ARTS-BASED LOCAL STRATEGIES

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Project RUCaS - FCT [PTDC/CS-GEO/115603/2009]
Main aim

To address and discuss socially creative forms of rural renaissance (real utopias) through arts

Real utopias:
- The need to find new responses to deal with adversity or (at least) with inquietude
- Political visions and critical thinking
- Creativity
- Communication, participation and negotiation
- The capacity to make real a project

“A map of the world that does not include Utopia is not worth even glancing at”

Oscar Wilde
Arts as a main lever of real utopias

- Developing creativity and critical thinking
- Facilitating communication (others than verbal discourse)
- (Re)constructing symbolic meanings
- Distinguishing/ennobling persons, organizations and places
- Being a vehicle of celebration
- Making easier social recognition
100 km / 1 hour highway from Lisbon
ancient latifundia / big landowners rural centre (until the 70’s)

17500 residents (municipality) / 11000 residents (city)
49% with more than 64 years old
20% of houses are second residences
50% of buildings were constructed before 1970

2001:
Culture and arts in MoN

The crucial role of local authorities

- Active development of cultural activities since the 80’s – culture as one of the three main pillars of local development

More recently:

- Attraction of artists offering heritage buildings as work places and exhibition/performance spaces
- Mediation between the arts/artists and the local community
- Large offer of cultural and artistic events
Culture and arts in MoN

The dynamics of arts and artists

- Integrated and plural vision (work and debate platforms)
- Networking (local, national and international)
- Embededeness in the local community
- Interaction between arts creation and cultural heritage
The present focus

- To understand and evaluate the stimuli and the outcomes of cultural and artistic initiatives

the view of the artists vs. the view of the population
Listening the artists and the population

(i) What does MoN give to the artists?

What do artists give to MoN?

(ii) Mapping MoN: where is creativity and inspiration?

The artists – 2 focus groups sessions (12 participants)

The population – survey (400 participants)
Focus Group Session

What does MoN give to the artists?

- Environment
  - Food
  - No jams
- Security
- Tranquility
  - Time enough
- Urbanity
- Good work conditions
- Municipality
  - supports
- Rurality
- Heritage
  - buildings to be used by artists
- Security
- Acessibility
  - (Lisbon, Spain)
- Cultural diverse supply
- Local policies
- Partnerships
  - with schools
- Human scale
- The skyline
- Transference of ideas
- Dissemination
- Professional encounters
- Starry nights
- Culture and arts projects as local priorities

Municipality supports Culture and arts projects as local priorities, ensuring good work conditions, and providing local policies. The skyline and the landscape offer urban and rural spaces. Partnerships with schools and dissemination of cultural diverse supply contribute to the artistic landscape.
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MoN → Artists

Artists and Population answers

- No jams
- Human scale
- Time enough
- Urbanity
- Rurality
- Environment
- Food
- Security
- Tranquility
- Friendly people

Quality of Life

Cultural Policies

Local policies
- Culture and arts projects as local priorities
- Municipality supports

Local Dynamics

Transference of ideas
- Dissemination
- Seminars/workshops
- Cultural diverse supply
- Professional encounters
- Partnerships with schools

Physical Structures

Heritage buildings to be used by artists
- Accessibility (Lisbon, Spain)

Inspiration ‘Poetry’

- Starry nights
- The skyline
- Landscape
- Good work conditions

MoN → Artists

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**Artists → MoN**  
**Artists answers**
### Artists→MoN

#### Artists and Population answers

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Places of Encounter

POPULATION & ARTISTS
(MORE FREQUENT ANSWERS)

- STREETS / SQUARES: 26%
- CULTURAL EVENTS: 13%
- CAFÉ: 13%
- WORK PLACE: 7%
- GARDEN: 4%
- MARKET: 4%
- SCHOOL: 3%
- CASTLE: 2%
THE ARTISTS IN MONTEMOR-O-NOVO
CREATIVE SPACES

Source: Workshop with artists, 5 Maio 2012
INSPIRATION SITES
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACE

POPULATION

2% RIVER
31% CASTLE
2% MONASTERY
3% OLD CITY CENTER
6% CINE-THEATRE
6% MUNICIPAL GARDEN
15% URBAN PARK
7% LANDSCAPE
7% CHURCH
2% MUNICIPAL POOL
2% SQUARE GARDEN
Final remarks

What seems to be relevant for the renaissance of MoN? For a real utopia?

- The old city centre (walking, meetings, cafés, ...) – the organic city
- The social and cultural role of streets and squares in the city – personal encounters
- The crucial value of the imbrication between the city and the countryside – the ‘landscape from the window’...
- The cultural path of the city
- The commitment of artists with the local community via the municipal authority

The population valorize the new public spaces and the artists don’t: this is a big challenge for the local policies...
What we have published about Montemor-o-Novo

Publications


Conferences and papers


- André I (2005) Por este rio acima... Montemor, uma cidade criativa. Em Conversas à Volta do Rio II, Montemor-o-Novo: Oficinas do Convento

- André I (2008) Les activités culturelles et le développement local : les arts dans la construction des milieux socialement innovateurs. Conferência no Centre de recherche sur les innovations sociales, Université du Québec à Montréal, Canadá

- André I, Abreu A (2008) - Understanding the dynamics of social innovation through arts: the case of Montemor-o-Novo, Portugal. KATARSIS Plenary Workshop 6 on Methodology Development, National Technical University of Athens, Department of Urban and Regional Planning

- André I (2009) Culture, Social Innovation and Development Strategies (a cultural shift in development policies?), Seminário Contemporary Society and Cultural Shifts in Public Policy, Universidade de Aveiro

- André I, Abreu A (2009) - Social creativity and postrural places: the case of Montemor-o-Novo, Portugal. Seminar 6 - Spaces of Social Innovation, University of Newcastle, School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape