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Urban Living Labs: cultural scenes, the Arts, and artists as levers of new urbanities

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In the context of action research, Urban Living Labs are proving to be particularly relevant in terms of encouraging reflection and debate in regards to urban spatial problems and their transformation, especially in relation to allowing experiences involving the various actors and agents present in certain places. This article discusses the framework of the research, including the role which the Arts and artists themselves play in the transformation of the city, in order to find alternatives to the dominant models. We define the concept of the artistic and cultural scene (a mix of one place and a whole network, characterized by critical thinking, the effervescence/disquiet and energy), where will be located the Urban Living Lab. This reflection is geographically located in the city of Lisbon, Portugal

The ULLs focused on in this paper arise in the context of research about “the encounters between the city and the arts, the emergence of new urbanities.” The main research arguments deal with: (i) how the city uses the arts as a way of valorizing itself, as a form of protest and as a means of reclaiming qualities that it has lost; (ii) in turn, the arts and artists consider the city as a means of stimulating inspiration, a sort of platform to strengthen relationships and to disseminate artworks; (iii) these encounters are responsible for triggering city transformations, creating new ways of producing urban places which promote social justice and creativity, developing new urbanities, and reinforcing or reinventing local identities. These transformations correspond to the central concept of our research, which is the culture scene.

The European contemporary city results from the conjunction of several layers related to different visions and models about what the city should be.

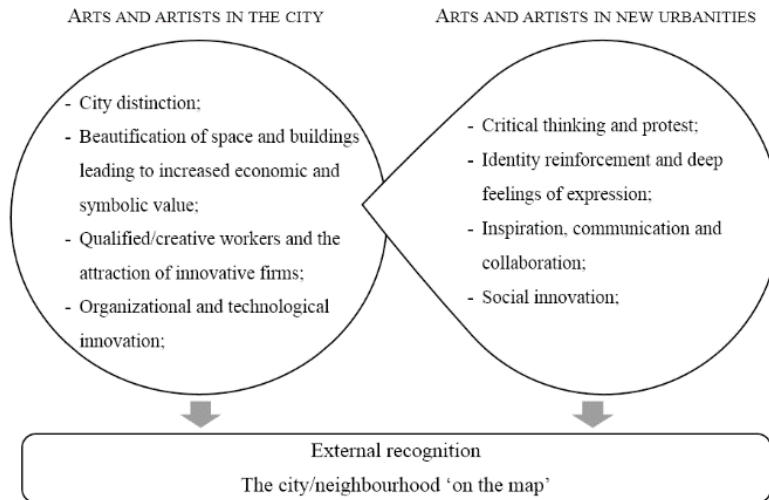
On the one hand, the hegemonic powers imposed their visions in order to maintain and reinforce the established political order. On the other hand, resistance movements tried to avenge alternative visions for cities, provoking conflict and tension locally or within a wider scope. Sometimes these alternative views are concretized in certain circumscribed spaces, either as ways of relieving the resistance pressure or because the authorities have difficulty in controlling these spaces. Such conflicts arise as “seeds of change” and even as levers of urban social innovation. New urbanities resulting from these “seeds” follow the vision that “another city is possible!” arguing for the existence of alternatives between the modern and the neoliberal city models (Borja 2011). The commonalities of these alternatives are focused on values such as: citizen/human scaling; the encouragement of proximity relations; the creation of a green and healthy city; social innovation; pluralism and interaction; and justice and democracy.

The arts and the artists themselves both play crucial roles in contemporary cities, either by reinforcing and idealizing mainstream agents and institutions or through actively protesting and promoting socio-territorial innovation boosting and enhancing the new urbanities (figure 1). The next figure shows the links between the arts and artists to the “flagships” of the neoliberal city (grand museums, opera houses, international fairs, exhibitions and so on), contributing towards the significant increase of the economic value of certain urban spaces: “at the neighbourhood level, the presence or introduction of a particular cultural worker or consumer can be modelled and tested for impacts on surrounding property values, retail businesses, building vacancy rates, jobs, and income” (Markusen & Gadwa 2010, 382). But in Lisbon, both the arts and artists are also central protagonists of urban alternative movements and initiatives, of urban ideals and real utopias (Wright 2010). In this regard, it is this latter idea that we focus on in this ongoing research.

In relation to the recent economic and political crises and the subsequent austerity policies, southern European cities have seen the emergence of many bottom-up artistic initiatives driven by political, social and civic goals. Often these actions are supported by local authorities—based on proximity commitments—contributing expressly to the revitalization of urban places. Why arts and artists? Arts have the power to amplify communication and to transcend the quarrels of daily life, allowing people to express their deep sentiments and expectations. The artistic domain also typically anticipates more desired futures (Ruby 2002; Smiers 2005).

We aim to explore and debate recent urban artistic experiences converging in certain city areas configuring cultural scenes (Straw 2004; Silver, Clark & Navarro 2010; Silver, Clark & Graziul 2011; Kotarba & LaLone 2014; Silver & Clark 2015), in other words, spaces that concentrate meeting venues for artists and intellectuals as well as places where their works are revealed and commercialized. Normally,

FIGURE 1. The emergence of new urbanities in the city: the role of the arts and artists



Source: authors

these are vibrant places where, for example, the restoration of run-down or abandoned buildings is pursued by way of public and private urban rehabilitation schemes. The peculiarity of these places and, at the same time, their exoticism gives them a seductive character. Such dynamics of social innovation (Fontan, Klein & Tremblay 2005) and the possibility to produce new urbanities requires inter-scalar relations, such as the micro-spaces of cafes, workshops or associations, which serve to establish connections to the world through social networks and digital means (Castells 1996).

To understand and reflect on transformation processes triggered by cultural scenes, we will use ULLs. These labs allow to mimic as close as possible the everyday reality and the changes that the arts are provoking in the city.

The ULLs included in our research project follow a road map consisting of three essential questions, which will be developed in the following sections of this article.

- i. Are urban Living Labs an adequate methodology in terms of co-creating new urbanity experiences through the arts? How can these be shaped into the space of the scene?

- ii. How can proximity relations in cultural scenes (or “milieus”) trigger new urbanities, new modes of living and of producing in the city?
- iii. What are the tensions between transformation and permanence and the links between different protagonists in the cultural scene’s conformation?

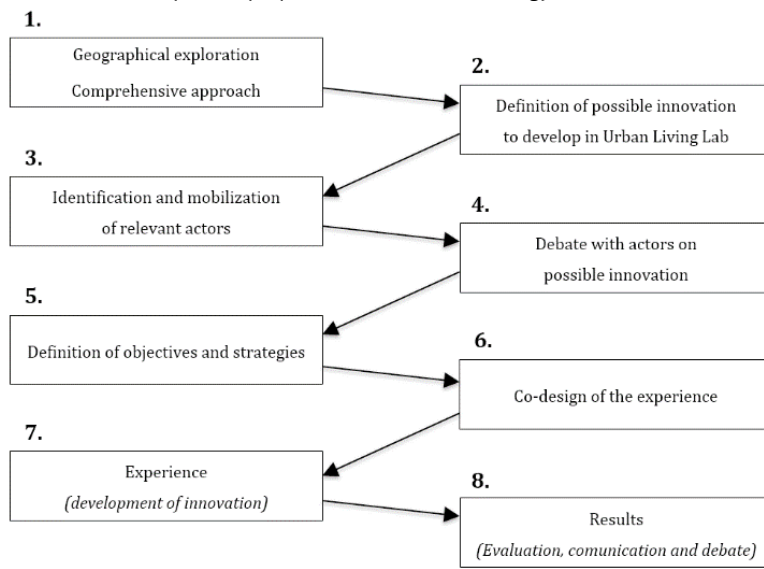
Why urban Living Labs?

Urban Living Labs are a method of action research that is based on the discussion and implementation of an innovation from the practicalities of daily life. For Bergvall-Kareborn *et al.* (2009: 3), a Living Lab is “a user-centric innovation milieu built on every-day practice and research, with an approach that facilitates user influence in open and distributed innovation processes engaging all relevant partners in real-life contexts, aiming to create sustainable values.” It is important to note that this method allows for an intense and integrated engagement of actors who are often invisible and silent in the processes of discussion and deliberation. Thus, it is possible to move beyond a linear and top-down layout of diffusion of innovation, and to thus promote their democratization (Bergvall-Kareborn, Eriksson & Ståhlbröst 2015; Buhr, Federley & Karlsson 2016). Based on

this idea, it is critical to emphasize the importance of this research method in the context of socio-cultural innovation in urban areas (Juujärvi & Pessa 2013; Baccarne *et al.* 2015). Such spaces are characterized by a fast pace and an intense complexity, which impedes the search process or the development of coherent, cohesive and inclusive dynamics.

Urban spaces, by their complexity, integrate a diverse set of places and actors who develop their own actions. Most often, they act in an isolated way for reasons that are associated with the development of dominant and hegemonic ideas and, as Castells (1972) mentions, with a political practice of class. The absence of collective action in the production, use and diffusion of innovation processes can put into question the mode of operation and its future. Contradicting the logic of individualization and the loss of collective sense (Bourdieu 1998; Bauman 2007) present in the current city, collective actions reinforce feelings of belonging, allowing for experiences and alternative practices that can lead to new urbanities, namely new ways of producing the city. Despite the endogenous differences, collective action creates more robust processes (Simmel 2010: 76) and leads to a political position. In the context of immaterial production, this goes beyond the traditional boundaries and extends to the cultural, social and political field of the power relations that make up the urban space (Hardt & Negri 2004: 120-121).

In our view, figure 2 summarizes the eight steps of an urban Living Lab, starting with a comprehensive approach of the place and networks in question, and giving rise to a real experience involving different actors and agents with major roles in the artistic and cultural scene. In the specific case of this research, which aims to discover how the various transformations and resistances take place in the city through the arts and artists, it is noted that the collective practices that involve researchers, artists, local agents and/or other stakeholders have great importance. The involvement of all these actors (point 3 on the road map

FIGURE 2. Road map of the proposed urban lab methodology

Source: authors

– figure 2) will allow them to co-create and co-decide in a balanced plan. The co-design of the experience (point 6 on the road map – figure 2), after understanding the scene profile, will allow for the development of a greater range of ideas and solutions to pressing issues.

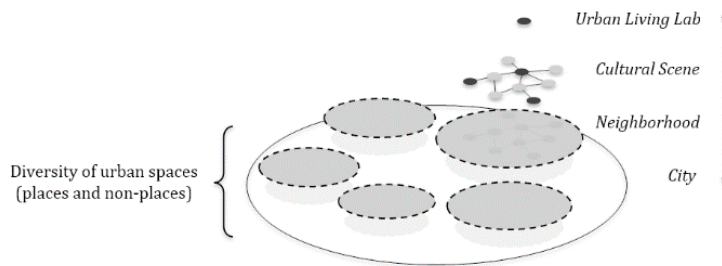
Considering this, we also believe it makes sense to consider the important but underdeveloped social science concept of “scene” to obtain a more specific view and to represent the spatial context where urban Living Labs can emerge. As Kotarba & LaLone (2014: 54) stated, “Irwin’s concept of scene is a useful framework for analyzing emerging cultural phenomena.” Therefore, taking the definition of other scholars who have discussed this idea, we consider that the cultural scene is a “particular constellation of amenities in a place—cafes, galleries, pubs, music venues, fashion houses, dance clubs, antique shops, restaurants, fruit stands, convenience stores and the like (...). These constellations of amenities define the scene by making available an array of meaningful experiences to residents and visitors. Scenes give a sense of drama, authenticity and ethical significance to a city’s streets and strips. Depending on its particular configuration of amenities, a vibrant scene can trans-

form an urban area” (Silver, Clark & Graziul 2011: 229). Another interesting definition considers scene to be an inclusive concept that involves everyone who is somehow associated with a cultural phenomenon (e.g., artists, audiences, management, vendors and critics); the ecological location of the phenomenon (e.g., districts, clubs, recording studios and rehearsal rooms); and the products of this interaction (e.g., advertisements, concerts, recordings and critical reviews) (Kotarba & LaLone 2014: 54). O’Connor & Gu (2016: 24), for their part, consider cultural scenes as “informal assemblages, ‘fields’ or ‘art worlds’ in which performers/creators, facilities and audiences/consumers come together in a shared investment in a particular activity, such as music scenes, art scenes, poetry scenes, fashion scenes and so on.” Evoking both the cozy intimacy of community and the fluid cosmopolitanism of urban life, Straw (2004: 412) in his work on cultural scenes considers that the “scene designates particular clusters of social and cultural activity without specifying the nature of the boundaries which circumscribe them (...) Scenes invite us to map the territory of the city in new ways while, at the same time, designating certain kinds of activity whose relationship to territory is not easily asserted.” Although there is difficulty in terms of

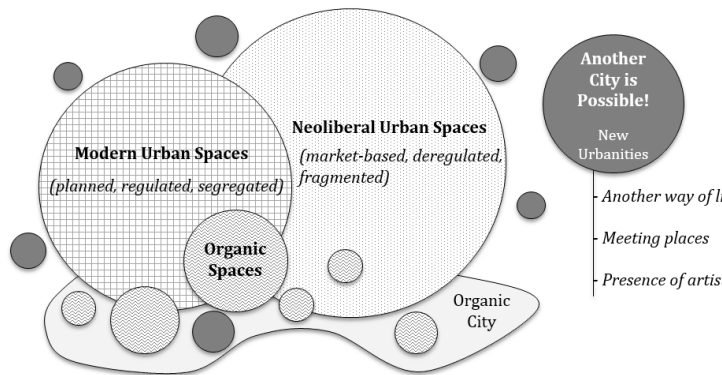
the border demarcation, the scene is based on a territorial area that cannot be overlooked. Silver & Clark (2015) point out that although it is possible to describe a place as a scene with all its meanings, these meanings are not exclusive to one place, because they also can be found elsewhere, even if to different degrees and in different combinations, meaning that its geography carries some complexity. For that reason Kotarba & LaLone (2014) noted the existence of “local scenes,” referred to as local communities in a specific neighbourhood rather than the city as a whole, “translocal scenes,” referring to many local scenes connected together through a common identity, and “virtual scenes,” where the place exists within the internet as a network of connections. Picking up on the idea from Straw (2004), which highlights the crucial role that the mobility of artists between cultural scenes has for a career in artistic fields, as well as the idea from O’Connor & Gu (2016) that “Local scenes [itself] can be highly mobile,” we here emphasize the nomadic lifestyle that characterizes many contemporary artists and that influences this geography characterized by porous frontiers.

Therefore, although many spatial boundaries are formally defined in the territory, sometimes they can be “invisible” features, similar to ones that are present in some neighbourhood limits which trespass the strictness of physical demarcations. That said, we understand cultural scenes as permeable places that transcend the more formal boundaries and that combine the “real” space with the “network” space, here limited to one single neighbourhood. Figure 3 shows the different analysis scales used to spatialize a cultural scene and the emergence of an urban Living Lab similar to the fictional one that will be presented below as a possible case study.

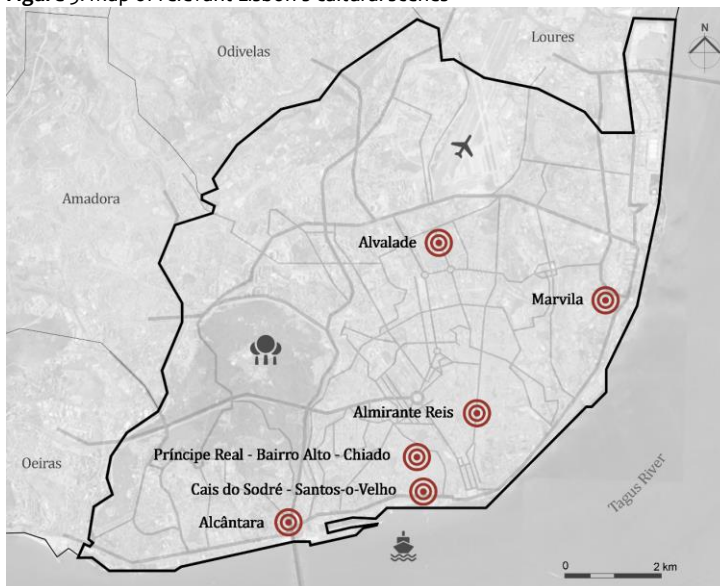
Although the question “Why an urban Living Lab?” has been answered, one might still ask, “What makes that fictional urban Living Lab a case study?” and “It’s a case-study of what?” In this sense, considering the fictional character of a ULL as a possi-

Figure 3. The city, cultural scenes and urban Living Labs

Source: Authors

Figure 4. Contemporary city layers

Source: Authors

Figure 5. Map of relevant Lisbon's cultural scenes

Source: Authors

ble case study in a particular neighbourhood, we give great importance to clarifying the framework for such a case study. On the one hand, we rec-

ognize that there are multiple definitions and understandings of the case study research, including what Flyvbjerg (2006; 2011) refers to as mis-

understandings about this methodology. Therefore, guided by this author's ideas, to whom case studies comprise detail, richness, completeness and variance, we consider that practical knowledge resulting from a real experience is no less valuable than theoretical knowledge; that through this individual experience of the urban Living Lab, we can generalize the acquired knowledge to other cases, making an important contribution to scientific development; and that the formulation of this case study allows us to generate and test preliminary hypotheses concerning our exposure to new urbanities.

On the other hand, concerning what makes a case study deserve our attention, namely its identification and selection within a research project, the sociologist John Walton wrote that a case study "impl[ies] particularity—cases are situationally grounded, limited views of social life," but also "something more—not simply glimpses of the world or random instances of social activity" (Walton, 1992: 121). This "something more," as it happens with our urban Living Lab, may also be some familiarity with that territory as well as some agents, entities and local institutions, thus enabling its selection. It resembles what Silver & Clark (2015: 6) said about the delimitation of a cultural scene: "We cannot 'just look' at the world of scenes and expect some fixed set of qualities to pop out. We have to know what to look for." The previous knowledge of the neighbourhood and its people, activities and public policies clearly speak in favour of the proposed urban Living Lab. Moreover, "implicit in the idea of the case is a claim" (idem), that is a "representation of general categories of the social world" identified from a "knowable universe." This means that "the case is one point in a sampling frame" (idem) that obviously deserves a closer look. Walton (1992: 122) had already confirmed that "cases are always hypotheses," because although they "come wrapped in theories (...), they embody causal processes operating in microcosm [and intend] to demonstrate a causal argument about how

Table 1. Contemporary city and the emergence of New Urbanities

RUPTURES AND THREATS OF THE CONTEMPORARY CITY	OPPORTUNITIES AND HOPES IN NEW URBANITIES
<p>The restricted and exclusive city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Expels the poor to the suburban areas; - Extols power through ostentatious architectural sites in the central area, which concentrates opportunities (housing, trade, culture, etc.) aimed at elites; - Rejects immigrants giving them very limited rights; 	<p>The tough and inclusive city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opposes urban development projects that imply the expulsion of the disadvantaged population to the outskirts; - Energizes and regenerates urban spaces through the cultural and political mobilization of local communities; - Attracts young adults of different social groups to the city center through rehabilitation operations (abandoned and/or rundown buildings that allow an affordable supply);
<p>The extensive and unequal city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vast archipelago with little interaction between these ‘islands’ where access to public services and the quality of urban space is very differentiated; - Risks the dissolution of coherent and consolidated urban networks; 	<p>The compact city and the poly-nuclear metropolis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emphasizes the social and cultural diversity as well as the mix of activities and functions; - Favors the development of local communities and close relationships; - Organized in a poly-nuclear regional network;
<p>The unsustainable city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Exaggerated consumption of water and energy related largely to excessive circulation flows; - Inadequate land use which carries significant environmental risks; - Patterns of high mobility based on road transport in fast circulation routes; - Presents threatening pollution levels to public health; 	<p>The green and healthy city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Strengthens environmental awareness achieving major environmental gains but also the production of more welcoming spaces and quieter and easier communication; - Articulates the physical and virtual mobility mitigating the adverse effects of excessive movements; - Favors small displacement; - Promotes healthier lifestyles;
<p>The ‘urbanized’ city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reproduces indistinct urban networks in the suburbs, imposing uniform rhythms of living standards; - Repeats decontextualized urban regeneration models (based e.g. in the Creative City) generating greater social polarization; 	<p>The distinctive and creative city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Values the identity elements of the urban public, feelings of belonging, a sense of place and the collective memories (heritage) are original or rebuilt; - Mobilizes human, environmental and symbolic resources to promote creativity and innovation, involving the production of wealth and social cohesion (socially creative city);
<p>The dual and competitive city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seeks to attract businesses and more competitive activities irrespective of their social role; - Includes workers of two contrasting professional segments: highly skilled workers (creatives) and the low-qualified workers that ensure the city functions 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; - Depends on external resources and credit financing; 	<p>The plural (economically) and resilient city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can respond to the economic and financial crisis by recovering and revaluing the local economic fabric – small and medium companies focused on domestic market and based on local and regional resources; - Favors the plural economy based on coordination and cooperation between the various economic agents (public, private and third sector);
<p>The ungovernable city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deals with real estate speculation as well as the disarray of the territory and corruption; - Managed by local authorities faced by much higher demands to their response capabilities, leading to debts and the complicity to speculate in order to generate revenue; - Debates with the inadequacy of the governance scale (municipal – plurimunicipal); 	<p>The city of citizenship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Facilitates and encourages the linking and proximity of citizens to the political institutions, promoting a real democracy in which priorities and decisions are based on the needs and expectations of the people and urban public; - Joins, through effective mediation vehicles, proximity organizations and institutions with political and administrative bodies at a regional and national level;
<p>The frightened city</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Adopts a securitarian ideology able to generate a climate of fear and suspicion, thus limiting the citizens’ freedom; 	<p>The city anchored in public space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upgrades the collective spaces as protective, accessible, comprehensive and integrating places – areas of conflict resolution;

Source: authors

general social forces take shape and produce results in specific settings.” In our study, this means that although we acknowledge the possible existence of other territories with similar conditions to the selected neighbourhood, Alvalade has the amenities and the suitable people for an experience like the one we propose.

Locating urban Living Labs: the various layers of the city

The city is a territory based on hierarchies, disparities and inequalities, but is also the realm of new possibilities, conflict and negotiation, achievements and inventions of new styles and perspectives in relation to urban life. That is why, as mentioned before, the city encounters the arts in many

ways. One way is to put the arts at the service of a neoliberal policy, as has been done with the “creative cities” agenda promulgated worldwide by the controversial work of Florida (2002) and Landry (2000), and which the Lisbon region could not escape. In another approach, the city encounters the arts in a “modern city” sense, where it tries to maintain the traditions and history of the places, namely

Table 2. Artistic Scenes in the city of Lisbon – main profile topics

	<i>HISTORICAL PATH</i>	<i>MAIN LOCAL AGENTS INVOLVED IN THE SCENE</i>	<i>CULTURAL AMENITIES AND ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS</i>
ALVALADE	Planned neighbourhood from the 1940's based on modern urbanism and targeting different middle class segments. Neighbourhood units organized around schools, public gardens, social institutions and every day retailers were the main focus of this urban plan. In the 60's, this neighbourhood represented the modern city and successive waves of urban innovation were observed in the following decades.	Local public authorities. Small creative enterprises. Renowned and emergent artists.	Municipal cultural hub: workshop, gallery and library. Bottom-up initiatives. Alternative events.
ALMIRANTE REIS	Almirante Reis is a historical boulevard originating from the end of the 19 th century where republican, anarchist, socialist and communist organizations had a strong presence at the time. To this day, some of these organizations have retained their geographical memory and some of them have even been reborn into relevant, alternative organizations.	Civic / bottom-up organizations. Emergent cultural agents and artists.	Political activism. Fairs and exhibitions in big empty warehouses and industrial spaces.
PRÍNCIPE REAL – BAIRO ALTO – CHIADO	In the core of the historical city centre (mainly built between the 16 th and the early 19 th centuries), these 3 areas were strongly gentrified in the last few decades. Many cultural infrastructures and amenities are located there. Nevertheless, some alternative or heterodox spaces coexist in these areas, namely LGBT organizations and meeting places.	International investors. Touristic enterprises. Creative industries.	Renowned museums, theatres and other cultural spaces. Art galleries.
CAIS DO SODRÉ – SANTOS-O-VELHO	This is an old port zone with a traditionally intense sense of bohemia and an image of marginality. In the last few years touristification has been very sturdy and associated with new hotel, hostels, bars and restaurants. Some of the old bohemian spots were modernized with a 'cool' ambiance including a large market exploited by Time Out where the old and the new spaces show some interesting synergies. Despite the commodification, this area still has many degraded and empty buildings, yet it attracts artists (located previously in Príncipe Real and Bairro Alto) and some alternative activities and events.	International investors (e.g. Time Out). Touristic enterprises. Some old and emerging cultural associations.	Rehabilitated buildings, namely the old market (Mercado da Ribeira), reused as creative hubs. Some bottom-up initiatives and alternative events attracted by the 'mercantile' scene.
ALCÁNTARA	One of the most important industrial areas until the first half of the 20 th century, lost almost all factories in the past 50 years (relocation for the urban periphery). A vast space with industrial ruins has been transformed into a creative hub since 2007, the beginning of the economic crisis. The landowner – the real estate funds manager named Mainside – followed a successful strategy of temporarily renting spaces, constituting nowadays one of the most vibrant cultural scenes in the city.	Real estate funds manager – Mainside. Small creative industries. Artistic and cultural retail.	'Soft' rehabilitated buildings, namely the old factories reused as creative hub. Landscape (near the Tagus River).
MARVILA	This is also an old industrial area which has been progressively abandoned. During past decades (following the dynamics printed by the World Exhibition 1998, located in a close area) important plans were approved to this area focused on the work of recognized international architects. With the crisis, these initiatives did not materialize. In the last few years many bottom-up cultural and artistic organizations appeared in this area, most of them having an alternative profile. As it is a very recent dynamic the mix between tradition and innovation is quite impressive.	Civic / bottom-up organizations. Emergent cultural agents and artists.	Industrial history. Landscape (near the Tagus River). Exhibitions and events in big empty warehouses and industrial spaces.

Source: authors

without the most radical and mainstream initiatives linked to creative entrepreneurship and massive urban centre touristification. It does so by modernizing its public spaces and existing institutions and services through urban regeneration strategies, using art in the aestheticization of urban elements. However, adopting the vision that “another city is possible!” (neither modern nor neoliberal), arts and artists emerge as vehicles and tools for social and political emancipation

(Gleaton 2012) and are involved in alternative projects and dynamics that put socio-territorial innovation at the forefront of this vision (André, Malheiros & Brito-Henriques 2009; André, Malheiros & Carmo 2013). These visions—based on the diversity of alternatives—seek to escape from the mere reproduction or improvement of urban intervention strategies that have traditionally used art for ornamental and beatification purposes. In relation to this, the aim was to attract

the “creative class” (using Florida's terminology) and consequently more economic activities, entrepreneurs and tourists, as well as the intention of bringing new life to the neighbourhoods.

The construction of new urbanities is built precisely on the basis of resistance to hegemonic processes of individualization and fragmentation, expressing itself in a collective, democratic, participatory and diverse way,

and allowing “a social construction with multiple phases and interrelated faces” that “bears the mark of tensions,” and that is the basis of innovation (Fontan, Klein & Tremblay 2005: 40). In this sense, following the vision that it is possible to give way to another city, as an alternative to the modern city and the neoliberal city models, Borja (2011) talks about a new urban reality or the possibilities of new urbanities as a more inclusive, resilient, pluralist and greener contemporary city. According to the author, these new urbanities are closely linked with a city that, among other features mobilizes communities and favours close relations; focuses on social and cultural diversity; promotes healthier lifestyles; mobilizes resources to promote creativity, innovation and social cohesion; emphasizes the need for a plural economy; values the local economic fabric; and facilitates and stimulates the relationship between citizens and the proximity of political institutions. Therefore, inspired by the work of Borja (2011), Table 1 summarizes the main threats and disruptions of the contemporary city, as well as the possibilities and hopes of new urbanities.

The confrontation of these multiple realities and the processes that both cities’ visions tend to promote and develop leads us to look at the contemporary city as a mixture of several layers that can be constructed and activated in order to favour new alternative urbanities. Thus, as shown in Figure 4, in our research project we need to acknowledge the co-existence of two important city layers that are destroying or transforming the organic city¹—the modern city (planned, regulated and segregated) and the neoliberal city (market-based, deregulated and fragmented), as well as the intersections that result from both of them. Emerging from the conflict between different models or from its internal contradictions, alternative urban visions and experiences are being developed and are mobilizing various actors. In the ULLs, we are exploring and focusing on precisely these experiences that are more frequent (or visible) in the consolidated city and especially in the neighbourhoods that

maintain a cultural identity and a sense of place (Tuan 1977). While several protagonists configure such experiences, the artists among them seem to have a crucial role in reinforcing its experimental nature and stimulating innovation. In fact, cultural scenes mentioned above are in many cases the arenas of these alternative urban practices.

Seeds of new urbanities in Lisbon triggered by the arts and artists

The above-mentioned urban models linking the arts and urban development are well represented in Lisbon. The relatively strong municipal power follows a social-democratic welfare view of the city, maintaining public planning and managing the driving urban forces, at least in the programmatic field. Nevertheless, the most attractive metropolitan spaces for tourism and for real estate investments have become increasingly controlled by neoliberal market forces, thus reducing public action, jeopardizing public spaces and weakening neighbourhood bonds. However, some alternative initiatives are emerging in the city. In general, these are related with new lifestyles that prioritize ecological and environmental concerns, contestation, artistic expressions, proximity relations, a sense of place and community belonging.

Cultural scenes in the city: enclaves of ULLs

In the AGORA research project, different urban spaces that are commonly recognized as cultural scenes are being explored as levers of new urbanities (figure 5). The geographic exploration of these scenes highlights several cultural and artistic initiatives showing the effervescence and energy that is the basis of local cultural networks and the hypothetical trigger for alternative urban spaces. They are also important for the construction of a vision capable of overcoming the adversities of the modern and neoliberal cities. In fact, they are places where artists and other cultural agents develop their projects and where culture and the arts give a sense of place identity

through material marks and also via the created atmosphere.

Table 2 presented below emphasizes the three main aspects of the scenes we are talking about: (i) the importance of the historical path, both in terms of its intangible memories and physical marks; (ii) urban dynamics, in part related to the recent economic crisis; (iii) the availability of large empty spaces left by old industries, warehouses and other abandoned buildings that became obsolete.

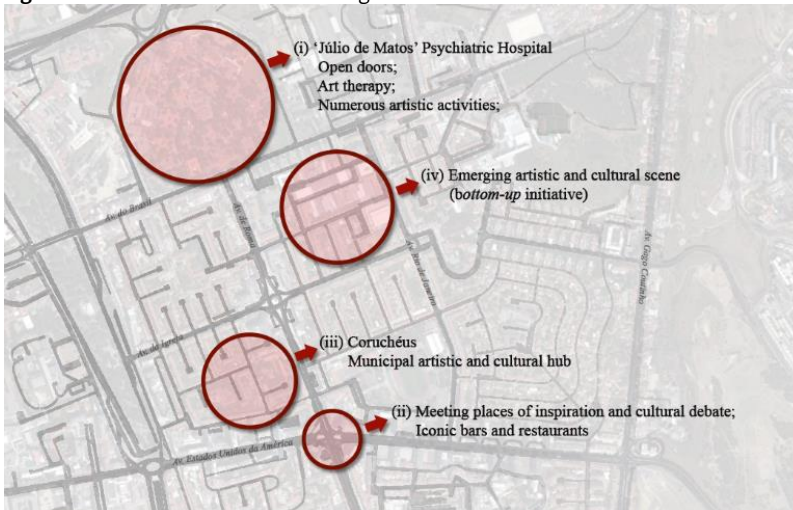
Despite the significant mix of involved agents, bottom-up organizations and alternative movements have a significant presence. In some cases they are the main protagonists and in others they are secondary players, attracted by the scene’s “energy.” Notably, in three (Príncipe Real, Bairro Alto; Chiado, Alcântara; and Cais do Sodré, Santos) of the six scenes, touristic and real estate investors play a relevant role. Culture and the arts emerge mainly as vehicles of increasing economic urban value; in Almirante Reis and Marvila, cultural and artistic collectives—more or less formal—comprise most of the scene; Alvalade exhibits a mix of agents and links, namely the synergy between local state institutions and bottom-up initiatives from artists and cultural agents. In all of the six spaces, ULLs can be located to explore the seeds of new urbanities. This paper presents in greater detail the Alvalade scene and the outline of the ULL that we are developing there.

Sketching an urban Living Lab

As mentioned in the methodology, the first step to frame ULLs (considered in this particular research) concerns the geographical exploration of the scene.

Alvalade is a planned neighbourhood conceived just after the Second World War and was built mainly during the 1950s and 1960s, targeting young families from the rising middle class. The plan followed four main principles: (i) organization around neighbourhood units that polarized the civic centre composed by the school, social

Figure 6. Cultural scenes in Alvalade neighbourhood.



Source: authors.

infrastructures, public gardens and some daily life retail; (ii) “soft” social mixing composed of different middle class segments, from low-qualified public servants to liberal professionals and intellectuals; (iii) the difference between the residential buildings being more related to the apartments’ size rather than to the façade’s aesthetics—this has given great consistency to the urban fabric and has prevented the rise of social stigma; (iv) a central boulevard was devoted to more specialized retail and a specific area was reserved for the market and to services and workshops/small factories to satisfy local demand.

It was intended that this type of neighbourhood would promote walkability and proximity relations. Furthermore, it quickly gained the status of the city’s modern district. This attracted new actors with changing lifestyles, such as the 1960s youth culture. This social ambiance gave rise to independent cinemas and avant-garde shops as well as cultural and artistic amenities. Meeting places, which were predominantly cafes, were crucial protagonists in the urban dynamics of the neighbourhood. Also relevant was the proximity of two great universities.

In terms of culture and arts, four centralities can be found in Alvalade (figure 6):

- i) A concentration of cafes at the crossroad between the two principal avenues where artists and intellectuals meet every day to debate their projects, concerns and expectations. The rise of the Portuguese new cinema in the 1960s and 1970s and the origin of the punk rock movement in Lisbon during the 1980s and 1990s could be found here. Although some of the cafes resisted until recently, the area’s effervescence is much lower despite various efforts to recover the previous appeal.
- ii) A municipal artistic and cultural hub from the beginning of the 1970s developed around an old palace (one of the only survivors of the planned urban development). Still today, this hub accommodates 50 artist studios, rented out at low prices by the municipality, a dynamic multi-service library and an arts gallery.
- iii) A psychiatric hospital founded in 1942 (occupying an area of 22ha/54.4 acre) with an innovative profile. A therapeutic theatre group was formed, which has been reaching out to the neighbouring community since the 1960s. Following this artistic path, the hospital has retained an intense program with dance groups, exhibi-

tions, land art installations, workshops and so on.

- iv) An emerging bottom-up artistic hub located at the back of the municipal market, which was formerly occupied by services and workshops/small factories that have been in decline in recent decades. One interesting vision for this hub is to achieve cooperation between new artists and some older craftsmen and -women that still operate out of their traditional workplaces.

Final reflection

In this article it was our intention to establish links between the methodology of urban Living Labs and the contribution of the arts and artists to those experiences as well as the ways in which it can produce new urbanities as an alternative to the hegemonic models of the contemporary city. In this sense, through a research action perspective, we present on the one hand some reflections that help to support a broader research project about the arts and artists in the production of new urbanities and, on the other hand, the methodological development of urban Living Labs, which we intend to improve and test in a specific neighbourhood of Lisbon, Portugal.

Regarding the closed link between the arts, artists and the city—namely the ways in which art can enhance and strengthen social relations and urban dynamics—one may argue that the arts are themselves segmented (seeing that they are divided into different disciplines), are related to different groups of artists and have different audiences, and that the dynamics of art markets are distinct. Nonetheless, without denying that art is an expression of the artists themselves, we can say that art is, most generally, a form of communication. Furthermore, that communication can have the intention or effect—whether intended or unintended—to advertise, provoke, motivate or, as we are suggesting, propose critical thinking and social and political change. Consequently, regardless of whether it is street art or music, be it

elitist or popular, art has the ability to affect and contribute towards the creation and improvement of urban spaces. That is why, even though the way in which art contributes to a society depends on the social context, the artist's intent, genre, form and subject, and on the work's reception by the public, we emphasize that the arts and artists encounter the city to spread inspiration, strengthen relationships and disseminate artworks. Through this link, the city's transformation can provoke new ways of producing urban places that privilege social justice and creativity, promote new urbanities and reinforce or reinvent identities.

In this sense, we introduced the discussion of urban Living Labs with the intention of joining the arts and artists with the capabilities that this research method has in the context of social and cultural innovation in urban areas. We emphasize the capacity that this methodology has to, on the one hand, overcome the complexity of the current urban dynamics—promoted by the city of modernity and the neoliberal city—which tends to impede a rapprochement between the various actors and agents of the territory, and to, on the other hand, encourage participatory processes that explore dynamics of cohesion and inclusion through the development of social and cultural innovation projects. An urban Living Lab can be seen as a special type of innovation network that puts emphasis on the connections established among different city users, whether these are artists with new ideas in terms of creating artworks or ordinary people who simply want to solve real-life problems. Knowledge production, combining different types of information and expertise to achieve a product that becomes associated with a specific urban context, is one important benefit of this methodology. The developmental experience of a bottom-up project that links the local community with, for instance, outside institutions plays a crucial role in the creation of new urbanities in which public concerns can be taken into account.

However, ULLs also have difficult aspects to deal with, such as managing the relationship between the various players involved in the innovation project. From co-creation to co-production of the final output—whether an artwork or a more in-depth urban intervention—the organization between artists, local authorities, stakeholders and communities can be a challenge. Also, the boundaries of ULLs may be difficult to define because the diverse actors and agents act at different scales and some of them lack a clear territorial anchor. Another adversity of this methodology may be related to the time duration of the projects that are developed. In some cases, because they are initiatives that can imply a more visible urban transformation, they require a long-term commitment to reach potential outcomes. Lastly, the complexity of combining different types of knowledge in social experiences should be highlighted, namely because scientific knowledge is often considered to be of a higher level, which often results in the underestimation of tacit knowledge or even the importance of intuition.

Considering both the virtues and the complexities related to ULLs, this case study, as highlighted above, will assume an exploratory nature. Indeed, the development of this methodology has already begun, including the contacting of some local actors and agents, not to mention the artists themselves, and the testing of its effects on urban dynamics and transformations towards the production of a new urbanity.

In memorium

Professor Isabel Margarida André, passed away on April 3, 2017 in Estoril, Portugal. She was 60. Her PhD in Human Geography at the University of Lisbon in 1994 was pioneer in the study of Gender Geography in Portuguese research. In recent years, her research projects have turned to the role of culture and the arts as engines of socio-territorial innovation, inclusion and urban development. As a geographer, she revealed a constant

concern for the construction of a better society and Geography, through the affirmation of the geographical knowledge, and the innovative character of the themes of her research, especially in the areas of Social and Cultural Geography, Urban Geography, Political Geography, Gender Studies and Research Methodologies. Isabel always tried to promote the link between research and teaching, and has developed several methodological tools that aim to stimulate the processes of active learning, critical thinking and participative methodologies. Creative and committed, both as a teacher and as a researcher, she leaves a remarkable work legacy, having succeeded in stimulating the critical spirit and the will to learn geography. We will miss her and remain thankful for what she has given to us as a scientist and as a memorable and extremely wonderful person.

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¹ The metaphor of the city as a living thing, an organism in biological terms, which includes the complexity of economic and social processes in constant flux but also the sociological notion of the organization of society and community. This "organic nature" is considered to have been accomplished, gradually and with the influence of the residents, through a process of bottom-up development (Schilders 2010).