

KATARSIS Plenary Workshop on Methodology Development

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Exploring the Dynamics of Social Innovation Through Art: the Case of Montemor-o-Novo, Portugal

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Structure of the presentation

- 1. Creativity, the arts and social transformation – a framework to understand places (spaces+communities) development**
- 2. Montemor-o-Novo: arts-based social creativity**
- 3. What have we learned in M-o-N about social innovation? Socially creative strategies, local development and 'post-rurality'**

1. Creativity, the arts and social transformation

- Art, the representation of the present and the anticipation of the future
- The “aesthetisation” of daily life and the democratisation of artistic production and consumption
- Art, metaphors and communication: conveying meaning across linguistic and cultural barriers
- Art as an arena of social tensions and conflict: dominance and resistance
- Social creativity: bringing together communication, civic participation and critical engagement, in addition to employment and income generation

1. Creativity, the arts and social transformation (ct'd): places development

- Commitment to artistic and cultural production in response to economic restructuring and social fragmentation
- Creative cities/places: from degeneration to regeneration (?); beyond the aesthetic; post-materiality (?)
- The 'dark side' of mainstream creative cities: gentrification, polarisation; social exclusion
- Socially innovative governance: regeneration 'without' polarisation and exclusion

1. Creativity, the arts and social transformation (ct'd): public art and public space

- Public art as new references for spaces undergoing decay or abandonment
- 'Giving public space back' to the local communities
- The work of art as mediator and conveyor of collective meaning
- Artistic sites and venues as 'new' public spaces

1. Creativity, the arts and social transformation (ct'd): socially innovative milieux

- Innovative milieux: information; knowledge; competences; creativity
- Socially innovative milieux: instability, uncertainty and 'plasticity' (diversity, tolerance, participation/democracy)



Katarsis/Lisbon in Montemor-o-Novo
and Montemor-o Novo in Katarsis/Athens



Understanding the Dynamics of Social Innovation Through Art: the Case of Montemor-o-Novo, Portugal



2. Montemor-o-Novo - Arts-based Social Creativity

- Municipality of 18,500 inhabitants, 8,000 of whom living in the city by the same name
- 100 Km from Lisbon; 30 Km from Évora
- Alentejo region traditionally an area of large-scale agricultural estates: rural proletariat; history of class struggle, repression and mass outmigration; today: ageing and economic stagnation
- ... yet M-o-N has been successful in attracting population, strengthening the local economy, reinforcing social cohesion and becoming a centre of artistic creation



2. Montemor-o-Novo - Arts-based Social Creativity: the origins

- Rigid political-economic structure, poverty, repression, migration
- Interest in high culture by the rural 'elite': Montemor Club and 'Carlista' Society
- 'Pedrista' Society: catering to the cultural needs and aspiration of the workers
- Two cultural venues as physical and symbolic poles representing the local political-economic structure



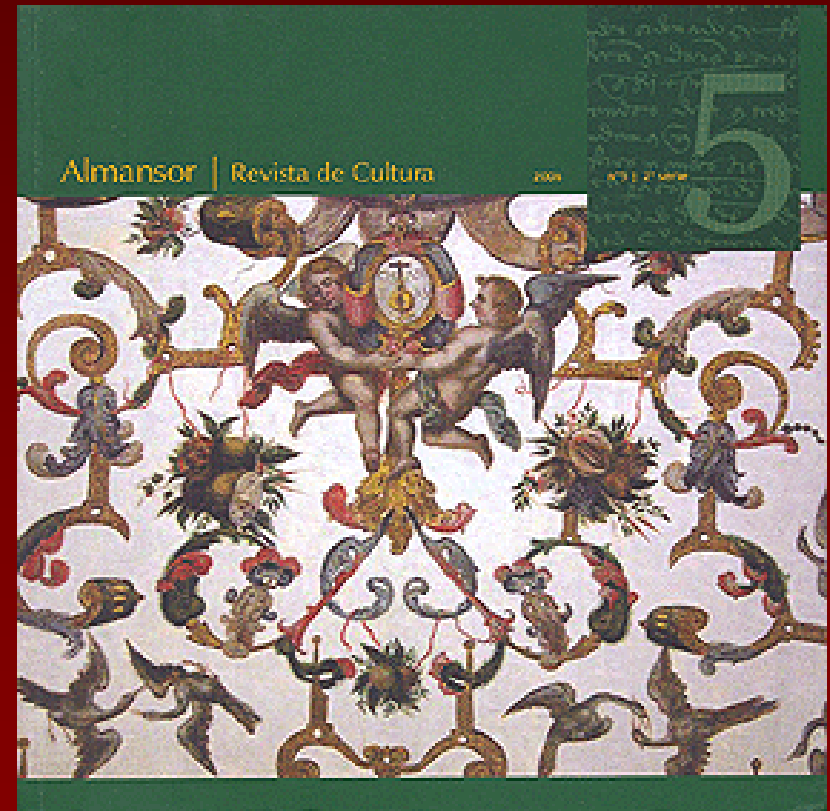
2. Montemor-o-Novo - Arts-based Social Creativity: after the revolution

- April 25th, 1974 democratising revolution: collectivisation of the land, creation of cooperatives of production
- Communist Party rises to power in first elections (remaining there ever since)
- Access to culture as key feature of the local agenda (influence of intellectuals at national level + history of culture as arena of social contestation)
- Examples of initiatives: Municipal Gallery and Library, dedicated cultural office



2. Montemor-o-Novo - Arts-based Social Creativity: the 1980s and 1990s

- M-o-N gradually becomes a part of broader cultural and artistic networks
- Preventing the creation of an artistic 'enclave' from an early stage: pedagogy, community mobilisation and cohesion, inclusion of vulnerable and excluded groups (e.g. 'Children's Workshops')
- Success of earlier initiatives + inflow of EU funds: art and culture become *the* strategic axis of local development
- Partnerships and networks; coherent sense of meaning and identity



Since 1983

2. Montemor-o-Novo - an Example of Arts-based Social Creativity: the present

- Harmonious triangle: community cohesion - cultural and artistic activity – rural landscape and culture
- Arts and culture as both instrument and outcome
- 'Critical mass' of artists and creators, third sector organisations and even 'consistent' for-profit initiatives



2. Montemor-o-Novo - an Example of Arts-based Social Creativity: three examples

a) O Espaço do Tempo ("The Space of Time"): choreographic centre and platform for artistic creation

program > **june 2008**

▼ 01 / 30-06-2008	Dance Classes	D	■
▼ 01 / 31-06-2008	Drama Classes	T	■
▼ 01 / 30-06-2008	Tai Chi	D	■
▼ 02 / 08-06-2008	Curso de Artes Digitais e New Media	F	■
▼ 06 / 10-06-2008	O corpo que pensa III	F	■
▼ 07-06-2008	Concerto Micro Audio Waves	M	■
▼ 07 / 30-06-2008	Summer Café	E	■
▼ 09 / 15-06-2008	H.I.P. New Interfaces for Performance	D	■
▼ 13 / 29-06-2008	New Creation	DMMM	■
▼ 16 / 29-06-2008	Killer Loop	D	■
▼ 30-06 / 20-07-2008	New Creation	D	■
▼ 30-06 / 20-07-2008	Forum Dança	F	■

■ performances in montemor
■ performances in evora
■ residence
■ projects
■ community
■ training
■ special events

other month >> ▼



2. Montemor-o-Novo - an Example of Arts-based Social Creativity: three examples

b) Oficinas do Convento ("Convent Workshops"): multi-dimensional artistic centre with a strong emphasis on rediscovering the local landscape and culture



Mestre Manuel
M-o-N



Arthur Meyer,
Netherlands

2. Montemor-o-Novo - an Example of Arts-based Social Creativity: three examples

c) João Cidade Association and Socio-Therapeutic Community: integrating artistic and cultural activity, inclusion and care of mentally handicapped persons, and broader community cohesion



ASSOCIAÇÃO COMUNIDADE SÓCIO-TERAPÊUTICA CASA JOÃO CIDADE

CONTACTE-NOS COMO POSSO AJUDAR? PRECISA DE AJUDA?

QUEM SOMOS
NOTÍCIAS DA ASSOCIAÇÃO
JOÃO CIDADE

O SONHO

UM DIA NA CASA JOÃO CIDADE

O PROJECTO
SÓCIO-TERAPIA
O LUGAR
JÁ CONSEGUIMOS
EM CURSO

QUEM NOS APOIA
A SUA AJUDA
O CLUBE DOS MIL
PARTICULARES
EMPRESAS

O Dom da Diferença.

A Casa João Cidade, associação particular de solidariedade social, tem como objectivo ser uma comunidade sócio-terapêutica para pessoas com deficiência mental.

clube dos 1000

Seja 1 dos 1000 nomes a apadrinhar esta iniciativa.

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3. What have we learned in M-o-N about social innovation? Socially creative strategies, local development and 'post-rurality'

- Explaining the trajectory of M-o-N: fortuitous factors, 'favourable' 'initial' conditions, socially innovative local development strategy
- Fallacies of composition and limits to replicability: avoiding the 'best practice' interpretation
- Rurality as essential component of local identity and crucial resource for local development
- Reconstruction of collective 'rural' identity renders this trajectory to post modernity distinct from urban post-industrial trajectories: post-rurality as a strategy for, and mode of, socially creative development (though not without its dangers)

3. What have we learned in M-o-N about social innovation? (ct'd) Socially creative strategies, local development and 'post-rurality'

- The crucial issues of the narrative:
 - the relation between history and geography (time-space/place approach) framing social processes
 - construction and reconstruction of social relations
 - tensions and cooperation
 - the role of outsiders
 - characteristics of leadership
 - collective meanings and shared local identity
- and... conceptual openness

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Through Art: the Case of Montemor-o-Novo, Portugal**

Ευχαριστώ! Thank you! Obrigado!

**Isabel André and Alexandre Abreu
CEG-UL**