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Empowering Teenagers: Exploring the Role of Non-Governmental Organizations in Mediating the Relationship Between Political Economy and Socio-Economic Issues

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Master in Political Economy

Supervisor: Renato Miguel Emídio do Carmo, Associate Professor (with aggregation), ISCTE- Instituto Universitário de Lisboa

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CIÊNCIAS SOCIAIS
E HUMANAS

Department of Political Economy

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Resumo

Num período marcado pela globalização e pelo aumento da competitividade económica, o presente estudo investiga os desafios levantados ao abordar questões socioeconómicas no contexto da economia política. Desta forma, o estudo pretende explorar de que forma as organizações não governamentais (ONG) podem enfrentar eficazmente estes desafios, ao mesmo tempo que enfrentam as dificuldades e oportunidades que surgem do seu envolvimento.

Centrando-se no Programa Escolhas, um programa de longa data patrocinado pelo Governo Português para envolver adolescentes provenientes de bairros desfavorecidos, esta dissertação adota uma abordagem analítica que visa compreender a dinâmica entre economias políticas e exclusão social, identificando componentes essenciais para reforçar a inclusão social. As ONGs, como intervenientes relativamente recentes nesta conjuntura, desempenham um papel vital na abordagem das desigualdades e injustiças e na defesa de interesses específicos, onde as principais características de ONGs eficazes incluem bases de uma “democracia participativa”, relação de sintonia com os financiadores e por fim as responsabilidades de apoio governamental.

O estudo enfatiza a necessidade de compreender a história de Portugal para compreender eficazmente as origens destes desafios. Realizando estudos de caso de duas ONGs portuguesas selecionadas no âmbito do Programa Escolhas e das suas iniciativas, a dissertação pretende fornecer informações que possam dar uma perspetiva sobre como as ONG, os atores políticos e intervenientes podem promover um progresso socioeconómico e um crescimento inclusivo acrescido.

Palavras-chave: Economia Política, Exclusão Social, Organizações Não Governamentais (ONG), Programa Escolhas.

Abstract

In an era marked by globalization and increased economic competitiveness, this study delves into the challenges of addressing socio-economic issues within the context of political economy. It aims to explore how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can effectively address these challenges while facing the difficulties and opportunities that arise from their involvement.

Focusing on Programa Escolhas, a long-running Portuguese government-sponsored program to engage disadvantaged teens in difficult neighborhoods, the present project takes an analytical approach that aims to understand the dynamics between political economies and social exclusion, identifying essential building blocks for enhancing social inclusion. NGOs, as relatively new actors in this area, play a vital role in addressing inequities and advocating for special interests, where the key features of effective NGOs include their grounding in "participative democracy," alignment with donors, and supportive government roles.

The study emphasizes the need to understand Portugal's history to effectively grasp these challenges' roots. Conducting case studies of two selected Portuguese NGOs within Programa Escolhas and their initiatives, the dissertation aims to provide insights that can shed light on how NGOs, policymakers, and stakeholders can promote socio-economic progress and inclusive growth.

Keywords: Political economy, Social exclusion, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Programa Escolhas.

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Acronym Glossary

ANFR - Associação Nacional Futebol Rua

BPC - Bairro Padre Cruz

BPF - Bola P’ra Frente

CPE - Comparative Political Economy

CME - Coordinated Market Economies

EC – European Commission

FP - Fazer a Ponte

HCM - High Commission for Migration

IPE - International Political Economy

LME - Liberal Market Economies

NGO - Non-Governmental Organizations

MME - Mixed Market Economies

SF - Street Football

1. Introduction

In recent years, with the intensified process of globalization and the increasing competitiveness of economies, addressing socio-economic problems within the framework of political economy has become more relevant. The repercussions of this globalization, while fostering economic growth, have simultaneously aggravated social exclusion, affecting marginalized groups' ability to fully engage in economic development. As a response to mitigate the negative effects of globalization, such as market failures, conflicts, and violence, among others, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have emerged as crucial actors. Their importance in the political, economic, social, and cultural spheres in combating social inequities and advocating for special interests makes NGOs crucial actors. Social organizations have been present in society for many years, however, they have more recently played a pivotal role in reducing inequalities and increasing opportunities for those who are marginalized, ultimately contributing to the increase of peacebuilding throughout the world.

This dissertation attempts to show that political economy, described as the field of study that focuses on how political and economic systems operate, is being continuously influenced by globalization, technology, and consequently, by the social phenomenon that is social exclusion. Similarly, the dissertation seeks to study two NGOs of Programa Escolhas, 'Associação Nacional de Futebol de Rua – Bola P'ra Frente' and 'Associação de Luta Contra a Exclusão Social – Fazer A Ponte', to understand how they promote social and economic development for teens in their communities. Programa Escolhas is a Portuguese governmental program of national scope, protected by the High Commission for Migration (HCM), whose main mission is to promote social integration, civic participation, equal opportunities for education and employment, combat social discrimination, and strengthen social cohesion.

The main objective of this study is to focus on the results of the intervention done by the two NGOs, where the main hypothesis formed is “the intervention conducted by ‘Bola P'ra Frente’ and ‘Fazer a Ponte’ under Programa Escolhas in Portugal has a significant and positive impact on addressing socio-economic problems, offering effective strategies to combat social exclusion and promote social integration”. The specific objectives of this dissertation aim to understand the methodologies and approaches of the two NGOs, where a comparison of the responses of the technicians and teenagers will be made to observe patterns.

The main concepts approached in the theoretical part are defining and describing political economy and its models, the impact of globalization and its consequences, highlighting the

topic of social inclusion and exclusion, and their definitions and characteristics. Other concepts addressed are the emergence of social economy models and organizations, delving into the NGO perspective, highlighting their concept, history, evolution, roles, the importance of effective functioning, participative democracy, the discrepancy of power between northern and southern NGOs, and relationships between donors. The empirical part treats information regarding Programa Escolhas, as well as the two institutions chosen, describing their main goals, territory of intervention and methodologies. The findings of the interviews and analysis of documentation aim to show that NGOs have effective and specific strategies to address socioeconomic issues.

The first section of this dissertation will introduce the topic of NGOs, contextualizing their emergence. The second section consists in the examination of the existing common variables in the literature, specifically the roles of NGOs, their relationship with the new era of globalization; and the influence of the mixed market economy model in these organizations. Following this section, the methodology will be presented, consisting of the analysis of official institutions' documents, followed by individual and group interviews. The final part will be composed of the results, findings, and the final discussion/conclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Political Economy

Political Economy is the field of study that focuses on how political and economic systems operate, specifically studying production and trade and their relationship with laws, governments, and different countries. In addition, political economy is concerned with the distribution of wealth and national incomes and how different institutions mediate problems when faced with challenges. According to Blyth (2009), political economy “is the methodology of economics applied to the analysis of political behavior and institutions” (Blyth, 2009: 217). Clift (2014) states that “political economy (...) [is] interested in how political and economic systems work. Its starting point is that social orders and the institutions which make them up need to be studied as complex wholes rather than analytical distinct parts... in order to understand the interrelationships between the [economic and political] aspects, and secondly to understand the broader political and economic context in which a particular institution is embedded” (Clift, 2014: 5)¹. Political economy, on the other hand, examines the interrelationship between politics and economics, focusing on how political institutions, policies, and power dynamics influence economic outcomes and vice versa.

This field of study is divided into four major branches, those being International Political Economy (IPE), Comparative Political Economy (CPE), Heterodox Economics, and Economic Sociology. Focusing on CPE, this branch is related to post-Keynesian economics and is composed of three main approaches: ideational analysis, interest-based analysis, and institutional analysis. Ideational analysis investigates real actors’ thoughts and movements and stresses the importance of ideas. Interest-based analysis operates at the macro level of broad societal groups and at the micro level of individual economic or political actors. On the other hand, institutional analysis highlights the importance of institutions to explain economic processes, such as laws, systems of individual relations, or even welfare systems. In this tradition, two perspectives on the role of institutions emerge: historical institutionalism (HI) and rational choice institutionalism (RCI). HI studies the role that institutions play in creating coordination mechanisms and focuses on a specific example to clarify the reason behind certain events. This tradition disagrees with the idea that institutions are created to provide efficiency, as there proves to be an asymmetry in the way power is distributed. According to Thelen (1999), historical institutionalism emphasizes “how institutions emerge from and are embedded in concrete temporal processes” (Thelen, 1999: 371) as political development and institutions

emerge from historical conflicts. On the other hand, RCI rejects mainstream assumptions of the role of institutions, since they believe institutions are chosen structures designed by actors, usually collective, to achieve their goals. This type of institutionalism emphasizes the role of strategic interaction in determining outcomes.

The study of IPE brings a distinct perspective to the three main blocks analyzed by comparative political economy (interests, ideas, and institutions). For international political economy, institutions and interests matter. Furthermore, IPE studies how political decisions affect money policies and international economic integration, among others. According to Oatley (2019), IPE studies the mutual development of the global economy and politics, in other words, “it focuses most heavily on the enduring political battle between the winners and losers from global economic exchange” (Oatley, 2019: 25).

2.2. Models of Political Economy

After the financial crisis that began in 2008, various countries felt pressure from international financial markets and institutions to reach agreements that would contribute to external financial assistance. This event led various academic researchers to deepen their knowledge of the Varieties of Capitalism (VoC) model and examine the role southern countries played in this scenario. Hall and Soskice published their *Varieties of Capitalism* book, in 2001, based on a firm-centered approach, highlighting that a company’s success depends mainly on their capacity to solve coordination problems with several actors. These actors are present in five main spheres: industrial relations, vocational training and education, corporate governance, inter-firm relations, and relations with their employees. The approach chosen by the firms influences how a national political economy is classified. Two ideal types of national political economy models emerged from this analysis: Coordinated Market Economies (CMEs) and Liberal Market Economies (LMEs), where CMEs include countries like Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands who depend more on non-market relationships to coordinate their activities. In this model, the equilibrium of firm behavior is the result of strategic interaction. In contrast, LMEs encompass countries such as the USA, UK, and Australia who coordinate their activities mainly through hierarchies and competitive market arrangements, therefore their equilibrium usually derives from demand and supply conditions in competitive markets.

The study of these two ideal models presented some limitations, namely how southern European countries are included in CMEs and LMEs. Evans et al. (2019), present a contribution to the existing knowledge by studying how southern European countries such as Portugal,

Spain, and Italy fit into the VoC framework. The new insights encompass the mention of a new model of capitalism, Mixed Market Economies (MMEs) since they incorporate characteristics of both but do not necessarily fit into CMEs or LMEs. According to Molina (2014), the characteristics of this model are: less generous social protection than CMEs but more generous than LMEs; higher collective bargaining coverage and solid class-oriented unions promoted by the state; vocational training mainly provided by the state which results in a lower percentage of the population with higher levels of education and a decrease in the involvement of social partners, leading to poor connection with firms, and finally predominance of a small enterprise production regime where internal demand plays a key role in increasing economic growth. Therefore, we can conclude that in MMEs the coordination mechanism of regulating and promoting growth is taken over by the state.

Portugal was marked, in the 1970s, by a change in the socioeconomic sphere, where policies to liberalize the trade and investment industries were implemented in order to diversify the economy, changing it from a more agricultural-based economy to an element of the liberalized and economically integrated European conjuncture. The effects of the financial crisis of 2008 were also felt in southern European countries and the challenges of the MME model were intensified, as the country's economy contracted drastically, due to a series of austerity measures implemented by the government to reduce public spending and increase taxes. The conjuncture was defined by high levels of debt, unemployment, low labor force participation, and persistent income inequality, which constricted the ability to invest in infrastructure, social programs, and ultimately affected the country's potential for long-term economic growth leading to social unrest and a high climate of political instability. (Perez and Matsaganis, 2018). This concern was addressed in the conventional VOC approach, as the authors state that the 'hybrid' character of MMEs amounts to institutional incoherence and makes them prone to poor economic performance (Boyer, 2005; Hall & Gingerich, 2009; Hancké, Rhodes, & Thatcher, 2007; Schmidt, 2008, 2009; Streeck, 2010; Thatcher, 2004). Similarly, Evans, Matos & Santos (2019) state that despite undergoing this liberalization period, the Portuguese economy is still largely dependent on the state, which plays a significant role, associating this behavior with the country's corporatist past. To contradict this movement Portugal would need to undertake more comprehensive labor market reforms, including increasing labor market flexibility, improving education and training, and promoting entrepreneurship and innovation (Lains, 2019).

2.3. Globalization and Social Exclusion

For centuries, individuals have been trading goods and services from one country to another. The nineteenth century marked the beginning of globalization as we know it today and in the twentieth century, many companies began expanding their production processes, allowing them to produce and sell their goods and services all around the world. This process of integration and interaction was intensified with the Industrial Revolution, which allowed the emergence of telephone services and airplanes that brought together trade of goods, services, technology, movements of people, and information. With globalization this expansion and trade has been intensified, allowing people from all over the world to benefit from various products, technologies, flows of investment, and information.

Globalization can be described as the increasing interrelationship of economies, cultures, and populations on a world level. Its main drivers are international trade and investment and “the ability to codify design information in digital form, particularly when combined with new forms of telecommunication to transmit this information” (Thun, 2018: 6). Globalization has been given various definitions and although there are some disagreements in what this concept consists of, there is a consensus around the fact that it has originated and is driven by technology, “electronic communication, declining transport costs, more flexible forms of economic organization and the growing importance of mobile access (...) integrating markets around the world and internationalizing decisions about jobs and investment.” (Edwards, Hulme, and Wallace, 1999: 118). With globalization came the free circulation of investments, ideas, and cultures that forced laws and local economies to adjust their policies to a global level. Governments, politicians, and the rules they adopt have been key players regarding the globalization of production.

Although globalization fundamentally changed and improved the interactions of different actors, it has undoubtedly allowed for existing inequalities to be even more enhanced. This results in rewards for those “well endowed with the conditions required to take advantage of these opportunities; increasing pressures on those less well endowed (...) and rising inequality between these two groups” (Edwards, Hulme and Wallace, 1999: 118). An example of these inequalities is social exclusion, which according to Galabuzi (2016) refers to the process by which certain individuals or groups are systematically disadvantaged and marginalized within a society, often leading to limited access to resources, opportunities, and participation in various social, economic, and political activities. This process is identified by four main characteristics:

“legal sanction or other institutional mechanisms; failure to provide for the needs of particular goods; exclusion from social production; [and] economic exclusion from social consumption” (Galabuzi, 2016: 390) and it is enhanced if one belongs to one or more of the following groups: “aboriginal people, immigrants and refugees, racialized groups; people with disabilities; single parents; children and youth in disadvantaged circumstances; women; (...)” (Galabuzi, 2016: 388). Estivill (2003) also emphasizes that “after the so-called grand renfermement (Foucault, 1963), the clearest manifestation of exclusion, namely social problems in Europe, was not related so much to pauperism as to the wretched living and working conditions of wage-earners entering the industrial world and settling in large cities. Old charitable mechanisms and systems, together with national and local poor laws, which denied beneficiaries certain civil rights in exchange for assistance, were refashioned and adapted to market forces” (Estivill, 2003:6). The fast pace of the industrialized conjuncture and the rise of globalization had a massive impact on national economies and in order to remain competitive, aspects such as access to public goods, health, work conditions, among others, became more accessible to groups with certain characteristics than others. Despite several efforts to reverse this trend, policymakers – whose main worry is the emergence of marginalized groups who may pose a threat to said “organized society” – continue to affect factors such as policies, power dynamics, labor market dynamics, access to public services, social movements, and advocacy.

The debate on social exclusion started gaining more relevance around the 1990s and from then has gained more magnitude in political parties and social partners due to certain external pressures. Pereirinha (1995), opens the discussion on social exclusion in Portugal, highlighting the main situations where this phenomenon exists. The author states that the rural population and its predominance in rural areas, alongside elevated levels of agricultural techniques, a population composed mainly by elderly and retired population, and a dominance of manual workers in manufacturing industries are the main groups affected by poverty. These groups are also defined by low levels of monetization, literacy, and precarious work conditions. Although Portugal’s entrance to the EC allowed for some of these trends to be reversed, the characteristics of poor agricultural families tend to be transferred through generations. In many cases “educational, cultural and economic factors induce children to start working very early (...) [and additionally] the poor living conditions of many households also contribute to school failure and then the abandonment of studies. Vocational training is also very rare” (Pereirinha, 1995:173). Another key aspect of social exclusion in Portugal is related to the labor market and education. The dynamics of the contracting and expanding sectors that create or absorb the

affluence of the labor force can generate situations of exclusion as some workers with specific job skills and social groups that do not have sufficient employment and vocational training policy are more prone to be involved in cases of poor levels of unemployment benefit. The main argument in the relationship between education and the labor market is that low levels of education, which are present in Portuguese society, determine the entrance and performance in the labor market.

To address this issue, it is important to understand “that social exclusion is [a] multi-dimensional phenomenon, [and that] coordinated action between the various areas of social policy are required to fight it” (Pereirinha, 1995:177). One trend highlighted regarding the evolution of these coordination efforts and policies is the creation of programs that address, solve, and ease issues faced by vulnerable groups, namely programs launched by the EC and funded by the state, encompassing the aid and presence of several social actors, such as NGOs, who design and implement these projects.

2.5. Social Economy Models and Organizations

Social-economy organizations were already present in the Western world, in the form of cooperatives, associations, foundations, and mutual societies, since the 1950s. Acting as a vehicle for intervention when the State could not provide, their importance became more eminent in the late 1970s due to the poor social and economic conditions. Issues such as structural unemployment, state deficits, unstable policies, and lack of adequate support for social actors called for an intervention.

Defourny and Nyssens (2010), highlight four main models of social economy adopted by European countries, which are divided as: The Bismarckian, Nordic, United Kingdom, and the Southern Countries. In the Bismarckian Countries, also known as the ‘corporatist’ group – (namely Belgium, France, Germany, and Ireland), social economy organizations played a significant role in providing transitional forms of employment through the ‘second labor market programme’, which was responsible for integrating unemployed individuals through training programs. In countries such as Sweden, Finland, and Norway, the cooperative sector grew and became more intertwined with the welfare and business sectors. The cooperative sector provided and ensured the provision of public services and goods as well as new pedagogical and healthcare methods. The UK, following a more liberal model, allowed for the growth and development of the non-profit and voluntary sectors where the main focus was on private providers, which would reduce the budget for government spending. The main shift was “not

the level of social expenditures but rather the instruments through which the government supported third sector organizations: public money took the form of contracts and third-party payments instead of grants” (Defourny and Nyssens, 2010: 36). The Southern countries, namely Portugal, Spain, and Italy, were characterized by a low welfare spending, an underdeveloped social services sector and a strong link to religious (Church-related) organizations. Several cooperatives started blooming as a response to these poor conditions and this new context to re-acquire centrality in the provision of public services, etc., even included new stakeholders, such as paid workers and volunteers. The aim was now for the satisfaction of the general needs and interests of the community.

Social solidarity organizations were found in Portugal around the Middle Ages and were marked by a strong presence of the Church or inspired by Christian values. In the Modern Era, there was a strong presence of the Holy Houses of Mercy, also known as the ‘*misericórdias*’ and brotherhoods, where the crown state controlled the majority of their care-related activities. It was only in the Liberal Era, marked by the establishment of the constitutional monarchy, that there was a change in the main areas of action of the ‘*misericórdias*’ and brotherhoods. The new political regime provided the freedom necessary for associations, clubs, and societies to emerge and develop, allowing different social and professional forums to have their place in society. However, around the 1930s, the *Estado Novo* was installed, centralizing power among all sectors which damaged the societies and cooperatives that had been blooming. This authoritarian regime had a nationalist, conservative, and corporatist position, viewing social bodies as organisms of the collective nature therefore, in order to control the actions of these organisms, the state expelled governing bodies and constricted their actions by forcing out and in some cases persecuting activists, extinguishing certain associations and in turn, integrating government-appointed corporate institutions. The social and economic dissatisfaction felt throughout the country during the dictatorial years culminated in the revolution that occurred on April 25, 1974, marking the end of the *Estado Novo*. After this historical date, “civil engagement became particularly dynamic in different areas of activity and citizens got increasingly involved in various types of associations such as unions, employers’ organizations, social solidarity institutions, aid agencies, cultural, sports and recreational associations” (Survey On the NGO Sector in Portugal, 2015). Similarly, from the mid-fifties to the early sixties, Portugal took several steps to turn from this regime and enter a more liberalized and economically integrated European conjuncture. Some examples of these steps include joining the United Nations, becoming a founding member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

(NATO), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the European Economic Community (EEC).

2.6. Non-Governmental Organizations

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), according to Richard Holloway, emerge from the dynamics of civil society – described as a medium where social dilemmas and ordinary environment can be identified and solved. Ward (2007) states that NGOs appeared in the international conjuncture after World War two, highlighting the “vital role that NGOs play in promoting sustainable development [which] was recognized in Chapter 27 of Agenda 21” (Ward, 2007: 44). They are inserted in the third sector and the main reason for their intervention is related to market failures, when markets or governments are not capable of correcting social, economic and cultural disparities, “thereby non-profit associations and organizations evolve and develop in virtue of failures of market and government or probably with regards to need to face and solve problems designing a wider organizational configuration of actors and interests in relation to complexity and dynamics of environment problems” (Halpern, 2004: 639)

According to the United Nations Department of Public Information, NGOs are defined as “any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizens' concerns to governments, monitor [and advocate for] policies and encourage political participation at the community level. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms, and help monitor and implement international agreements” (Ward, 2007: 50). The UN's Guide to Consultative Status also mentions that NGOs play a pivotal role in raising awareness for key subjects, such as education and in reducing misinformation/information dissemination. Their governance is independent from the state and the main outcome of their actions is for the public good even if the resources used to reach this outcome originate from a private source/fund. Unlike other organizations, the surpluses generated are reinvested in areas that will help to achieve NGOs' goals, instead of being distributed among directors, employees, or other contributors/sponsors.

A distinction between popular organizations and intermediaries NGOs is important, according to Pearce (1993) due to the difference in the way they are composed. While the former is composed of “people with specific identities and interests”, the latter is “typically composed of middle-class people who have opted, (...) to work with (or on behalf of) the poor

and marginalized” (Pearce, 1993: 222). Similarly, it is important to correctly use the term NGO, since it encompasses several types of organizations and the “failure to make these distinctions contributes to a tendency to depoliticise popular organizations and politicise development NGOs” (Pearce, 1993: 223).

2.7. Non-Governmental Organizations: Roles and Effective Functioning

NGOs have various roles in society. The main consensus according to Abdullahi (2019) and Pearce (1993) is that they are the balancing forces between markets and politics; agents of development, through different policies, and their purpose is, among others, to facilitate links between beneficiaries and donors. NGOs’ main concerns are usually related to promoting social equality, reducing poverty, empowering underprivileged communities, supporting social movements, restoring peace, as well as promoting good codes of conduct.

The main motivation for the expansion of the activity of NGOs is related to democracy, more specifically participative democracy. Ward (2007) cites the European Commission and its highlight of the distinction between “representative democracy” and “participatory democracy”, as the former relates to a political system in which citizens of a country or other political entity vote for representatives who then vote on policy initiatives and the latter relates to a form of government in which citizens participate individually and directly in political decisions. In this sense, participatory democracy aggregates in communities of interest, and NGOs are the “most evident examples of such participatory democracy and [that] can facilitate changes in public policy” (Ward, 2007: 45)

Political decisions can deeply affect NGOs and how they operate since a favorable change in policies – i.e., a decrease in bureaucracy for certain affairs - facilitates their work, but a disadvantageous change in policy constrains their actions. However, the opposite is also possible, since NGOs can vouch for and work towards a change in policies, therefore, we can conclude that NGOs and IPE mutually affect each other. Ward (2007) questions the political and economic conditions that make NGOs operate efficiently, stating that in the democratic capitalism world we live in today “the motivating force in the economy is self-interest” and that “NGOs function optimally in the context of both a modern liberal democracy and a market economy vis-a-vis other social models where governmental or corporate controls compromise needed autonomy” (Ward, 2007: 53-58).

Similarly, “NGOs have gone on to secure an increasingly pivotal role in defining and in lobbying for the international agenda on ending internal and inter-state conflicts and in advancing human rights, women's issues, global development, and protection of the environment” (Ward, 2007: 49), however, some are still unsure of the degree of intervention they should adopt. Several NGOs have emerged and proposed different solutions for resolving the new inequalities and conflicts, highlighting that these solutions must be made at a grassroots level. Edwards, Hulme, and Wallace (1999) identify three main strategies that NGOs can adopt. The first centers around improving the grants for the poor, so that they are provided with the same competitive tools; followed by reducing benefits of intermediaries; and lastly by allowing civic groups to explore diverse methods of production and exchange, allowing them to build, among others, more social capital.

The dynamic between northern and southern NGOs has been another consequence of globalization. Since northern NGOs are geographically closer to their market donors/partners and have easier access to resources, it easily creates a “pass-down aid” chain between northern and southern organizations. The tendency is for northern organizations to gain a higher presence in NGO advertising and media, “present[ing] the case for change ‘on behalf of’ others” (Edwards et al, 1999: 131). Southern NGOs have questioned this ‘right’ of northern NGOs to speak for them and developed their own grant basis, however, many are still dependent on external resources. Some strategies can be adopted to mitigate the discrepancies felt between these two ‘spheres’, namely, working “closely with Southern groups to build up their relief and peace-building capacity and widen the current Northern-centric humanitarian policy dialogue” (Edwards, Hulme, and Wallace, 1999: 129).

2.8. Non-Governmental Organizations: Relationship with Donors and Governments

Reith (2010) highlights the importance of the power of money between NGOs and their donors/partners. Most NGOs see contributions from their donors or partners as the key element to develop their work, turning their relationship highly unstable. This money ties them together and creates a “hierarchy of power, where the donor takes control by turning the NGO into a recipient” (Reith, 2010: 448). Many NGOs shift their interests and goals in order to fit the donor's demands and needs. This shift creates imbalances and a lack of trust between both actors, which in turn may have negative effects on the expected outputs. Donors lack flexibility and many times inhibit communication in order to fulfill pre-made agendas. Another factor that affects the donor-NGO relationship is the location of the institution/organization, since many

submit proposals that are rejected due to their location, as donors might view it as one that does not provide considerable direct contact. Lastly, the expectations that donors or partners of NGOs have regarding the results of various projects can damage the work developed by said organizations. Some goals may take longer to achieve than others and the pressure that donors put to complete these tasks may be detrimental. Not all relationships are based on inequalities of power, however, there needs to be a careful analysis of the way money impacts NGOs.

One major actor in this relationship between NGOs and donors are governments since the latter has the potential to impact the effectiveness of public and private service delivery, “the quality and responsiveness of public policies, the degree of social exclusion, the expression of public values and the building of social capital” (Zbucheá and Romaninelli, 2018: 640). Governments and NGOs tend to have various types of relationships, however the most common are cooperation, co-optation, complementarity, and confrontation. There has been a gradual shift from the confrontation stage to the cooperation stage, due to efforts from both actors, such as providing support assistance, increase in participation, and input in planning and policy-making, among others, which has led to a more stable environment in civil society.

3. Methodology

In political science there are a plethora of methodologies that can be used for studying a specific project, however, the three main methods that are used, according to Vromen (2007) are quantitative research/methods, qualitative research/methods, and formal models.

To study the main questions posed at the beginning of the study, the two qualitative methods that will be applied are the analysis of official documents of the organizations and individual and group interviews. These methods are identified specifically as a primary research source (although primary research sources are usually known as documents that indicate an individual’s stance), which according to Vromen (2007) is “the use of in-depth interviewing, ethnographic work and life histories (...) [as well as] oral history, ethnography, interviews, archival research, participant observation, and discourse analysis” (Vromen, 2007: 252). Subsequently, this qualitative method focuses more on subjective information and answers, since they include a personal manifestation from the institutions, people, or processes that are analyzed. Interviews allow for a more introspective and detailed description of the context of the individuals’ lives, which “focus on the in-depth distinctiveness of particular cases”

(Vromen, 2007: 256). This means that the data gathered may include factors such as social habits or patterns of exchange with other individuals, cultures, or organizations, demonstrating that although the researcher is analyzing one specific case, the results show a multitude of other important variables.

The first method consists of analyzing documentation from the organizations. To understand the specific goals of the associations, their projects, and how their intervention occurs, the study will analyze their documents and pay close attention to the different strategies adopted to implement the main objectives. Vromen (2007) mentions four main criteria highlighted by John Scott when analyzing a document. These pertain to authenticity, credibility, representativeness, and lastly meaning. The limitations connected to this method are also linked to the key factors mentioned above since an unreliable, inaccurate, untypical of its genre and incomprehensive document hampers the accuracy of the study.

The other method applied is conducting and interpreting interviews. This approach has been extensively adopted and some even state that we are living in an “interview society (...) [where] qualitative researchers are realizing that interviews are not neutral tools of data gathering but active interactions between two (or more) people leading to negotiated, contextually based results.” (Fontana and Frey, 2005: 646). The accessible use of this method has led to the deterioration of certain qualitative interview characteristics, such as the requirement of extensive training, and knowledge of specific rules and roles, among others; but it has also allowed for certain more inexperienced individuals/groups to participate in this data collecting method.

The three most commonly used approaches to qualitative interviewing are structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews. It is up to the discernment of the interviewer to choose which approach is better suited depending on the goal of the interview, keeping in mind that the “interviewing skills (...) involve a high-order combination of observation, empathetic sensitivity, and intellectual judgment” (Fontana and Frey, 2005: 651). In a structured interview, the process is very standardized, since all interviewees receive the same set of questions, completed in the same order, following a specific pace, with little to no variation in the responses (as there is a limited set of categories for the answers). The interviewer’s role is neutral, straightforward, and impersonal, enhancing the rational part of the interview and overturning the emotional side. An unstructured interview is an approach that is more open-ended and in-depth, attempting “to understand the complex behavior of members of society

without imposing a priori categorization that may limit the field of inquiry” (Fontana and Frey, 2005: 653). There is a close relationship between the interviewer and interviewee and a longing to understand the latter. The combination of both these approaches is also used in group interviews. This method consists of questioning various individuals at once – also designated as ‘focus groups’ in a formal or informal environment. Depending on the purpose of the interview, the approach can vary from a structured interaction to an unstructured interaction, to gather the fullest coverage of the data possible. A more structured view can lead to direct and factual results, while an unstructured view can lead to more collective input and a more detailed analysis of the subject. Besides the skills mentioned by Fontana and Frey (2005), the interviewer should be mindful of power dynamics, meaning that one or a set of individuals should not predominate/influence the topic and that all members of the group should intervene and contribute to the interview.

The interviews in the present study are semi-structured, with the main objective of collecting feedback on the impact that the project/NGO has on the subjects’ lives. The interviews were conducted in the facilities of the NGO/institution to make interviewees more relaxed since that is a space with which they are familiar. The questions are neutral and with simple wording to make the intent of the question clear. They do not necessarily require a direct answer, since questions with open-ended answers may make interviewees feel more comfortable and allow them to truly express their opinions and feelings.

3.1. Analysis of documentation

The projects ‘Bola P’ra Frente’ and ‘Fazer a Ponte’ are part of the NGOS encompassed by ‘Programa Escolhas’. Programa Escolhas is a Portuguese governmental program of national scope, protected by the High Commission for Migration (HCM), whose main mission is to promote social integration, civic participation, equal opportunities for education and employment, combat social discrimination, and strengthen social cohesion. The program is intended for all children and teens, particularly for those who live in vulnerable socio-economic contexts and the three main areas of intervention are: I – Education, Digital Inclusion, Training, and Qualification; II – Employment and Entrepreneurship and III – Community Dynamization, Health, Participation, and Citizenship.

‘Escolhas’ had its first implementation between 2001 and 2003 as a program to prevent crime and aid the social inclusion of teens from the most problematic neighborhoods of Lisbon, Porto, and Setúbal. In those years ‘Escolhas’ implemented fifty projects and involved more than

six thousand recipients. Its success led to the renewal of the second generation, from 2004 to 2006, where the main focus shifted from the prevention of crime to the promotion of social inclusion of children and teens stemming from vulnerable socioeconomic contexts. The program became less centralized and began drawing on projects planned by local institutions, such as schools, and associations, among others. The number of recipients continued rising, being consequently renewed until its eighth generation – the present one. In total, the program has accompanied and financed more than six hundred projects and 200.000 participants, in all major continental regions and the autonomous regions of Madeira and Azores.

The project's main funders are Direção Geral da Educação and Instituto da Segurança Social, with Fundo Social Europeu and Portugal 2020 as co-funders. Besides the protocols established with the promoter and managing entities, Escolhas has protocols with several associations and foundations, such as 'Associação Mais Cidadania' and 'Fundação da Juventude', as well as Portuguese institutes belonging to the University of Lisbon, such as ISCTE and ISCSP.

3.1.1. Bola P'ra Frente

'Bola P'ra Frente' is one of the projects financed by the 4th Generation of Programa Escolhas and promoted by the Associação Nacional de Futebol de Rua (ANFR). The project began in 2010 and consists of the development of socio-sports activities based on formal and informal education models. Therefore, the project proposes to contribute to the improvement of the social skills of teens from ages 12-18, living in Bairro Padre Cruz (BPC), with a path marked by absenteeism or academic failure and issues related to poverty/social exclusion.

BPC is located in Lisbon, specifically in the municipality of Carnide, originally built in the late 1950s with the objective of re-allocating the inhabitants of Bairro Quinta da Calçada - struck by the construction of the 'Cidade Universitária'. According to the Social Diagnostic of 2021, the municipality of Carnide had approximately 19.000 inhabitants with approximately 16.000 of them registered. BPC has 8.000 inhabitants, where 5.000 of them are registered. The neighborhood is mainly composed of immigrants/descendants of Portuguese-speaking African countries and Romani ethnicity. The youth population makes up around 27% of the total, where 194 inhabitants are under 14 years old and 808 are around 15-34 years old. BPC is the biggest social neighborhood in the Iberian Peninsula and the third biggest in the EU, registering 1874 social houses. In 2012 the project to requalify socio-urban structures began, with the construction of new social houses and the installation of new services/associations to improve

the living conditions of the inhabitants. In 2019, there was a strengthening of the requalification which led to a shift in the structure of the neighborhood.

According to the document, children and teens under eighteen are the age group at most risk regarding poverty and exclusion. The most affected, however, is the age group from 12-24 years old, who are faced with alarming levels of poverty/exclusion – approximately 53%. This percentage is associated mainly with the poor labor conditions of the household. The immigrant population also has a higher poverty/exclusion rate when compared to the population with Portuguese citizenship. The disparities felt in the case of the Romanini community in Portugal and BPC are historical and persistent, with nearly all Portuguese of Romanini ethnicity living in poverty and being the poorest group in the EU - therefore denominated, according to the 2020 report on poverty/exclusion, as extremely vulnerable. To combat this situation, the government attributes subsidies – Social Insertion Income (SII) to individuals or families who are in a situation of extreme poverty and fulfill the specific allocation criteria. In November 2020, Portugal had around 210.000 beneficiaries of SII, of which 19.000 were located in Lisbon, with 47% of the income being attributed to the age group of children to 29-year-olds. Carnide had 257 processes for SII, the majority belonging to BPC.

The neighborhood is also characterized by high levels of illiteracy, an estimated 40%, a high percentage compared to national and European levels. This value is due to learning difficulties, indiscipline, lack of habits/methods of study, parental depreciation of school culture, absenteeism, and educational underachievement. Only approximately 6% of the students of the Agrupamento de Escolas Bairro Padre Cruz present a successful educational path, finishing high school, and only 1% reach university – a number that evidences the lack of opportunity for social mobility of the children/teens. The main cause for the existence of juvenile risk situations is the high deficit levels of skills regarding parental competencies, school absenteeism, alcoholism, parental consumption of drugs, and lastly domestic violence. The Santa Casa da Misericórdia of Lisbon managed in 2020, 32 processes of families with children/teens at risk in the Carnide area. There were around one hundred children/teens from BPC who were accompanied by the Commission for the Protection of Children and Youth. Despite the efforts and interventions present in the territory, there is still a gap in intercultural literacy, and the population still suffers from social isolation, which translates into negative indexes compared to the national reality.

The methodology used by Bola P'ra Frente is the Street Football (SF) methodology. The year 2000 marked the stronger emergence of inclusive sports chains and throughout the world street football projects started emerging. In 2003, SF gained more emphasis, due to the link with the intervention for homeless people in the 'Homeless World Cup', sponsored by UEFA. Similarly, the international 'Streetfootballworld' chain emerged, with the partnership of FIFA, aiming to promote SF as a genre of human development, social change, peace, and resolution of social issues on a global scale. The emergence of this chain was detrimental to the SF methodology since it was from previous street football socio-sports experiences, the emphasis on 'fair play' and peaceful resolution of conflicts that many organizations, and specifically ANFR have been adapting their rules and principles to local context and intervention.

The SF methodology aims to recover the roots of street football to promote healthy lifestyles and to shed light on relevant social problems, such as poverty, social exclusion, and racism, among others. SF is characterized by its facilitating aspect of positive sociability and the development of community spirit; therefore, it can formalize its practice as an instrument of social intervention. Football attracts people, encourages self-improvement, participation, and cooperation which creates room for the creation of team spirit, and shared objectives, thus making it possible to break down numerous social barriers, and ultimately motivate the participants to, in the grand scheme, alter their behaviors and take the necessary steps to "victory" – which translates into the resolutions of their difficulties/projects. Therefore, we can conclude that the main intention of street football is the creation of a social structure that conveys important values, a sense of social commitment, and self-confidence through the practice of an activity. The expected outcome is that, consciously or unconsciously, the participants will reflect the good habits and practices in their daily lives and use the tools provided (knowledge on topics such as self-esteem; tolerance to frustration; conflict management; interculturality; gender equality; among others) to affirm themselves in society. The main components of SF sessions are divided into three parts: in the first part there is a pre-match discussion, where the teens develop, with the technicians, personal and psychosocial skills; a second part where they play a match, and the third part is composed of a post-match discussion/reflection.

Table 1 shows the short- and long-term outcomes as well as the overall goal of street football according to the Football3 Handbook.

Table 1- Outcomes and goals of Street football

Source - Football3 Handbook

| Short-term outcomes | Long-term outcomes | Overall goal /impact |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Increased sense of responsibility and accountability</p> <p>Increased ability to compromise and find consensus</p> <p>Increased communication skills</p> <p>Positive/healthy competition on the pitch</p> <p>Increased respect for women and girls</p> <p>Increased willingness to include others</p> <p>Increased confidence to play sport</p> | <p>Increased conflict mediation skills</p> <p>Increased youth participation in programme design and implementation</p> <p>Decrease in aggressive and violent behaviour</p> <p>Increased positive interaction between diverse groups</p> <p>Increased gender equality</p> | <p><i>Youth are empowered to act as role models and young leaders in their communities</i></p> <p><u>Outputs</u></p> <p>Number of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mediators trained in football3 • Players trained in football3 - participants in regular football3 sessions • Fair play points awarded |

To reach their goals, BPF relies on a continuous assessment process to evaluate the sessions based on 5 main criteria: a multidimensional scale of social expression – applied before and

after the training program to evaluate the motor and cognitive part; an evaluation table filled by the responsible of the practice; a joint reflection with the teens and technicians at the end of each practice to open a discussion of the positive and less positive aspects of the practice; a joint monthly appraisal, and a simplified internal competency measurement scale, applied semiannually. The multidimensional scale that evaluates the motor part is composed of sixty-four questions that have a score ranging from 0 (never or rarely) to 4 (always or very frequently) to reflect the number of times the behavior described in the question is performed. The scale has questions such as “I have trouble speaking in public”, “I express affection to my parents”, “I feel good when I’m complimented” and the result of the questionnaire is obtained by summing up the points attributed to each question, which indicates the overall social skill of the individual, where the higher the score, the higher the social skill. The cognitive part is evaluated similarly, with forty-four questions, to evaluate the train of thought related to the different dimensions of social skills. The scale is composed of questions such as “I think defending myself against my friends' criticism probably leads to violent situations”, “I’m afraid to refuse the requests my parents make of me”, “I am afraid people will criticize me” and the result is obtained by summing the points, in this case, the lower the score, the higher the social skill.

Table 2 shows the psychosocial assessment scale used by the technicians, where for each item a value on a scale from 1 (very weak) to 5 (very good) is assigned. The minimum score for an individual is 11 and the average score has to range between 33 and 55 points. The result allows for the evaluation of the individual and group status per item and in total.

Table 2 - Psychosocial Skills Assessment Scale

Source - Bola Social – Futebol de Rua – Manual do Recurso

| Name | Autonomy | Attitude | Participation | Assertiveness | Focus | Conflict management | Leadership | Social interaction | Expressing emotions | Motor capacity | Self-esteem | Individual Total |
|------|----------|----------|---------------|---------------|-------|---------------------|------------|--------------------|---------------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Final Average | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

3.1.2. Fazer a Ponte

“Fazer a Ponte” is another project financed by Programa Escolhas and promoted by “Projecto Alcantara – Associação de Luta Contra a Pobreza e a Exclusão Social”. “Projecto Alcantara” proposes, according to their principles and values, to develop projects with local underprivileged communities, contributing to their insertion in society by minimizing the phenomena that lead to social, economic, and psychological exclusion through tools such as school and digital inclusion and professional training and qualification. The main partner entities of ‘Fazer a Ponte’ are Projeto Alcântara, Lisbon Town Hall, Santa Casa da Misericórdia de Lisboa, the Parish Councils of Alcântara and Campo de Ourique, Gebalis, Agrupamento de Escolas Manuel da Maia, the Regional Health Administration of Lisbon and Vale do Tejo and Associação Tempos Brilhantes. The nine entities have provided during 2021 fundamental support in the conception, execution, monitoring, and evaluation of the project through their active and significant presence in meetings and their human, material, and financial contributions.

The project is directed to children and teens from ages 6 to 25 years old and family relatives, who reside in the social neighborhoods of Vale de Alcântara – with an estimated 20.000 inhabitants. The population of the Bairros do Vale de Alcântara (BVA), previously occupied the social neighborhood of Casal Ventoso, which was partially demolished and substituted by the neighborhoods of Quinta da Cabrinha, Loureiro, and Ceuta-Sul. Although the population was reallocated, they are still linked to the stereotypes and negative aspects of the previous neighborhood. The BVA are known for crime; poverty; drug consumption, trafficking, and illicit activities related to parallel economy; violence; absenteeism, and early school abandonment as well as unemployment. According to the Annual Evaluation Report of 2021, the continuous depreciation of education is the main factor that restricts social integration, as older generations who do not have the proper education or professional experience, allow the perpetuation of the pattern. Therefore, the children and teens are ‘destined’ for precarious jobs, unemployment, drug trafficking, and theft, among others, and are also psychologically traumatized by the frequent raids, police operations, shootings, and arrests brought by the continuous rise of illicit activities – a factor indicated by the participants as the main driver for school failure and absenteeism.

Similarly, children and teens are exposed to degrading images that depict negative experiences as they are required to move daily among toxic waste left in the open air by consumers. The sociodemographic diagnosis of Vale de Alcântara states that 11% of the residents indicate juvenile delinquency as one of the main problems in the neighborhoods of Vale de Alcântara. As a reflection of these situations, youngsters tend to have a lower ability to concentrate on the performance of chores and tend to have a more aggressive attitude toward others.

To combat these issues and reach their goals, Fazer a Ponte relies on competence assessment grids that are present in their annual and semi-annual reports. The 2021 Annual Evaluation Report states that to comply with their general objectives Fazer a Ponte considers the number of individuals involved in all the activities of measures I and III of Programa Escolhas. During the year, Fazer a Ponte covered 345 individuals (60 direct participants and 285 indirect participants), where 255 of the total were children/teens, 79 were family relatives and 11 were other individuals who attended the psychosocial care sessions. The direct and indirect participants are composed of children/teens and family relatives of migrants or descendants of migrants; Afro-descendants and individuals from Romani communities.

Measure I – Education, Digital Inclusion and Training and Qualification’s target audience was children/teens from 6-25 years old and family relatives. The main outcome proposed for this measure was to involve 195 children/teens and 35 relatives through activities that promote school success, the development of personal, social, and cognitive skills, and digital inclusion. The instruments of evaluation include school report cards; teachers' records on school behavior and conduct; and the amount of personal and/or social and/or cognitive skills developed, among others, which are developed in activities such as “Faz-te ao Estudo + Digital”, “Projetos de Vida” and “Atelier Meu Futuro”. In general, the students transitioned into the next school year and there was progress in the development of personal and social skills, such as empathy, interpersonal relations, progress in terms of expressing emotions and self-awareness, respect for others, conflict resolution, and building of trust in relationships. However, topics such as school absenteeism, lack of respect for school grounds, and bullying are still the most underdeveloped skills. Regarding digital inclusion, activities such as “Formações Ser + Digital” – aiming to provide knowledge and skills for safe and moderate use of the Internet, gadgets, and social networks – had a positive impact on both teens and family relatives. There was also a great development of skills in the use of Word ® and PowerPoint ®.

Measure III - Community Dynamization, Health, Participation, and Citizenship had the same target age group as measure I, and the main aim was to involve two hundred children/teens and family relatives in community activities and territory dynamics, to promote literacy in health, social cohesion, and citizenship. The instruments of evaluation include several initiatives/events/community gatherings and territory dynamics carried out with the contribution of the participants; enrollment in sporting activities; the number of citizenship skills and healthy lifestyle habits developed, which were developed in activities such as “Igualdade Na Diferença”, “Dinamiza na Tua Comunidade” and “ClubeSaúde”. Regarding the community gatherings, the report highlights the important role of the participation of the population in the planning and organization of the events, providing the example of a photography workshop, promoted by one informal partner, that worked with a group of 13 youngsters intending to tell the story of Bairro do Loureiro and its residents through photography – a positive example of the promotion of artistic means involving the community and promoting a more positive image of the territory. Concerning citizenship skills, there was progress in the understanding of topics such as respect for others, and appreciation of differences regarding gender, religion, and ethnicity. According to the participant’s needs, the topics that were most emphasized regarding health were the importance of physical health, including a balanced diet; body and oral hygiene; appropriate sleep routines; and mental health, stress, and emotion management, although the report states that the sleep routine and stress management were the hardest topics to discuss and develop.

Table 3 shows the Psychosocial Risk Assessment Instrument, which serves as a comprehensive tool for consolidating pertinent data regarding the various risk factors that impact the lives of children and young, encompassing aspects like behavioral challenges, deviant behavior, and household dynamics, among others. These domains are assessed on a scale ranging from low risk to high risk.

Table 3 - Instrument of Psychosocial Risk Assessment
Source - Annual Evaluation Report of 2021

| Domain | Audience | Low Risk | Medium Risk | High Risk |
|---------------------|-----------------|----------|-------------|-----------|
| Behavioral problems | Direct/Indirect | | | |
| Deviant behavior | Direct/Indirect | | | |
| School risk | Direct/Indirect | | | |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|--|--|--|
| Household factors | Direct/Indirect | | | |
| Community factors | Direct/Indirect | | | |
| Severe family dysfunction | Direct/Indirect | | | |
| Global Risk | Direct/Indirect | | | |

Lastly, *Table 4* identifies several processes, documenting information for both direct and indirect participants, which is completed in all cases in which an important process that was beneficial for the development of the individual occurred.

Table 4 - Types of processes Evaluated
Source - Annual Evaluation Report of 2021

| Type of Process | Total of individuals | | Total of processes | |
|--|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| | Direct Participant | Indirect Participant | Direct Participant | Indirect Participant |
| School reintegration | | | | |
| Academic success | | | | |
| Integration into alternative curricular responses | | | | |
| Referral to Professional Training | | | | |
| Integration in Professional Training | | | | |
| Success in Professional Training | | | | |
| Referral for Education and Vocational Training Responses | | | | |
| Integration in Education and Professional Training Responses | | | | |
| Referral to Employment | | | | |
| Employment Integration | | | | |
| Digital Literacy – Basic Notions on Understanding Computers | | | | |

3.2. Individual and group interviews

For this study, semi-structured interviews were conducted using a dual approach: face-to-face sessions on the institution's premises and online meetings, due to restricted schedules. The interview guide directed towards the technicians encompassed four primary themes: neighborhood environment, community response to the project, engagement with teenagers, and relationships with donors. The interview guide for the teenagers delved into similar variables, although organized under three key themes: neighborhood environment, personal habits and relationships, and BPF. Within the BPF theme, the investigation extended to distinct subtopics such as housing situations, educational pursuits, and the expression of opinions. The complete interview guides can be found in the annexes.

The interviews carried out with the 'Bola P'ra Frente' technicians involved a total of seven participants: the main coordinator of the project; the responsible for the socio-sport approach – organizing and carrying out the SF practices and implementing the SF methodology, who has been with BPF for eight years; a student of the Bachelor of Social Work, who, as part of the mandatory internship, went to BPF for more than a year, continuing to be actively involved until the present date, and assisting in the SF practices; the technician responsible to assist and support in Information and Communication Technologies (ITC); the technician responsible in for the teaching of English; a volunteer, who is responsible for assisting the teens in the activities and sessions; and lastly another intern as part of her technical-vocational course in Sociocultural Entertainment. The interviews with the teenagers of 'BPF' included nine participants, six males and three females, their ages range from 11 to 15 years old, their grades range from fifth to tenth grade, and they have chosen to maintain their anonymity, signing the informed consent form, present in the annex.

In 'Fazer a Ponte', three technicians were interviewed: the coordinator of the 'Fazer a Ponte' project who has been with the institution for four years; the institution's psychologist, who started in 2021; and lastly a former resident of the 'Bairro Cabrinha' and current resident of 'Bairro do Loureiro', who has been for the last four years the community facilitator, responsible for the sporting activities and follow-up to the study, playing a crucial role in bridging the gap between the community and the project. The lack of data for interviews with teens can be attributed to two main factors. Firstly, the restricted schedules made it challenging to secure participation within the allotted time. Additionally, the closed nature of the community made it challenging to access interviewees, as gaining entry and building trust

within such a closely bonded community is a complex process. These circumstances combined to create a situation where obtaining comprehensive data from interviews with teens proved to be a challenging endeavor.

The data from the interviews is processed using MAXQDA, a research tool specifically designed for qualitative data analysis and management, which provides a diverse set of features to assist in data organization and analysis. The key aspects of MAXQDA are data import and organization, coding and analysis, query and retrieval, data visualization, team collaboration, mixed methods, project management, and report writing, among many others. The main features used in the analysis of the data of this study are data import and organization, coding and analysis, mixed methods, and data visualization. The codes in MAXQDA are derived from the interview guides used with both technicians and teens, however, certain codes lack responses from one group because they were aimed at a specific audience. There are 15 codes present in the analysis: Environment of BPC, Inhabitants of BPC, Behaviors linked to the neighborhood, Visits outside BPC, Housing conditions, Interaction with the community, Insertion and reception of the project in/from the community, Rewards of BPF, Difficulties of BPF, Participation in sessions, Relationship with technicians and teens of BPF, Importance and acceptance of BPF, Expressing themselves, School and lastly Setting goals.

The study will assess the presence of patterns or similar outcomes within each group, using the tools from the mixed methods feature, and subsequently compare them. The mixed methods research in MAXQDA refers to the use of both qualitative and quantitative research approaches, employing a wide range of features, with a particular emphasis on "analysis and comparison" and "visualizations" for this case. The first analysis option used was the Interactive Quote Matrix, which is used to compare the coded segments for different cases and/or groups, where the codes are listed as rows and the responses as columns, facilitating the analysis between different groups. This Mixed Methods analysis option can also be complemented with the visual tool "Code Matrix Browser" and "Crosstab". "Code Matrix Browser" lists the codes in rows and the documents in columns. The symbols at the conjunction points represent the number of coded segments that are coded with a particular code. The larger the symbol, the more coded segments are assigned to the code in question. Document groups, document sets, or focus group speakers can also be displayed in the columns of the CMB, for example, to compare individual cases or groups of cases. Similarly, 'Crosstab' illustrates the relationship between document variables and codes, but it encompasses the possibility of comparing different social groups, with distinct features, based on variable values.

4. Results

4.1. Bola P'ra Frente

4.1.1. Environment of BPC

Regarding the environment in Bairro Padre Cruz, the technicians describe it as somewhat safe and as having the “stamp” for a social housing neighborhood environment from an outsider’s perspective. From the insider perspective, the inhabitants have a certain sense of community, mentioning that compared to others the neighborhood is not as unsafe and deteriorated. In addition, several responses characterize the environment as vulnerable, with a great presence of unstructured/dysfunctional families who need financial, emotional, and educational support. On the other hand, other technicians have a different, more positive, perception as they describe the environment as fun, filled with multiculturalism which brings added value due to its diversity, a place where everyone is friends/acquaintances with each other and where there is no discrimination. One technician feels part of the community and states that the neighborhood is “different, [... and that] the best word to describe is ‘captivating.’ Getting to know the people captivates you and they ultimately distinguish themselves from others for their dreams and goals. There is a lot to do, a lot to learn.”

The teens have a similar view, describing the environment as generally calm and occasionally joyful. Nonetheless, some responses state that there used to be frequent police interventions in the past, resulting in occasional agitation. However, it is noteworthy that the teenagers in this area generally feel safe.

4.1.2. Structure of BPC

Concerning the structure of the neighborhood, a response from the technicians states that each sector/part has its own identity but that does not create an issue. Since the rehabilitation of the buildings and the presence of BPF in the area, there has been an improvement in the relationship between the various sectors (the periphery has continuously been integrating with the center) and there has been a higher sense of security and stability. Neighborhood associativism has contributed to the overall enjoyment of the common space.

Regarding housing situation and the care it receives, many teenagers state that sometimes it is not very well taken care of, in the sense that the buildings do not have enough rooms (4 participants), the houses have a lot of humidity and there is not enough lighting inside the buildings and elevators (2 participants), some buildings are burnt and/or do not have a good

paint finish– the main consensus centering around their desire for better maintenance. The remaining participants state that the conditions are good. The consensus around the care the neighborhood receives is mainly positive, as they state it is clean, they feel safe, and access to school is great considering there are three schools.

4.1.3. Social pattern of BPC

Regarding the social pattern of the neighborhood, the technicians describe it as composed mainly of Afro-descendants, Romani people, and individuals/families that depend heavily on social income/subsidies. BPC is characterized by its prominent levels of academic failure; some levels of school absenteeism; some domestic violence and abuse referrals; and gender inequality, which translates to poor juvenile freedom, therefore we can deduce that the behaviors they have are conditioned by the social environment they are in. A response from the technicians states that when the teens are not on the playing field or with the association, they tend to gather in groups and that while some groups motivate each other to find better opportunities and strive to make a difference, others try to push the narrative of minimal effort and laid-back attitude- “that the less you do the better” and “that there will still be subsidies”. Some residents are proud to be from BPC, maintaining their life there, while others are more apprehensive in disclosing this information since they are aware it influences outsiders’ perspectives in areas such as school, work, and even social interactions. There are a few cases of children/teens who have relatives abroad who have other experiences, however, the majority are deprived of experiences, have poor living conditions, have little or no prospects for the future, and have low self-esteem. The teens are very limited to the neighborhood area since there is little knowledge of the outside world, a response corroborated by the answers from the teens stating that they mostly go outside BPC with BPF, although there are some cases of participants who go outside of BPC to go visit their parents/ take small trips with their parents or go to school.

According to the teens, the inhabitants of the neighborhood are nice, warm, receptive, extroverted, and with little judgment towards others. They are comfortable when they go outside of BPC, but, naturally, this comfort increases when they are accompanied by individuals whom they are familiar with and trust. Overall, the teens evaluate their interaction with the community an average of 4.5 on a scale of 1 (little interaction) to 5 (high interaction).

4.1.4. Process of presenting and inserting the project in BPC

The process of presenting and inserting the project in the community was eased because the Carnide parish council received it well. The process was characterized by a lengthy process of spreading the project and its goals through flyers, school meetings, parish meetings, and community events that assembled large groups of people. The relationship between BPF and other associations present in the neighborhood was also challenging since the latter wanted to play a part in the community, but the former came to ‘disrupt’ the current dynamic. It was a challenge at first since the initial contact was made only by women presenting the dynamics and structure of SF, which was a shock and created a reaction, especially among parental figures. BPF started testing limits and assessing the environment to adapt their approach, and the technicians had to adopt a more defensive standpoint when approaching the community, to assert their stance. As time passed the relationship with the population and other associations evolved and the defensive attitude became an open attitude. This translates into the important part that BPF plays in the community. The technicians state that the association is essential as it provides the teens and subsequently the parents/guardians with stability, security, development, and productivity.

The view from the teenagers is also aligned with the technicians, as they all evaluate the importance of BPF on a scale of 1 (not very important) to 5 (very important) a 5. The teenagers feel the association was well accepted in the community, for both them and their parents, describing it as an advantage, and playing a crucial role in aiding the neighborhood in terms of family issues. They recognize they have more opportunities and access to the resources they need to reach their goals with BPF.

4.1.5. Participation in sessions in BPC

To understand the involvement of teens in topics such as civil participation, school involvement, and gender equality, among others, the technicians state that it is important to understand one main prerequisite: there is a bigger tendency to understand, connect and relate to topics that affect us. Considering this, it is understandable that the teens prioritize their focus depending on the topics approached in the sessions. For example, to an adolescent who suffers from domestic violence, engaging in a discussion about recycling will not be of interest to them. Therefore, many of the participants may not find the discussion of these topics interesting or relevant and will only attend the sessions/debates because Bola P’ra Frente promotes them. Some of the topics discussed were unknown and some were known but regarded as normal. For

example, they believed that being excluded from a school or certain opportunities because they were from a social housing neighborhood was normal. The initial part of the sessions was regarded as something uninteresting, they attended mainly because they knew the game would only occur after the first part. Nonetheless, the technicians feel that from session to session the involvement progresses and that certain messages are being absorbed. They notice that, as time passes, certain behaviors are no longer tolerated/are changed, there is more pondering before their actions, more empathy towards others, and more critical thinking as to how they would react if they were in each other's shoes. For instance, teenage girls report that there are actions that they do not tolerate anymore, such as physical violence towards them. Similarly, there are examples of some parental figures who have been looking for and attaining better jobs with better conditions. There are also advances related to the increase in participation in some workshops, where their acceptance of certain topics and retention of information is higher. Three main factors that enhance the output of the sessions are highlighted by one technician: trust, honesty, and “no reservations.” When the participants are honest and trust the technicians enough to let them in on their daily struggles, it allows the former to know which approach is the most appropriate to tackle and solve the root issues of the latter. ‘No reservations’ refers to addressing the issues as a tangible and real occurrence, in other words, discussing these topics with no tabus. These factors may make some participants feel outside of their comfort zone, but they are the ones that allow for the creation of a strong relationship between the two actors. Two other technicians also emphasize the need to show the teens that the activities they participate in throughout the day contribute to something. For instance, BPF has a newspaper, that now has the contribution of the teens through the knowledge acquired in ICT activities. They have learned how to use search engines and how to practice their writing skills in Microsoft Word ®, which increases their involvement in the community and improves their self-esteem since they are proud to show the outcome of something they participated in. Another important example that involves taking the acquired knowledge into real-life situations is the tournament that occurred, where ANFR was the only association that had female participants.

From the teen’s perspective, the most common answer is that they enjoy the sessions, they feel like they learn new information and there is no judgment. Some teens do not feel like there are any other topics to address, while others feel like they would like to address/re-address topics such as: relationships between teens and their parents and how it influences attitudes toward others; sexual orientation and abuse in relationships. The teenagers are usually involved

in the debates/sessions and when they do not participate it is mainly due to the lack of knowledge on the topic, and therefore prefer to listen, others do not participate because they are not confident enough to do so.

4.1.6. Bringing sessions into daily life in BPC

The technicians state that the teens bring the subjects discussed in the sessions into their everyday lives continuously. This means that these results are not visible from one day to another, but rather gradually through their actions day by day. For instance, the technicians have reported an improvement in the youngsters' communication speech and how they adapt it to the circumstances they are in. Another example was the garbage collection performed by the teens around the neighborhood after the recycling session. There are also reports of teens standing up for themselves in situations of racism and sexual assault and even teens searching for jobs after realizing that theft was not a solution. It is possible to conclude that one of the most developed skills is conflict resolution. Similarly, the pattern observed is of transmission/propagation, since in a group of fifteen only three retain a message, alter their behavior, and spread the word, it motivates another three to do the same, creating a snowball effect of positive change.

The perspective of teenagers aligns with that described by the technicians, as the messages transmitted in the sessions are useful in your day-to-day life, especially through repetition, since they see a change in some behaviors – even giving the example of the importance of addressing the “self-awareness” topic – noticing that some people were more impulsive and now it is not so common.

4.1.7. Greatest struggle felt in BPC

The greatest struggle the technicians feel when approaching these topics is adapting their speech to subjects that truly seem practical. Many teens are already faced with difficulties in the workplace or at home and would rather participate in a discussion of topics that would help overcome these challenges instead of adding more. The technicians also struggle with the sensitivity of the topics since many have been victims or are still dealing with sensitive situations. They also report that subjects such as racism, sexual orientation, and religion, among others, are topics that are difficult to address since they are not spoken about at home, which reduces the stimulation and impact of the discussion. Additionally, two technicians report that working with around 200 children/teens – 30/40 per day – is challenging and they can only

reach around 10 or 15. There is a lack of support, availability, and flexibility on behalf of the parents, which creates a fragile environment and takes a toll on the children/youngsters' capability to develop tools to manage their emotions. This situation is portrayed in their actions during their time at BPF and their behavior with the technicians since they marvel at something as simple as asking about their day or showing signs of affection. Another struggle, reported by the technicians, is the ability to captivate them, whether it is for the practices, with new exercises, or how to captivate them when they are having a bad day – which involves understanding why they are having a bad day and how to try and revert the situation.

The teenagers initially lacked the confidence to initiate conversations or discuss certain topics, but this aspect improved as they became acquainted with and began to trust the technicians.

4.1.8. Greatest reward felt in BPC

The greatest reward the technicians receive from working with the teens is the evident change in behavior. They also notice an improvement in receptivity, stating that captivating them to be involved in certain discussions has been easier. They feel that the youngsters are aware they all have their place in the community and that the conditions they live in/are faced with are not factors to feel ashamed of. Additionally, it rewards the workers by seeing the teens overcome challenges, observing school and work progression, the improvement in family management, and the progress in eating behaviors/disorders. Furthermore, knowing that there they can find a safe space, where they are comfortable to share what they are thinking or feeling at that moment, without being punished with physical harm or lack of food, for example, is a great reward for both technicians and the teens. There is also joy in creating fond memories and providing new experiences, such as going to the beach, the zoo, or the cinema. In sum, the greatest reward is seeing them grow, accompanying them, and seeing that the love and support given to each individual is felt and that the organization is a vector to help them achieve their objectives.

The teens recognize that the main rewards in the sessions/talking with the technicians derive from their increased participation, the opportunity to correct misguided attitudes, engage with new people, experience self-improvement, learn new skills, and mainly have the assurance of a support system for any issue – as there is mainly no issue in expressing their thoughts (in BPF), but at home they are more aware. Others are more open at home, and others do not like to express their opinions because there are people who will criticize them.

4.1.9. Relationship with school in BPC

Most teen interviewees like to go to school and believe it is useful, but it is mainly to be with their friends. Some do not have any interest in school and therefore do not like it, although they recognize it is useful. The most liked subjects are History and Geography of Portugal, followed by Physical Education and Math, and lastly psychology. Regarding extra-curricular activities, five interviewees do not participate in EC activities, and four participate in activities such as volleyball, football (one case of a participant playing in Sporting Clube de Portugal), and theatre. Related to this topic, four participants can easily define their goals and the actions they need to take to achieve them and five participants state that they are mainly indecisive about setting goals as they do not always know what the right path is. Eight participants have positive expectations regarding their future, with many already showing an interest in the field they would like to work in – examples such as football players, air hosts, lawyers, or sound and light technicians.

4.1.10. Code Matrix Browser in BPC

The Code Matrix Browser shown below depicts, at its combination point, the number of coded segments that are assigned to a specific code, where the larger the symbol, the more coded segments are allocated to that specific code. The smallest number of occurrences has been assigned the smallest circle, and the highest number with the biggest circle. In *Figure 1*, we can observe that the technicians do not have any pattern, as the codes highlighted differ between the documents. The most common code in interview 1 is the ‘Inhabitants of BPC’, in interview 2 it is ‘Presenting and inserting the project in the community’, while in interview 4 the ‘Difficulties of BPF’ is more common, and lastly in interview 6 the more frequent code is ‘Participation in sessions’ followed by ‘Rewards of BPF’. By observing the code matrix for the teenagers, a pattern is noticeable. The first interviews have the predominance of the codes ‘School’, ‘Setting goals’, ‘Visits outside BPC’, and ‘Housing conditions’, while the last interviews' the most frequent code is ‘Setting goals’. These analyses are useful to understand patterns and where the individual aspect is more common.

Figure 1 - Code Matrix Browser Standard View
Source – MAXQDA

| Code System | Entrevi... | Entrevi... | Entrevi... | Entrevi... | Entrevi... | Entrevi... | Questi... | Questi... | Questi... | Questi... | Questi... | Questi... | Questi... | Questi... | SUM |
|---|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----|
| Rewards of BPF | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | 16 |
| Presenting and inserting the project in t | • | • | | • | • | • | | | | | | | | | 6 |
| Social pattern of the neighborhood | | | | • | • | • | | | | | | | | | 3 |
| Expressing themselves | | | | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | 9 |
| Difficulties of BPF | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | 16 |
| Participation in sessions | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | 17 |
| Relationship with technicians and teen | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 9 |
| Importance BPF Scale | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 9 |
| Importance and acceptance of BPF | | • | | • | | | | | | | | | | | 11 |
| Interaction with the community | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 9 |
| School | | | | | | | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | 11 |
| Setting goals | | | | | | | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | 16 |
| Visits outside BPC | | | | | | | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | 12 |
| Housing conditions | | | | | | | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | 11 |
| Inhabitants of BPC | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | 16 |
| Environment of BPC | | | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | • | 13 |
| SUM | 6 | 7 | 5 | 9 | 7 | 10 | 18 | 18 | 16 | 15 | 15 | 14 | 15 | 14 | 15 |

4.1.11. Crosstab in BPC

The Crosstab below shows the number of times a coded segment occurs for each interviewee, gender, and age. The numbers are shown in absolute frequencies where the highest values are highlighted in green to facilitate the interpretation of the results.

Table 5 shows that in absolute frequency, the age group ≤ 14 has the highest values in the code ‘Setting goals’, with 11 segments, while the age group > 14 only has 5 segments linked, which is aligned with the responses the participants gave regarding the prospects for their future. By analyzing the data concerning gender, it is possible to identify that the female responses have the highest value in the code ‘Participating in sessions’, with 11 segments, followed by ‘Rewards and difficulties of BPF’ and ‘Inhabitants of BPC’ with 10 segments. On the other hand, the more frequent code for the male gender is ‘Setting goals’, with 11 coded segments, followed by ‘School’ and ‘Visits outside BPF’, with 8 coded segments each. These results may express what areas the technicians are more enthusiastic about or what to improve on.

Table 5 - Crosstab Standard View

Source - MAXQDA

| | Age ≤ 14 | Age > 14 | Interview 1 | Interview 2 | Interview 3 | Interview 4 | Interview 5 | Interview 6 | Interview 7 | Interview 8 |
|---|----------|----------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Environment of BPC | 6 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Inhabitants of BPC | 6 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Social pattern of the neighborhood | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Visits outside BPC | 8 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Presenting and inserting the project in the community | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Interaction with the community | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Importance and acceptance of BPF | 6 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Participation in sessions | 6 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Rewards of BPF | 6 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Difficulties of BPF | 6 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Expressing themselves | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Relationship with technicians and teens of BPF | 6 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| School | 8 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| Setting goals | 11 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 |
| Housing conditions | 8 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 |
| SUM | 89 | 42 | 7 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 10 | 5 | 13 | 14 |
| N = Documents/Speakers | 6 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |

| | Interview 9 | Interview 10 | Interview 11 | Interview 12 | Interview 13 | Interview 14 | Interview 15 | Gender = F | Gender = M | Total |
|---|-------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|------------|-------|
| Environment of BPC | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 35 |
| Inhabitants of BPC | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 6 | 41 |
| Social pattern of the neighborhood | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 6 |
| Visits outside BPC | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 36 |
| Presenting and inserting the project in the community | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 12 |
| Interaction with the community | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 27 |
| Importance and acceptance of BPF | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 6 | 31 |
| Participation in sessions | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 11 | 6 | 43 |
| Rewards of BPF | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 6 | 41 |
| Difficulties of BPF | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 6 | 41 |
| Expressing themselves | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 27 |
| Relationship with technicians and teens of BPF | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 6 | 27 |
| School | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 33 |
| Setting goals | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 5 | 11 | 48 |
| Housing conditions | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 8 | 33 |
| SUM | 17 | 15 | 14 | 14 | 17 | 13 | 14 | 86 | 89 | 481 |
| N = Documents/Speakers | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 6 | 39 |

4.2.Fazer a Ponte

4.2.1. Environment and Social Pattern of BVA

Regarding the environment in Bairros do Vale de Alcântara, the technicians describe it as critical, hostile, insecure, violent, and with a great level of separation/sectorization. Compared to seven years ago it has been increasingly harsher, there is an increase in drug

trafficking and inhabitants that witness this traffic. The neighborhood is not safe, there is a pattern of frequent raids and strong police presence, which affects the whole community but mainly small children and elderly citizens. The dealers often attack/assault the buyers since they do not want the latter to consume the product in front of the community. Most of the teens do not actively participate in drug trafficking but belong to families that do so, which enhances the probability for them to follow this path. Therefore, families exhibit a pattern of vulnerability and dysfunctionality. Nonetheless, the behavior of the children and teenagers when outside their comfort zone is positive and they can show different attitudes and there are even some concrete examples of ex-participants of FP that have concluded their high school studies and have a defined plan for their future. The overall description of the children and teenagers inhabiting the neighborhood is positive, as they are described as joyful, specifically the age group from 6-10 years old, who show a greater level of assertive communication, while the older age group is more reserved, introspective, and observant.

4.2.2. Process of presenting and inserting the project in BPC

Although the project has existed for 15 years, the coordinator has only been in charge of it for 4 years, nevertheless, the feedback since the beginning has been that the population adhered very spontaneously and easily. At the time there were no projects similar to Fazer a Ponte, so it sparked an interest and gave the community a sense of support and sense of trust. Since the coordinator's participation, there have been several young kids (6-7 years old) joining the project. Since the seventh generation of the project, there has also been a renewal in the dominant average age group, switching from 13-16/17 years old to 6-13 years old. One technician states that the process had positive feedback specifically from children, young teens and elderly people, with a considerable number of adherences. More participants are entering FP than leaving since many parents/grandparents/guardians are aware that their children will be involved in activities that they are not able to provide.

4.2.3. Greatest struggle felt in BVA

The main difficulty posed regarding the approach with the teens is the lack of awareness that the young kids present when speaking of subjects such as civic and social participation since at the age they enter there should be more consciousness about such topics. They do not show social skills at first but as time progresses and as their attendance in the project increases, the skills improve, and the difference is significant. They usually do not adopt the skills they learn into their everyday lives, since they adapt their attitude depending on the environment

they are in. On the institution's grounds, they follow rules, in school the rules are different and at home, for example, there are no rules, therefore it makes it difficult to apply the knowledge they have been given. They know how they can act around certain people and contexts, to what extent they can break/cross limits or rules, and which breaks have the best/worst outcome. The greatest struggle the technicians feel when approaching this generation of teens (that entered in 2019/2020) is making them commit to a certain goal and fulfill a life project. They feel as if the teens lack resilience since the first instinct after realizing something needs work, failing to reach a certain goal, or even to find that goal is to give up. There is a lack of interest, motivation, commitment, compromise, and most of all resilience. Another great struggle felt is the weak parental involvement, especially their negative attitude regarding school and academic success, also linked to the youngster's attendance and punctuality. There is also a great difficulty related to the underdevelopment of some social skills.

4.2.4. Greatest reward felt in BVA

The greatest rewards they receive from working with the teens are observing their progress, seeing them overcome challenges, become more assertive in their interpersonal relationships, observing school progression and career progress when they become effective at their internship or job, the shift in mentalities regarding certain topics (for example early pregnancy) and even the fact that they do not see themselves being addicted to drugs. Examples of rewards in day-to-day life are receiving a positive message from a teacher regarding their good behavior, their active participation and urge to gather together in the activities organized by the association or receiving feedback from a good grade the students had. These rewards have deep meaning, but the main reward is felt in the long term when the workers feel they have made an impact/difference.

4.2.5. Relationship with donors in BVA

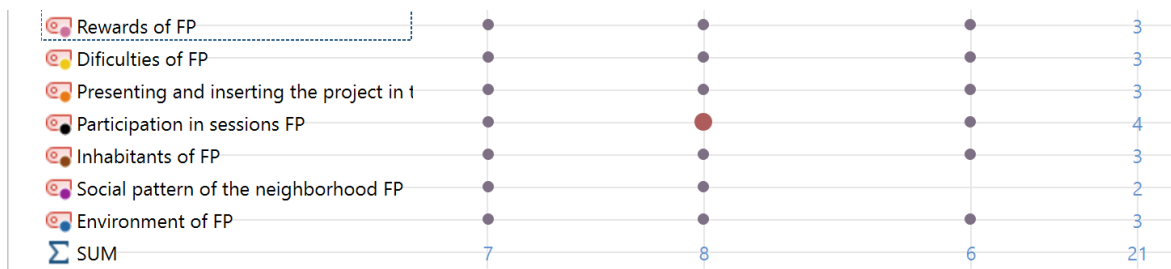
The project being financed by Programa Escolhas and HCM has a total impact on the proactivity of the technicians since they evaluate them. The technicians feel accompanied but at the same time observed, as there are periodical evaluations. They are an institution that feels the rigor of the Programa Escolhas, but they also work to surpass expectations – making them up to par. The coordinator describes the team as thorough and rigorous, active and proactive, and self-critical, recognizing that the team acquired skills very well, highlighting there is a lot of sharing and exposition of ideas, and a vast knowledge of what they are doing and their intervenient. Regarding the periodicity to deliver results, it is done quarterly through four main

approaches: the Quarterly Activity Plan; evaluation reports (semiannual and annual); Plataforma AGIL – where there is a daily record of the activities and self-evaluation tools (competency grids, ICT (Information and Communication Technology) knowledge assessment worksheets); and finally, a self-evaluation that is done regularly. They also evaluate the attendants on a scale from 0-5 to understand what they know or do not know. The efficiency of the results is measured through indicators that are in the quarterly (2022 – from Jan-Jun) and annual (2021) reports.

4.2.6. Code Matrix Browser in BVA

Figure 2 shows the Code Matrix Browser for Fazer a Ponte, where the largest symbol, and therefore the most coded segment from the interviews, is linked to the code ‘Participation in sessions. The remaining codes all illustrate the same symbol, representing the same number of coded segments.

Figure 2 - Code Matrix Browser Standard View - 'Fazer a Ponte'
Source - MAXQDA



5. Conclusion and Discussion

The literature review recognizes that political economy studies the relationship between production, trade, and laws within different governments and countries. This field is divided into four major branches, where the main focus was interest-based and institutional analysis, which argues, respectively that there is a macro and micro level to analyze societal groups and that institutions play a significant role that explaining economic processes. In this sense, it is important to highlight that there are different models of Political Economy, LMEs, and CMEs as the ideal types. However, it is important to consider new models that include certain characteristics of both, leading to the appearance of the MME model - enhancing the role of the state as a main intervention actor, funder, and definer of coordination mechanisms - where Portugal is included. Understanding the history and changes of the socioeconomic spheres, i.e., globalization, history of Portugal and how they relate to the MME model is crucial to justify the emergence and importance of social economy models and organizations, such as NGOs. These institutions are developed with the main aim of bringing citizens' concerns to governments as well as promoting equality and empowering underprivileged communities.

In light of this, the main objective proposed at the beginning of this study was to focus on the results of the intervention done by two NGOs that integrate Programa Escolhas – ‘Bola P’ra Frente’ and ‘Fazer A Ponte’, namely, to understand what their methodologies are to address and diminish socioeconomic inequalities. The study is initiated with the analysis of documentation from Programa Escolhas, to understand its history, evolution, and primary areas of intervention. Programa Escolhas considers all aspects of a teen’s needs – education, digital inclusion, social and community inclusion. It is a very comprehensive program, encompassing the full range of support needed and it is also funded by the European Union, which links to the donor/government relationship.

Following this analysis, the study delves into the documentation from BPF and FP, providing a description of the territory and its inhabitants, its history, goals, and methodologies employed. In BPF, the SF methodology is adopted, which aims to recover the roots of football to expose relevant social problems, such as poverty, and social exclusion, among others. FP does not adopt a specific methodology but adopts several competence grids to evaluate their participants on academic and social skills.

To deepen the analysis, a series of interviews were conducted, to obtain a better understanding of the everyday routine, how the methodology is applied, and their effectiveness.

The interviews encompassed both the technicians and teenagers on BPF, but only the technicians on FP, thus limiting the study. The data from these interviews was processed and analyzed through MAXQDA, a research tool designed for qualitative data analysis and management.

It was possible to conclude that both NGOs were targeting similar groups – children and young teens, and that both acted in underdeveloped areas of Lisbon, however since their conditions are distinct, their approach focuses on different measures from Programa Escolhas, as BPF mainly focused on measure III – civic action/community engagement, while FP mainly focused on measure I– addresses education and digital tools, although measure III also applied. Their methodologies were distinct, and one could argue that since the SF methodology is very tightly defined, it provides clear guidance for success. However, a counterargument could be that not having a specific methodology allows for a more general approach. Regarding the environment and the social patterns of the neighborhood, the similarities are linked to vulnerability, unstable and dysfunctional family structures, poverty and exclusion, multicultural environment – predominantly immigrants and Romani ethnicity, elevated levels of illiteracy, school absenteeism, domestic violence, gender inequality and high dependence of subsidies. Although both neighborhoods present the same characteristics, the main difference is linked to safety. The receptivity of the community to the project was opposite in the two territories. In BPC, the initial reaction was negative, as the community presented a defensive attitude since they felt the project and their intervenient came to disrupt the dynamic already in place. In BVA, the population was very receptive as no project similar to Fazer a Ponte had been implemented in the area. The community was interested, felt supported and heard, which facilitated the implementation of the project. The influence of the projects in the teens' lives was very positive in both BPC and BVA. There was an overall improvement in personal, social and digital skills. The teens developed self-confidence, empathy, became more aware of their actions and which ones they tolerated, and learned how to respect each other's differences in topics such as gender, religion, and ethnicity. Similarly, there was an improvement in school involvement and a higher number of teens transferring to the next school year. From the interviews, the main difficulties and rewards faced by the technicians were approximate in both territories. The technicians felt that captivating the teens was a challenge since many of the topics approached in the sessions and encounters were not deemed as relevant by the teens. Similarly, both groups revealed that the lack of parental support made it impractical to apply the knowledge acquired in the time spent on the associations' grounds. The main rewards

mentioned in both territories are a positive change of attitude, overcoming challenges, and school progression.

These findings can also be pictured in *Table 6* which presents the common and differentiating variables of the analysis of documents and interviews. The main topics approached in both the methodology approaches, with a column named “analogy” detailing if the topic has similarities in BPC and BVA.

After these considerations, it is possible to conclude that Programa Escolhas, which operates in different neighborhoods through different projects and adapts its program depending on the location to achieve success, is a clear example of how successful social inclusion programs work and have positive outcomes. Similarly, the study concludes that action that is measurable and can be repeated is a crucial aspect.

Deriving from this study and considering the positive results of the program in analysis, a few suggestions/recommendations can be considered within a social responsibility context, such as the promotion of wider and more frequent communication to increase collaboration between diverse entities, namely companies, to incentivize hiring teenagers that participated in these programs. Similarly, universities could endorse specific programs aimed at fostering children's education, providing them with a stronger foundation for their academic journey. Entities in sports, music, and cultural contexts could further promote programs of social integration, and government/ city councils could enhance programs, activities, and/or incentives to foster professional integration. Such examples of enhanced collaboration and positive results of its implementation would allow further awareness and discussion in the Political Economy area.

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7. Annexes

Annex 3A:

Interview guide for BPF and FP's technicians:

Environment:

1. How do you characterize the environment in BPC/ BVA?
2. What is (if applicable) the social pattern of the neighborhood?
3. How are the teens of the neighborhood and how do they fit in society?

Community response:

1. How was the process of placing your project in the community?
2. How was it received by the population?
3. What were the major difficulties/obstacles posed?

Approach with the teens:

1. Do the teens understand the topics presented by you (topics such as ethics; civic participation/involvement; gender equality; social and interpersonal skills; school/learning issues; etc.)?
2. How do they react to discussions based on these topics?
3. How do they develop and bring these subjects into their daily lives?
4. Major difficulties and rewards in approaching the teens/these topics?

Efficiency of the results:

1. Since the project is supported by the Programa Escolhas and HCM, what impact does this have on the proactiveness of the technicians?
2. What is the periodicity to show the results?
3. Through what metrics/indicators is the efficiency of the results measured?

Annex 3B:

Interview guide for BPFs' teens:

Personal information:

1. Age of participant

2. Age at which you joined the association
3. Gender: male, female, other
4. What are you studying?
5. Do you have any siblings?

Environment:

1. How do you characterize the environment in BPC?
2. How are the inhabitants of the neighborhood?
3. How do you feel regarding your housing situation and the care it receives?
4. How do you feel regarding the care the neighborhood receives?
5. Do you usually leave the neighborhood?
6. Do you feel comfortable when you are outside the neighborhood?

Habits and relationships:

1. How do you feel about school?
2. Do you have good grades?
3. Do you have a good relationship with your teachers?
4. Do you participate in any extra-curricular activities?
5. On a scale of 1 (little interaction) to 5 (high interaction) how would you rate your interaction with the people in your community?
6. Do you feel you can freely express your opinions and ideas at home or school without being judged?
7. Can you easily define your objectives and goals?
8. Do you have positive expectations about your future?

‘Bola P’ra Frente’:

1. On a scale of 1 (not very important) to 5 (very important), rank the importance of having the presence of the BPF in the neighborhood.
2. Do you feel BPF was well accepted in the community?
3. Do you feel that with BPF you have more access to the resources and support you need to achieve your goals?
4. How is your relationship with the BPF technicians?
5. How is the relationship you have with the other teens from the BPF?
6. Do you understand the topics that are addressed in the sessions?

7. Would you like to talk about other topics? If yes, which ones?
8. Do you usually participate in the “debates” of the sessions? If not, what prevents you?
9. Are the messages transmitted in the sessions useful in your day-to-day life? If not, why?
10. What are the biggest difficulties you experience in the sessions/when talking to the technicians?
11. What are the biggest rewards you feel in the sessions/talking with the technicians?

Annex 4A

CONSENTIMENTO INFORMADO

O presente estudo surge no âmbito de um projeto de investigação a decorrer no **ISCTE – Instituto Universitário de Lisboa**. O estudo tem por objetivo perceber as dimensões da Economia Política e da exclusão social, utilizando como caso de estudo o Programa Escolhas e as suas associações. Deste modo, pretende-se estudar o envolvimento e impacto socioeconómico das Organizações Não-Governamentais no quotidiano de jovens socialmente excluídos.

O estudo é realizado por Luísa Matilde Neves Tavares – luisa.neves.tavares@gmail.com, que poderá contactar caso pretenda esclarecer uma dúvida ou partilhar algum comentário.

A sua participação no estudo, que será muito valorizada pois irá contribuir para o avanço do conhecimento neste domínio da ciência, consiste em realizar um entrevista semi-diretiva, com a duração de aproximadamente 30 minutos. Não existem riscos significativos expectáveis associados à participação no estudo.

A participação no estudo é estritamente **voluntária**: pode escolher livremente participar ou não participar. Se tiver escolhido participar, pode interromper a participação em qualquer momento sem ter de prestar qualquer justificação. Para além de voluntária, a participação é também **anónima e confidencial**. Os dados obtidos destinam-se apenas a tratamento estatístico e nenhuma resposta será analisada ou reportada individualmente. Em nenhum momento do estudo precisa de se identificar.

Declaro ter compreendido os objetivos de quanto me foi proposto e explicado pelo/a investigador/a, ter-me sido dada oportunidade de fazer todas as perguntas sobre o presente estudo e para todas elas ter obtido resposta esclarecedora, pelo que **aceito** nele participar.

_____ (local), ____/____/____ (data)

Nome: _____

Assinatura: _____

SE NÃO FOR O PRÓPRIO A ASSINAR EM RAZÃO DA IDADE OU DE INCAPACIDADE

(Cfr. artigos 7.º - “Participantes menores” - e 8.º - “Participantes maiores incapazes de prestar consentimento informado” - da Lei n.º 21/2014, de 16 de abril)

(Se o menor tiver capacidade de compreensão deve também assinar o documento)

Nome: _____

Documento de Identificação n.º: _____

Data ou validade: ____/____/____

Representante legal: _____

(se for parente, indicar o grau de parentesco, tendo presente que a autorização deve ser assinada pelo representante legal, que poderá não ser um dos pais ou outro familiar)

Assinatura: _____

Annex 5A

Table 6: Analogy between territories

Source: Developed by the author

| | Bairro Padre Cruz | Bairros Vale de Alcântara | Analogy |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| Neighborhood Environment | Vulnerable | Vulnerable | ✓ |
| | Dysfunctional Families | Dysfunctional Families | ✓ |
| | Poverty / Exclusion | Poverty / Exclusion | ✓ |
| | Multiculturalism | Multiculturalism | ✓ |
| | Safe | Unsafe/Violent | ✗ |
| Social Pattern of the Neighborhood | Low Levels of Education | Low Levels of Education | ✓ |
| | Absenteeism | Absenteeism | ✓ |
| | Domestic Violence | Domestic Violence | ✓ |
| | Gender Inequality | Gender Inequality | ✓ |

| | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|---|
| | Dependency on Subsidies | Dependency on Subsidies | ✓ |
| | Low Criminality | High Criminality | ✗ |
| Initial Response to the Project | Defensive Posture | Receptive posture | ✗ |
| Impact of the Project on the Community | Greater cohesion | Greater cohesion | ✗ |
| | Neighborhood Dynamics | Neighborhood Dynamics | ✓ |
| | Periphery Vs. Center | - | - |
| Influence of the Project on Young People | Respect for Difference | Respect for Difference | ✓ |
| | Academic Concern | Academic Concern | ✓ |
| | Reflection about actions | Reflection about actions | ✓ |
| | Empathy for others | Empathy for others | ✓ |
| | Critical Thinking | - | - |
| | Expression of Emotions | Expression of Emotions | ✓ |
| | Reporting Abuse/Violence | - | - |
| | Self-confidence | Self-confidence | ✓ |
| | Digital Skills | Digital Skills | ✓ |
| Difficulties and Rewards of the Project | - | Lack of Motivation/Resilience | - |
| | Speech Adaptation | - | - |
| | Difficulty to Captivate | Difficulty to Captivate | ✓ |
| | Impracticality of Topics | Impracticality of Topics | ✓ |
| | High Number of Children | - | - |
| | Lack of Parental Support | Lack of Parental Support | ✓ |
| | Positive change of attitude | Positive change of attitude | ✓ |
| | Overcoming Obstacles | Overcoming Obstacles | ✓ |
| | Safe and trustworthy area | - | - |
| | Creating Good Memories | - | - |
| | Academic Progression | Academic Progression | ✓ |