

Local Sounds, Global Streams. Indie Labels, Music Platforms and the Pursuit of Sustainability in the Digital Age

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RESUMO:

This proposal examines the adaptation of independent record labels to the digital age, focusing on the balance between global trends and local contexts in the United Kingdom, Portugal and Brazil, representing the Global North, the semi-periphery and the Global South, respectively. The study investigates how these labels utilise music streaming platforms (MSPs) such as Spotify and Bandcamp, exploring strategies for visibility and sustainability across social media, live events and emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence. The research aims to analyse how record labels with limited resources optimise their operations and expand audience reach in a scenario of increasing competition within the digital landscape. It will examine MSP algorithms, platform mechanisms, audience engagement, and the role of digital marketing in visibility and success while considering the maintenance of artistic freedom alongside market demands. Comparing practices across these three regions will highlight how local cultural contexts shape strategies, revealing shared challenges and unique responses to platformisation, technological change and market pressures. Drawing on authors such as Hesmondhalgh, Van Es and Poell, the study will map the 'imaginaries of the music platform' to understand the adaptation to socio-economic transformations brought about by MSPs, revealing the complex dynamics of the sector and further our understanding of independent record labels in the digital age.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: independent record labels, music streaming platforms, digital landscape.

Luiz Alberto Moura has a PhD in Communication Sciences from CECS—University of Minho. As a researcher, he focuses on cultural studies and communication, emphasising the intersection between music, society, and history. His doctoral thesis, "Fado Canibal: The Constitution of Indie in Portugal Across 18 Record Labels (1982–2017)," examines the impact of independent record labels on Portuguese music. He also holds a master's degree in Communication, Arts, and Culture from the University of Minho and a postgraduate qualification in urban studies from the Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Born in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Luiz began his professional career as a journalist. He is fluent in Portuguese, English, and German, having spent two years living in Erlangen, Germany. Since 2014, he has been residing in Lisbon, Portugal.