



Photo given by Ana da Silva. Photographer: Shirley O'Loughlin

Introduction

Underground music scenes and DIY cultures

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The underground music scenes were, for a long time, associated with strong DIY (do-it-yourself) cultural practices. Consequently, in this book we intend to discuss the importance of underground artistic and musical practices in contemporary society, both for its volatility and for its undeniable importance in youth urban cultures, keeping a record of sociological reflection, although open to all other social sciences. Underground urban musical cultures were and still are considered by many as illegitimate objects of analysis within the framing of contemporary social theory. However, these cultures play a central role in the functioning of music (post) industry and in the outlook of emerging digital media. We also intend to clarify the musical scenes that run through contemporary cities, giving them rhythms but also specific forms of cultural identity, as well as a new historical, social and artistic heritage. In sum, this book aims to explore the contemporary landscapes of underground urban music scenes and DIY cultures in a context of globalized modernity. The book is organized according to the following seven thematic areas: Music and DIY cultures: DIY or Die!; Porto calling: meanings, dynamics, artifacts and identities in today's punk scenes; Music scenes, politics and ideology: social-historical memories and contemporary practices; Contemporary underground cultures' aesthetics: between the digital, the retro and the nostalgia; Musical production, mediation, consumption and fruition in the contemporaneity; Underground music scenes; and, last, Local scenes, communities, identities and urban cultures.

The thematic area "Music and DIY cultures: DIY or Die!" examines how young people involved in underground music scenes are actively forging DIY careers though applying skills, for example in production, promotion, composition and performance, acquired through long-term immersion in these scenes. This panel features papers from a diverse range of local contexts and core to each one of this papers, and is an illustration of how youth culture can no longer be regarded purely as a leisure-based and age-demarcated phenomenon but must also be seen as a platform through which young people acquire practical skills and competencies in an era of risk, uncertainty and precarious living. The thematic "Porto calling: meanings, dynamics, artifacts and identities in today's punk scenes" features a set of papers whose objective is the description, analysis and discussion of several punks throughout the world. One of the subjects of these papers is the analysis of the relationship between punk, youth cultures and DIY. Thus, the importance of punk in the youth culture structuration plays a major role in the analysis, serving as an ignition to the discussion of actual subcultural or countercultural filiations. The DIY and authenticity are clearly associated with punk, so it is fundamental to understand how they materialize in daily strategies and practices, giving birth

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to particular identities and lifestyles. Another subject are the punk scenes related to the political activism, resistance practices and the rise of contemporary social movements – where punk is present and playing some kind of role, depending on the context. The presented papers discuss political visions (left-right), ideological inclinations (anarcho-punk), press, graphic design, pussy riots... The subcultural belonging has an inevitable connection with genre and ageing. The orientations and the aesthetic bindings of punk and their inscription in the body, as well as the affections towards certain bands deserve special attention in this thematic section.

The relationship between art, culture, ideology and politics has raised, since long time ago, a great interest from the social sciences. Particularly, since the cultural studies advent it emerged a great interest in the study of countercultures and urban subcultures, especially in what concerns their dimension of protest and resistance, through different ways and languages, to cultural, political and ideological hegemonic manifestations. This thematic section of the KISMIF International Conference “Music scenes, politics and ideology: social-historical memories and contemporary practices” aims to contribute to review and update this discussion, examining different (sub)cultural underground manifestations, speeches and practices, located both in the past and in the present, situating them historically, culturally and politically, and trying to debate them in their different dimensions and perspectives.

The relationship between society and contemporary culture with its past is certainly a theme that has occupied social sciences in the last decades. In this context, concepts like memory, heritage or tradition are very relevant and studied in these fields. Recently, new discourses related with luxury, “retromania” and nostalgia invaded contemporary cultural and artistic production and consumption. What is the influence of retro/nostalgic approaches in contemporary artistic production? How does it influence the work processes and management of artistic careers? And how about the consumption? What techniques and modes of production have been recovered? Another relevant topic in this thematic section of the conference is the growing importance of digital media and culture in contemporary underground cultures, at different levels. How does it influence the authors’ creativity and modes of production, allowing the emergence of new aesthetic languages or even new tools and musical instruments? Moreover, is it changing their role, making relevant the links between authorship and production? What is the relevance of digital networks? What kind of relationships are been established between new and “old” medium in contemporary artistic production? How musicians taking advantage of the digital media to structure their careers? What has changed in gatekeeping processes? These are some of the main topics covered in the thematic section “Contemporary underground cultures’ aesthetics: between the digital, the retro and the nostalgia”.

The musical consumption has been an important subject in sociology during the last three decades. Crossed by quantitative (Bourdieu, 1984, 2004, 2007) and qualitative (DiMaggio, 1987; DeNora, 2000) methods, the classical researches in this area highlighted the role of music as a way of social distinction and status. Recently, the usefulness of the links between musical taste and status has been shown more complex. It’s worth to mention the work produced by the Cultural Studies of Birmingham and its contemporary re-updates, especially in their contributions to the construction of social identities and to all the processes by which meanings were attributed to musical works and public engagement (Hebdige, 2004; Feixa, 1999; Hall, 2003; Bennett & Peterson, 2004). Thus, in the thematic area of “Musical



production, mediation, consumption and fruition in the contemporaneity” we intend to present a range of discussions on this issue.

Sarah Cohen recognized an effective relationship between music and local identity (Cohen, 1991, 1993; Corral, 2008), supplanting the classical approach of cultural studies and engaging a demarche based on the spatialization of group dynamics of music consumption. This approach has been extremely useful to sociology because it is based on the concept of scene (Bennett & Peterson, 2004:6-7; Bennett, 2004) as a social construction buoyed by the networks and patterns of interactions that occur in a given space-time. Thus, a scene refers to a cluster of social and cultural activities without rigid boundaries, but with an attachment to a space of interactions. Scenes can be distinguished from each other by their geographical location, the type of cultural production which identifies them or by the social activities which animate them. The great virtue of the concept is based on the fact that it makes us an invitation to the mapping of urban territory, to the new forms and new uses, to the new semiotics, to the new relationships (Straw, 2005: 412). And the papers presented in this book are rooted in it. Like Barry Shank (1994) said, a scene can be defined as a significant community of sounds, images, lifestyles, aesthetics... The concept of scene is a way of expressing the theatricality of the city or the city's ability to generate images of the interactions. So, it captures the sense of the bustling city, the everyday sociability. Will Straw believes that the most frequent and repeatedly identified scenes are those related to music (Straw, 2005: 412). The production and consumption of music are, in effect, sociability multipliers. The music, more than any other artistic field, is part of the bodies, groups and interactions (Hennion, 1993). The last two parts of this book condense two thematic areas of discussion about the contemporary cultural and musical scenes: “Underground music scenes” and “Local scenes, communities, identities and urban cultures”.

This object of analysis and inspiring motto of this book falls within the development of the scientific research project Keep it simple, make it fast! (KISMIF): Prolegomenons and punk scenes, a road to Portuguese contemporaneity (1977-2012) (PTDC/CS-SOC/118830/2010), whose goal is the analysis of the punk manifestations in Portugal since its origins until nowadays (1977-2012). KISMIF is supported by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT) and is being developed in the Sociology Institute of the Faculty of Arts of the University of Porto (IS|UP) in a partnership with the Griffith Centre for Cultural Research (GCCR), the Universitat of Lleida (UdL), the Faculty of Economics of the University of Porto (FEP), the Faculty of Economics of the University of Coimbra (FEUC), the Faculty of Psychology of the University of Porto (FPCE) and the Lisbon Municipal Libraries (BLX). KISMIF's approach is trans-disciplinary (Anthropology, History, Psychology, Communication, Journalism and Sociology) and deals with different time and space frames, in both synchronic and diachronic manners, in order to unveil the curtains that hide this barely visible and complex research object. It privileges a dialogue between punk's production and reception, within the Portuguese urban culture framework, but it also intends to conceptualize the music phenomenon both as one the most ancient, universal and important ways of communicating and as an important tool to build identity and community identity definition.

Here is an invitation to reading the various texts and approaches about contemporary music scenes, in the lookout for an open and deep debate about the cultural and symbolic changes which have been operating at fast pace in this late modernity.

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