACILITIES IN BRAGANÇA, 2023

Source: Ricardo Costa Agarez.

Collective-use facilities—condensers of collective life, products of decades-long joint endeavours—can be potent vehicles for a better-informed, more knowledgeable citizenry to advance its living standards, capable of defending its shared heritage from the pressures of liberal drift and political ignorance.

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NOTE ON CONTRIBUTOR

Ricardo Costa Agarez, currently Senior Researcher at ISCTE – University Institute of Lisbon, is an architect and architectural historian, specialized in the history and theory of 19th- and 20th-century cities and buildings, national and regional identities, knowledge dissemination and the circulation of forms, ideas and techniques, housing and public architecture and the architectural culture in bureaucracy. He is Principal Investigator of the ERC Starting Grant project *ReARQ.IB – Built Environment Knowledge for Resilient, Sustainable Communities: Understanding Everyday Modern Architecture and Urban Design in the Iberian Peninsula (1939-1985)*, and the FCT-funded project *ArchNeed – The Architecture of Need: Community Facilities in Portugal 1945-1985*. ORCID ID: 0000-0002-1170-6661

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UMA ESCOLA ABERTA À CIDADE: REPENSAR OS ESPAÇOS DO LICEU DE COIMBRA

Gonçalo Canto Moniz

Centro de Estudos Sociais, Departamento de Arquitetura, Universidade de Coimbra
gmoniz@ces.uc.pt

João Mendes Ribeiro

Centro de Estudos de Arquitetura, do Território ao Design, Departamento de Arquitetura, Universidade de Coimbra

Carolina Coelho

Centro de Estudos Interdisciplinares, Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação, Universidade de Coimbra

Pedro Brígida

Centro de Estudos de Arquitetura, do Território ao Design, Departamento de Arquitetura, Universidade de Coimbra

Duarte Miranda

Centro de Estudos de Arquitetura, do Território ao Design, Departamento de Arquitetura, Universidade de Coimbra

Valentina Leal Gutiérrez

Centro de Estudos de Arquitetura, do Território ao Design, Departamento de Arquitetura, Universidade de Coimbra

Joana Correia

Centro de Estudos de Arquitetura, do Território ao Design, Departamento de Arquitetura, Universidade de Coimbra

António Rochette

Centro de Estudos Interdisciplinares, Faculdade de Letras, Universidade de Coimbra

Luís Alcoforado

Centro de Estudos Interdisciplinares, Faculdade de Psicologia e Ciências da Educação, Universidade de Coimbra

RESUMO

Os espaços educativos modernos enfrentam o desafio de se adaptarem aos métodos contemporâneos de aprendizagem, às transformações urbanas e às alterações climáticas. Projetado em 1930, o Liceu de Coimbra funciona como escola desde 1936. Em 2023, iniciou-se a sua renovação, primeiro como projeto de investigação e depois como projeto profissional e como projeto pedagógico com os estudantes do Departamento de Arquitetura da Universidade de Coimbra. O processo de intervenção e investigação decorre em duas fases. A primeira fase, nos três meses iniciais, envolveu a participação da comunidade, convidada a refletir sobre: (1) a relação social com a cidade através de mapeamentos históricos; (2) a avaliação dos usos atuais e potenciais; (3) as ligações físicas com o tecido urbano. Na segunda fase, estes resultados foram traduzidos em três linhas de projeto: (1) acessibilidades escola-cidade e infraestruturas; (2) restauro da estrutura original do edifício, removendo ampliações e valorizando o património modernista; (3) valorização dos espaços exteriores e sua relação com os espaços de aprendizagem. A abordagem pedagógica no atelier de projeto do mestrado integrado em Arquitetura pretendeu explorar uma reflexão crítica sobre o projeto de participação e reabilitação, procurando enfatizar a abertura da escola à cidade. Este artigo apresenta os resultados intermédios deste processo de investigação pelo projeto, que concilia a intervenção no património moderno com a participação cidadã.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

arquitetura moderna, espaços de aprendizagem, projeto participado, reabilitação, BIM

INTRODUÇÃO

Os edifícios escolares modernos concebidos durante o período funcionalista pretendiam desenvolver uma nova forma que seguisse a função, de acordo com a pedagogia progressista. Os projetos para as escolas foram os primeiros a explorar os princípios modernos, a partir da experiência racionalista do século XIX, através da inclusão de novos espaços pedagógicos como laboratórios, ginásios, piscinas, valorizando também a cultura higienista.

Atualmente, muitas destas escolas ainda estão em funcionamento, mas necessitam de ser renovadas em termos arquitetónicos e educativos, devido à degradação das condições materiais e à inadequação das instalações educativas. A reutilização destes edifícios escolares modernos é dificultada ora pelo seu carácter funcional, o que limita a adaptação às necessidades educativas contemporâneas, ora pela sua fragilidade construtiva, devido às soluções inovadoras e experimentais empregues, como a impermeabilização de coberturas planas.

Estes edifícios foram construídos em zonas urbanas modernas, inseridas em bairros residenciais e desempenharam um papel social importante, funcionando como centros da comunidade. Hoje, são mais do que instalações educativas e tornaram-se parte da vida quotidiana das cidades, sendo utilizadas por gerações que desenvolveram um sentimento de pertença à instituição, à arquitetura e ao mobiliário.

Por conseguinte, é necessário envolver a comunidade educativa e outros intervenientes-chave no processo de reabilitação destes edifícios, a fim de se proceder a uma renovação arquitetónica e pedagógica que seja compreendida e abraçada pela comunidade. O projeto participado com uma abordagem colaborativa torna-se cada vez mais relevante quando os edifícios têm uma dimensão social, uma vez que vários intervenientes podem contribuir com o seu conhecimento e experiência.

ESCOLA SECUNDÁRIA JOSÉ FALCÃO (1930-2025) – HISTÓRIA E TRANSFORMAÇÃO

O início do século XX em Portugal foi marcado pela alteração do panorama dos edifícios escolares nacionais, que acompanhou a tendência vanguardista europeia. A implantação do novo regime político e a abertura da cultura arquitetónica ao Modernismo criou uma nova consciência sobre os edifícios escolares. Assim, a Junta Administrativa do Empréstimo para o Ensino Secundário, formada para conduzir a modernização do parque escolar nacional, lançou em 1930 uma série de concursos públicos para a conceção de novos liceus. (Moniz, 2007).

A Escola Secundária José Falcão, inicialmente construída como Liceu Dr. Júlio Henriques, resulta desta série de concursos que deu a oportunidade a um grupo de jovens arquitetos de apresentarem as suas propostas modernistas inspiradas nas referências europeias, associadas a uma aprendizagem racionalista. A equipa dos arquitetos Carlos Ramos, Adelino Nunes e Jorge Segurado venceu o concurso que teve lugar em 1930 com a proposta Santa Cruz, aludindo ao primeiro convento que funcionou como escola (Figura 1).

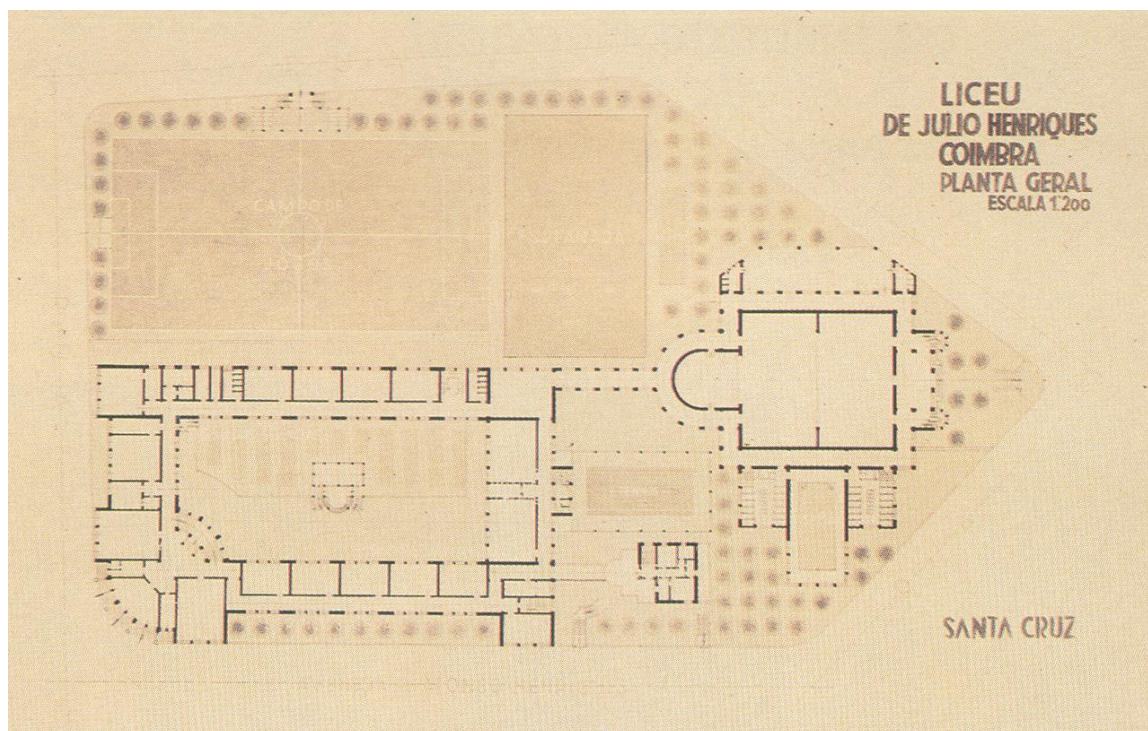


FIGURA 1. PROJETO SANTA CRUZ, LICEU JÚLIO HENRIQUES, COIMBRA, CARLOS RAMOS, JORGE SEGURADO, ADELINO NUNES, 1930

Fonte: Arquivo do arquiteto Carlos Ramos.

O projeto é implantado num quarteirão de uma área de expansão da cidade de Coimbra, com frente para a avenida Afonso Henriques. O terreno apresenta um declive acentuado o que leva os arquitetos a estabilizar o terreno em plataformas e a organizar o programa em três edifícios autónomos – edifício de aulas, pavilhão desportivo e casa do reitor. O edifício de aulas desenvolve-se em torno de um pátio com um acesso pontual para os alunos, que tinha como principal função providenciar boas condições de ventilação e iluminação. A localização das salas é racional. Ao longo das alas poente e nascente localizam-se as salas de aula normais, com iluminação a nascente. Nos topos Norte e Sul, as salas de aula excecionais, como laboratórios e salas de desenho.

Os longos corredores revestidos a azulejos e mosaico hidráulico seguem os princípios higienistas da época, assim como os vãos de grande dimensão e de abertura para o exterior, para permitir a ventilação de todos os espaços. Os espaços de transição são marcados por rótulas, sendo o átrio de entrada o de maior proeminência, localizado num volume de exceção, de forma circular.

O pavilhão desportivo tem acesso independente à rua e está ligado ao edifício principal por uma galeria. Este edifício integra o ginásio principal, uma piscina e os balneários, em

articulação com os espaços exteriores também dedicados a atividades desportivas. O edifício da Casa do Reitor também está ligado por uma galeria ao edifício principal e tem acessos e jardim independentes.

Na década de 1940, Carlos Ramos projeta e constrói um jardim público na frente poente do edifício para fazer a ligação urbana ao Liceu Feminino, que não foi construído.

Apesar de estar a funcionar ininterruptamente há 89 anos, os edifícios sofreram quatro grandes alterações que adaptaram a sua estrutura à necessidade de aumentar o número de alunos. A primeira aconteceu logo em 1938, com a ampliação de um terceiro piso das alas Sul e Poente do edifício principal. A segunda transformação aconteceu nos anos 1960, no Pavilhão Desportivo. A piscina foi substituída por um ginásio interior e por um auditório e o recreio exterior foi substituído por salas de aula e novos balneários. A terceira transformação aconteceu na década seguinte, com a substituição de toda a caixilharia de madeira dos edifícios por caixilhos de alumínio. A quarta transformação traduziu-se na ampliação dos espaços da cantina e balneários no ala poente do Pavilhão Desportivo.

PROJETO PARTICIPADO

ESTADO DA ARTE

Desde o final da década de 1960, o projeto participado tem desafiado os arquitetos a repensar as práticas de conceção arquitetónica numa abordagem colaborativa com a comunidade local. Em 1971, Giancarlo de Carlo apelou a uma arquitetura de participação na qual “architecture will abandon the authoritarian position and will become part of the people, and people will defend architecture” (De Carlo, 2015, p. 78). De facto, De Carlo criticava os arquitetos modernos que produziam edifícios belos sem considerar as necessidades das pessoas, aplicando programas racionais baseados em lógicas técnicas. Esta perspetiva foi ampliada por Herman Hertzberger que reivindicava uma maior abertura das escolas à cidade, considerando que a escola é uma micro-cidade e a cidade é uma macro-escola (Hertzberger, 2008).

Assim, há hoje uma oportunidade de reabilitar o edifício de acordo com a experiência dos utilizadores e as suas reais necessidades. O projeto participado para a reabilitação dos edifícios escolares modernos destaca este desafio ao colocar a arquitetura moderna e contemporânea em diálogo com a educação, mas também com o espaço urbano.

METODOLOGIA

O Projeto participado e projeto CoReD

No Departamento de Arquitetura da Universidade de Coimbra (DARQ-UC), foram desenvolvidos dois projetos europeus financiados pelo programa Erasmus com o objetivo de criar métodos e ferramentas para responder a esses desafios, envolvendo a comunidade

escolar no processo de projeto, nomeadamente o projeto RMB – Reuse of Modernist Buildings (coordenado pela Universidade de Ostwestfalen-Lippe) e o projeto CoReD – Collaborative Redesign with Schools (coordenado pela Universidade de Newcastle). Este último, envolvendo a mesma equipa de investigadores, forneceu a base de conhecimento para o processo de participação implementado na Escola José Falcão, utilizando a ferramenta denominada Survey on Student School Spaces (S3S), que visa recolher o feedback dos estudantes sobre as suas escolas. A S3S atua como uma ferramenta projeto e de avaliação pós-ocupação, considerando possíveis ações de cocriação e co-reabilitação com a comunidade escolar, de forma a alinhar melhor as partes envolvidas no processo de aprendizagem com os espaços por estas frequentados e a sua utilização efetiva (Coelho et al., 2022).

A ferramenta S3S atua em três momentos. Primeiro, através de um questionário online sobre os sentimentos e atividades dos utilizadores em cinco tipos de espaços educativos: espaços exteriores, espaços formais de aprendizagem, espaços de estudo, espaços de refeição e espaços comuns e de circulação. Seguidamente, envolvem-se grupos focais, através de caminhadas pelo edifício, para detalhar os dados recolhidos previamente. Finalmente, a comunidade escolar é reunida numa assembleia, para apresentar os resultados e definir ações futuras sobre os espaços analisados.

No caso específico da Escola José Falcão, o processo participativo também visa incluir a comunidade escolar na reabilitação dos espaços que frequenta todos os dias, como um esforço inclusivo e empoderador, o qual está a ser implementado em duas etapas principais:

No primeiro trimestre, a participação foi realizada para entender como o edifício está organizado, como os espaços são usados, quais os espaços mais relevantes e quais os espaços que estão em falta ou precisam de ser repensados.

No trimestre final, a comunidade será novamente envolvida para avaliar o impacto da reabilitação na vida diária da escola, atuando como uma avaliação pós-ocupação.

Adicionalmente, durante as fases intermédias, a comunidade escolar é convidada a participar em atividades específicas, ajudando na tomada de decisões sobre as soluções de projeto a empreender.

O projeto pedagógico

A integração do projeto no Departamento de Arquitetura permite também envolver os estudantes do Mestrado Integrado em Arquitetura e assim explorar propostas mais especulativas que funcionem como espaço de reflexão crítica sobre o projeto, abrindo temas e soluções que aí possam ser integrados.

Assim, o Atelier de Projeto IIE do primeiro semestre do ano letivo de 2024–2025 desafiou os estudantes a desenvolver um projeto de arquitetura participado para a reabilitação da escola secundária José Falcão, com o tema a Escola como Cidade, a Cidade como Escola. Uma turma de estudantes do 12º ano da escola Secundária José Falcão interagiu com os estudantes de

Arquitetura ao longo deste processo para ativar o processo de participação. Neste sentido, o projeto de arquitetura foi organizado em três fases:

A cidade como escola. Os estudantes de Arquitetura e da escola identificaram os espaços e os percursos urbanos onde gostariam de realizar atividade de educação informal.

A escola como cidade. Os estudantes identificaram os espaços escolares com maior capacidade de relacionamento com a cidade.

Um novo espaço de aprendizagem foi identificado para promover o diálogo entre escola e cidade

REABILITAÇÃO DA ESCOLA JOSÉ FALCÃO

PROCESSO PARTICIPATIVO

O presente artigo foca-se no processo participativo realizado com a comunidade escolar na fase inicial deste projeto, implementado entre 1 de dezembro de 2023 e 31 de janeiro de 2024. A intenção foi co-criar o programa funcional e repensar a utilização dos espaços existentes da escola, de acordo com a experiência daqueles que a utilizam todos os dias para aprender, ensinar e trabalhar.

No projeto de reabilitação da Escola José Falcão, a metodologia CoReD foi reformulada devido à necessidade de envolver os diferentes intervenientes: um grande número de alunos, professores, funcionários, pais, antigos alunos e parceiros institucionais. Assim, as atividades de investigação incluíram questionários, caminhadas pelos espaços e uma assembleia, mas também compreenderam workshops e entrevistas. Este processo envolveu um total de 500 participantes.

Esta ampla gama de métodos participativos possibilitou a recolha de dados e informações sobre os espaços da escola e alargou o nosso conhecimento sobre a sua utilização por toda a comunidade. Da mesma forma, também possibilitou o reconhecimento dos valores do património material e imaterial, e desvendou as necessidades e oportunidades de transformação do edifício. A diversidade de intervenientes permitiu ainda abordar questões relacionadas com a modernidade arquitetónica, a educação inclusiva, a interseccionalidade e a cidadania.

Questionário

O questionário realizado abrangeu de forma ampla os membros da comunidade educativa, com o objetivo de compreender as suas necessidades e perspetivas, sendo que o recurso a plataformas online beneficiou da fluência digital das gerações mais jovens. As questões colocadas abordaram a frequência de utilização, as atividades realizadas e as perceções dos participantes sobre cada espaço, com o objetivo de esclarecer sobre as atividades e sentimentos associados a cada um. As 524 respostas obtidas possibilitaram uma

compreensão holística dos diferentes pontos de vista da comunidade e facilitaram as discussões colaborativas subsequentes, bem como a reflexão informada sobre as possíveis intervenções arquitetónicas adaptadas às necessidades específicas desta comunidade escolar.

A análise das respostas sublinha uma representação substancial de alunos (80%), em comparação com os professores (16,9%) e os funcionários (3,1%). Relativamente à relação da escola com a cidade, foram identificadas as seguintes questões: o pátio interior destacou-se como um espaço valorizado, embora o seu acesso restrito limite a sua utilidade; a área exterior recreativa enfrenta desafios no uso, devido a problemas de manutenção e falta de equipamentos; a entrada destaca-se como um espaço amplamente utilizado, estabelecendo-se como a "face" da escola para a cidade e como um dos elementos representativos da sua identidade.

Caminhada pelos espaços

As caminhadas (walkthroughs) são atividades em grupo que pretendem visitar e comentar os espaços escolares, tendo aqui sido conduzidas de duas formas. Numa primeira instância, as caminhadas tinham como objetivo clarificar os resultados obtidos anteriormente no questionário, visitando os espaços nele mencionados. Em segundo lugar, as caminhadas com representantes de associações ou grupos específicos permitiam recolher as perspetivas relativamente aos espaços da escola considerados de particular interesse para cada grupo. No total, foram realizadas 14 caminhadas no total, das quais 10 se destinaram a grupos específicos (Figura 2).



FIGURA 2. CAMINHADA COM PROFESSORES, PÁTIO, PROJETO DE REABILITAÇÃO DA ESCOLA JOSÉ FALCÃO, 3 DE JANEIRO DE 2024

Fonte: Foto de Gonçalo Canto Moniz.

Os comentários corroboraram e ampliaram os dados do questionário, mas também expandiram as áreas de preocupação e interesse. Por exemplo, foram vincadas as preocupações da comunidade relativamente à acessibilidade da entrada da escola para toda a comunidade; a reabilitação do Jardim das Escadas do Liceu como um espaço verde de continuidade com a área de envolvimento do edifício; a redução da velocidade do tráfego automóvel para assegurar a segurança dos estudantes e dos utilizadores em geral nos momentos de entrada e saída da escola; bem como o acesso direto à escola pelos espaços exteriores, através de uma alameda mais lúdica e aprazível.

Workshops

Os workshops foram realizados num ambiente fechado, direcionados a grupos que não utilizam todos os espaços escolares nas suas rotinas diárias. Em primeiro lugar, os participantes sentaram-se à volta de uma mesa com fotografias representativas dos espaços escolares, escolheram uma e utilizaram-na para proceder a um comentário sobre esse local. Seguidamente, organizaram-se em grupos à volta da planta da escola para discutir áreas de interesse e problemas comuns, registando-os em post-its que foram posteriormente afixados no desenho e o porta-voz de cada grupo apresentou os comentários mais prementes. Para além dos três workshops planeados, decorreram ainda reuniões espontâneas com quatro grupos, motivadas por limitações de tempo, comprovando a simplicidade e facilidade proporcionada por esta ferramenta.

Os comentários gerais alinharam-se com os das outras atividades, mas forneceram informações adicionais sobre espaços menos discutidos, como as escadas centrais, que, embora imponentes, enfrentam desafios relacionados com acessibilidade, controlo climático e segurança; o ginásio, onde é necessário um espaço exterior coberto para os estudantes; e a cantina, um centro social que necessita de uma maior atratividade, especialmente durante os meses de inverno.

Entrevista com a diretora da escola

A entrevista com a Diretora da Escola serviu como um momento fulcral no processo de participação, consolidando os temas desenvolvidos no âmbito dos procedimentos anteriores. A entrevista foi realizada por dois membros da equipa de investigação que seguiram um guião previamente partilhado e forneceu informações sobre a estratégia educativa e a operatividade diária da escola, aprimorando a nossa compreensão sobre a situação atual e oferecendo recomendações à equipa de projeto. Os pontos-chave incidiram na necessidade de garantir acessibilidade para todos e resolver requisitos específicos de gestão dos espaços.

Assembleia

Para encerrar a primeira fase do processo participativo, foi organizada uma assembleia para apresentar o co-diagnóstico, a estratégia de projeto e discutir os resultados obtidos. A sessão foi organizada em quatro momentos. Primeiramente, foram apresentados dois projetos relacionados com intervenções em duas escolas secundárias modernas realizadas no âmbito do Parque Escolar, onde se procurou discutir as potencialidades e as limitações dos edifícios modernos (Costa, 2011). Em segundo lugar, a equipa apresentou o co-diagnóstico e a

estratégia de projeto. De seguida, a comunidade escolar foi convidada a dividir-se em quatro salas para discutir um dos quatro espaços-chave – entrada, sala dos alunos, salas de aula e espaços desportivos. Finalmente, os grupos retornaram ao anfiteatro para partilhar os resultados da discussão nas suas salas.

Os resultados foram equilibrados entre o apoio à estratégia, a cocriação de novas propostas e alguma resistência a mudanças específicas. O grupo que trabalhou sobre a entrada destacou a necessidade de uma entrada acessível para todos e o controlo da velocidade do tráfego automóvel na avenida em frente à escola. O grupo relativo à sala dos alunos aprovou a abertura para os pátios, mas fez recomendações para mais espaços de convívio exteriores, tais como: equipamentos desportivos ao ar livre, casas de banho, materiais não cromáticos e estacionamento para bicicletas e motos. O grupo afeto aos espaços exteriores propôs a renovação da alameda com uma nova entrada mais digna, nomeadamente com bancos e mesas, pontos de água, painéis informativos e estacionamento para bicicletas. Este grupo discutiu também o pavilhão desportivo, particularmente a transformação do auditório num espaço flexível que pudesse ter uso misto, associando a cantina e o auditório. Contudo, esta solução revelou-se polémica e o projeto foi revisto para manter a autonomia do auditório. A assembleia não foi apenas um espaço de apresentação e discussão, mas também um espaço de tomada de decisões.

PROJETO DE REABILITAÇÃO – A PARTIR DE UM PALIMPSESTO DIGITAL

O primeiro passo do projeto de arquitetura passou não pela produção de desenhos, mas antes pela sua análise. A equipa partiu para a análise do arquivo que documenta as alterações de nove décadas de vivências, num total de três centenas de documentos.

A escolha do software BIM revelou-se desde logo acertada uma vez que permitiu organizar o arquivo segundo uma ordem temporal e georreferenciada, em várias camadas. Desta forma, foi possível construir vários modelos tridimensionais e respetivas versões em duas dimensões das várias fases de alterações mais significativas do edifício.

Esta organização por camadas sobrepostas formou uma espécie de palimpsesto digital, que permitiu em qualquer fase do processo consultar a evolução de cada espaço ao longo dos vários períodos de transformação.

A estas camadas, juntaram-se ainda os vários contributos e conclusões recolhidos nas sessões de participação, facilmente consultáveis durante todo o processo de projeto, nomeadamente: abertura franca do pátio central à comunidade escolar, construção de um espaço polivalente de alunos – ao qual foram mais tarde associados o bar e cantina –, uma organização mais coerente das salas de aula e serviços, uma reformulação das entradas na escola para melhor a acessibilidade.

Todas estas considerações foram analisadas sob a lente do novo projeto pedagógico que se pretende adaptado e adaptável às próximas décadas. A organização interna das salas foi preparada para um modo de aprender mais participado e adaptado a novas formas de partilha de conhecimento. Os corredores e átrios viram a sua função de passagem repensada para

permitirem a sua vivência e permanência, permitindo que o processo de aprendizagem possa acontecer fora da sala de aula.

A organização das funções escolares do edifício principal foi ainda reposta e clarificada. Desde os anos 1960 que salas, sanitários, gabinetes e arrumos têm sido adaptados segundo as necessidades de um momento específico e sem consideração da sua relação com o todo. O novo projeto procurou restabelecer a organização clara do plano de 1930 e simplificá-la. Nas alas nascente e poente existem apenas as salas de aula convencionais. Na ala norte, espacialmente mais generosa, localizam-se os laboratórios, na ala sul, as salas de desenho. Os sanitários e arrumos encontram-se equitativamente distribuídos nos topos do edifício, de acesso facilitado.

Os serviços, salas de grupos disciplinares e gabinetes localizam-se exclusivamente no piso térreo. No piso térreo da ala sul, todas as paredes entre pilares vão ser demolidas para dar lugar a uma grande sala polivalente, cantina e bar, que permitem ligar os dois grandes pátios do edifício, tornando-os agora de usufruto pleno da comunidade escolar.

Também as acessibilidades foram integralmente repensadas e todos os espaços do recinto escolar serão acessíveis, facto conseguido pela introdução de dois elevadores cirurgicamente implantados no edifício principal, e de um elevador no edifício do ginásio. No interior e no exterior, foram pensadas novas rampas de acesso aos campos de jogos e auditório, permitindo também a utilização independente destes dois programas fora do horário escolar.

Na relação com o espaço público, as entradas foram reavaliadas. Criou-se uma nova entrada acessível para todos, com ligação direta da rua ao átrio da escola. Reformulou-se a entrada lateral norte para integrar um parque de bicicletas (Figura 3) e redesenhou-se a entrada junto ao edifício do ginásio para um melhor diálogo entre a escola e o espaço público.

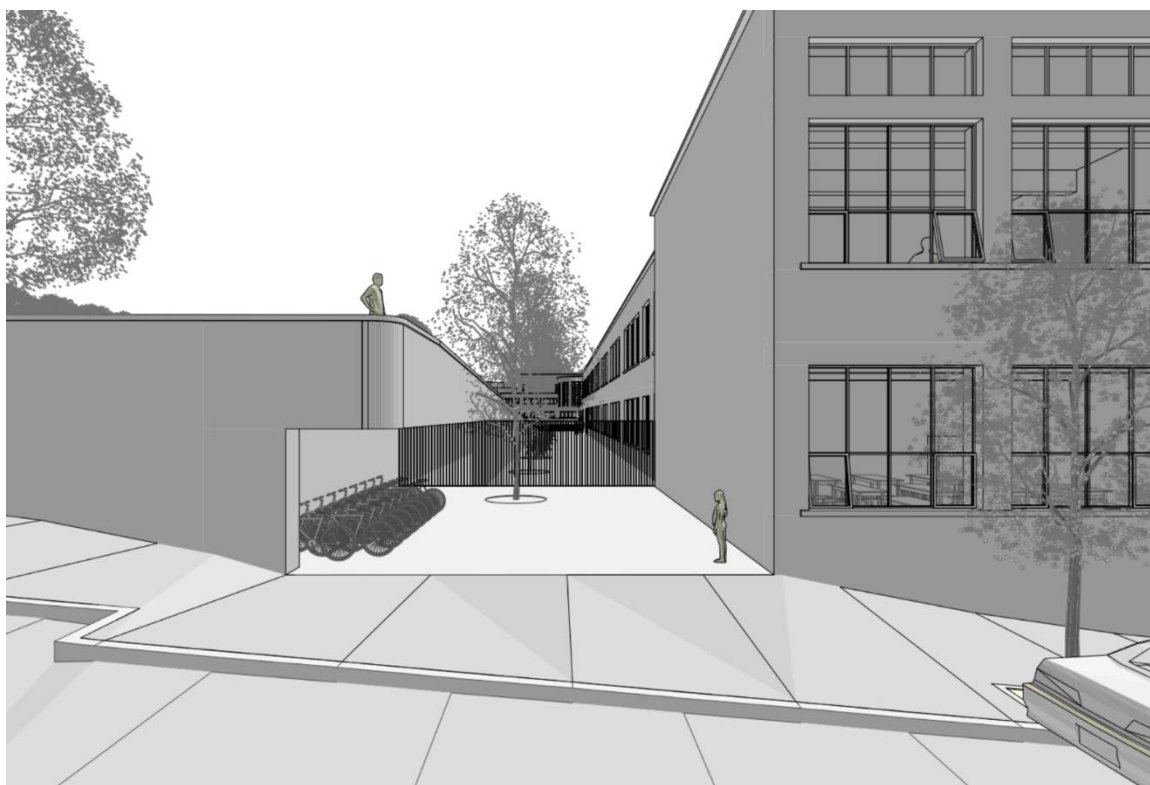


FIGURA 3. NOVA ENTRADA ACESSÍVEL DA RUA JOÃO PINTO RIBEIRO, COM ESTACIONAMENTO DE BICICLETAS INTEGRADO

Fonte: Arquivo do CEARQ-TD.

Todas estas alterações são possíveis sem construir edifícios novos. Permitem restabelecer a composição original, adaptada às necessidades do presente e futuro.

O PROJETO PEDAGÓGICO

O trabalho realizado no atelier de projeto foi organizado em grupos, permitindo uma maior partilha de conhecimentos entre os estudantes, considerando que são estudantes em mobilidade internacional.

Na primeira fase, o diálogo com os estudantes da escola direcionou os projetos não só para a reformulação do jardim público em frente à escola, mas também para o desenvolvimento de propostas que relacionassem a escola com o Jardim da Sereia, os quarteiros envolventes, o mosteiro de Celas e com as escolas da Solum (Avelar Brotero e Dona Maria). As propostas promovem uma maior integração da mobilidade urbana, das áreas verdes, dos percursos pedonais e dos espaços de aprendizagem. Na segunda fase, a discussão centrou-se na oportunidade de repensar os limites da escola e assim promover uma relação mais aberta da

escola à comunidade. Procurou-se explorar a possibilidade de redesenhar o muro existente, abrir o pátio interior à cidade, reformular os espaços exteriores da escola procurando renaturalizá-los. Na terceira fase, as propostas concretizaram as ideias desenvolvidas nas fases anteriores e alguns novos espaços repensaram a transição entre a escola e o espaço público – novos espaços desportivos, biblioteca na casa do reitor com entrada pela rua, salas de aula no espaço exterior, edifícios de ligação entre a rua nascente e a rua poente.

Estas propostas foram discutidas com os estudantes da escola e com a equipa de projeto, contribuindo para a construção de novos cenários para a escola moderna José Falcão (Figura 4).

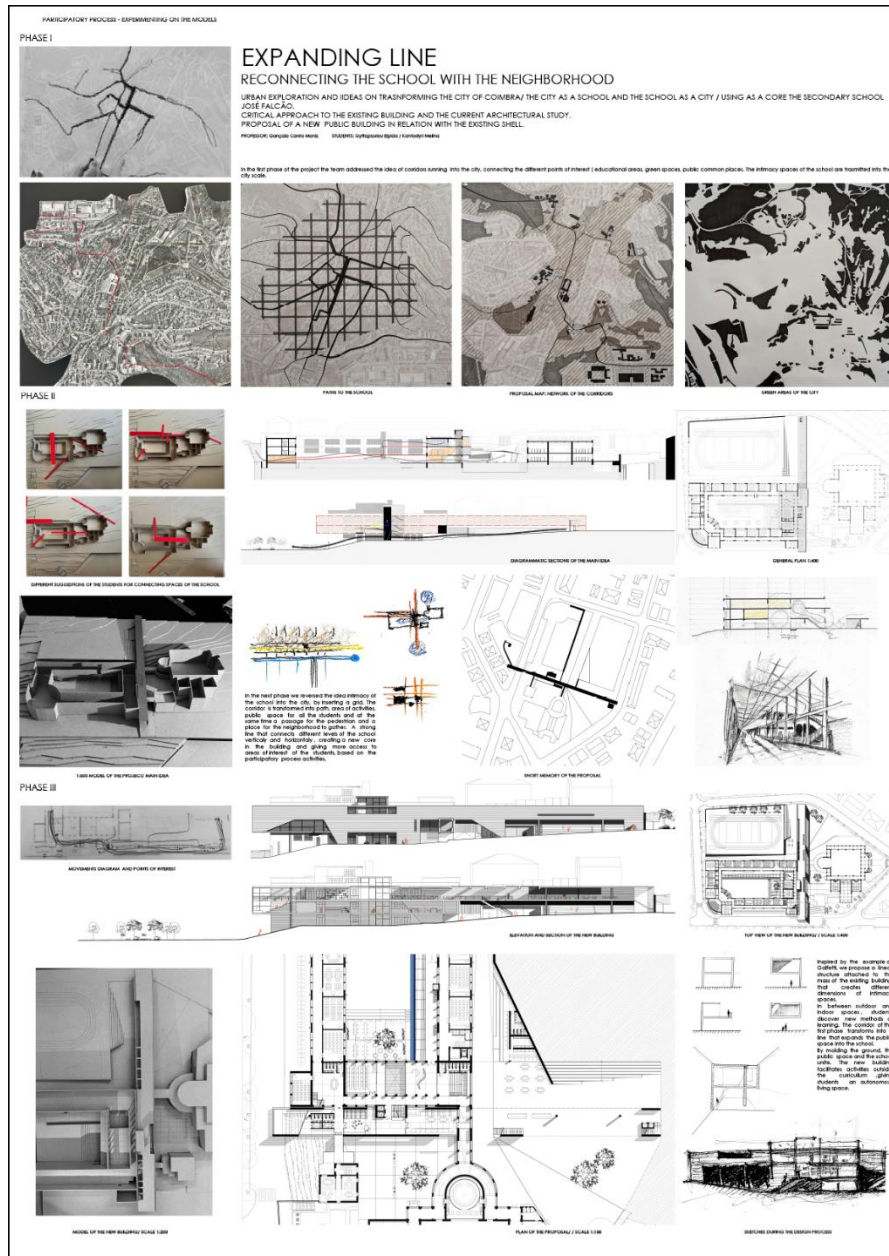


FIGURA 4. PAINEL DO PROJETO “EXPANDING LINE: RECONNECTING THE SCHOOL WITH THE NEIGHBORHOOD URBAN EXPLORATION AND IDEAS ON TRANSFORMING THE CITY OF COIMBRA / THE CITY AS A SCHOOL AND THE SCHOOL AS A CITY / USING AS A CORE THE SECONDARY SCHOOL JOSÉ FALCÃO”. STUDENTS: GYFTOPOULOU ELPIDA / KONTOSFYRI MELINA, DESIGN STUDIO II E, PROFESSOR GONÇALO CANTO MONIZ, MESTRADO INTEGRADO EM ARQUITETURA, DEPARTAMENTO DE ARQUITETURA DA UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA, 2024-2025

CONCLUSÕES E LIÇÕES APRENDIDAS

No âmbito do processo de participação da comunidade educativa da Escola Secundária José Falcão, foram identificados alguns constrangimentos metodológicos e lições aprendidas. Toda a comunidade estava muito entusiasmada com o processo e disposta a participar nas atividades, devido a um forte sentimento de pertença. Uma vez que foram planeadas várias atividades com antecedência, incluindo caminhadas, workshops e reuniões, foi necessária alguma flexibilidade na sua implementação para se adaptarem ao calendário escolar e à disponibilidade dos participantes. De facto, dada a evolução natural de cada atividade e a resposta de cada grupo, muitas vezes ocorreram dinâmicas diferentes das inicialmente planeadas. Todos os membros da comunidade educativa foram convidados a participar nas respetivas atividades: alunos, ex-alunos, funcionários, professores e direção. No entanto, as atividades foram sempre planeadas com incerteza quanto ao número de participantes esperados, o que obrigou a que a equipa do projeto tivesse uma capacidade estratégica para garantir a boa organização de cada uma delas.

Podemos concluir que a proximidade participativa é fundamental para fomentar um diálogo estreito com toda a comunidade escolar durante o processo de participação, abrindo vários canais de comunicação, como o correio eletrónico, o telefone ou as mensagens. O diretor da escola também atuou como facilitador da comunicação entre todos os intervenientes, coordenando o calendário das várias atividades e os envolvidos em cada uma delas.

De facto, um dos constrangimentos da equipa foi definir um calendário exequível para todas as atividades participativas no curto espaço de tempo disponível para interagir com esta extensa comunidade escolar. A este desafio juntou-se a difícil tarefa de programar todas estas atividades em dias e horários adequados a cada grupo.

Durante o processo de organização destas atividades, sentimos também que a grande dimensão da escola impediu, por vezes, uma discussão completa de todos os espaços. As visitas guiadas prolongaram-se em termos de tempo e de distância percorrida, o que, apesar de tudo, não constituiu uma dificuldade, dada a motivação de todos os participantes em contribuir com o seu feedback. Além disso, conciliar a remodelação do edifício com os desafios da educação inclusiva e as necessidades específicas dos alunos com necessidades especiais revelou-se um desafio para os arquitetos.

Por último, dada a variedade de participantes envolvidos em termos do tipo de experiência que têm nos espaços escolares, das suas idades e contextos pessoais, sociais e profissionais, houve por vezes pontos de vista contrastantes sobre o mesmo espaço. Estas situações tiveram de ser geridas pela equipa de investigadores do projeto, que mediou os pontos de vista e compreendeu os argumentos subjacentes. Assim, sabemos que a definição espacial proposta não é consensual entre todos os envolvidos, mas resulta de uma mediação e negociação dos contributos de muitos intervenientes neste processo.

O projeto pedagógico abriu a discussão sobre propostas que já estavam consolidadas, o que introduziu uma reavaliação crítica do projeto. Não se pretendia reformular o projeto com as propostas académicas, mas foi possível recentrar o olhar para aspetos que não estavam a ser

considerados, como o papel do muro de vedação, o potencial de uso da cobertura plana do edifício principal, ou estratégia de alimentação saudável através da horta escolar. Ainda que a relação com a cidade tenha sido trabalhada pelo projeto, para dar resposta às propostas da comunidade de abertura à cidade, é importante que o espaço público na envolvente próxima seja repensado de modo a favorecer a pedonalização, as ciclovias e os espaços verdes. De facto, a complementaridade entre os projetos de investigação, profissional e pedagógico permite ampliar a capacidade de resposta à complexidade de questões que se colocam na reabilitação de um edifício moderno, procurando também integrá-lo na cidade e na comunidade.

NOTAS BIOGRÁFICAS

Gonçalo Canto Moniz é professor associado no Departamento de Arquitetura da Universidade de Coimbra, onde se licenciou em 1995 e obteve o grau de doutor em Arquitetura em 2011. É investigador do Centro de Estudos Sociais da Universidade de Coimbra, onde co-coordena a linha temática *Culturas Urbanas, Sociabilidades e Participação*. É co-investigador principal de dois projetos europeus: URBiNAT (H2020, 2018–2024) e TRANS-Lighthouses (Horizon Europe, 2023–2026). No DARQ-UC co-coordena a reabilitação da Escola Secundária José Falcão. É membro do DoCoMoMo ISC Education and Training.

João Mendes Ribeiro é licenciado pela Faculdade de Arquitetura da Universidade do Porto (FAUP) e professor associado no Departamento de Arquitetura da Universidade de Coimbra (DARQ-UC) desde 1991. Defendeu a sua tese de doutoramento em 2009, na área da teoria e história, sobre a relação entre arquitetura e cenografia. A sua prática profissional tem sido reconhecida com prémios e publicações, destacando-se a renovação das estufas do Jardim Botânico de Coimbra e o Centro de Arte Contemporânea da Ilha de São Miguel, nos Açores.

Carolina Coelho é arquiteta e professora auxiliar na Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade de Coimbra (FPCEUC), onde desenvolve atividade de investigação e docência no âmbito dos espaços educativos. É investigadora integrada e membro da Comissão Científica do Centro de Estudos Interdisciplinares (CEIS20). Defendeu a sua tese de doutoramento no Centro de Estudos Sociais (CES) e no DARQ-UC, com a investigação “Life within architecture from design process to space use. Adaptability in school buildings today – A methodological approach”. Participou no projeto “(EU)ROPA: Rise of Portuguese Architecture” e coordenou a equipa de investigação portuguesa no projeto “CoReD: Collaborative Re-design with Schools”.

Pedro Brígida é professor auxiliar convidado no Departamento de Arquitetura da Universidade de Coimbra (DARQ-UC), nas áreas de projeto e construção, desde 2010. Desenvolve atividade profissional em parceria com Alice Santiago Faria, com a qual tem obtido prémios e publicações. O seu trabalho vai desde pequenas intervenções, como reabilitação de habitações, até equipamentos de maior escala, como o Hotel Colmeal ou o Centro de Dia de Marialva. Tem particular interesse no design de mobiliário, sendo cofundador da empresa de design de equipamentos ZTDA, com Eduardo Mota, desde 2001.

Duarte Miranda é arquiteto, licenciado pelo Departamento de Arquitetura da Universidade de Coimbra (DARQ-UC), onde apresentou a sua dissertação de mestrado, em 2017, sobre o processo de projeto de Álvaro Siza no Parque Van der Venne, em Haia. Trabalhou entre 2016 e 2022 em Gent, Bélgica, e desde janeiro de 2024 integra o Centro de Estudos de Arquitetura, do Território ao Design, da Universidade de Coimbra (CEARQ-TD).

Valentina Leal Gutiérrez Arquiteta recentemente graduada pela Universidade de Coimbra. O seu percurso tem-se centrado na reabilitação arquitetónica e em metodologias de participação comunitária nos processos de projeto. A sua dissertação de mestrado, “Entre Tradição e Inovação: A Manifestação do Ethos no Processo de Participação da Comunidade Escolar na Reabilitação da Escola Secundária José Falcão”, evidenciou a sua abordagem crítica e prática à relação entre tradição, inovação e envolvimento coletivo. Colaborou ainda com o Observatório Permanente da Justiça no desenvolvimento de propostas para novas salas de audiência, reforçando o seu interesse por práticas inclusivas na arquitetura.

Joana Correia é investigadora auxiliar convidada no Departamento de Arquitetura da Universidade de Coimbra (DARQ-UC). Em março de 2024 passou a integrar o Centro de Estudos de Arquitetura, do Território ao Design, da Universidade de Coimbra (CEARQ-TD). Defendeu a sua tese de mestrado em 2022 no DARQ-UC, com a investigação “Turismo de Aldeia. Ribeirinho: um projeto de base comunitária para o desenvolvimento de Sicó”. Trabalha em Coimbra, Portugal, desde 2021, e a partir de 2022 desenvolve atividade profissional em parceria com Pedro Gustavo Cardoso.

António Rochette Doutor em Geografia e Professor da Univ. de Coimbra, é Investigador Integrado do CEIS20, no qual integra o GRUPOEDE e é coordenador do Núcleo de Investigação “Territórios e Educação”. No âmbito da investigação interdisciplinar desenvolveu trabalhos em áreas como Sustentabilidade e Espaços Urbanos, Políticas Públicas - Educação e Ordenamento, Planeamento de Equipamentos Coletivos e Climatologia Urbana. Elaborou, desde 2004, cerca de 40 Cartas Educativas Municipais e coordenou a Carta Escolar da RA dos Açores, e os projetos “Reorganização do Parque Escolar por NUT III a 2013” e “Reorganização da Rede do Ensino Particular e Cooperativo com Contrato de Associação”. Integrou os projetos H2020 URBINAT, assim como o Erasmus+ “CoReD - Collaborative Re-Design with Schools”.

Luís Alcoforado é Doutor em Ciências da Educação pela Universidade de Coimbra. É Professor na Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade de Coimbra e Investigador do Grupo de Políticas Educativas e Dinâmicas Educacionais (GRUPOEDE) do Centro de Estudos Interdisciplinares do Século XX (CEISXX). Foi Coordenador dos Mestrados em Educação e Formação de Adultos e Intervenção Comunitária e em Ciências da Educação e é Coordenador do Doutoramento em Ciências da Educação, da Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade de Coimbra. Está ligado preferencialmente às temáticas de Educação e Formação de Adultos, Educação, Formação e Trabalho e Planeamento, Desenvolvimento e Avaliação de Políticas Locais de Educação e Formação. Participou e coordenou diversos projetos de investigação e intervenção. É membro do Conselho Científico-Pedagógico da Formação Contínua de Professores e integra equipas de

avaliação externa de Agrupamentos de Escolas. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4425-7011>

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CULTURAL MAPPINGS AND URBAN CREATIVITY RESEARCH IN SEVILLE, SPAIN: METHODOLOGICAL TOOLS FOR PARTICIPATION AND ACTION

Andréa V. F. Costa

Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte Instituto de Educação Ciência e Tecnologia do Rio Grande do Norte
costa.andrea@escolar.ifrn.edu.br

Maria de los Angeles Somocurcio Holguin

Peruvian University of Applied Sciences
masomocurcioarq@gmail.com

Safiya Tabali

University of Seville
tsafiya@us.es

María F. Carrascal Pérez

University of Seville
mcarrascal@us.es

ABSTRACT

Cultural mapping methodologies have become powerful tools for identifying and promoting the tangible and intangible values embedded in urban environments. These methods foster connections between creativity, urban management, and planning. Such strategies have been implemented in projects led by the PAIDI Research Group HUM-666: Contemporary City, Architecture and Heritage (CAPC) at the University of Seville, Spain. One example is Laboratorio Q (Lab Q), a digital platform that employed collaborative cartography to document creative actions, spaces, and processes in Seville between 1996 and 2012. Another is a set of initiatives on creative industries developed as part of the Management Plan for Heritage Municipal Buildings of Seville, which included mapping the city's creative ecosystem and its built heritage. In the CREAfab R&D+i project, these methodologies were integrated into a creative placemaking process aimed at fostering the creative reindustrialisation of Andalusian historic centres. This article seeks to identify and explore a transversal methodological vector within these projects, which have developed transferable frameworks that incorporate cultural mapping for use by local and regional administrations. The findings highlight the potential applicability of these tools in other international contexts, particularly in Latin America, such as Brazil and Peru.

KEYWORDS

cultural mapping, research methodology, creativity, urban planning, Seville

INTRODUCTION

Since 2006, Seville has been a member of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network in the Music category, a recognition that highlights its rich flamenco heritage and cultural dynamism (UNESCO, 2024). This designation was later incorporated into Seville's Strategic Plans in 2009 and 2019. It is linked to a broader process of urban transformation in Seville, which began in the late 20th century and has continued into the 21st century, with culture playing a pivotal role in shaping the city's identity and development strategies. A significant milestone was the 1992 Universal Exposition, held on the Isla de la Cartuja, followed by landmark architectural projects such as the Metropol Parasol, designed by German architect Jürgen Mayer, and the Torre Sevilla, a skyscraper by Argentine architect César Pelli (Carrascal-Pérez et al., 2019).

The 2008 economic crisis triggered a shift in Seville's approach to urban and cultural policies, with creativity increasingly seen as a cost-effective strategy for urban transformation. In response, grassroots movements and citizen-led initiatives have gained visibility in recent years through small-scale actions. These took place particularly in the historic "corralones"—shared workshop spaces that host creative activities—and through creative interventions in public and common spaces, reflecting a bottom-up approach to urban development (Carrascal-Pérez et al., 2019).

In this context, the PAIDI Research Group HUM – 666: Contemporary City, Architecture and Heritage (CAPC) at the University of Seville leads an international research line on "Creativity and Contemporary City", which explores the relationship between creative communities, creative industries, and urban space since the second half of the 20th century. This article focuses on three of its main research projects related to the city of Seville: the Urban Creativity Lab: Laboratorio Q; the strategic program on Creative Industries within the Management Plan for Heritage Municipal Buildings of Seville; and the R&D&I project: CREAfab: Methodologies for a Creative Reindustrialisation of Historic Centers. These initiatives were selected because of their specific proposed methodologies, which incorporate mapping and citizen participation, in line with the consolidated understanding of cultural mapping as both a diagnostic and dialogic tool that supports community engagement and place-based knowledge (Duxbury & Redaelli, 2020).

This article begins with a brief contextualization of the city of Seville, followed by a description and analysis of the selected research projects, focusing on their cultural and participatory mapping methodologies. Subsequently, the contributions and limitations of mapping strategies in Seville are evaluated, and finally it explores the potential for replicating these tools in other similar contexts, such as Latin America.

CULTURAL MAPPING AS A CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC URBAN PLANNING

The investigations presented originate from a research line developed by the CAPC group over the past 15 years, which focuses on the role of artistic and creative communities in urban transformation (Carrascal-Pérez, 2022). The first two research projects have been completed while the third one is under development.

CAPC, throughout these two decades, has fostered citizens' awareness of their own creative capacity for the transformation of their living environments. This is also an example of how academia can produce applied research and work for specific objectives set by local urban agendas using its international perspective and background knowledge. Through the creation of international digital platforms for the registration and visibility of alternative practices, together with the design of specific processes and methodologies for the promotion of creative communities and industries, it advocates for a sustainable, civic and inclusive development. While the first project acts in the field of cultural dissemination, the latter two are instrumental for action with particular interest for public administration. In both cases, mapping is a fundamental tool either to present an overview of cases enabling public participation with the rigor of georeferencing, or to serve as a database conceived by experts to aid decision-making for intervention in multifactorial contexts. However, these projects have been shaped by different socio-economic crises: Laboratorio Q emerged in response to the 2008 real estate crisis, whereas the Management Plan for Heritage Municipal Buildings of Seville and CREAfab were developed during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This socio-economic context has undoubtedly influenced the methodologies applied.

LABORATORIO Q OF CREATIVE URBAN PLACES, 2008-2012. EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH COLLABORATIVE MAPPING

Developed between 2008 and 2012, Laboratorio Q aimed to identify and register places of urban creativity in Seville's public spaces between 1996 and 2012 using collaborative mapping in response to the socio-economic challenges following the 2008 financial crisis. The project focused on low-cost, low-tech, and resource-efficient models that maximized the potential of local creative communities (Carrascal-Pérez et al., 2019). It was selected as part of MoMA's project, platform, and publication *Uneven Growth: Tactical Urbanisms for Expanding Megacities* (Gadanhó, 2015).

The methodology was based on the Urban Buzz project and was developed in four key stages. First, a preliminary study was conducted to identify active creative agents and initiatives. Second, in-depth interviews were carried out to collect participant testimonies, capturing their knowledge, perceptions, and proposals for urban transformation. Third, the output of the interviews was contrasted with newspapers, websites, videos, and publications of the creative community involved in the actions, books, and articles. In the fourth step, a first selection of unique creative projects was made, incorporated into an online platform using a georeferenced system (Figure 1). Thus, 19 creative places were catalogued, grouped into three categories: actions, processes, and spaces. So, Laboratorio Q implemented research methods to engage participants in the co-production of knowledge: a participatory mapping

tool in its online platform; active participation during interviews to identify urban actions; and public engagement events, where the results were shared and discussed. However, participation levels were lower than expected by the researchers, which showed the need to adopt strategies to mobilize citizenship in future research (Carrascal-Pérez et al., 2019).



Laboratorio Q Global

FIGURE1. LABORATORIO Q PLATAFORM

Source: Laboratorio Q research team.

This methodology was replicated in London (UCL), Bogota (Universidad de los Andes), and Milan (Politecnico di Milano) in collaboration with Laboratorio Q Seville. The expanded research network organized events, called “Jornadas de Creatividad Urbana” (2011, 2012, 2014, 2016), where academics, citizens, architects, and planners actively engaged in discussion of this matter. These activities not only strengthened citizens’ sense of ownership over public spaces but also expanded knowledge on bottom-up projects and methodologies, in which decisions were made in a participatory manner, reflecting the aspirations of the community (Carrascal-Pérez et al., 2019).

The knowledge generated provided visibility and promoted the exchange among existing bottom-up creative initiatives in Seville. In addition, there is still an active forum that can be reactivated at any time through outreach and scientific and educational dissemination activities. In summary, Q Laboratory demonstrated how a collaborative mapping methodology can enrich urban planning processes, underscoring the importance of including citizens at every stage of urban regeneration.

CREATIVE INDUSTRIES AND BUILT HERITAGE: MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR HERITAGE MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS OF SEVILLE, 2019-2021. CULTURAL MAPPING AS AN ACTION FOR URBAN PLANNING

Within the general framework of the Management Plan for Heritage Municipal Buildings of Seville, which includes multiple strategies for the conservation and promotion of built heritage, CAPC created a specific program on creative industries, which included a series of actions to document and dynamize this economic sector and its communities in this context. One of the actions is aimed to make the cultural and creative industries (CCIs) of the city visible and valuable using a collaborative cultural mapping methodology. This began with spaces for creation, production, dissemination, and interaction, for which data was collected through on-site visits and collaboration with creative professionals and citizens.

Moreover, an Advisory and Management Centre for CCI and Historic Heritage is proposed for another action in the program. This centre would serve as a support resource for cultural entrepreneurs, providing technical guidance and connecting local actors with authorities. In this way, it would contribute to consolidating a participatory management approach for heritage spaces (Plaza Morillo et al., 2022).

Another cross-cutting component, Program V – Socialization, which emphasizes citizen participation and foresees actions for education and dissemination of the Management Plan (Plaza Morillo et al., 2022). Both citizens and experts participate in the identification and categorization of these places, documenting their characteristics, uses, and cultural potential. This collaborative mapping would provide a database that allows cultural managers to base policies on a local and participatory perspective, thus achieving an exhaustive and representative inventory of Seville's cultural heritage (Plaza Morillo et al., 2022).

To ensure sustained citizen participation, the Management Plan contemplates the development of a publicly accessible digital platform, where citizens can explore the results of the mapping. This tool will facilitate dialogue between citizens and cultural managers. Lastly, the Management Plan proposes cultural revitalization programs through workshops and community events to promote the appropriation of cultural spaces and strengthen the bonds between citizens and heritage. Collectively, these participatory methodologies are designed to establish an inclusive cultural governance model that can be transferred to local policies, thereby consolidating a heritage management approach where the community plays an active role in decision-making. The Management Plan has been completed and approved by the Seville City Council, who provided the funding. Its implementation is ongoing.

CREAFAB: PLACEMAKING FOR CREATIVITY AND INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE, 2022-2024. FROM CULTURAL MAPPING TOWARDS INCLUSIVE DECISION-MAKING

The CREAfab project introduces an innovative placemaking methodology for creativity aimed at engaging citizens in the reindustrialisation and regeneration of heritage spaces in Andalusian historic centres. This approach enables residents not only to participate in the planning and design of spaces but also to become active agents in creating a sustainable and

culturally dynamic urban environment (Hidalgo-Sánchez et al., 2024). The CREAfab process draws on a diverse set of frameworks, combining adaptive reuse, creative placemaking, cultural mapping, and territorial regeneration. It incorporates the placemaking approach from the cross-disciplinary non-profit Project for Public Spaces and builds on the research team's own theoretical contributions to creativity and contemporary city (Carrascal-Pérez, 2022; García-Vázquez, 2022), alongside insights from heritage studies and the creative economy. Unlike conventional urban regeneration approaches, CREAfab integrates citizen participation and digitalization across all phases of the project.

A key component for the long-term sustainability of CREAfab is its interactive digital infrastructure: the CREAfab App (Figure 2). This tool, still in development, is based on the geo-referenced study of CCI and industrial heritage enclaves with creative potential. It facilitates participatory governance and functions as an interactive hub where users can interact directly, access resources, propose new initiatives, and connect and collaborate with other local actors. It therefore encourages interconnection among local stakeholders and fosters the generation of new cultural initiatives, helping to consolidate a sustainable, shared model for managing heritage spaces (Hidalgo-Sánchez et al., 2024).

The CREAfab process is a methodological framework for the creative reindustrialisation of historic centres, structured in seven interrelated steps that combine territorial diagnosis, regulatory alignment, and collaborative design. It begins with mapping the local presence of creative industries, housing dynamics, and industrial heritage, and continues with the analysis of urban policies and planning tools to identify opportunities for intervention. The process culminates in a pilot activation strategy and the creation of a creative ecosystem that connects spaces and agents through digital and territorial networks.

At the core of the methodology lies the creative placemaking phase, designed as a turning point from analysis to transformation. Structured in five stages—preparation, inspiration, ideation, implementation, and maintenance—it relies on participatory tools such as cultural mapping, walking tours, and co-design workshops where citizens, artists, and local stakeholders collaboratively reimagine the future of underused spaces. Rather than imposing fixed solutions, this approach fosters collective agency, aligns with community needs, and builds a shared vision grounded in place.

This process is being consolidated in the CREAfab guideline document, *Creative Reindustrialisation of Historic Centers – Placemaking for Creativity at Industrial Heritage Sites*, which is pending publication by the Department of Public Works, Territorial Planning, and Housing of the Regional Government of Andalusia.

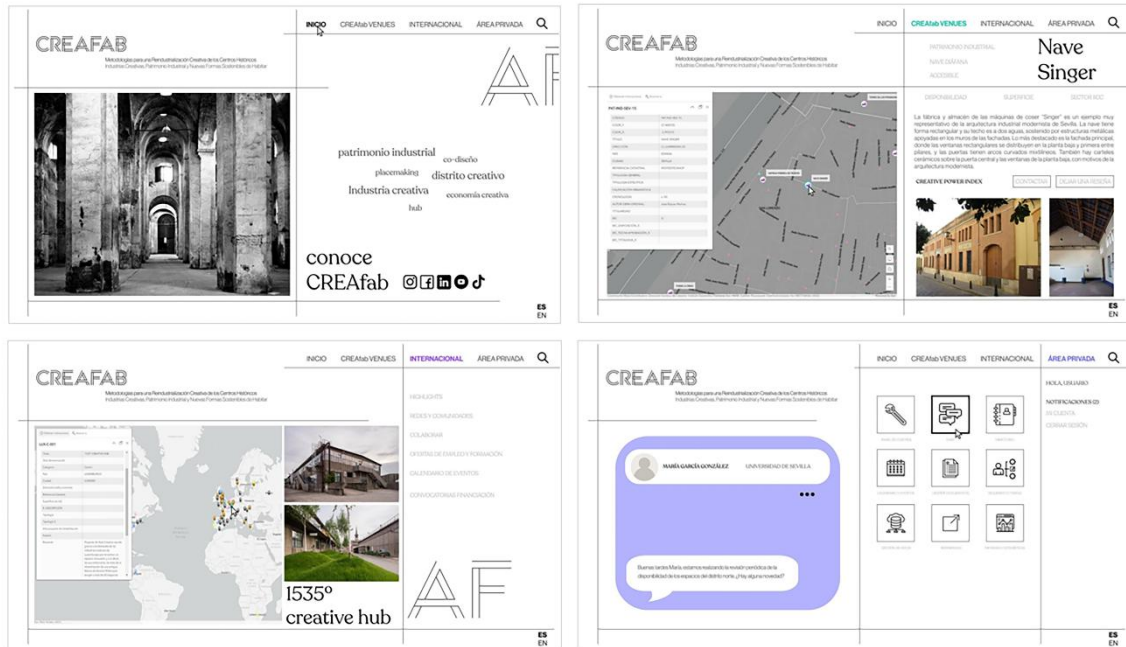


FIGURE 2. CREAMFAB APP

Source: CREAMfab research team.

CREAfab represents an innovative approach to placemaking and heritage regeneration, integrating creativity and citizen participation as drivers of change. The methodology not only seeks to revitalize historic centres but also to establish a local creative economy that strengthens cultural identity. Its long-term sustainability relies on inclusive digital tools and other participatory engagement strategies. The outcomes will be useful to regional administrations, as well as cultural and local stakeholders interested in replicating the process.

RESEARCH PROJECTS, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND LIMITATIONS

The projects presented provide a promising framework for exploring how cultural and participatory mapping could foster meaningful civic interventions and strengthen democratic governance in urban and cultural planning.

Laboratorio Q has developed a methodology for registering and showcasing urban creative spaces, processes and actions. Unlike the large cultural interventions of the Creative City model at the beginning of the 21st century, it highlights other types of creative production in the city developed by creative communities and individuals. The Management Plan uses the experience of Laboratorio Q research and brings together contributions from several investigations developed in the various lines of study of the CAPC research group and

includes the creative mapping as a main action. And the CREAfab deepens the theme of creative and cultural industries, using the contribution of previous research to design methodologies and interactive mapping tools to make the process of creative reindustrialisation of Andalusia's industrial heritage viable. Based on the data and guidelines resulting from these projects, as well as the interest shown by the public authorities in the Management Plan and CREAfab, which financed them, suggesting that they have a high chance of being implemented. However, a critical evaluation highlights both the transformative potential and the challenges and limitations of these methodologies within the context of cultural policies.

PARTICIPATORY MAPPING AS A MEANS OF CIVIC INTERVENTION AND DEMOCRATIZATION IN URBAN PLANNING

These projects illustrate how participatory mapping has the potential to facilitate the identification and activation of a city's tangible and intangible resources, allowing communities to express a shared vision for the use of their spaces. However, the success of this methodology relies heavily on the continuity and commitment of local actors, as well as on a framework that effectively integrates the diversity of voices into the process. Laboratorio Q offers a valuable bottom-up model that foregrounds grassroots narratives and creative memory. Although its scope was not primarily oriented toward policy influence, it highlighted the need for mechanisms capable of transferring such community-based knowledge into formal planning frameworks. For this approach to genuinely democratize urban planning, it is essential that administrations not only promote these processes but also sustain them over time, allocating resources and building capacities to consolidate participatory outcomes as institutional practice and to attend to their findings in policy making and planning contexts.

SUSTAINABLE AND LONG-TERM PARTNERSHIPS IN CULTURAL MAPPING

The specific actions of the Management Plan for Heritage Municipal Buildings of Seville in Creative Industries show how participatory cultural mapping can transcend short-term operational tasks, fostering a continuous support network for cultural and creative industries (CCIs). However, the experimental and methodological nature of the initiative requires continuous evaluation of its long-term impact, particularly regarding the relationship between cultural actors and public administration. While the proposed partnerships are essential, they face challenges in maintaining the independence of CCIs and avoiding the instrumentalization of cultural heritage solely for tourism or economic purposes. For this initiative to be sustainable and enriching for the community, it is crucial to establish a collaborative framework that respects the autonomy of cultural agents, ensuring that these alliances are not subject to political or economic shifts.

MAPPING AS A CATALYST FOR SHARED IDENTITY AND COLLABORATIVE ECONOMY IN CREAfab

CREAfab emphasizes the importance of mapping and placemaking in fostering a local creative economy rooted in identity and civic participation. Its success, however, depends on managing potential risks such as gentrification and resident displacement, while maintaining inclusivity. Achieving long-term impact requires balancing community aspirations with market dynamics, supported by institutional commitment and adequate resources for self-management and maintenance of spaces.

Together with Laboratorio Q and the Heritage Management Plan of Seville, CREAfab demonstrates how cultural mapping has been systematically integrated into the design of participatory methodologies—not only as a diagnostic tool, but as a catalyst for intervention and democratic governance. The long-term sustainability of this approach relies on three key factors: (1) institutional support through structured policies and funding mechanisms, (2) the consolidation of long-term partnerships that respect the autonomy of cultural agents, and (3) the continuous adaptation of participatory mapping as an evolving tool that reflects community needs. The initiatives developed by CAPC illustrate how communities can co-produce knowledge, identify creative spaces and actors, and contribute actively—not just as informants, but as collaborators—in a more democratic and inclusive form of urban planning.

Ultimately, this approach offers strong potential for integrating local perspectives into planning and enabling sustainable cultural development. Its applicability extends beyond Seville, particularly to contexts such as Latin America—specifically Brazil and Peru—where participatory planning and cultural mapping are emerging fields and where shared historical and cultural conditions with southern Europe make the transfer of such methodologies especially relevant.

CREATIVE CITIES AND COLLABORATIVE MAPPING IN BRAZIL AND PERU: INSIGHTS FROM AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

In Brazil, the first recognition by UNESCO of a creative city took place in 2014 (Curitiba), and today, 14 cities are part of the UNESCO Creative Cities Network. Despite this, the literature on creative cities indicates that the dissemination of the term has been slow disseminated and that adapting it to the Brazilian context remains necessary, with the creation of public policies that value Brazil's cultural diversity. In this way, it is considered that, about the conceptual dimension, the academic field surrounding creative cities with CCIs, in Brazil, is marked by conceptual ambiguity and the coexistence of diverse models promoted as creative cities.

Regarding the empirical object, there are isolated actions related to the economic dimension, disconnected from the creative city parameters set by UNESCO (Muzzio & Silva, 2023). These impacts ultimately affect creative individuals and groups, which is why it is considered essential for studies on creative cities to include the mapping of CCIs through participatory

methodologies that involve citizens not only as informants, but also as co-creators and contributors to the public policy development.

In Peru, cultural promotion has gained momentum following the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlighted the structural fragility of the cultural sector and the limited progress in cultural governance. For this reason, the Peruvian cultural-creative sector has been proposed to be fostered and strengthened in the last four years. Since 2020, the Ministry of Culture (MINCUL) has guided national cultural planning through the document National Cultural Policy 2030 (Ministerio de Cultura de Peru, 2020), which establishes the relevance of creative industries for the country's cultural development. In addition, progress is evident in cultural mapping with public tools such as the Geoportal and with particular initiatives such as the cultural cartographies of Cultural Nodes (Nodos Culturales Perú, 2025).

Integrating creativity into urban development is a relatively recent approach in Peru. The first cities to join the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (RCCU) were Arequipa and Ayacucho in 2019, followed by Huancaayo in 2021. However, creativity has not been implemented as part of urban planning. This is due to the absence of participatory mechanism and coordination between urban planning and creative stakeholders. The most significant impact of the titles as creative cities in Peru has focused on the economy, profitability, and tourism.

Although national policies recognize the value of creative industries and endorse top-down approaches, implementing these frameworks in Peru remains a challenge. Ineffective governance, limited understanding of creative actors' real needs, and the invisibility of bottom-up cultural initiatives hinder their institutional consolidation. Strengthening citizen participation is essential to bridging the gap between urban management and local communities. Rather than prioritizing tourism—which often disrupts authenticity and daily life—the goal should be cultivating culturally rich spaces that remain deeply connected to their inhabitants.

The situation evident in Brazil and Peru is analogous in other Latin American countries, with similar issues arising. It highlights the fragility of the creative sector and the lack of mapping; the disconnect between creativity and urban planning; the prioritization of the economic dimension over sustainable development goals; and negative impacts on the use of cultural resources, such as the commodification of culture, mass tourism, and gentrification.

Therefore, since urban creativity feeds on intangible urban aspects such as cultural practices, artistic expressions, and lifestyles developed in the daily lives of creative individuals and groups, it is believed that placing these elements at the centre of urban planning aimed at developing the creative potential of cities is essential (García-Vázquez, 2022). In this way, designing an inclusive mapping methodology can become a tool that involves the community, provides democratic management with citizen participation, integrates scientific accuracy with the flexible and changing contexts of places, and ultimately leads to tangible changes in reality.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Andréa V. F. Costa has a master's degree in Urban Development from the Federal University of Pernambuco (2007). Since 2009, she has been a professor in the Higher Technology Courses in Cultural Production at the Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of Rio Grande do Norte. She is currently developing her PhD thesis at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Norte (Brazil), conducting a sandwich PhD (doctoral internship) at the University of Seville, Spain. She worked at the National Institute of Historical and Artistic Heritage (IPHAN) from 2006 to 2009 and from 2014 to 2017. <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-6390-5261>

María de los Ángeles Somocurcio Holguín has a degree in Architecture from the Peruvian University of Applied Sciences (UPC), with two master's degrees, one in Architecture and Sustainable City and another in Art, Idea and Production, both from the University of Seville. Since 2018, she has worked as an independent architect in Architecture studios such as Jinarq, De la Torre Arquitectos, and Cosapi in Lima, Peru. She also developed an academic career as a teaching assistant in the Integral Design VII and Urban Design VIII Lima-Madrid workshops with UPC. Its approach integrates architecture, urban sustainability, and artistic production. <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3977-9333>.

Safiya Tabali is an architect (University of Seville, 2020) with a Master's in BIM Management (Pablo de Olavide University, 2021) and is currently pursuing a Master's in Architecture and Historic Heritage at the University of Seville. She is also a PhD student and researcher at the HUM-666: Contemporary City, Architecture and Heritage research group. She is part of the CREAfab I+D+i project, focused on the creative reindustrialisation of historic centres. In addition, she has worked as an architect in multiple studios, contributing to various architectural projects and competitions. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9515-7243>.

María F. Carrascal Pérez is a PhD Architect (2015) and Associate Professor in the Department of Architectural History, Theory and Composition, University of Seville, Spain. Head researcher of the Research Group PAIDI HUM666: Contemporary City, Architecture and Heritage (CAPC), she leads the line on Creativity and Contemporary City. Responsible for the competitive R&D&I project: *CREAfab: Methodologies for a Creative Reindustrialisation of Historic Centers* (2022– 2024) and coordinator of the pioneering program of Creative Industries in the Management Plan for Heritage Municipal Buildings of Seville (2022–2030). She has cofounded the international platforms *Laboratorioq.com*; and *@DmujerAnd: Design and Women in Andalusia*. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8194-9995>.

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WHATS-UP: INVOLUCRAR A LA COMUNIDAD EN LA CONSERVACIÓN SOSTENIBLE DEL PATRIMONIO MUNDIAL

Blanca del Espino Hidalgo

Departamento de Urbanística y Ordenación del Territorio, Instituto Universitario de Arquitectura y Ciencias de la Construcción, Universidad de Sevilla
bdelespino@us.es

Marta García de Casasola Gómez

Departamento de Historia, Teoría y Composición Arquitectónicas, Instituto Universitario de Arquitectura y Ciencias de la Construcción, Universidad de Sevilla
mgcasasola@us.es

RESUMEN

La incorporación de la comunidad patrimonial a la gestión de los bienes culturales ha experimentado un crecimiento reciente de la mano de la ratificación y la implementación efectiva del Convenio de Faro por parte de los distintos Estados miembros. Cada día son más los proyectos de conservación o planificación de grandes y pequeños inmuebles o conjuntos urbanos que cuentan con mecanismos de participación a través de los cuales la ciudadanía puede estar implicada, con distintos grados, en los procesos de toma de decisiones sobre su patrimonio cultural. En el caso de los sitios Patrimonio Mundial, la voz de la comunidad ha sido incluida en los dossiers de candidatura y, poco a poco, va integrándose también en los planes de gestión e informes de seguimiento conforme estos evolucionan en concepto y contenido. Entre los últimos instrumentos de gestión definidos que incorporan la participación, se encuentran las Evaluaciones del Impacto Patrimonial, que monitorizan y evalúan de forma preventiva la repercusión de posibles intervenciones o decisiones en los valores patrimoniales de los bienes, ampliando los límites del Valor Universal Excepcional. Este trabajo pretende desarrollar una metodología para la incorporación de las comunidades patrimoniales en estos procesos.

PALABRAS CLAVE

patrimonio sostenible, participación ciudadana, comunidad patrimonial, gestión del cambio, innovación metodológica

INTRODUCCIÓN Y ANTECEDENTES. EXPERIENCIAS METODOLÓGICAS EN TORNO A LA CONSIDERACIÓN DEL VALOR CULTURAL DEL PATRIMONIO

El campo de la conservación del patrimonio ha alcanzado suficiente madurez en lo que respecta a la definición de una metodología de trabajo general que, desde una perspectiva transdisciplinar, garantice unos buenos resultados fruto de la gestión sostenible. Sin embargo, son muchas las aproximaciones específicas que pueden realizarse para desarrollar determinados aspectos, poniendo de manifiesto que no existe una única metodología válida (Rodwell & Turner, 2018). Es decir, pueden operar simultáneamente distintas maneras de aproximación al problema, distintos métodos y herramientas, al mismo tiempo que se trata de metodologías que están en permanente revisión y donde, por lo tanto, su actualización forma parte de los procesos de trabajo asociados. Un modo de proceder que no se caracteriza por tener en cuenta la consideración tipológica del bien, sino que más bien atiende a su especificidad y naturaleza (Rodwell & Turner, 2018).

La experiencia en el monitoreo de bienes culturales de naturaleza compleja que ha desarrollado el Instituto Andaluz del Patrimonio Histórico (IAPH) en los últimos años, permite dar cuenta de un proceso de maduración metodológica en el que se han abordado bienes monumentales como el Palacio de San Telmo o las Reales Atarazanas, complejos industriales como la Fábrica de Tabacos de Altadis, conjuntos residenciales patrimonio moderno como las viviendas de Ntra. Sra. del Carmen o un paisaje urbano histórico como el Distrito Urbano Portuario (Castellano Bravo & Torres García, 2024). Todos estos bienes, situados en la ciudad de Sevilla, han protagonizado procesos de transformación que han requerido de documentos de planificación previa para marcar criterios y directrices, un desarrollo estratégico que se proyecta a partir de un diagnóstico previo.

Ha tenido que transcurrir casi un siglo desde las primeras cartas y textos internacionales de referencia en el campo de la conservación para de manera clara, a partir del último texto de referencia de carácter general que representa la Convención de Faro de 2005 “Sobre el valor del Patrimonio para la sociedad”, poner el foco en los dos aspectos fundamentales que hoy en día siguen vigentes: el reconocimiento de lo que tiene valor y el papel de la ciudadanía.

El desarrollo metodológico y la conceptualización del patrimonio han evolucionado de manera muy lenta, sin embargo, en los últimos años se ha producido un cambio exponencial en esta tendencia, emergiendo proyectos e investigaciones al servicio de la mejora de la implementación de los procesos. Esta especie de revolución se ha centrado en los dos aspectos antes reseñados, generando un importante corpus teórico de referencias que atienden a los procesos de identificación de los valores, su evaluación y monitoreo, así como a la implementación de los procesos participativos. Todas estas cuestiones van a caracterizar los procesos de intervención en el patrimonio donde la toma de decisiones se justifica a partir del control de la incidencia en los valores reconocidos y en la generación de otros nuevos, así como en la puesta en marcha de procesos que garanticen la participación ciudadana.

En este escenario caracterizado por procesos de mejora continua, la figura del Paisaje Histórico Urbano (PHU) establecida por Unesco en 2011 y desarrollada a partir del paso

marcado por la Convención Europea del Paisaje en 2000, introduce la comprensión del objeto de estudio como situación dinámica (Taylor, 2018). El paisaje entendido como proceso requiere de la implementación de herramientas de trabajo que permitan la gestión del cambio de una realidad compleja que se va a caracterizar como sistema.

Esta consideración del paisaje, como situación en la que se producen las dinámicas patrimoniales, va a resolver algunos de los problemas que habían dificultado la gestión de los bienes culturales: en primer lugar, la necesidad de trabajar con realidades y situaciones amplias, implementando metodologías de trabajo que permitan planificar y proyectar sobre el bien objeto de estudio y su contexto sin atender a la cuestión tipológica. Y en segundo lugar, las cuestiones perceptivas relacionadas con el patrimonio intangible que marcarán el paso hacia todos los procesos participados. Esta manera de proceder no permite simplificaciones y exige la puesta en marcha de procesos de conocimiento abiertos que aborden el problema patrimonial en toda su complejidad.

Uno de los principales objetivos de esta investigación tiene que ver con la necesidad de resolver la distancia aparentemente insalvable que existe entre la teoría y la práctica (Kloos, 2017). Para ello se propone definir mecanismos de seguimiento y control que permitan monitorear los valores identificados en un bien cultural. La propuesta se centra en los bienes del Patrimonio Mundial, pero es extrapolable a cualquier otra situación en la que se identifiquen valores culturales a preservar.

EL PROYECTO WHATS-UP: HACIA LA CONSERVACIÓN SOSTENIBLE DE BIENES PATRIMONIO MUNDIAL

El Proyecto de investigación *WHATS-UP World Heritage: an Approach To Social sustainability while UPgrading cultural values*, marco de esta investigación, incorpora como cuestión previa la consideración cambiante del objeto de estudio, sobre todo en lo que tiene que ver con su valoración cultural. Para ello introduce el monitoreo de los valores identificados como herramienta clave para justificar las acciones proyectadas para su conservación, teniendo en cuenta la participación ciudadana.

La conservación del patrimonio es entendida como un proceso crítico y riguroso, que basa la toma de decisiones en el conocimiento transdisciplinar, y que requiere de procedimientos transversales para completar su manera de proceder: archivo y gestión documental, transferencia y participación acompañan al desarrollo de las fases de trabajo que no pueden ser entendidas como compartimentos estancos, sino que se conforman por aproximaciones sucesivas y por permitir el tránsito de conocimiento (Figura 1). Desde la planificación, entendida como proceso abierto, se aborda la redacción de los proyectos de conservación e intervención arqueológica (cuando se requiera), apuntando hacia la accesibilidad universal como objetivo principal: una aproximación a la gestión sostenible de la conservación que se centra en el reconocimiento de lo que tiene valor.



FIGURA 1. METODOLOGÍA Y FASES DE TRABAJO PARA UNA GESTIÓN SOSTENIBLE DE LA CONSERVACIÓN

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

Este proceso de trabajo se ha consolidado en los últimos años y responde, en el contexto andaluz, a las exigencias marcadas desde la Ley 14/2007 de Patrimonio Histórico de Andalucía donde expresamente se indica la obligatoriedad de identificar los valores de un bien objeto de conservación, así como de la incidencia que las acciones proyectadas tienen sobre el mismo.

En el campo del Patrimonio Mundial (PM) esta manera de proceder se ha procedimentado a través de las Evaluaciones del Impacto Patrimonial (EIP) que, a partir del referente de las Evaluaciones del Impacto Medioambiental, se han convertido en el instrumento de trabajo capaz de medir la gestión del cambio garantizando la preservación. En este caso, la metodología se centra en los denominados valores universales excepcionales (VUE) que deberán ser completados con esos otros valores reconocidos por otros agentes implicados en la comunidad patrimonial.

Las evaluaciones del impacto sobre el patrimonio han caracterizado el tercer ciclo de los informes periódicos que los bienes PM deben reportar como consecuencia del monitoreo al que se ven sometidos desde que son declarados. Este tipo de informes responde a *las directrices operativas para la aplicación de la Convención del Patrimonio Mundial* marcadas desde Unesco y actualizadas de forma periódica (González Arques et al., 2025). El desarrollo metodológico se ha producido a partir de las orientaciones publicadas por ICOMOS en 2011 y, posteriormente desde 2022, a la guía e instrumentación publicada en colaboración entre los diferentes organismos responsables de la gestión del patrimonio mundial cultural y natural (Court et al., 2022).

La WHITR-AP, *World Heritage Institute of Training and Research for the Asia and the Pacific Region*, hace hincapié en la consideración de la evaluación como proceso en el que operan al mismo tiempo la identificación, la predicción, la propia evaluación y la comunicación. Una

herramienta que facilita la toma de decisiones no sólo ante la acción propositiva, articulada en forma de proyecto, sino también ante propuestas de planificación y desarrollo. Una tarea que se desarrolla de la mano de las comunidades, tal y como se ha apuntado, considerando el patrimonio un recurso activo especialmente ligado a la calidad de vida de las personas.

El reto al que se enfrenta el proyecto WHATS-UP tiene que ver con la necesidad de sistematizar un proceso de trabajo complejo que presenta el riesgo de prolongarse en el tiempo. Para ello, persigue atender a los requerimientos del trabajo transdisciplinar basado en el conocimiento que caracteriza a la tarea patrimonial, de manera que los gestores de la conservación precisen de instrumentos de trabajo que faciliten el ejercicio de síntesis y el consenso con los agentes participantes. En este contexto, el proyecto de investigación busca avanzar en la definición de un modelo metodológico para la actualización contemporánea de valores y atributos sobre los que evaluar el impacto patrimonial. Este modelo se inserta en una estrategia de control de calidad de las actuaciones, así como en la garantía de la sostenibilidad social de los procesos de conservación de estos bienes de alto valor y relevancia. Para ello se han definido estrategias híbridas que permitan la interlocución de las personas interesadas y los agentes a todos los niveles. Este trabajo pretende avanzar en la identificación de actores y de estrategias para este fin.

EL VALOR Y EL ALCANCE DE LA PARTICIPACIÓN CIUDADANA EN LA GESTIÓN DEL PATRIMONIO CULTURAL

La noción del patrimonio cultural como construcción social ha supuesto una progresiva incorporación de la sociedad no solamente en la toma de decisiones sobre los bienes patrimoniales sino, más aún, en los criterios sobre su salvaguarda e incluso en la determinación de qué es patrimonio y cómo se define el valor patrimonial. En este sentido, como ya se apuntaba, la proclamación del Convenio Marco del Consejo de Europa sobre el Valor del Patrimonio Cultural Para la Sociedad, el conocido como Convenio de Faro, supuso en 2005 la primera y gran constatación oficial del modo y medida en que la ciudadanía puede involucrarse en lo que respecta a sus contextos y bienes patrimoniales, llegando incluso a renovar el concepto de patrimonio cultural como el *conjunto de recursos heredados del pasado que las personas identifican, con independencia de a quién pertenezcan, como reflejo y expresión de valores, creencias, conocimientos y tradiciones propios y en constante evolución*, y acuñando el término de comunidad patrimonial como el *conjunto personas que valoran aspectos específicos de un patrimonio cultural que desean conservar y transmitir a futuras generaciones, en el marco de la actuación de los poderes públicos*.

El hecho de que este documento internacional cuente ya con dos décadas no ha provocado una pérdida de su vigencia ni tampoco la presunción de que los preceptos que en él se anuncian y, mucho menos, su efectiva aplicación, sean una cuestión superada en la actualidad. Al contrario, debe tenerse en cuenta que el Convenio fue inicialmente firmado en 2005 por 6 de los Estados miembros y que actualmente son 35 los que lo han ratificado, de entre los cuales España es uno de los últimos, con firma en 2018 y ratificación en 2022, tan

solo seguido por Bélgica, Polonia y San Marino. En el contexto nacional de la elaboración de este trabajo, por tanto, la aplicación de estos principios debe ser considerada como una cuestión incipiente.

No obstante, en los últimos años se ha incorporado a la práctica patrimonial una toma de conciencia de la importancia de la ciudadanía en los procesos de toma de decisiones. Aunque, probablemente por la naturaleza social de sus procesos de salvaguarda, el diseño de mecanismos específicos para vehicular la participación en la gestión patrimonial ha estado especialmente asociada al patrimonio inmaterial (Deacon & Smeets, 2013), también se ha incorporado, probablemente de la mano de la legislación en materia de planificación urbana y territorial, en los planes de gestión de conjuntos patrimoniales (Ripp & Rodwell, 2018). Menos abundantes son los casos en los que se hayan desarrollado mecanismos centrados en la incorporación de las personas en ámbitos patrimoniales concretos, aunque se localizan a menudo en trabajos técnicos relacionados con la arqueología (Kyriakidis, 2020, p. 142) o también en el estudio, la delimitación y la gestión de los paisajes culturales (Tenzer, 2023).

Por otra parte, la orientación hacia la sociedad de los procesos de planificación y toma de decisiones sobre el patrimonio cultural y, particularmente, sobre el patrimonio inmueble con una cierta relevancia a nivel espacial urbano, ha sido enfatizada de la mano de la incorporación de los Objetivos de Desarrollo Sostenible (ODS) en la Agenda 2030 de la Organización de Naciones Unidas y, más concretamente, de la Nueva Agenda Urbana (NUA) publicada por ONU-Habitat en la Conferencia Habitat III en Quito en 2016, que desarrolla el contenido y los principios del ODS número 11 sobre ciudades y comunidades inclusivas, seguras, resilientes y sostenibles. Más concretamente, debe destacarse el papel que la NUA asigna al patrimonio cultural no solamente como objeto de sostenibilidad -es decir, algo que debe ser protegido y conservado junto con el patrimonio natural- sino, más allá, como sujeto de sostenibilidad, por su capacidad de generar un impacto positivo en otras dimensiones como la ambiental, la económica, la social o la de gobernanza. Así, respecto a la incorporación de las personas en los procesos de gestión del patrimonio, el artículo 125 recoge la intención de movilizar el *patrimonio cultural para el desarrollo urbano sostenible* y reconocer *su función como estímulo de la participación y la responsabilidad*. De igual modo, promueve *el uso innovador y sostenible de monumentos y espacios arquitectónicos con la intención de crear valor por medio de restauraciones y adaptaciones respetuosas*.

UN MODELO METODOLÓGICO PARA INCORPORAR A LA CIUDADANÍA EN LA IDENTIFICACIÓN DE VALORES Y EVALUACIÓN DEL IMPACTO PATRIMONIAL SOBRE BIENES PATRIMONIO MUNDIAL

Con base en los principios anteriormente enunciados, nos disponemos a diseñar un modelo metodológico que permita la incorporación efectiva de la ciudadanía y las comunidades locales en los principales objetivos del proyecto WHATS-UP, esto es, identificar los valores patrimoniales de los bienes Patrimonio Mundial con un enfoque desde la sostenibilidad

social y evaluar el impacto patrimonial sobre estos de potenciales intervenciones, proyectos o incluso instrumentos de planificación que puedan afectar a dichos valores.

El desarrollo metodológico partirá de la identificación de la comunidad patrimonial de los bienes sobre los que se va a trabajar. Esto supone una dificultad añadida ya que, por definición, las personas que pueden identificar valores en los bienes Patrimonio Mundial, para los que se ha establecido como condición sine qua non un Valor Universal Excepcional serán, necesariamente, las que componen el total de la sociedad global. La inconmensurabilidad de esta afirmación, que no por ello deja de ser cierta, nos lleva a establecer una serie de niveles de pertenencia o vínculo con los bienes, en función de los cuales se asignan estrategias y mecanismos concretos para su participación, que intervendrán en mayor o menor medida y con distinto grado de concreción en la determinación de valores y del impacto patrimonial:

- En un nivel 0, inicial o básico, se engloba a la ciudadanía en general, que puede conocer en distinto grado la existencia del bien, así como sus valores y sus atributos patrimoniales.
- En un nivel 1, las personas que acceden al bien de manera no sistemática, tanto visitantes turísticos como ciudadanos o incluso expertos de distintos ámbitos que, sin tener un vínculo estrecho con él, lo han experimentado de primera mano.
- En el nivel 2 se incorporan a las personas que tienen un contacto habitual o estrecho con el bien patrimonial. Se incluyen aquí visitantes habituales, expertos o estudiosos del bien, personas que trabajan habitualmente dentro o sobre el mismo, ciudadanos que residen en su entorno inmediato, colectivos cívicos o asociaciones con un especial interés en su gestión, entre otras posibilidades.
- En el nivel 3 se incluye a las personas que tienen una responsabilidad directa en su gestión, ya sea a nivel técnico, institucional o político, y que desarrollan o promueven los instrumentos de planificación, intervención y gestión sobre los que deberán efectuarse los Estudios de Impacto Patrimonial.

Ante esta diversidad de perfiles, se opta por crear un abanico de estrategias o mecanismos que permitan incorporar los puntos de vista y las sensibilidades de todos los grupos identificados en la comunidad patrimonial.

- Para el trabajo con las personas con un mayor contacto, identificación, conocimiento y capacidad de intervención en los bienes (niveles 2 y 3), se diseñan talleres participativos en los que se incorporen a agentes tanto del propio bien como de su contexto urbano y patrimonial. Esto supondrá el desarrollo de una metodología propia para su puesta en marcha, coordinación y extracción de conclusiones. Se desarrollarán dos talleres participativos en cada uno de los dos bienes objeto de estudio en el proyecto: el Real Alcázar de Sevilla y la Alhambra de Granada, el primero dedicado a la asignación de valores y atributos y el segundo a la evaluación del impacto patrimonial. En grupos de 20 a 25 personas, que idealmente deberían ser las mismas en los dos talleres para cada bien, se integrará tanto a algunos miembros del

equipo de investigación del proyecto como a una consultora que desarrollará una asistencia técnica especializada. Los talleres tendrán una duración de unas 7 horas, incluyendo una pausa para el café y otra para el almuerzo, y tendrán una dinámica fundamentalmente activa, permitiendo tanto la formulación directa de ideas y posiciones como la escucha, el debate y el intercambio de opiniones. Se prioriza, por tanto, la calidad de la información recogida sobre la cantidad de personas a incorporar.

- Para la incorporación de los puntos de vista de las personas con una menor cercanía o una experimentación puntual o incluso nula de los bienes patrimoniales, se ha establecido un mecanismo consistente en el diseño, distribución, recogida y análisis de datos resultantes de una pequeña encuesta que será presentada a la ciudadanía a modo de juego en el que perfilar, mediante respuestas de opción sencilla o múltiple a algunas preguntas simples, su propia perspectiva sobre cada uno de los dos bienes patrimoniales objeto de estudio. Basándose en los valores previamente recogidos por el equipo de investigación sobre los instrumentos de protección, planificación y gestión de los conjuntos monumentales y sus entornos urbanos, se determinarán las cuestiones a incorporar en el formulario y se trabajará con un equipo de desarrollo de aplicaciones móviles para su diseño y puesta en marcha. Se colaborará, además, con los organismos gestores de ambos bienes para su distribución entre visitantes y personas interesadas, además de difundirse desde las herramientas digitales del proyecto. En esta estrategia primará la cantidad de respuestas obtenidas sobre la calidad de las valoraciones recibidas.

De forma complementaria a estas dos actividades, se establecen dos mecanismos adicionales que ayudarán a cualificar o modelar la percepción social de los bienes Patrimonio Mundial:

- Se trabajará con la gamificación mediante el uso del recurso *HeritGate, Connecting Worlds*, desarrollado por la Fundación Santa María la Real del Patrimonio Histórico, en el que dos equipos establecen una priorización de valores y atributos sobre un bien o un contexto patrimonial dado, fomentando el debate y el posicionamiento crítico. Se ha aplicado ya en el propio equipo de investigación (Figura 2) y se han planificado experiencias con grupos piloto de estudiantes, técnicos y agentes ciudadanos.
- Se incorporará la construcción de un imaginario alternativo sobre los bienes del Patrimonio Mundial que, a través de la fotografía, pueda construir una mirada sobre los bienes completamente alejada de los tópicos o los discursos autorizados e institucionalizados, centrándose en la vivencia, la experimentación y la selección en la que la ciudadanía desmonta y construye su interpretación sobre el Alcázar de Sevilla y la Alhambra.



FIGURA 2. IMÁGENES DEL TALLER DE *HERITGATE, CONNECTING WORLDS* DESARROLLADO CON EL EQUIPO DEL PROYECTO Y LA FUNDACIÓN SANTA MARÍA LA REAL DEL PATRIMONIO HISTÓRICO

Fuente: Elaboración propia.

CONCLUSIONES

El proyecto WHATS-UP trata de actualizar un modelo metodológico que, focalizado en la gestión de la conservación, incorpora la participación ciudadana al proceso de identificación y monitoreo de los valores culturales. Más allá de esta cuestión procedimental, pretende resolver el vacío que a veces se genera entre la investigación patrimonial y la acción propositiva, avanzando sobre un modelo que permitirá justificar y argumentar las decisiones proyectuales con la incorporación de la comunidad patrimonial.

Aplicada al Patrimonio Mundial y a los casos de estudio en el Alcázar de Sevilla y en la Alhambra, Generalife y el Albaicín en Granada, la investigación persigue avanzar sobre los mecanismos de seguimiento y control que los promotores y las administraciones implicadas puedan llevar a cabo para garantizar los buenos resultados de las acciones propuestas, siempre de manera consensuada con los agentes implicados y la ciudadanía en general. Este modelo de trabajo supondrá un cambio de mentalidad y es extrapolable a la gestión de la conservación de cualquier bien de naturaleza patrimonial.

NOTAS BIOGRÁFICA

Blanca del Espino Hidalgo. Doctora Arquitecta, Máster en Arquitectura y Patrimonio Histórico y Máster en Ciudad y Arquitectura Sostenibles. Ha desarrollado su carrera docente e investigadora entre la Escuela de Arquitectura de Sevilla y el Instituto Andaluz del Patrimonio Histórico. Desarrolla y dirige proyectos sobre la sostenibilidad del patrimonio urbano-territorial en distintos ámbitos (áreas rurales, ciudades medias o grandes ciudades), con especial hincapié en la componente social y participativa. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1442-7385>

Marta García de Casasola Gómez. Doctora Arquitecta, Máster en Arquitectura y Patrimonio Histórico. Su investigación gira en torno a la definición y actualización de las Metodologías para la Conservación del Patrimonio. Ha trabajado interdisciplinariamente, en colaboración con el Instituto Andaluz del Patrimonio Histórico, desarrollando diagnósticos, informes de valores y proyectos de intervención en bienes inmuebles. Entre otros proyectos, participó como redactora en la intervención paisajística en la Ensenada de Bolonia (Cádiz), actuación que obtuvo el premio Hispania Nostra 2013. <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5308-5322>

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COMUNIDADES EM AÇÃO: OS DESAFIOS DA PESQUISA COLABORATIVA NO PROJETO CONVENTUS, LAGOA-ALGARVE

Catarina Almeida Marado

Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra
FCHS, Universidade do Algarve
catarinamarado@ces.uc.pt

Lorena Sancho Querol

Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra
lorenaquerol@ces.uc.pt

RESUMO

No campo da gestão do património cultural, as práticas de colaboração social e cultural são a chave para a construção de caminhos que nos permitem alcançar novos modos de entendimento mútuo para a sustentabilidade cultural, ao mesmo tempo que nutrem sentidos de identidade e de resiliência coletiva. Neste cenário, a memória torna-se uma ferramenta essencial para a compreensão dos valores, emoções e significados do lugar, permitindo-nos criar novos modelos de gestão colaborativa do património cultural de cada lugar. Neste texto partilhamos o enquadramento metodológico, as lógicas colaborativas e os primeiros resultados do projeto *CONVENTUS: Novos olhares sobre o edifício do antigo Convento de São José em Lagoa (Algarve-Portugal)*. Entrelaçando a investigação histórica e arquitetónica em arquivos com a investigação biográfica da comunidade, o projeto está a reconstruir a história das dimensões materiais e imateriais (usos, sentidos, valores e emoções) associadas a este emblemático edifício, com a participação da comunidade de Lagoa. Esta assume assim o papel de agente de memória local, dando voz a este património vivo, através da recolha de testemunhos de memórias e vivências individuais e coletivas, com recurso a múltiplos instrumentos: entrevistas semiestruturadas, rodas de conversa, visitas de escuta ativa e laboratórios colaborativos. O envolvimento da comunidade, o conhecimento pluriverso e a vontade comum de dar vida a este património, são os ingredientes principais de um processo que nos desafia a cada passo.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

património cultural, metodologias participativas, gestão colaborativa, abordagens diacrónicas, micro-história

O PROJETO CONVENTUS: CRUZAR A INVESTIGAÇÃO HISTÓRICA E ARQUITETÓNICA COM A INVESTIGAÇÃO BIOGRÁFICA

O projeto CONVENTUS apresenta novos olhares inclusivos e plurais sobre o edifício do antigo Convento de São José de Lagoa-Algarve, aplicando uma abordagem diacrónica ao estudo da sua história, arquitetura, impactos urbanos e interações sociais ao longo dos seus mais de três séculos de existência, que se desenvolve a partir da aplicação do conceito de investigação ação participativa (IAP) ao património arquitetónico (Gabarrón & Landa, 2006).

Fundado como casa religiosa feminina da Ordem do Carmo, este imóvel adquiriu posteriormente a função de colégio sob a gestão de religiosas dominicanas. À semelhança do que ocorreu com muitos dos antigos conventos (Marado, 2021), após a sua secularização, o edifício acolheu uma diversidade de usos, tais como: escola primária, sede do Grupo Nacional de Escutas, matriz de Lagoa, Conservatória do Registo Civil, posto da Guarda Nacional Republicana, Junta de Freguesia de Lagoa, Museu Municipal de Arte, Etnografia e Arqueologia, e diversos serviços camarários, assumindo a partir de 1993 as funções de Centro Cultural, que mantém até aos dias de hoje.

As recentes transformações da dinâmica funcional deste edifício de referência na cidade de Lagoa, tornaram necessário repensar as suas valências, promovendo ativamente os seus valores socioculturais e a sua importância no seio da comunidade local enquanto motor de desenvolvimento sociocultural integrado e integrador (Nogués-Pedregal, 2006).

Procurando responder a esta necessidade, o projeto CONVENTUS desenvolve uma investigação integrada, participativa e transdisciplinar sobre o edifício do antigo Convento de São José, com o objetivo de produzir conteúdos científicos que servirão de base para a definição de um plano museológico de carácter, natureza e anatomia participativa para este património de carácter religioso. Simultaneamente, organiza um conjunto de atividades e produtos de disseminação do conhecimento gerado ao longo do caminho, dirigidas à comunidade científica, ao público em geral e à comunidade local em particular.

Paralelamente, o projeto pretende contribuir para o desenvolvimento do conhecimento teórico e metodológico sobre abordagens diacrónicas de tempo longo no estudo da arquitetura monástico-conventual e das suas interações históricas, culturais, urbanas e sociais (Marado, 2023), assim como experimentar, avaliar e produzir conhecimento sobre metodologias e práticas participativas no campo da gestão do património cultural, a partir de novos olhares práticos e territorialmente adaptados do conceito de rede (Castells, 2011).

Para tal, recorre-se a uma combinação de metodologias que cruzam a investigação histórica e arquitetónica sobre este antigo espaço conventual com a investigação biográfica, mediante a participação ativa, direta e regular da comunidade local (Sancho Querol, 2017), permitindo uma abordagem atenta e plural às suas dimensões materiais e imateriais.

Constituído por uma equipa multidisciplinar que agrega diferentes saberes e experiências, associando investigadoras/es, técnicas/os municipais, membros da comunidade local e consultoras/es científicas/os, o projeto resulta de uma parceria entre o Centro de Estudos Sociais – Universidade de Coimbra, o Centro de Estudos em Arqueologia, Artes e Ciências do Património – Polo UAlg e o Município de Lagoa, e desenvolve-se em três linhas de investigação.

A Linha 1, *À Descoberta da História Escrita*, dedica-se à recolha e análise de dados a partir de fontes bibliográficas e documentais (manuscritas, impressas, gráficas, cartográficas, iconográficas e fotográficas) conjuntamente com a análise arquitetónica do edifício. Partindo de uma revisão da literatura exaustiva, foram em seguida identificados e consultados os fundos documentais relevantes para a investigação localizados em arquivos nacionais, regionais e municipais. Desta recolha resultou um vasto *corpus documental*, que foi posteriormente sistematizado numa base de dados, permitindo organizar a informação recolhida segundo diferentes períodos cronológicos, partindo-se depois para a sua interpretação (Ricoeur, 1995). Os dados daí resultantes foram posteriormente cruzados com os dados provenientes da interpretação arquitetónica (Groat & Wang, 2013), recorrendo-se a métodos de análise regressiva através do desenho para a identificação do processo de construção e transformação do edifício ao longo do tempo.

A Linha 2, *À Descoberta das Memórias Faladas*, foca-se na recolha de dados historiográficos a partir de pesquisa biográfica (Acaso & De Pascual, 2014) efetuada por meio da realização de um conjunto de entrevistas semiestruturadas realizadas às pessoas da comunidade local, revelando as memórias e significados atribuídos ao edifício. Complementando esta recolha, foram realizadas duas Visitas de Escuta Ativa e quatro sessões de Rodas de Conversa dedicadas a tópicos considerados relevantes para a comunidade local. Estas ferramentas proporcionaram um espaço privilegiado para o resgate e partilha de memórias, experiências e saberes locais, permitindo aos/às participantes refletirem em conjunto sobre as vivências pessoais, bem como sobre os processos de transformação social e cultural nos contextos e realidades abordados.

A Linha 3, *Partilhando Experiências em Rede*, pretende criar uma rede cultural ativa multifacetada e multidirecional, estabelecendo pontos de contacto com outros edifícios de natureza semelhante, a nível local, regional, nacional e transnacional, conectando sinergias entre os edifícios, as instituições que os tutelam e as comunidades que os habitam. Nesta linha, procedeu-se ao mapeamento dos antigos edifícios conventuais existentes na Península Ibérica com uso cultural na atualidade e à análise comparativa dos projetos culturais em curso em cada um desses imóveis, estabelecendo as bases para uma análise teórica e metodológica que permitirá repensar a função social e cultural destes edifícios e a forma como podem cooperar, partilhando experiências numa rede alargada de saberes locais.

Do cruzamento destas três linhas resultará um “novo olhar” sobre a história, as transformações arquitetónicas e o papel deste edifício no desenvolvimento urbano de Lagoa e na vida das suas comunidades ao longo do tempo, assim como polo de articulação e partilha de experiências museológicas em rede ao nível ibérico, com vista ao desenvolvimento de futuros projetos colaborativos no âmbito do património arquitetónico local.

A PESQUISA COLABORATIVA NO PROJETO CONVENTUS

A comunidade assume assim o papel de agente de memória local dando voz a este patrimônio vivo, através da recolha de testemunhos de memórias e vivências individuais e coletivas com recurso a um conjunto de ferramentas utilizadas no campo da IAP: entrevistas semiestruturadas, rodas de conversa, visitas de escuta ativa e laboratórios colaborativos.

ENTREVISTAS SEMIESTRUTURADAS

A partir de temáticas-chave para o CONVENTUS, foi definido um guião de entrevista em função de quatro temas principais: (1) Surgimento do Convento na vida do/a informante; (2) Características e vivências; (3) Importância do Convento e seus significados para o/a entrevistado/a; e (4) Perceção atual do Convento e expectativas para o futuro.

As entrevistas foram realizadas entre outubro de 2023 e junho de 2024 por Gabriela Vieira, socióloga e investigadora na equipa do projeto. No total foram efetuadas 34 entrevistas semiestruturadas, com o objetivo de integrar no projeto todas aquelas pessoas da comunidade local de Lagoa que tiveram (ou que ainda têm) alguma relação com o edifício em análise.

Esta ferramenta permitiu recolher narrativas detalhadas, contribuindo para a compreensão das experiências, histórias, valores, memórias e emoções associadas ao espaço, constituindo por isso o elemento fundamental para a recolha dos dados biográficos, sendo posteriormente complementada com os restantes instrumentos de recolha.

RODAS DE CONVERSA

O Ciclo de Rodas de Conversa foi realizado entre março e maio de 2024, compreendendo quatro sessões sob o nome de “Conversas de Café”. Com o objetivo de criar momentos de partilha das memórias relativas ao edifício, e dar espaço para uma reflexão conjunta sobre as vivências pessoais, as Conversas tiveram lugar na Sala Polivalente do Centro Cultural Convento de São José com uma média de 10 a 12 participantes por sessão.

Cada sessão incidiu sobre um tópico diferente que foi escolhido em conjunto com a comunidade local. Os temas abordados foram:

- Roda de Conversa 1 – Tema: *Memórias do Convento*. Centrou-se na reflexão sobre a história do edifício, explorando as suas transformações ao longo do tempo, a forma como estas foram experienciadas pela comunidade, e também a sua relevância no contexto geográfico, histórico e simbólico da cidade;
- Roda de Conversa 2 – Tema: *Memórias da Escola*. Colocou o foco nas memórias do funcionamento da escola primária no edifício, analisando a transformação e a forma de utilização dos diferentes espaços, as experiências educativas dos/as participantes,

os métodos e ferramentas de ensino ao longo do século XX, o ambiente escolar e o modo como este contribuiu para a formação de identidades individuais e coletivas (Figura 1) particularmente no concelho de Lagoa;

- Roda de Conversa 3 – Tema: *Os Sismos e as Transformações do Convento*. Explorou as consequências dos sismos que afetaram o edifício, nomeadamente os danos causados pelo abalo de 1969, refletindo sobre o impacto desses eventos na preservação do património e na memória coletiva do lugar;
- Roda de Conversa 4 – Tema: *Brincar na Escola*. Analisou as práticas lúdicas na escola e a forma como os espaços eram vivenciados pelos/as alunos/as nas atividades do recreio, assim como as mudanças nas formas de brincar ao longo do tempo.



FIGURA 1. RODA DE CONVERSA 2 – TEMA: MEMÓRIAS DA ESCOLA, ATIVIDADE DINAMIZADA PELA EQUIPA CONVENTUS COM A PARTICIPAÇÃO DA COMUNIDADE LOCAL. REALIZADA A 4 DE ABRIL DE 2024

Fonte: Projeto CONVENTUS.

VISITAS DE ESCUTA ATIVA

No âmbito do projeto foram realizadas duas Visitas de Escuta Ativa (VEA) com a comunidade, com o mesmo objetivo de recolher memórias, perceções e interpretações sobre o edifício, num processo que valorizou a partilha situada de experiências no espaço, permitindo uma compreensão mais profunda e contextualizada dos seus significados.

A primeira VEA, realizada no dia 15 de março de 2024, teve lugar na igreja do Convento de São José e foi conduzida por Carlos Soares, artista plástico responsável pelo restauro da igreja entre os anos de 1985 e 1992, que descreveu os trabalhos realizados e partilhou um conjunto de memórias ligadas ao processo de intervenção neste espaço, seus desafios, ferramentas e critérios de intervenção.

A segunda VEA ocorreu no dia 15 de maio de 2024, nas instalações do edifício, com a participação de antigos alunos e alunas da escola primária que ali funcionou, focando-se na identificação dos espaços onde funcionava a antiga escola, bem como em práticas educativas e sociais associadas ao quotidiano da época.

LABORATÓRIOS COLABORATIVOS

Como complemento às atividades e ferramentas até agora referidas, foi também realizado um conjunto de quatro Laboratórios Colaborativos (LCs) junto da comunidade e da equipa da Câmara Municipal de Lagoa, com o objetivo de pensar coletivamente o espaço no presente e no futuro, por forma a colocá-lo no centro da vida da população lagoense, quer pela qualificação dos espaços, quer pela dinamização cultural do imóvel, quer pela envolvimento da comunidade em cada uma das dimensões e objetivo do próximo capítulo vital deste edifício de valor patrimonial. Nos LCs foram utilizadas metodologias como Mapeamento Cultural Coletivo, o Design Colaborativo (Iconoclastas, 2025) e as Síntese Democráticas, por forma a se obterem mapas de projeção de futuras e dinâmicas desejadas e necessárias para a comunidade de Lagoa.

O 1º Laboratório Colaborativo (LC1) teve lugar no dia 17 de janeiro de 2025 no Pátio das Gerações. Subordinado ao tema: *Quatro décadas de Cultura: E agora? que futuro queremos?* a sessão permitiu aos/às participantes identificar necessidades, discutir desafios e propor soluções para o espaço do antigo Convento.

O 2º Laboratório Colaborativo (LC2) teve lugar no dia 30 de janeiro de 2025, no Auditório Carlos do Carmo, em Lagoa (Figura 2). Subordinado ao tema *Incubadora de laços afetivos no território*, o LC2 teve por objetivo cartografar coletiva e localmente: i) a realidade sociocultural do Convento de São José ao longo do tempo; ii) os seus potenciais identitários, culturais e patrimoniais; e iii) o seu papel, funções e missão num futuro próximo, pensado a várias vozes.

O 3º Laboratório Colaborativo (LC3) teve lugar no dia 23 de fevereiro, na Escola Secundária Padre António Martins de Oliveira. Sob o Tema: *O Centro Cultural Convento de S. José: Passado, Presente e Futuro pelo olhar da população jovem*, o objetivo do LC3 consistiu em explorar a

relação da juventude com este espaço histórico, promovendo a escuta ativa e cocriação coletiva.

O 4º Laboratório Colaborativo (LC4) teve lugar no dia 27 de fevereiro no Centro Cultural Convento de São José. Com o tema: *Centro Cultural Convento de S. José: desafios e linhas futuras de ação*, este laboratório foi um espaço privilegiado de reflexão sobre o futuro do Convento e do seu modelo de gestão cultural, contando com a participação de representantes da comunidade, associações culturais e especialistas locais na área do património.

Desenhadas e aplicadas de forma a permitir a presença regular e permanente da comunidade ao longo do caminhar do CONVENTUS, mas também a construção de um entendimento mútuo, baseado no respeito pela diversidade e na construção de um diálogo plural, aberto e sensível, estas atividades traduziram-se, com o passar do tempo e graças à colaboração de todas e cada uma das pessoas envolvidas, nos seguintes resultados e/ou efeitos:

- **Presença plena, regular e permanente** de um amplo conjunto de membros da comunidade identificados/as com a ajuda da equipa da CML e profundamente conhecedores/as da história do edifício nas suas diversas vertentes, desde o início do projeto e em todas as atividades organizadas pelo CONVENTUS;
- **Construção lenta, progressiva, consciente e sensível** de uma relação de interajuda, confiança e cumplicidade entre a equipa do CONVENTUS e as pessoas da comunidade, mediante: i) a programação colaborativa de cada uma das atividades do projeto; ii) a partilha dos desafios, preocupações, conflitos, sonhos, possibilidades, impossibilidades e desejos, em cada um dos momentos de encontro;
- **Participação física, intelectual e sensitiva** da comunidade em cada uma das fases do projeto: diagnóstico da realidade atual, análise documental, estúdio mnemónico, identificação de possibilidades e desenho de futuros;
- **Reforço de autoestima, consolidação da coesão relacional, desenvolvimento de capacidades** de entendimento e de tomada de decisões coletivas, sentimento de união, compreensão e respeito pela diversidade como resultado do processo de trabalho-criação partilhado.

OS PRIMEIROS RESULTADOS DO CONVENTUS: CONSTRUINDO O FUTURO COM A COMUNIDADE, DESDE O PRESENTE E COM A HISTÓRIA COMO EIXO NORTEADOR

Com início em outubro de 2022, o projeto CONVENTUS recebeu em 2025 o *Prémio de Excelência Autárquica* na área da Cultura no âmbito do III Congresso da Cidade Social e produziu já um conjunto significativo de resultados, entre os quais:

- o website do projeto (<https://conventus.ces.uc.pt/>), que faz a apresentação da iniciativa, da equipa, do edifício, das atividades e da produção realizada, e ainda da

plataforma base para a implementação da rede ibérica de antigos (e atuais) edifícios conventuais com função sociocultural na atualidade;

- o International Seminar “New perspectives on female monastic architecture and heritage”, que teve lugar nos dias 21 e 22 de novembro 2024 em Lagoa. Um encontro que reuniu um amplo e diversificado conjunto de investigadoras/es, técnicas/os e alunas/os de património cultural com o objetivo de discutir as mais recentes abordagens ao estudo da arquitetura conventual feminina e os desafios que se colocam hoje à gestão deste vasto e rico património em contexto internacional.
- o Ciclo de Laboratórios Colaborativos, realizado entre janeiro e fevereiro de 2025 com o objeto de refletir sobre a história e o presente do Convento, pensando de forma criativa, funcional e coletiva o próximo capítulo vital deste espaço de cultura;
- a publicação do livro internacional, *Re-interpreting Female Conventual Heritage: Space, Memories and Reuse*, coordenado por Catarina Almeida Marado, Lorena Sancho Querol, María del Castillo García Romero e Ismael Estevens Medeiros, numa edição conjunta do CES-UC, CEAACP-Polo UALG e CMLagoa (no prelo), destina-se a compreender em profundidade a essência desta tipologia arquitetónica segundo novas abordagens definidas a partir da experiência do projeto CONVENTUS;
- a publicação de um livro dedicado ao edifício do Convento de São José de Lagoa, coordenado por Catarina Almeida Marado, Lorena Sancho Querol e Ismael Estevens Medeiros, também numa edição conjunta do CES-UC, CEAACP-Polo UALG e CMLagoa (no prelo), que apresentará os resultados finais da investigação que foi realizada sobre este imóvel no decorrer do projeto e permanecerá como um instrumento para a divulgação da história do Convento.



FIGURA 2. EQUIPA CONVENTUS (COORDENAÇÃO, INVESTIGAÇÃO, MUNICÍPIO DE LAGOA, CONSULTORES CIENTÍFICOS E COMUNIDADE LOCAL), ORADORES, ALUNOS E PARTICIPANTES NO CONVENTUS PROJECT INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR REALIZADO ENTRE 21 E 22 DE NOVEMBRO DE 2024 NO CENTRO CULTURAL CONVENTO DE SÃO JOSÉ EM LAGOA, PORTUGAL

Fonte: Projeto CONVENTUS.

Para além dos desafios inerentes à pesquisa histórica e à análise arquitetónica que a abordagem diacrónica exige, e por tratar-se de um edifício de grande complexidade tanto ao nível da história, como da arquitetura, como ainda dos usos e das interações sociais e urbanas que manteve ao longo dos seus mais de três séculos de existência, a utilização da IAP abriu espaço para um trabalho entranhado no território, na história da terra e das suas gentes, e nas necessidade socioculturais, multiperspectivadas e transgeracionais do espaço em estudo. Atuar localmente a partir de estas metodologias e suas ferramentas, junto, com e para a população local em toda a sua diversidade, envolve um olhar atento, sereno e perspicaz, capaz de gerir a diversidade de vivências, necessidades e desejos existentes – e por vezes silenciados – em cada lugar (Carpentier, 2012). Os projetos cujos pilares são edificados com o material do IAP são sempre mais diversos nos seus olhares, mas desafiantes na sua gestão do dia a dia e de cada um dos seus objetivos, sendo também muito mais reais nas suas abordagens e, simultaneamente, mais eficazes nos seus resultados e nos seus impactos positivos no território.

Desafiante é também a integração destas narrativas e de cada um dos seus resultados na construção de um presente melhor para todos/as, um processo que se encontra atualmente em desenvolvimento e cujos frutos serão vertidos para o futuro programa museológico a construir de forma colaborativa junto com diversos agentes, entre os quais a comunidade local, a equipa da Câmara, as associações locais e as escolas públicas, entre outros.

NOTAS BIOGRÁFICAS

Catarina Almeida Marado é Investigadora integrada no CES-Universidade de Coimbra e Professora auxiliar convidada na FCHS-Universidade do Algarve e na ETSArquitectura-Universidade de Sevilha. É arquiteta, com formação pós-graduada em Património Cultural, Urbanismo e Ordenamento do Território, e Doutoramento em Arquitetura pela Universidade de Sevilha. A sua investigação incide sobre a aplicação de abordagens diacrónicas ao estudo do património construído e das suas relações com os contextos urbanos e sociais em transformação, a história do património cultural e os processos de patrimonialização e a integração de práticas colaborativas na gestão do património. Participa em vários projetos nacionais e internacionais e coordena o Projeto CONVENTUS, com Lorena Sancho Querol.

Lorena Sancho Querol é ativista e investigadora em Museologia Social no Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra. É doutorada em Museologia e pos-doutorada em Gestão Participativa em Museus. Entre os últimos projetos realizados destacam-se: SoMus “A Sociedade no Museu” (BD-FCT,2014–2019), com foco na identificação, análise e sistematização de práticas inovadoras de participação cultural em 4 museus europeus; CREATOUR, “Creative Tourism Destination Development in Small Cities and Rural Areas” (P-2020, 2016–2020); ECHOES, “European Colonial Heritage Modalities in Entangled Cities” (H-2020, 2018–2021). Atualmente participa em vários projetos nacionais e internacionais e coordena o Projeto CONVENTUS junto com Catarina Almeida Marado.

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CO-CREATION OF HUMAN-NATURE SOLUTIONS / CULTURE, NATURE AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

BUILDING THE CAPACITY FOR ‘CULTURE-NATURE’ INTERACTION IN REVITALIZING OPEN PUBLIC SPACE IN THE LARGE HOUSING ESTATES OF BULGARIA

Elena Dimitrova

University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy

Milena Tasheva-Petrova

University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy

tasheva_far@uacg.bg

ABSTRACT

The paper discusses the role of the local socio-cultural context in the joint effort undertaken to increase urban climate resilience in a large housing estate in Sofia by introducing nature-based solutions (NBS) to health and climate-related issues in the urban environment. Based on the results of the EU-funded URBiNAT project (H2020, 2018–2024), the authors discuss how the NBS concept, models, and tools proposed by the project were locally perceived, interpreted, further enriched, and practically integrated into the local planning process through the interaction of public authorities, academic researchers, citizens, and technical urban experts. Conclusions are drawn about the effectiveness of the project intervention in initiating a visible transformation in individual perceptions and community interactions but also in established planning approaches, tools, and procedures. Recommendations are made about estimated priorities and needed efforts for increasing the sensitivity of the local governance culture to “people–nature” centered considerations.

KEYWORDS

action research, large housing estate (LHE), culture-based urban regeneration, nature-based solutions (NBS), co-creation of public space

INTRODUCTION

During the millennia-long interaction of humans with nature, cities have provided shelter to habitation, economic activities, and social life. They have evolved as hubs of knowledge, culture, and spiritual development, but have also overexploited natural resources and are today facing the consequences of alienation from nature and its rhythms. Nowadays, the estimated need for supporting the continuity of urban development by increasing the climate resilience of human settlements has put an explicit focus on urban regeneration and the need to rethink the value of nature in human life and to undertake a systemic restoration of nature

in urban space. The recently intensified scientific and public discourse on nature-based solutions (NBS) has brought attention to a broad range of issues—from NBS conceptual interpretations to the challenges of understanding the factors that influence their practical applicability and their long-term effectiveness under varying geographical, economic, sociocultural, and spatial conditions. Although already identified as important aspects of NBS creation and implementation, the sociocultural dimensions of the process seem still understudied.

THE CONCEPTUALIZATION OF NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS IN THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY

Acknowledging societal dependence on natural ecosystems has provided a strong foundation for action by stressing its importance for humanity and emphasizing the need to reconceptualize human–environment interactions and effectively integrate them into policy (World Resources Institute, 2005). Nature-based solutions are increasingly hailed nowadays in the effort to boost cities' climate resilience, biodiversity, and social cohesion. NBS is also assumed as an umbrella term for ecosystem-related approaches (Cohen-Shacham et al., 2016), which have gradually evolved to reflect an adaptive and integrated strategy to address the complex challenges facing contemporary natural environments. The wider application of nature-based solutions to climate change is expected to deliver multiple societal benefits and contribute to biodiversity conservation (EEA, 2023). Many authors claim that the path ahead requires collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to preserving the planet's valuable ecosystems for future generations. The effective application of participatory planning approaches is therefore considered an important factor in the NBS-related decision-making processes (Pröbstl-Haider et al., 2024). Numerous EU-funded research projects have studied NBS from different perspectives since 2016 (Collier, 2022), while the URBINAT project provided an integrated one (Ferreira et al., 2024).

NATURE IN THE LOCAL CULTURAL CONTEXT OF BULGARIAN SETTLEMENTS

Sensitivity and respect for nature have been deeply embedded in the structure of traditional Bulgarian settlements and architectural styles for centuries. Towns and villages have developed in harmony with the natural landscape, and nature has largely influenced their morphology. This unity is also visible in the residential buildings dated from the Bulgarian Revival period (from the mid-18th century to the late 19th century), which demonstrate a conscious living in balance with nature (Stamov et al., 1972). Being a central compositional element, their courtyards served as multifunctional spaces blending agricultural practices with social interaction, and framed by vine-covered walls, climbing vegetation, flowerbeds, and blossoming fruit trees (Sugarev, 1993).

The modern planning approaches applied in Sofia since the late 19th century and until World War II largely respected the inherited principles. The plans strived to provide climate comfort and enable favourable air flows through the street orientation, to integrate existing riverbeds

into the urban tissue, and to ensure green wedges connecting the city with the adjacent mountain and the rural surroundings. The large housing estates (LHE) planned, designed, and built on expropriate ex-rural land between the 1960s and mid-1980s were to accommodate the people needed for a rapidly industrialized society. Following the principles of Modernism, the LHEs were supposed to guarantee equity in providing an adequate living standard in the residential units, social services, and facilities, as well as abundant public greenery accessible for all. The inhabitants of the newly built LHEs often kept the tradition of planting trees, flowers, and creeping vines next to the buildings or in front of their entrances to counteract anonymity and increase comfort in places for leisure and social contact.

The political changes in Central and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s replaced centrally planned economies with market-oriented ones and caused considerable transformations in urban development and planning. In Bulgaria they resulted in the restitution of urban land to previous owners (or their heirs) and the fragmentation of the physical structure of the open space system, the LHEs of Sofia, and its cultural meaning (Rode, 2007). Despite building densification and the visible shrinking of public space, today's LHEs still comprise large public green areas in between the residential buildings and intimate spaces with small gardens and climbing vegetation in front of the entrances. The Sofia LHEs currently shelter people with diverse life paths, qualifications, income, and ways of life. From second- or third-generation residents being locally rooted and sharing common memories and stories, to newcomers on restituted land or in newly purchased apartments opting to integrate, to people largely alienated from local social life. This diversity is nowadays seen as both a chance and a challenge to community development and to building a shared vision and strategy on the use of public space.

RESEARCH AIM, QUESTIONS, AND METHODOLOGY

The **aim** of this study is to outline how the local cultural context—people's way of life, values, and motivations, but also active planning rules and approaches, influence the typology and practical integration of NBS into the public space of the large housing estates inherited from socialism. The study applies a case study-based approach and discusses the NBS-related action jointly undertaken in Nadezhda District of Sofia by the municipal authorities and a university research team within the EU-funded URBiNAT project (Moniz & Lameiras, 2024). To address housing shortage in the rapidly industrialized city, several large housing estates with multifamily residential buildings were planned and built at the urban periphery in the mid-20th century following the principles of the Athens Charter. Under a changing societal context after the 1990s, public space in the estates had been shrinking and undergoing numerous functional and ownership transformations. The URBiNAT project undertook the testing of inclusive planning approaches to conceptualize and practically implement a Healthy Corridor (HC), as a cluster of NBS, linking two large urban parks on both sides of the Nadezhda housing estates. The effort relied on the support of local educational and cultural institutions, citizens, planning experts, local administrative staff, elected politicians, students and pupils, NGOs, and housing associations. After identifying local cultural practices and existing conflicts in public space, the project applied participatory planning tools

(roundtables, workshops, etc.) to discuss and co-create nature-based solutions (NBS) to perceived local challenges. Being personally involved in the URBiNAT research, the authors reflect on its process and published results through a culture lens to outline local peculiarities in the general tendency of changing the urban culture of “human–nature” interaction in Sofia.

Two **research questions (RQ)** have been addressed: What were the NBS proposals prioritized for implementation in the local citizens’ proposals as an expression of their nature-related values and needs? (RQ1); and (2) How were the proposed NBS integrated into the documents and procedures of the active urban planning system to be practically implemented? (RQ2).

The study interprets the URBiNAT project intervention into the built environment of Nadezhda within the culture framework adapted from Stephenson (2023). The external influences stimulating cultural change were related to the EU policy priorities for undertaking action in response to climate change challenges, followed by URBiNAT. The external influences supporting cultural stasis were referred to the established planning policy processes, its power relations with society, and its expert and collaborative capacity. The study focuses on two key areas of interplay influencing the NBS practical implementation: Interplay 1 outlines the links between the local actors’ values, needs, and expected benefits concerning nature in the living environment and the NBS proposed to be implemented with URBiNAT support. The estimation of the cultural dimensions of the interplay is based on reported project activities and results (Moniz, 2024). Interplay 2 outlines the processes of NBS integration into the active planning system and estimates the compatibility of URBiNAT’s innovative participatory tools with the requirements of the existing administrative procedures and planning documents (Figure 1) and the official requirements for political validation of the interventions by Sofia municipality.

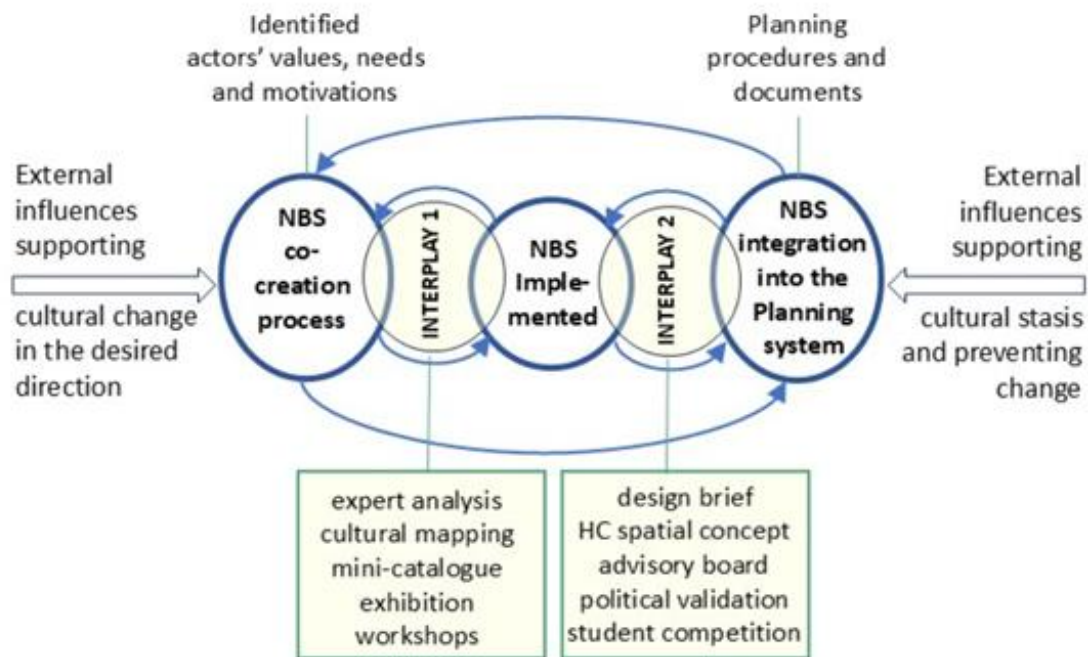


FIGURE 1. CONCEPTUAL SCHEME OF URBINAT INTERVENTION IN NADEZHDA DISTRICT, SOFIA

Source: Adapted from Stephenson (2023).

STUDY RESULTS

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN ACTORS' VALUES AND THE PROPOSED NBS IMPLEMENTATION

To respond to RQ1 the study analyzed the results of two URBiNAT investigation lines—on shared residents' perceptions and needs at the on-site meetings and workshops, and on the proposals made for NBS implementation (Moniz & Lameiras, 2024). These were then related to the NBS practically implemented because of the URBiNAT project's intervention to provide the basis for a further estimation of the capacity of the planning system to integrate NBS practical implementation (Table 1).

Identified local values	Local needs as formulated in citizens' proposals	NBS practically implemented as a result of the project
a. Better contact with nature in the living environment, ecological considerations	Better public greenery maintenance	not realized
	Introducing water fountains in public places	not realized
	Utilizing the local thermal spring	A well upgraded thermal; a swimming pool design competition organized
	Providing access to the riverbed	not realized
	Adding green walls in open space	not realized
	No parking of cars allowed on public greenery	Parking places along the Healthy Corridor reorganized, a new green parking built
	Preserving existing trees	Preserving the existing traditional trees
b. Accessible and safe living environment	Improving the state of the pedestrian environment (pavements, crossing, lighting)	HC pavements upgraded, safe crossing of the boulevards organized; greenery shaped to improve visibility
c. Everyday active movement and outdoor sports activities	Improving connectivity within the neighborhoods	The HC developed as a pedestrian area linking the two public parks
	Connecting the two public parks; an easier crossing of the river	The HC organized; a bridge upgraded
	Efficiently organizing traffic and calming down pedestrian space.	Pavements improved along the main track of the HC
	Providing affordable space for sports	Sports fields and open-air fitness facilities constructed

Identified local values	Local needs as formulated in citizens' proposals	NBS practically implemented as a result of the project
	Providing children's playgrounds	Children's playgrounds upgraded
d. Open public space for socializing and public life	Providing place for family games	Space for family games organized
	Providing space for cultural activities and dancing classes	An open-air Green Amphitheatre constructed
	Space for recreation and relax	A site with wooden park elements provided
	Fencing an area for dog walking	not realized
	Organizing open-air markets for fruits and vegetables	A Farmers' Market organized at the Green Amphitheatre
e. Educating respect and understanding for the role of nature in human life	Educating children to care for nature and the environment	The "Tasty Garden of Learning" upgrading was supported in a kindergarten yard
	Practical education for young people on growing plants	A Greenhouse built to replace a previous one in a schoolyard
	Working with natural and recycled materials	A "do-it-yourself" playground and one for family board games constructed
	Organizing agricultural activities	A flower garden planted by residents

TABLE 1. IDENTIFIED RESIDENTS' VALUES AND NEEDS VS. NBS LOCALLY IMPLEMENTED BY URBINAT PROJECT

Source: Authors.

The analysis of the inhabitants' needs claimed during URBiNAT's inclusive events outlined five groups of values related to contact with nature that were broadly acknowledged by the residents:

- a. **Closer contact with nature.** Building a thermal water swimming pool had been a long-held dream for the residents and the district administration alike; it had been discussed by politicians, experts, and citizens since the project's inception. The ideas of utilizing the thermal water spring for building facilities for children's physical education and recreation and introducing water fountains in public space resonated with millennia-long regional cultural traditions in Southeastern Europe. The proposal for incorporating "green walls" in public open spaces aligned with long-standing historical and contemporary local practices of shading space. A group of proposals—better maintenance of green public space and safeguarding the greenery from parked cars—were aimed at a better microclimate and healthier urban environment. The proposals of this group were only partially implemented within URBiNAT.
- b. **An accessible and safe living environment.** This was expected to be achieved through improving the state of the pedestrian areas, including pavements, crossings, lighting, etc. The project responded to all the requests.
- c. **Everyday active movement and sports activities in the open air.** The aspiration for everyday active movement motivated claims for improving the traffic organization in favour of non-motorized mobility within and between the neighborhoods, and for connecting the two parks located on either side of the area. These claims were fully addressed by the project. The Healthy Corridor provided a new pedestrian link, pavements along its main track were repaired, and the bridge over the river was upgraded.
- d. **Open public space for socializing and public life.** The key function of public space to foster social interaction was addressed, while considering communication, recreation, and co-creation. Open space for family games, relaxation, performances, and events was organized. The URBiNAT contributions complemented the municipal practice of providing planting materials to residents for more than 20 years. The traditional maintenance of self-made social places in front of the blocks of flats was supported.
- e. **Educating respect and understanding for the role of nature in human life.** The educational aspect was highly appreciated by all residents. Places for working together and exhibitions in public places were perceived to be needed. A "Tasty Garden of Learning", already functioning in a local kindergarten where children, teachers, and parents were jointly growing herbs, vegetables, and fruits, was highly regarded by the residents as a means to develop an attitude to healthy living in harmony with oneself, other people, and nature. A long-standing tradition of greenhouses and open educational agricultural fields in Bulgarian schools was revived through a greenhouse constructed in the place of a previously existing one in a schoolyard. Regretfully, despite citizens' willingness to engage with urban agriculture, the district Mayor was reluctant to endorse the practice.

THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN THE URBINAT CO-CREATION PROCESS AND THE ACTIVE PLANNING SYSTEM IN SOFIA MUNICIPALITY

The analysis of processes in this interplay enabled the response to RQ2. The local NBS co-creation undertaken through the URBiNAT project comprised a complex set of organizational and investment initiatives with expected tangible and intangible results. The planning and investment processes of the Healthy Corridor required the synchronization of numerous institutions, activities, and tools (Figure 2).

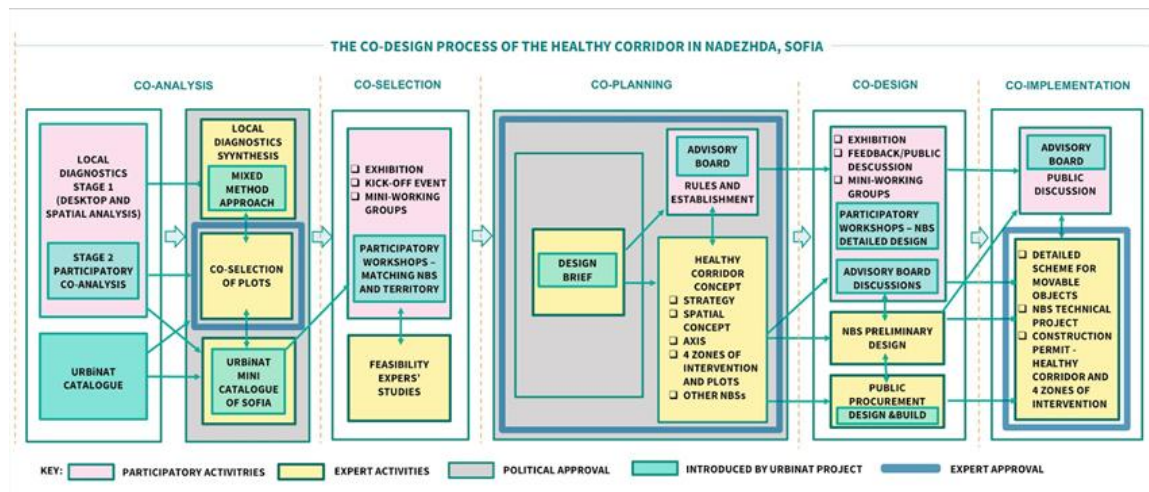


FIGURE 2. INTEGRATION OF THE URBINAT TOOLS INTO THE URBAN PLANNING AND INVESTMENT PROCESSES DURING THE NBS IMPLEMENTATION

Source: Expanded from Moniz (2021).

The authors have undertaken several steps to analyze the URBINAT action to integrate NBS into the ongoing planning and governance practice:

Linking the URBiNAT co-creation process with the documents and procedures of the planning system. A series of participatory activities was undertaken during the co-analysis, co-selection, and co-design stages of the project. The initial co-creation processes were easily integrated within the local planning system, participatory activities being already included in the practice of Sofia Municipality and the political validation points being explicitly coordinated.

Building a typology of the action undertaken. The tasks and responsibilities within expert, participatory, and policy decision-making activities were clearly distinguished, structured, and synchronized. The expert activities had a prevailing share within the whole process, while the results of the participatory activities were summarized and made publicly available

in an on-site exhibition—to share the results of the local diagnosis and to explain and operationalize the NBS implementation through Sofia’s mini-catalogue. Two validation steps were successfully integrated into the planning process, concerning the plots for the URBINAT intervention at the end of the co-analysis stage, and the official approval of the Healthy Corridor concept as a closing act of the co-planning stage.

Situating the new tools into the active governance system. The URBiNAT project introduced a number of innovative tools into the local system: the Healthy Corridor (HC) design brief and spatial concept, a Stakeholders Advisory Board, two political validation procedures, and a student competition. The HC design brief summarized and integrated the results of the participatory workshops into an urban planning assignment, translating them into expert technical language. The HC spatial concept respected the requirements set in the Design Brief and formulated the strategic vision on the practical NBS implementation in Nadezhda district. The architectural competition—a forgotten practice in the country—was used as a tool for sensitizing public attitude to the physical organization of public space. The Stakeholders Advisory Board of local citizens and experts, established during the co-planning stage, was meant to support NBS management and monitoring during the HC co-design and co-implementation stages.

Identifying NBS implementation challenges. Several main challenges were identified: Despite the clear criteria formulated and the detailed expert evaluation, the selection of the intervention plots was finally subjected to a non-transparent political validation. Some inconsistencies also occurred between the research results and their compilation into the HC design brief. The constitution of the Stakeholders Advisory Board followed clear rules and transparent procedures (Ferreira et al., 2024), but the competence and motivation of the individuals who applied was difficult to foresee. The investment projects proved to be a major challenge in the transition from planning to implementation due to the confidentiality of the negotiations and the conservative character of the procedures. A major issue was the technological compatibility of the newly introduced tools and procedures with the established planning practices and the limited time available for validation of the proposed interventions. The NBS with an investment component, i.e., the greenhouse, due to the required numerous coordination procedures, was difficult to integrate into the project timeframe. Others needed additional institutional coordination outside the local level, e.g., the bridge upgrading had to be coordinated with the regional Water Basin Directorate.

Identifying the reasons for not realizing some proposals. Issues of NBS scale, character, and required institutional coordination were among the constraints identified. Large-scale NBS (e.g., riverbed re-naturalization) required complex integrated planning approaches and an intervention scope going beyond the URBiNAT budget and timeframe. A visible discrepancy was observed between collective dreams and administrative considerations, e.g., residents valued the mineral water and its health benefits, but the district administration prioritized considerations about existing practical barriers. Budget restrictions and the ongoing inflation in the country proved to be additional challenges to NBS realization. Missing mechanisms for water consumption control and inefficient mechanisms to bind it to public payments were the arguments given to reject the restoration of the drinking water fountains in public space.

DISCUSSION

The URBiNAT project was initiated to develop and test NBS-related inclusive planning approaches, tools, and models thus influencing existing planning practice within the diverse cultural context of Europe. When Sofia municipality took the chance to join the process, the project had to be integrated ad hoc into the active strategic and operational planning documents of the municipality. Besides the tangible changes in the urban environment, the URBiNAT project had some substantial cultural impact at the local level:

Respect for urban continuity and the cultural embeddedness of the local process while stimulating and supporting innovative change. The URBiNAT project enabled the consideration of a broader cultural framework of the urban process and supported the revival and continuity of local nature-related traditions in Bulgarian settlements. Some key local values were identified and integrated in the NBS co-creation. The project development proved that NBS are meaningful to citizens when responding to clearly defined local social and cultural needs and confirmed the need to link urban culture (i.e., inhabitants' values, behavioural modes, and perceptions) to the physical characteristics of the urban structure (function, morphology, infrastructure, etc.). The inclusive approaches applied in the URBiNAT project enhanced citizens' awareness, understanding, and self-confidence about NBS implementation; it also enabled a deeper view in people's motivations, value systems, and way of life.

Starting a dialogue with the local planning system on needed changes in currently established thinking, models, and practices. Coming to Nadezhda District in Sofia, URBiNAT logically entered an ongoing urban process, itself the result of a long development path and specific social, economic, and cultural pattern. The project was meant to intervene in an urban area being governed by an already adopted urban plan, a variety of planning and investment documents, and with an established planning culture. The tools introduced by the project made it potentially possible to translate the theoretical principles of inclusive planning into the language of local communities and future planning practice in Bulgaria.

Identifying barriers and bottlenecks to innovation. Being pragmatic, the URBiNAT project sought to adapt activities to the established local rules. Instead of striving to change active planning rules and procedures, it tried to encourage creative approaches to identifying opportunities within the existing frame of planning regulations. For example, the project strived to enable more effective integration of inclusive planning approaches in a planning process where public hearings are currently mandatory, but feedback on the integration of the proposals made is not obligatory.

Outlining needed changes in the culture of urban planning and governance. The URBiNAT experience on the ground confirmed that NBS planning initiatives need to be better integrated into the ongoing broader processes of urban governance. This would also require building the capacity for strategic thinking among all the actors involved. Being a synergy of NBSs, the Healthy Corridor was acknowledged as a chance for positive change with a pragmatic focus on adopted short-term benefits. Decision-making largely remained a top-down process throughout the project development.

Capacity for dialogue between local administration and citizens and within communities with competing values, needs, and claims slowly grew throughout the process. Although open workshops facilitated interaction and resulted in raising residents' self-confidence, the ultimate validation of NBS proposals largely rested with municipal administration and elected politicians. The assigned experts' responsibility to guarantee the health and safety assurance of the facilities was stated as the reason to strictly follow established regulations. The academic team members, who were keen to support the development of inclusive approaches, had limited influence on how stakeholders' ideas were subsequently integrated during the implementation phase. An effectively functioning meeting point of bottom-up and top-down action is still to be conceptualized and built.

CONCLUSION

The "culture–nature" dialogue undertaken by the URBiNAT project in Sofia unfolded a variety of cultural layers—the still vital centuries-old traditions of human contact with nature; the impacts of a process of fast urbanization quickly undertaken after a Modernist planning model; the consequences of a profound societal transformation to capitalism since the late 20th century; and an emerging culture of consumerism, the prevalence of short-term considerations, and the underestimation of the public dimension of urban life in a neoliberal society. Nature-based solutions address a broad range of human needs—from most basic to sophisticated ones. Citizens and communities more readily identify with NBS that clearly address their social and cultural needs and resonate with the spatial, temporal, and sociocultural dimensions of urban processes. It was confirmed that effective NBS implementation strongly interacts with local culture. Their performance should be continuously monitored and adopted to residents' evolving lifestyles, behaviours, and preferences. It could be expected that inclusive approaches to NBS enhance citizens' awareness, confidence, and long-term commitment, prompting shifts in lifestyles and cultural patterns. Two major lines in a people-centred transformation of the urban planning culture still need to be explicitly focused upon: the development of a dialogue-based planning process, sensitive to the values, needs, and priorities of residents; and the transformation in planning institutions, procedures, and documents to enable a holistic urban policy respectful to nature and human quality of life.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Elena Dimitrova, M Arch, PhD, Associate Professor; over 30 years teaching and research at the Urban Planning Department, University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy (UACEG), Sofia; expertise in sustainable development, European planning systems, planning theory, and cultural heritage. National representative and UACEG contact person in AESOP until 2016, and SPA-CE.net (Network of spatial planning research institutions in Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe) until 2017; expert member of ICOMOS-Bulgaria and CIVVIH (ICOMOS International Scientific Committee on Historic Cities, Towns and Villages); UACEG team leader in EU-funded research projects ECHOES (H2020) and PETUS (FP5); and senior researcher in URBiNAT (H2020). ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6481-8472

Milena Tasheva-Petrova, M Arch, MSc Urban Planning and Housing, PhD, Associate Prof.; 20 years of teaching and research at the Department of Urban Planning, University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy (UACEG); 20 years of consultancy in planning and environmental assessments; expertise in integrated planning and urban regeneration, planning methodology, and the impact of European policies on spatial development and planning. National representative and UACEG contact person in AESOP (European Association of Planning Schools) since 2016; UACEG team leader in projects URBiNAT (H2020) and HURBE (Erasmus+); and senior researcher in ECHOES project (H2020). ORCID ID: 0000-0002-8344-6811

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PAISAGENS ALIMENTARES URBANAS: CONSTRUINDO CIDADES DIVERSAS, DINÂMICAS E RESILIENTES NA VIDA COTIDIANA

Mónica Guerra da Rocha

Faculdade de Economia, Universidade de Coimbra

Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra

mfmguerra@gmail.com

RESUMO

Este texto reflete sobre como as paisagens alimentares podem ajudar a compreender e transformar a dinâmica urbana, tornando as cidades mais resilientes e diversas. A reflexão parte de uma pesquisa em andamento sobre paisagens alimentares urbanas no Rio de Janeiro, atualmente na fase de trabalho de campo. O objetivo é colocar esse conceito no centro do debate urbano e adaptá-lo ao contexto das cidades do sul global, aproximando a discussão sobre comida da produção do espaço e das culturas urbanas. O texto está estruturado em quatro partes: (i) a primeira discute a lacuna nos estudos urbanos em relação à comida; (ii) a segunda introduz o conceito de paisagens alimentares e sua relevância para entender a cidade e suas culturas; (iii) a terceira traz exemplos da pesquisa de campo em três territórios do Rio de Janeiro; e (iv) a última parte apresenta reflexões sobre a contribuição das paisagens alimentares para o pensamento urbano.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Comida, Paisagens alimentares, Rio de Janeiro

A INCOMPLETUDE DA QUESTÃO URBANA—O LUGAR DA COMIDA

Pense nos lugares e nos caminhos que percorre, no dia a dia, para comprar ou comer seu alimento. Não se foque no que comeu, mas na maneira como comeu—na cultura alimentar que permeia sua necessidade básica. Onde, quando e com quem estava na sua primeira refeição? Essa prática é frequente ou excepcional? Por que almoçou ou jantou em determinado lugar? Em quais locais come sozinho ou acompanhado? Conhece quem preparou ou plantou sua comida, ou são pessoas anônimas? A comida foi feita onde consumiu ou transportada até você?

Há infinitas perguntas sobre práticas alimentares nas cidades. Comida está presente por toda parte, circula constantemente, um ato fisiológico construído a partir da cultura e da comunalidade. Comer medeia necessidades materiais e simbólicas dos sujeitos com seus territórios e na relação entre comedor, comida e lugar se configura um espaço social alimentar (Poulain, 2004). Esse espaço relacional é produzido pelas relações sociais que

moldam hábitos alimentares, onde o que se come, com quem e quando, reflete um contexto territorial construído no tempo.

Sistemas urbanos e alimentares são interdependentes, com impactos diretos nos desafios contemporâneos. Crises climáticas, direitos, perda de biodiversidade—cidades e comida estão no centro dos debates atuais.

Paradoxalmente, embora comida impacte todos os territórios urbanos e seja culturalmente condicionada, sua relação com as cidades é pouco explorada nos estudos urbanos e sociologia urbana. Essa lacuna gera desconhecimento sobre como práticas alimentares oferecem novas perspectivas sobre a vida urbana.

Considerando o comer como prática sociocultural condicionada em territórios, interrogo se sistemas alimentares constituem paisagens, sintetizando o espaço-tempo social no acúmulo de relações entre sujeitos e comida.

O QUE SÃO AS PAISAGENS ALIMENTARES? UM CONCEITO EM CONSTRUÇÃO

Pergunto como a lente da comida pode ajudar a ler os desafios urbanos contemporâneos, suas implicações cotidianas e modos de dinamizar a vida urbana. Minha pesquisa está ancorada em três bases conceituais: Henri Lefebvre e a produção do espaço-tempo social (Lefebvre, 1991); Carolyn Steel, que destaca a comida como produtora de espaço nas cidades (Steel, 2013); e a ideia de Jean Pierre Poulain de que o espaço alimentar é sempre social (Poulain, 2004).

Entendendo que o espaço-tempo é socialmente produzido, que a comida contribui para a produção material das cidades e que o espaço alimentar é social, o conceito de paisagens alimentares emerge como ferramenta interdisciplinar promissora. Apesar de recente e ainda em disputa, o conceito sempre correlaciona comida, sujeitos e lugar.

Uma revisão sistemática (Vonthron et al., 2020) indica que o conceito ganhou tração após 2010, destacando-se desde 2017. São quatro abordagens principais: espaciais, comportamentais, culturais e sistêmicas. As espaciais têm foco quantitativo, associadas à saúde pública, enquanto as demais são qualitativas, dialogando com ciências sociais e interdisciplinariedade.

Operacionalizo aqui o conceito como “um registo dinâmico de uma produção contínua, permanente, cotidiana, ordinária, biológica e cultural do espaço tempo social (...) o conjunto de práticas alimentares desenvolvidas na relação com o território, e inseridas em contexto político-económico, ambiental, e social” (Rocha, 2024, p. 7). Esse olhar qualitativo, baseado em revisão de literatura, observação e entrevistas, é aplicado a três territórios do Rio de Janeiro.

AS PAISAGENS ALIMENTARES URBANAS NO RIO DE JANEIRO: UM OLHAR SOBRE TRÊS TERRITÓRIOS

Com base na pesquisa sobre as paisagens alimentares do Rio de Janeiro, apresento análises preliminares que revelam como a relação dos sujeitos com a comida contribui para a produção da cidade. As análises combinam revisão bibliográfica, entrevistas e observação direta nos territórios.

O Rio se destaca por sua diversidade e complexidade. Nesta pesquisa, examino três territórios que refletem diferentes épocas e processos urbanos. Apesar de suas distintas características geográficas, sociais e históricas, todos evidenciam o papel singular da comida na cidade.

LEBLON

O Leblon, um dos bairros mais valorizados do Rio de Janeiro, tem cerca de 46 mil habitantes. Antes terra de engenhos e fazendas, tornou-se um espaço burguês e cosmopolita no século XX.

Rotas invisíveis da paisagem alimentar

D. cozinha mais de 100 refeições por dia em sua casa na Cruzada São Sebastião, conhecida como a Favela do Leblon, e seu filho as distribui de bicicleta para trabalhadores que não podem pagar os altos preços do bairro. Apesar de ter uma feira próxima, D. percorre até 20 km para comprar alimentos.

Feira? Leblon é toda quarta, que eles dizem que é a feira dos ricos, que é aqui atrás. (...) As pessoas daqui também têm medo. Porque passam tanto preconceito aqui, tanto racismo, tanto, tanto, tanto... E as pessoas aqui, ó, se encolhem. (D.)

A relação distância-proximidade é simbólica, refletindo a segregação do bairro.

Ruas de comida e comidas de rua—a disputa da informalidade

A informalidade no Leblon é ambígua: valorizada como parte do “estilo de vida carioca”, mas reprimida quando praticada por pequenos comerciantes. Enquanto botequins antigos viram patrimônio cultural, a venda informal de comida é relegada à Cruzada São Sebastião. O bairro prioriza ruas gastronômicas reguladas, como a Dias Ferreira, enquanto os pequenos empreendedores permanecem em espaços marginalizados.

Passado/futuro—a burguesia e o imaginário cosmopolita

Nos anos 1950, o Leblon era um polo da alta burguesia carioca, com circulação exclusiva de produtos importados e chefs europeus nos hotéis. Essa exclusividade agora é mais simbólica do que real. A mudança social no bairro reflete-se na COBAL, antes mercado das elites e agora esvaziado.

Hoje em dia, a madame não tem tempo, porque ela está trabalhando, porque ela se separou do marido, ou ficou viúva, e ninguém mais quer ser motorista. Babá, quando você tem um filho, depois você dispensa. Então, isso desmontou todo esse esquema, né? (G., Cobal do Leblon)

No Leblon a comida é instrumento de cristalização do ideário cosmopolita modernista que se esvazia progressivamente, e o bairro alterna entre territorialidades divididas e temporalidades marcadas por uma patrimonialização de modos de vida vinculados à comida.

CAFUNDÁ ASTROGILDA

O Quilombo Cafundá Astrogilda, na Floresta do Maciço da Pedra Branca, abriga cerca de 300 famílias cuja história se liga à escravidão e à agricultura.

A agricultura como base do tecido social

Num território produzido na relação permanente entre o rural e o urbano, o Cafundá teve suas práticas de produção de alimentos, compartilhamento da cozinha e dos saberes, comércio em mercados locais, como base da estrutura social do território. A proibição da prática agrícola com a criação do parque estadual desestruturou a comunidade (Cáceres, 2023), levando à redução demográfica da população moradora no quilombo.

O Cafundá tem sido um território de luta pelo direito de produzir alimentos na cidade e de ver reconhecida a sua história e o direito à terra enquanto comunidade tradicional Quilombola. As práticas culturais foram se costurando em relação às tradições agrícolas dessa população, e a comida tem um lugar central nessa história. No Cafundá lutar por permanecer no território veio muito ligado à luta por uma possibilidade outra de existir na cidade, com outros tempos e outras relações, pautadas por encontros de familiaridade e a possibilidade de produzir está vinculada à possibilidade de existir nesse espaço e de reproduzir uma cultura enraizada.

Como é que você vai viver num terreno, num território, onde você é proibido você praticar aquilo que você já tem de costume e está na cultura e no sangue? (...). (P.)

Era mais essa questão de troca mesmo, não o valor real em dinheiro. A gente criava porco e quando se matava o porco, o porco era dividido por vizinho. (P.)

A comida no território hoje, além de seguir sendo elo entre núcleos familiares, é elo social e meio de resistência. O restaurante de G. busca dar visibilidade ao território:

Eu disse à minha mãe: “Mãe, vou montar um restaurante aqui para as pessoas conhecerem, certo? O que a gente tem na comunidade, como a gente vive, como a gente recebe as pessoas (...). (G., proprietária de um restaurante no território)

As práticas socioculturais e a cidade como território mais do que humano

As práticas de produção de alimentos atestam a profunda conexão desse povo e de sua cultura com a floresta. A territorialidade e a temporalidade do Cafundá são negociadas permanentemente entre natureza e cidade, passado e presente, memória e uma perspectiva de futuro, e a comida é um elemento-chave nessas relações. A água, a terra, os seres não humanos, permeiam os cotidianos e compõem um território sociocultural onde o alimento carrega uma espiritualidade compartilhada.

Se existia uma forma de se benzer a comida, botar na panela agradecendo, então tinha todo um símbolo, que até hoje eu lembro, minha tia pegava a carne, aí fazia a cruz na panela, botava lá, aí eu ficava ligado. Então existia um culto de você estar agradecendo o alimento que você tá fazendo. Porque não é só fazer uma comida. (P.)

MARÉ

A Maré é um bairro formado por 16 favelas, na zona norte da cidade. Possui mais de 140.000 habitantes, e o seu processo de formação urbana é complexo e com a sua história intrinsecamente ligada à expansão industrial da cidade e a chegada massiva de migrantes nordestinos em meados do séc XX (da Silva et al., 2012).

Cidadania insurgente nas práticas alimentares—comida de rua e a extensão do espaço doméstico

Na Maré cerca de 40% de todos os negócios locais estão relacionados a alimentos, com mais de 76% de seus trabalhadores provenientes do território. Tem feira, tem barraca de frutas pela rua, tem lanchonete e tem comida a quilo, calçadas cheias, restaurantes abertos para a rua. Tem festival de comida, e de tarde tem muito espetinho, churrasco com molho à campanha. Tem ambulante, tudo se move neste lugar, o tempo todo, o ritmo é acelerado, a comida se adapta à velocidade e aos tempos do lugar:

Temos acesso a comida 24 horas por dia. Mas isso é específico da Maré, nem todas as favelas são assim. (T. B., morador da Maré)

A rua é lugar de comida, com diversas opções de alimentos frescos vendidos nas maiores vias de circulação e uma série de barracas e trailers de alimentação em vários pontos do bairro. A comida de rua é parte da identidade do bairro, e a maioria dos estabelecimentos de comida se estendem para a rua ou se abrem para ela. As ruas na Maré foram conquistadas, a partir de processos de aterramento sobre a Baía de Guanabara—o bairro inicialmente cresceu sobre palafitas, e gradativamente foi construindo o seu próprio chão, as suas ruas. Essa relação de apropriação com a rua está muito presente na sua paisagem alimentar, a rua é espaço público por excelência, onde diversas práticas acontecem em justaposição. A comida de rua está em total harmonia com o ritmo frenético do lugar, e assiste-se a uma diluição dos limites do espaço doméstico e da intimidade. Nas lajes das casas ou nas ruas, é comum aos finais de semana fazer um churrasco compartilhado, no restaurante da Amparo tem um chuveiro na área dos clientes, externo, para refrescar nos dias de calor; no Bar Esperança não existe porta “porque nunca está fechado”:

Se eu mudasse o angu para qualquer outro lugar que não fosse a rua, perderia metade dos meus clientes. (P.)

As relações nos espaços de comer são de muita proximidade, proprietários e consumidores se tratam pelo nome, e a paisagem alimentar é composta por uma teia de relações muito próximas. 76% dos estabelecimentos comerciais de alimentos e bebidas são informais, e muito sustentados em arranjos familiares. Vê-se nas práticas alimentares uma insurgência cidadã, com grande variedade de opções, para diversos públicos, um lugar onde a comida encontra seu caminho para chegar nas pessoas. A comida é na Maré uma das principais fontes de rendimento, e as práticas alimentares animam o território, ocupam as ruas, trazem variedade e memória da história nordestina do bairro. A paisagem alimentar da Maré resulta de um conjunto de táticas para negociar a vida urbana, e uma forma de reivindicar o direito à cidade e ao espaço público, à memória e à identidade:

É muito a ver essa coisa do alimento encontrar o caminho até a pessoa. A gente tem vendedores ambulantes, o ovo na Kombi que circula. Tem também carros com frutas e verduras que circulam. Tem alguém que vai caminhar de vez em quando com caranguejo ainda vivo para vender. Tem um carrinho de mão empurrado, às vezes com aipim fresquinho vindo da roça. Tem muitas formas ali que os vendedores também encontram. (T. B.)

Multiterritorialidade e a paisagem alimentar migrante

A maré é uma paisagem alimentar migrante, e a comida é ferramenta de memória e identidade, de nostalgia. Em todas as entrevistas que fiz na maré a resposta era uníssona – se uma comida representasse esse território, seria um prato nordestino com toda a certeza. Na paisagem alimentar se deposita a história migrante desse território, e essa presença compõe o que hoje se denomina localmente de uma gastronomia mareense. É também a partir da gastronomia que o território convida moradores de outras regiões da cidade a conhecerem a Maré a partir de sua capacidade inovativa e sua potência na cidade, a questionarem as estigmatizações produzidas acerca do território ao longo do tempo.

Nesse sentido, a paisagem alimentar da Maré produz uma multiterritorialidade diaspórica, no sentido em que apresenta uma “consciência pluriescalar com múltiplos espaços de referência” (Haesbaert, 2004, p. 359) (na relação com o imaginário e a memória nordestina) ao mesmo tempo que abre a possibilidade de uma experiência cultural distinta na teia da cidade (de abertura do território e de questionamento aos estigmas pré-existentes).

REFLEXÕES

Ao olhar a cidade pelas lentes da comida é possível ler uma cultura urbana cotidiana, dinâmica e repleta de inovação. A partir do mergulho nas paisagens alimentares urbanas destes 3 territórios, é possível perceber a relação entre sujeitos e a comida enquanto expressão cultural da luta pelo direito a cidade. Na paisagem alimentar intersecciona-se a cidade planeada (em suas regulações e suas invisibilidades), a praticada pelos sujeitos e a imaginada coletivamente.

Mas de que forma as paisagens alimentares urbanas podem ser instrumento para avançar rumo a cidades mais resilientes e diversas? As paisagens alimentares permitem ler dinâmicas urbanas invisíveis, presentes nos cotidianos e que informam modos de produção da cidade. Essas práticas resultam em encontros urbanos, em demarcação de identidades e encontro de diversidades múltiplas no tecido social e espacial. A relação dos sujeitos com a comida na cidade pode ainda ajudar a compreender táticas insurgentes presentes nos cotidianos para garantir o direito à cidade (como o caso das práticas informais e do uso do espaço público).

As paisagens alimentares poderão trazer um espaço de esperança para a transformação de nossas cidades e de uma perspectiva sociológica renovada sobre os cotidianos sensíveis inseridos nos modos de vida urbanos (Fortuna, 2020). São campo fértil para a investigação no âmbito da sociologia urbana e dos estudos interdisciplinares:

Quando se começa a ver o mundo através da comida, tudo muda. Coisas aparentemente desconexas revelam-se intimamente ligadas; relações aparentemente confusas tornam-se evidentes. A comida, como sabemos, é uma das maiores forças que moldam o mundo. Então, como é que podemos usar a comida para moldá-lo melhor? (Steel, 2013, Capítulo 7)

NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

Mônica Guerra da Rocha é arquiteta pela Universidade do Porto, mestre em planejamento e gestão urbana pela Universidade de Aalborg, e está doutoranda em Cidades e Culturas Urbanas na Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra / Centro de Estudos Sociais da Universidade de Coimbra, com a tese “Comida e Urbanidades: a produção das paisagens alimentares urbanas – o Rio de Janeiro”, financiada com bolsa de Doutorado atribuída pela Fundação Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT), número 2022.11329.BD. É pesquisadora convidada do grupo de pesquisa em Sociologia das Práticas Alimentares (SOPAS) da Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-4114-4096>

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PERMACULTURE FOR BUILDING INCLUSIVE CULTURE AND ART ENVIRONMENTS: RESEARCH AND PRACTICE FOR INCLUSIVE PUBLIC SPACE

Vesela Kazashka

Center of Plant Systems Biology and Biotechnology (CPSBB) – Plovdiv
Academy of Music, Dance and Visual Arts “Prof. Asen Diamandiev” – Plovdiv
vesela.kazashka@gmail.com

Tsvetomira Kazashka

Center of Plant Systems Biology and Biotechnology (CPSBB) – Plovdiv
Academy of Music, Dance and Visual Arts “Prof. Asen Diamandiev” – Plovdiv
tsvetomira.ivanova@artacademyplovdiv.com

Kiril Velchev

Plovdiv 2019 Foundation
Academy of Music, Dance and Visual Arts “Prof. Asen Diamandiev” – Plovdiv
kiril.velchev@plovdiv2019.eu

ABSTRACT

This article explores the connections between culture, art, climate change, and social issues, analyzing their impact on artistic creation in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Plovdiv is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in Europe and was designated as the European Capital of Culture in 2019. The city's transformation focuses on establishing it as a European cultural, ecological, and smart city. This evolutionary process is based on a combination of traditions and the development of new contemporary models rooted in science, ecology, and inclusivity. Permaculture is a scientific approach to designing sustainable human habitats that aims to create conditions for inclusive art in harmony with nature. The article presents successful practices that emphasize the role of art in improving quality of life and fostering inclusivity.

KEYWORDS

permaculture, inclusive culture, interdisciplinary research

INTRODUCTION

This article represents a case study offering a scientific-theoretical analysis of the practical and applied possibilities of two scientific organizations: Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts “Prof. Asen Diamandiev” (AMDFA) and the Center for Plant Systems Biology and Biotechnology (CPSBB). Both organizations are located in the city of Plovdiv, Bulgaria. The analysis focuses on two initiatives (projects) that serve as successful examples of interdisciplinary synergy between plant science and art. Emphasis is placed on the potential for creating not only conditions for the coexistence and development of art and nature but also for fostering education and upbringing based on this integration.

The concept of *permaculture* emerged as a pioneering movement in 1978 in Australia, initiated by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren¹, who designed a principle of sustainable living and agriculture (Mollison & Holmgren, 1978; Holmgren, 2002). Permaculture practices are primarily based on observations and ideas about the environment and maintaining the connections between land and people. Permaculture, in its most advanced form, relies on fundamental ecological principles observed in the natural functioning of ecosystems to plan all human activities and habitats. These researchers formulate 12 Permaculture Design principles:

Principle 1: OBSERVE AND INTERACT (Beauty is in the eye of the beholder)

Principle 2: CATCH AND STORE ENERGY (Make hay while the sun shines)

Principle 3: OBTAIN A YIELD (You can't work on an empty stomach)

Principle 4: APPLY SELF-REGULATION AND ACCEPT FEEDBACK (The sins of the fathers are visited on the children unto the seventh generation)

Principle 5: USE AND VALUE RENEWABLE RESOURCES AND SERVICES (Let nature take its course)

Principle 6: PRODUCE NO WASTE (Waste not, want not, A stitch in time saves nine)

Principle 7: DESIGN FROM PATTERNS TO DETAILS (Can't see the forest for the trees)

Principle 8: INTEGRATE RATHER THAN SEGREGATE (Many hands make light work)

Principle 9: USE SMALL AND SLOW SOLUTION (The bigger they are, the harder they fall slow and steady wins the race)

Principle 10: USE AND VALUE DIVERSITY (Don't put all your eggs in one basket)

Principle 11: USE EDGES AND VALUE THE MARGINAL (Don't think you are on the right track just because it is a well-beaten path)

¹ <https://derdejan.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/permaculture-principles-and-pathways-beyond-sustainability-pdfdrive.com-.pdf>

Principle 12: CREATIVELY USE AND RESPOND TO CHANGE (Vision is not seeing things as they are but as they will be).

The principles of permaculture design can never substitute for appropriate practical experience and technical knowledge. However, they can provide a framework for continuously generating and evaluating site- and situation-specific solutions necessary to move beyond limited success and sustainable development toward a reintegration of culture and nature (Mollison & Holmgren, 1978; Holmgren, 2002, 2020; Morel et al., 2019). Akila Wijerathna-Yapa and Ranjith Pathirana explore the concept of regenerative agriculture as a relatively new but rapidly growing approach within sustainable farming. This concept builds upon the principles of sustainable agriculture by not only aiming to reduce environmental harm but also actively promoting the restoration and enhancement of agroecosystems (Wijerathna-Yapa & Pathirana, 2022). Both regenerative agriculture and permaculture are based on similar principles, emphasizing the importance of working with nature rather than against it.

In this context, the collaborative initiatives of CPSBB and AMDFA aim to bring contemporary young people closer to nature and make art the mediator between science, society, and generations.

CASE STUDY

The case study presents two organizations: the Center of Plant Systems Biology and Biotechnology (CPSBB) and the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts (AMDFA). Despite operating in different scientific fields, the two institutions join efforts to co-organize the European Researchers' Night in the city of Plovdiv.

The Center for Plant Systems Biology and Biotechnology (CPSBB) is a new, innovative type of independent research organization that is reshaping the research landscape in Bulgaria. With support from the European Commission, the Bulgarian government, and the Municipality of Plovdiv, CPSBB has rapidly become a leading institute for plant science in Bulgaria. It generates knowledge across various fields, including bioinformatics, biotechnology, genetics and genomics, metabolomics, and systems biology (Gechev et al., 2024).

CPSBB conducts cutting-edge fundamental and applied research, utilizing the latest technologies. These tools are employed to unravel complex gene regulatory networks and metabolic pathways that govern plant development, stress physiology, and the production of valuable metabolites with potential market applications. The departments within CPSBB provide services to partner organizations and external clients (Gechev et al., 2020).

AMDFA is a distinguished higher education institution specializing in the arts and the only one of its kind outside the capital of Bulgaria. Founded in 1964, AMDFA will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2024. The Academy provides education and training at bachelor's, master's, and doctoral levels in the fields of fine arts (including applied arts and

photography), music (folk and classical), choreography (folk and classical dance), and arts pedagogy.

AMDFA is an active contributor to the cultural and educational landscape of Bulgaria and Europe. Since October 2022, the Academy has been an official partner of the European Union's New European Bauhaus initiative, which connects the cultural and artistic dimension with the goals of the European Green Deal. This initiative promotes sustainable innovation that enhances quality of life and encourages dialogue between science, technology, and the arts.

EUROPEAN RESEARCHERS' NIGHT IN THE CITY OF PLOVDIV

Over the past five years (2018–2023), the Center for Plant Systems Biology and Biotechnology (CPSBB) has served as a communicator of science and art. Plovdiv is one of five Bulgarian cities, along with Sofia, Burgas, Stara Zagora, and Ruse, participating in the Researchers in the Knowledge Triangle (K-TRIO) project, part of the European Researchers' Night initiative (2018–2023). This initiative was launched in 2006, coordinated by Sofia University, and the current consortium in Bulgaria consists of 11 full members, including seven research organizations, one innovation centre, one NGO, one regional museum, and one professional science communicator.

In Plovdiv, the events focus on young people in science and the multifaceted expressions of talent that converge in this initiative. The team's overall motivation and concept represent a long-term strategy aimed at attracting young researchers, creating sustainable traditions in scientific research and artistic creativity, fostering science communication, and, importantly, contributing to the promotion of Europe's green transformation.

The project is based on the concept of the "knowledge triangle", a functional model of interaction between its three key components—science, education, and innovation—with a focus on the channels of interaction between them. Maximilian Unger and Wolfgang Polt emphasize the interactions between research and education, research and innovation, and education and innovation (Unger & Polt, 2017).

We have enriched this concept by, on the one hand, incorporating art into the process and, on the other, following the evolution of the "knowledge triangle" into the concept of the "quintuple helix".

Etzkowitz, Lundvall, Jackson, and other researchers highlight the dependence of science, education, and innovation on the structure of the respective national or regional innovation ecosystem. Their research precedes the development of subsequent functional models and concepts such as the triple helix, quadruple helix, and quintuple helix (Etzkowitz, 1983; Lundvall, 1992; Jackson, 2011).

A significant missing link in the process of building a knowledge-based society and economy appears to be the lack of engagement from local and regional stakeholders with innovation

potential, the absence of governance mechanisms at the regional level, and insufficient human and financial capital.

Based on the concepts developed by the aforementioned researchers, we have devised a framework aimed at enhancing engagement through science and art communication. Our goal is to attract young people in society to knowledge, science, and art through various event formats, thereby fostering ecological thinking.

The Concept for Researcher's Night in the City of Plovdiv in 2023 is illustrated in Figure 1. The engagement strategy during the event "European Researchers' Night 2023" can be developed by combining several core strategies that encourage active participation, interaction, and long-term involvement with science and the arts.

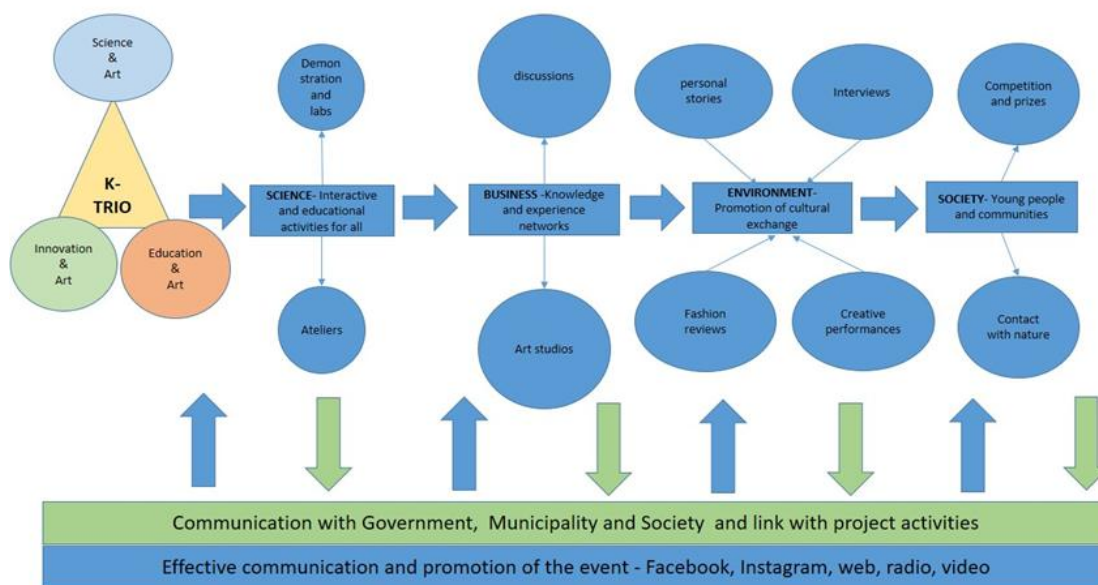


FIGURE 1. CONCEPT FOR EUROPEAN RESEARCHER'S NIGHT IN THE CITY OF PLOVDIV, BULGARIA, IN 2023

Source: Authors.

This concept combines scientific rigor with artistic freedom while providing spaces for active interaction, inspiration, and the exchange of ideas between various social and professional groups. Organizing interdisciplinary events that combine science and art has been proven to attract a wide and diverse audience, fostering mutual understanding between different fields of knowledge and creativity. Participants actively engaged in scientific experiments such as DNA extraction, enzyme manipulation, and 3D printing, which generated significant interest

and engagement. This shows that when science is presented in an interactive and accessible way, it can attract not only scientists but also the general public, including young people and children. It highlights the need to integrate hands-on activities that not only demonstrate scientific principles but also allow participants to experience them firsthand.

Fashion shows and art events that emphasize the importance of environmental responsibility serve as powerful channels for communicating important social messages. They can draw attention to sustainable behaviour and offer artistic and creative opportunities for self-expression that align with global environmental challenges.

Round tables and discussions between scientists and artists showed that the integration of science and art leads to the creation of new ideas and concepts that enrich both the cultural and scientific landscape. These formats provide opportunities for mutual enrichment, which traditionally receive little attention and resources but can be extremely fruitful.

The active social media campaign was highly successful in attracting a broad audience. Sharing interesting facts and photos from the events significantly increased visibility and engagement with the initiative. This demonstrates the importance of a digital communication strategy in today's rapidly changing media and communication platforms.

The practical implementation of permaculture principles through planting plants and strengthening community involvement in eco-initiatives not only created physical but also psycho-social bonds between participants and nature. It also proves that permaculture principles can be successfully integrated into urban environments, thus creating sustainable solutions for addressing global environmental issues.

Testing new vegetable varieties, such as tomatoes and peppers, was one of the events that attracted a large number of participants. The respondents were asked to taste the different varieties and evaluate their flavour qualities, recording their preferences on a pre-prepared survey form (Figure 2).



FIGURE 2. TASTING AND EVALUATION OF NEW VARIETIES

Source: Vesela Kazashka.

In conclusion, the findings from organizing the European Researchers' Night with the participation of both organizations, CPSBB and AMDFA, highlight that future initiatives should focus on inclusivity, with particular attention given to engaging younger and more diverse audiences. This can be achieved by organizing events that cater to different interests and demographic groups. Improving the communication of scientific processes through hands-on and visual presentations is essential. This approach will make science more accessible and engaging, enabling participants to better understand complex concepts. The role of social media should be further enhanced to promote events and activate the audience. A targeted social media strategy will increase visibility and broaden public participation. Partnerships between scientific and cultural institutions should be expanded to foster innovation and sustainable development. Such collaborations offer valuable opportunities to combine creativity and scientific achievements for a positive societal impact.

GREEN CULTURE – GREEN CITY

Inspired by the connection between art and nature, AMDFA continues to support the integration of permaculture through its participation in the “Green Culture – Green City” initiative. This initiative, developed by the Municipal Foundation “Plovdiv 2019”², focusing on environmental sustainability and cultural innovation. It highlights the importance of imagination and artistic expression in addressing global environmental challenges, while also strengthening the connection between people, urban spaces, and nature. By promoting public awareness, interdisciplinary collaboration, and community resilience, the project supports the goal of building more informed, inclusive, and environmentally responsible societies.

In the open call of the “Plovdiv 2019” Foundation, related to the “Green Culture – Green City” initiative, 34 project proposals were submitted, with 17 of them being funded. The highest rating was awarded to the project “PERMA-CULTURE – Spaces and Art” by the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts – Plovdiv.

The Academy emphasizes the contribution of imagination and the tools of art and culture in creating conceptual proposals addressing global environmental issues. Our project focuses on the intersection of culture, the arts, and the Anthropocene. It explores climate change and the social and humanitarian crises triggered by it, reflecting how these societal problems manifest in and through art. The project raised questions about our choices, contributions, resistance, and support, striving to turn the present into a solid foundation for a healthier and more prosperous future.

In partnership with several key institutions such as the Municipality of the Central District – Plovdiv, the Regional History Museum – Plovdiv, the City Art Gallery – Plovdiv, the Puppet Theater – Plovdiv, and the Municipal Institute “Old Plovdiv”, the three faculties of the Academy presented music, dance, fashion, and visual arts for both spontaneous and specially engaged audiences.

The project events aimed to highlight our readiness as urban dwellers to care for the environment sustainably, ensuring human presence doesn't disrupt ecosystems. Iconic locations in Plovdiv were chosen to inspire reflection through art, asking if we contribute enough for nature to thrive, make daily eco-friendly choices, and collaborate to create a cleaner, greener city for future generations. These reflections aimed to deepen the awareness of both residents and visitors, encouraging collective responsibility for a sustainable and harmonious urban ecosystem. One of the presented events was a poster exhibition inspired by two iconic performances of the State Puppet Theater Plovdiv. One of the performances is an impressive children's musical, while the other is an emotionally stirring show for adults. Both productions delve into dreams and fears, hinting at our choices and sharing the impact

² <https://www.plovdiv.bg/%D1%84%D0%BE%D0%BD%D0%B4%D0%B0%D1%86%D0%B8%D1%8F-%D0%BF%D0%BB%D0%BE%D0%B2%D0%B4%D0%B8%D0%B2-2019-%D0%B8%D0%BD%D0%B2%D0%B5%D1%81%D1%82%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B0-200-000-%D0%BB%D0%B2-%D0%B7/>

we have as a united group of people. The exhibition includes works by students from the Faculty of Fine Arts.

In the courtyard of the remarkable House Museum “Hristo G. Danov”, part of the Regional History Museum – Plovdiv’s exhibition, beautiful Bulgarian folk music was played. The music, deeply intertwined with the power and generosity of nature, highlights the inseparable connection between people and nature. The performances were by students and professors from the Academic Folk Orchestra of AMDFA.

On the new green staircase in front of the City Art Gallery – Plovdiv on “Saborna” street, students from the departments of “Pop and Jazz Performance”, “Fashion Design”, and “Clothing Design” showcased their talent and reflected on our choices, contributions, resistance, and support to ensure that the present forms the best foundation for a healthier and more successful future (Figure 3).



FIGURE 3. FASHION SHOW UNDER THE SLOGAN OF RESPONSIBLE LIVING AND AN ECOLOGICAL FUTURE

Source: Yuskan Adem.

In order to connect our local perspective with something broader and greater than ourselves, we concluded the event from the place where time for our city began – Hisar Kapia. There, the enchanting voices of the Academic Folk Choir, conducted by Dr. Nikolay Gurbanov and

vocal pedagogue Associate Professor Dr. Danka Tsvetkova, filled the air, and we sent off a humane and hopeful civilizational message.

CONCLUSION

The two projects presented illustrate the development of science, art, and innovation from the concept of the “Triangle of Knowledge” to the concept of the quintuple helix (Carayannis et al., 2012) through the presentation of two organizations and two examples of collaboration between scientists, researchers, artists, the business environment, government, and society in support of an ecological and spiritual way of life.

The transformation of the economy and life in favour of ecology, new technologies, and globalization are among the factors that strongly influence the way of life, but they begin with a change in mindset and a vision for the future. Our goal is to focus public, governmental, business, and other stakeholders’ attention through science and art communication events, aiming to create conditions for prosperity and environmental protection.

Joint initiatives between organizations from various scientific fields, business, and local authorities continue and chart a new successful path for a progressive future and the creation of smart and ecological cities and knowledge.

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Vesela Kazashka holds a PhD in Special Pedagogy, successfully defending her dissertation on “Positive Stigma towards People with Disabilities” in 2014. She teaches the subjects “Inclusive Education” and “European Programs and Projects in the Arts”. Her work contributes to enriching scientific knowledge and advancing the paradigm of science, education, culture, and innovation for the benefit of society. Through her published research, she mobilizes civic positions on issues related to culture, art, and the transformation of knowledge. ORCID: 0000-0001-7311-0022.

Tsvetomira Kazashka holds a Bachelor’s degree in “Information Physics and Communications” from Plovdiv University. She also holds two Master’s degrees: one in “Investment Management and Communications” and another in “Management of Cultural Information

Centers". She works as the head of the library at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof. Asen Diamandiev" in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. Tsvetomira Kazashka has participated in editions of the European Researchers' Night in Plovdiv through the project "Researchers in the Knowledge Triangle", promoting science and art in the city. She is also a member of the European network of researchers, EURAXESS. ORCID: 0000-0001-7529-5438.

Kiril Velchev is the Director of the "Plovdiv 2019" Foundation and a PhD student at the Academy of Music, Dance and Fine Arts "Prof. Asen Diamandiev". He actively participates in the creation of policies in this field, including the city's cultural strategy until 2024, among other initiatives. His leading role is seen in the initiatives for promoting Kapana as the only art district in Bulgaria. He is also actively involved in the development of the city's cultural calendar and attracting new audiences and events. Velchev is a trained choreographer and director.

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DEVELOPING A COLLABORATIVE PORTFOLIO OF PARTICIPATORY METHODS FOR NBS GOVERNANCE: THE TRANS-LIGHTHOUSES APPROACH

Angelica Lundgren

CES – Centro de Estudos Sociais da Universidade de Coimbra
angelicalundgren@ces.uc.pt

Pedro Gouveia

Kairós – Cooperativa de Incubação de Iniciativas de Economia Solidária

Nathalie Nunes

CES – Centro de Estudos Sociais da Universidade de Coimbra

Rita Campos

CES – Centro de Estudos Sociais da Universidade de Coimbra
ritacampos@ces.uc.pt

ABSTRACT

This paper presents and discusses the processes of collaboratively constructing a portfolio of participatory methods within the TRANS-lighthouses project. The project aims to embed co-creation processes within governance frameworks for Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) by engaging youth, women, and other traditionally underrepresented communities through a reflexive citizen science approach. This initiative integrates diverse perspectives into decision-making and fosters more equitable societal outcomes. To support this, a preliminary set of participatory methods is being developed by project participants, based on their previous experience and expertise. The set will later be customized for eight pilot cases, aligning with community-driven processes and stakeholder-centred perspectives, and evaluated according to their efficacy in supporting the co-design, implementation, and management of NBS. The methods will thus evolve as they adapt to local contexts across rural, coastal, urban, and forestry lighthouses, and governance models, in the scope of each Living Knowledge Lab (LKL), ultimately contributing to a comprehensive portfolio of participatory methods for inclusive NBS governance.

KEYWORDS

nature-based solutions (NBS), participatory methods, governance, co-creation, community engagement

INTRODUCING THE TRANS-LIGHTHOUSES PROJECT

Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) have emerged in recent years as a promising framework for addressing interconnected environmental, social, and economic challenges. By leveraging the regenerative power of nature, NBS aims to foster sustainable, resilient, and inclusive communities. This ambition has attracted substantial European investment and policy attention. However, despite reported benefits, key dimensions of NBS, particularly those related to social equity, participation, and governance, still need deeper understanding (see, for example, Tallent & Zabala, 2024). Socio-political challenges such as cultural lock-ins, limited participatory depth, and power asymmetries often hinder the full transformative potential of NBS (Bulkeley et al., 2020; Haase, 2017).

Critiques of past NBS initiatives have revealed risks in how participation is framed and implemented. These include tendencies to oversimplify engagement by aiming solely for consensus, instrumentalizing community input for externally defined solutions, and unintentionally reinforcing inequalities. In light of these concerns, there is growing recognition of the need for NBS approaches that are environmentally sound, socially just and democratically robust (Haase, 2017). Herrmann-Pillath et al. (2022) points out that in the context of NBS, so far “co-creation” is often referred to as co-creation within the human domain, although a different number of multi-sector entities and people should be involved here; therefore, the “leap forward” will be to include the “non-human” in the design of NBS, promoting institutional reform that values “Earth Rights”, and the inclusion of zoosemiotic approaches or other-than-human animals participatory approaches, rather than only human-centred ones.

The TRANS-lighthouses project¹ responds to these challenges by reimagining NBS governance through participatory, reflexive, and inclusive processes. It embeds co-creation at the core of NBS development, operating across eight pilot cases, or “lighthouses,” in diverse urban, rural, coastal, and forested contexts. These lighthouses experiment with locally tailored solutions that address both specific local challenges and broader global concerns like biodiversity loss and climate change.

The project mobilizes a diverse network of stakeholders, embracing a transdisciplinary methodology and epistemic diversity to value the inclusion of different perspectives. A core aspect is the collaborative development of a portfolio of participatory methods, tailored to different sociopolitical contexts, to guide NBS co-design, implementation, and management. Drawing on the experience of past projects (e.g., URBiNAT²), the portfolio evolves dynamically, integrating real-time learning and adaptation through Living Knowledge Labs (LKL), reflexive monitoring, and citizen science. This approach aims to enhance local NBS outcomes and simultaneously contribute to broader systemic change by reshaping

¹ <https://trans-lighthouses.eu/>; This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe Framework Programme for Research and Innovation under Grant Agreement No. 101084628. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or European Commission. Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

² <https://www.urbinat.eu/>

governance practices, fostering active citizenship, and promoting just transitions in the face of climate and ecological crises.

This paper explores the processes involved in building the portfolio. It highlights how participatory methods are being co-developed, tested, refined, and evaluated for their effectiveness in enhancing inclusive governance within the pilot cases. Special attention is paid to engaging youth, women, and other traditionally underrepresented groups, to consider the voice of nature, and to incorporate both digital and low-tech tools.

WHAT ARE NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS?

Nature-Based Solutions (NBS) refer to initiatives that are inspired by and work with nature, rather than against it. Whether it's regenerative agriculture to restore land health or planting trees to cool urban areas, these solutions are designed to benefit both people and the planet. In the global arena, at least since the release of the United Nation's seminal report on Sustainable Development,³ it is well recognized that climate and environmental policies must include both social and ecological dimensions to be sustainable. With that said, NBS solutions also have the potential to be beneficial for humans, such as improving mental health, boosting social connections and generating economic opportunities. However, a key challenge for NBS is moving beyond an instrumental utility rationale, where nature is seen only as a provider of goods and services to humans. There's a risk of commodification and financialization of nature (Remme & Haarstad, 2022). Instead, NBS should foster emotion, interaction, empathy, care, conservation, and biodiversity reinforcement (Clayton et al., 2017; Jax et al., 2018).

NBS also faces the danger of only addressing localized problems, and failing to engage with structural conditions causing global socio-ecological crises (Seddon et al., 2020). To counter this, strong community and citizen engagement is needed through collective action and local social innovation processes. These processes draw on communities' leadership capacity in collaborative, community-based natural resource management. Such initiatives represent a positive transformation towards environmental governance built on reciprocal relationships, influencing social and individual norms in decision-making to address social challenges and improve social well-being (Diver et al., 2019; Umantseva, 2022). In this sense, it is equally important that all of us (humans) can come to understand "nature" as involving multi-species forms of "world-building": humans, plants, animals, rivers and even entire ecosystems (Herrmann-Pillath et al., 2022).

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH PARTICIPATION

The TRANS-lighthouses project is committed to ensure that all people, regardless of background, identity, or status, are included in the processes shaping the future of their

³ <http://digitallibrary.un.org/record/139811>

communities. As such, participation is acknowledged as recognizing individuals' agency and creating opportunities for them to influence, act, and co-create at every stage of the NBS process, not just inviting them to sit at the decision-making table.

This commitment is operationalized through Work Package 6 (WP6): *Community-Based Communication and Citizen Science*, which focuses on strengthening the communication between science and society and aims to promote meaningful citizen involvement in the co-creation, co-implementation, and co-monitoring of NBS across the project's pilot cases. A cornerstone of this effort is Task 6.3, which is dedicated to refining and customizing participatory methods for use across diverse contexts. This task builds on existing experience from previous projects, such as URBiNAT and PHUSICOS.

Rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach, these participatory methods are adapted iteratively based on reflexive monitoring, local feedback, and interdisciplinary collaboration. They are designed to be flexible and accessible, with a strong focus on community-driven processes and stakeholder-centred perspectives. Activities may include facilitated dialogues on public policies, workshops to co-design or prototype NBS, and participatory research initiatives that integrate citizen insights into project planning and evaluation.

The emphasis on citizen science further reinforces the role of communities as co-producers of knowledge and innovation. By embedding science into everyday civic life, the TRANS-lighthouses project encourages a deeper sense of ownership and agency, enabling residents to meaningfully shape the social and ecological futures of their territories. As such, empowering participation within the project is about redistributing power in the governance of natural and urban environments. It aims to make NBS more democratic, context-sensitive, and effective by ensuring that communities are heard and have a lasting influence on the transformations that affect their lives.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF PARTICIPATORY METHODS

Ethical concerns are central to the design and implementation of participatory methods in NBS, particularly ensuring meaningful inclusion of women and other groups historically underrepresented or excluded from decision-making processes. Including diverse voices throughout the NBS lifecycle is a fundamental requirement for achieving legitimate, context-sensitive, and transformative outcomes; it is a normative obligation and a necessary condition.

Women often face systemic barriers compounded by intersecting forms of oppression (e.g., race, class, age, etc.), making intersectionality a critical framework for understanding how different axes of identity and power shape the experience of inclusion or exclusion. For instance, while women may encounter gender-based discrimination in participatory processes, women of colour may also simultaneously face racialized forms of marginalization that further hinder their engagement. These overlapping dynamics necessitate an approach that actively uncovers and addresses layers of exclusion. Recognizing the pivotal roles

women often play in community life, caregiving, and ecological stewardship is essential to crafting participatory processes that are genuinely inclusive and capable of capturing the full spectrum of community knowledge (Crenshaw, 1989).

Beyond gender, participatory methods must account for a range of social specificities to ensure equitable representation and the legitimacy of outcomes. Young people, for example, may be overlooked due to assumptions about lack of experience. For example, in the Portuguese context, data from UNICEF⁴ indicates significant under-involvement of youth in decision-making processes; 70% of the youth surveyed consider that “when adults make decisions they never or rarely ask their opinion”. Elderly participants may face physical or digital access limitations. Indigenous peoples frequently possess valuable cultural and ecological knowledge yet remain marginalized in many participatory frameworks. Migrants, especially those with insecure legal status, may experience linguistic, bureaucratic, or economic barriers that inhibit engagement. Other socially marginalized groups, such as the LGBTQ+ community, people with disabilities, single parents, and ethnic minorities, similarly face distinct challenges that require tailored strategies to ensure that their involvement is both possible and meaningful.

Designing inclusive participatory processes therefore demands intentionality in method selection, facilitation practices, and logistical planning. This includes adapting formats to different linguistic, cultural, and cognitive contexts; employing tools accessible to people with varying levels of literacy or technological familiarity; and ensuring that participation does not require trade-offs that disproportionately burden certain groups, such as childcare responsibilities. Equally important is the creation of safe and respectful spaces for dialogue, where all participants feel empowered to speak and contribute without fear of discrimination or reprisal.

These ethical commitments must be operationalized through safeguards that ensure transparency, consent, and accountability. Participants must be fully informed of the goals, procedures, and implications of their involvement. Mechanisms for feedback and redress should be embedded within the participatory process, allowing for continuous improvement and participant agency. Ethical standards must remain flexible enough to respond to context-specific needs, yet robust enough to uphold principles of justice, dignity, and respect for all stakeholders.

The risks of failing to incorporate diverse perspectives are significant. Exclusion can reinforce existing power asymmetries, undermine the legitimacy of the process, and result in solutions that fail to address the priorities of those most affected by environmental and social change. Moreover, the neglect of alternative knowledge systems, particularly those rooted in lived experience, local traditions, or cultural heritage, reduces the transformative potential of NBS. When participation is narrowly defined or unevenly distributed, it jeopardizes the long-term viability and social acceptance of implemented solutions. In response, participatory methods must be embedded within a reflexive practice that continually evaluates and adapts to evolving social realities. This reflexivity is essential for realizing the full promise of NBS and

⁴ <https://www.unicef.pt/media/4126/tenhovotonamateria2023-resultados-unicef.pdf>

to avoid any forms of harm in the process. The inclusive strategies and reflections presented here represent an early but necessary step toward building a living, collaborative catalogue of participatory methods. One that supports diverse communities and organizations in shaping their futures together, from the ground up.

BUILDING A CATALOGUE OF PARTICIPATORY METHODS

In support of more inclusive, just, and context-responsive NBS, the TRANS-lighthouses project foregrounds the integration of participatory methods throughout the full NBS lifecycle (co-diagnosis, co-design, co-implementation, and co-monitoring). In other words, it envisions participation as a condition for ensuring that the solutions developed respond to the lived realities of diverse actors, reflect local knowledge systems, and foster long-term ownership and sustainability.

This participatory orientation challenges dominant paradigms that treat nature primarily as a resource to be managed. Instead, it supports a shift toward more reciprocal and interdependent relationships between humans and the natural world, grounded in care, mutual responsibility, and shared agency (Jax et al., 2018). The TRANS-lighthouses approach recognizes the central role of communities in shaping the environments they inhabit, moving beyond a logic of consultation toward one of co-governance. Achieving such transformations requires a decisive break with the dichotomous thinking of "people versus nature" and the instrumental view of the environment as just a supplier of goods and services. Socio-ecological transitions depend on building pluralistic, hybrid models that centre coexistence and mutual flourishing (Umantseva, 2022; Diver et al., 2019). This orientation underpins the European Union's strategic vision for NBS, which is increasingly positioned as locally resonant yet globally relevant responses to systemic challenges such as biodiversity loss, climate change, and public health.⁵ The TRANS-lighthouses pilot areas, conceptualized as LKLs, offer fertile grounds for testing and refining participatory methods that are sensitive to these multiple dimensions.

The participatory methods developed and adapted in the context of the LKLs serve as both engagement strategies and epistemic frameworks. They are designed to elicit, integrate, and operationalize diverse knowledges, including those held by women, indigenous peoples, migrants, youth, and other traditionally underrepresented groups. Coupled with broad representation, participatory methods must also create conditions for shared power, dialogue, and mutual respect. Methodological flexibility, cultural and linguistic adaptation, and sensitivity to structural barriers are essential components of ethical practice in participatory research.⁶ Throughout the NBS lifecycle, from initial problem identification to solution implementation and evaluation, these methods support reflexive, iterative, and transparent co-creation.

⁵ <https://op.europa.eu/s/z69i>

⁶ <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2777/157060>

Participatory processes begin by surfacing locally identified challenges, then move toward co-designing and testing place-based NBS tailored to specific ecological, social, and economic contexts. Local communities and end users are invited to contribute to design and lead implementation, developing new skills, forming stronger community ties, and establishing shared stewardship. This emphasis on local agency ensures that the process is rooted in community priorities while also drawing on external expertise to enrich the knowledge base and enhance capacity. Additionally, participatory evaluation mechanisms ensure that implementation remains dynamic, accountable, and responsive. Monitoring provides real-time insights to inform management, while evaluation systematically assesses the outcomes, unintended effects, and contextual factors that shape success or failure. When evaluation includes feedback loops and participant validation, it becomes a tool for empowerment that facilitates shared learning and more equitable governance structures. As such, the participatory methods elaborated within TRANS-lighthouses are tools of inclusion and instruments of transformation. By embedding these methods across the NBS lifecycle and grounding them in ethical, epistemic, and practical considerations, the project contributes to a broader shift toward co-created, resilient, and just environmental governance.

A collaborative effort unfolded among partners to explore how participatory methods could be meaningfully integrated into NBS pilots. Through surveys and internal exchanges, each pilot team identified which methods they were already familiar with, which ones they were considering adapting, and in some cases, which entirely new methods they were developing. A draft catalogue began to take shape from this collective input, outlining key characteristics of each method through shared templates.

This ongoing process is being enriched by an in-person participatory workshop aiming at sharing insights, discussing challenges, and introducing alternatives better aligned with LKLs' specific contexts. From these conversations, a list of methods is emerging, refined by use, feedback, and practical relevance and greater theoretical and practical precision regarding what is meant by "participatory methods in NBS". The result is an evolving, reflexive document being built through dialogue and collective testing, unfolding what works, what doesn't, and why. A feedback loop between project partners and engaged participants ensures that the methods presented are grounded in real-world application. Table 1 links each method to NBS governance steps, criteria, and objectives:

Participatory method	NBS lifecycle stage	Key governance criteria	Overarching objective
BioBlitz	Co-diagnosis, Co-monitoring	Inclusivity, Transparency, Knowledge Co-production	Build shared understanding of local biodiversity; foster environmental stewardship.
Communities of Practice (Virtual)	All stages	Collaboration, Knowledge Sharing, Capacity building	Create a sustained network for learning and knowledge exchange.
Cultural Mapping	Co-diagnosis, Co-design	Inclusivity, Equity, Context-responsiveness	Integrate cultural values and knowledge into NBS design.
Design Thinking	Co-design, Co-implementation	Innovation, User-centricity, prototyping	Develop creative, practical, tailored NBS solutions.
Focus Groups	Co-diagnosis, Co-monitoring	Inclusivity, Deliberation, Targeted feedback	Gather in-depth insights from specific stakeholder groups.
Future Making Workshops	Co-design, Co-implementation	Visioning, Empowerment, Long-term planning	Create shared future visions; develop actionable NBS plans.
Participatory (Spatial) Scenario Planning	Co-design, Co-implementation	Future-thinking, Resilience, Adaptive management	Explore possible futures; enhance NBS resilience and adaptability.
Photovoice	Co-diagnosis, Co-monitoring	Empowerment, Voice, Advocacy	Enable marginalized communities to share experiences via photography.

Participatory method	NBS lifecycle stage	Key governance criteria	Overarching objective
Unlearning Dialogue	Co-diagnosis, Co-design	Reflexivity, Power-sharing, Transformative learning	Challenge assumptions; foster open, equitable dialogue.
Walkthroughs	Co-diagnosis, Co-monitoring	Experiential learning, Place-based knowledge, Accessibility	Understand place and challenges; Incorporate embodied knowledge.
World Café	Co-diagnosis, Co-design	Collaboration, Collective intelligence, Network development	Facilitate large-group dialogue and knowledge sharing.

TABLE 1. PARTICIPATORY METHODS BY NBS LIFECYCLE STAGE, KEY GOVERNANCE CRITERIA, AND OVERALL OBJECTIVES

Source: Developed by authors.

In the collective construction of the portfolio, each method is presented with a consistent structure to ensure clarity, comparability, and comprehensive understanding (Table 2). The information is intended to help practitioners select the most suitable tools for their local realities and project objectives.

Participatory method	Description
Descriptive Synopsis	A brief overview of the method.
Toolbox	Materials and resources required for the method.
Duration (estimated)	The estimated time required to implement the method.

Participatory method	Description
Steps (for execution)	A step-by-step guide to carrying out the method.
Top Target	Groups or individuals best suited as participants.
NBS Lifecycle	The stage(s) of the participatory process the method is most applicable to (e.g., co-diagnosis, co-design, co-implementation/management, co-monitoring).
Expertise (Low, moderate, high)	The level of expertise required to implement the method.
Inclusivity potential (Low, moderate, high)	An assessment of the method's ability to engage diverse participants.
Limitations	Material and immaterial limitations or challenges in applying the method.
Overall difficulty (Low, moderate, high)	A general assessment considering all aspects, including time, resources, and expertise.
Links to Participatory activities/Events	When available, relevant examples of the method organized in the framework of other NBS projects are listed.

TABLE 2. STRUCTURE OF THE PARTICIPATORY METHODS' DESCRIPTIONS

Source: Developed by authors; adapted from the sensitive TRANS-lighthouses deliverable D6.8.

The current work builds on an initial set of ten participatory methods identified in an early stage of the project. These methods were further refined throughout the project lifetime in a reflexive monitoring process. This work is expected to continue and consolidate into an open-access portfolio of participatory methods for co-governance of NBS. This resource will include field-tested methods, updated based on pilot feedback, and serve as a practical guide for supporting participatory processes in NBS governance.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper has presented a shared journey toward building a participatory foundation for NBS, grounded in the principle that communities should be genuinely empowered in decision-making. Empowerment means ensuring that people, regardless of background, position, or prior involvement, have the capacity to act and influence decisions at every stage of the process. Participation serves as the mechanism through which communities reclaim agency over their futures and cultivate lasting, reciprocal relationships with the natural world.

The participatory approaches explored in this paper foster inclusive and transformative governance, strengthen local ownership, and deepen the connection between people and place. This is essential for building communities that live in harmony with it or in a reciprocal logic of care. These solutions are transformative because they convene citizens, local governments, researchers, and businesses and, to a certain extent, nature itself (“the world beyond the human”) to co-create responses to shared challenges. They are plural, rooted in local knowledge, and capable of adapting to diverse social, cultural, and ecological contexts.

The final portfolio thus aims to become a reference point and a practical guide useful within this project and beyond; adaptable to initiatives striving for bottom-up, community-driven, and collaborative governance of NBS. By documenting these processes and insights, we aim to support others in navigating similar paths, building on what has already been learned while creating space for new and context-specific adaptations.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Angelica Lundgren Is an interdisciplinary researcher focusing on the critical intersection of social and environmental issues. She holds degrees in Political Science/International Relations, and Global Studies from the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, and has conducted interdisciplinary research across several European countries. Lundgren’s research career is refined by community engagement, most notably as Vice President of the United Nations Environmental Organization Gothenburg. The blend of academia and advocacy has cultivated a nuanced understanding of contemporary sustainability challenges, policy processes, and communication strategies. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-7292-3018>

Pedro Gouveia Is a PhD candidate in Anthropology at the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Master in Social and Solidarity Economy and Specialisation in Political, Municipal and Administrative Sociology. He currently works as Senior Technician at Cooperativa Kairòs (São Miguel Island - Azores), responsible for designing and implementing “social innovation” projects in vulnerable territories, incubating integration companies and is the contact person for the TRANS-lighthouses project (Horizon Europe). Previously, he coordinated the Fundão Social Network (CMF) and led Fight Against Poverty Projects (National Programme).

Nathalie Nunes holds a PhD in Sociology of Law from the University of Coimbra (Portugal), with master's degrees in International Careers (University of Auvergne-Clermont 1, France) and in International and European Law of Fundamental Rights (University of Nantes, France), and an undergraduate degree in International and European Law (University of Paris Nanterre, France). Between 2018 and 2024, she was a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra, coordinating European projects (URBiNAT - Horizon 2020 and TRANS-lighthouses - Horizon Europe), and is currently coordinator of research on International Financial Institutions at JUSTA Platform. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0577-9300>

Rita Campos Is a researcher at the Centre for Social Studies-University of Coimbra; member of the Observatory for Education and Training Policies; and co-coordinator of the Working Group on Citizen Science and Education. With a PhD in Biology, her research focuses on science communication, active learning and citizen science tools regarding biodiversity and human health, connections between systems (natural, social, cultural), and sustainability. She is interested in interdisciplinary approaches that enhance public participation, such as context-based education or visual methodologies. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4184-3269>

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A PERCEÇÃO DO RISCO EM TRILHOS PEDESTRES: O CASO DO TRILHO DA ÁGUA – JANELA DO INFERNO NO ARQUIPÉLAGO DOS AÇORES

Eduardo Marques

Universidade dos Açores

Centro Lusíada de Investigação em Serviço Social e Intervenção Social (CLISSIS)

eduardo.js.marques@uac.pt

António Patrão

Universidade de Coimbra

Centro Lusíada de Investigação em Serviço Social e Intervenção Social (CLISSIS)

antoniopatrao@gmail.com

Ana Rita Matias

Universidade dos Açores

ana.rt.matias@uac.pt

RESUMO

O turismo de natureza tem ganho, globalmente, uma crescente expansão e interesse, com destaque para os trilhos naturais. No contexto do projeto europeu TRANS-lighthouses, decorre um estudo sobre o trilho “Rota da Água-Janela do Inferno”, em São Miguel (Açores). Um dos principais objetivos do estudo envolve conhecer quais são as percepções dos riscos pelos seus visitantes num contexto da crescente ameaça ambiental e de intenso fluxo turístico. O turismo de natureza envolve riscos, desde condições meteorológicas imprevisíveis até perigos no terreno, e a forma como os caminhantes compreendem esses riscos impacta a sua experiência, segurança e a sustentabilidade da atividade. Neste cenário, a percepção do risco em trilhos pedestres é pouco estudada, mas constitui fator crítico para que os riscos sejam compreendidos e geridos adequadamente, de forma a informar e dar suporte científico a planos de segurança. A percepção do risco envolve uma interação complexa entre os fatores sociais e naturais, e exige um equilíbrio entre as condições de segurança, sentido de aventura e de conexão com a natureza, com o respeito pelas comunidades locais. Este artigo apresenta os resultados preliminares de um estudo de caráter quantitativo e exploratório que visa entender a avaliação global de caminhantes sobre o trilho.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

turismo de natureza, trilhos pedestres, percepção do risco, Arquipélago dos Açores, projeto TRANS-lighthouses

INTRODUÇÃO

O turismo de natureza tem demonstrado um crescimento significativo e uma importância maior a nível mundial nos últimos anos, onde mais de 80% do valor dos bens e serviços do setor de viagens e turismo depende dos recursos e ecossistemas naturais e onde o turismo baseado na natureza representa mais de metade de todas as excursões, com previsões de gerar \$665 mil milhões anualmente até 2030 (World Travel & Tourism Council et al., 2024). Os trilhos pedestres são, neste contexto, elementos estruturantes para o desenvolvimento do turismo de natureza e para a sustentabilidade das áreas naturais, contribuindo para a conservação ambiental, a educação dos visitantes e o envolvimento das comunidades locais, de modo a gerar receitas, criar empregos e a impulsionar o desenvolvimento local (Ryan et al., 2015). Os trilhos pedestres proporcionam, ainda, experiências imersivas que aproximam os visitantes das paisagens, do património cultural e ambiental e dos saberes locais, permitindo integrar o exercício físico, a consciência ecológica e envolvimento cultural com a valorização dos territórios.

O fator segurança representa um princípio muito relevante aquando da tomada de decisão dos turistas na escolha de uma área destino, especialmente em contextos marcados por elevada concorrência entre territórios. Tanto a percepção subjetiva como a segurança objetiva influenciam significativamente o comportamento dos turistas na fase de decisão, o que se torna num vetor crítico de sucesso para a competitividade e sustentabilidade do destino. Este entendimento alarga-se obviamente aos espaços naturais e trilhos pedestres, onde a existência de percursos seguros, bem mantidos e sinalizados reforça a atratividade do destino, promovendo experiências positivas e a fidelização dos visitantes.

A percepção do risco, nomeadamente em contexto de espaços naturais, constitui uma área emergente de investigação, com implicações relevantes para a segurança dos visitantes, mas também para a sustentabilidade dos territórios. Apesar do crescente interesse pelo turismo de natureza esta temática permanece ainda pouco explorada, sobretudo no contexto de trilhos pedestres em regiões insulares e ambientalmente sensíveis. A percepção do risco é compreendida como a avaliação subjetiva que os indivíduos fazem de perigos potenciais sendo a mesma influenciada pelas experiências passadas, crenças, cultura e contexto social do indivíduo (Slovic, 1992). Esta avaliação afeta não só a decisão de visitar determinados locais como também o comportamento durante a visita, a preparação prévia e a interação com a paisagem. Associada à percepção do risco está a comunicação de risco, que assume um papel relevante enquanto processo bidirecional entre entidades gestoras, comunidades locais e visitantes. Trata-se de uma ferramenta estratégica que visa aumentar a literacia sobre riscos, promover comportamentos responsáveis e reforçar a confiança entre os diferentes atores envolvidos na gestão e promoção de trilhos. Uma comunicação mal concebida ou

culturalmente desajustada pode resultar em percepções distorcidas e comportamentos inadequados por parte dos visitantes comprometendo a sua segurança e a preservação dos recursos. Ainda num quadro de gestão integrada do risco, a mitigação de riscos depende da capacidade de transformar as percepções dos visitantes em estratégias de gestão operacionais. De acordo com as orientações práticas propostas pelo *Risk Management Centre of Excellence* a gestão eficaz dos trilhos deve incluir inspeções regulares, manutenção preventiva, sinalética clara e estratégias de comunicação e de educação ajustadas ao perfil dos visitantes e das comunidades. Este processo contínuo de percepção–comunicação–mitigação tem impacto direto na experiência do visitante e na imagem turística do destino, sendo particularmente relevante nos Açores, território que se posiciona como uma referência em turismo de natureza seguro e sustentável.

O turismo de natureza representa uma das principais linhas estratégias para o desenvolvimento sustentável da Região Autónoma dos Açores através de práticas responsáveis na conservação e sensibilização ambiental para a valorização dos seus recursos naturais e culturais. No entanto, o aumento da procura por experiências de turismo de natureza nos Açores, e nomeadamente em trilhos pedestres, levanta desafios significativos em termos de sustentabilidade ambiental, segurança e capacidade de carga dos percursos. Estes desafios são particularmente relevantes em contextos insulares, onde os recursos são limitados e os ecossistemas apresentam elevada sensibilidade a pressões externas. Tal como salientam Eagles, McCool e Haynes (2002), a gestão do turismo em áreas protegidas exige uma abordagem integrada que inclua planeamento estratégico, desenvolvimento de competências locais e mecanismos eficazes de monitorização. Por sua vez, Butler e Carlsen (2011) sublinham a importância de integrar os valores ecológicos, culturais e sociais dos destinos insulares na gestão do turismo, promovendo a participação ativa das comunidades e valorizando a percepção de segurança dos visitantes como elemento-chave da sua experiência. Complementarmente, estudos sobre as economias turísticas de pequenas ilhas evidenciam a necessidade de políticas ajustadas à sua vulnerabilidade estrutural, reforçando a importância de estratégias resilientes e participativas para garantir a conservação dos recursos naturais e a sustentabilidade a longo prazo. Neste sentido, assegurar a qualidade e a segurança dos trilhos pedestres, entre outras infraestruturas, nos Açores constitui uma condição essencial não apenas para a proteção dos visitantes, mas também para o fortalecimento do destino enquanto território sustentável e atrativo.

O arquipélago dos Açores representa um contexto privilegiado para a investigação em turismo de natureza, devido à sua notável diversidade biológica, geológica e paisagística. A estes atributos soma-se a consolidação de uma vasta rede de trilhos pedestres classificados, que tem vindo a atrair um número crescente de visitantes, tanto nacionais como internacionais. No âmbito do projeto europeu TRANS-lighthouses, o Trilho da Rota da Água – Janela do Inferno, localizado no concelho da Lagoa, em São Miguel, está a ser estudado para se poder converter numa Solução Baseada na Natureza (SbN) aplicada ao contexto do turismo sustentável.



FIGURA 1. TRILHO DA ROTA DA ÁGUA – JANELA DO INFERNO

Fonte: Autores.

Inserido neste projeto este estudo tem como objetivo analisar a percepção do risco pelos visitantes do Trilho da Água – Janela do Inferno, na ilha de São Miguel, a fim de perceber uma dimensão importante na experiência turística em áreas naturais protegidas. O estudo baseia-se no paradigma psicométrico de Slovic (1992), que integra dimensões emocionais e experienciais na análise do risco, para além das componentes técnicas. Complementarmente, modelos sócio-psicológicos reforçam a importância dos fatores cognitivos (ex. conhecimento), experienciais (ex. vivências anteriores) e socioculturais (ex. valores e normas sociais) na construção da percepção do risco (Sjöberg, 2000). Ao analisar a percepção do risco dos visitantes em trilhos pedestres esta investigação pretende contribuir para o desenvolvimento de estratégias de gestão mais eficazes promovendo simultaneamente a melhoria da experiência turística e a integração de medidas de mitigação do risco no planeamento territorial.

METODOLOGIA

A presente análise de caráter exploratório e quantitativo, procurou avaliar a percepção de caminhantes sobre os potenciais riscos associados ao trilho “Rota da Água – Janela do Inferno”. No âmbito do projeto TRANS-lighthouses foram instalados dois “eco contadores”, que permitem avaliar o tráfego total de visitantes. A contabilização para o período de 15 de agosto de 2024 a 15 de março de 2025, deram conta de um tráfego total de, aproximadamente, 26 000 caminhantes, com uma média diária de 124 pessoas. Na presente investigação, foi construída uma amostra não representativa da população, com um total de 62 inquéritos por questionário, recolhidos entre 30 de setembro a 6 de outubro, junto dos caminhantes, após estes terem terminando a sua caminhada. Trata-se de uma amostra por conveniência, técnica de amostragem não probabilística, onde os participantes são escolhidos com base na facilidade de acesso aos sujeitos ou presença no local, durante o período de recolha de dados (Bryman, 2016).

O questionário foi construído pelos investigadores e resulta de um processo colaborativo no contexto da Unidade Curricular de “Laboratório de Investigação em Serviço Social” do 4º ano da licenciatura de serviço social da Universidade dos Açores. Pretendeu-se com esta colaboração treinar alunos de serviço social no processo reflexivo do pensar e desenhar processos de investigação aplicada e facilitar o treino de competências de aplicação de questionários em contexto real de prática. Atendendo à dimensão pedagógica e de aprendizagem baseada em projetos, não foi necessário a elaboração de parecer pela Comissão de Ética da Universidade dos Açores. No entanto, o protocolo de trabalho seguiu todas as dimensões éticas a que obedece um trabalho de investigação, como a apresentação do estudo e do seu objetivo, um campo para o registo do consentimento informado.

Os dados recolhidos foram, posteriormente, sujeitos a uma análise descritiva, com recurso ao *software* IBM SPSS, que permitiu analisar as principais características das variáveis em estudo. Em termos das limitações metodológicas, não foi possível garantir a aleatoriedade e o controlo da seleção dos participantes, nem a generalização à população. Não obstante, a análise exploratória dos dados possibilitou identificar alguns padrões de resposta, em particular identificar um perfil de caminhante e da sua relação com o risco, e deste modo, formular hipóteses de trabalho para análises posteriores.

RESULTADOS

O PERFIL DO CAMINHANTE E A SUA PREPARAÇÃO PARA GERIR RISCOS

Com o objetivo de caracterizar o perfil dos caminhantes do trilho da “Rota da Água – Janela do Inferno”, iniciou-se a análise das principais características sociodemográficas. Do total de 62 inquiridos, 54,8% eram do sexo masculino. Os resultados sugerem que estes indivíduos possuem um elevado nível de capital escolar, evidenciado pelo facto de que a grande maioria (88,5%) completou o ensino superior. A análise baseada na nacionalidade permitiu concluir que a maioria dos pedestrianistas não provinha da ilha de São Miguel, sendo, assim,

composta por turistas. Ao todo, foram inquiridas 18 nacionalidades, oriundas da Europa, da América do Norte e da Austrália – a maior parte dos participantes era de nacionalidade alemã (16,1%), espanhola (14,5%) e portuguesa (do continente) (11,3%). Em termos de idade, a maioria dos participantes tinha entre 30 e 40 anos (43%), enquanto 23% estavam entre os 51 e 59 anos.

Na Tabela 1, apresentam-se algumas das variáveis usadas para caracterizar o perfil dos caminhantes, ao nível da sua preparação para gerir possíveis riscos. Os resultados indicam que a maioria são pedestrianistas frequentes, possivelmente com interesse em atividades ao ar livre, mesmo enquanto viajam dado que 87,1% referiram caminhar com frequência.

		n	%
Costuma fazer trilhos com frequência?	<i>Sim</i>	54	87,1
	<i>Não</i>	7	11,3
Como avalia a sua condição física?	<i>Boa</i>	39	62,9
	<i>Normal</i>	23	37,1
Leva um kit de sobrevivência quando faz trilhos?	<i>Sim</i>	25	40,3
	<i>Às vezes</i>	21	33,9
	<i>Não</i>	16	25,8
Sabe qual é o número de contacto de emergência em caso de acidente?	<i>Sim</i>	44	71,0
	<i>Não</i>	18	29,0
Utilizou algum site/aplicação como orientação neste trilho?	<i>Sim</i>	42	67,7
	<i>Não</i>	14	22,6
Considera importante ter um guia local para fazer o trilho consigo?	<i>Sim</i>	6	9,7
	<i>Não</i>	56	90,3

TABELA 1. O PERFIL DO CAMINHANTE E A SUA PREPARAÇÃO PARA GERIR RISCOS

Fonte: Autores.

Em termos da sua condição física, a maioria dos participantes classifica-a como sendo “boa” (62,9%), o nível mais alto na escala apresentada no questionário. No que se refere à sua preparação geral ou de emergência no trilho, o facto de 40,3% dos participantes levar um kit de sobrevivência nas suas caminhadas e 33,9% indicarem fazê-lo “às vezes”, sugere que, embora experientes, estes pedestrianistas demonstram uma consciência das medidas de segurança a tomar durante as caminhadas. Assim, não é inesperado que cerca de 4 em cada 5 inquiridos refiram que, em caso de acidente, sabem que número de emergência contactar (numa questão subsequente, procurou-se compreender qual seria esse número, e todos os 44 inquiridos responderam que ligariam ao 112). Outra característica identificada nestes caminhantes é o uso de recursos digitais, a maioria (67,7%) refere ter usado uma aplicação ou website para se orientar no trilho “Rota da Água – Janela do Inferno”. Numa análise não apresentada aqui, 85,7% destes inquiridos referem que utilizar um website/aplicação sobre o trilho lhes proporcionou uma sensação de maior segurança durante a caminhada. Assim, além de serem experientes em caminhadas, estes pedestrianistas procuram, de forma autónoma e com o auxílio de recursos digitais, mais informações antes de iniciar um trilho, o que pode ser interpretado como parte de uma prática antecipatória de preparação para possíveis riscos. Portanto, era de esperar que, quando questionados sobre a necessidade de um guia local, 90% não considerassem essa necessidade.

Em termos gerais, a análise do perfil do caminhante e o seu posicionamento perante algumas questões relativas ao seu comportamento face a riscos, permite concluir que a maioria dos participantes são caminhantes experientes/frequentes e que estão relativamente precavidos com medidas básicas de segurança.

AValiação dos Índices de Risco Físico, Ambiental e de Segurança do Trilho

De seguida, importava compreender de que forma estes caminhantes percecionaram os riscos existentes após a conclusão do trilho. Foram analisados três índices compósitos, com variação entre 1 (risco mínimo) e 5 (risco máximo), desenvolvidos a partir de um bloco de indicadores destinados a medir a perceção de riscos em três dimensões: “físicos e mentais”, “ambientais” e de “segurança”¹. A análise realizada permitiu concluir que a perceção do risco envolvido no trilho “Rota da Água – Janela do Inferno” é globalmente baixa, tanto em termos de riscos físicos e mentais, como em relação aos riscos ambientais e de segurança. No entanto, ao analisar os resultados, torna-se claro que os inquiridos percecionam um nível ligeiramente mais elevado de risco (médio-baixo) no índice de segurança.

¹ O índice de risco “físico/mental” inclui 8 indicadores de risco, Alfa de Cronbach 0,833 (queda; escorregar; de se lesionar; exaustão física; de se sentir ansioso; ter um ataque de pânico; sentir medo; sentir isolado). O índice de risco “ambiental” inclui 5 indicadores, Alfa de Cronbach 0,818 (meteorologia; contato com a fauna (animais ou insetos); contacto com a flora (plantas desconhecidas ou perigosas); sismos; desastres ou eventos naturais); O índice de risco de “segurança” inclui 4 indicadores, Alfa de Cronbach 0,697 (não ter de condições de comunicação; falta de um plano de segurança (assistência médica e evacuação); ser assaltado ou ser vítima de um crime; desorientação (por desconhecimento do trilho, falta de sinalização ou de informação adequada).

Em termos dos riscos “mentais”, e numa análise aqui não apresentada, mede-se aspetos como sentir-se isolado, com medo, ansioso ou ter um ataque de pânico no trilho – riscos classificados como “muito baixos” pela maioria dos inquiridos. Dentro dos riscos “físicos”, a maioria dos caminhantes considerou que sentir-se exausto é um risco “muito baixo”, assim como consideram “baixo” o risco de ter lesões ou quedas no trilho (46,8% e 51,6% dos inquiridos, respetivamente). O único risco que aqui se destaca com um nível médio de preocupação para a maioria dos participantes (41,9%) diz respeito ao risco de escorregar.

Relativamente aos riscos ambientais do trilho, como aqueles associados a desastres naturais (deslizamentos de terra, queda de árvores ou inundações), assim como o risco de contato com flora ou fauna perigosas, são classificados pela maioria dos inquiridos como “muito baixos” ou “baixos”. É de notar que o risco relacionado com sismos é avaliado como sendo, destacadamente, “muito baixo” para 67,7% dos participantes, o que é uma constatação curiosa, dado a alta atividade sísmica da Ilha de São Miguel. Os riscos relacionados ao clima são percebidos como uma preocupação de nível médio-baixo, sublinhando-se as preocupações ocasionais com as condições meteorológicas imprevisíveis.

Por fim, entre os riscos relacionados com a segurança dos indivíduos no trilho, a percepção geral é de que este é um trilho relativamente seguro. No entanto, o risco associado à falta de plano de segurança em caso de emergência médica, assim como o risco de não ter acesso a rede de telemóvel no trilho, apresentam-se como preocupações de nível médio para os inquiridos (registando os níveis mais elevados de risco). Em termos globais, os dados parecem demonstrar que estes caminhantes revelam estar algo preocupados com os problemas de comunicação, mas também com as condições climatéricas imprevisíveis e possíveis consequências físicas (como cair ou escorregar), durante a visita ao trilho da “Rota da Água – Janela do Inferno”.

De seguida, tinha-se como objetivo compreender se diferentes experiências dos inquiridos ao nível da caminhada em trilhos (se os fazem frequentemente ou não) implicam uma percepção de risco distinta. Os dados permitem concluir que caminhantes mais experientes, ou que fazem trilhos mais frequentemente, demonstram níveis mais baixos de percepção de risco do que aqueles que não caminham com tanta regularidade. No entanto, é necessário ter cautela ao interpretar estes resultados, dado que apenas 7 dos 62 inquiridos afirmarem não ser caminhantes frequentes. Ainda assim, esta demonstra ser uma hipótese com potencial; neste caso, a percepção de risco tende a diminuir com a experiência do caminhante.

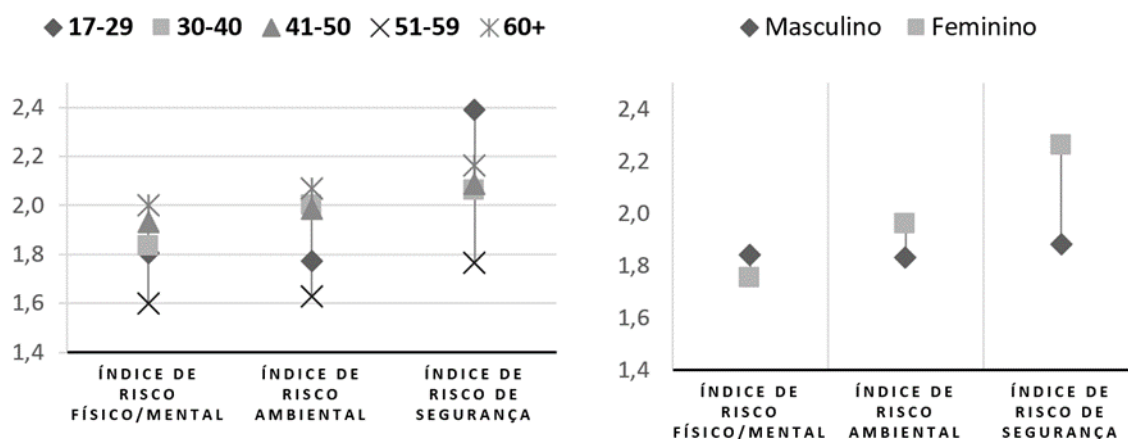


FIGURA 2. A VARIAÇÃO MÉDIA DOS ÍNDICES DE RISCOS CONSOANTE A IDADE E SEXO DO CAMINHANTE

Fonte: Autores.

Importava similarmente perceber se a percepção de risco varia consoante a idade e o sexo dos inquiridos. Os resultados permitiram concluir que os participantes com 60 anos ou mais anos têm, em média, uma percepção de risco mais elevada nos índices que medem os riscos físico/mental e ambiental (Figura 2). Os participantes mais jovens, com idades entre os 17 e os 29 anos, tendem a ver maior risco em termos de segurança. Esta observação está relacionada com o facto de a maioria dos indivíduos deste segmento etário ter classificado a ausência de rede telefónica no trilho como um risco elevado. Por outro lado, ao considerar o sexo, as mulheres apresentam uma percepção mais elevada de risco em dois dos três índices analisados (Ambiental e Segurança), na amostra considerada.

No contexto dos dados aqui apresentados, importa reconhecer que este estudo apresenta limitações, embora os dados obtidos forneçam pistas relevantes sobre padrões de percepção do risco a sua representatividade é ainda limitada. Torna-se, por isso, necessário aprofundar esta linha de investigação alargando o universo da amostra e diversificar os contextos geográficos, incluindo abordagens metodológicas complementares, como entrevistas qualitativas a *stakeholders*, membros da comunidade ou governantes. Este aprofundamento poderá revelar-se essencial para consolidar o conhecimento científico de modo a informar as políticas públicas, a capacitar os agentes locais e a garantir que os trilhos pedestres dos Açores continuem a ser infraestruturas seguras, sustentáveis e enriquecedores para todos os que os utilizam.

CONCLUSÃO

Com este estudo, podemos perceber que apesar das limitações do mesmo, é possível identificar que a grande maioria dos utilizadores do Trilho da Água-Janela do Inferno, não identifica grandes riscos no trilho, pelo que a sua perceção de riscos é baixa. Numa primeira análise este dado é positivo, dado que se pretende converter este trilho numa solução baseada na natureza, entendida como “ações para proteger, administrar de forma sustentável e restaurar ecossistemas naturais e modificados de maneira que abordem os desafios sociais de forma eficaz e adaptável, para fornecer bem-estar humano e benefícios à biodiversidade” (IUCN, 2020, p. 1). A dimensão social é para nós de grande relevância dado que no contexto do Projeto TRANS-lighthouses, a proposta de valor para o trilho assenta na vertente de Laboratório de Conhecimento Vivo, Espaço de Arte e Cultura, Trilho de Saúde e Bem-estar, Território empreendedor de base local.

Sabemos que se olharmos os indicadores de riscos para uma Solução Baseada na Natureza (SbN) estes levam em linha de conta fatores maioritariamente muito objetivos, isto é, riscos naturais e climáticos, tais como: Resiliência a desastres; Desenvolvimento informado sobre risco de desastres; Perdas diretas e indiretas anuais médias devido a perigos naturais e climáticos; Risco à infraestrutura urbana crítica; Número de pessoas adversamente afetadas por desastres naturais a cada ano; Alerta precoce de risco múltiplo, indicadores importantes, mas não suficientes.

É importante ter em atenção que a perceção de riscos, permite cruzar outros olhares e assim desenvolver planos de segurança e melhoria dos trilhos que permitam consolidar o turismo de natureza. Investir na segurança nos trilhos é também investir na valorização do território como um todo, sendo particularmente relevante em regiões de grande sensibilidade ecológica como é o caso dos Açores.

Para além da sua função recreativa, os trilhos pedestres podem ser conceptualizados como Soluções Baseadas na Natureza (SbN) promovendo benefícios múltiplos em termos de conservação da biodiversidade, bem-estar humano e adaptação às alterações climáticas. A adoção dos princípios associados às SbN no planeamento e gestão destes percursos permite articular objetivos ecológicos e turísticos, promovendo uma governação integrada participativa e do risco. Os açores têm um grande potencial para o desenvolvimento do Turismo Baseado na Natureza, entendido como um turismo que depende da natureza e de cenários naturais (Boyd & Hall, 2005) e que pode ser definido como atividades de turismo ao ar livre em áreas naturais.

No contexto do projeto TRANS-lighthouses a dimensão de bem-estar e de conexão com a natureza é um elemento importante, pelo que a segurança nos trilhos é fundamental. De acordo com Hansen (2018),

Bem-estar e saúde são razões importantes pelas quais os visitantes decidem visitar áreas naturais. Este é particularmente o caso quando se envolve em atividades recreativas ao ar livre, onde a ligação entre saúde, bem-estar e o ambiente natural é muito explícita. (p. 125)

Assim é importante pensar em estratégias potenciadoras da utilização de trilhos e seu contributo na promoção do bem-estar individual, social e ambiental e do desenvolvimento sustentável, pelo que perceber os riscos associados à utilização dos mesmos é fundamental. O setor do turismo de saúde é uma área pouco desenvolvida nos Açores, com potencial para vir a ser um produto de alto valor acrescentado e que se pode ser percebido como um tipo de turismo de bem-estar que implica que as pessoas viajem para restaurar a sua saúde mental, não é uma cura, mas permite restabelecer a nossa saúde física, mental e social através duma intervenção que pode ser mediada pela natureza.

A indústria global do turismo e a indústria do bem-estar estão ambas passando por uma grande fase de crescimento alimentada pelo desejo cada vez maior dos consumidores não apenas por experiências emocionais, mas também por transformações mais permanentes e mudanças no estilo de vida (Räikkönen & Grénman, 2017, p. 3).

Por estas razões, compreender a perceção do risco em ambientes naturais sensíveis constitui um passo muito importante para reforçar a atratividade dos Açores enquanto destino seguro, sustentável e ecologicamente responsável, alinhado com os princípios do turismo de natureza e de saúde assente em Soluções Baseadas na Natureza.

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NOTAS BIOGRÁFICAS

Eduardo José da Silva Tomé Marques é Doutor Europeu em Serviço Social pela Universidade Complutense de Madrid. É Diretor do Curso da Licenciatura em Serviço Social e docente da FCSH da Universidade dos Açores. Desenvolve atividades de investigação como membro integrado do Centro Lusíada de Investigação em Serviço Social e Intervenção Social (CLISSIS) fazendo parte do seu Conselho Científico. É membro do Comité Científico e Editorial de várias revistas científicas, tem sido o IR de vários projetos nacionais e internacionais. Foi Embaixador do Pacto Europeu para o Clima” no âmbito da iniciativa da União Europeia para o clima (DG CLIMA). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9697-3381>

António Patrão Engenheiro Florestal e investigador, doutorando em *Território, Risco e Políticas Públicas*, com pós-graduações em Dinâmicas Sociais e Riscos Naturais, Direito do Ordenamento, do Urbanismo e do Ambiente, e Gestão e Planeamento em Turismo. Tem experiência profissional em funções técnicas e diretivas nas áreas da gestão florestal, silvicultura urbana, gestão integrada do fogo e do risco, em Portugal e no estrangeiro. Colabora com centros de investigação e instituições de ensino superior, desenvolvendo investigação centrada nas dimensões sociais do risco e no uso de métodos colaborativos e

participativos para promover comunidades mais resilientes e adaptadas ao risco e às mudanças climáticas. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0006-3724-8466>

Ana Rita Matias Socióloga e investigadora, doutorada em Alterações Climáticas e Políticas de Desenvolvimento Sustentável, com especialização em Sociologia. Tem experiência em desigualdades sociais, estudos de juventude, sustentabilidade e transições socioecológicas em territórios de baixa densidade, incluindo contextos insulares. Colabora com diversos centros de investigação e instituições de ensino superior, integrando abordagens interdisciplinares para analisar questões relacionadas com desigualdades sociais, desigualdades digitais e sustentabilidade territorial. Possui experiência na conceção e coordenação de investigação com métodos mistos, incluindo elaboração de inquéritos, realização de entrevistas qualitativas e análise estatística. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4686-4926>

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TOWARDS INCLUSIVE CITIES AND SPACES

FINANCEIRIZAÇÃO DA HABITAÇÃO NO PORTUGAL DO SÉCULO XXI: REPRESENTAÇÕES SOCIAIS, PRÁTICAS E IMPLICAÇÕES POLÍTICAS. RESULTADOS DE UM PROJETO INTERDISCIPLINAR¹

Raquel Ribeiro

Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra
raquelribeiro@ces.uc.pt

Joaquim Pires Valentim

Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade de Coimbra

Ana Cordeiro Santos

Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra

Daniela Sofia Neto

Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra
Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra

Fernanda Jesus

Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra

Lina Coelho

Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra
Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra

Rita Campos

Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra

Rita Silva

Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra

Sheila Holz

Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra

Tiago Castela

Centro de Estudos Sociais, Departamento de Arquitectura, Universidade de Coimbra

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RESUMO

O direito à habitação adequada é inseparável do direito à vida e constitui a base de outros direitos humanos, tais como a educação ou a saúde. Contudo, a ascensão dos mercados, atores e motivações financeiras na provisão da habitação tem levado a um aumento dramático das desigualdades de acesso neste domínio. O projeto HOU\$ING – *Financeirização da habitação no Portugal do século XXI: Representações sociais, práticas e implicações políticas* teve como objetivo estudar a relação entre financeirização e representações sociais e práticas habitacionais, assim como os seus impactos psicossociais e políticos. O projeto adotou uma abordagem interdisciplinar e de métodos mistos, envolvendo a análise de documentos, bases de dados internacionais, inquéritos nacionais, entrevistas, grupos de discussão focalizada, análise da comunicação em redes sociais e estudos de caso. Os resultados revelam como as representações sociais e práticas associadas à habitação evoluíram em resposta às políticas públicas que fomentaram a aquisição de habitação própria através do crédito hipotecário, numa primeira fase, e o investimento (inter)nacional no imobiliário, numa segunda fase. Conclui-se discutindo as implicações das crescentes desigualdades habitacionais ao nível psicossocial e político.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

habitação, financeirização, representações sociais, práticas sociais, impactos psicossociais

INTRODUÇÃO

A habitação constitui uma necessidade básica universal e um direito constitucional. Em Portugal, a provisão da habitação tem estado indissociavelmente ligada à produção e reprodução de desigualdades sociais. A ascensão dos mercados, atores e motivações financeiras na provisão da habitação ou, por outras palavras, a financeirização da habitação (Aalbers, 2016), tem contribuído dramaticamente para a atual situação de crise habitacional. Com o objetivo de estudar a relação entre a financeirização e o acesso à habitação, focando-se na análise das representações sociais e das práticas associadas à habitação, foi desenvolvido o projeto HOU\$ING – *Financeirização da habitação no Portugal do século XXI: Representações sociais, práticas e implicações políticas*, entre janeiro de 2022 e dezembro de 2023. Nesta publicação descrevemos brevemente a origem do projeto e o seu enquadramento teórico, os objetivos e abordagem metodológica, bem como os principais resultados, remetendo para os documentos publicados, em particular o “e-book” produzido pela equipa (Ribeiro, 2023), que sintetiza as diferentes atividades realizadas.

ORIGEM E ENQUADRAMENTO TEÓRICO

O projeto surgiu na sequência de diversos projetos² desenvolvidos no Centro de Estudos Sociais (CES), em particular dois: o projeto FINFAM – *Finanças, Género e Poder: Como estão as Famílias Portuguesas a Gerir as suas Finanças no Contexto da Crise?* (Coelho et al., 2015), que evidenciou a importância das decisões sobre a habitação na vida das famílias e o impacto da Crise Financeira Global; o projeto FINHABIT – *Viver em Tempos Financeiros: Habitação e Produção de Espaço no Portugal Democrático*, que identificou duas fases distintas da financeirização da habitação em Portugal (Santos, 2019). A primeira fase, entre meados da década de 1990 e o início do milénio, incentivada pelos subsídios públicos e benefícios fiscais associados ao crédito à habitação, conduziu a um aumento substancial do número de famílias proprietárias da sua habitação, mas também a um aumento exponencial do endividamento das famílias. As políticas adotadas para fazer face à crise financeira conduziram à segunda fase de financeirização da habitação no país, impulsionada por políticas públicas destinadas a atrair o investimento estrangeiro (e.g., Regime Fiscal para Residentes não Habituais; Autorização de Residência para Atividade de Investimento), com importantes impactos na acessibilidade à habitação.

Os estudos sobre a financeirização da vida quotidiana mostraram que esta não produz apenas transformações materiais, mas também transformações nas narrativas e nos discursos. No entanto, pouco se sabia ainda sobre a forma como estes discursos orientavam as teorias leigas sobre a habitação e as práticas habitacionais ou, por outras palavras, as representações sociais associadas à habitação. A teoria das representações sociais (Moscovici, 1981; cf. Poeschl em cap. 5 do e-book) salienta que as pessoas desenvolvem teorias leigas para dar sentido à realidade social e orientar as suas práticas sociais. Originadas na vida quotidiana no decurso das comunicações interpessoais, i.e., nas conversas entre familiares, amigos e colegas e na informação veiculada nos meios de comunicação social, as teorias leigas são o resultado de complexas inter-relações entre diferentes pertenças sociais, experiências e valores pessoais.

OBJETIVOS E ABORDAGEM METODOLÓGICA

O projeto HOU\$ING combinou a psicologia social e política com os estudos sobre a financeirização para compreender as inter-relações entre os processos psicossociológicos e político-económicos nas representações sociais e práticas associadas à habitação. Mais concretamente, o projeto procurou: a) estudar as representações sociais e práticas habitacionais nas diferentes fases da financeirização da habitação em Portugal; b) analisar o impacto da pandemia da COVID-19 nas representações sociais e práticas habitacionais; e c)

² Projeto “Habitação: Cem Anos de Políticas Públicas em Portugal, 1918–2018”, tarefa coordenada por José António Bandeira e Tiago Castela sobre a história do Fundo de Fomento da Habitação (ver capítulo de Bandeira et al. em: https://www.portaldahabitacao.pt/web/guest/publicacao_100anos).

compreender as implicações psicossociais e políticas das desigualdades habitacionais (para uma descrição detalhada ver Ribeiro et al., em cap. 2 do e-book).

O projeto estudou a realidade portuguesa, tendo como casos de estudo as duas principais cidades do país, Lisboa e Porto, e suas áreas metropolitanas. Salientando a importância dos contextos políticos, históricos, económicos e geográficos, das posições e experiências sociais na formação e expressão das representações sociais, o projeto adotou uma abordagem interdisciplinar, envolvendo investigadores e investigadoras de diversas áreas disciplinares, e uma metodologia de métodos mistos (ver Figura 1).

Tendo como referência os estudos sobre comunicação de ciência participativa e a abordagem de ciência social cidadã, o projeto procurou envolver as populações na investigação como primeira atividade e atividade transversal, procurando perceber as suas perspetivas e visões. Para o efeito foram implementadas diversas estratégias para dialogar com diferentes públicos. As atividades desenvolvidas ao longo dos dois anos do projeto incluem a criação de uma página online (<https://ces.uc.pt/pt/investigacao/projetos-de-investigacao/housing/inicio>), a participação em eventos de comunicação de ciência, mas também formatos participativos como atividade de rua (Vox Pop) e sessões em escolas públicas no âmbito do programa de extensão CES vai à Escola. Por último, foi elaborado o e-book *Lar (agri)doce Lar: Representações sociais da habitação no Portugal do século XXI e seus impactos psicossociais* (Ribeiro, 2023), que aborda, de forma sucinta, as principais temáticas da investigação, bem como os principais resultados. As atividades de envolvimento, comunicação e divulgação científicas são descritas no capítulo 3 do e-book por Rita Campos e Fernanda Jesus.

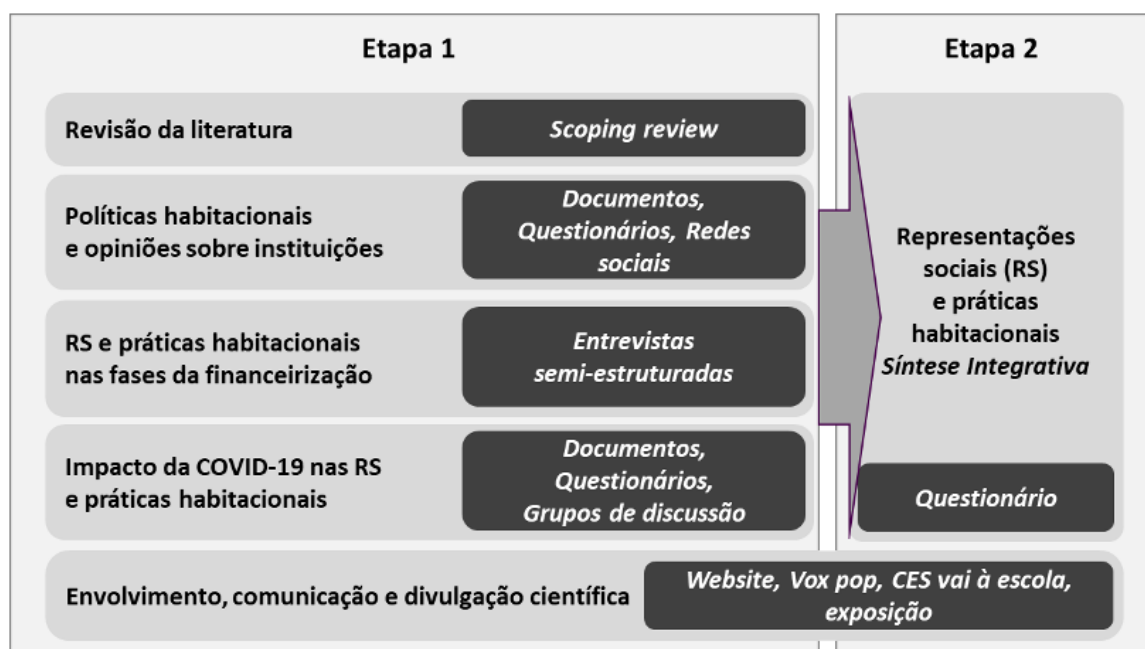


FIGURA 1. ETAPAS E ATIVIDADES DO PROJETO HOUSING

Fonte: Autores.

O trabalho empírico foi desenvolvido em duas etapas, seguindo a abordagem da Escola de Genebra da teoria das representações sociais. A primeira etapa envolveu atividades de análise documental, análise de dados quantitativos (inquéritos e bases de dados), bem como análise qualitativa de entrevistas, documentos, grupos de discussão focalizada e comunicação em redes sociais, tendo em vista: a) rever a literatura sobre financeirização, habitação, representações sociais e práticas habitacionais; b) analisar o impacto das políticas de habitação na opinião dos cidadãos acerca das instituições e seus impactos psicossociais; c) estudar as representações sociais e práticas habitacionais nas diferentes fases da financeirização da habitação em Portugal; e d) analisar o impacto da pandemia da COVID-19 nas representações e práticas.

Os resultados da primeira etapa informaram a construção de um questionário de síntese de âmbito nacional na segunda etapa, no qual participaram mais de mil pessoas entre 26 de maio e 30 de novembro de 2023 (Ribeiro, Poeschl et al., 2023). O inquérito procurou identificar as diferentes posições sobre a crise da habitação no país, sua ancoragem na situação e condições habitacionais, na pertença social, nas conceções acerca do funcionamento da sociedade, em princípios de justiça distributiva e na orientação política. O inquérito procurou ainda avaliar os impactos psicossociais e políticos das desigualdades habitacionais e extrair implicações teóricas e práticas.

PRINCIPAIS RESULTADOS

A revisão da literatura tendo em vista sistematizar os principais resultados e identificar lacunas sobre as inter-relações entre financeirização e representações sociais e práticas habitacionais no século XXI, revelou que a financeirização da habitação é um fenómeno que suscita interesse académico a nível global, em particular desde a Crise Financeira Global (Ribeiro, Neto et al., 2023). As principais temáticas identificadas na literatura são: investimento imobiliário e propriedade através do crédito hipotecário; práticas familiares e regime de ocupação; habitação acessível; mercado de arrendamento; e governança urbana, a mais expressiva. Os resultados revelaram ainda que poucos estudos abordaram esta relação do ponto de vista psicossociológico, salientando a relevância da investigação empírica realizada pelo projeto para aprofundar a compreensão de como, e em que medida, a financeirização da habitação está a produzir mudanças nas representações e nas práticas habitacionais. Os principais resultados obtidos no projeto HOU\$ING são descritos nos 21 capítulos do e-book (Ribeiro, 2023), e sintetizados abaixo.

EVOLUÇÃO DAS REPRESENTAÇÕES E PRÁTICAS HABITACIONAIS

As raízes da aspiração da casa própria em Portugal foram evidenciadas pela análise documental histórica realizada por Tiago Castela (cap. 6 do e-book). Esta análise mostrou que, à semelhança do observado na América do Norte, à medida que o modo de produção capitalista se estendeu à construção das cidades na segunda metade do século XX, em articulação com políticas públicas de fomento da propriedade habitacional e discursos de deslegitimação do arrendamento, também se transformaram e aprofundaram os regimes de segregação espacial e social no país.

Os estudos qualitativos mostraram como as representações e as práticas evoluíram em resposta às transformações do contexto político-económico-social (Ribeiro et al. em cap. 15 a 17 do e-book). Até ao final dos anos 1980s, recorrer ao crédito bancário para comprar casa era uma prática residual, não só devido às elevadas taxas de juro (na ordem dos dois dígitos), como às exigências do processo e à conotação negativa associada ao endividamento. A partir dos anos 1990, a preparação e posterior adesão à União Monetária Europeia, as políticas públicas de bonificação do crédito à habitação e os benefícios fiscais associados à aquisição de casa própria (cf. Santos, 2019), aliados à simplificação de procedimentos e ao investimento massivo em publicidade que mobilizava ideias de racionalidade financeira, segurança e felicidade, conduziram a um aumento exponencial do endividamento das famílias. Comprar casa com recurso a crédito tornou-se uma prática comum e socialmente valorizada, inicialmente sobretudo entre as famílias de rendimentos médios e elevados das áreas metropolitanas de Lisboa e do Porto, depois um pouco por todo o país.

Na sequência da Crise Financeira Global, com a subida das taxas de juro do crédito à habitação e a introdução de garantias bancárias mais exigentes para a concessão dos empréstimos, assim como a quebra de rendimentos e o aumento do desemprego, ficou evidente o risco associado ao crédito concedido na década anterior. A insolvência de inúmeras famílias, que acabaram por perder as suas casas para a banca, enquanto esta era resgatada pelo Estado português, acabou por afetar negativamente a confiança da população

nas instituições financeiras. O endividamento para compra de casa voltou a ser perspetivado, tal como no passado, como algo arriscado para as famílias de rendimentos médios. Contudo, as estratégias desenvolvidas para promover a recuperação económica – focadas no turismo e na atração de investimento estrangeiro – promoveram a crescente utilização da habitação como um ativo financeiro, isto é, um bem no qual se investe para se obter um rápido e avultado retorno. Em resultado, a insegurança habitacional agravou-se e começou a assistir-se a um aumento de práticas pouco éticas com vista à expulsão das famílias das casas arrendadas.

A análise de economia política realizada por Ana Cordeiro Santos (2024; ver também cap. 7 do e-book), evidenciou as consequências práticas das políticas de atração de investimento estrangeiro no país: entre 2012 e 2019, as compras de habitação por não residentes aumentaram de 4.9% para 8.5% do total de compras no país. A análise de dados de outros países europeus revela como o aumento da procura do imobiliário nacional por pequenos investidores de países centrais, atraídos pelas mais-valias e extração de rendimentos, contribui para aumentar o fosso entre os preços e rendas da habitação e os salários da população residente, agravando a crise da habitação no país.

A análise exploratória ao conteúdo de anúncios de imóveis para venda em Lisboa e no Porto (ver cap. 16 do e-book) ilustra uma das formas como o “sujeito investidor” é promovido e fomentado como modelo social de sucesso, informando as representações e práticas habitacionais, não só de profissionais e investidores do ramo imobiliário, mas também das famílias que procuram uma casa para viver. Com o aumento dramático do custo da habitação, tanto da aquisição como do arrendamento, e a quase inexistência de habitação pública, ter uma propriedade passou a ser perspetivado como forma de garantir o direito à habitação ou um rendimento futuro.

O IMPACTO DA PANDEMIA DA COVID-19

A pandemia da COVID-19, ao redirecionar o foco para a função de uso da habitação, permitiu reunir consensos sobre a importância de uma habitação adequada. Contudo, também expôs os impactos negativos das desigualdades nas condições de habitação na saúde física e no bem-estar emocional durante os períodos de confinamento (ver cap. 18 do e-book), conduzindo a uma polarização do nível de satisfação com as condições habitacionais: as pessoas que se sentiam satisfeitas antes da pandemia tenderam a ficar ainda mais satisfeitas, enquanto que aquelas que já se encontravam insatisfeitas, ficaram ainda mais insatisfeitas (Ribeiro, Santos & Poeschl, no prelo).

No rescaldo da pandemia, a crise da habitação que se vinha a desenrolar desde a Crise Financeira Global, com especial incidência nas principais cidades do país, agravou-se ainda mais. A propósito das dificuldades sentidas no alojamento estudantil no início do ano letivo 2022–2023, realizámos uma análise da comunicação em redes sociais (Neto & Ribeiro, 2024). Os resultados evidenciaram uma polarização e politização das opiniões sobre as causas e/ou estratégias de resolução da crise habitacional. Um clima de conflitualidade social entre grupos com interesses opostos (por exemplo, proprietários vs. estudantes) ou

ideologias opostas (por exemplo, direita vs. esquerda) está patente nos comentários trocados, que recorrem frequentemente ao uso de estereótipos negativos e linguagem incivilizada.

As crescentes dificuldades no acesso à habitação no pós-pandemia conduziram a uma nova fase no movimento social organizado em torno da defesa do direito à habitação em Portugal. No capítulo 11 do e-book, Rita Silva descreve brevemente as suas diferentes fases, salientando como o movimento adquiriu uma dimensão à escala nacional após a pandemia em resultado de uma aliança de movimentos e associações contra a transformação da habitação num ativo financeiro, salientando a sua vocação social.

IMPLICAÇÕES PSICOSSOCIAIS E POLÍTICAS DAS DESIGUALDADES HABITACIONAIS

A análise realizada por Lina Coelho (cap. 9 do e-book) evidencia como os significados da habitação, a vulnerabilidade à sua perda ou a experiência de precariedade habitacional, não são iguais para os homens e para as mulheres. Os resultados sugerem, nomeadamente, que o facto de a habitação ser percebida pelas mulheres como tendo uma importância determinante para o equilíbrio, segurança e bem-estar próprio e dos filhos, justifica que elas assumam um papel de liderança e exposição pública na luta pela habitação, algo que não acontece noutros domínios da vida social.

No capítulo 2 do e-book, Sheila Holz detém-se sobre os desafios envolvidos na garantia do direito à habitação, consagrado na Constituição da República Portuguesa no seu artigo 65.º, entre os quais a necessidade de relacionar direitos individuais e coletivos e políticas de gestão urbana, do território e do ambiente. No projeto foram realizados estudos qualitativos e quantitativos para compreender as implicações psicossociais e políticas da financeirização da habitação, nomeadamente quando esta coloca em causa a garantia do direito a uma habitação adequada.

Joaquim Pires Valentim, no capítulo 8 do e-book, salienta três vetores que surgem da análise temática realizada sobre as intervenções das populações residentes nas Assembleias Municipais de Lisboa e Porto e que são dimensões fundamentais das atuais ameaças à democracia: a) sentimentos de injustiça, ressentimento e exclusão; b) processos de categorização “nós” vs. “eles”, as elites; c) saliência da identidade social local.

Os estudos quantitativos evidenciaram uma relação positiva entre condições habitacionais e confiança nas instituições. As pessoas inquiridas que relataram níveis mais baixos de satisfação com as condições da habitação e do bairro, bem como uma maior carga com os custos de habitação, tenderam também a expressar níveis mais baixos de confiança nas diferentes instituições políticas, públicas e privadas (Ribeiro et al., 2022; ver também cap. 19 e 20 do e-book).

Os resultados dos diversos estudos realizados reforçam a centralidade da habitação na vida das pessoas e famílias e evidenciam como as dificuldades no acesso a uma habitação adequada, a insegurança habitacional ou a sobrecarga financeira produzem fortes impactos negativos, não só ao nível individual e familiar, afetando a saúde física e mental, mas também ao nível societal, polarizando opiniões e comprometendo a confiança nas instituições e as relações entre grupos sociais.

Os dados do inquérito por questionário de âmbito nacional (Ribeiro, Poeschl et al., 2023) elaborado na segunda etapa do projeto (ver Figura 1) foram recolhidos num período em que o tema da habitação dominou a agenda mediática e levou à rua milhares de pessoas em diversas cidades do país a 1 de abril e a 30 de setembro pelo direito à habitação. Resultados preliminares do inquérito descritos nos capítulos 19 e 21 do e-book refletem um agravamento da crise, com mais de metade das pessoas participantes a mostrar algum nível de preocupação com a sua situação habitacional em 2024. São evidenciados os impactos negativos da insegurança habitacional, com uma percentagem elevada de participantes a manifestar-se “muito preocupada”, não só entre as pessoas em situação de maior vulnerabilidade (quarto alugado, caravana, ocupação, etc., 49%) como também entre os arrendatários (40%) e os proprietários a pagar empréstimo à habitação (36%). Mais de metade (57%) dos respondentes considera que existe muita desigualdade nas condições de habitação em Portugal e apenas uma pequena minoria (8%) considera que as desigualdades existentes são, até certo ponto, justas.

A análise agregada oculta as variações nas opiniões individuais e como estas se organizam em diferentes posições sobre a crise da habitação em Portugal. Com efeito, os resultados de uma análise de *clusters* complementar sobre as opiniões acerca dos principais regimes de ocupação, a tolerância e frequência de práticas habitacionais irregulares, e as causas e consequências da crise habitacional, confirmou que a compreensão do problema da habitação em Portugal não é uniforme. As diferentes posições, que também propõem diferentes soluções para a crise, estão ancoradas em experiências distintas de conforto, acessibilidade e segurança habitacional, em pertenças grupais diferenciadas, bem como na adesão a diferentes princípios de justiça distributiva (igualdade, equidade e necessidade), diferentes perspetivas acerca do funcionamento da sociedade e de orientação política.

NOTAS CONCLUSIVAS

O projeto HOU\$ING estudou a relação entre a financeirização e o acesso à habitação, procurando compreender as inter-relações entre os processos psicossociológicos e político-económicos nas representações sociais associadas à habitação e nas práticas habitacionais. Adotando uma abordagem interdisciplinar e de métodos mistos, o projeto mostrou como as representações e as práticas evoluíram em resposta às diferentes políticas públicas e aos contextos económico-sociais. Os resultados dos estudos realizados permitiram ainda compreender como os processos de financeirização da habitação contribuíram não só para aumentar as desigualdades no acesso à habitação, mas também para uma crescente polarização de opiniões, experiências e avaliações em diferentes dimensões da vida em sociedade, que é necessário considerar para solucionar a atual crise habitacional.

NOTAS BIOGRÁFICAS

Ana Cordeiro Santos – Investigadora do Centro de Estudos Sociais, doutorada em Economia e Filosofia pela Universidade Erasmus de Roterdão, Holanda, tem-se dedicado ao estudo do capitalismo financeiro semiperiférico, da financeirização do Estado e da habitação em Portugal. anacsantos@ces.uc.pt; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3654-2544>

Daniela Sofia Neto – Licenciada e Mestre em Sociologia pela Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra, onde se encontra a frequentar o Doutoramento em Sociologia. danielaneto@ces.uc.pt; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7839-1545>

Fernanda Jesus – Licenciada em Psicologia e Mestre em Psicologia da Educação, Desenvolvimento e Aconselhamento pela FPCEUC, doutoranda em Psicologia Social na mesma instituição. Interesses de investigação na área da tomada de decisão, endividamento, cidadania e inovação no setor público. fcostajesus@ces.uc.pt; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4205-9209>

Joaquim Pires Valentim – Professor associado na Faculdade de Psicologia e de Ciências da Educação da Universidade de Coimbra. Doutorado em Psicologia Social pela Universidade de Coimbra, fez também o Doutoramento Europeu em Representações Sociais e Comunicação (Universidade de Roma 'La Sapienza, Universidade de Helsínquia e ISCTE). As suas principais áreas de pesquisa são: representações sociais, psicologia política, relações entre grupos e diversidade cultural. jpv Valentim@fpce.uc.pt; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9632-3693>

Lina Coelho – Professora auxiliar na FEUC e investigadora no Centro de Estudos Sociais (CES). Doutorada em Economia. Nos últimos anos tem focado a sua investigação em temas relacionados com a divisão sexual do trabalho pago e do trabalho não pago e com os efeitos das crises económicas nas desigualdades de género. lcoelho@fe.uc.pt; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8641-417X>

Raquel Ribeiro – Investigadora associada do Centro de Estudos Sociais, doutorada em Psicologia pela FPCEUP, tem-se dedicado ao estudo das representações sociais orientam os comportamentos individuais e as relações grupais e às questões da (des)igualdade e justiça social dos processos económicos. raquelribeiro@ces.uc.pt; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4113-0664>

Rita Campos – Investigadora do Centro de Estudos Sociais e co-coordenadora do Grupo de Trabalho em Ciência Cidadã e Educação (CC.Edu). Doutorada em Biologia pela Universidade do Porto. Os seus atuais interesses de investigação centram-se na produção e avaliação de ferramentas de comunicação de ciência, aprendizagem ativa e envolvimento do público com e na ciência (ciência cidadã). ritacampos@ces.uc.pt; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4184-3269>

Rita Silva é licenciada em Desenvolvimento Comunitário e mestre em Estudos de Desenvolvimento. Atualmente é estudante de doutoramento em Economia Política, centrando-se na emergência de investidores institucionais na habitação. É ativista pelo direito à habitação e à cidade. ritasilva@ces.uc.pt; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7559-9933>

Sheila Holz – Investigadora do Centro de Estudos Sociais. Tem graduação em direito, mestrado em planeamento urbano e doutoramento em Democracia no Séc. XXI. Os principais interesses são investigação são experiências de democracia participativa e deliberativa voltadas para as políticas públicas nas áreas de ambiente e habitação. sheilaholz@ces.uc.pt; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5988-239X>

Tiago Castela é historiador da arquitectura e do urbanismo, e arquitecto. Doutorou-se em Arquitectura na Universidade da Califórnia, Berkeley nos EUA. É professor auxiliar convidado no Departamento de Arquitectura da Universidade de Coimbra, e investigador do Centro de Estudos Sociais. Faz investigação sobre periferias espaciais, com enfoque em Portugal e no sul de África no final do período colonial, e sobre política da habitação. tcastela@uc.pt; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0921-3470>

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MY WHOLE CITY: INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY REVITALIZATION OF HISTORIC VILLAGES. A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE VIVIMURO PROJECT

Gustavo D'Aversa

Università del Salento

gustavo.daversa@unisalento.it

ABSTRACT

The documentary “My Whole City” explores the spatial dynamics of social inclusion and integration of individuals with psychiatric conditions in South-East Puglia’s inner areas through a multidisciplinary approach, combining geography, crip theory, and critical disability studies. Since 2018, the mental health association L-otto has led a performative arts workshop that promotes mental health awareness while challenging dominant narratives of “normality” and “disability”. The documentary examines how physical and social settings influence psychiatric individuals in historic villages, reinterpreting the inner areas as dynamic spaces where marginalized identities negotiate participation through artistic practices. Central to the documentary is ViViMuro, a project within the Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) in the municipality of Muro Leccese. ViViMuro promotes employment and integration for people with psychiatric symptoms through accessibility, artistic workshops, education, and a solidarity economy model. Through semi-structured interviews, participatory filmmaking, and social theater techniques, the documentary captures personal and collective experiences. This research and documentary, authored by myself, stems from a commitment to explore the intersection of space, mental health, and cultural practices. By engaging directly in research and filmmaking, the author foregrounds marginalized voices, emphasizing the transformative potential of participatory governance in fostering social justice and inclusive urban regeneration.

KEYWORDS

inclusive regeneration, peripheral rural areas, psychosocial disability, participatory research, cultural heritage and social inclusion

INTRODUCTION: RETHINKING URBAN REGENERATION IN HISTORIC VILLAGES

Across Italy, historic villages face increasing social and economic marginalization, depopulation, and cultural disconnection. Muro Leccese, a small village of 4654 inhabitants (ISTAT, 2024) in the province of Lecce (Puglia), embodies these challenges despite its rich architectural and cultural heritage, including Messapian ruins, Baroque churches, and a medieval center. The ViViMuro Project, funded under the Italian Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), aims to counteract these tendencies by integrating cultural heritage preservation, participatory urbanism, and inclusive social practices. This initiative transformed marginal spaces into cultural and social hubs that foster community engagement and enhance well-being, particularly of vulnerable groups, including individuals with psychiatric symptoms.

At the European level, cultural heritage has been recognized as a pivotal factor in promoting social cohesion, economic development, and sustainable urban regeneration. The European Framework for Action on Cultural Heritage (2018) and Urban Agenda for the EU (2016) emphasize community engagement in heritage-led renewal processes. The New European Bauhaus (2020) further reinforces the role of culture in shaping inclusive and accessible spaces, fostering social innovation through creative and digital practices.

The Italian National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) represents the national response to the European Union's "Next Generation EU" strategy, which allocates €191.5 billion to Italy for economic recovery and social transformation. Under this agenda, "Mission 1 – Digitalization, Innovation, Competitiveness, Culture, and Tourism" recognizes cultural heritage as a key driver of sustainable development, dedicating €6.68 billion to investments in culture and tourism. A central component of this strategy is the M1C3 "Attractiveness of Historic Villages" initiative, which allocates €1.02 billion to revitalize small historic settlements affected by economic stagnation and depopulation. ViViMuro (Table 1) is a direct beneficiary of this funding, combining material interventions, such as the restoration of Messapian walls and the creation of accessible cultural trails through digital technologies, with immaterial measures, including workshops, seminars, and employment programs for people with disabilities. ViViMuro is not merely an urban renewal initiative; it also provides a critical perspective on social inclusion and spatial transformation, demonstrating how cultural heritage can promote equity and participatory urbanism.

Intervention	Description	Beneficiaries	Expected Results
Accessibility of cultural infrastructure	Restoration of Messapian walls, pedestrian paths, use of VR/AR for immersive experiences	Public, tourists, people with disabilities	Increase in cultural enjoyment and attractiveness
Social economy	Restaurant managed by disabled people or people with psychiatric symptoms	People with psychosocial disability	Employment and social inclusion
Festival, workshops	Messapia Summer Festival, Messapian Nights, and inclusive community workshops	Inhabitants and tourists	Strengthening local collective identity
Educational programs and digital divide	Seminars on cultural heritage and bridging the digital divide	Inhabitants, young people	Increasing digital and cultural competence

TABLE 1. PERSONAL SYNTHETIC ELABORATION OF THE VIVIMURO PROJECT

Source: Author.

This paper aims to critically examine the project, exploring its impact through the lens of geography, performative practices, and critical disability studies within the revitalization process.

The main theme of research is the exploration of spatial dynamics about social inclusion and integration of people with psychiatric symptoms in a peripheral area of the southeast Puglia Region. This research explores how the physical and symbolic characteristics of historic villages shape the experiences of individuals with psychiatric disorders, drawing on key theoretical contributions: Henri Lefebvre's "Right to the City" (Lefebvre, 1968, 1991), which highlights the importance of access, participation, and spatial justice in urban environments; David Harvey's concept of "inclusive spaces" (Harvey, 2008), which emphasizes the role of urban policies in reshaping public spaces to accommodate marginalized groups; and Critical Disability Studies (Parr, 2008), which provides a framework to analyze how urban environments either enable or restrict the participation of individuals with disabilities.

The research was conducted from October 2023 to July 2024 and is structured around three key research questions: How do the physical and symbolic features of small historic villages shape the experience of people with psychiatric disorders? How does ViViMuro help participants renegotiate their social position and sense of belonging? How can PNRR-driven inclusion processes contribute to creating more inclusive and accessible everyday life and spaces?

A particular focus is placed on the role of artistic practices as tools for social research. Performative arts, participatory filmmaking, and digital storytelling are explored as strategies to reshape social relations, challenge systemic exclusion, and foster community resilience. This paper also employs other data sources, like a Lynch-inspired survey (Lynch, 1960) and participatory research methodologies, to assess the project's impact.

Ultimately, illuminating the critical role of space in shaping identity, inclusion, and community resilience, this paper argues that inclusive practices are fundamental to fostering sustainable and equitable communities, positioning ViViMuro as a replicable model for historic village revitalization.

METHODOLOGY AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

This study uses qualitative and participatory methods to assess the ViViMuro project. Grounded in the broader frameworks of geography and critical disability studies, this research evaluates the project's inclusivity and sustainability through diverse sources and methodologies:

1. **Participatory filmmaking.** The central research tool is the documentary "My Whole City" (D'Aversa, 2024), conceived, directed, and realized by the author as part of this research. This participatory filmmaking captures the socio-spatial experiences of individuals with psychiatric conditions, offering a multi-layered perspective on inclusion and spatial dynamics through individual and collective narratives. A public screening of the documentary amplified the project's impact and community engagement. It acted as a social-political intervention, creating a counter-narrative to dominant discourses on disability while promoting inclusive urban regeneration.
2. **Qualitative interviews.** Semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with workshop participants, including individuals with psychiatric conditions and their families. These interviews explored spatial marginalization, resilience, and community engagement (Parr, 2008).
3. **A Lynch-inspired survey** (Lynch, 1960) analyzed perceptions of space, accessibility, and daily life, identifying key spatial elements—paths, edges, nodes, districts, landmarks—that influence social interactions and inclusion within the community.
4. **Social inclusion through economic participation.** While not yet implemented, a key objective of the project is the creation of a solidarity-based economic model that fosters inclusion through employment. The plan includes the establishment of a community-run restaurant managed by individuals with psychiatric conditions members of L-otto ONLUS. This initiative aims to promote economic empowerment, challenge stigma, and reshape public perception of psychiatric conditions. Although this aspect has not yet been examined in this study, it represents both the final goal of the process and a future criterion for evaluating the long-term success of the project.

By integrating participatory research techniques with traditional qualitative methodologies, this study highlights the transformative potential of co-created narratives, spatial analysis, and inclusive economic strategies in advancing social justice and urban resilience.

One of the most innovative aspects of ViViMuro is its use of performative arts as a tool for fostering inclusion and empowerment, reflecting the broader “performative turn” in social and cultural theory. This approach recognizes the role of performance not only as an artistic expression but as a social act that actively shapes realities and reconfigures spatial dynamics (Schechner, 2002). By engaging individuals in embodied practices of self-representation, performative arts provide a space for marginalized voices to reclaim agency, aligning with the notion that identity and belonging are continuously negotiated through performative acts (Butler, 1993).

Since 2018, the nonprofit L-otto has organized performing arts workshops that bring together individuals with psychiatric conditions, their families, and community volunteers, creating an inclusive space where artistic expression catalyzes social change. The author’s longstanding involvement in this process has provided a deep understanding of its transformative potential: participants developed self-awareness through body language, vocal expression, and group dynamics, leading to the co-creation of plays and performances based on collective improvisation. This engagement process fosters a growing sense of self-awareness, allowing participants to reclaim their narratives and redefine their social roles—not only within the workshop community but also within the broader *social fabric* of the village.

ViViMuro, launched in 2022, expanded this vision by incorporating digital storytelling as a complementary strategy, leading to a significant transformation in the alignment between artistic objectives and participatory techniques. Through participatory filmmaking, storytellers regain agency over their narratives, amplifying their voices within the broader social and spatial discourse—an approach that represents a crucial epistemological strength of the initiative.

The L-otto’s workshop engaged 14 participants (nine women and five men), all over 18 years old, with six residing in Muro Leccese and the remainder in neighboring municipalities. Among them, eight participants had psychiatric symptoms; the others were volunteers and family members. Rather than passive subjects of study, participants actively shaped their narratives, reinforcing the project’s ethos of co-creation and self-representation.

Participatory video, a dynamic learning and storytelling process, played a pivotal role in the methodology, involving participants in the creation of a film documenting their community experience. Social mapping techniques were integrated into the research, allowing participants to navigate and document their community experience visually (Lunch & Lunch, 2006). The research was combined with traditional qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews, focus groups, diaries, and extended personal storytelling sessions, ensuring a rich and multi-layered data collection approach.

The transition to self-narration was carefully managed, considering the diverse backgrounds and personal histories while addressing the heterogeneous challenges faced by participants.

Moreover, the research examined the broader social impact of these narratives, as they directly involve storytellers, their families, and the wider community, necessitating a careful evaluation of potential consequences. Over time, the research expanded to include an analysis of participants' hometown geographies, interpersonal relationships, and perceived or actual barriers to full participation in community life.

The recruitment process extended beyond the theater group to include families, requiring a rethinking of research design. Dedicated spaces were introduced to explore participants' motivations, ensuring alignment with the study's overarching objectives. An open-ended approach was adopted to foster an authentic and nuanced exploration, avoiding any prescriptive guidance that could compromise the authenticity of the narratives. The absence of external research personnel was a deliberate methodological choice, preserving the trust and reciprocity inherent in participatory research. The researcher's pre-existing role within the group was leveraged to reinforce this collaborative and reciprocal dynamic.

The production process unfolded in structured phases:

- a. Brainstorming sessions to define both individual and collective themes.
- b. Technical training in audiovisual tools to eliminate barriers to self-expression.
- c. Construction of a collective narrative—integrating individual contributions into a cohesive thematic structure.

ViViMuro underscores the active role of space in shaping accessibility and inclusion. Space is not a passive backdrop but an active agent through which inclusion is shaped. In defining the cultural landscape (Sauer, 1925), the project recognized the interplay between human activity and the environment. This aligns with Lefebvre's (1968, 1991) assertion that urban spaces are co-produced through lived experiences—it is evident in the way participants navigated and transformed their surroundings. Similarly, Harvey's (2008) concept of "inclusive spaces" illustrates how removing physical and psychological barriers enables marginalized groups to assert their presence and rights within the urban environment.

This research also establishes a foundation for the next phase of the project: the creation of a community-run social restaurant where individuals with psychiatric conditions move beyond symbolic participation and actively contribute to the reinvention of spaces as places of visibility, recognition, and inclusion through the mediation of artistic practices. This effort to reclaim the "right to the city" (Harvey, 2008) also serves as a critical lens for understanding the participatory planning ethos embedded in ViViMuro's approach to urban space.

By integrating physical infrastructure and social purpose, it generates an "ethical space" rooted in principles of justice and inclusion. This approach challenges traditional power dynamics, ensuring that urban transformation is not merely architectural but also socially meaningful. The project aligns with the critical disability studies' concept of spatial justice, which challenges the ableist design paradigms that often dominate urban planning, advocating instead for environments that foster diversity and belonging.

The participative documentary “My Whole City” captures this transformation, illustrating how art-based methodologies empower individuals to navigate and redefine their relationship with space (Parr, 2008), a symbolic and physical act of reclamation.

DATA ANALYSIS: INSIGHTS FROM DOCUMENTARY AND LYNCH-INSPIRED SURVEY

Before presenting the results, it is essential to outline the rigorous process of data coding and analysis conducted during the ViViMuro project. Given the complexity of interpreting a large and multifaceted dataset, Nvivo qualitative analysis software was employed to ensure a structured and comprehensive approach. The analysis of the digital artifact, *My Whole City*, is intrinsically linked to the participatory process that led to its co-creation. The methodologies employed, the relationships among participants, between participants and the facilitator, and the facilitation techniques used all contribute to the final research product. Consequently, the research documentation encompasses not only the final documentary but also various types of data collected throughout the self-narration process. More than a narrative representation, the documentary functions as a methodological tool, visually capturing participants’ lived experiences and reinforcing the study’s core themes.

The analytical process followed a multi-layered structure, incorporating:

- a. **Narrative coding**, the first stage involved coding the verbal content of the documentary, categorizing narrators’ voices and dialogues thematically.
- b. **Non-verbal analysis**, beyond verbal content, non-verbal elements such as facial expressions, body language, pauses, tone variations, sighs, and laughter were analyzed to uncover additional layers of meaning.
- c. **Process observation**, the researcher documented interaction dynamics among participants, decision-making processes, instances of inclusion or exclusion, and emerging patterns that influenced the research outcomes.

This systematic approach led to three levels of analysis:

- a. **Descriptive analysis**, a direct interpretation of coded data structured through thematic categorization.
- b. **Contextual and intertextual analysis**, examination of data concerning the broader case study and theoretical framework.
- c. **Critical discourse analysis**, investigation of power dynamics and identity representation, particularly exploring how individuals with disabilities navigate social spaces and whether their voices were equitably represented in the final narrative.

To ensure a holistic understanding, the research integrated findings from digital storytelling, participatory creative process, and structured quantitative data collection through the Lynch-inspired survey. This hybrid approach provided a multi-dimensional perspective on participants' spatial experiences and accessibility challenges.

The researcher assumed a dual role as both an insider (facilitator of the participatory process) and an outsider (analyzing the data to extract broader implications). While this strengthened the participatory nature of the study, it also required careful ethical considerations, particularly regarding data interpretation and researcher positionality. A particularly sensitive aspect was the public screening of the documentary (Figures 1 and 2), which involved sharing deeply personal narratives with the wider community.



FIGURE 1. AERIAL VIEW OF THE EVENT VENUE DURING THE DOCUMENTARY SCREENING

Source: Photo by Luigi Persano, used with permission of L-otto Archive.

Given the themes of belonging, exclusion, and integration, managing the dissemination of findings responsibly was imperative to ensure that participants retained agency over their own stories. Awareness of the social stigma surrounding psychiatric conditions introduces additional ethical complexities, necessitating a methodological approach that prioritizes participant empowerment.



FIGURE 2. PANEL DISCUSSION ON STAGE WITH A FULL AUDIENCE

Source: Photo by Luigi Persano, used with permission of L-otto Archive.

The Lynch-inspired survey provided structured data on spatial perceptions and social experiences, organized into eight key topics (Lynch, 1960):

1. **Paths:** Participants described their habitual routes, perceptions of safety, and overall sense of belonging within the urban landscape.
2. **Edges:** Identification of physical and psychological barriers restricting mobility or social participation.
3. **Districts:** Analysis of areas of comfort and discomfort, assessing the inclusiveness of different spaces, and identifying locations requiring intervention.

4. **Nodes:** Investigation of commonly frequented gathering places, assessing participants' level of comfort and social significance of locations.
5. **Landmarks:** Evaluation of buildings, monuments, and urban features that hold symbolic importance in participants' mental maps, reinforcing spatial orientation and identity.
6. **Social inclusion:** Reflection on community integration and accessibility in public spaces.
7. **Impact of community projects:** Assessment of ViViMuro's effectiveness in fostering inclusivity and shifting local perceptions of disability.
8. **Personal considerations:** Open-ended responses allow participants to express subjective insights and recommendations for future initiatives.

These integrated analytical approaches reinforce the study's central argument: urban spaces are not neutral but socially constructed, reflecting and perpetuating existing power structures. By combining participatory storytelling with empirical spatial data, the research provides a nuanced understanding of how individuals with disabilities experience and navigate their environments, further strengthening the case for inclusive urban regeneration strategies.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Urban space is not merely a collection of physical structures; it is socially constructed and deeply intertwined with perceptions, emotions, and social interactions. For many participants, certain streets and neighborhoods felt unwelcoming, not only due to architectural barriers but also because of a more pervasive form of exclusion: a sense of judgment or a lack of belonging. This reinforces the arguments of Lefebvre (1968) and Harvey (2008), who assert that urban environments reflect and perpetuate power dynamics, determining who belongs and who is marginalized. Symbolic barriers are the tangible manifestations of social inequalities and symbolic capital, demonstrating that true inclusion requires not only physical accessibility but also cultural and social interventions.

At the same time, public spaces hold the potential to foster social connection and identity. Participants identified places that provide a balance between social interaction and personal comfort—parks, squares, churches, and community gathering points—as fundamental to their sense of belonging. This aligns with Lynch's (1960) concept of "spatial identity" and Tuan's (1977) theory of "topophilia", which underscores the deep emotional connection individuals develop with meaningful spaces.

However, inclusion extends beyond physical access and it necessitates active participation in shaping communities. Findings indicate that cultural and artistic practices, such as performing arts and digital storytelling, play a pivotal role in breaking down barriers and

fostering a sense of belonging. Through participatory projects like the Social Restaurant Initiative, individuals with psychiatric conditions are not only integrated into public life but also reclaim agency over their role in the community, aligning with the concept of “recognition justice”.

The success of urban regeneration policies depends on the active and sustained involvement of communities. ViViMuro demonstrates how participatory projects can transform inclusion from a top-down policy measure into a co-created process, reinforcing the idea that residents should not be passive beneficiaries but active agents in shaping urban environments (Vanolo, 2024).

A key finding emerging from this study is the strong correlation between spatial perceptions recorded through the Lynch-inspired survey and the narratives captured in the participatory film and social theater workshops. Participants who described certain urban areas as “*restricted*” or “*exclusionary*” in the survey later reaffirmed these perceptions in their autobiographical storytelling within the documentary. This suggests that the challenges of accessing public spaces are deeply connected to social barriers, such as stigma and marginalization (Parr, 2008).

Performing arts workshop further validated these insights, as improvisation and dramatization exercises revealed an additional layer of exclusionary experiences. Participants reported feeling more included in “*hybrid*” community spaces—such as cultural centers or informal gathering places—compared to traditional public spaces like central squares or institutional buildings. Furthermore, the documentary visually confirmed the mental maps constructed in the survey: areas perceived as “*unsafe*” or “*unwelcoming*” in responses aligned with locations that participants avoided in their daily routines.

The findings advocate for an integrated methodological approach, where quantitative mapping techniques are complemented by qualitative methods such as digital storytelling and performative practices. Only through such a multidimensional strategy can we fully grasp the complexity of urban experiences for individuals in vulnerable conditions and design inclusive interventions that address both tangible and intangible barriers to inclusion.

The ViViMuro project stands as a model for this holistic vision—a multidimensional and inclusive urban planning approach, where accessibility is not just about ramps and pathways but about creating spaces where everyone has the right to be seen, to participate, and to belong. This goal is achieved through the integration of material and immaterial interventions within a framework of spatial justice and active citizenship.

Findings from the ViViMuro project provide concrete insights to improve the governance of urban and social regeneration policies within PNRR. One of the most critical aspects emerging from the study is the necessity of active inclusion in decision-making processes. Data indicates that the mere presence of accessible infrastructure is insufficient to foster genuine social inclusion. Instead, public administrations must design structured participatory processes, ensuring that individuals in vulnerable conditions are actively involved in both the planning and management phases of urban interventions.

Moreover, performing arts and participatory filmmaking have proven to be highly effective tools in reducing the sense of exclusion and fostering new forms of social interaction. Additionally, research on the effectiveness of participatory arts in social inclusion suggests that artistic engagement enhances self-representation and social agency, making it an effective tool for marginalized communities. Their role should not be limited to mere dissemination; these methodologies should be formally recognized as heuristic and scientific tools, capable of generating valuable qualitative data and deepening our understanding of social dynamics in urban settings. By integrating such approaches into urban regeneration projects, policymakers can enhance the effectiveness of inclusion policies by addressing both physical and symbolic barriers to participation.

Despite its promising results, this study has certain limitations. The long-term impact of ViViMuro remains to be assessed, particularly in terms of economic sustainability and institutional support. Moreover, the close involvement of the researcher in the participatory process may have influenced participant narratives. Future research should explore these aspects, incorporating longitudinal studies to evaluate the project's sustained effects.

This research is trying to compare ViViMuro to similar participatory urban regeneration projects in Europe, such as in Portugal, providing valuable insights into scalability and adaptability. Ultimately, ViViMuro serves as a replicable model for municipalities aiming to integrate cultural heritage preservation with social inclusion strategies. Future urban policies should prioritize participatory approaches, intertwining physical regeneration with social innovation. By adopting this integrated approach, urban policies can move beyond conventional infrastructural interventions, fostering environments that are not only accessible but also genuinely inclusive, participatory, and socially just.

NOTE ON CONTRIBUTOR

Gustavo D'Aversa is a PhD student in Human and Social Sciences (historical-geographical curriculum) at the University of Salento in Lecce, Italy. His research focuses on the enhancement of local cultures and heritage through interdisciplinary approaches. His areas of interest include participatory action-research techniques and qualitative methodology, with a focus on cultural mapping and the use of geo-media tools for spatial analysis. He is an expert in storytelling and conducting informal learning workshops. He has consolidated experience in the field of theatre and cultural project management, integrating artistic skills and research methodologies to foster social inclusion and participatory processes.

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URBANIDADES CULTURAIS PERIFÉRICAS: O PAPEL DA PRODUÇÃO CULTURAL NA REMODELAGEM DE PERIFERIAS URBANAS

Ana Carolina Louback Lopes

Centro de Estudos Sociais, Universidade de Coimbra

a.loubacklopes@gmail.com

RESUMO

As formas assumidas pela produção cultural em territórios urbanos de vulnerabilidade socioespacial – aqui definidos como ‘periferias urbanas’ –, ao mesmo tempo que enfatizam os desafios impostos pela segregação urbana à garantia do direito à cultura, expõem os impactos da cultura na consolidação de novas condições de urbanidade. Sob o intuito de aprofundar perfis de urbanidade delineados a partir da produção artístico-cultural em periferias urbanas, este artigo sugere um debate acerca do que define por “urbanidades culturais periféricas”. Partindo da análise de distintas iniciativas de produção cultural situadas em territórios periféricos das cidades de Lisboa e São Paulo, busca apreender os possíveis impactos sobre o urbano promovidos a partir do empoderamento artístico local. Com base numa abordagem qualitativa, três dinâmicas centrais à produção cultural periférica são tomadas enquanto eixos de diálogos entre interlocutores distintos, contudo aproximados pela condição urbana: (i) o acesso à produção artística, (ii) a consolidação de circuitos culturais periféricos, e (iii) o desenvolvimento de novos modelos de gestão para a cultura. Ao sugerir a noção de uma urbanidade cultural periférica, mais do que sublinhar as interrelações entre cultura e espaço urbano, este artigo pretende contribuir para a reflexão em torno de políticas públicas emancipatórias.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

urbanidades culturais, produção cultural, periferias urbanas, São Paulo, Lisboa

INTRODUÇÃO

Em 1938, ao defender “o urbanismo como modo de vida” próprio das cidades, Louis Wirth (1997) ensaiou três perspectivas a partir das quais o urbano poderia ser abordado: (i) como estrutura física, que compreende uma base populacional, uma tecnologia e uma ordem ecológica; (ii) como sistema de organização social; e (iii) como conjunto de atitudes, ideias e personalidades vinculadas a formas específicas de comportamento (Wirth, 1997, p. 59). A noção de urbanidade, compreendida, grosso modo, como a qualidade do que é urbano, remete, portanto, a tais perspectivas. Na busca por uma definição mais precisa, Netto (2010)

sugere, a partir da filosofia, a urbanidade como, simultaneamente, produção, efeito e experiência do urbano. Ao propor uma mudança de interpretação da urbanidade enquanto reprodução das distintas formas de vida urbana para a urbanidade enquanto *ethos* das relações entre atores urbanos, o autor defende a ideia da urbanidade como “devir do urbano”. Nesse sentido, a noção de urbanidade deixa de denotar apenas um fato, para remeter à ideia de processo, a partir do qual pode-se não só ler o presente, como também propor o futuro do urbano.

Ao tratar das relações entre urbanidade e humanidade, o urbanista Luís Antonio Jorge (2002) aponta como a intensificação das desigualdades sociais veio distanciar as cidades da pretensa melhoria da qualidade de vida a que se propunha. Se antes a noção de urbanidade vinculava-se a um ideal humanista, os formatos assumidos pelos grandes centros urbanos contemporâneos, ao promoverem ambientes hostis à vida humana, acabaram por rever o próprio conceito, ampliando-o e complexificando-o frente a um intenso dinamismo dos processos de produção do espaço urbano. Às margens da cidade urbanizada, urbanidades renovam-se não necessariamente em sintonia com a melhoria das condições urbanísticas.

Dentre outras dinâmicas locais, os múltiplos arranjos da cultura que povoam os territórios periféricos moldam novos “devires do urbano”, mesmo na ausência de perspectivas que remetam à requalificação espacial. Nascidas de predileções ideológicas, necessidade ou militância, práticas artístico-culturais atribuem maior diversidade à vida urbana, erguem novas cenas sociais e sugerem outras formas de diálogo com a cidade, o que tem por efeito a resignificação simbólica do próprio espaço urbano. Tais movimentações moldam espaços liminares, onde novos arranjos são experimentados e utopias são delineadas. Por vezes, marcas são impressas nos territórios, esboçando contornos para uma nova configuração do urbano. Uma outra urbanidade.

A noção de liminaridade constitui uma vertente conceitual fundamental ao debate em torno da produção cultural em periferias urbanas. Em posição oposta às estruturas vigentes, as práticas culturais contra hegemônicas transitam por espaços intermédios de negação – e de proposição –, conduzidas pela contestação da ideologia dominante. Esse intervalo entre a esfera hegemônica e a subordinada, que Van Gennep (1960) nomeia como “período liminar”, remete não exatamente a um espaço de ruptura, mas sim de tensionamento e empoderamento, “um exercício de afirmação por negação dos princípios classificatórios que instituem a ordem social” (Pina-Cabral, 1996, p. 2). Tal perspectiva alinha-se sensivelmente ao papel desempenhado por iniciativas de produção artístico-culturais em territórios periféricos, aqui compreendidas como espaços liminares entre a segregação socioespacial e a vida urbana plena.

Segundo Pina-Cabral (1996), a evolução teórica do conceito de liminaridade desemboca em uma concepção contemporânea que traz as margens para o centro da vida urbana ao enxergar na marginalidade o terreno sobre o qual a estrutura é constantemente reconstruída. A marginalidade, por sua vez, deixa de ser definida por valores estanques – “certo” ou “errado”, “bom” ou “ruim” – para disputar embates no campo do simbólico. Nesse contexto, territórios marginais – no caso, os periféricos – passam a integrar uma territorialidade marcada por condições potenciais de transformação.

A condição das margens como territórios potencialmente transformadores dos padrões definidos pelos centros apoia-se não só na necessidade de contestação, como também na possibilidade de experimentação de que dispõem. Alheias às instituições e regulamentações que regem os centros, as margens acabam por oferecer um ambiente de maior autonomia, visto que menos restritivo a novas práticas. Tal abordagem é compartilhada por autores de distintos campos, empenhados na superação de leituras que associem as margens exclusivamente a dinâmicas de escassez e exclusão – o chamado Paradigma da Ausência –, para dar lugar a narrativas que reconheçam suas potências. Este é o caso, por exemplo, de bell hooks (1990), que define as margens enquanto espaços de “abertura radical”, e de Hakim Bey (2003), que propõe a noção de “Zonas Autônomas Temporárias” (*Temporary Autonomous Zone - T.A.Z.*) para referir-se a espaços de autonomia constituídos nas brechas da regulação e do controle. Tais referências constituem contribuições fundamentais à compreensão do contexto contemporâneo da produção cultural nas periferias de grandes cidades.

A defesa das margens como *locus* de autonomia e liberdade é traduzida por Michel Foucault (1967) na noção de “heterotopia”. Para Foucault, se, por um lado, as utopias não representam um lugar real na sociedade – “lugares sem um local real” –, as heterotopias remetem ao encontro entre ideais não-hegemônicos em um espaço real. Às margens das esferas dominantes, espaços heterotópicos extrapolam suas próprias características espaciais ao ressignificar os lugares da cidade sob uma enorme pluralidade de sentidos, potencializando algo comum a qualquer um deles, que é a heterogeneidade.

A leitura de iniciativas artístico-culturais periféricas enquanto entidades heterotópicas permite reconhecer e compreender a complexidade e a heterogeneidade dos territórios simbólicos constituídos às margens da cidade urbanizada. Ao produzirem cultura em espaços urbanos alheios às redes de infraestruturas oficiais de produção cultural, tais iniciativas ressignificam sua própria condição de acesso à cidade, configurando territórios simbolicamente incluídos, embora fisicamente excluídos de uma vida urbana plena. Esse processo simbólico de inclusão urbana de um território socioespacialmente excluído por meio do acesso à produção artístico-cultural defino como “urbanidade cultural”.

Longe de desprezar a necessidade de melhoria das condições socioespaciais nas periferias urbanas e reconhecendo a incapacidade da prática cultural em interferir plenamente em tal dimensão, a proposição da noção de urbanidade cultural busca enfatizar o papel da cultura na modelagem de um “devir do urbano”. Não em detrimento do território funcional, mas talvez sobrepondo-se a ele, a urbanidade cultural constitui-se como uma nova territorialidade, um espaço liminar, onde se propõe a transição entre as margens da cidade urbanizada e o centro da vida urbana.

Sob o intuito de aprofundar a noção de “urbanidade cultural”, partimos da análise de distintas iniciativas de produção cultural situadas em territórios urbanos de vulnerabilidade socioespacial – aqui definidos como ‘periferias urbanas’ –, nas cidades de Lisboa e São

Paulo¹, com vista a apreender os possíveis impactos simbólicos promovidos a partir do empoderamento artístico local.

RESSONÂNCIAS DA PRODUÇÃO CULTURAL DAS PERIFERIAS

Todos os territórios carregam invariavelmente e simultaneamente, embora em diferentes proporções, um carácter funcional e outro simbólico. Enquanto o primeiro refere-se à realização de funções, à ideia do “território como recurso”, o segundo remete à produção de significados, o “território como símbolo”. Segundo Haesbaert (2008), os “atores dominantes” prezam por priorizar a vertente funcional, em uma perspetiva mercantil que imprime ao território valor de troca, enquanto os “atores dominados”, ao valorizar o território enquanto via de sobrevivência cotidiana, tendem a combinar “funcionalidade (‘recurso’) e identidade (‘símbolo’)” (Haesbaert, 2008, p. 22) com intensidades muito próximas. Nesse sentido, nas periferias urbanas, a produção cultural dos territórios assume significativa relevância.

A partir de um amplo diagnóstico acerca da atual produção artístico-cultural nas/das periferias das cidades de Lisboa e São Paulo, a pesquisa aqui tomada por base selecionou 6 casos de estudos, 3 em cada localidade, os quais foram conjugados aos pares, com vistas a propiciar a construção de diálogos entre eles. No intuito de mergulhar em distintos arranjos da cultura em periferias urbanas, a seleção dos casos de estudo buscou garantir representatividade em termos de localização, contextos territoriais, linguagens artísticas e perfis de atuação das iniciativas selecionadas. Diante de interlocutores diversos e com posicionamentos distintos junto a suas comunidades, temas pontuais foram confrontados.

Para além do perfil assumido e das dinâmicas engendradas por cada iniciativa – seus devires –, a seleção dos casos de estudo buscou, como sugere Detienne (2008), eleger uma “categoria”, uma “escolha lógica”, a partir da qual se pudesse estabelecer um espaço de diálogo entre duas práticas pautadas por contextos urbanos, de um lado, distintos – situados ao norte e ao sul global, inclusive –, mas, por outro, semelhantes, dado que periféricos. Na busca pela promoção de diálogos afetos ao tema das políticas culturais, a eleição dessas “categorias” pautou-se por dinâmicas centrais à produção cultural em periferias urbanas: (i) o acesso à produção artístico-cultural, (ii) a consolidação de circuitos culturais periféricos, e (iii) o desenvolvimento de novos modelos de gestão.

Para tratar do acesso à produção cultural, o primeiro diálogo pautou-se pela experiência de duas iniciativas de pequeno porte, direcionadas particularmente a linguagens artísticas específicas: o Centro Periférico, situado na Alta de Lisboa, voltado para a cultura urbana e,

¹ Este artigo deriva da tese de doutoramento da autora, intitulada *Por uma política cultural de dimensão territorial: diálogos entre periferias urbanas de Lisboa e São Paulo*, defendida em 2024, dentro do programa de doutoramento “Cidades e Culturas Urbanas”, oferecido pelo Centro de Estudos Sociais e pela Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra, sob orientação do Prof. Dr. Carlos Fortuna e do Prof. Dr. Nabil Bonduki. A criação do paralelo entre Lisboa e São Paulo parte da hipótese de que, apesar das particularidades dos contextos urbanos localizados no Norte e no Sul globais, territórios periféricos compartilham desafios comuns no campo cultural, decorrentes de um perfil de posicionamento socioespacial regido por dinâmicas globais de produção capitalista do espaço urbano.

sobretudo, para o desenvolvimento da serigrafia; e o Cine Favela, localizado na Favela de Heliópolis, em São Paulo, que se dedica prioritariamente à linguagem cinematográfica. Deste diálogo pode-se apreender que, se por um lado, a existência de tais iniciativas representa um passo importante na aproximação de territórios periféricos às cadeias produtivas da cultura, por outro, carências específicas à inserção socioespacial acabam por dificultar a continuidade do percurso. Apesar do potencial de tais iniciativas para delinearem novas condições de urbanidade a seus territórios a partir da conquista do direito à produção cultural, mérito este que precisa ser enfatizado, o papel das políticas públicas torna-se determinante ao fortalecimento dessas práticas, podendo remeter à definição de cenários tanto de inovação, quanto de homogeneização artística.

O protagonismo nas periferias de políticas sociais e urbanas, em detrimento de ações em âmbito artístico-cultural, acaba por exaltar abordagens reducionistas frente ao potencial de desenvolvimento criativo desses territórios. A priorização de intervenções de cunho sociocultural, que empregam a cultura enquanto meio, empobrecem as práticas de produção artística, promovendo a sua instrumentalização. Nesse cenário, iniciativas periféricas enfrentam os riscos da instabilidade, da precarização do trabalho e da apropriação cultural, dependendo de contextos excepcionais para estabelecerem-se como agentes culturais autônomos e reconhecidos no âmbito de sua produção artística. Nesse contexto, a construção de uma nova urbanidade fica atrelada às formas como esse processo é delineado.

Com vista a aprofundar-se no tema da formação de circuitos artísticos periféricos, o segundo diálogo elencou duas iniciativas artísticas emblemáticas: o Kova M Estúdio, um estúdio de gravação localizado no bairro da Cova da Moura, gerido pela Associação Cultural Moinho da Juventude e considerado um ponto de referência para a cena hip-hop na Área Metropolitana de Lisboa; e o Centro Cultural Arte em Construção, situado na Cidade Tiradentes, zona leste de São Paulo, um espaço multidisciplinar dedicado ao teatro, gerido pelo grupo Pombas Urbanas, um dos primeiros e mais reconhecidos grupos de teatro das periferias paulistanas.

À parte do porte físico, constituem ambas iniciativas de importante presença simbólica, dado o caráter precursor de suas atividades. Ao papel ocupado pelos músicos do Kova M na cena do *rap* na Área Metropolitana de Lisboa, corresponde o respeito adquirido pelo Pombas Urbanas no panorama do teatro comunitário latino-americano. Para além da função territorial desempenhada por tais espaços junto a suas comunidades, surpreende a qualidade e originalidade da produção artística. Calcado nas realidades locais, o trabalho desenvolvido por tais iniciativas amplia a representatividade ao atribuir visibilidade a manifestações culturais autenticamente periféricas. Diante da resistência imposta pelas esferas oficiais de legitimação, tais iniciativas articulam suas próprias redes.

Embora a articulação em redes constitua dinâmica recorrente a iniciativas culturais situadas em periferias urbanas, sobretudo impulsionadas pelas tecnologias digitais, a análise desses circuitos aponta para escalas e formatos variados. Marginais aos circuitos oficiais da cultura, essas iniciativas demonstram integrar redes culturais em torno de linguagens artísticas próprias a contextos urbanos periféricos: no caso, o *rap crioulo*, na Cova da Moura, e o teatro comunitário, na Cidade Tiradentes. Desse diálogo sobressai, de um lado, a capacidade da atividade artística em promover articulações entre distintas periferias, delineando novas

territorialidades, ou seja, novas condições de urbanidade compartilhadas por territórios diversos e distantes. Contudo, de outro lado, sublinha o limitado reconhecimento desses circuitos pelos circuitos consagrados e pelas próprias políticas públicas de cultura. Tal distanciamento abre espaço a dinâmicas de mercado muitas vezes predatórias, que veem nessas iniciativas verdadeiras incubadoras criativas mobilizadoras de novos públicos.

Por fim, sob o intuito de avaliar os impactos dos modelos de gestão experimentados pela cultura em periferias urbanas, o terceiro diálogo contrapõe as experiências do Centro de Experimentação Artística – CEA, situado no Vale da Amoreira, no Concelho da Moita, Área Metropolitana de Lisboa, um equipamento cultural de excelência, que, ao contrário dos demais, é atualmente gerido pelo município, e que, embora construído em resposta a uma demanda cultural já instalada no bairro, depara-se com o desafio de conectar-se com a comunidade; e da Ocupação Cultural Mateus Santos, localizada no distrito de Ermelino Matarazzo, região leste de São Paulo, um espaço multicultural de gestão coletiva constituído sob a figura de uma ocupação cultural de um imóvel público, que materializa a conquista de uma antiga reivindicação da população local por um equipamento cultural.

Os casos analisados constituem ambas experiências nascidas de parcerias entre Estado e território, que, no entanto, assumiram percursos distintos, os quais vieram a impactar profundamente os perfis de atuação assumidos, numa dinâmica que enfatiza a reciprocidade das relações entre arranjos de gestão e empoderamento criativo. Deste diálogo destacam-se os desafios da institucionalização da cultura em territórios periféricos, enfatizando que a presença em si de um equipamento cultural no território não implica na configuração de novos padrões de urbanidade.

Embora ambas as iniciativas tenham origem em contextos de produção artístico-cultural espontaneamente tecidos em seus territórios, o CEA e a Mateus Santos acabaram por assumir percursos e perfis distintos das suas ambições iniciais e radicalmente opostos entre si. Enquanto o projeto de criação do CEA previa já em sua origem um arranjo de gestão compartilhada, conduzida essencialmente por agentes locais, a demanda inicial em Ermelino Matarazzo focava-se especificamente na implementação de um equipamento municipal de cultura no bairro – uma Casa de Cultura. Contraditoriamente, enquanto o CEA veio a converter-se num equipamento cultural gerido diretamente pelo município, sem qualquer participação da comunidade, a demanda pela Casa de Cultura de Ermelino Matarazzo cedeu lugar a uma ocupação cultural, autogerida coletivamente por agentes e coletivos culturais locais.

Ao aproximar o CEA e a Ocupação Cultural Mateus Santos, para além das especificidades de cada um dos formatos de gestão empregados, pesam os reflexos da participação da comunidade na apropriação local das iniciativas. Se em Ermelino Matarazzo se pode suspeitar de novas condições de urbanidade a partir da consolidação de uma “centralidade” cultural no bairro, no Vale da Amoreira parte significativa da população local desconhece o equipamento.

URBANIDADES CULTURAIS PERIFÉRICAS

Os diálogos tecidos, embora centrados em dinâmicas específicas, permitem afirmar que a constituição de uma urbanidade cultural não está atrelada unicamente à presença de um espaço ou iniciativa de cunho cultural no território. Ao aprofundar-se o tema do acesso à produção artística, verificou-se que o seu impacto na construção de uma nova urbanidade está atrelado às formas como esse acesso é promovido. Do diálogo em torno da formação de circuitos artísticos periféricos, destacou-se a capacidade da atividade artística em promover perfis de urbanidade comuns a periferias diversas e distantes, apesar da dificuldade em adentrar esferas urbanas regidas por seus próprios centros. Do debate em torno dos arranjos de gestão da cultura em periferias, apreendeu-se a relação entre participação social e a configuração de novas condições de urbanidade. Ao fim dessas conversas, fica a pergunta: em que medida a produção cultural pode, de fato, incidir na consolidação de uma nova urbanidade?

O processo de tessitura de uma urbanidade cultural tende a caminhar por limites sensíveis. Se, de um lado, a prática artístico-cultural em territórios periféricos pode levar a processos de empoderamento social por meio da cultura, de outro lado, não são raros os casos em que predominam processos de instrumentalização, os quais fazem da cultura uma estratégia não de visibilidade, mas sim de silenciamento de demandas socioespaciais locais, uma “forma culturalizada de gestão da pobreza” (Rizek, 2011, p. 4). Enquanto no primeiro cenário insurge uma dinâmica de conquista da cidadania (uma “cidadania cultural”), no segundo, esta é abafada, mediante uma falsa expectativa de que o direito à cultura tenha sido assegurado. Nesse âmbito, a priorização de dinâmicas próprias – e não impostas – aos territórios constitui um caminho decisivo à reversão das condições de exclusão socioespacial.

Dos diálogos estabelecidos, pode-se também apreender que a consolidação da urbanidade cultural está ligada a impactos positivos nas diversas dimensões da cultura – simbólica, econômica, cidadã e territorial –, dados seus vínculos intrínsecos. Da inserção simbólica de um território no contexto da cidade devem derivar impactos econômicos, sob a perspectiva da cultura enquanto atividade profissional; na dimensão cidadã, sob a perspectiva da conquista de direitos; e na dimensão territorial, no sentido da promoção de um reposicionamento do território no contexto urbano. Para tanto, o protagonismo dos agentes culturais e o foco nas demandas locais constitui fator imprescindível para uma intervenção holística capaz de impactar a cultura em sua multidimensionalidade.

A instrumentalização da produção cultural em periferias urbanas mostra-se um risco inerente à própria institucionalização da cultura, o que requer, portanto, clareza quanto aos processos implementados e aos respectivos impactos envolvidos. Como demonstrado pelos casos analisados, se por um lado, o CEA, ao contar com uma infraestrutura de excelência, insere incontestavelmente o Vale da Amoreira na rede de equipamentos artísticos da região, por outro lado, não garante à comunidade local o acesso à criação e à produção cultural. À qualificação urbanística do território não corresponde sua inserção sociocultural. Embora o bairro passe a integrar uma rede cultural de escala regional, a perspectiva do “local” (Durrer et al., 2023) não se mostra presente em escala alguma.

Na contramão do CEA, no entanto, iniciativas como o Cine Favela ou o Kova M Estúdio, embora contem com estruturas físicas auto-organizadas, de pequeno porte e dotadas de certo improviso, são capazes de promover o acesso das comunidades locais a linguagens, circuitos e infraestruturas artísticas especializadas – do cinema e da música, respectivamente –, atribuindo aos seus territórios o direito à produção e à fruição cultural, mesmo que sigam alheios às redes oficiais de equipamentos culturais de suas cidades. Nesse sentido, tais iniciativas mostram-se capazes de mobilizar, a partir da cultura, outros modos de vida, independente das condições socioespaciais disponíveis. Esse câmbio simbólico é o que caracteriza uma urbanidade cultural periférica.

A promoção de uma urbanidade cultural periférica mostra-se, portanto, intrinsecamente dependente do protagonismo do “local”. A presença de um equipamento cultural em um território cuja comunidade permanece alheia à fruição cultural pode remeter-lhe atributos urbanos, ao inseri-lo formalmente nas redes culturais da cidade. Contudo, não garante o exercício de uma cidadania cultural plena, uma vez que à qualificação do espaço urbano não corresponde a inclusão simbólica da população local em rotinas restritas aos centros urbanos.

O foco na perspectiva “local”, por sua vez, pode ser por si suficiente à modelagem de uma “urbanidade cultural”. Como demonstra o diálogo em torno dos circuitos artísticos periféricos, ao se reconhecerem como integrantes de uma rede cultural de âmbito regional, nacional ou, até mesmo, internacional, iniciativas culturais em periferias passam a posicionar-se em uma cena cultural que transcende os próprios limites territoriais, mesmo que continuem marginais aos contextos urbanos de suas próprias cidades. Por meio da produção cultural, localidades como a Cova da Moura ou a Cidade Tiradentes passam a ser reconhecidas artisticamente em outros países, mesmo se “invisíveis” aos circuitos culturais consagrados de suas próprias cidades. Tal repercussão, embora não garanta a melhoria das condições urbanísticas desses bairros, atribui *status* a esses territórios e fortalece-os politicamente ao lhes proporcionar maior visibilidade.

CONCLUSÃO

Ao explorar o mosaico de urbanidades que compõem a cidade contemporânea, Fortuna destaca o papel contraditório exercido pela informalidade em contextos periféricos: “mesmo quando as atividades que ali decorrem têm uma natureza igual às atividades alojadas em lugares semelhantes do centro consolidado da cidade, (...) a diferença está na autonomia pessoal para refundar os seus significados” (Fortuna, 2020, p. 210). Para o autor é essa informalidade a responsável, muitas vezes, por preencher as lacunas deixadas pelo planejamento e pela regulação urbana, ao alterar a qualidade socioespacial de territórios cuja diversidade é comumente negligenciada por uma leitura tipificada das zonas da cidade. Tal condição converteria essas margens em laboratórios experimentais onde a vida urbana é constantemente revista e reconfigurada mediante as práticas oriundas do próprio território.

A proposição da noção de “urbanidade cultural”, para além de enfatizar a relação entre a cultura e o urbano na modelagem de novas territorialidades, busca reconhecer o papel da cultura e das artes na configuração deste “laboratório experimental” no qual está em causa a reivindicação de outros modos de vida urbana. Se tanto em Portugal como no Brasil, as periferias estiveram anteriormente muito atreladas às lutas urbanas, no contexto atual, a cultura, sobretudo face ao potencial de circulação propiciado pelos meios digitais, converteu-se em uma fundamental ferramenta de expressão coletiva e empoderamento social. Embora, por um lado, essas “urbanidades culturais” não bastem para reverter as condições socioespaciais, por outro, oferecem aos que ali (con)vivem um sentido de inclusão, por meio da conquista do exercício do direito à cultura. Ao garantir acesso à cultura, essas novas condições de urbanidade mobilizam periferias para a conquista do direito à própria cidade.

Ao sugerir a noção de uma urbanidade cultural periférica, mais do que sublinhar as interrelações entre cultura e espaço urbano, pretende-se aqui direcionar a reflexão em torno das políticas culturais em um sentido emancipatório. Ao demonstrar o potencial da cultura no reposicionamento simbólico de territórios urbanos segregados, busca-se enfatizar a responsabilidade da política cultural no planejamento de suas ações. O foco na perspectiva local, a partir de suas distintas escalas e dimensões, constitui estratégia central de um caminho que pretenda não a instrumentalização da cultura, mas sim o empoderamento social e criativo das periferias, a partir do qual possam emergir novas urbanidades.

Em contraponto à ideia de uma “urbanização sem urbanidade”, a proposta de uma “urbanidade cultural” remete a uma dinâmica de dentro para fora, que transita, sobretudo, pelo campo do simbólico, mas impõe tensionamentos à estrutura socioespacial. Nesse sentido, a produção cultural coloca-se como um elemento tensionador da inclusão urbana, incapaz de materializá-la, mas importante à sua reivindicação. Por outras palavras, a cultura periférica passa a ser compreendida enquanto elemento potencialmente modelador de novas urbanidades, de “urbanidades sem urbanização”.

NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

Ana Carolina Louback Lopes é doutorada em Sociologia: Cidades e Culturas Urbanas, pelo Centro de Estudos Sociais e pela Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra, e em Arquitetura e Urbanismo: Habitat, pela Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo da Universidade de São Paulo, em regime de cotutela e sob financiamento da FCT. Possui graduação e mestrado em Arquitetura e Urbanismo pela Universidade de São Paulo e especialização em Gestão Cultural pelo Centro de Pesquisa e Formação do SESC-SP. Seu foco temático está na formulação, gestão e acompanhamento de políticas públicas para a cultura. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6374-059X>.

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CO-MAPEAMENTO CULTURAL E CRIATIVO PELAS REDES DA AUTOETNOGRAFIA

André Ramos

Departamento de Arquitetura da Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia da Universidade de Coimbra

jmarramos@gmail.com

RESUMO

Quais os desafios para uma investigação que, não só se inicia do lugar representado, mas usa a sua própria rede enquanto arquivo e fonte para co-mapear? A investigação parte de uma experiência curatorial de 10 anos numa loja-galeria de esquina, no quarteirão artístico do Porto, para propor uma reflexão crítica sobre o papel dos quotidianos de fruição nos fluxos e na vitalidade urbana. Pretende-se discutir as potencialidades da autoetnografia enquanto ponto de partida (e de chegada) para a construção de um co-mapeamento num campo cultural e criativo específico. Na investigação argumenta-se que no centro da cidade do Porto, num cenário onde não se sentem os limites do que é da viagem e do que é do quotidiano, um emaranhado de projetos culturais e criativos estão, espontaneamente, a operar um desarticulado, mas incisivo processo duplo papel de combate e promoção ao espectável curso da gentrificação e turistificação. Pretende-se participar no debate do planeamento da cidade, e devolver uma proposta de conhecimento específico à comunidade participante que se auto-mapeou. Mas fazê-lo, simultaneamente, contribuindo para questionar o lugar da academia como um fundamental ponto de intermediação, que des/interessadamente (e qual o objetivo privado de quem investiga?) co-produz os instrumentos para o aperfeiçoamento de um fenómeno.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

quotidiano, cultura, fruição, turismo, comunidade

INTRODUÇÃO

Está a cidade de hoje mais próxima de nos permitir encarnar uma qualquer versão atualizada e aperfeiçoada do homo-ludens (Huizinga, 1990)? Quase um século depois de Huizinga ter eleito o jogo como elemento fundamental à vida humana, questiona-se como é que se posicionam cidades que usaram este ingrediente para o seu desenvolvimento. Esta formulação, ainda que manifestamente secundária, é resultado de uma investigação que

procura caracterizar o conceito de vitalidade¹ em lugares de fruição urbana (para o caso elege a cidade do Porto). Enquanto questão principal, procura-se compreender qual o papel que, um conjunto de objetos-espaciais relacionados com a cultura e a criatividade, habituados a uma certa invisibilidade na teoria da arquitetura, têm no desenho de uma morfologia de fruição. Pretende-se assim apresentar uma proposta de metodologia e um conjunto de conclusões preliminares de uma investigação que se encontra em curso.

Mas regressando à questão que nos serviu de gatilho, se de uma resposta de sim/não se tratasse, a opção pela negativa parecia-nos a resolução crítica mais justa, para a qual as ciências sociais têm contribuído na demonstração de novas desigualdades, insondáveis nos maravilamentos temporais da escrita de Huizinga. Mas a resposta positiva interessa-nos enquanto hiperbólico ponto de partida para incitar o desenho de uma metodologia que nos permita destapar ângulos nublados. Para assim tentarmos uma circulação positiva, precisamos de partir de cinco premissas, que aqui listamos para depois desambiguar: retirar a carga plural e recentrar a hipótese num contexto espacial e especial de nicho; analisar o fenómeno com as esperanças lentes da arquitetura; aceitar usarmo-nos para chegarmos à cultura, numa proposta metodológica que parta da autoetnografia; promover a colaboração dos passos quotidianos da comunidade participante; por fim, desafiar a análise documental, construindo um arquivo vivo.

Investiga-se um fenómeno, que apesar de se ter tentado líquido², nunca parece ter deixado o seu posto central. Sendo a cidade do Porto centrífuga, também esta investigação parte de um ponto central para investigar o todo. Com recurso a uma autoetnografia³, parte-se de uma experiência curatorial e crítica de 10 anos numa loja-galeria de esquina, a SCAR-ID (scar-id.com), em Bombarda, no quarteirão artístico do Porto. Faz-se assim um estudo da esquina para o bairro, a comunidade, a cidade, para analisar um conjunto de objetos-espaciais que seduzem os urbanitas⁴.

O centro do Porto é reconhecido como um cenário turístico: uma cidade *depois do turismo* (Urry & Larsen, 2011), um território onde não se sentem os limites do que é da viagem e do que é do quotidiano, uma atmosfera onde justificamos que podemos aprofundar a questão inicial. Argumenta-se que um emaranhado de projetos culturais e criativos – os quais chamámos de objetos-espaciais – estão, espontaneamente, a operar um duplo processo

¹ Partiu-se do conceito ambíguo de “*vitalidade urbana*” que pode ser compreendido em Jacobs (2003), enquanto uma cidade com vida, diversa, complexa. A ideia de “*vitalidade*” para Jacobs é também ponto de partida a uma linhagem de pensamento que percorre vários autores e tem no seu reflexo contemporâneo o pensamento de autores como, a exemplo, Carlos Moreno, Jan Gehl ou David Sim.

² O conceito de “*cidade líquida*” foi popularizado por Paulo Cunha e Silva enquanto Vereador da Cultura da Câmara Municipal do Porto (2013–2015), para descrever um modelo de cidade onde a cultura detinha um papel transversal nas políticas públicas da cidade. Parte de um jogo de palavras com referência ao conceito de “*modernidade líquida*” de Zygmunt Bauman. Aqui continuamos esse jogo de palavras.

³ Pretende-se com este caso discutir as potencialidades da autoetnografia enquanto ponto de partida (e de chegada) para a construção de um co-mapeamento num campo cultural e criativo específico, levantando uma problemática, que é por si própria da autoetnografia: quais os desafios para uma pesquisa que não só se inicia no lugar representado, mas utiliza a sua própria rede como arquivo e data para co-mapear?

⁴ Urbanitas entendidos aqui como aqueles que usam e gostam da cidade, sejam habitantes ou visitantes temporários.

correlacionado, simultaneamente na promoção e no combate à gentrificação e turistificação, contribuindo assim, tanto para a positiva vitalidade da cidade, como para desencadear novas problemáticas urbanas.

CONTEXTO ESPACIAL E ESPECIAL

Se a modernidade, ou pós-modernidade tardia do caso português, empurrou o entusiasmo cultural, criativo e artístico para as duas últimas décadas do século XX, no Porto, essa euforia teve o seu apogeu estilístico num tempo que envolve a classificação pela Unesco em 1996 e a Porto 2001, Capital Europeia da Cultura. A tomada do Centro Histórico do Porto como Património Mundial, conferiu à cidade o reconhecimento e a atratividade internacional. Quanto a 2001, não foi apenas um ano de programação, mas o motivo para o redesenho e novo desenho de equipamentos culturais, ruas, praças e passeios, feitos chão e cenário que acolheram o dinamismo que se seguiu. Depois de um longo hiato - a ressaca do pós-Porto 2001, a crise económica de 2008 e uma autarquia menos sensível à ideia de cultura enquanto material para a urbanidade - por volta de 2013, com um novo impulso municipal para a cultura, o advento das viagens low-cost e a reforma da lei do arrendamento, a cidade embarca numa nova etapa de atração.

A década seguinte, 2013–2023, é um momento de começar a pôr em prática aquilo que o vereador da cultura Paulo Cunha e Silva chamou de “*cidade líquida*”, para a prática de uma urbe a ser composta pelo papel da cultura, desenhando “*a marca Porto, de um Porto mais cosmopolita e turístico*” (Queirós & Carvalho, 2013). Paulo Cunha e Silva assume a passagem de uma “*política de espaços*”, enquanto herança da Porto 2001, para uma “*política de conteúdos*”, que não só programa, mas inspira, num todo composto de top-downs, bottom-ups, práticas independentes e práticas marginais, resultantes num conjunto de objetos-espaciais que desejam ser evidenciados por esta investigação. As ruas, as praças e os equipamentos de 2001, são chão e cenário do que agora se estava a começar a fazer. Perguntamos assim, se após este caminho de relação com a cultura, conseguiu esta base criar uma urbe-ludens⁵, uma cidade para o jogo, o prazer, a fruição?

A evolução morfológica do Porto foi desde os seus primórdios centrífuga. O epicentro simbólico do Porto é uma realidade contínua entre o que hoje chamamos a Sé, a Ribeira e os Aliados. A densidade de utilização do centro permite que este, a partir do século XIX, alargue as suas fronteiras e se estenda para o Bonfim, Trindade, Cedofeita, em direção à Boavista. Só o século XX permitiu que, com o automóvel, a cidade se densifique até à Foz, continue para fora dos seus limites geográficos e hoje forme uma contínua, mas disforme massa indivisível com os territórios vizinhos – uns mais urbanos que outros. Apesar de um conjunto de sucessivas adições – leia-se novas centralidades – estas não terão conseguido alcançar dimensão simbólica e cultural suficiente para serem mais do que polos comerciais, económicos ou núcleos habitacionais.

⁵ Declinação conceptual do conceito de “*homo-ludens*” de Huizinga (1990), adaptado à morfologia da cidade.

A última década permitiu a entrada compulsiva do turismo. Se a atividade turística contribui com quase 13% para o PIB nacional e representa metade do crescimento da economia em 2023, não é menos verdade que os problemas que levanta, dada a sua holística complexidade são, tantas vezes, imensuráveis. O turista que nos visita tem a ligeira percepção – senão mesmo a convicção – de que faz parte de um jogo, de uma certa *autenticidade encenada*⁶. Para o turista, não existem duas visões diferentes da cidade: a cidade de quem a habita e a cidade de quem a visita. Mas isso não significa que o lado artificial tenha ganho. Significa, como já se avançou, que estamos num momento em que a cidade não sente os limites entre o que é da viagem e o que é do quotidiano.

É neste contexto que esta investigação procura por um conjunto de objetos-espaciais que seduzem os urbanitas, participando da vitalidade urbana e conferindo à cidade do Porto o seu carácter distintivo. Procura-se este outro itinerário quotidiano, onde um emaranhado de projetos culturais e criativos, espontaneamente e descoordenadamente opera um duplo papel de combate/promoção ao rumo da gentrificação e da turistificação. A partir destes objetos-espaciais será desenhada uma leitura crítica sobre a vitalidade urbana da cidade, assente na sua morfologia de fruição. Os objetos-espaciais podem ser, tal como a SCAR-ID – seu ponto de partida – lojas-galerias, mas são certamente qualquer tipo de espaço, público ou privado, mas sempre de uso público, conectado com a rua: lojas, cabeleireiros, floristas, boutique-hotels com eventos regulares, galerias, garrafeiras, cafés, restaurantes, livrarias, showrooms, estúdios criativos com montra para a rua, e um sem número de outros equipamentos de difícil classificação, que a investigação se ocupará de classificar.

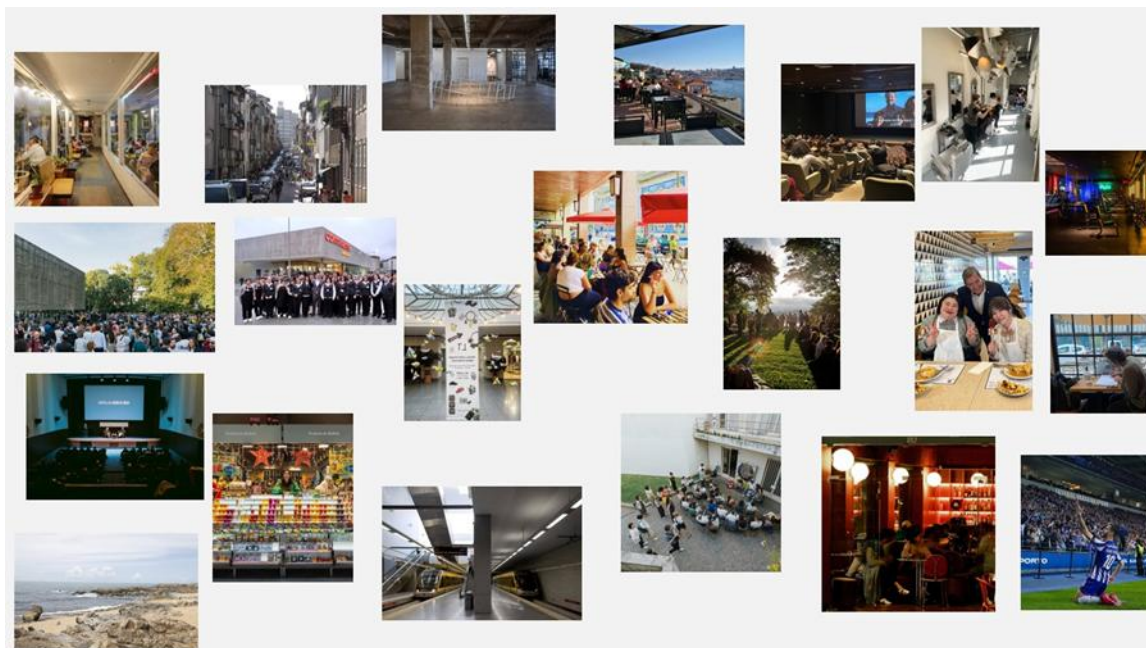


FIGURA 1. MOSAICO DE IMAGENS COLECIONADAS PELA INVESTIGAÇÃO

Fonte: André Ramos.

⁶ Para desambiguar o conceito, ver MacCannell & Lippard (1999).

METODOLOGIA

LENTE DA ARQUITETURA

Um dos legados recentes das ciências sociais é a importância que Bruno Latour⁷ dá aos agentes não humanos para a composição dos fenômenos. Esta condição é, no entanto, já qualidade intrínseca da disciplina da arquitetura, habituada a entender o edifício, o espaço e o território como portadores de características transformadoras da nossa vida individual e social. Por se ocupar das questões materiais e espaciais, o uso das lentes da arquitetura na análise da cidade, permite olhar para estes objetos-espaciais não humanos enquanto potenciadores das dinâmicas e dos fluxos urbanos. A qualidade material e espacial, mas também visual, semiótica, simbólica, propostas pelo *nowness* ou acumuladas no tempo, são determinantes para uma leitura de caminho holístico da cidade. Fazer um estudo da vitalidade urbana a partir dos seus espaços, lugares e arquiteturas resultantes do todo, permite olhar para as questões da cidade a partir de propostas de resposta. É através da cartografia dos objetos-espaciais, dos seu posicionamento e relação em rede, que a investigação legará uma leitura crítica dos quotidianos de fruição.

UM JOGO DE EMPATIA E ABSTRAÇÃO

Este estudo entende a autoetnografia enquanto método de pesquisa qualitativa, cruzando a etnografia com a experiência pessoal, prática e prévia à investigação. Os 10 anos de experiência na SCAR-ID permitem o recurso a um conhecimento prático do território, das problemáticas e o auxílio de uma rede de relações. A autoetnografia tem assim, por um lado a vantagem de legar à investigação uma operatividade que a coloca numa relação de particular interação com o objeto estudado, por outro, a desvantagem de acrescentar pré-conceitos. Massimo Canevacci (1993) alerta-nos para a questão da excessiva familiaridade com o objeto representado, principalmente para um investigador que foi um participante ativo desse objeto. Estudar uma realidade da qual se tem a veleidade de se conhecer pode, no limite, atenuar a curiosidade da investigação e assumir que se conhecem, à partida, algumas das respostas.

Como saída a esta singularidade, Canevacci propõe o conceito de *máxima internidade e máxima distância*: estar simultaneamente tão próximo e imerso no objeto, mas o mais longe possível para o poder teorizar, num rigoroso jogo de empatia e abstração com o objeto. Ainda que a descrição possa definir bem o papel do investigador participante, este conceito é sobretudo determinante enquanto reiterado lembrete no processo de trabalho. O que pode ser à partida entendido como uma defesa através de um jogo ilusório de distanciamento forçado, pode simultaneamente assumir-se como uma mais valia quando devidamente temperado. Paralelamente, Isabel Doucet (2016) mostra-nos o conceito de *críticidade-desde-dentro*, onde nos adverte para a preponderância de um estudo que procura alcançar uma posição teórica e crítica através de uma experiência prática, próxima do objeto estudado. Aqui, estar dentro não como familiaridade pré-conceitual com o objeto, mas enquanto

⁷ Pretende-se destacar o papel da arquitetura enquanto ator presente na actor-network theory de Bruno Latour.

intensidade de envolvimento na prática e comprometimento com o fenómeno, por força a que a crítica possa envolver-se no processo de resposta.

É então nesta justaposição entre a *críticidade-desde-dentro* e *máxima internidade e máxima distância*, que a investigação se propõe olhar para os objetos-espaciais em estudo. Mas fazê-lo, consciente do repto de Ronald J. Pelias (2003), quando, em jeito de autorização científica, instiga os investigadores que se usem a si próprios para chegar à cultura. O uso próprio de preconceções, práticas e posições do investigador não conferem à investigação qualquer mais-valia face a outra, mas tão somente uma outra forma de investigar.

OS PASSOS QUOTIDIANOS DA COMUNIDADE

Ao contrário de outros beckerianos *art e culture worlds*⁸, o fenómeno cultural e criativo responsável pela vitalidade urbana de uma cidade, não é tão passível de cair em interpretações reducionistas ao elemento mais mediático do todo. Neste fenómeno particular, é comumente entendível que cada elemento desempenha um papel próprio. Aquele que cria um “*conceito*”, um “*espaço*” ou um “*projeto*” cultural e criativo – só para usar alguns termos vulgarmente usados por alguns dos entrevistados – não é menos decisivo do que aquele que diariamente dá a cara no contacto com o urbanita. Uma loja de conveniência aberta até às 24h, enquanto simples equipamento que mimetiza qualquer outro do género, sem nenhum grau de inovação, pode contribuir mais para a vitalidade de um lugar do que o último arrojo estilístico em lazer urbano. Cada lugar elege os seus objetos-espaciais com base no seu próprio contexto. Apesar da investigação se preocupar em analisar, caracterizar e teorizar as razões para essa eleição, sabe que o resultado está longe de ser capaz de produzir fórmulas a serem replicadas noutros lugares, mas tão somente a fornecer pistas. Essa eleição de objetos-espaciais só pode ser apontada pelos passos quotidianos da comunidade participante que usa, vê, trabalha ou vive nos espaços.

Para respondermos à nossa questão inicial, necessitamos assim de uma comunidade de co-mapeadores a quem, sob várias sub-questões, será genericamente perguntado: o que entendem por fruição urbana e como (usu)fruem da sua cidade? A seleção de co-mapeadores é composta por agentes culturais e criativos; participantes da vida cultural da cidade, ainda que do lado do uso e da fruição ativa; e especialistas nas temáticas culturais e criativas. Mas dado o carácter autorreferencial do ponto de partida, estipulou-se que estes provêm da rede de relações⁹ que o investigador construiu através da sua atividade na já mencionada SCAR-ID.

Tendo em conta as premissas que caracterizaram esta seleção, assume-se que esta está condicionada quase a um arquetípico, um perfil-tipo onde podemos encontrar personagens relacionadas com aquilo que Featherstone (1995) caracteriza como uma *fusão de arte e vida*. Se numa investigação quantitativa a similitude do perfil dos entrevistados pode constituir um obstáculo ao desenvolvimento da tarefa, numa investigação qualitativa, são as pequenas, mas decisivas diferenças de tipificação que garantem à investigação a sua mais-valia.

⁸ Alusão ao conceito de “art world” de Howard Becker, no seu livro homónimo (Becker, 1984).

⁹ A lista de co-mapeadores é composta por vizinhos (moradores ou agentes de espaços comerciais/culturais), clientes ou colaboradores (diretos ou indiretos, como fornecedores, designers, artistas).

PARA UM ARQUIVO VIVO

A investigação em curso relaciona-se, ainda que marginalmente, com a ideia do que Eric Ketelaar (2009) chamou de arquivo vivo. Um arquivo que se vai constituindo continuamente e que talvez, no seu conjunto, provavelmente possa apenas responder às questões deste estudo. Os dados pretendem ser recolhidos de diversas fontes: desde os novos e tradicionais meios de comunicação, como os públicos e a impressão publicada sobre os assuntos; mas também guias turísticos online e impressos; contas de redes sociais e outra publicidade digital comercial e artística da presença online dos stakeholders; relatórios de negócios; relatórios de turismo; frequências de vida noturna; contadores de movimento da vida diurna, como os usos de transporte público; convites para vernissages e finissages; às quais se somam, entre outros, os dados recolhidos das já destacadas entrevistas aos co-mapeadores.

A pesquisa visa identificar, mapear e teorizar um conjunto de objetos, espaços, lugares e arquiteturas, habituados a uma certa invisibilidade na teoria da arquitetura, que são entendidos como principais ativadores de uma transformação cultural e urbana. Os mapas que serão desenvolvidos pretendem ser uma síntese crítico-visual do arquivo vivo. Mas mais do que perceber se estes mapas serão desenhados de forma graficamente unificada pela investigação, ou esboçados por cada um dos entrevistados, é interessante compreendê-los como peças desenhadas não pela, mas através da comunidade e que nos contam a história desse lugar. O mapeamento de um território através da comunidade surge na investigação como oportunidade de aprofundar as relações das redes que o criam - ou não fosse um mapa, voltando a Cenevacci, uma soma “*sincrónica ou simultânea as diversas vozes*”.

TRÊS OBJETIVOS

O objetivo principal da investigação passa por uma reflexão propositiva e crítica sobre o papel destes objetos-espaciais para o desenvolvimento urbano sustentável, participando no debate do planeamento da cidade, podendo servir de guião à cidade, aos seus agentes de decisão, aos seus agentes de consumo, e principalmente, aos seus agentes de ação. Mais do que uma deriva crítica dos locais de fruição da cidade, a investigação pretende estar envolvida no debate público sobre gentrificação, turistificação, usos, planeamento, sustentabilidade e apropriação comercial e cultural. Um desejado e planeado efeito-secundário pretende devolver uma proposta de conhecimento específico à comunidade participante que se auto-mapeou, para que o conhecimento alcançado possa ser usado para influenciar positivamente o crescimento dos seus projetos e os auxilie na superação dos desafios. Mas fazê-lo, simultaneamente, contribuindo para questionar e definir o lugar da academia como um fundamental ponto de intermediação, que des/interessadamente (e qual o objetivo privado de quem investiga?) coproduz os instrumentos para o aperfeiçoamento de um fenómeno. A circularidade do processo enfatiza precisamente o regresso desse conhecimento ao ponto de partida.

UMA NÃO CONCLUSÃO DE UM PERCURSO DE CAPTAÇÃO

No início perguntávamos que variação de *urbe ludens* pode ser encontrada na análise de um fenómeno particular, que é olhado desde dentro, por aqueles que diretamente o constroem? Se o trabalho da análise documental, aqui tratada como um arquivo vivo, se apresenta como fundamental para o estudo, a experiência em curso revela que é a entrevista a ferramenta principal da investigação. Tratadas as entrevistas com a informalidade de uma conversa¹⁰, ainda que parcialmente monologar, os entrevistados são encaminhados a pensarem sobre a sua cidade, o seu lugar nessa cidade, e comparativamente, em todas as cidades – conhecidas e/ou imaginadas – como lugar de desejo. Dependendo do seu posto no mundo cultural particular que se investiga, sempre que estes acumulam posições, são ainda levados a questionar o seu papel enquanto agentes nas práticas de fruição. Apesar da proximidade tipológica dos entrevistados, é de assinalar a complexidade das diferenças. Compor um discurso unido, mas não necessariamente unitário, preparado pelo mosaico caleidoscópico não só dos pontos de vista, mas também dos interesses, é um dos maiores desafios da investigação. Mas como o desafio ainda está em curso, cabe-nos de forma desordenada e telegráfica apresentar um conjunto de – mais do que conclusões – pistas de leitura com base na soma das várias vozes:

“A cidade é um lugar de prazer” é a pergunta que inicia todas as entrevistas. As respostas são sempre positivas, ainda que por vezes acompanhadas por um “ainda” ou por uma identificação de algumas perdas e lamentos, nomeadamente de perdas de partes da cidade, – mapas de ausências;

Alguns arriscam definições mais acabadas e elegem a “cidade enquanto lugar do estímulo e afinidade intelectual e criativa”;

Procura-se definir o que os entrevistados entendem por urbano. Alguns destacam a importância da “noite”. Talvez o aproveitamento do espaço à noite seja uma pista determinante – mapa de usos do espaço à noite e/ou por segmentos horários;

Outros, citando Lefebvre de cabeça, procuram definições mais fechadas como o assumir de um posicionamento, e caracterizando a “cidade enquanto [lugar que] mistura do ócio e do negócio”;

Conversa-se muito sobre noções de qualidade de vida, regressando ao conceito de “tempo”, e mais precisamente a cidade enquanto lugar que permite “não perder tempo”. E aqui a noção do conceito de “proximidade”, tão cara à cidade de 15 minutos de Carlos Moreno, assume um

¹⁰ A experiência da entrevista rapidamente revelou que os resultados seriam tão melhores quanto a entrevista fosse conduzida de forma mais livre. A estruturação inicial da entrevista em 10 perguntas foi substituída por uma conversa livre, de aproximadamente 1h, onde o papel do investigador-entrevistador passa apenas por garantir que o maior número de assuntos programados fossem discutidos, independentemente da ordem. A própria ordem e aprofundamento/densidade temática tornaram-se fatores a analisar. O estilo “conversa” apenas quer representar a informalidade com que a entrevista ocorre, pois esta acaba por funcionar em monólogo, nunca se tornando num debate de ideias.

papel conceptual na qualidade de ser urbano – mapa de cidades de 15 minutos dentro da cidade;

A proximidade física e nunca o seu simulacro em streaming – numa inesperada relação com a “*urbanidade da matéria*” de Solà-Morales (2008), mas também entrando ligeiramente nos conceitos de “*Platform Urbanism*” (ex. Barns, 2020). É importante “*o ir, mais do que o receber*”, numa direta referência à economia das encomendas online, cada vez mais presente;

É particularmente interessante conhecer as perspetivas de habitantes do Porto recentes, que chegam de fora e encontram um Porto que não é “*perfeito*”, porque tudo está ligeiramente “quebrado” fazendo assim a comparação direta com as suas experiências anteriores;

Sem nunca esquecer esta qualidade tão possível no Porto que é o “*andar a pé*”, percorrer a cidade, não só num sentido funcional, mas prazeroso, de descoberta – possibilidade de desenhar mapas de pedonalização. Andar a pé, lembrado pelos entrevistados como umas das principais condições da urbanidade;

Mas sobre o Porto há sempre o “*lamento*”, ainda que por vezes um lamento resignado da consciência de que chegamos tarde a esse processo, de gentrificação, de turistificação e “não aprendemos nada! E que cometemos os erros das outras cidades todas!”;

O que leva por vezes, a algo ainda mais saudosista, como o movimento que na arte urbana levou às paredes da cidade o conhecido: “*Make Porto Podre Again!*”;

Arrisca-se uma divisão da cidade por bairros, questionando-se a dependência centrífuga da cidade – mapas de subdivisões da cidade e/ou mapa de bairros;

Relaciona-se o Porto com a sua Área Metropolitana, novamente questionando-o como centro;

As respostas mais desafiantes correspondem à pergunta sobre a cultura urbana. O desconhecimento da dimensão disciplinar, leva o entrevistado a arriscar evidenciar certos fenómenos como a recente utilização na cidade da “*esplanada*”. Por o entrevistado partir daí, identificam a SCAR-ID e outros projetos semelhantes como portadores da condição da cultura urbana. Alguns tentam desligar-se do objeto e evidenciar “*formas específicas de viver a cidade*”, o que se torna um exercício muito produtivo onde se destaca por exemplo como uma rua no centro da cidade onde coincidem um dos bares-da-moda, o Candelabro, com um carpinteiro, duas atividades aparentemente tão inconciliáveis na cabeça de um funcionalista, mas tão funcionalmente úteis na cabeça de um urbanita;

Outros lembram-nos que ainda há uma cidade “*underground*” a ser descoberta – desafiando a investigação a perceber se quem não quer estruturalmente comunicar com a cidade, ainda que dela participando, deve ser elencado como agente da sua vitalidade;

Sobre o turismo força-se uma tomada de posição entre dois limites, o turismo enquanto predador da cidade e enquanto catalisador da renovação urbana. Se os agentes com uma vertente mais comercial se encontram numa posição dividida em relação ao turismo,

simultaneamente beneficiando economicamente deste, e sentindo as dores da gentrificação, outros há, que não tendo esse ganho direto, resignados, lamentam a perda de partes da cidade para essa outra coisa que, para eles, não é cidade, mas é uma cidade do divertimento – muitos entrevistados têm um olhar negativo para aquilo que podem vir a ser as conclusões da investigação;

Surpreende a investigação que os entrevistados ainda não tenham falado de segurança;

Raramente se discute trânsito. Parece-nos que por uma consciência coletiva que o andar a pé, de transporte-público, mobilidade suave, a proximidade, são condições já absorvidas;

O espaço público é o assunto com o qual os entrevistados passam mais tempo. Mais do que conceptualizar o que é hoje o espaço-público, fala-se de opções simples. Sem o nomearem, falam de urbanismo tático, efêmero ou urbanismo de tinta e fita-cola. De como fechar uma rua ao trânsito e abri-la à interpretação livre pela comunidade pode fazer mais pelo espaço-público do que o desenho ou a programação top-down;

Referem constantemente ao bar do momento, o Fiasco, entendido por todos como um dos grandes lugares do espaço-público de hoje. Com este e outros casos, o espaço-público é assim entendido como o espaço que permite olhar para fora, que participa, por vezes sem participar;

Mas com demasiado enfoque em bares, cafés, esplanadas, museus e cinemas, houve a tentativa de tentar alargar as possibilidades de lazer urbano, discutindo outras possibilidades;

E numa inversão, identifica-se da nova realidade do trabalho a partir de casa, da rotina, da saúde mental e da importância do “*vir cá abaixo, do vir cá fora*”, experienciar a cidade sem a obrigação de a percorrer por motivos funcionais;

Convoca-se também sempre a importância de Paulo Cunha e Silva e a vontade de uma cidade que se mistura;

E da importância do coletivo, da vizinhança e da comunidade.

E esta procura de uma *urbe ludens* particular serve propósitos mais largos que a caracterização do caso? Ou arrisca-se que a investigação se identifique apenas como um cronismo de caso, não alargando proficiência para o conhecimento da cidade, enquanto organismo disciplinar? Infere-se, como já assumido, que os resultados do estudo estarão longe de contribuir para fórmulas que possam ser reproduzidas e simuladas noutros contextos. Cada cidade deve ser tratada no seu contexto. Mas passada esta preconcepção, espera-se que possa ser desenhadas pistas que entusiasmarão os decisores, os agentes, os urbanitas de outros contextos urbanos, para a construção da vitalidade das suas cidades.

NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

André Ramos é arquiteto, investigador e galerista. Investiga sobre os quotidianos de fruição urbana enquanto desafio programático para a vitalidade da cidade, explorando o papel das práticas culturais e criativas. Investigador colaborador no IS-UP, Instituto de Sociologia da Universidade do Porto e no CeArq-TD, Centro de Estudos de Arquitetura - do Território ao Design Doutorando no DARQ-UC, Departamento de Arquitetura da Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia da Universidade de Coimbra (2022-), com uma Bolsa da Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia (ref: 2023.00995.BD) e mestre pela FAUP, Faculdade de Arquitetura da Universidade do Porto (2002-10). Trabalhou em arquitetura de forma intermitente desde 2008, em colaborações, nome próprio ou parceria. Em 2013, cofundou a galeria de arte e design SCAR-ID, e em 2017 a marca ATER by SCAR-ID. Foi Professor de Educação Visual e Tecnológica na escola pública. Colabora pontualmente com jornais e revistas. ORCID: 0000-0002-6854-0957

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CITYSPACES AS INTERIOR SETTINGS: ON AN *INSIDE OUT* EFFECT IN THE CITIES UNDER NEW CAPITALISM

João Borges da Cunha

Lusófona University

CECC – Research Center for Communication and Science, Catholic University of Portugal

borgesdacunha@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Siegfried Kracauer ended his 1930 article “Abschied von der Lindenpassage” (“Farewell to the Linden Arcade”), on the decline of the commercial venue, questioning: “What would be the point of an arcade [*Passage*] in a society that is itself only a passageway?” (Kracauer, 1995, p. 342). The question points to the ultimate horizon of capitalist agency on city economy being an overall commoditization of urban places. Implying that a social and economic total mobilization of city spots is on the way like in a walloping shopping mall, as the one in J. G. Ballard’s dystopic novel *Kingdom Come* (2006), leading to a spatial outcome where no boundaries can be found between indoor and outdoor practices, in a detectable *inside out effect*. At the crisscross of cultural theory and urban aesthetics, this article addresses this city phenomenon in the context of which the tradition of bourgeois interiors and modern public sphere were degraded by the cultural transformations of New Capitalism, synthesized by Richard Sennett as when “the institutions inspire only weak loyalty, ... diminish participation and mediation of commands, ... breed low levels of informal trust and high levels of anxiety about uselessness” (Sennett, 2006, p. 181). Meaning the stage set of a life drama in which the disappearance of an outer cityscape is the token of a full capitalist incorporation and the threat of a vanishing future.

KEYWORDS

cityspace; masses; interior effect; synekism; new capitalism

Late [New] Capitalism is scratching its piles and trying to figure out where to shit next. All privy doors are closed except one. Buying a washing machine is a political act—the only real kind of politics left today.

(Ballard, 2006, p. 209)

‘Mr. Pearson? [...] You’re not hurt?’

‘He missed me. It’s over there.’

‘I didn’t hear a shot. Let’s get you indoors.’

‘Indoors? We’re already indoors. Aren’t we?’

(Ballard, 2006, p. 229)

CITYSPACE

In the comment on Paris across his essay “Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism”, Walter Benjamin states a premonitory diagnosis about future life in the cities:

The arcades were a cross between a street and an *intérieur*. ... [A] boulevard [turned] into an *intérieur*. The street becomes a dwelling for the *fâneur*; he is as much at home among the facades of houses as a citizen is in his four walls. To him the shiny, enamelled signs of businesses are at least as good a wall ornament as an oil painting is to a bourgeois in his salon. The walls are the desk against which he presses his notebooks; news-stands are his libraries and the terraces of cafes are the balconies from which he looks down on his household after his work is done. (Benjamin, 1985, p. 37)

In the same spirit, through the 1929 review on Franz Hessel’s *Spazieren in Berlin*, in the celebrated article entitled “The Return of the *Flâneur*”, Benjamin restates virtually the same idea. However, he adds to it the notion of the masses¹: “[for] the masses ..., glossy enameled corporate nameplates are as good a wall-decoration as an oil painting is for the homebody sitting in his living room ...; the fire walls are their desks, ... and the café terrace the bay window from which they can look down on their property” (Benjamin, 2003, p. 264).

What is at stake in the quotes above is somehow something further than vivid allegories, which used to help Benjamin’s wording in reaching highly sophisticated thoughts. The occasion is instead one of looking back in time, even for Benjamin, in order to reveal the beginnings of a so to speak *spatial turn* that the recent critical theory has sustained, picturing the intellectual movement that stresses *place* and *space* in contrast to the emphasis put on *structures* and *ideas*. Let me name a few, such as the “spatial stories” (*récits d’espaces*) (Michel de Certeau), the “situated knowledges” (Donna Haraway), the “heterotopias” (*des espaces autres*, Michel Foucault), and “geohistory” (Soja, 2000). Nonetheless, the one this article privileges the most is the “conceptual triad”, as formulated by Henri Lefèbvre in *The Production of Space* (1991), which comprehends a “spatial practice”, a “representation of space”, and “representational spaces” (Lefèbvre, 1991, p. 33), which Edward Soja turned into

¹ The mass, as a distinctive character and the main subject of city interactions, enters the discourse of urban sociology by the hand of Max Weber: “the consumers for the local market are made up of large consumers if they are residents and/or entrepreneurs, workers and craftsmen who form the great mass” (Weber, 1969, p. 27). For Weber, it is made clear, the mass is an agent of the economy, whereas for Benjamin, the notion acquires a mid-tone between the *political* and what the Benjaminian studies consecrated as the *dialectical imagery* (or the dream image) of a *Urgeschichte* [“the fossil, the fetish, the wish image, the ruin” (Buck-Morss, 1989, p. 211)]; elements of a primal history, when, according to Benjamin’s maxim in the “Exposés” of his *Passagen-Werk*: “In dem Traum, in dem jeder Epoche die ihr folgende in Bildern vor Augen tritt, erscheint die letztere vermählt mit Elementen der Urgeschichte, das heißt einer klassenlosen Gesellschaft” (Benjamin, 1982, p. 47) [“In the dream in which each epoch entertains images of its successor, the latter appears wedded to elements of primal history <Urgeschichte>—that is, to elements of a classless society” (Benjamin, 2003, p. 4)]. By this token, which relates the masses with its ancestral classless aspiration, it’s worth retrieving a proto-Benjaminian conceptualization between the ones envisioning (dreaming) and the ones envisaged (ever dreamt of) that has a deep resonance in this paper’s argument of a chiasmatic figure about the public city man enclosed in his interior, and the inner city people flooding the streets with their practices, a political idea collected from that “peculiar dramatism” enunciated in the political writings by José A. Bragança de Miranda (2008), epitomized in that “‘mystery of obedience’ [La Boétie] of the ‘many’ towards the ‘few’” (Miranda, 2008, pp. 13, 43, author’s translation).

the “trialectics of cityspace”, out of the analysis of a “*conceived space*”, a “*perceived space*”, and a “*lived space*” (Soja, 2000, pp. 10–11).

In fact, looking into a historical phenomenon as the one described by Benjamin, I am not only seeking for the origins of an *inside out effect*, what, in a certain way, Soja calls “a kind of reverse teleology that leads the searcher to find roots and starting points that reflect his or her personal views of the present” (Soja, 2000, p. 19). On the contrary, I’m actually considering its present counter-culturally driven manifestations and its compulsory irruption in a nearby future, in the fashion of an interrupted revolution, the first steps of which Benjamin has only *conceived*. Nowadays, they can start being *perceived* and *lived* hereafter.

Such a convolution is happening, and will keep happening, against the backdrop of what Richard Sennett calls the context of New Capitalism. When “the institutions inspire only weak loyalty, ... diminish participation and mediation of commands, ... breed low levels of informal trust and high levels of anxiety about uselessness” (Sennett, 2006, p. 181), people desert the homes they built under an architecture of *interdictory spaces* to go away with a fully prosaic fear (Baumam, 2003 p. 26).

Under such terms, you might certify how in the modern aesthetics of city life, the primeval tread about city feelings is the one leading from a land of the free (supported by the dictum about living in post-medieval cities: *Stadt Luft macht frei* – “the air of the city makes people free” [Sennett, 1996, p. 155]), to a risky territory, the realm of crime and the dominion of police surveillance. A biased open space—the sheer exterior—where the rule of law and the principle of order are simply provisional, since the step into Carl Schmitt’s “State of Exception” [*Ausnahmezustand*] is just a matter of how subjectively serious the state of emergency seems to be (Schmitt, 1997).

CITY ELEMENT

However, previous to the question of *how does it work* and *how will it condition* citylife and cityspaces for days to come, what I’ve been naming so far as an *inside out effect*, it lacks a methodological warrant in the line of the Benjaminian reflections, the which lead to a *Ur-questioning*: what is the primeval element of cityspace that allows an effect as such, when what has been taking the aspect of inward *spatial practices* became in fact the drive for an outward *representation of space*, and by then a delirious ground for euphoric, if not dysphoric, *representational spaces*?

The literature on this sort of original backdrop of people’s drives for gathering in settlements, where number, density, and heterogeneity constitute a so to speak necessary formal setting, but not in the least a sufficient functional one, has divided itself according to what might have been the decisive element. An element under which all the phenomenon of urbanization as a world movement, if not as an anthropological given, has gained pace and momentum since ancient times, fostering the initial notion of an urban revolution. Actually, the latter has been taken as an indisputable, if not dogmatic, theory based on what Edward Soja

discredits as “the conventional sequence: hunting and gathering – agriculture – villages – cities – states” (Soja, 2000, p. 20).

As a matter of fact, what seems of the utmost importance to this *elemental* debate is not a train of thought combining different disciplinary approaches from archeology to paleography, from sociology to economy. It is instead a tentative psycho-anthropological conjecture, which acquires its refulgent formulation in the *Ur-term synekism*, “the stimulus of urban agglomeration”. As Soja puts it:

Synekism is directly derived from *synoikismos*, literally the condition arising from dwelling together in one house, or *oikos*, and used by Aristotle in his *Politics* to describe the formation of the Athenian polis or city-state. ... Synekism thus connotes, in particular, the economic and ecological interdependencies and the creative—as well as occasionally destructive—synergisms that arise from purposeful clustering and collective cohabitation of people in space, in “a home” habitat. (Soja, 2000, p. 13)

However clear this *Ur-root* might be, and in the lead for an undeniable pre-ancestor even a gene to the *inside out effect* in cityspace, what Soja fails to explain is the mechanism why the sheer interior dimension, the one of the home (*oikos*), moves people to share the same exterior space and therefore, to build a *representational cityspace (syne-oikos)*.

To trace this missing link, I propose a more daring approach, relating two concepts by Carl Schmitt, taken from his 1942 controversial intent of a reflection on the Universal History, *Land und Meer [Land and Sea]*, which is, I argue, closer to a Benjaminian cultural analysis than to a scientific one based on historical evidence. The first concept is no other than that of *element*. For Schmitt, encompassing all of its mythic and infra-scientific implications, an *element* is some earthly substance in a deep contrast to humankind’s existence, since human life can only be conceived against it:

[M]an is not a creature wholly conditioned by his environment. Through history, he has the ability to get the better of his existence and his consciousness. He is aware not only of the act of birth, but also of the possibility of a rebirth. When in danger or in a desperate situation, circumstances in which the other animals and plants left to themselves are likely to perish, man can save himself and start anew by his perspicacity, the conclusions he draws from his analysis, and the soundness of his decisions. The scope for his abilities and for action on history is vast. Man can choose, and at certain moments in his history, he may even go so far, through a gesture peculiar to him, as to change himself into a new form of his historical existence, in virtue of which he readjusts and reorganizes himself. (Schmitt, 1997, p. 5)

In this line of thought it is undisputable that it would have to be an equal *element*, the one mastered by humankind, in order to pass from *oikos* to *syne-oikos* and vice-versa. The one, I contend, that even Schmitt misses to perceive as an *Ur-element* in his dualistic account is the mythical *light*, since—it could severely be argued—he erroneously puts the mastering of *fire* in the end of the line for the universal historical. On the contrary, the *Ur-ancestor* of humankind, its *pater*, is no other than the *pirokleptic* Titan Prometheus, the fire/light stealer, the championing father of humankind, whose punishment was to be held imprisoned in the Caucasus, just where the first *syn-oikos* started to appear. Why shouldn’t they, there, *readjust*

and *reorganize* their cityspaces under the benefit of citylights granted by fire, something that only came out in 15th-century Cordoba, and much later in 19th-century London?

As well as for the *oikos*, the *synekistic* element is *fire*. As for the fireside (the *house*), light is the controlled environment effect of an urban space (the *city*). That's the reason why the Marxist dialectics of rural space vs. urban space is completely at pains to the uncontrolled fire. To the collective memory, one natural reason for a devastating fire must be a feeble one. Fire brings men together and, as such, their very moral judgement: crime and disregard. In cityspace, under modern times, *fire* is bumpered by social enthusiasm and social distress, a supreme and outrageous entertainment due to a lack of class differentiation: a huge lit building, burnt to pieces, is a representational space of the collapse of a class-ridden society. As Walter Benjamin contends: "The appearance of the street as an *intérieur* in which the phantasmagoria of the *flanêur* is concentrated is hard to separate from the gaslight. ... A street, a *conflagration*, or a traffic accident assemble people who are not defined along class lines" (Benjamin, 1985, p. 62, second emphasis added).

The second concept I will take up from Schmitt is that of a *space revolution*. As Schmitt points out in the following excerpt of his own questioning about "what is a *space revolution*?":

The inhabitant of a big city has a different image of the world than does a farmer. A whale hunter has a vital space that differs from that of an opera-singer. Life and the world are seen in a different light by an airplane pilot, and they have different dimensions, depths, and horizons. The differences in the perception of space are even larger and deeper among various nations and among the various periods in the history of mankind. (Schmitt, 1997, p. 28)

Secondly, he concludes:

This redeployment may be so profound and so sudden that it alters not only man's outlook, standards, and criteria but also the very contents of the notion of space. It is in that context that one may talk of a space revolution. Actually, all important changes in history more often than not imply a new perception of space. (Schmitt, 1997, p. 29)

In present times, as far as you can take a view of the globe from outer space, it is undeniable, all against the reasoning of Schmitt, that the struggling stage of this *space revolution* is not being undertaken neither by land nor air or sea, but under the dominion of *light*: the most illuminated parts of the planet are the ones where *synekism* is at loose.

For the profound redeployment of space that Schmitt asserts could be able to sustain a space revolution, I do want to add the argument of the overwhelming post-modernist, if not hyper-human and post-apocalyptic, mechanism of capitalistic incorporation (Jameson, 1991): that ever increasing inversion of values, in which, on the one hand, what is outside is being systematically integrated as key inwards comfort and commodities. And on the other hand, the outside cityspace is much more, or even less, than a *syne-oikos*: it is just a passageway, a mall, a shopping-centre, the *element* of which, like fire, consumption, and consumerism are the sheer ignition.

KINGDOM COME

The title of this section is borrowed from the 2006 novel by J. G. Ballard, *Kingdom Come*. Its narrative genre is of a simple kind: a crime novel where a murder is committed within the suburbs of London. However, its sociological and urban implications are of a broad scope: in the outskirts of a large cityspace people conduct themselves as if there were no outside, public, or firm settlement, but a huge surrounding interior to which the population adopts a feeling of belonging—a circular highway: “the protective shoulders of the M25 were virtually an invention of the advertising industry, or so account executives The suburbs, we would all believe to our last grasp, were defined by the products we sold them, by the brands and trademarks and logos that alone defined their lives” (Ballard, 2006, p. 4).

Let us go back in time to assert the right lineage of the *space revolution* from which I’ve started. In the year of 1930, the German cultural critic Siegfried Kracauer, trained as an architect and active as a writer and journalist under the Weimar Republic, ended his article, “*Abschied von der Lindenpassage*” (“Farewell to the Linden Arcade”), on the decline of such a particular commercial venue, with the following broad question: “What would be the point of an arcade [*Passage*] in a society that is itself only a passageway?” (Kracauer, 1995, p. 342). He’s already suggesting the fact that the ultimate horizon of the capitalistic agency on city economy is the overall commoditization of urban places. Implying from the onset there, is the social and economic total mobilisation of city spots and urban sites as a walloping shopping mall, resulting in a spatial effect in which no boundaries can be pointed out between the recognizable selling station and the non-buying inner unit. That’s the core of Ballard’s novel, when a formidable shopping mall transforms the whole entire system of relations into the typical Schmittian *space revolution* where an environmental *element* is put totally under or out of control. The element, there, starts to be *lighting*, which bears no distinction between the broad daylight and the darkest night. As the novel opens: “The suburbs dream of violence. Asleep in their drowsy villas, sheltered by benevolent shopping malls, they wait patiently for the nightmares that will take them into a more passionate world....” (Ballard, 2006, p. 3).

The latter is the world of terminal consumerism at its simplest. That’s where people from inside an uprising shopping mall, like in the most class-ridden and hated “Metro-Centre”, start erecting typically exterior shrines to the fainting god of consumerism: “a retail messiah for the age of cable TV,” a shopping channel screen presenter (Ballard, 2006, p. 60). And they do so out of the ultimate interior settings, i.e., home appliances: “the modest workstation was almost a neo-fascist altar” (p. 55).

The biting question is that the present social theory of New Capitalism seems to reaffirm the diagnosis made half a century way ahead of its time by Walter Benjamin when he pointed out that the perspective of a vanishing schism between interior and exterior was the greatest social achievement of *ein Lyriker im Zeitalter des Hochskapitalismus* (a *Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*). Likewise, as Richard Sennett states about the contemporary biased hero, the “Citizen as Consumer”: “Overload prompts disengagement” (Sennett, 2006, p. 172).

The ironic and fully phantasmal turn of J. G. Ballard's novel, in complete accordance with the *inside out effect* that has been contended to this point, and which is willing to haunt cityspaces for way too long, is that just like in ancient times the unabashed revolution won't come from outside the spot. The "many" will control the "few". Rather from inside.

In sum, according to the culture of New Capitalism as sustained by Richard Sennett, the principle of the "consumer as citizen" entails an inversion in the access to what was once the public space, the element of which would be definitely the air, the open air as in the ancient Agora (agoraphilia is the extreme fondness of wide open fields). The mentioned inversion is the very one that has been described as an inside out effect, for the free open spaces can now only be understood not like an expanded free market, but rather as a closed circle of both physical and psychological innerness, where people do not meet and stand out in the streets. They resemble instead a "tourist who travels from one clone city to the next, visiting the same shops, buying the same products in each ... for the consumer, stimulation lies in the very process of moving on" (Sennett, 2006, p. 148), round and round in interior circles you should add.

NOTE ON CONTRIBUTOR

João Borges da Cunha. Assistant Professor, architecture, anthropology, visual culture and the arts, Universidade Lusófona, Lisbon. Researcher at CECC – Research Center for Communication and Science, Catholic University of Portugal. PhD in Culture Studies, Catholic University of Portugal. Degree in Architecture, Faculty of Architecture, University of Lisbon. Author of books on urban aesthetics and interart studies relating architecture and the city to the other arts. Writer of fiction, poetry and playwright. Art critic writing in *ArteCapital*, Portugal. Working as an architect in the field of international exhibitions. Set designer and performer.

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POLICIES, PLANNING, AND STRATEGIES FOR CULTURE

POR UMA NOVA CULTURA DE PLANEAMENTO NO PLANEAMENTO PARA A CULTURA: DESAFIOS E OPORTUNIDADES QUE SE COLOCAM AO PLANEAMENTO ESTRATÉGICO PARA A CULTURA EM PORTUGAL

Pedro Quintela

Instituto de Sociologia da Universidade do Porto
Quatenaire Portugal
pquintela@quatenaire.pt

Andreia Magalhães

Consultoria
andreia.alves.magalhaes@gmail.com

Elisa Pérez Babo

Quatenaire Portugal
elisab@quatenaire.pt

RESUMO

O planeamento estratégico à escala local e intermunicipal surge em Portugal na década de 1990 e, desde então, tem conhecido desenvolvimentos, seja de forma mais genérica e numa base territorial, seja quando incide em domínios temáticos e setoriais, incluindo o da cultura. Embora existam diversos exemplos de planos estratégicos para a cultura, não existe uma prática sistemática de planeamento a este nível, incluindo de monitorização e avaliação das estratégias e medidas preconizadas pelos planos, tornando por isso as abordagens relativamente heterogéneas. Por outro lado, é reconhecida em Portugal uma tendência – técnica e política – de crescente envolvimento e participação pública nos processos de planeamento. Contudo, o modo como tais estratégias são implementadas é muito variável, designadamente no que toca aos métodos e à integração dos momentos de participação dos *stakeholders* ao longo das várias etapas de elaboração do plano, bem como no posterior acompanhamento da sua execução. Este artigo propõe uma reflexão sobre o panorama atual do planeamento estratégico para a cultura em Portugal – à escala local e intermunicipal –, identificando os principais desafios e oportunidades, mas também os limites e constrangimentos que se colocam hoje à aplicação de novas metodologias participativas e colaborativas.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

cultura, políticas culturais, planeamento estratégico, governança, participação

POLÍTICAS CULTURAIS E PLANEAMENTO ESTRATÉGICO

Na Europa, as políticas culturais difundem-se essencialmente no pós-guerra, acompanhando o desenvolvimento do Estado Social. Nas últimas décadas, assistiu-se a uma crescente integração de uma conceção alargada de cultura no seio das políticas públicas e da gestão pública do setor cultural, tornando a atuação neste âmbito cada vez mais abrangente, seja nos domínios, disciplinas e indústrias abrangidas, seja nas relações que se estabelecem com outros setores.

Neste processo têm vindo a adquirir particular relevância as questões da participação de *stakeholders* e das comunidades, presentes em diferentes modelos e paradigmas de políticas culturais – para alguns autores, estaremos perante uma “viragem participativa” das políticas culturais (Dupin-Meynard & Négrier, 2020). Como referem Bonet e Négrier (2018), coexistem nas políticas culturais contemporâneas diferentes paradigmas de participação cidadã que, por vezes, se sobrepõem. Esta “plasticidade” da noção de participação reflete-se na multiplicidade de interpretações e práticas que coexistem nas políticas culturais (Dupin-Meynard & Négrier, 2020), as quais evidenciam diferentes “escalas de participação cidadã” (Arnstein, 1969). Esta discussão reflete ainda um debate mais abrangente, em torno da necessidade de modelos de governança mais exigentes do ponto de vista da participação cívica (Mota, 2025). Estas mudanças trazem desafios importantes para o planeamento estratégico no domínio da cultura.

Do ponto de vista territorial, o tema da participação das comunidades na governança dos sistemas culturais ganhou relevância nos últimos anos, incluindo do ponto de vista das políticas públicas. O planeamento estratégico na área da cultura, que se disseminou sobretudo a partir da década 1990 (Bianchini, 2016), tem vindo a integrar – retoricamente ou de forma efetiva – novos métodos e procedimentos que procuram responder a estas preocupações, promovendo um alargamento dos *stakeholders* que participam nestes processos, envolvendo-se no desenho de estratégias de intervenção e na sua execução (Stevenson, 2016).

A noção de governança – central no planeamento estratégico integrado de base territorial – implica o reconhecimento de que, nos processos de desenvolvimento cultural de um território, é crucial negociar interesses e conciliar vontades, articulando as diferentes escalas territoriais, os múltiplos níveis setoriais de intervenção pública e privada, a articulação horizontal com outros setores, para além da participação da comunidade (Costa, 2020). Metodologicamente, o esforço de envolvimento das comunidades nos processos de planeamento tem suscitado a adoção de técnicas de recolha e coprodução de conhecimento sobre os sistemas culturais – das mais convencionais às mais inovadoras e criativas –, procurando apoiar processos de planeamento mais ricos, sustentados e participados.

PLANEAMENTO ESTRATÉGICO NA CULTURA EM PORTUGAL

Em Portugal, é sobretudo a partir da década de 1990 que as artes e a cultura adquirem protagonismo, quando se inicia um “ciclo de modernização do país e das cidades pela cultura” (Fortuna & Silva, 2001, p. 416). Os municípios vão assumir uma relevância crescente enquanto agentes promotores de cultura – papel arrogado desde a década de 1980 – e que têm mantido, com progressiva diversificação e qualificação até aos nossos dias.

No início dos anos 2000, surgem as primeiras estratégias municipais e intermunicipais para a cultura, repercutindo, de forma combinada, o amplo e crescente reconhecimento político da cultura e do seu papel no desenvolvimento socioeconómico local (Garcia et al., 2016) e a popularização de planos estratégicos municipais e intermunicipais (Ferreira, 2015).

Por outro lado, acompanhando as tendências internacionais, também em Portugal as questões da participação têm ganho relevância no campo artístico e cultural, incluindo do ponto de vista político, aspeto refletido nas abordagens ao planeamento e intervenção cultural de base local e territorial. Num artigo recente, Pedro Costa (2020) apresenta um extensivo panorama sobre a posição central da retórica da participação no contexto das práticas artísticas e das políticas culturais em Portugal, evidenciando como esta se tem vindo a reforçar ao longo das duas primeiras décadas do século XXI. Através de alguns exemplos, o autor ilustra os muito diversos contextos em que esta acontece, as múltiplas formas que pode tomar e os variados objetivos e motivações para o desenvolvimento de processos participativos.

REFLEXÕES A PARTIR DA ANÁLISE DE CARTAS E PLANOS À ESCALA MUNICIPAL E SUPRAMUNICIPAL

FONTES DE INFORMAÇÃO, ÂMBITOS SETORIAIS E TIPOLOGIAS DE PLANOS

No âmbito do presente trabalho, identificaram-se 36 instrumentos estratégicos de cultura (dois designados por “cartas” e não “planos”), à escala municipal e supramunicipal, desenvolvidos em Portugal desde 2001.¹ Excetuando os planos em que os autores deste

¹ Por ordem cronológica, as cartas e planos estratégicos para a cultura identificados foram os seguintes: *Plano de Ação Intermunicipal do Vale do Lima para o Setor da Cultura e Lazer* (2002); *Estratégia cultural para o concelho de Castelo Branco* (2003); *Plano de Ação para a Cultura e Lazer da Terra Quente Transmontana* (2007); *Estratégia Cultural, de Lazer e de Desporto para o Concelho de Torres Novas* (2009); *Estratégias para a Cultura em Lisboa* (2009); *Artemrede - Plano Estratégico e Operacional 2015-2020* (2015); *Carregal do Sal - Cultura Plano Setorial (Plano Estratégico de Carregal do Sal 2016-2025)* (2016); *Estratégias para a Cultura da Cidade de Lisboa* (2017); *Artemrede- Revisão Intercalar do Plano Estratégico e Operacional 2015 - 2020* (2018); *Plano Estratégico para a Cultura de Aveiro 2019-2030* (2019); *Plano Estratégico para a Cultura no Município de Esposende* (2019); *Estratégias para a Cultura em Oeiras 2018-2027 - Relatório Intermédio* (2020); *Estratégia Cultura de Braga 2020-2030* (2020); *Plano Estratégico para a Cultura de Faro 2030* (2020); *Estratégia Cultural de Ponta Delgada 2030* (2021); *Plano Estratégico de Cultura Torres Vedras 2026* (2021); *Plano Estratégico Municipal de Cultura - Vila Real 2030* (2021); *Plano Estratégico Municipal para a Cultura do Funchal 2021-2031* (2021); *Plano de Desenvolvimento Cultural do Município da Moita* (2021); *Plano Estratégico Municipal Cultura Torres Novas 2030* (2021); *Plano Estratégico Municipal Cultura Guarda 2030* (2021); *Plano Estratégico Municipal da Cultura para o*

artigo participaram, no âmbito da equipa da empresa Quaternaire Portugal, a recolha dos documentos (apresentações e relatórios finais e intermédios), realizou-se através de *websites* institucionais, do portal base.gov, de notícias e outros elementos disponíveis *online*. Não foi possível localizar conteúdos relativos a cinco planos², pelo que o *corpus* objeto da análise se cingiu a 31 instrumentos.

Note-se que a designação dos instrumentos os remete diretamente para o setor da cultura, sendo que apenas dois planos associam outras dimensões: num caso, o desporto e, noutro, a criatividade e educação.

Procedeu-se à análise de conteúdo de cada plano, com base num conjunto de dimensões, detalhadas e aprofundadas à medida que o exercício evoluiu. No final, foi feita a harmonização das categorias identificadas, permitindo depurar a leitura deste *corpus* documental. As principais dimensões analíticas foram: Designação; Promotor; Âmbito Territorial; Ano; Perfil da equipa técnica; Contexto/motivação para desenvolver o Plano; Estrutura base do Plano; Participação Pública (Fases/momentos da participação; Quem é envolvido e como); Metodologias utilizados nas diferentes etapas do Plano).

ÂMBITOS TERRITORIAIS

Dos 36 planos analisados, a larga maioria (29) é de âmbito municipal, sendo de iniciativa autárquica; os planos intermunicipais (7) são promovidos por Comunidades Intermunicipais (CIM), Áreas Metropolitanas (AM) ou associações de municípios com características específicas, como a Artemrede. Embora disseminados pelo país, incluindo regiões autónomas, há uma concentração de planos e cartas estratégicas na AM Lisboa/Lisboa e Vale do Tejo, AM Porto, Região Norte e Região Centro.

Concelho de Leiria (2021); *Plano Estratégico para a Cultura - Projeto "Santarém Cultura"* (2021); *Plano Estratégico para a Cultura de Évora - 2030* (2021); *Tempo da Terra - Plano Municipal de Cultura Odemira 2030* (2022); *Plano Estratégico para a Cultura de Santa Comba Dão* (2022); *Cultura em Rede - Carta de Intenções para a Cultura da Área Metropolitana Lisboa* (2023); *Plano Estratégico Municipal Cultura Guimarães 2032* (2023); *Plano Estratégico Municipal Cultura Setúbal 2030* (2023); *Plano Intermunicipal Cultura, Criatividade e Educação do Ave* (2023); *Carta Metropolitana para a Cultura 2023-2028 da Área Metropolitana do Porto* (2023); *Plano Estratégico para a Cultura de Lagos* (2023); *Plano Estratégico Municipal Cultura Loulé 2034* (2024); *Plano Estratégico Municipal Cultura Portimão 2034* (2024); *Revisão intercalar do documento "Estratégias para a Cultura em Oeiras 2021-2032"* (2024); e *Plano Estratégico Municipal Cultura Matosinhos 2034* (2024).

² Trata-se dos PEC de Esposende (2019), Santarém (2021), Évora-2030 (2021), Oeiras - revisão (2024) e Matosinhos (2024).

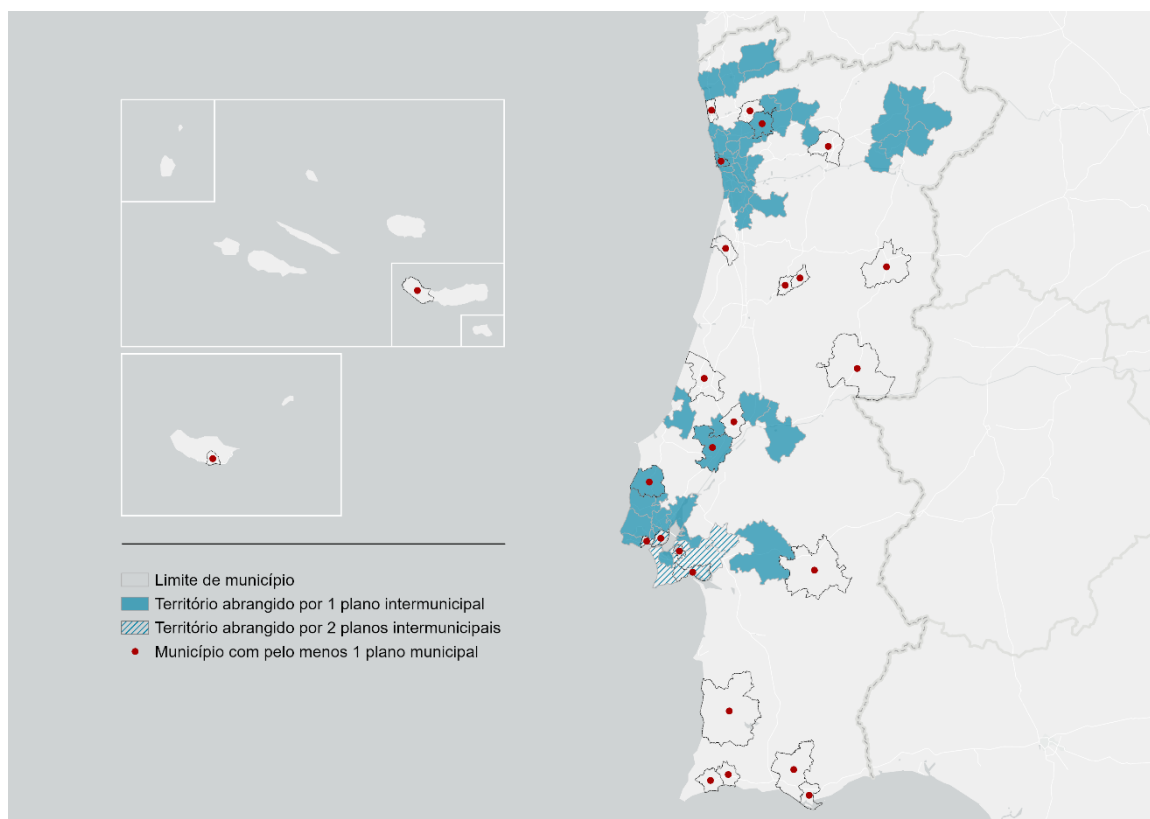


FIGURA 1. CARTAS E PLANOS ESTRATÉGICOS MUNICIPAIS E INTERMUNICIPAIS PARA A CULTURA (2001-2024)

Fonte: Elaboração própria.

DINÂMICAS TEMPORAIS E CONTEXTOS

A elaboração de cartas e planos estratégicos para a cultura à escala local e inter/supramunicipal em Portugal arranca na primeira década de 2000. Contudo, entre 2002 (data do primeiro plano identificado) e 2009, o número de Planos Estratégicos para a Cultura (PEC) foi bastante reduzido (5), assumindo a Quaternaire Portugal um papel precursor na elaboração deste tipo de planos (apenas 1 plano foi realizado por outra equipa – Dinâmia’CET/ISCTE). Após um interregno de alguns anos (2010-2014) sem notícia da elaboração de PEC, ocorre uma retoma, a partir de 2015, ganhando intensidade a partir de 2018-2019.

Esta última dinâmica decorre, em larga medida, do contexto da preparação de candidaturas a Capital Europeia da Cultura (CEC) 2027³, um processo concorrencial que motivou várias cidades portuguesas e pressupunha a elaboração de um PEC. No último quinquénio, cerca de metade dos planos decorre da preparação de candidaturas a CEC 2027 (sinalizam-se 10 planos das 12 cidades candidatas elaborados entre 2020 e 2022). Além disso, a motivação para a elaboração recente de um PEC em Guimarães parece estar associada à celebração de uma década desde a realização da CEC nesta cidade, em 2012.

Como veremos adiante, os planos elaborados no contexto das candidaturas a CEC 2027 dão uma particular ênfase à dimensão participativa da comunidade (e não só dos atores e instituições do setor) – com repercussões nas estratégias metodológicas e na estruturação dos planos.

PERFIL DAS EQUIPAS TÉCNICAS ENVOLVIDAS

A responsabilidade pela elaboração dos planos divide-se entre equipas de perfil académico ou de consultoria/empresarial, e, menos frequentemente, equipas internas às entidades promotoras (municípios/associações de municípios/CIM/AM) – sendo que, nestes casos, há situações em que a entidade é assessorada por um perito consultor.

A robustez metodológica tende a ser maior nos planos desenvolvidos por equipas externas (em alguns casos, assessorando as equipas internas, num trabalho mais partilhado). Em todo o caso, no que se refere à utilização de técnicas específicas de planeamento estratégico, independentemente do perfil da equipa, verifica-se um certo “conservadorismo” – p.ex. geralmente recorre-se à análise SWOT (*Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities e Threats*, em português, Forças, Fraquezas, Oportunidades e Ameaças); somente em casos pontuais há recurso a técnicas auxiliares mais diferenciadas.

Embora planos conduzidos por equipas externas possam prever um conjunto de momentos de capacitação, formal e/ou informal, das equipas internas dos municípios, habilitando-as, pelo menos teoricamente, a assumirem um papel mais proativo na fase de implementação e monitorização do plano, nomeadamente no esforço de manter algum envolvimento e participação pública, parece ser claro que a externalização dos exercícios de planeamento acarreta, em geral, consequências do ponto de vista do comprometimento político dos promotores. Além disso, esta relação depende muito também do modo como os decisores políticos se envolvem no processo de elaboração do plano, ou seja, da interação e comunicação com a equipa externa. Com efeito, foi num plano desenvolvido por um grupo de trabalho interno expressamente constituído para o efeito (*Plano de Desenvolvimento Cultural do Município da Moita*, 2021) que se constatou o exemplo mais consolidado de envolvimento de diferentes *stakeholders* locais na execução do plano, prevendo-se momentos de monitorização e avaliação bienais – o que poderá indiciar que, quando as equipas internas dos municípios participam de forma ativa neste exercício de planeamento, o grau de

³ 12 cidades portuguesas responderam ao convite do Ministério da Cultura, de novembro de 2020, para prepararem candidaturas para CEC 2027: Aveiro, Braga, Coimbra, Évora, Faro, Funchal, Guarda, Leiria, Oeiras, Viana do Castelo, Ponta Delgada e Vila Real. Em novembro 2022, Évora foi selecionada como CEC 2027.

compromisso político na implementação dos planos tende a aumentar, com efeitos ao nível da transparência e *accountability*. Este contexto também pode condicionar positivamente a apropriação efetiva do processo de planeamento pela comunidade em que se enquadra (e, em particular, pela comunidade técnico-artística), o que resulta igualmente de outros fatores, como veremos no ponto seguinte.

De notar, por outro lado, que os planos elaborados por equipas de perfil académico tendem a concentrar-se nas fases do diagnóstico e estratégia, eximindo-se de aprofundar aspetos mais operacionais, que deixam para as equipas municipais – incluindo o desenvolvimento dos planos de ação, o desenho dos roteiros de financiamento e a conceção de sistemas de monitorização e avaliação. São exemplares desta tendência os vários planos elaborados pela equipa do PolObs-CECS-UMinho.

Identificaram-se ainda especificidades decorrentes do perfil disciplinar dos coordenadores dos Planos – independentemente de serem realizados num contexto académico ou de consultoria/empresarial. Por um lado, parece existir uma clivagem entre Planos coordenados por economistas, que tendem a abordar o setor da cultura introduzindo, de forma integrada, o conceito de “cadeia de valor”, o que se repercute no tipo de diagnóstico, mais alargado (incluindo na tipologia de *stakeholders* convocados a participar, onde incluem de forma mais nítida empresas ligadas às indústrias culturais e criativas, por ex.), bem como nas estratégias preconizadas e respetivos planos de ação. Por outro lado, os planos coordenados por técnicos com outras formações, com preponderância de sociólogos, tendem a assumir uma visão mais restrita do setor, concentrando-se em áreas artísticas *core* e no património e bibliotecas, por exemplo, constatando-se ainda a tendência para restringir o tipo de agentes e instituições chamados a participar (entidades públicas e representantes do tecido associativo, p. ex.).

ENVOLVIMENTO DE *STAKEHOLDERS* E ESTRATÉGIAS METODOLÓGICAS

O número de momentos, de mecanismos de participação e de entidades envolvidas é, em geral, muito significativo, traduzindo um esforço considerável de mobilização dos *stakeholders*. Os mecanismos de participação são muito diversos, incluindo entrevistas, *focus group*/grupos de discussão temáticos, inquéritos, reuniões, apresentações públicas, *workshops*, recolha de contributos através de canais digitais ou *e-mail* ou, ainda, processos de consulta pública semelhantes aos promovidos no contexto dos Instrumentos de Gestão Territorial. Encontram-se igualmente metodologias de participação inovadoras e experimentais (Laboratório Cidadão, Future Search, Metodologia LEGO® Serious Play®, World Café, etc.) – mas claramente menos frequentes, o que indicia que o recurso a estas ferramentas metodológicas está ainda pouco consolidado.

Embora muitos planos não especifiquem em que fases ocorrem os momentos participativos, estes parecem estar centrados no diagnóstico (em $\frac{2}{3}$ dos PEC analisados) e muito menos presentes na formulação da estratégia (cerca de $\frac{1}{3}$ dos PEC analisados) e na construção dos planos de ação (menos de $\frac{1}{8}$ dos PEC analisados). Isto é, o envolvimento dos *stakeholders* tende a ser feito numa lógica de auscultação, e não de envolvimento como cocriadores da estratégia (em geral, é desenvolvida pela equipa técnica e validada politicamente) e/ou do

plano de ação, desafiando-os a apresentarem ideias/propostas de projetos, assumindo-se como copromotores, ou estimulando lógicas de cooperação e trabalho em rede com parceiros locais.

Os agentes do setor cultural são os *stakeholders* mais frequentemente convocados, seguindo-se os responsáveis políticos e os técnicos das autarquias/empresas municipais/CIM afetos ao setor. Quase metade dos planos enquadra mecanismos para o envolvimento da comunidade em geral, por vezes, segmentos específicos; na maioria dos casos, a possibilidade de envolvimento da população está associada a metodologias pouco inovadoras (p.ex. apresentações públicas ou disponibilização de informação em *websites*/redes sociais), não sendo evidente a sua participação efetiva na elaboração dos planos. Por outro lado, só uma pequena parte dos planos envolve técnicos de outros setores das autarquias/CIM ou da Administração Central. Alguns envolvem outras entidades públicas locais, designadamente, na área da educação e formação. Também as estruturas consultivas adstritas ao setor cultural são pouco expressivas no universo em análise. Quando existem são envolvidas nos planos (nalguns casos também as estruturas consultivas ligadas à juventude, educação, etc.); nalguns planos, é proposta a sua criação (Conselhos Municipais de Cultura, por ex.). Regista-se ainda uma muito fraca participação de entidades públicas de nível regional e nacional, revelando um grau incipiente de integração vertical entre as estruturas municipais e da Administração central/descentralizada.

A definição de modelos de governança associados aos planos, preconizando o envolvimento de diferentes *stakeholders*, designadamente no acompanhamento/execução dos PEC, surge apenas nos planos realizados na última década. Por outro lado, ainda não é generalizada a preocupação de construir um sistema de monitorização – trata-se, na verdade, de uma tendência recente, tal como as preocupações com a governança e a *accountability* –, registando-se em muitos PEC alguma dificuldade em distinguir indicadores de cariz operacional de indicadores estratégicos.

Por fim, importa reconhecer que não dispomos de informações suficientes que permitam verificar em que medida a intenção de envolvimento dos *stakeholders* se concretizou *de facto* na implementação dos planos, quer na execução das ações previstas, quer no acompanhamento, monitorização e avaliação da estratégia e plano de intervenção.

Todos os aspetos referidos, seja o tipo de *stakeholders* que participam nos processos de planeamento, seja o momento e o modo como são chamados a fazê-lo, podem condicionar as perspetivas de apropriação dos mesmos pela comunidade. Tendencialmente, quanto mais amplo e aprofundado for o envolvimento dos *stakeholders*, ultrapassando a mera lógica de auscultação e promovendo uma contribuição efetiva para o processo, maior será essa apropriação. O envolvimento efetivo de órgãos consultivos locais, como os Conselhos Municipais de Cultura, constitui uma boa-prática de alguns dos mais recentes exercícios de planeamento estratégico para a cultura, superando a “mera” auscultação, por uma efetiva validação e melhoria quer de diagnósticos, quer de estratégias e propostas de intervenção. Por exemplo, no âmbito do *Plano Estratégico Municipal para a Cultura do Concelho Leiria*, no qual os autores participaram, optou-se por realizar rondas sucessivas de interações com o Conselho Municipal de Cultura, cujos membros foram ativamente envolvidos, ao longo de

todo o processo, na discussão de documentos de trabalho preliminares, tendo em vista a recolha de contributos para a sua melhoria e ajustamento. Por outro lado, há que distinguir o envolvimento e a participação de *stakeholders* do envolvimento e participação da comunidade em geral. Apesar dos avanços importantes verificados em termos do envolvimento efetivo de *stakeholders*, anteriormente mencionados, a participação da comunidade tende ainda a manter-se bastante incipiente em Portugal, incluindo nesta área do planeamento cultural, sobretudo porque os métodos de participação são muito mais exigentes e demorados (investimento de tempo, continuidade de envolvimento ao longo do processo, capacitação, etc.), mas também atendendo a aspetos mais estruturais que sugerem que a participação cívica na sociedade portuguesa é ainda relativamente incipiente e pouco estratégica (Mota, 2025).

CONSIDERAÇÕES FINAIS

Estas reflexões finais correspondem, sobretudo, à sistematização de conclusões preliminares decorrentes da análise apresentada e à identificação de interrogações e pistas a aprofundar em futuras investigações.

Em primeiro lugar, apesar de uma ideia prevalecente de que estamos perante uma crise do planeamento (face às incertezas e volatilidade do mundo contemporâneo), o planeamento estratégico ao nível do território parece manter pertinência e relevância – incluindo no domínio da cultura, em que se tem intensificado.

Por outro lado, se há muito existe em Portugal uma “relação umbilical” entre o planeamento estratégico e as oportunidades abertas pelos FEEI – Fundos Europeus Estruturais e de Investimento (Carvalho, 2024), a programação e gestão dos FEEI tem contribuído para reduzir significativamente o planeamento estratégico a nível municipal e mesmo intermunicipal, uma vez que os instrumentos e a estrutura dos FEEI estão muito predeterminados. Na maioria dos casos, os FEEI não apoiam nem a realização de exercícios de planeamento estratégico, nem esforços mais estruturados de governança nestas escalas territoriais.

Em segundo lugar, parece evidente a crescente ênfase na dimensão participativa da comunidade (e não só dos atores e instituições ligados ao setor cultural) nos processos de planeamento (Costa, 2020). Num contexto em que o peso da Administração Local na definição e implementação de políticas culturais de base municipal e intermunicipal é muito significativo, tornando as Autarquias e as CIM/AM protagonistas das dinâmicas culturais de base territorial, parece incontornável que estas procurem reforçar, por motivações políticas “internas”, a dinâmica participativa em processos de planeamento. Contudo, a emergência destas preocupações e abordagens é igualmente induzida por incentivos e modelos “externos”, que circulam em diversos *fora* nacionais e internacionais, sendo gradualmente apropriados pelas autarquias e pelas CIM/AM. Veja-se o efeito gerado pelo concurso a CEC

2027 ou a dinâmica de desenvolvimento de Planos Estratégicos Municipais Cultura-Educação que o *Plano Nacional das Artes* pretende fomentar.⁴

Da análise realizada, não são evidentes ganhos muito significativos para a construção estratégica e sua operacionalização resultantes da crescente participação. Com efeito, constatou-se que a maioria dos PEC realizados em Portugal parece reduzir os momentos de participação à fase de diagnóstico e frequentemente numa lógica de mera auscultação, informação e consulta.

Pese embora a recente constituição de Conselhos Municipais de Cultura, previamente efetivada ou proposta em sede de Plano, possa ser um indício de que estão em curso mudanças (cujo grau de concretização importa avaliar), da nossa análise conclui-se estarmos ainda muito longe de níveis avançados de participação pública (Arnstein, 1969), como sejam os da parceria, da delegação de poder e do controlo cidadão – nomeadamente, tendo uma voz ativa na definição da estratégia, no desenho dos projetos a incluir no plano de ação e, ainda, no acompanhamento da sua execução, envolvendo-se efetivamente na monitorização e avaliação dos PEC.

Daqui decorre um conjunto de desafios para o aprofundamento das abordagens ao planeamento estratégico de base territorial para a cultura em Portugal.

Um primeiro desafio prende-se com a abordagem conceptual ao setor, superando visões que, como referido, tendem a ser redutoras, ora porque se centram nas dimensões mais quantitativas e macroeconómicas – aspeto que tendencialmente encontramos nos planos estratégicos à escala regional e nacional –, ora porque revelam dificuldades em ultrapassar uma conceção excessivamente micro ou baseada apenas nas dinâmicas das instituições públicas e do setor associativo, não conseguindo articular devidamente estas dinâmicas com outras, nomeadamente de cariz económico. A conciliação destas abordagens é crucial para assegurar um diagnóstico equilibrado e útil para a definição de uma estratégia de desenvolvimento dos territórios e das comunidades assente na cultura.

Um segundo desafio, prende-se com uma efetiva integração de novas agendas (transição digital e climática, cruzamentos cultura-educação, coesão social, questões ligadas à abertura à diversidade, dimensão urbana, etc.). Embora se constate uma evolução qualitativa importante nos últimos anos, sobretudo nos PEC desenvolvidos em cidades candidatas a CEC 2027, existe ainda um caminho importante a percorrer.

Um terceiro desafio remete-nos igualmente para aspetos de natureza política: como conseguir que a participação seja encarada como um efetivo envolvimento na cocriação e escrutínio público de políticas, superando visões mais instrumentais, que tendem a encará-la como um momento de *marketing* e comunicação? Tal implica, em nosso entender, que os decisores políticos assumam *politicamente* a opção de concertar opções e prioridades políticas, bem como de delegar uma parte do seu poder. Trata-se, no fundo, de distinguir uma governação com algum grau de participação de uma efetiva governança.

⁴ Cf. <https://www.pna.gov.pt/>

Noutra dimensão, constitui um desafio – por sinal, antigo e persistente – concretizar uma efetiva *territorialização das políticas públicas* em Portugal (Figueiredo & Babo, 2015). Além da falta de equilíbrio e de coesão territorial da política cultural nacional, a análise realizada aponta para uma frágil e escassa articulação entre as políticas culturais de base local e aquelas que são definidas centralmente.

Em quinto lugar, identificam-se desafios de cariz metodológico que se relacionam com o desiderato do fomento da participação nos processos de planeamento. Se é, por um lado, importante aprofundar os momentos de participação na fase do diagnóstico, mais importante ainda é conseguir dar um “salto” qualitativo no modo como se concretiza a etapa da elaboração da estratégia e do plano de ação, assegurando que a participação e o envolvimento públicos se mantêm fortes e efetivos. Simultaneamente, há ainda um outro desafio que se coloca na implementação do Plano: como manter o envolvimento e a participação, assegurando a transparência e o escrutínio público? Para tal, impõe-se o desenvolvimento de modelos de governança dos Planos que assentem em sistemas de monitorização e avaliação que efetivamente funcionem, o que, por seu turno, implica uma maior valorização destas dimensões nos processos de elaboração dos Planos, incluindo do ponto de vista político, encarando-os também como ferramentas de prestação de contas à comunidade e aos diferentes *stakeholders*.

Embora não existam dados suficientes que permitam a realização de uma análise mais sistemática destes processos, podem referir-se alguns exemplos interessante que indiciam a preocupação crescente de, numa fase pós-aprovação do Plano, continuar a assegurar o seu acompanhamento, monitorização e avaliação externa. Como referido anteriormente, a criação e dinamização de órgãos consultivos locais, que se envolvem no acompanhamento da execução dos Planos Estratégicos para a Cultura, ganhou relevo nos últimos anos. Efetivamente, alguns Planos recentes conduziram à criação ou renovação de Conselhos Municipais de Cultura (p.ex. Lisboa, Leiria) ou Conselhos Consultivos de Cultura (p.ex. Braga), que se mantêm em atividade. Em Torres Vedras, foram criados instrumentos de governança que decorrem das propostas do Plano, como a *Rede Cultura de Torres Vedras*, lançada em fevereiro de 2023, com a missão de promover processos participativos de governança cultural que contribuam para “co-construir, implementar, monitorizar e avaliar as estratégias locais integradas para a cultura fomentando a aprendizagem cooperativa e a capacitação dos agentes do setor cultural e criativo” (CMTV, s.d.). Os destinatários da Rede são artistas, criadores e grupos informais, associações culturais, coordenadores dos Projetos Culturais de Escola (projetos que estão relacionados com o *Plano Nacional das Artes*), empresas do setor cultural e criativo, empresas que promovem e apoiam a atividade cultural, desde que sedeadas no concelho, e Juntas de Freguesia. Finalmente, encontramos noutros domínios setoriais, práticas de disponibilização de informação estatística e documental que permitem o escrutínio público e a monitorização regular da execução de estratégias e planos de ação. A título de exemplo, entre outros possíveis, refira-se o caso do Município de Vila Nova de Famalicão que, na sequência da elaboração do *Famalicão.30 - Plano Estratégico de Vila Nova de Famalicão 2022-2030*, criou e mantém atualizado um portal digital, designado de *Observatório Famalicão*, onde são publicamente disponibilizados diversos documentos (planos e estudos) produzidos ou encomendados pela autarquia, infografias temáticas, um

dashboard com um indicadores estatísticos por setor de atividade (incluindo Cultura) e ainda um conjunto de dados estatísticos em acesso aberto que podem ser trabalhados por investigadores ou outros cidadãos interessados.⁵

Por último, um sexto desafio de ordem económica: como conciliar este conjunto de novas exigências e desafios com o seu impacto nos orçamentos municipais e na duração dos processos de planeamento? Novamente, o reconhecimento político da sua relevância parece-nos determinante.

NOTAS BIOGRÁFICAS

Pedro Quintela – Licenciado em Sociologia pelo ISCTE-IUL, Mestre em Cidades e Culturas Urbanas e Doutor em Sociologia, ambos pela Faculdade de Economia da Universidade de Coimbra. Tem investigado e escrito sobre políticas culturais; cidades e culturas urbanas; intermediação e mediação cultural; (sub)culturas urbanas; economia cultural e criativa. Investigador integrado do Instituto de Sociologia da Universidade do Porto. Consultor-coordenador da Quaternaire Portugal. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2383-342X>

Andreia Magalhães – Licenciada em Geografia, pela Universidade Nova de Lisboa, e Mestre em Planeamento Regional e Urbano, pela Universidade Técnica de Lisboa. Tem-se dedicado à consultoria nas áreas do planeamento estratégico, desenvolvimento regional, instrumentos de gestão territorial, entre outros. Integrou a estrutura técnica de várias empresas privadas, bem como de uma empresa pública com atividade no domínio da requalificação urbana e ambiental. Participou em vários projetos de investigação e foi docente do ensino superior nas áreas da geografia e do ordenamento do território. É autora e coautora de diversos livros, artigos e comunicações.

Elisa Pérez Babo – Licenciada em Economia pela Faculdade de Economia do Porto e Mestre em Planeamento do Território – Inovação e Políticas de Desenvolvimento, pela Universidade de Aveiro. Foi quadro técnico superior da Comissão de Coordenação da Região do Norte. Quadro técnico superior da Quaternaire Portugal desde 1997, é Presidente do Conselho de Administração desde maio de 2018. No âmbito da empresa, coordena e participa ainda em trabalhos nos domínios das políticas e projetos culturais, das políticas urbanas e do planeamento e desenvolvimento socioeconómico. É autora de vários artigos e de comunicações em seminários sobre temas relacionados, particularmente, com as políticas culturais e urbanas.

⁵ Cf. <https://b-smart.famalicao.pt/observatoriofamalicao/>

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COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE IN THE REGIONAL CULTURAL POLICY OF CZECHIA

Kateřina Churtajeva
Charles University
churtajk@ff.cuni.cz

ABSTRACT

This paper explores the application of Communities of Practice (CoP) theory in cultural policy and management through three case studies from Czechia. Communities of Practice, as conceptualized by Jean Etienne and Beverly Wenger-Trayner, are groups centred on shared knowledge, learning, and practice. The study examines the role of CoPs in the participatory development of a regional cultural strategy, a small town's bid for the European Capital of Culture, and the evolving approach to intangible cultural heritage. Findings suggest that CoPs contribute significantly to cultural governance by fostering knowledge exchange, innovation, and collective ownership of cultural strategies and practice. They also demonstrate the capacity to accelerate implementation processes and strengthen regional resilience, particularly in peripheral areas. The research highlights that CoPs are not automatically formed within cultural settings but require active facilitation and engagement. The study concludes that integrating CoPs into cultural policy can enhance participation, generate innovative solutions, and reinforce a sense of community, ultimately shaping more inclusive and adaptive cultural ecosystems.

KEYWORDS

communities of practice, cultural development, cultural policy, regional resilience

INSIGHTS FROM COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE THEORY

Communities of Practice are a phenomenon that seems to have been with humanity throughout its existence and are linked to the process of learning and the transmission of acquired knowledge from one generation to the next. However, they involve more than the transmission of information and skills from father to son, mother to daughter, master to pupil. In their research, anthropologists Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger concluded that even the seemingly narrowly defined transmission of knowledge always in fact involves a wider community (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). It involves a range of ways and also settings where Communities of Practice are encountered—from the world of corporate specialists, to public administration experts, to non-profit organizations, in medicine as well as in automotive, accounting, auditing services, or education.

However, although we encounter Communities of Practice in almost all areas of human life, not everything can automatically be considered a Community of Practice. A work team, a business unit, or a neighbourhood community are not automatically Communities of Practice. In the context in which we speak of Communities of Practice, we understand them to be communities that are brought together by the need to maintain, transfer, and develop a particular type of knowledge and skills, regardless of whether these skills are generally recognised by society as particularly valuable. Thus, a “knowledge” community may form around highly specialised IT or medical topics, as well as around a street gang of teenagers (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). Such a community can therefore logically be formal or informal, local or global, large or small in number, present for generations or newly forming. Even over time, the character of the same Community of Practice will change, from an initial phase in which the recognition of the need to associate, share, and pass on knowledge is only tentatively emerging, through the peak stages of a fully functioning and developed community, to a phase of decline that slowly evolves into a mere reminiscence and recollection of the high times.

The core functions thus include information exchange and interpretation, keeping knowledge alive and steward competencies to keep the organization at the cutting edge (Wenger, 1998). How can we distinguish a Community of Practice from a hobby group or a neighborhood community? Communities of Practice are centred around people and the social structures that enable them to learn from one another. There are three key elements that define a Community of Practice: the domain, the object of interest; the community itself, which enables relationship building and learning; and the practice, the active reinforcement, building, and transfer of experience.

Communities of Practice are present in nearly all human activities, so the question arises: how are they embedded in the cultural sector? Are they acknowledged, and do cultural policies at all levels recognize their potential and seek to enhance it? It's also worth considering the extent to which artists, artisans, cultural actors, and organizers are involved in Communities of Practice. Are these communities equally distributed across all cultural spheres—such as filmmaking, memory institutions, or festival organizing? Or are some areas of culture and cultural policies more open to community sharing and learning than others? What factors influence this, and what conditions are necessary for the growth of Communities of Practice in cultural contexts? Can cultural policies help cultivate an environment conducive to their development? Lastly, what do Communities of Practice contribute to culture and cultural policies, and how can we define their role? These are some of the key questions that arise when examining the intersection of Communities of Practice with cultural practice and policy.

THREE STORIES FROM THE PRACTICE OF A CULTURAL MANAGER IN THE REGION

For the purposes of this article, the author is searching for answers in her practice as a cultural manager and representative of a public local authority in the field of culture in one of the regions of Bohemia.

CASE STUDIES FROM THE REGION, STORY ONE

The formulation of the first cultural strategy for the region in 2020–2021 was the first initiative of its kind in the Czech Republic. Until then, cultural strategies and cultural policies existed at the national level—state cultural policy or sub-conceptual national documents, for example, for heritage conservation or traditional folk culture—and then also at the level of cultural concepts of individual cities, organizations, and institutions. Giving shape to the regional cultural concept was a big challenge, especially because of the search for the right boundaries, competences, and the role that the regional government actually plays and has to play in the region. Almost 300 people were involved in this process, from representatives of ministries, cities, universities, and professional organizations, to a very wide range of cultural actors from the non-profit sector. The participatory process of strategy formulation had an expert leader, so in terms of Communities of Practice theory it was a semi-formalized activity with expert guidance.

From the perspective of the Communities of Practice theory, it is also important that the process of jointly searching for the content of the regional cultural policy started a process of sharing know-how and joint search for answers and joint learning that continues and develops in the region to this day. Formally, this process has taken various forms: regular meetings of experts from similar types of institutions (e.g., municipalities, cultural centres, directors of cultural organizations, etc.), regular meetings of festival organizers on themes close to their own, or a broad cultural platform of cultural actors that takes place in the region once a year, each time with a different theme. The main role of this large Community of Practice in the region is to address practical challenges and share experiences. For example, festival organizers can discuss how to attract both younger and older audiences, where to rent wheelchair-accessible mobile toilets, or how to manage festival waste recycling. Beyond that, they also work together to refine arguments for defending and explaining their activities, coordinate and align their efforts, foster cooperation, and tackle new challenges facing cultural actors today—such as pandemics, war, and technological change.

But perhaps the most powerful moment that came from working together in the Community of Practice was the innovation and new solutions that this collaboration brought. From the very start of the participatory meetings, it became clear that expert discussions were introducing new and unexpected topics that had never been addressed at the regional government level. One key theme was the quality of public space and architecture. This issue was raised repeatedly by both municipal representatives and the public. The discussions highlighted a critical gap—an area of major public concern that had remained on the fringes of regional government priorities. Through a joint discussion, the participants arrived at a possible solution, which was to establish a regional centre for architecture with an educational and consultative function. Such a solution not only provided a practical answer to the formulated problem, but also increased the self-confidence of cultural actors and public administration. The actors have seen that their involvement brings real results, and the public administration can be proud of its exemplary response to the needs of the inhabitants of its region.

Another striking example of the Community of Practice's strength was the speed at which planned strategic changes began to take effect. Rather than waiting for the strategic document to be approved or for someone else to initiate action, regional actors took the lead. As key activities emerged and took shape through discussions and debates, they began implementing them within their own capacities and areas of expertise. A website presenting the common steps and dates of the next meetings of this Community of Practice or a platform for sharing materials and mobilities for cultural events were quickly created. Apparently, in this case study we find all the parameters of a Communities of Practice – the common domain of the formulation of the role of public administration in cultural policy and the formulation of cultural policy itself. The community is the active cultural actors in the region who have been given (and used) the opportunity to express themselves publicly and engage in an open participatory process. Round tables, platforms, and expert meetings are a practice, a form of sharing experiences. From an organizational perspective, it is an open yet well-structured community, consisting of smaller, topic-specific groups of experts and actors. These groups often include invited experts to broaden perspectives, share best practices, or address specific questions. The driving force behind the community has become the regional government, which has taken on the role of leading and steering regional cultural policy. The biggest risk in the case study is the political leadership of the region. After the most recent regional elections, there was a complete change in both personnel and political parties. The new leadership appears to overlook the participatory aspect of cultural policy development, failing to recognize the strength of the Community of Practice. Instead, they tend to view cultural policy as a political decision made by the previous administration. In this case, the Community of Practice can play an additional role, namely an advocacy role, if the joint efforts of the dozens of actors involved succeed in demonstrating the necessity and reality of the planned cultural policy activities.

CASE STUDIES FROM THE REGION, STORY TWO

The second story from the region, in which I will explore the characteristics of Communities of Practice, is about a small regional town's bid for the title of European Capital of Culture. It is Broumov, a town of 7000 people in the border periphery, with still visible scars on the social coexistence suffered by the displacement of the original German population after the Second World War. Despite this, the town decided to enter a challenging international competition with significant prestige, partly to shift its negative media image and offer young people a new perspective. With its sincere and enthralling commitment, it reached the second round, further than incomparably larger regional centres or the second largest city in the Czech Republic, Brno. Even though it was not the absolute winner and the European Capital of Culture in 2028 will be České Budějovice for the Czech Republic, it was still a great satisfaction and success for Broumov to reach the narrow final. This is despite the fact that the effects of participation in this European competition are not always demonstrable and unambiguous (Garcia, 2005). This almost touching story should not, however, obscure the fundamental question of this article: Can we find in the case of the Broumov candidacy the features of Communities of Practice around the preparatory team and the whole community that has joined in it?

What could we observe during Broumov's candidacy? The initiative to apply came from the Benedictine monastery in Broumov. However, it would not be a true picture if we were to imagine Benedictine monks or any other ecclesiastical structure behind it. At the time of the start of the candidacy, the monastery had already been partially leased for about 15 years by a non-profit organization that was instrumental in its reconstruction and in the creation of many cultural activities, many of which have become part of the recurring cultural calendar of the place. The preparatory team in both rounds was led by a charismatic young woman, hired for the role, who brought international experience and boundless energy. The role of the consultant was of course played by an experienced foreign expert, as is often the case in this competition. The close-knit team was made up mostly of young women, with a few exceptions. Some were from Broumov, others from the surrounding region, and some had relocated there—some with roots in the area and some with no prior connection to it. A large number of associated and necessary persons were added to the core team, some of whom provided graphic design or translation of the bidbook, while others contributed to the content parts. This extended team was followed by an even wider circle of collaborating actors, organizers, schools, institutions, and the wider public. Although from the point of view of the preparatory team the emphasis was on connecting with locals and activities that responded to local problems (often environmental or social), from the point of view of the general public one could observe either great sympathy or, on the contrary, a complete lack of understanding and remarks about the detachment of “those from the monastery” from real life. After the decision that the final city would be České Budějovice and not Broumov, the preparatory work slowed down, the team slowly started to disband, and people left for other work challenges. And here we are at the key question regarding Communities of Practice: if a Community of Practice is considered “a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015), a year and a half after the announcement of the competition results, it would seem that the Broumov candidacy was not so much a Community of Practice, driven by internal need, but a project team that tackled the topic with great enthusiasm and passion, but nevertheless because it was its work assignment. While most of the newly arrived team members took the job because they genuinely connected with its mission, many of them are no longer there after a year and a half. The demands of the role have led them elsewhere, where they are now just as passionate about their new work as they once were about Broumov.

Or is there still something different about this experience? Long-term observations and interviews with team members show that even those who have left to work elsewhere are still connected to the implementation of projects from the bidbook. According to the current team, this implementation is slower, but it allows for implementation of those projects that prove to be truly meaningful, there is interest in them, and funds can be found to implement them. Those who used to be in the second row, so to speak, have moved into the leadership of today's team. However, these people are strongly connected to the region, live in it, and feel its needs. Knowledge, know-how, and management have thus been transferred to the local level. These new leaders are very interested in further learning, sharing their know-how, and communicating regularly about possible further shifts in their competences and the solutions they bring to the region. It turns out that even those who have left and seemingly

only got a ride on an interesting job offer, are still in contact with today's core team, use their current social contacts and new knowledge for the benefit of Broumov, and participate, although to a lesser extent, in building common know-how.

It is therefore clear that while there is a distinction between a purely work-based team and Communities of Practice, the distinction is often not as sharp and clear as it might first appear. Factors such as team members' intrinsic motivation, personalities, team dynamics, ethical foundations, and ongoing attention to well-being ultimately determine the team's impact. These factors determine whether team members will contribute their expertise in proportion to their salary and use their knowledge elsewhere after the end of their contract, or whether they will stay involved and continue to build collective know-how as part of a community of practice.

CASE STUDIES FROM THE REGION, STORY THREE

The third story from the region is the shortest. In this case, we are at the very beginning of the journey and building Communities of Practice is one of the strong objectives of our activity. What is it all about? Taking care of cultural heritage is one of the natural tasks of the Department of Culture in the regional government where the author works. It is also the concern of many associations, non-profit organizations, and official institutions in the region and the Czech Republic, and it is also the subject of care at the international level and of interest to many scholars. Often cultural heritage is divided into tangible and intangible, although the emerging discourse of recent times is not to separate these areas and to think of cultural heritage in a more holistic manner. For the purposes of this article, however, let us stick to what is referred to as intangible cultural heritage. This definition and its care derive primarily from the international UNESCO Convention on Intangible Heritage (UNESCO, 2003), but it is also enshrined in other international agreements (notably the Faro Convention [Council of Europe, 2005]). In the Czech Republic, for a number of reasons stemming from both history and the education system, the system of care for intangible cultural heritage has narrowed to care and attention devoted exclusively to folklore assets associated with folk culture (Janeček, 2017). However, this definition is very limiting and completely inappropriate for the needs of the East Bohemia region, from which this example is taken, as it is not a region associated with traditional folklore. For this reason, several departments, particularly the regional authority and the regional museum, joined forces to develop a new conceptual approach that will broaden the scope of interest from the previously narrowly defined folk culture to a broader concern for intangible cultural heritage. This new approach also seeks to introduce global research trends into the Czech debate. Over the past 20 years, these trends have complemented the "authorized heritage discourse" with the concept of "heritage from below", which values not only expert opinions but also the voices of communities directly connected to cultural heritage (Smith, 2006; Muzaini & Minca, 2018).

For this second goal, it is essential to create around the topic exactly what is called Communities of Practice, a broader group of stakeholders who have a common interest and want to meet, share their experience, and advance knowledge and know-how in the field. In this case, we can see the emergence of a Community of Practice in its birth. An interesting

aspect is that the community as such and the transfer of knowledge and skills within this community are two key moments that are absolutely crucial for the field of intangible cultural heritage. Thus, somewhat paradoxically, a community of practice is emerging around the theme of preserving and developing the field of intangible cultural heritage, in which Communities of Practice are naturally and often for decades (or longer) present by default. The risk in this area is the inertia around the “ownership” and permeability of this Community of Practice to non-elite and professionally erudite experts.

This excursion into three stories from the east Czechia are summarized in Table 1.

Case study <i>Brief description of activity from the region</i>	Domain <i>Subject of interest and expertise</i>	Community itself <i>Stakeholders involved</i>	Practice/Activity <i>Functions, repertoire sharing, and know-how building</i>	Risk <i>What can negatively affect the viability of a CoP</i>
Formulating the first regional cultural strategy	Formulating cultural policy and developing its sub-themes	Active cultural actors in the region who have been given (and have taken) the opportunity to express themselves publicly and engage in an open participatory process	Sharing the experience; Building know-how in cultural policy – how to formulate and implement a regional cultural concept; Innovative role – reacting to a newly discovered topic and searching for an appropriate solution; Advocacy of culture, advocacy of the work of all stakeholders, searching for common arguments; Meeting and networking;	Political changes and distrust, unwillingness to listen to the voice of the Communities of Practice

Case study <i>Brief description of activity from the region</i>	Domain <i>Subject of interest and expertise</i>	Community itself <i>Stakeholders involved</i>	Practice/Activity <i>Functions, repertoire sharing, and know-how building</i>	Risk <i>What can negatively affect the viability of a CoP</i>
			Discussion of professional sub-topics (creative education, digitalization of cultural heritage, architecture, etc.).	
European Capital of Culture – a powerful story of a small town candidacy from the region	Development of the region through cultural projects formulated in ECoC bidbook	ECoC core team, associated experts, cultural actors, organizations, institutions in the immediate and wider surroundings, part of the public	Search for available information and inspiration in the region, country and internationally; Sharing experiences with other ECoC candidate cities; Joint formulation of principles of employee well-being; Building a network of like-minded people willing to work together.	Risk of instability of the team, which is mainly made up of experts from outside who are not connected to the location
Intangible cultural heritage – the transition from folklore expertise to a participatory narrative of intangible	Intangible culture heritage care	Actors and participants of the identified intangible cultural heritage assets in the region; staff of memory institutions and	Solving new, innovative challenges; Sharing experience internationally, within the Czech	The Community of Practice that is being created is closed to the lay public, defined on the basis of elite characteristics

Case study <i>Brief description of activity from the region</i>	Domain <i>Subject of interest and expertise</i>	Community itself <i>Stakeholders involved</i>	Practice/Activity <i>Functions, repertoire sharing, and know-how building</i>	Risk <i>What can negatively affect the viability of a CoP</i>
cultural heritage		authorities; academic experts; interested public	Republic and the region; Finding and formulating policies and methodologies.	of expertise, education, etc.

TABLE 1. CASE STUDIES SUMMARY THROUGH THREE KEY ELEMENTS THAT DEFINE A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Source: Author.

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

As noted in the introduction, I am exploring whether the theory of Communities of Practice can be applied to cultural policies and practice. The three regional case studies have shown that it certainly can. Here we find communities that fulfil all the aspects of Communities of Practice defined in the literature: they are built on the willingness to share experience, invest time, share knowledge, and pass it on to others. They are also based on a willingness to evaluate together, to move on, and to seek new questions and answers. The three examples from the region also showed very strongly that Communities of Practice are a capable and good tool for finding innovative solutions and changing the discourse of established practice. We observe them in multiple areas—cultural heritage, living culture, and cultural policy. There are even topics (intangible culture heritage) where Communities of Practice are at the very core.

What do Communities of Practice bring to the culture and creative sphere? Thanks to its participatory character, it is clearly a moment of strong ownership, for example, the actors actively involved in the formulation of joint conceptual documents for regional cultural policy perceive the resulting document as distinctly “theirs”. Communities of Practice also bring new and unexpected ideas and solutions “from below”, strengthen planning results, and accelerate the implementation process. And at least in the case of peripheral regions, an active Communities of Practice strengthens the region itself because (young) people have a sense of meaningful working and life fulfilment and therefore perceive they can stay.

Looking again at the three case studies, I conclude that Community of Practice is an important part of cultural life and cultural policy when used properly and wisely to make the most of its potential. For a Community of Practice to function well, it often requires an active—though not always visible—driving force to facilitate networking and initiate new connections. If we want to integrate Communities of Practice into cultural policy and practice, we must recognize this need and ensure that someone takes on the role of “mover” with awareness of its importance. If obstacles prevent this, efforts should be made to remove them.

The agenda and content of Communities of Practice meetings are not set in stone and require ongoing attention. To keep them dynamic and effective, it's essential to introduce fresh ideas, whether through suggested topics, guest experts, alternative meeting formats, or new locations. This helps prevent stagnation and the sense that the meetings no longer offer value. This is especially important if we aim to use and sustain Communities of Practice over the long term.

An important moment in the Communities of Practice is to consciously “cherish the core and boundaries” (Wenger-Trayner & Wenger-Trayner, 2015). The core of the community carries and contains key resources and knowledge, while new impulses, frictions, and impulses are created at its edges.

Communities of Practice in culture can be very fragile and in need of support. If we want to consciously work with them and develop them, let's not be afraid to explicitly name the role of Communities of Practice in cultural policies. Last but not least, their role needs to be repeatedly explained, including clarifying their role and principles of operation to politicians. To be able to do this, we need to better describe the role of the Communities of Practice in the culture sphere.

NOTE ON CONTRIBUTOR

Kateřina Churtajeva has worked in international development cooperation and as a cultural diplomat. At time of writing, she led the Department of Culture at a Regional Authority Office in Czechia. Currently she leads the Czech Cultural Institute. She was a member of the final team of Broumov's candidacy for the European Capital of Culture. She is a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University in Prague. Her research interests include the role of culture in the development of the region, cultural policy, management and cultural heritage. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8591-405X>

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URBAN TRANSFORMATIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED: A CASE STUDY OF PÉCS AS EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

Kata Murányi

University of Pécs

muranyi.kata@pte.hu

ABSTRACT

The creative city concept has become prevalent since the early 2000s as an urban development concept. It began to be commonly applied in grant applications as a development direction; however, today, we can speak of it as a concept that has significantly faded. Nonetheless, it has been an integral part of the development strategies in numerous European Capitals of Culture applications and implementations, whether it involves major investments, public space usage, community building, or strengthening dimensions of local identities. This paper aims to showcase the European Capitals of Culture project in Pécs in 2010 and demonstrate the application of the concept of *creative city* and its impact on the city and its citizens from a perspective several years later. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the dynamics between culture, socioeconomic environment, urban development, and community empowerment from a Central and Eastern European perspective, offering practical implications for policymakers, urban planners, and cultural practitioners engaged in fostering sustainable urban transformations.

KEYWORDS

European Capitals of Culture, Pécs, Hungary, Central and Eastern Europe, creative city, urban development

INTRODUCTION

Pécs was named the European Capital of Culture in 2010, alongside Essen and Istanbul. The Pécs project received a lot of criticism at the time, and its perception is still diverse. However, it was an important milestone not only for the city but also for Hungary, as it was the first time that a Hungarian municipality had won the title.

Creativity, as a basis for economic value creation and artistic activities, as well as a form of capacity for renewal, can be learned and is present as an engine for the dynamic development of the economy in today's knowledge-based society. Theory about the creative economy and the creative industries is a relatively new field of science, with extremely diverse approaches and explanations. Despite its novelty, the creative economy and industries give regions a competitive advantage due to the effects of globalization and increased accumulation of

knowledge societies; as a result, concentrations of information and innovation can be found (Murányi, 2017).

The forced, centralized heavy industrialization of Pécs, followed by its dismantling in the late 1980s and the privatization and new economic structure that accompanied the change of regime, left a big gap in the city's development. The search for an updated path of development characterized the municipalities in Hungary and all over the Central and Eastern European region. Out of this vacuum, the European Capitals of Culture (ECoC) competition, which embraced creativity as an economic and social driver, and its successful award gave Pécs unique perspectives in the new millennium. An important aspect, however, is that the city was unprepared for the Western-style thinking in urban development.

In this article, I seek to give an overview of the complexity of urban development, affected by the socio-cultural, political, and economic changes of the post-regime period. The main questions of this paper are: what was the relevance of the then fashionable creative economy and creative city approaches in Pécs' ECoC application; what was the political lobbying of the Pécs city government in the 2000s and what led to Pécs being the first Hungarian city to win the competition; and what values did the ECoC bring to the town, what is still visible and dominant in the cityscape, and how is it linked to the heritage of Pécs?

CREATIVE CITY, CREATIVE ECONOMY—CAPPUCCINO WITH WHIPPED CREAM?

Research on the creative economy was novel in the 1990s, and its application in praxis flourished in the first decade of the 2000s. Since then, this concept has faded, and urban development strategies and research have shifted towards concepts such as *smart city*, *sustainable city*, *green city*, etc. (Murányi, 2019). The creation of the Pécs ECoC application coincided with the spread of the creative city concept in the early 2000s, in which the development proposal was focused on the diversification of creative industries and culture and the renewal of public spaces. In Pécs, the main infrastructural investments of the ECoC in 2010 were the Regional Library and Knowledge Centre ("The Beehive"), Kodály Concert Hall and Conference Centre, renovation of public spaces and parks, and the reconstruction of the Museum Street and the Zsolnay Cultural Quarter (a former ceramics factory) (Pécs EKF 2010, 2005; Rampton et al., 2011).

By the end of the 1980s, with the decline of heavy industry and the development of information technology, not only had the structure of society been transformed, but also multinational corporations emerged, where local experiences can mean a significant competitive advantage (Murányi, 2017). After the global economic crisis, creativity in the economy was valued as a response to the uncertain situation. 2009 was the official year of creativity and innovation in the European Union. In this atmosphere, in the blossoming phase of creativity as a development concept, Pécs became the ECoC capital in 2010. Because of the criteria in urban development, such as information, innovation, networks, and concentrations of informal relations and knowledge, the ideal places for a creative economy are large cities (Florida, 2002). In his book, *The Rise of the Creative Class*, Florida points out

that the driving force of creativity is knowledge and information; thus, innovation can be produced. He argues that local values have been reevaluated, and the success lies beyond the realization of creative cities, whose cornerstones are the 3 T's: meaning technology, talent, and tolerance. Technology refers to economic-technological development, talent stands for the quality of available human resources, and tolerance signifies the inclusive socio-cultural environment. In Pécs's ECoC application, the pillars related to Florida's 3T were the following:

- Lively public spaces and medium-sized cities allow the presentation of a cultural life that is different from that of a metropolis or small city;
- The rich history of artistic innovation;
- The multicultural character of the city which accommodates the cultural heritage of Latin, Turkish, German, Croatian, and Hungarian origins;
- Support for the idea of regionalism and decentralization; and
- The city's role as a cultural gateway city open to the Balkans and parts of Europe which do not yet belong to the EU (Pécs EKF, 2010, 2005).

As ground-breaking as Florida's theories were at that time, with city leaders using them as popular tools in their development concepts, these approaches were also subject to much criticism (Murányi, 2019).

PÉCS AND ITS CULTURAL CAPITAL

Before turning to Pécs' ECoC application and its implementation, I would like to outline the city's path of development, which is necessary to understand as a path towards the title European Capitals of Culture. Pécs is the fifth most populous city in the country, with approximately 140,000 inhabitants (Póla et al., 2023), and is the full-fledged regional centre of South Transdanubia. Summarizing the historical drivers of the city's development, according to Faragó (2010), three groups of factors can be identified: regional functions, culture, and multiculturalism. In addition, the stages of industrial evolution and development factors have played a role.

As Póla et al. (2023) highlight, Pécs is located 200 km from the capital and relatively far from the centre of development and power, and was the last regional centre in Hungary to receive motorway accessibility to Budapest. This delay is partly due to the city's proximity to the border, which made it vulnerable to the Balkan wars, further exacerbating the peripheral problems associated with its peripheral situation. The fragmentation of the peripheral region as a whole continued and, within this periphery, by 2010 the central functions of Pécs were weakening. At the same time, the development of Pécs' cultural and scientific institutions provided a safety net for the city in previous crises.

Pécs has certain central (ecclesiastical, cultural, commercial, administrative) functions, which reinforced and developed the city into a regional centre. These historically acquired functions were preserved in the South Transdanubian region, as well as in comparison with other competing cities in Hungary, and were maintained after the change of regime. The broadly understood culture has always been a significant driving force in the city's development. In terms of culture, Pécs is the most complexly endowed city in the region. There is a certain patriotism among the local elite and an above-average level of activity in the civil sector (Rácz, 2021).

The Romans founded the town in the second century, and later it became a provincial seat of early Christianity—the early Christian cemetery was listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2000. The bishopric was founded in 1009, and the country's first university was founded in 1367, which is still a major institution. The monuments of the 150 years of Turkish occupation enrich the built heritage even nowadays. The ecclesiastical field town was granted the title of a free royal town in 1780, which led to the development of a new commercial model based on industrial activity. The Zsolnay Porcelain Manufactory, the Hamerli Glove Manufactory, and the Angster Organ Manufactory were the most important factories established in the 1850s (Rácz, 2021). During socialism, the economy of Pécs was determined by the central Soviet development policy, i.e., settlement of heavy industry based on the natural resources of the Mecsek Hills (coal mining and uranium mining, which was essential for Cold War preparedness), where local institutions were not involved in decision-making and led to a one-sided economic structure (Lux, 2017).

From the 1960s, local politicians and the cultural elite were active in mediating local needs, a process accelerated by the partial decline of mining from the end of the decade. At the same time, knowledge-centred and cultural development trends increasingly shaped the life, economy, and image of the town. Pécs' intellectual boom in the 1970s was linked to certain progressive professionals and artists. Their work was supported by the modernist party leadership of the time. The image of Pécs as an industrial city began to change during this period, and from the 1980s it became increasingly known for its culture, art, and science (Lux, 2010).

The regime change led to the complete disappearance of the socialist industry. In the first half of the 1990s, the most important driving force was privatization. There was a lack of competitive industry and institutional background, as well as the necessary knowledge base, including the professional elite (Lux, 2017). Since the closure of the Elcoteq electronic factory, the University of Pécs became the largest employer by the end of the first decade of the new millennium (Rácz, 2021).

The 1995 development strategy of Pécs gave priority to the need for quality renewal, knowledge-intensive economy, cooperation partnerships, technology-intensiveness, and an innovation-oriented economy, as well as cultural industries. The city adopted strategies that were harmonized with national and EU development expectations. The de-industrialization of the economic structure also offered the possibility of identifying potential break-out points, and by taking advantage of weaknesses and turning them into growth factors, further tertiarization could be sought for new regional development. One new development direction

was the cultural industry, a key element of which had emerged through the European Capital of Culture (ECoC) 2010 bid (Rácz, 2021).

THE BORDERLESS CITY IN 2010

In Pécs, the City of Culture slogan refers to an above-average cultural offer, and this image has been consciously shaped towards culture and the arts as a means of diversification. This period is the basis on which Pécs still has the most diverse cultural offer of any rural town, and later substantial infrastructure developments were added (Póla et al., 2023). The message of the ECoC title is that a city has a chance to become a European “capital” even when it is not in a position of public power. The philosophy behind this successful EU project, which has been running for several decades, has gradually changed. Initially, capitals could also be awarded the title, but after the turn of the millennium, “regionalism” became more prominent, which suited Pécs. The idea behind the application was that winning the ECoC title could demonstrate the city’s role as a “projector”, and “realizing and demonstrating itself”. An important aspect of the application was to place the cultural functions and values of the city in a European and regional dimension. The slogan of the competition is aptly “borderless city”—connecting beyond the direct neighbourhood to the Balkans and Europe as a whole. In addition to the concept, which was in line with the European mainstream using “creativity”, the strong government lobbying influence and contacts of the mayor probably played a role in winning the bid (Póla et al., 2023).

In April 2004, a literature professor at the University of Pécs, József Takáts argued in the Hungarian journal *Life and Literature* (*Élet és Irodalom*) in favour of the city’s candidacy, citing the principle of cultural decentralization. The intellectual elite of Pécs had been debating the city’s ECoC ambitions since 2003. One of the indicators for their exchange of ideas was Graz, the twin city of Pécs, which was awarded the title of European Capital of Culture in 2003, so Pécs’ civic leaders could use this example to brainstorm what to do if their city were to win the title. It was one of the rare moments when a rural town, rather than Budapest, set the pace in a debate that was realized. Eleven Hungarian cities applied for the title of European Capital of Culture for 2010. It was clear from the start that only a few towns had a realistic chance of winning: Pécs and Budapest were among them. Many felt that it would be unfair if Budapest, which already had a monopoly on cultural life, were to win the title. Also, the European Union tends to award medium-sized cities to the ECoC. The mayor of Pécs at that era, László Toller (from the Hungarian Socialist Party), saw the opportunity in the tender. Toller was one of the most influential politicians in the post-regime change history of Pécs, with national influence. Toller was familiar with the power games, but the Westernized thoughts, such as creative economy or creative industries, with which the intellectuals of Pécs approached the ECoC tender, were bizarre to him. This led to friction between the city administration and civil society from the very beginning. Although this could easily have led to the failure of the Pécs project, Toller (and Pécs politics) stepped back in time, realizing that the city could only win if it let the civilians work. And the mayor wanted to win at all costs.

Pécs won the first round by a unanimous majority and was able to submit its “Borderless City” application in the second round. The competition was based on Western European ideas that were unknown in the country at that time. The civilian coordinators of the project realized that the competition not only required cultural programmes but also an urban development concept. This is how the major investments aimed at building a new cultural quarter were selected. The tenderers expected that the project would help Pécs to break out of the declining economic situation it found itself in after the fall of communism through cultural urban development.

It was only after the victory that local politics realized how big a bite an ECoC project is. As a result, they immediately started to squeeze out the civilians. The author of the tender, József Takáts, resigned in the spring of 2006, along with other key members. The civilians of Pécs became apathetic and increasingly hostile to the city government. The situation escalated further when a management crisis developed in the city hall after Toller had a car accident in June 2006, went into a vegetative coma, and died in 2010. The city was then led by Péter Tasnádi, who also died soon after of a serious illness. In three years, the third mayor of Pécs had to take over the preparation of the project.

The national government felt the power vacuum in Pécs. The funds needed to run the ECoC programmes were not given directly to Pécs, but through a company in Budapest, Hungarofest Company, and the concept of decentralization was completely lost. So far, the city had lost not only the support of the local civil society but also that of the national public. The year 2010 started without a single key project being completed, and even the main square, Széchenyi Square, the site of the opening ceremony, was only temporarily paved and then demolished immediately after the opening, which attracted tens of thousands of visitors. Other key projects were completed with considerable delays. The new library was opened in autumn 2010, while the Kodály Music Hall, was inaugurated in December (see Figure 1).



FIGURE 1. KODÁLY MUSIC HALL, ONE OF THE BIGGEST DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PÉCS ECOC 2010

Source: image by the author (2025).

The Zsolnay Cultural Quarter was completed by the end of 2011. Despite criticisms, the project has been a great success and the image of Pécs has been completely revitalized. The renewal of public spaces has been an absolute success. The idea of car-freeing the city centre was ahead of its time and gave back the Széchenyi Square area to the locals. The redevelopment of Uranváros, the centre of a housing estate built for uranium miners in the 1950s and 1960s, was also a great success (see Figure 2). Parks, public spaces, and playgrounds were renovated, highlighting the miners' narrative, something that had not been done since the change of regime.



FIGURE 2. THE URANIUM MINERS SQUARE, IN FRONT OF THE 37-SQUARE-METRE SCULPTURE IN THE URANIUM CITY NEIGHBOURHOOD, WHICH WENT THROUGH ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE TRANSFORMATIONS OF PUBLIC SPACE DURING 2010

Source: image by the author (2025).

Along with the renewal of the Zsolnay Quarter, a patina-rich area linked to the city's industrial revolution, the industrial heritage and the environment have been extensively redeveloped, and several university faculties and art institutions have moved in, but the district is still not fulfilling its role. One reason for this is that the creative industries have not settled in the district. Many had expected emerging businesses to take over the buildings, but this has not happened. Professionals should have planned the attraction of businesses, but Pécs did not have the managers to do the job (Molnár, 2023).

Despite the criticisms and difficulties around the implementation, the ECoC in Pécs can be considered a success overall. On the one hand, the cultural image of the city has been significantly strengthened and, on the other hand, it has created the potential for long-term, culture-based urban development, in which tourism is playing an increasing role (see Figure

3). The project has led to several major investments and neighbourhood renewal projects, making Pécs an increasingly vibrant regional centre and contributing to the shaping of society (e.g., the internationalization efforts of the university).

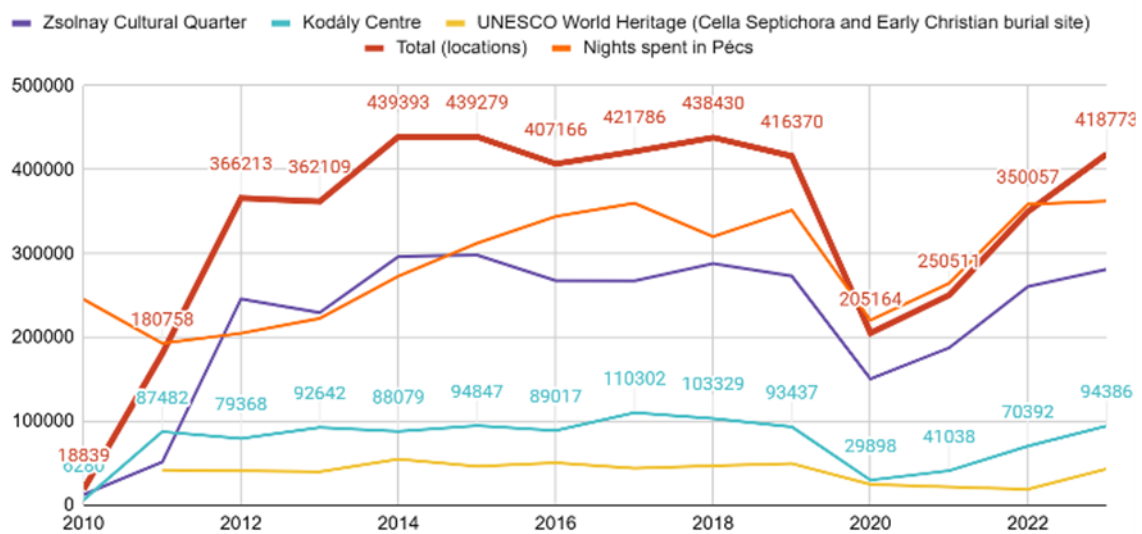


FIGURE 3. NUMBER OF VISITORS IN PÉCS BETWEEN 2010 AND 2023

Source: City Hall Pécs, edited by the author (2024).

But the ECoC project did not just boost tourism. Pécs, already considered a city with a “special atmosphere” and the birthplace of numerous national (pop music acts such as Kispál és a Borz, 30Y, Punnany Massif, etc.) and internationally renowned creative figures (Victor Vasarely, Marcel Breuer, Béla Tarr, etc.), underwent significant changes in the 2010s in terms of culture, society, and city image. During and immediately after its year as the cultural capital, numerous entertainment venues (E78 Zsolnay Quarter), clubs, and pubs (Nappali, Szabadkikötő, etc.) opened or received new management (e.g., Apollo art cinema), which transformed cultural consumption. This was accompanied by the university’s internationalization program, which has been growing stronger since the 2010s, resulting in thousands of foreign university students coming every year to the city. As a result, the city’s gastronomic palette has also expanded (e.g., Indian restaurant, bubble tea bar, Chinese restaurant, etc.). New festivals and cultural events have been created, such as the Learning City Festival, the Szamárfül Festival for families, the Pécs LIT literary festival, documentary film festivals (BIDF, Verzió), and Open Courtyards. In 2016, the Zsolnay Light Festival was launched, the only one of its kind in the country, when artistic light paintings create a special atmosphere in the historic city center on the first weekend of July. The fact that Pécs is the only city in the country besides Budapest, the capital, to hold a Pride parade says a lot about

the city's diversity and the tolerance of its residents. Since the 2010s, not only numerous civil organizations but also foundations supporting them have been active in the city (Pécs Community Foundation, Emberség Erejével Foundation, etc.).

CONCLUSION

To fill the gap left by the decline of industry since the 1980s, the gradually emerging concept of the creative economy proved to be the right answer, reaching its heyday in the beginning decade of the 2000s, despite many criticisms. Many see it as a superficial urban development concept without a real strategy. The design of Pécs' ECoC application coincided with the emergence and popularization of the creative economy and creative industries trend. This was preceded by the decline of the forced industry of socialism (coal and uranium mining) in the city and the economic and political instability after the change of regime. In Hungary, for the first time, a large-scale urban development concept based on the theory of the creative economy was developed. After the city's successful bid, the project was criticized for several reasons, including political infighting and games, the contrast between decentralization and centralization, lack of local lobbying, and a shortage of experts. Although Pécs has extraordinary potential for the creative class, which was emphasized in the application (historical factors, multiculturalism, knowledge-intensive industries, etc.), the concept based on the creative economy has not been translated into economic recovery. However, it has left its mark on the built heritage, the cityscape (e.g., the Knowledge Centre, the Kodály Centre, the Zsolnay Quarter, Tetttye Park, public spaces, etc.), vibrant cultural life and cultural consumption, the narratives of Pécs' history and its inhabitants over different periods (e.g., Uranváros and mining), and the infrastructure, without which the city would have a different image today. But it also became clear that culture is not enough to make a city dynamic.

NOTE ON CONTRIBUTOR

Kata Murányi, PhD, is an assistant professor at the University of Pécs, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Political Science and International Studies. She is also a visiting professor at the Department of Communication and Media Studies. She obtained her doctoral degree in 2021 in the Doctoral School of Earth Science's Geopolitical program. The title of her dissertation is *The Presence of Lusophone Identity in Urban Creativity Practices through Examples of Lisbon, São Paulo, and Goa*. In her research, she focuses on topics and questions on public space, identity, popular geopolitics, and the Portuguese-speaking world. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-3009-8154>

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NEOLIBERALISMO E POLÍTICAS CULTURAIS NO BRASIL: ENTRE O INCENTIVO FISCAL E O FOMENTO DIRETO

Layno Sampaio Pedra

Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA)

Universidade Federal do Recôncavo da Bahia (UFRB)

layno.cultura@gmail.com

RESUMO

A expansão da ideologia neoliberal a partir da década de 1970 trouxe uma nova abordagem para as políticas culturais, principalmente com a expansão das leis de incentivo. No Brasil, o incentivo fiscal se consolidou como o principal mecanismo de atuação do poder público no campo da cultura, estando presente em todos os níveis de governo. Nos últimos anos, com a crise gerada pela pandemia de COVID-19 e a necessidade de mitigar seus impactos, foram criadas leis emergenciais que transformaram o Estado no principal agente de fomento direto à cultura, desafiando a noção de estado mínimo defendida pelo neoliberalismo. Este ensaio apresenta uma contextualização histórica desse processo, observando-o a partir da perspectiva neoliberal.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

política cultural, neoliberalismo, democracia, fomento à cultura

NEOLIBERALISMO: IDEOLOGIA EM EXPANSÃO¹

A ideologia neoliberal possui como uma de suas principais características a crença de que o papel do Estado é garantir a competição entre as instituições, sem interferir diretamente nos processos. Além disso, compreende que o Estado é um agente competidor e, como tal, deve ajustar-se às regras do mercado. Isso se explica porque o modo de governança neoliberal considera o sucesso econômico como o principal objetivo do governo e minimiza o papel da política (Malina, 2021).

[...] no neoliberalismo, diferentemente do que prega o discurso corrente, o Estado não é mínimo, pelo contrário, atua constantemente como repressor e como gestor de uma sociabilidade totalmente norteadas por imperativos econômicos, idealmente, sob a roupagem da linguagem

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técnica, travestida pelo discurso antipolítico e de valorização da gestão e administração. (Salgado, 2022, p. 55)

Além de enfraquecer a função política, o modelo neoliberal busca eliminar a noção de sociedade (Malina, 2021). Os indivíduos são vistos como uma rede de “empreendedores de si”, responsáveis exclusivamente pelo próprio sucesso ou fracasso, sem que a sociedade ou o Estado desempenhe um papel relevante em suas vidas. Esse distanciamento promove desinteresse pela política e cria condições favoráveis ao surgimento de movimentos conservadores e antidemocráticos, caracterizados por “candidatos, grupos ou movimentos antissistêmicos, que pregam um neoliberalismo autoritário, um governo reduzido e forte” (Malina, 2021, p. 69).

A crise do capitalismo regulado, na década de 1970, e o consequente declínio do modelo de Estado de Bem-Estar Social abriu espaço para a ascensão da ideologia neoliberal no mundo. Diversos países passaram a adotá-la como modelo de gestão, começando pelos governos militares do Chile e da Argentina e posteriormente se expandindo para a Inglaterra e os Estados Unidos da América (EUA) (Augustin, 2011).

As primeiras tentativas de reforma do Estado brasileiro ancoradas na ideologia neoliberal aconteceram nos governos de José Sarney - PMDB (1985–1990) e Fernando Collor de Mello - PRN (1990–1992) (Hermida & Lira, 2018). No entanto, “foi no governo de Fernando Henrique Cardoso (PSDB) que o processo de reformas econômicas e do aparelho do Estado ancorado na ideologia neoliberal conseguiu ampla penetração nas esferas econômicas, políticas e sociais da realidade nacional” (Hermida & Lira, 2018, p. 41). Durante esse período, o processo de construção democrática no país passou a enfrentar o que Evelina Dagnino (2004) chama de crise discursiva: de um lado, o projeto democratizante se fortalecia com a promulgação da constituição de 1988, mas, por outro, o neoliberalismo se instalava.

NEOLIBERALISMO E AS POLÍTICAS CULTURAIS

ESTADOS UNIDOS E INGLATERRA

A ideologia neoliberal teve repercussões significativas no campo das políticas culturais. Augustin (2011) destaca os seus efeitos nos Estados Unidos, durante o governo de Ronald Reagan (1981–1989), e na Inglaterra, sob a liderança de Margaret Thatcher (1979–1990). Nos EUA, o autor aponta três medidas principais. A primeira foi a redução dos recursos públicos destinados ao *National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)* e ao *National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH)*, enfraquecendo o apoio estatal às artes e à cultura.

O argumento usado era que esses fundos haviam sido politizados e estavam orientados para “o desenvolvimento das artes com objetivos sociais, e não artísticos”. O foco do governo deveria mudar, financiando apenas a alta cultura. Outro motivo alegado pelo Departamento de Orçamento e Administração foi que o financiamento público das artes resultava na “redução do papel histórico do apoio filantrópico do indivíduo privado e das empresas”. (Augustin, 2011, p. 7)

A segunda medida foi estimular o patrocínio privado. Foram realizadas alterações na Lei de Imposto de Recuperação Econômica, aumentando o teto de dedução para doações a entidades caritativas, e foram criados o Comitê Presidencial para as Artes e as Humanidades e a Comenda Presidencial por Serviços às Artes, ambos com o objetivo de estimular o setor privado a investir na cultura. A terceira medida foi a mudança na orientação política do NEA, que passou a ser gerido por um funcionário alinhado com a política econômica de Reagan.

Na Inglaterra, Thatcher adotou medidas semelhantes. Reduziu o orçamento do *Arts Council*, com o argumento de que os artistas deviam se desapegar do Estado assistencialista. Promoveu o patrocínio privado às artes e publicou folhetos apresentando os benefícios do patrocínio cultural e das isenções fiscais. Na administração dos espaços culturais houve redução de curadores ligados às artes, substituídos por empresários e políticos próximos ao governo.

Reagan e Thatcher reduziram os investimentos diretos do governo e fizeram esforços para aumentar o investimento privado, ou melhor, pseudoprivado, já que na maioria dos casos são oriundos de isenções fiscais. Foi esse modelo que serviu de inspiração para o governo brasileiro alterar sua política cultural, criando as leis de incentivo. (Augustin, 2011, p. 10)

Reportando-se em particular ao contexto inglês, mas refletindo sobre tendências que se generalizaram por toda a Europa a partir da década de 1980, Jim McGuigan (2005) sintetiza os efeitos da globalização neoliberal sobre as políticas culturais em três aspectos principais: substituição do investimento público por investimento privado; pressão crescente para que as instituições culturais públicas adotem estratégias de gestão semelhantes às das empresas privadas; reorientação das políticas culturais para objetivos econômicos e sociais, em detrimento dos objetivos culturais, numa lógica instrumental e focada em regeneração e competitividade econômica e territorial.

BRASIL

O efeito mais perceptível do neoliberalismo nas políticas culturais brasileiras foi a proliferação e o predomínio das leis de incentivo. É possível afirmar que estas leis se tornaram a principal política pública de cultura do país e transformaram as empresas privadas nos principais agentes do financiamento cultural. A primeira a ser criada foi a Lei Sarney, em 1986. Esta lei concedia incentivos fiscais a empresas patrocinadoras de projetos culturais e funcionou até 1990. Um ano após a sua extinção, o governo Collor promulgou a Lei Rouanet, principal mecanismo de fomento à cultura até os dias atuais. Esta lei tem por finalidade captar e canalizar recursos para a cultura através de três mecanismos: o Fundo Nacional da Cultura (FNC), os Fundos de Investimento Cultural e Artístico (Ficart) e o Incentivo a Projetos Culturais. O primeiro deles, o FNC, permite ao Estado realizar apoio direto às ações culturais; O Ficart, embora tenha sido criado, nunca foi executado; e o Incentivo a Projetos Culturais é o mecanismo de apoio indireto. Este último permite que pessoas físicas ou jurídicas apliquem parte do Imposto de Renda, a título de doações ou patrocínios, tanto no apoio a projetos culturais, como para contribuições ao Fundo Nacional de Cultura. O Incentivo a Projetos Culturais é o mecanismo mais conhecido e utilizado da lei.

Em 1993, já durante o governo de Itamar Franco - PMDB (1992–1994), foi promulgada a Lei do Audiovisual. Esta também é uma lei de incentivo fiscal e concede isenção no Imposto de Renda aos patrocinadores de obras audiovisuais.

No governo de Fernando Henrique Cardoso - PSDB (1995–2002) as leis de incentivo se tornaram mais atraentes. A Lei Rouanet teve o percentual de desconto do Imposto de Renda ampliado e seus financiadores passaram a ter o direito a abater até 100% do imposto. De forma semelhante, a Lei do Audiovisual teve aumento do percentual de abatimento para pessoas jurídicas. Durante esse período, as principais ações do Ministério da Cultura foram no sentido de ampliar e fortalecer os mecanismos de financiamento via incentivos fiscais. Em consequência disso, essas leis, concebidas como complementares às ações do Estado, transformaram-se nas principais ferramentas da política cultural brasileira.

Durante o governo Lula - PT (2003–2010), considerado o primeiro presidente de esquerda do Brasil, houve esforços no sentido de fortalecer a participação do Estado na cultura. Um deles foi a criação do Programa Nacional de Cultura, Educação e Cidadania – Cultura Viva, que posteriormente transformou-se na Política Nacional de Cultura Viva (Lei 13.018/2014). Este programa, diferente do que vinha acontecendo até então, não segue a cartilha neoliberal e coloca o Estado como financiador direto de instituições culturais.

Através do que poderia se denominar de “chancela”, o governo passou a reconhecer grupos culturais dos quatro cantos do país, levando um Ministério, até então restrito aos centros urbanos, a lugares longínquos aos olhos de Brasília, e transformando o Ponto de Cultura no projeto de maior alcance territorial do Ministério, responsável, inclusive, por propiciar uma base social e política de apoio à atuação do governo. (Lacerda et al., 2010, p. 118)

Quanto às leis de incentivo, o governo Lula atuou no sentido de ampliá-las e fortalecê-las, dando continuidade à evolução do neoliberalismo nesses mecanismos. A Lei Rouanet teve a dedução de 100% ampliada para mais áreas e a Lei do Audiovisual ganhou novos e importantes artigos e teve sua vigência prorrogada. No entanto, vale destacar que durante esta gestão também houve tentativas de revisão da Lei Rouanet e de vinculação de recursos ao orçamento da cultura, mas estas propostas não prosperaram no parlamento. Uma das principais mudanças seria a definição do FNC como o principal mecanismo de fomento da Lei Rouanet. Essa alteração, caso aprovada, representaria uma mudança importante no papel do Estado no fomento à cultura.

Durante os governos Dilma Rousseff - PT (2011–2016) e Michel Temer - PMDB (2016–2019) poucas mudanças foram realizadas. Temer ampliou o teto do valor incentivado para proponentes da Lei Rouanet, tornando-a mais atraente para patrocinadores, e aumentou o limite de valor para cobrança de ingressos (Cerqueira, 2018). Vale destacar que Michel Temer tentou extinguir o Ministério da Cultura, mas, após manifestações da comunidade cultural, a pasta foi mantida. Esses governos foram marcados pelo início de uma importante crise política e democrática no país, que teve como uma de suas consequências o impeachment da presidenta Dilma Rousseff.

A sucessão de eventos e mudanças legislativas ocorridas desde a década de 1980 evidencia a influência neoliberal sobre as políticas culturais brasileiras, alinhando-as às tendências

internacionais. Essa influência pode ser percebida em dois aspectos principais: O primeiro deles é a redução do papel do estado como formulador e executor de políticas públicas. Com a hegemonia das leis de incentivo, a principal atuação do poder público passou a ser a regulação e a indução de investimentos por meio desses mecanismos. Dessa forma, o eixo das políticas culturais foi deslocado da esfera pública para a lógica empresarial, limitando a atuação do Estado.

O segundo aspecto, decorrente diretamente do primeiro, é a substituição dos investimentos públicos por investimentos “privados”. Como demonstrado, ao longo dos anos os incentivos fiscais se tornaram mais vantajosos às empresas, ampliando a sua adesão a esse modelo. Nos anos 1990, o próprio Ministério da Cultura publicou a cartilha intitulada “Cultura é um bom negócio”, com o objetivo de estimular o uso das leis de incentivo. Embora os recursos utilizados sejam oriundos de renúncia fiscal, a decisão sobre quais iniciativas financiar é exclusiva das empresas patrocinadoras, que, em geral, utilizam critérios que favorecem iniciativas com maior potencial de retorno institucional ou visibilidade midiática. A consequência disso é a existência de um sistema de financiamento norteado pela lógica de mercado e não, necessariamente, pelo interesse público.

CRISE DEMOCRÁTICA E PANDEMIA: REFLEXOS NAS POLÍTICAS CULTURAIS

O modelo de democracia liberal, baseado na representação e na governança, está passando por um colapso gradual (Castells, 2018). “Mais de dois terços dos habitantes do planeta acham que os políticos não os representam, que os partidos priorizam os próprios interesses, que os parlamentos não são representativos e que os governos são corruptos, injustos, burocráticos e opressivos” (Castells, 2018, p. 14). Essa crise de legitimidade levou a uma série de manifestações públicas em diversos países e, no Brasil, esses movimentos foram palco para o surgimento de novos atores e grupos da extrema direita.

Além da crise das democracias, o mundo foi assolado por uma assustadora crise sanitária. A pandemia de COVID-19 foi responsável pela perda de milhares de vidas, falência de instituições e pela reorganização nas formas de se relacionar socialmente. No Brasil, essa crise teve seu ápice na gestão do presidente Jair Bolsonaro - PL (2019–2022), líder da extrema direita.

No governo Bolsonaro, o campo das políticas culturais sofreu uma série de retrocessos, a exemplo da extinção do Ministério da Cultura, da atuação de gestores pouco afeitos à democracia, da interrupção de programas, corte de investimentos, tentativa de criminalização de artistas e produtores, censura a exposições, discursos preconceituosos e ataques às comunidades indígenas e tradicionais.

Embora tenha sido um governo claramente de ideologia neoliberal, no fomento à cultura, a tática da gestão Bolsonaro não foi ampliar a participação da iniciativa privada, como observado nos Estados Unidos e na Inglaterra dos anos 1980, mas reduzir o apoio à cultura. O apoio via Lei Rouanet sofreu algumas alterações neste sentido: os valores limites para

captação de recursos, aluguel de teatros, cachê para artistas e ações de divulgação foram reduzidos; a Comissão Nacional de Incentivo à Cultura (CNIC) teve sua atuação reduzida e limitada; o prazo para captação de recursos foi reduzido; empresas patrocinadoras foram proibidas de aportarem recursos por mais de dois anos consecutivos em projetos de um mesmo proponente, salvo algumas exceções; nos aportes acima de R\$ 1 milhão, o patrocinador era obrigado a investir 10% em projetos de proponentes que não obtiveram patrocínio anteriormente (O Globo, 2022). Essa última alteração é bem-vista por tentar reduzir a concentração de recursos em determinados tipos de projetos.

Calabre (2020) afirma que durante esse período o setor cultural foi atingido por alguns vírus:

O primeiro a destacar é o coronavírus, que obrigou a adoção das medidas de isolamento social, acarretando a paralisação das atividades artísticas e culturais. Mas ele não é o único. A arte e a cultura do país vêm sofrendo ataques sistemáticos de outros vírus, como o da intolerância, o do autoritarismo, o do obscurantismo, o do conservadorismo, todos propagados no fértil ambiente criado por um grupo que ascendeu ao poder, em especial ao governo federal, na gestão que teve início em 2019. (Calabre, 2020, p. 9)

Foi neste contexto de pandemia e governo de extrema direita que surgiram três leis que estão mudando a forma de apoiar a cultura no país: as Leis Aldir Blanc (LAB), Paulo Gustavo (LPG) e a Política Nacional Aldir Blanc (PNAB). É importante destacar que nenhuma delas foi proposta pelo governo federal. A LPG e a PNAB, inclusive, foram integralmente vetadas pelo presidente Jair Bolsonaro, sob as alegações de que criavam despesas sem apresentar medida compensatória, ou que eram inconstitucionais, ou que contrariavam o interesse público. Os vetos foram derrubados pelo Congresso, mas o presidente ainda editou uma medida provisória para adiar o pagamento dos recursos.

A Lei Aldir Blanc - LAB (Lei nº 14.017/2020) foi a primeira a ser criada. Ela surgiu a partir da mobilização de parlamentares e da comunidade cultural em resposta às consequências da pandemia e à constatação de que o governo federal não se moveria para auxiliar o setor artístico/cultural. Através da lei, o governo federal disponibilizou aos estados, Distrito Federal e municípios a quantia de R\$ 3 bilhões para realizarem ações emergenciais por meio da concessão de renda aos trabalhadores da cultura, de subsídios para manutenção de espaços artísticos e culturais e da publicação de editais, chamadas públicas, prêmios, aquisição de bens e serviços. Executada entre os anos de 2020 e 2021, a lei permitiu que, pela primeira vez, municípios recebessem repasses diretos do governo federal para impulsionar seus orçamentos na área da cultura. Seguramente, muitos deles nunca haviam lançado editais ou chamadas públicas para financiar ações culturais, o que significou um grande desafio para os gestores públicos.

A segunda lei foi a Paulo Gustavo - LPG (Lei Complementar nº 195/2022). Assim como a LAB, esta teve como objetivo combater e mitigar os efeitos da pandemia por meio do repasse de recursos aos entes federados. A LPG destinou R\$ 3,8 bilhões para a realização de editais, chamamentos públicos, prêmios, aquisição de bens e serviços ou outras formas de seleção pública simplificada. Sua execução está prevista para encerrar em 2025 e a maior parte dos recursos está destinada ao setor audiovisual.

Por fim, a terceira lei é a que institui a Política Nacional Aldir Blanc - PNAB (Lei Nº 14.399/2022). Diferente das anteriores, a PNAB não é uma lei emergencial. Sua execução abrange, inicialmente, um período de cinco anos, com o repasse de R\$ 3 bilhões por ano aos estados, municípios e Distrito Federal. Cada ente deve destinar 80% dos recursos para a realização de editais, chamadas públicas, prêmios e aquisição de bens e serviços. Os demais recursos devem ser utilizados no apoio a programas, projetos e ações de democratização em áreas periféricas e de povos e comunidades tradicionais.

O surgimento dessas leis permite observar o período da pandemia/pós-pandemia como um momento de ruptura nas políticas culturais brasileiras, assim como a redemocratização foi nos anos 1980. Da mesma forma que a redemocratização veio acompanhada das leis de incentivo, fruto do neoliberalismo, a pandemia fez o país adotar uma nova forma de fomento cultural, onde o Estado é o principal agente do fomento e os entes federados atuam conjuntamente.

As experiências resultantes deste momento apontam para um novo caminho no fomento à cultura. O fortalecimento do papel do Estado nas políticas culturais desafia a noção de estado mínimo defendida pelo neoliberalismo. Um passo significativo neste percurso foi a publicação da lei que torna a PNAB uma política permanente. Sancionada em 2025, a norma estabelece que os recursos para a sua continuidade, após os cinco anos iniciais, devem ser incluídos na Lei Orçamentária Anual - LOA. Dessa forma, o repasse de recursos aos entes federados deixa de ser apenas uma resposta à crise momentânea e passa a ser uma política de estado.

Essa nova conjuntura impõe alguns desafios. O principal deles é garantir a efetiva inclusão dos recursos no orçamento federal—o que não é uma tarefa simples. Outro desafio relevante é evitar o contingenciamento dos valores aprovados, prática comum na gestão orçamentária brasileira. Além disso, é fundamental que os recursos repassados aos entes não substituam aqueles que normalmente são destinados pelos próprios entes à cultura. O que se espera é que os novos recursos venham a se somar aos existentes, ampliando os investimentos no setor.

Além dos desafios mencionados, a política nacional também enfrentará limitações, que já são percebidas atualmente. Uma delas diz respeito à fragilidade das estruturas de gestão nos municípios, sobretudo os de pequeno porte, que enfrentam dificuldades para administrar os recursos repassados. Essa limitação pode ser superada por meio do fortalecimento dos sistemas municipais de cultura, especialmente com a criação e atuação efetiva dos órgãos gestores, conselhos, planos e fundos de cultura.

CONSIDERAÇÕES FINAIS

No início da década de 1990 o Brasil viveu um período de fortalecimento do projeto democratizante, com a promulgação da constituição de 1988, e viu o neoliberalismo se instalar no país, como apontado por Dagnino (2004). Na cultura, as leis de incentivo se

tornaram a principal política pública e se fortaleceram ao longo do tempo. No entanto, nos últimos anos observa-se um movimento um tanto diferente. O país enfrentou uma importante crise democrática com o impeachment da presidenta Dilma Rousseff e a ascensão da extrema direita. A tática utilizada pelos extremistas não foi entregar a cultura ao mercado, como típico do neoliberalismo, mas sim atacá-la.

Nesse ambiente político desfavorável, com uma gestão pouco afeita à cultura, e em meio a uma crise sanitária global, o Brasil viu serem criadas três importantes leis que colocaram o Estado como principal agente do fomento. As leis Aldir Blanc, Paulo Gustavo e a Política Nacional Aldir Blanc são importantes marcos recentes das políticas culturais brasileiras. Pela primeira vez a ideia de sistema na área do fomento à cultura se concretizou através do repasse de recursos aos entes federados e com a definição das respectivas responsabilidades. Estudos sobre os impactos das leis ainda estão sendo realizados, mas, em meio ao avanço do neoliberalismo, elas significam que o poder público também pode ser protagonista no fomento à cultura e que a decisão sobre o que merece ser apoiado não precisa estar apenas nas mãos das empresas.

Com a mudança política ocorrida em 2023, marcada pelo início do terceiro mandato do presidente Lula, o país voltou a contar com uma gestão que demonstra maior atenção ao campo cultural. A recriação do Ministério da Cultura e a consolidação da Política Nacional Aldir Blanc - PNAB como política pública permanente são expressões concretas deste momento. Destacam-se ainda a publicação da norma que regula os procedimentos de prestação de contas de projetos culturais e a instituição do marco regulatório do fomento. Além disso, foram criados projetos especiais no âmbito da Lei Rouanet, com o objetivo de direcionar recursos a públicos historicamente menos favorecidos.

A Política Nacional Aldir Blanc - PNAB passa, assim, a integrar o sistema de financiamento à cultura, ao lado da Lei Rouanet, da Lei do Audiovisual e do Programa Cultura Viva. Com isso, vislumbra-se a possibilidade de um maior equilíbrio entre os mecanismos de incentivo fiscal—característicos do modelo neoliberal e amplamente difundidos no país—e o fomento direto, baseado em critérios que vão além dos interesses empresariais e que podem ampliar o acesso e a diversidade das iniciativas culturais apoiadas.

NOTA BIOGRÁFICA

Layno Sampaio Pedra é doutorando no Programa Multidisciplinar de Pós-Graduação em Cultura e Sociedade (UFBA), Investigador Visitante do Centro de Estudos Sociais (CES) da Universidade de Coimbra (2024–2025) e Produtor Cultural da UFRB. Pesquisador do Observatório da Economia Criativa (OBEC), do Coletivo Gestão Cultural e pesquisador em formação do Centro de Estudos Multidisciplinares em Cultura (CULT). ORCID: 0000-0002-6980-5734.

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