# (Semi)-hidden and Manifest Transcripts in Forms of Living and Residing: The 'Social Housing' Neighbourhood in Andorinhas, Braga-Portugal[1]

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ABSTRACT This paper discusses the results of a research developed at Andorinhas neighbourhood, created in the early 1980's in Braga. It is based on quantitative and qualitative data resulting from the application of a survey, semi-structured interviews and life narratives. This plural methodology allowed for the analyses of the objective living conditions, habits and ways of life, relationships and representations not only between various groups of the community, as well as the relations between the neighbourhood inhabitants and the surrounding society, including the institutions and public powers (police, court, social security, services, media and especially municipal housing company BragaHabit). The results suggest the presence not only of manifest but also (semi)hidden transcripts, both at family and community levels, but rarely in open collective actions for neighbourhood improvements.

*Key words:* social housing, Andorinhas neighbourhood, Braga-Portugal, mixed methods, BragaHabit.

## 1. Introduction: The problem

This paper aims to give an account of a research concerning the ways of living and modes of inhabiting in 'social housing' of Andorinhas neighbourhood, located in the parish of S. Vicente, whose construction began in 1983 and was completed in 1986. Currently, it consists of 224 dwellings, mainly inhabited by Portuguese families. Originally a social housing estate, it is composed of 32 entrances/apartment buildings spreading over a total of 6 blocks, some of which fell into a serious state of disrepair over the course of the last two decades (see statistics of the municipal enterprise BragaHabit, 2016). While many properties are still managed by the municipal housing company BragaHabit[5], other models of occupancy have emerged, notably purchase of private dwellings and private rental, causing it to partially lose its original status and classification. As well as the underutilised surrounding green spaces, the estate contains various shops and other non-residential units, including community spaces such as the youth centre opened following the agreement with the Youth Organisations Support Fund (*Fundo de Apoio a Organismos Juvenis*-FAOJ) in 1988, and activity areas such as the *Street Workout* Park, inaugurated in 2017.

In this reconfigured neighbourhood, although not so precarious and deprived as other popular neighbourhoods in Braga that lack infrastructures, equipment and that are characterized by an acute social and economic deprivation as well by degraded social housing, the working and living conditions are still hard for the most part, receiving low incomes and with low levels of formal education. However, we did not observe open protest movements against the authorities and institutions. Through participa-

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[5] *BragaHabit* is the municipal housing company in Braga, responsible for the development and management of social housing, also responsible for managing council accommodation support services and urban redevelopment.

tion in associations, residents make demands in a familiar, informal sphere, revealing semi-hidden transcripts of grievances against some institutional stakeholders. As such, the first question raised is that of understanding and explaining the low levels of outwardly visible conflict. In other words, by what mechanisms and for what reasons are not open conflicts but prevail informal grievances and critical semi-hidden transcripts[6] towards the authorities?

This article aims to understand how residents relate not only to the spaces they inhabit and the other residents of the building or block, but also to the surrounding area of the city and, in particular, the local authorities and various public institutions. After setting out the theoretical framework, we will briefly outline our research strategy and the methods and techniques used in the research project, both quantitative and qualitative, namely a survey and semi-structured interviews.

Having in mind the posed question, two core aspects of the survey results were taken into account. Firstly, we will construct a sociodemographic and economic profile, considering the objective living conditions, for instance undervalued and poorly paid jobs, low incomes and low levels of education. Secondly, we will analyse relationships between residents, as well as shared social representations of the surrounding societal and political institutions among residents, namely the media, the police, the judiciary, social security, the Council and, above all, BragaHabit. In more evocative terms, a description, an analysis and a crossing of the objective and subjective dimensions of the lives of residents and uncover relationships of collaboration (sharing and complicity) and/or friction within the community, or, in light of relationships of dependency with the local authorities, instances of collusion with authority figures within the council will take place.

## 2. Housing, authorities, and residents: A brief theoretical framework

Social housing is administered by the public sector, either via Central Government or local authorities, and involves the provision of accommodation organised and/or managed by government bodies and/or municipal companies, in response to housing shortages affecting vulnerable and/or low-income social groups, who, due to housing policy and market forces, cannot afford to rent or buy a home. Housing provision involves much more than simply building a residential space, measurable in square metres. It must be accompanied by the shops, services and facilities needed to make a

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[6] (Semi)hidden transcripts is a concept applied by Scott (1976, 1990) who in his research about the peasants in the South Asian context, draws attention to the behaviour adopted by the more impoverished peasants and dependents do not openly defy or confront in a public space the landowners and the holders of the local power. Rather, they express their grievances within the family and informal sphere. They adopt strategies that do not put them in danger and to secure their position, avoiding situations that can make matters worse.

residential space habitable and convenient, in terms of the right to the city (Bonetti, 1994, p.18ff; Ibern, 2013; Lefebvre, 1968; Scott *et al.*, 2016). Other services, including water and sanitation, electricity, education, health and supply services, must also be available, which is not always the case in social housing estates. A multidimensional approach is required in order to ascertain to what extent certain advantages/disadvantages are present in a given 'social housing' estate: on one hand, social connections, sociocultural experiences and neighbourhood networks and/or, on the other, potential processes of exclusion and/or socio-spatial segregation within the urban environment and surroundings of the neighbourhoods in question (Apparicio *et al.*, 2008, p. 356; Hannerz, 1983; Guerra, 1996; Cordeiro, 1997; Baptista, 1999; Costa, 1999). The significance of social relationships and neighbourhood networks leads to the neighbourhood effect, a hypothesis that assumes that living without neighbours negatively impacts the lives of residents, both in terms of their interactions and their individual characteristics (Van Ingren *et al.*, 2016). Neighbourhood dynamics and networks influence the behaviour, (physical and mental) health and quality of life of the residents and, consequently, their satisfaction with the environment in which they live. Therefore, the role played by neighbourhood environments in social interactions, interpersonal relations, job prospects, financial conditions, social status and even marital relations is vital to local and regional development. In their research, the aforementioned authors demonstrate how neighbourhoods influence the way in which individuals live, interact, work and rest.

The public 'social housing' model has given rise to a form of hegemonic power that has actively produced and reproduced socio-spatial inequalities and exclusion, particularly in the past (Almeida *et al.*, 1992; Bourdieu, 1970; Costa, 1998). These favour the maintenance of the *status quo* and existing socio-spatial divisions, reinforcing control, authority, and the entrenchment of power. While descriptive geographical concepts are relevant (e.g. concentrated and dispersed settlement), a sociological analysis is crucial because it seeks to interpret and understand place not only as a physical space of attraction/polarisation and flow, but also as a cultural code by which the self and the other are represented and a stage for the effects of power, must, as Remy (1975), Harvey (1977) and Van Ingren *et al.* (2016) observe, draw on theories of urban space as a form of power and control, a view also put forward in seminal works by Weber (1978/1920), Foucault (1979) and neo-Weberian scholars such as Ledrut (1968) and Freund (1975).

Indeed the social places and behaviours of the residents are mostly not only product of the objective living conditions namely the social and economic conditions (see Marx and Engels, 1976/1846), but also of the power relationships and the degree of availability and control of resources in the urban environment as well as in the community itself (Weber, 1978/1920). However, this relationship is not always direct and mechanic. There are even discrepancies between the objective life condition and

the subjective conditions and social and political representations. Nevertheless, such discrepancy is explained by moral economists such as Thompson (1979) and mostly by Scott (1990), seeing that those more in need of resources and dependent, due to minimum safety (*safety first*), tend to contain their manifestations of protest in open spaces. They give preference to (semi)hidden transcripts of dissatisfaction in a more private, familial or informal settings, so as to avoid a greater degradation but mostly to avoid acts of retaliation performed by those who hold the power, namely the local brokers (*caciques*), not only in rural but also in urban spaces (see Silva, 2012).As we will see, while open confrontation with the social and political surroundings is rare, informal and (semi)-hidden backbiting and complaints, less immediately visible, are a more common survival strategy, as several moral economists and sociologists have discussed in a range of contexts, from labourers (Estanque, 1999; Silva 2012a; Thompson, 1982/1963, 1979), to rural peasants in Latin America (Wolf, 1974), Southeast Asia (Scott, 1990) or Northwest Portugal (Silva, 1998).

Though the stated objectives have not been achieved in full, since the 1980s several developed countries have introduced policies aimed at gradually shifting away from the socio-spatial segregation of inhabitants, giving rise to new practices. Initially confined to spaces lacking access to transport or sanitation, the creation of new neighbourhoods with improved homes and the mobility of various higher-income communities has led to new practices and demands, and spaces with better access and facilities (Forrest-Bank *et al.*, 2014). In some cases, public housing has been used as a means of mitigating or confronting processes of gentrification and property speculation since the 2007 market crisis, though this is an exception, making use of existing commercial infrastructure and services in the surrounding areas (*New York City Public Design Commission*, 2018).

Sociological research has focused on the social conditions of family units living in 'social housing', regularly ignoring the (de)composition of accommodation and its reorganisation over time and the collective efforts of communities to prevent this phenomenon (Grey *et al.*, 2017). In some countries there are areas of public housing with a set standards (quality of housing/construction, residential environment, relationships between individuals in these spaces), that form the legal basis of protections for wealthy families, in terms of the modification of these spaces (Rajaei *et al.*, 2016). However poor 'social housing' conditions, such as damp and leaks, often contribute to the social stigmatisation of poverty; they also impact negatively the health of residents, causing respiratory issues, asthma and certain mental illnesses, all problems frequently associated with living in cold, damp housing (Grey *et al.,* 2017). Strategies such as painting the facades of several blocks the same colour and the presence of graffiti on the buildings give rise to a set of subjective social representations about the people who live there and, consequently, the neighbourhood (Flores-Colen and Brito, 2010). Some studies suggest a correlation between improved housing conditions and benefits to long-term health (Grey *et al.*, 2017).

In addition to the construction of buildings and technical issues, the residential environment encompasses the notion of neighbourhood and the feelings of belonging and satisfaction among residents.[7] Some of the problems of contemporary town planning have their roots in the crisis of place, not in the postmodern sense it is given by Marc Augé (1994), who went so far as to call certain spaces "non-places", but in terms of the absence, deterioration or low degree of social relations in former social housing estates, in which social networks have been dismantled and people have been forced to relocate, leading to a loss of memory and the sense of belonging to a shared community. In general, and particularly in the 20th century, processes of urban development under unregulated capitalism gave rise to vast quantities of social connections and relationships, while the emotional bonds resulting from neighbourhood action and the sense of belonging to a place were overlooked. The 'social housing estates' created by or resulting from this process became repositories of low-income, resource-poor individuals. While, in theory, such spatial realities should foster the creation of strong neighbourhood bonds on the micro scale, economic constraints and political to such an extent that these districts are often characterised by relationships of indifference, if not emulation and conflict.

From the Weberian perspective (Weber, 1978/1920), also shared by Bader and Benschop (1988), the development of differentiated urban spaces is associated with the varying levels of access to resources among different social groups, which position themselves within the housing market as owners or renters, according to land prices and the corresponding ground rent (Santos, 1982), and their respective buying/renting power. This means that in a market economy, more sought-after and valuable central spaces are only accessible to groups with greater resources, while others are kept at a distance, in the suburbs and peripheral areas. As capital does not care about controlling housing costs and ensuring affordability, since it is not profitable to do so, it falls upon Central Government or local councils to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups (Silva, 2012) by creating 'social housing', often precarious and rundown. Indeed, various conditions and factors of risk exist in neighbourhoods with a high prevalence of phenomena such as poverty, lack of economic opportunities, lack of neighbourhood organisations, weak or non-existent bonds of neighbourhood solidarity,

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[7] Although the feelings of being neighbourly and of belonging can be identified in the Andorinhas neighbourhood, this cannot be generalized as being a dominant trait, as shall be demonstrated. As Silva (2012, p. 188) argues, place "is not a simple container or 'point in space', but instead represents a meeting point that provides social stakeholders with various settings for transactions and modes of living (together) (solidarity-conflict, inclusion-exclusion, distance-proximity, integration-segregation), as well as anchoring and structuring daily work and leisure activities". As such, sense of place is an amalgamation of conscious and unconscious emotions, attachments and understandings, based not only on daily life in the present, but also on works of memory (Bourdieu, 2006). It encompasses not only person-to-person interaction, but also person-to-place interaction (Ghafourian & Hesari, 2017), giving it a multifaceted capacity to explain the bonds between individuals and the setting in which they live, as well as their culture, values and social symbols.

and the activation or entrenchment of social norms critical of behaviours considered 'deviant', as noted by various sociologists (Becker, 1968/1963; Goffman, 1988/1963; and, regarding Portugal specifically, Capucha, 1990; Almeida *et al.,*1992; Gonçalves, 1996; Guerra, 1996, p. 173). Such 'deviant' or 'criminal' behaviours, referred to as 'antisocial' in certain psychological approaches[8], are, from the point of view of critical sociology, eminently social insofar as they result from the interaction between society (and the standards of 'normal' individuals, in particular 'moral entrepreneurs') and individuals whose behaviour is considered deviant (Silva, 2012). The conditions that foster these social practices cannot be understood without considering objective living conditions of residents and their lack of access to resources, as mentioned above, nor can they be isolated from the poor condition of the physical spaces in question, the lack of adequate infrastructure, facilities and services, and the experience of poor housing and negative surroundings (Schwartz *et al.*, 2010).

Another approach centred on the objective living conditions and representations of residents focuses on their relationship to authority, not only on the national level but, more pertinently, on the municipal and local levels. There is often a clash between the urban planning policies the municipal authorities wish to implement and the needs, cultures, representations and expectations of inhabitants, local business owners and other individuals. While on one hand, residents do not exhibit homogenous views on their neighbourhood, society, and politics, due to class, ethnic and generational affiliations, differing lived experiences or political and ideological narratives and influences, they often perceive themselves as victims of social exclusion and stigmatisation by outsiders.

## 3. Research strategy: Methods and techniques

In this research, quantitative and qualitative techniques are used in a complementary way, mindful of the advantages and disadvantages of each data collection technique. Quantitative tools included a face-to-face survey of residents and their families, carried out during the day with housewives or mostly at the end of the day or at night time in their corresponding family homes, with the husband and wife present. Of the 224 families, 96 were surveyed. Of the 96 surveys, 92 were validated, constituting 95.8% of the sample that included various social groups, the main types of professions and levels of income (the lower being 251-558, with an intermediate level of 559 up to 1000, to the highest incomes situated between the 1001 and 3000 euros), the several levels of formal education and different housing conditions.

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[8] The World Health Organisation International Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD) refers to behaviours classified, from a biased perspective, as antisocial under F60.2 - *Dissocial Personality Disorder*, while the American Psychiatric Association Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders refers to antisocial traits as a personality disorder DSM-5 301.7 (F60.2).

The results are presented in this paper using exploratory and descriptive statistical techniques. In addition to the surveys, 13 semi-structured interviews of survey participants were carried out. However, three refused by justifying not having time to spare but in reality for fear of answering questions pertaining to their private life and mainly about their income. Also during the interviews criteria such as gender, marital status, age, profession or activity were considered as social indicators of belonging, the level of formal education, based on the availability demonstrated at the time of the survey. Next, the people selected according to these criteria, described their experiences before and coming to live in the neighbourhood, their experiences of living in the neighbourhood, their perceptions and ways of feel and live in the neighbourhood. Due to the low number of semi-structured interviews, content analysis was not done. The interviews were transcribed for illustration purposes. The critical semi-hidden transcripts were expressed not only at the end of the interviews and life stories but also in the interviews and life stories in an informal setting, namely in a base of trust, away from public spaces and local authorities. The interviews were a key source, as they provided insight into some of the reasons and meanings behind the responses to the questionnaire, enabling us to grasp qualitative aspects, which would otherwise, would be overlooked, through life stories and narratives.

While we believe it is important also to map the neighbourhood as a community (community mapping), we by no means intend to idealise the community as a completely harmonious and uniform reality. Mapping the neighbourhood is therefore understood as a visual and relational data collection technique, used in conjunction with other data collection techniques (questionnaire, interviews), in addition to data from ethnographic observation, in order to illustrate socio spatial relationships and, by doing so, portray the construction of identities around factors such as social class, gender and race/ethnicity. In the words of Van Ingren *et al.* (2016, p. 5): "*to ask for a map, is to say 'tell me a story.'*"

When embarking on the task of mapping the community, as described by Van Ingren *et al.* (2016, p. 5) and, perhaps more directly, getting closer to the community, the authorisation of the Andorinhas Neighbourhood Residents' Association (*Associação de Moradores do Bairro das Andorinhas*-AMBA) to access its facilities, in particular the Association Bar, was essential, as were the ethnographic 'tours' of everyday spaces provided by residents, in particular certain key informants, creating a climate of trust among the vast majority of residents.

Finally, it should be noted that our constant presence and prolonged observation – as opposed to sporadic participant observation – in situations such as community celebrations proved extremely fruitful and was beneficial in terms of strengthening relationships and gathering expressive and honest testimonies, particularly regarding the institutional authorities, such as the BragaHabit. While, on one hand, the research

team had easy access to a group of individuals thanks to the openness and trust given to us by the Residents Association, a care provider (e.g. childcare and care for the disabled and the elderly) and mediator of internal conflict and relationships with external bodies, we experienced difficulty convincing certain individuals to participate in the survey. In some cases, this was due to unstable living conditions, while others showed a degree of resentment and scepticism toward the actions of the leadership of the AMBA, which they viewed as an agent of local behavioural surveillance and control. The services provided by the Management of the AMBA[9] were, however, key to the success of this research project, as they introduced the research team to local residents in various public spaces (the association's bar, cybercafe and other local cafés, sports facilities and gyms).

Drawing on field notes and the mapping of the Andorinhas Neighbourhood, obtained through testimonies and entries in the field diary, it was possible to uncover the semi-hidden transcripts of the community that, according to Scott (1990), reveal the views and representations of the residents regarding other residents and, above all, outsiders, in particular the powers-that-be within the council.

## 4. Mapping the Andorinhas Neighbourhood

Given the diverse potential mapping strategies (physical/geographical, economic, social and political), our initial objective, as already stated, is to describe and analyse objective living conditions, habits, ways of life and worldviews. We will then focus on relationships with and representations of various groups within the community and, in particular, outsiders from society at large, above all, the authorities (police, social security, political parties and, crucially, the Council, and, within it, the municipal housing company BragaHabit).

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[9] Despite differing stances in relation to the AMBA, it should be noted that the AMBA emerged from the need to create a residents' committee to combat the increase in rents by the IGAPHE (Institute of Management and Disposal of State Housing) in the late 1980s, which, when combined with debts accumulated by insolvent families led, according to Barreira (2000), to feelings of abandonment by IGAPHE (among 90%), and the Municipal Council (75%), with residents venting "we are the children of the land and we have been abandoned here!" Today, under different circumstances, the AMBA, continues to negotiate rents and other matters with BragaHabit, provide important community services (filling forms, especially for BragaHabit), organise recreational activities (walks, dinners, social events, Christmas parties, Easter processions) and other consumption and leisure activities (card games, football matches). On the importance of associativism in 'social housing' estates, see Capucha (1990).

### 4.1. Sociodemographic profile of the Neighbourhood

The Andorinhas Neighbourhood is a relatively accessible space, integrated into the city in physical and geographic terms, though not in economic and social terms, due to the low buying power of its residents. Originally built by the IGAPHE (Institute of Management and Disposal of State Housing) and currently managed by BragaHabit, the neighbourhood contains commercial premises and public housing, let by BragaHabit, as well as private housing, with houses rented or purchased by private individuals. The validated sample consisted of 92 participants, 48.8% male and 52.2% female. The majority of survey participants are Portuguese nationals (98.6%). Also, most participants were born in Portugal (97.8%) and identify as white/Caucasian (96.7%).

The survey covered a wide age range, with participants aged between 20 and 87, the average age being around 49 (mean value of 48.95). In terms of education levels among residents, though levels are higher and more varied than in the 1980s and 90s, owing it partly to a higher age of leaving compulsory school for those born after 25 April 1974, low education levels persist. As such, though the mean and median values fall within the 3$^{rd}$ cycle/old year 5 (33.7%), the three largest groups of individuals are the latter, as well as 1$^{st}$ cycle/class 4 (28.1%) and 2$^{nd}$ cycle/year 6 (18.0%). It should be noted that the sample also contains individuals who have completed higher secondary or professional education (13.4%) and others who are illiterate (6.7%). These data contrast with a similar survey carried out in 1999 (Barreira, 2000), based on a sample of 80 families, in which 11% of the population was illiterate, 49% only possessed basic education and 25% preparatory or unified education, while 13% had studied to higher secondary level (7$^{th}$ year of high school, commercial and industrial schools), though these courses were often incomplete, and just 2% had attended higher education.

As for marital status, the data show that the majority of participants are married (54.3%) or in a long-term relationship (7.6%), often with children, jointly accounting for 61.9% of the sample. Of the remaining statuses, 19.6% are single and 12% widowed (12.0%). Separated (1.1%) and divorced individuals (4.3%) make up 5.4% of the sample. In terms of family dynamics, though the law advocates equality between partners in the running of a household, the view that the man is the 'head of the household' tends to prevail, not only in the sense of being the family's main provider, in structural-functionalist terms (see Parsons, 1956), but also in terms of agreement with common sexist phrases such as "*em casa manda ela, mas nela mando eu*" ("she's in charge of the house, but I'm in charge of her").[10] At the time of the survey, only 23% of wives worked outside the family home, a situation which, according to Pais (1985) and Wall (2005), is exacerbated by the birth of the first child, after which women withdraw from the labour market or split their time between domestic and

[10] However, this is not as marked as in the late 1990s when, according to Barreira (2000), 74% of survey participants agreed with this phrase.

non-domestic work. Even where men claim to agree with the division of household labour, there are clear disparities, with woman generally being responsible for cooking, ironing, cleaning the house, shopping, taking children to school and in matters of health, while men contribute to household repairs, take the children out for walks, and deal with bank accounts and more expensive purchases. These data are backed up by other studies carried out by Torres and F. Silva (1998), Wall (2005), Wall and Amâncio (2007) and Silva (2016).

In terms of employment, not including the almost one quarter of the sample who are still in education or training, other than the 15% working in retail or services (accountants, shopkeepers) and the 12% who are unemployed, the vast majority work in predominantly manual occupations, mainly as labourers (metal workers, builders), tailors, cleaners and domestic workers, and street vendors, often in the informal economy, demonstrating some continuity with the labour landscape in the 1990s (see Barreira 2000).[11] Figure 1, below, shows the distribution of family income.

Figure 1.
Income of Family Units in Andorinhas (%)
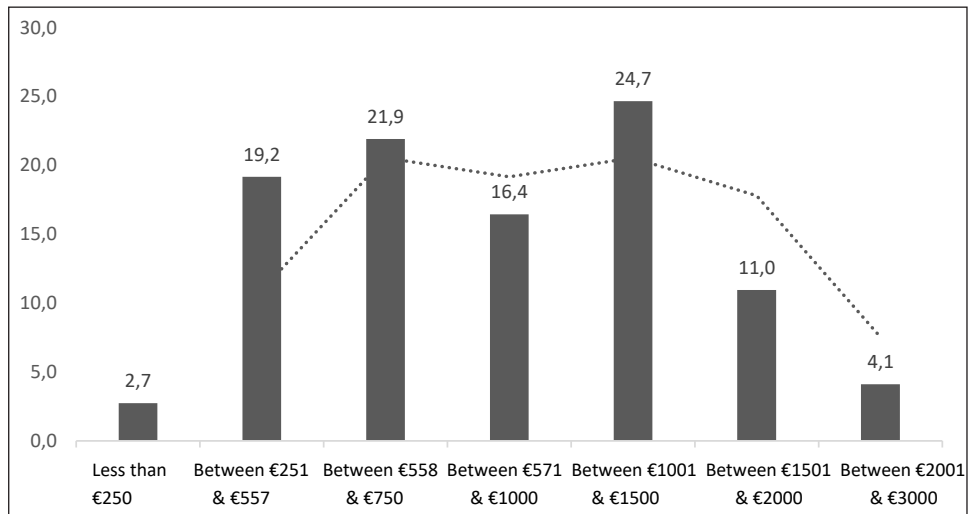


Source: Survey of Residents of the Andorinhas Neighbourhood *(Inquérito dos Moradores do Bairro das Andorinhas-* IMBdA).

With regard to the financial circumstances of family units in the Andorinhas Neighbourhood (AN), the majority of families (60.9%) either have no or very low incomes,

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[11] In 1999, aside from the 15% of people who were unemployed (of whom 52% were illiterate or only possessed basic education), 8% retirees and 17% working in the retail and service sectors, the majority of those in employment were salaried manual labourers (metalworkers and builders), while 22% were either domestic workers or retired domestic workers (see Barreira, 2000).

or a low income of €751 to €1000, two or more incomes sometimes being combined. It should also be noted that a significant percentage (24.7%) fall within the €1001 to €1500 income bracket, though this is not all that high when we consider that it may be a combination of the incomes of two or more family members. Except for 4.1% who have a more comfortable income of €2001 to €3000, the remaining 35.7% fall into the reasonable middle-income bracket of €1001 to €2000, but the majority live on low or very low incomes.

In terms of housing, the data show that on average residents have lived in the neighbourhood for almost 32 years (mode[12]) and almost three quarters of residents live in rented accommodation (72.5%), just over a quarter owning their own home (27.5%). Of those who rent their property, the majority are tenants of the municipal housing company BragaHabit (64.1%), while the remaining 35.9% rent their homes from private landlords or family. Monthly rents tend to range from under 100 euros (37.7%) to €101 to €200, (49.2%), accounting for 86.9% of the total sample, with the remaining 13.1% paying over €200 in rent.

Given the wide age range and the date of construction of the Andorinhas Neighbourhood, the vast majority have not always lived in the neighbourhood. As such, 89% have lived elsewhere, mainly in other nearby neighbourhoods such as Palhotas and Parretas and other areas of the parishes of Real and S. Vicente. They therefore experienced the better living conditions in their new homes in Andorinhas as a substantial improvement, a conclusion already drawn in 1999 by Barreira (2000), who identified negative views of the neighbourhood among almost ¾ of survey participants, though these waned or even reversed over time due to improvements to the neighbourhood, its central location and connections to the city (see Figures 3 and 4).

### 4.2. Living spaces: Apartment types

The most common are 3-bedroom apartments (60.4%), followed by 4-bedroom (30.8%) and 2-bedroom (8.8%), no other apartment types being present. All participants stated that internally they had a living room, kitchen, electricity, sanitation, running water and wooden, floating or tiled floors (other than the 11% who live in flats with concrete flooring). In terms of other facilities, the vast majority have a full bathroom (95.6%), while some families only have a toilet and shower, while others only have a toilet. It should be noted that apartments with 3 or more bedrooms have more than one bathroom, offering greater flexibility.

In terms of temperature regulation, a minority of homes have air conditioning (5.5%) or heating (13.2%), a fireplace (12.1%) or a boiler (2.2%). The vast majority have

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**12** Approximate mode value

piped natural gas (96.7%) as a result of improvements to infrastructure in the Andorinhas neighbourhood in recent years, mainly between 2003 and 2005.

In terms of amenities, all survey participants stated that they have a refrigerator and a hob. These are followed by other appliances and amenities such as a washing machine (96.7%), oven (98.9%), television (98.9%), heater (97.8%), cable/satellite TV (97.8%), microwave (95.6%), vacuum cleaner (92.3%), internet (84.6%), freezer/chest freezer (74.7%), hi-fi or radio (74.7%), tumble dryer (35.2%), dishwasher (30.8%) and camcorder (14.3%). When these data are compared to those gathered in 1999 by Barreira (2000), we note a considerable increase in the ownership of certain items, owned by fewer people in the past in the case of washing machines (85%) and vacuum cleaners (70%), or far fewer people in the case of microwaves (5%) and dishwashers (10%).

With regard to Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), the majority own a mobile phone (90.1%), 41.8% of which are smartphone*s*, followed by computers (65.9%) and tablets (45.1%). The majority of residents state they are happy (66.7%) or very happy (5.6%) with their living conditions, contrasting with 14.4% who are unsatisfied, and 13.3% who are very unsatisfied. While it is apparent that living conditions are reasonable and a high percentage own certain appliances and electrical goods, this alone is not sufficient proof of a high quality of life or an ability to change their way of life, much less the potential for upward social mobility, which implies a change in class.

### 4.3. Space in the neighbourhood: Available services, transport and access

In terms of the services available in the Neighbourhood, our principal focus was on public transport. Figure 2 shows the level of satisfaction:

Figure 2.
Opinion of Public Transport (scale 0-5)
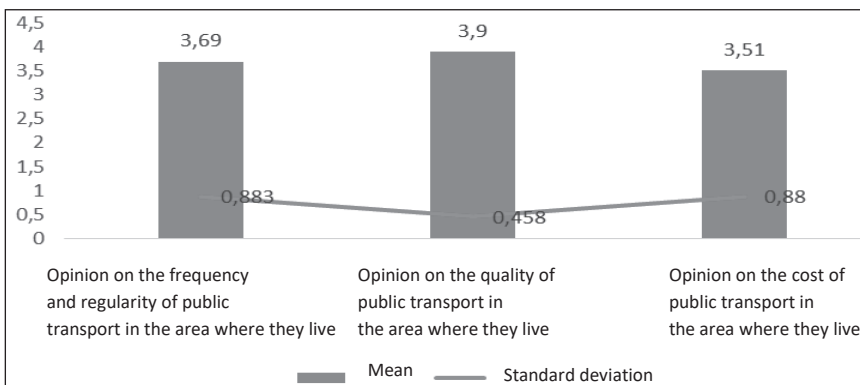


Source: IMBdA.

Figure 2 shows high internal consistency within the question group (alpha = .733**),** whereby individuals stated that they were generally satisfied with public transport, particularly in terms of quality (mean = 3.90). However, criticisms were made of its lack of frequency and regularity (mean=3.69) and its cost (mean=3.51). The lack of regular public transport within the neighbourhood was countered by the existence of nearby stops and the overall quality of transport services.

Residents stated that they were fairly satisfied with general conditions in the neighbourhood, highlighting the space for children to play as an advantage. In the assessment of the neighbourhood, the lowest score was for the lack of space for minor domestic repairs (alpha =.735).

Figure 3.
Assessment of general conditions in the neighbourhood (scale 0-5)
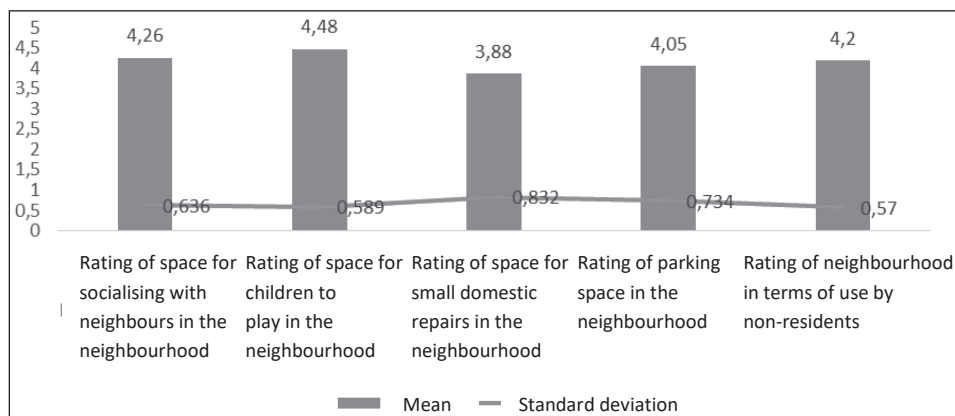


Source: IMBdA

Another question group concerned the internal characteristics of the neighbourhood. In terms of internal consistency, the alpha value was .337, revealing low consistency within the question group. When the results were analysed, it became apparent that for questions on assaults in the neighbourhood, the circulation of drugs, and whether it would be better if certain people left, standard deviation in relation to the mean values was extremely high. This explains the low internal consistency within the group, showing that different individuals responded differently to these questions, as seen in Figure 4.
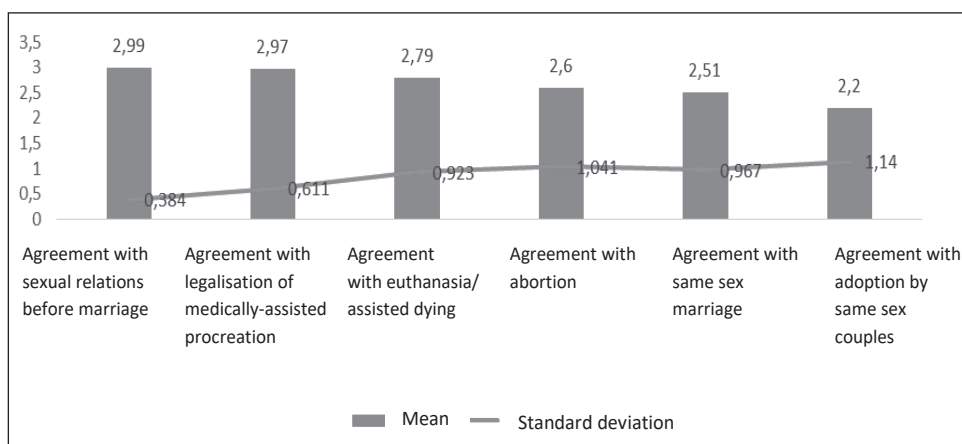
**Figure 4.**

Representations of the Andorinhas Neighbourhood (scale 0-5)
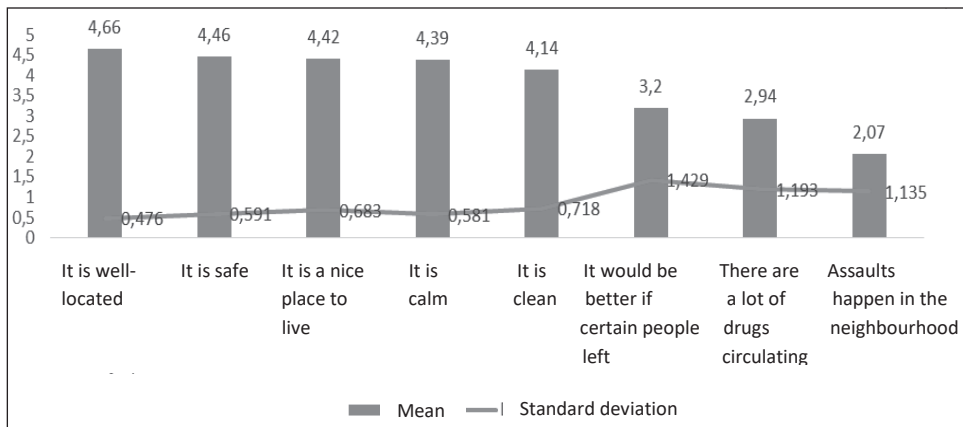


Source: IMBdA.

Upon the analysis of the matrix of correlation between variables, it became apparent that the individuals who responded positively to each of these three questions also responded positively to the other two, the same being true of those who responded negatively. This question reveals that different individuals interact with the neighbourhood in different ways and, significantly, in different spaces. As Figure 4 shows, it should also be noted that among the higher values, the phrase "Andorinhas is a clean neighbourhood" has the lowest mean score (4.14) and highest standard deviation (.718). The representations of survey participants regarding drugs exhibit huge disparity. In the field diary, we observed that younger residents allude to high levels of drug circulation, compared to older inhabitants. While this disparity may, at first, appear to be generational, interviews reveal that older residents are aware of the presence of drugs. However, when assessing the current situation, they compare it to the early days of the neighbourhood, when drug dealing was more prevalent: "It used to be bad. Drugs. You couldn't walk in the streets. Children couldn't play out (…) (Now) you don't see drugs like you used to. Things are better for children now, they've got the playground here" (male, aged 60). Besides the drugs issue, Figure 5 illustrates representations and views on other legal and ethical issues, measured on a scale of 0 to 5:

Figure 5.
Views on legal and ethical issues (scale 0-5)



Source: IMBdA.

As shown by Figure 5, the majority of individuals are accepting of sexual relations before marriage (2.99), the legalisation of medically assisted reproduction (2.97) and euthanasia/assisted dying (2.79). From various informal conversations, it was possible to infer that both men and women value virginity prior to marriage and fidelity on the part of the woman, though it should be noted that the expectation of fidelity and submissiveness on the part of the woman was more prevalent in the late 1990s, according to Barreira (2000), shared by 75% of men and 90% of woman, whereas more recent data suggests fewer moral constraints in this area (see Figure 5)[13].

The lowest mean values (though still tending toward approval) concern the adoption of children by same sex couples (2.20), same sex marriage (2.51) and abortion (2.60). This is a group of questions that had a reasonable level of internal consistency at .673. The main fears cited by residents (alpha=.513) are 'falling ill', 'being unable to provide for their children's future' and 'losing their job'.

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[13] In this regard, in addition to culturalist interpretations of the phenomenon (Pitt-Rivers 1988, Peristiany 1988), see studies by various authors including Schneider (1971), Cole (1991), Silva (2012) who note the significance of the value of premarital virginity as a condition of homogamous or heterogamous marriage, condemning the way in which, particularly in traditional societies, this value is closely linked to the cultural binary of honour-shame which, in addition to its ideological aspects and control of women, was related to the monetary or property value of the woman who, in order to marry homogamically or hypergamically, must, among other attributes, remain a virgin so as not to lose her status within the marriage market. To understand this phenomenon and the varying positions of authors on the subject, see Silva (2012).

## 5. Assessment of and stances towards institutions/organisations among residents

With regard to resident perceptions and assessments of the various institutions, in particular the council, we sought to identify the main problems and the views and stances of the residents themselves. The transformation of the neighbourhood from the 1980s to the present day is characterised by a shift away from its origins as a 'social housing estate', a status it lost almost a decade ago. Acquisition/purchase of apartments by residents gave rise to a neighbourhood in which, on one hand, the majority of accommodation is managed by the local authority (through BragaHabit), while on the other, some individuals rent properties from private landlords or relatives. In overcoming its initial situation, marred by internal conflict associated with drug dealing, the neighbourhood became more open, while, simultaneously, closing itself to outsiders: (*i*) open insofar as, having eliminated certain obstacles, outsiders can visit the neighbourhood freely, if they wish; (*ii*) closed insofar as individuals who are self-conscious about their financial and social status exhibit a desire to shut themselves off from the exterior, from representatives of agencies and individuals from outside neighbourhood.

Sense of place and sense of belonging are interpreted in two different ways. While internally, social bonds create a feeling of neighbourhood belonging, social stigmatisation by outsiders renders relationships with the latter ambivalent: *"The advantages (of living in the neighbourhood?) My friends! The disadvantages are… being discriminated against"* (female, aged 42). Others add that the problem is not exclusive to this neighbourhood – which many no longer even consider a "social housing estate" – but shared by other areas perceived as social housing:

> People who live in Andorinhas, Santa Tecla, Enguardas, "the people who live there are all abnormal, full stop." That's how they see us. When they come to meet the people, visit the neighbourhood, they see they were completely wrong. This is what a person from the neighbourhood strongly feels. I am proud. 'I lived in the Andorinhas neighbourhood.' I am proud to say I lived here" (male, aged 43).

This shared neighbourhood pride is not only based on their origins and ways of life, but also their modes of socialisation in the street, among adults and, above all, children and young people. We must also highlight another element of identity identified during our ethnographic observations, related to the central geographical location of the neighbourhood within the city: informal bonds with *Sporting Clube de Braga* among a large proportion of the population, especially younger residents, who often wear clothing featuring the club symbol. In the proximity of the neighbourhood, there is also a commercial establishment frequented by members of one of the fan groups of the club in question, "*Red Boys* Andorinhas" (Martins, 2017), demonstrat-

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ing neighbourhood allegiances.[14] Their games, experiences, and physical and psycho-logical capacity in the face of adversity are valued and may have contributed to the socialisation of children, adolescents and young people in the neighbourhood. In the past, given the neighbourhood's 'negative' reputation, particularly until the last dec-ade, their acts of indiscipline or minor transgressions (petty theft), misadventures or 'creative' excesses (for example selling balloons or chestnuts) were, according to Bar-reira (2000), viewed by shopkeepers and others as the work of 'good-for-nothings' 'bad-mannered kids', 'rebels' or 'savages' (for example, during football tournaments or group trips to the Bracalândia theme park).

One question in this survey aimed to ascertain how residents view the media and the various institutions and organisations in the surrounding environment. These include centralised government institutions such as the *Rendimento Social de Inserção* (So-cial Integration Income - RSI) and Social Security teams of the Ministry for Social Security, the *Polícia de Segurança Pública* (Public Safety Police - PSP), belonging to the Ministry of Internal Administration, as well as council-run agencies, notably the municipal company that manages social housing. Figure 6 shows how residents assess these institutions on a scale from 0 to 4:

Figure 6.
Assessment of institutions/organisations by residents (scale 0-5)
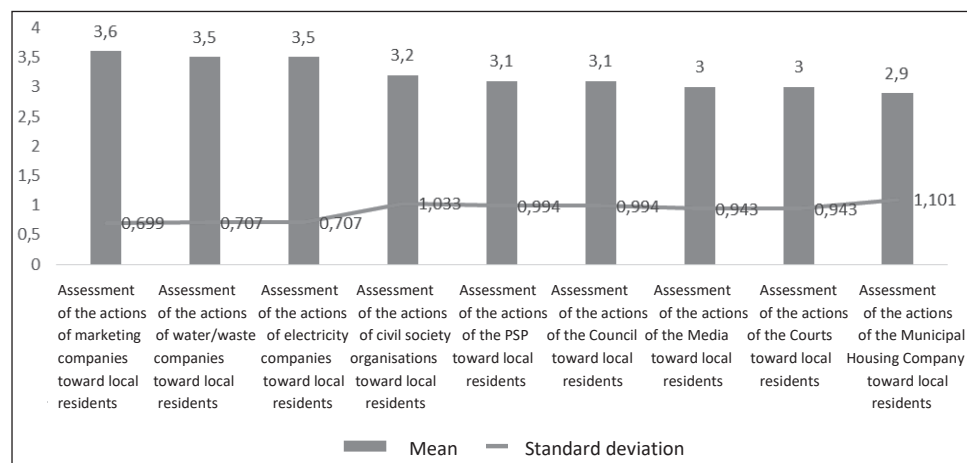


Source: IMBdA.

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**14** In 1999 Barreira (2000) observed three forms of coexisting in the neighbourhood: *(i)* integration, or interaction not only with family members, but also with neighbours, in 43% of cases *(ii)* a demarcation, maintaining relationships solely with family members or people with whom they share an apartment ("I mainly live my life at home, I keep myself to myself") in 47% of cases and *(iii)* isolation (characterised by the absence of any lasting social contact) in 10% of cases. On these processes of identity, identification and non-identification/ demarcation, see Pinto (1991) and also H.S. Gonçalves (1994) on social housing in the South of Vila Franca de Xira.

From the responses of residents expressed in Figure 6, we can see that their average rating of the RSI and Social Security teams is low, with responses to this item representing just over 15% of total responses, which is far from representative. Recourse to Social Security via social workers in a context and 'culture of poverty' as referred to by Lewis (1979) does not always have a collective character of sharing, mutual aid and affirmation. Instead, as a rule, survival and/or victimisation strategies are adopted on the individual or family level, which, according to Barreira (2000), certain 'moral entrepreneurs' such as the parish priest of S. Vicente, have interpreted in disapproving terms, as seen below:

> These people only know how to beg. They go begging to Social Services. And they tinker with the information. I know that. They don't want to work anymore. We've already tried looking for people to work in the church as cleaners, but no. They would rather beg. It's less work. I know of people who were "taking advantage" of the distribution of food to the poorest by the Church; when they knew we were coming, they would hide their televisions, they would hide their phones so we would believe they really were poor.

While complaints were made about the lack of social facilities, failings in health and social care and the Social Security system – though more pronounced in the past than they are today – the most negative ratings fall to BragaHabit (mean=2.9), the Municipal Council (mean=3.0) and the PSP (mean=3.1). Although, in numerical terms, BragaHabit is the most criticised organisation, some individuals defend its existence, sphere of influence and mode of action: "I've got nothing to complain about. I have no complaints, (…) BragaHabit has a reason to exist, and I think it's really good!" (male, aged 60). However, criticisms of the municipal housing company abound. Residents state that improvements to certain spaces in the neighbourhood are the result of their own hard work, due to a lack of investment: "*in terms of the work, I was the one who painted the stairwell. I painted all of the stairwells (…). Some residents expressed their frustration: 'as you've painted the stairwell, we'll pay for materials'. And that's all. They pay for materials and they get nicely painted stairwells*" (male, aged 60). Others argue that BragaHabit does not consider improvements made by residents to their homes: "A lot of people have done work, but there are also a lot of people who can't and BragaHabit should think of them too!" (female, aged 60). These collaborative efforts, which strengthen community bonds, are the result of financial inaction by BragaHabit: "There are many, many improvements to be made and that's why we work together. BragaHabit says it has no funds, that it has no budget" (male, aged 43). What's more, the reported ongoing investment issues at BragaHabit have incentivised many residents to make efforts to buy their homes: "Now we've bought our house. If there hadn't been BragaHabit, we wouldn't have done anything" (male, aged 46). When we tried to ascertain the major problems affecting residential properties, we received complaints about facades (and roofing), as well as pipework:

With the facades, at the very least they need to get rid of the damp, every house has it… I've always painted over it. It needs new pipes. The pipes to my bathtub and my bedroom have burst, the walls are all peeling off… (male, aged 67).

I've already made requests (to BragaHabit) and nothing… They came and took photos, but they never came back to do anything. They just took photos, but nothing since. They haven't repaired anything. They only repaired other people's; they've never fixed mine. I'm sick of going there and I can't rely on them (female, aged 60)

Families are therefore faced with inaction on the part of the local authorities: they report problems, in particular the poor sanitary conditions and pipework, the facades and the leaks and damp. BragaHabit records the issues but does nothing to resolve them. This neighbourhood is a prime example of what Tadeu *et al.* (2018) identified as the main causes of damp facades: poor choice and use of materials and a lack of up-keep. In the field diary, we observed constant references to issues with leaks and damp, which, according to residents, were resolved in part by the efforts of inhabitants to paint the facades and install external thermal insulation or ETICS (*External Thermal Insulation Composite Systems*), commonly known as '*capotto',* to save energy.

Complaints about the media referred, on one hand, to the portrayal of Andorinhas as a neighbourhood responsible for allegedly 'criminal' practices and, on the other, to its minimal coverage of community events and celebrations, let alone neighbourhood personalities. Martins (2017, pp. 89-109) observed the same phenomenon, stressing that its image as a dangerous, problem neighbourhood, and its associations with crime and drug dealing result, to a large extent, from stigmatisation driven by the actions of the media. In this sense, it could be argued that social stigmatisation acts as a negative intermediary between the residents and the rest of the city.

The complaints directed at the council focused on its disinterest in the community and its practices, senior council executives even being accused of not knowing the Andorinhas Neighbourhood. The explaining of the assessment of the PSP (Public Security Police) is more complex. Based on notes from the field diary, it was possible to conclude that complaints about the PSP resulted not from their failings, but rather from their constant patrols of the local area, based on the assumption it is a potentially criminal neighbourhood, a label also convergent with the actions of the local media.

Though problems with the cleanliness of the Neighbourhood were alluded to above, residents rated AGERE, the municipal company responsible for water, street cleaning, sanitation, upkeep of parks and waste disposal, higher than other municipal companies on average. Instead, showing a lower level of critical conscience than could be expected, they pin the blame on a 'lack of cleanliness' or a 'lack of manners', among

their neighbours, complaints which, though not as common as they were in the past, persist to this day to a certain extent.

During the community mapping stage and subsequent field observation, we noted some of the issues raised, such as washing lines hung in public spaces, the dirtiness of building entrances externally and apartment blocks internally, and littering. The Association and the residents themselves portray these as individual failings to be remedied (also stating that the situation is gradually improving), a hangover from practices entrenched among residents since the early days of the neighbourhood. As well as monitoring unwanted or damaging behaviours such as drug consumption, some residents, in particular members of the Residents Association, also aim to improve the image of the neighbourhood through community festivities and actions to demand improvements to its infrastructure, appearance and facilities. Furthermore, residents of the Andorinhas Neighbourhood are frequently, though often privately, "sharp tongued" in their criticism of outsiders, in particular politicians. They also often express their needs and demands, their feelings of pride in belonging to the neighbourhood in the face of its detractors and, above all, politicians deaf to their demands. In the terms used by moral economics such as Thompson (1982/1963), Wolf (1974) and Scott (1990), the data gathered reveal (semi)-hidden transcripts on the family and community level, which are voiced more explicitly and publicly by the Residents Association, particularly during electoral campaigns, in order to strengthen and achieve some of the requested improvements to the neighbourhood. Compared to the negative perceptions and images of the neighbourhood in the 1990s, as observed by Barreira (2000),[15] this study reveals some improvements to infrastructure, repairs to homes and social facilities, which have made the neighbourhood a more pleasant place.

## 6. Conclusion

The Andorinhas Neighbourhood is a residential area nearing its 40th anniversary, with blocks of apartment buildings initially built using a variety of poor building materials in order to cut construction costs, with no standardisation. Consequently, the blocks vary in terms of building quality. However, residents describe it as a well-located, calm, safe and pleasant place to live, with local businesses and services in the vicinity,

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[15] Though Barreira (2000) noted that the majority liked their homes, he recorded the reasons tenants disliked the neighbourhood: 68% due to drug problems, 57% because of "bad neighbours", 20% due to "lack of cleanliness", 15% due to "poor building quality" (15%) and 18% due to the "disrepair of the neighbourhood". Though 22% of residents had a positive view of the neighbourhood, 69%, the great majority, had a negative view, due to its poverty and stigmatisation, which still exists to this day, though to a lesser extent thanks to the work of the Association. Regarding negative views of the Andorinhas Neighbourhood in a recent study, see Martins (2017). A similarly negative image can also be found in other studies, including Gonçalves (1994).

but with limited access to public transport. As well as casting off its label as a 'drug neighbourhood', which persisted from its inauguration until the 1990s, according to the newspaper *Jornal de Notícias* (JN, 9-9-1998), it has also reversed an initial process of deracination and/or attachment to old physical spaces. This has helped forge a sense of place among the younger generations, who have not only invested in homes, but also the surrounding spaces with the participation of former residents in the neighbourhood, something to which the Residents Association contributed greatly.

In terms of positioning, the Andorinhas Neighbourhood has expanded its sphere of influence. On one hand, there are people who would rather move out of the neighbourhood, though others wish to stay. On the other, there are individuals who no longer live in the neighbourhood, but continue to frequent local establishments, from cafés to the headquarters of the Residents Association. Others still state that they live close to the neighbourhood. Those who choose to leave continue to participate in the social and cultural life of the neighbourhood, thanks, above all, to friendships and family ties and, without doubt, due to memories that remain with them, creating a sense of belonging and social identity, even though they no longer live in the area.

Regarding the issue of drug dealing and consumption in the neighbourhood, a difference of opinion persists, largely along generational lines, as a result of the major problems the neighbourhood faced in the 1980s and 1990s, which older residents remember, putting the current situation in context. Moreover, while there are still some problems with urban decay, due to the poor-quality building materials used, this situation was far more difficult and problematic in previous decades, largely due to the lack of social infrastructure and facilities, ubiquitous graffiti, and a lack of care for the exteriors (and sometimes the interiors) of homes.

This study proved innovative in two respects. On one hand, the analysis of quantitative data revealed objective socioeconomic living conditions: unemployment or predominantly manual and/or precarious employment in the retail and service sectors, low incomes, low levels of education including some illiteracy, and reasonable housing conditions thanks to struggles coordinated by the AMBA. On the other hand, subjective human factors, the weak organization and low social class consciousness and above all the political dependency and the feeling of being powerless against the multiple authorities and powers, demonstrate that the precarious or deprivation conditions are not enough for collective action to demand a collective improvement of life and housing conditions. Thus, such behaviours clearly show the weight of the assumptions of the power model and the principle of safety first sustained by the before mentioned moral economy theorists.

This research project also brought to light important information on relationships with authorities and interactions between the neighbourhood and the institutions that materially impact its residential, emotional, and physical sustainability. Emphasis

was placed on external work to the residential buildings, in particular painting and roofing work, as well as the installation of ETICS which improve energy efficiency while enhancing the appearance of the area. Other than the water and waste collection company AGERE, which residents rated above average, and the functioning of Social Security, which they rated as reasonable, residents reported a tense relationship with the media, accusing it of promoting stereotypes and stigmas about the neighbourhood, which can be linked to negligence and negative stances adopted by the Council and, above all, BragaHabit. Opinions on the latter vary, though they are predominantly negative, at times strongly so, reflecting the existence of conflict, sometimes visible, but for the most part latent. While some residents state that they understand the role of an organisation like BragaHabit, others criticise its negligence, as well as the criteria used when resolving problems with accommodation. These practices of action/inaction on the part of the organisation responsible for housing give an impression of arbitrariness and disinterest in the future of the neighbourhood. Contrary to what may be expected, though vulnerable and lacking in resources, the residents do not possess power of disposal and negotiation. They are more dependent and, as a result, more restrained in terms of open criticism of local and municipal authority figures. Contrary to the theory of relative deprivation and a dogmatic interpretation of the Leninist position (see Silva, 1998, 2012a), according to which the poorer the social stakeholders, the more predisposed they are towards criticism, opposition, or rebellion, this is not the case in the relationship between poor residents and the local and municipal authorities, as the sociologists and moral economists mentioned above have observed and discussed in diverse historical contexts. When they are not organised and placed in a vulnerable situation in atomist terms, poor individuals with scarce resources prefer to act with restraint in the public sphere and, if they do air their 'grievances' or 'complaints', do so in a familiar, informal and often (semi)-hidden manner, in order to retain the favour of those in power and, above all, avoid reprisals for open, direct, public criticism.

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# (Polu)-skriveni i manifestni transkripti u načinima življena i stanovanja: četvrt 'društvenog stanovanja' u Andorinhasu, Braga-Portugal

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**Sažetak**

Ovaj rad donosi rezultate istraživanja provedenog u četvrti Andorinhas, izgrađenoj u Bragi ranih 1980-ih. Temelji se na kvantitativnim i kvalitativnim podacima prikupljenim upitnikom, polustrukturiranim intervjuima i životnim narativima. Ta pluralna metodologija omogućila je analize objektivnih životnih uvjeta, navika i načina života, te odnosa i načina predstavljanja ne samo između različitih grupa unutar zajednice, već i odnosa između stanovnika četvrti i okolnog društva, uključujući institucije i predstavnike javnih vlasti (policiju, sudstvo, socijalno osiguranje, usluge, medije te posebno općinsku stambenu tvrtku BragaHabit). Rezultati upućuju na prisutnost ne samo manifestnih, već i (polu)skrivenih transkripata, na razinama obitelji i zajednice, ali rijetko na razini otvorenih kolektivnih akcija za unaprjeđenje četvrti.

*Ključne riječi:* društveno stanovanje, četvrt Andorinhas, Braga-Portugal, miješane metode, BragaHabit.

Sociologija i prostor