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Portuguese Case Study¹

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Nowadays the Social Sciences still face the absences of an appropriate conceptual framework, which could make for the understanding of the complex interactions between society and the environment. In fact, the majority of studies tend to concentrate on the effect and impact of man's actions on the environment, dedicating little attention to the consequences of those changes on human activity.

In Portugal, only in the recent times the scientific study of the environment, with its methodological and epistemological aspects, has been faced as priority to the scientific research. In general, the studies have been centred on environmental physical dimensions. The research on the importance of the population, as an agent of change and as a subject of the environmental change has been, until recent years, rather neglected.

The social understanding of the territory has born, in Portugal, in the end of the 19th century, with the rural studies where methods related with the modern Social Sciences were applied. It is from this time the remarkable descriptions of the Portuguese rural landscape made by agronomic researchers.

¹ in IHDP Proceedings N° 2 - National Human Dimensions Programmes in The European Union. Ed. Shaw, R. V., IHDP, Bonn, pp.147-159. Available on-line at: <http://www.ihdp.uni-bonn.de/eu-sy-po.htm>

The rural studies have been, therefore, one of the important contributions to the study of the problems of the agriculture and of the rural society in Portugal.

The researchers that studied the forest and the landscape in the *Instituto Superior De Agronomia* (Agronomic Institute) have given another important contribution to the study of the environment. The need of environmental protection perspective was then cultivated.

The importance of the territorial ordnance and planning grow since the seventies and it was crucial to understand the significance of the interactions between natural and social components of the environment.

The democratisation of the regime in 1974 gives a significant stimulus to the development of the Social Sciences in Portugal. The Sociology was one of those sciences that expand rapidly and its approach to the environment was made by the Rural Sociology, mainly related with the study of peasant social categories, agrarian structures technological changes on the rural areas, and also by the Urban Sociology.

The recent socio-economic transformations, felt since the eighties and related with the modernisation of Portuguese society associated with the integration in the European Union, give rise to a better visibility of the interaction nature / society. This new understanding of the environment issues is in the base of a new interdisciplinary approach of these questions.

I. THE MAIN GUIDELINES IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

The researchers are formally connected with the different Portuguese universities. During long time the research studies were made in the framework of the academic duties related to individual work of the PhD and MSc thesis. Only in the last two decades were constituted research teams that have a more emancipated scientific production. However the integration in the universities promotes some co-operation between teams, with different backgrounds, that work in the same space.

The studies undertaken, as well as the major research guidelines constitute therefore an ensemble of researches more or less isolated. Frequently the dissemination of the results, as well as of the teams, is rather confined.

The Portuguese scientific community that works on the issues of human dimensions in the global environmental change don't have any structure or policy which co-ordinates the research of this kind of problems.

The absence of a National Human Dimensions Committee is one of the expressions of this relative isolation. However it is important to highlight that only in the current year of 1998 it was established a national committee of the International Geosphere Biosphere Programme (IGBP). Although more related to the natural dimensions of Global Change this international programme sponsors, with IHDP, the core project Land Use and Land Cover Change (LUCC). The number of Portuguese researchers (mainly sociologists and geographers) that officially are related to this core programme is quite small.

Although the absence of a policy of research that establishes the priorities to the human dimensions studies it is possible to identify the main guidelines that orientates the research.

Next we introduce the three main subjects, followed by the research centres and the principal projects undertaken and its co-ordinators, that frame the major guidelines to the human dimensions studies in Portugal:

1. Environment, Society, Policies and Public opinion

The research activities undertaken under this main subject are associated with the Natural Resources Integrated Management. This means that the studies of the human dimensions are greatly related with the resources management and with the land ordnance. The increasing importance of the public opinion in the decision-making processes is also focused by the recent research. Another important issue to the research is the Policies Evaluation towards the decision-making processes. This research orientation is important as a mean to better understand the ways in which the population reacts to the some important external driving forces such as national or international rules and policies. As the impact of such measures is important to understand the land use changes, is also a research objective to evaluate the impact of those policies.

Projects and research centres:

Gabinete de Investigação em Sociologia Aplicada (SOCINOVA - Group of Research in Applied Sociology)

- **Rejuvenation of the Agricultural Businessman.** Project that aimed to study the impact of the support policies for the setting up of young farmers and of the agri-environmental measures and their effects on the modernisation of the agricultural farming systems. Carried out within the framework of PEDAP/Ministry of Agriculture that funded this project. Finished in 1993. Co-ordinator Nelson Lourenço
- **Dynamics of the installation of Young Farmers: Difficulties and potentialities to the fixation.** Project funded by the Portuguese Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development. To develop from 1998 to 2000. Co-ordinator Nelson Lourenço.

Centro de Investigação da Universidade Atlântica (CIUATLA - Research Centre of the Atlantic University)

- **The Qualification of Human Resources and the Development of Peripheral Areas.** It studied the employment market dynamics through the analysis of the workers' professional careers and the processes of sectorial and geographic mobility in peripheral areas. Science and Technology Foundation funded the project. Finished in 1998. Co-ordinator Nelson Lourenço.

Centro de Investigação da Universidade Atlântica (CIUATLA - Research Centre of the Atlantic University / Grupo de Ecologia Social (GES - Social Ecology Group from the National Laboratory for Civil Engineering)

- **Land Ordinance and the Influence of Public Participation in Decision Processes.** Project that aimed to assess the results of public participation in land ordinance processes. This study concentrated on an analysis based on the conflict of interests at a local level starting with the description of pragmatic situations of (in)compatibility between private and public and local and national interests. Ministry of Equipment, Planning and Territorial Administration funded the project in co-operation with the

Science and Technology Foundation. Finished in 1998. Co-ordinator Nelson Lourenço.

Universidade de Aveiro, Departamento de Ambiente e Ordenamento (Aveiro University – Department of Environment and Ordinance)

- **Grassroots environmental action and sustainable development in southern EC.** This project aimed to explore the implications of the local socio-economic conditions, the role of the different relations between the social actors and the implications of the spontaneous popular actions to the sustainable development in three countries of the European Union: Greece, Portugal and Spain. Co-ordinator Artur Rosa Pires.
- **Rural social sciences technical co-operation network (RUSSTIC).** This project aimed to study the socio-economic modifications in rural areas; to define strategies to better and increase the concepts, theoretic perspectives and databases to be used in rural research, in particular related to the projection of future socio-economic modifications in rural areas. Co-ordinator Artur Rosa Pires.
- **European rural studies action network (REAPER).** This project aim to co-ordinate research activities related with the dimensions of development and change in rural areas, specially the aspects of change not associated with agriculture. Co-ordinator Artur Rosa Pires.
- **Qualification and management of environment in rural regions. The perception and valorisation of the environment as fundamental components of Management Policies.** PhD Thesis in development, E. Figueiredo.

Centro Nacional de Informação Geográfica (CNIG - National Centre for Geographical Information)

- **The contribution of Social Sciences for the implementation of land ordnance policies.** PhD Thesis in development, Ana Toscano Rico.

Instituto Superior de Agronomia, Departamento de Economia Agrária e Sociologia Rural (ISA - The Higher Institute of Agronomy, Department of Agrarian Economy and Rural Sociology)

- **The survival of olive groves under the EU agri-environmental regulations: towards Agenda 2000.** Project funded by the Portuguese Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development which aims to clarify the consequences of the agri-environmental policy for olive groves in regional terms and to discuss the issues raised by the low intensive olive farming systems under Agenda 2000. It's a joint research project with University of Newcastle upon Tyne (Department of Agricultural Economics and Food Marketing) and the Technical University of Lisbon (Higher Institute of Agronomy - DEASR). Responsible for the project Inês Mansinho.

Instituto Superior das Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa (ISCTE – Higher Institute of Sciences of Labour and Business)

- **Science, Policy and Development. The Case of the Foz Côa Rock Art Engravings.** The objective of this project is to analyse the social and political processes underlying a science-based public controversy raised in Portugal following the disclosure of the existence of rock art engravings in the river Côa valley in Northern Portugal. The development of this case suggested that both the political and administrative cultures, and social values, may be changing in Portugal under the combined influence of factors such as a greater sensitivity and mobilisation of some sectors of civil society around environmental and cultural values, a growing activism of the scientific community, increasing openness and pluralism of the mass media, in a context of the increasing internationalisation, both of the professional communities and of regulatory processes. Project co-funded by the Science and Technology Foundation and European Union. Co-ordinator: Maria Eduarda Gonçalves.
- **Science and Its Publics.** The starting point for this research project has been the recognition that there is both a lack of analyses on the Portuguese public opinion and science based on available surveys data, and of studies on the relationships between science and its publics in extra-laboratorial contexts, as well as case studies on the attitudes and practices in the context of science-based social controversies, national or local, that might help to clarify the publics' social motivations and representations. Project co-funded by the Science and Technology Foundation and European Union. Co-ordinator: Maria Eduarda Gonçalves.

Centro de Estudos Geográficos da Universidade de Lisboa (CEG - Geographical Studies Centre from the Lisbon University)

- **Methodologies for the National Ecological Reserve assessment in Municipal Master Plans.** This project aimed to evaluate the National Ecological Reserve based in indicators in representative counties. The building of computer applications to be used by the local administration in territorial planning was a significant result of the research. Ministry of Equipment, Planning and Territorial Administration funded the project in co-operation with the Science and Technology Foundation. Co-ordinator Ana Ramos Pereira.

Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Departamento de Geografia e Planeamento Regional (UNL – New University of Lisbon, Geography Department and Regional Planning)

- **The response to National and European legislation affecting the modernisation of agriculture in Coruche, Portugal; and Aberdeenshire, Scotland.** The aim of this project is to relate technical progress in farming to social attitudes in agrarian communities in order to understand what responses can be expected to specific types of politico-economic initiatives. Responsible Ana Firmino. Project funded by FCT and British Council.

Observatório Permanente sobre Ambiente Sociedade e Opinião Pública (OBSERVA - Permanent Observatory on the Environment, Society and Public Opinion)

- **Agriculture, rural space and environment. The application of agri-environmental measures.** This project has been centred in the gathering and classification of information needed to the research in this area. Co-ordinator Aida Valadas Lima.

2. Environment, Land use / Land cover Changes

The interactions between land use land cover changes and environment are another important subject in the research related with the human dimensions of environmental studies.

Land-use change is a key research and policy issue, which provides the theme for significant amounts of cross-disciplinary research in Europe. Despite the existence of a large number of national and Trans-European research programmes aimed at assessing the sustainability of land-use systems, there are few programmes with the explicit task of developing integrated methodologies. Thus, the need to provide a forum for the debate and assessment of research methodologies as a means of developing convergence between disciplines.

Given the growing and often conflicting pressures on land use systems, this area of research has been identified as a major point of focus for national and international policies.

Another research point very important is also the development of tools to the monitoring and managing changes in the territory. This kind of approach is made in co-operation with the final users of the research, i.e. farmers, municipalities' technicians, and other land users.

Projects and research centres:

Centro de Investigação da Universidade Atlântica (CIUATLA - Research Centre of the Atlantic University) / Gabinete de Investigação em Sociologia Aplicada (SOCINOVA - Group of Research in Applied Sociology)

- ***Monitoring and Managing Changes in Rural Marginal Areas Project: a comparative research.*** This study aimed to understand the changes in land use in marginal rural areas (in Portugal, Belgium and Denmark) focusing on the analysis of the farmers' strategies in the light of the changes caused by the European Union policies and their different effects in each country. Funded by the DG VI - European Union Commission, FAIR Programme. . Co-ordinated, at European Union level, by Nelson Lourenço.
- **Measuring, Monitoring and Managing Sustainability: the coastal dimension.** It is an interdisciplinary and international project (Portugal, Spain, Italy and India) funded by the European Union, DG XII Science, Research and Development, in the framework of the Programme "Co-operation with Third Countries and International Organisations (INCO – DC 1997)". Co-ordinator Lobo Ferreira (LNEC).

Centro de Investigação da Universidade Atlântica (CIUATLA - Research Centre of the Atlantic University / Grupo de Ecologia Social (GES - Social Ecology Group from the National Laboratory for Civil Engineering)

- **The motivational and structural aspects of forest fires.** Project to be accomplished between 1998 - 2000. The main objective of this research is to understand the relations between individual and social motivations of forest fires (the hazardous conduct of the population) and the structural and socio-economic realities of the management of forest resources. This research lie in the belief that the socio-economic characteristics of the population associated with land use changes is an important factor to understand the hazardous behaviour in Portugal. Ministry of Internal Administration funded the project in co-operation with the Science and Technology Foundation. Co-ordinator Nelson Lourenço.

Centro de Estudos Geográficos da Universidade de Lisboa (CEG - Geographical Studies Centre from the Lisbon University)

- **The dynamic of the transformation of the structure of *montado* in Alentejo. The counties of Moura and Barrancos (1890-1990).** The project aims to identify the modifications of agrarian landscape associated with the montado of cork and holm oaks in Alentejo on the last century. These landscape changes, which are strictly related with the human intervention, have significant consequences on the land use changes and on the human occupation of the region. Science and Technology Foundation funded the project. Co-ordinator Denise de Brum Ferreira.

Centro Nacional de Informação Geográfica (CNIG - National Centre for Geographical Information)

- **The rural landscape in the Alcáçovas river: a socio-ecological approach.** MSc thesis that aims to study the environmental attitudes of the farmers and the way they interact with the environmental system.

3. Urban Problems

The strong and rapid increase of the urban pressure over the territory is a significant issue of the research on the environment. In Portugal the majority of the human activities, and also the higher population densities, are concentrated in the coastal area. This increasing of the urban and industrial pressure in those areas lead to a unbalanced occupation of the land. Therefore the research on urban problems aims not only the mitigation of the present problems but also the protection of sensible areas that still enjoy an ecological balance.

Projects and research centres:

Centro Nacional de Informação Geográfica (CNIG - National Centre for Geographical Information)

- **Urban network and accessibility's: recent transformations in the territory organisation.** This research aims to identify the modifications of the accessibility to the urban centres related to the construction of new roads. The evaluation of the new accessibilities has implications on the integration of the country's different regions and in the policy of territorial planning. Science and Technology Foundation funded the project. Co-ordinator João Reis Machado.
- **Greenway network for the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon.** This project intended to emphasise the importance of permanent, continuous research that is conducted in parallel with the respective governmental planning agencies, and also for the need to have prospective visions that may become long term strategic goals and policies. Ministry of Equipment, Planning and Territorial Administration funded the project in co-operation with the Science and Technology Foundation. Co-ordinator Rui Gonçalves Henriques and João Reis Machado
- **Main human interventions in the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon and their effects on the patrimony.** The project aims to identify the main human interventions (expressed by the different territorial plans) and its consequences on the territory and on the historical cultural and natural patrimony of the region. Science and Technology Foundation funded the project. Co-ordinator Rui Gonçalves Henriques and João Reis Machado.

- **Social Condition, Urban Environment and Life Quality.** This project aims to create and develop a methodological device to observe and inquire in a prospective way the pressures and urban landscape changes and the evolution and efficacy of urban environmental regulations, in Lisbon. Co-ordinator Vitor Matias Ferreira.

II. THE PRIORITIES TO THE RESEARCH IN HUMAN DIMENSIONS

One of the efforts of the human dimensions studies undertaken in Portugal seems to be, although not always very explicit, the search for an interdisciplinary research. The various institutions and researchers that co-operate in the different research projects express this aspect. Also the internationalisation of the research teams seems to be a priority. In this way is frequent that Portuguese teams co-operates with foreign institutions, mainly from the European Union.

However it seems to us that the priorities of the human dimensions research must be emphasised in three points:

In the case of Social Sciences in general:

- a) A more global, theoretic and epistemological level of analysis must constitute a priority to the human dimensions research.**

It is very important to construct methodological approaches that integrate the scientific knowledge of different disciplines. The interdisciplinary work is the best way to achieve an integrated comprehension about the problems behind the changes and the effects over the agents present in the areas that changed.

In the specific case of Portugal:

- b) The environmental impacts of the human actions at different scales.**

It is very important to study the impact of an activity, such the tourism, over the environment and on the populations that live in a region.

For instance the increasing pressure to urbanise the coastal Alentejo could transform an almost wild region in a chaotic area similar to the south cost of Algarve.

Also the increasing construction of new highways in our country has an impact, locally and regionally, and not only over the natural environment, that is far from totally known. Another significant issue is related to the study of land use changes.

The monitoring and the managing of the change in rural areas are very important to understand and evaluate the processes of marginalisation, land abandonment and desertification that affect the rural areas.

The land use changes study associated with the socio-economic characteristics of the population also permits to understand an important phenomena that affect the correct management of the natural resources in the rural areas in Portugal: the forest fires.

The development of the studies related to the urbanisation and industrialisation, that have significant consequences on the use of territory and to the environmental quality, are also important. Associated with them is another issue where natural and social dimensions interact: the risk assessment.

c) The scientific basis of this work lies in the belief that integrating physical and socio-economic approaches in the study of land resources and land use systems represents a conceptually correct means of addressing the unifying issue of economic and environmental sustainability. Therefore, the construction of indicators of change is an important step in this kind of approach, which aims to achieve an integrated comprehension of environmental changes.

The creation of networks that bring together researchers and support the exchange of information related to these issues is another important tool to the development of the environmental change studies. Furthermore the scientific community will have advantages from this kind of global platform of discussion, which could disseminate in a more organised way the results of the researches.

III. MAJOR PARTNERS IN ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

In Portugal only few organisations undertake research under the subject of Human Dimensions of Environmental Change. As referred above the studies have been developed more due to the capacity of organisation of isolated researchers or small groups of research, than to the existence of an official and clear orientation to this subject.

The research is, as almost all the scientific research in Portugal, funded by the *Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia* (the Portuguese research agency for the Science and Technology). This organisation is very recent and results from the reformation of other institutions that previously had the same objective.

It is an institution depending from the *Ministério da Ciência e Tecnologia* (Ministry of Science and Technology) which aims to organise, promote and fund scientific research in Portugal. Frequently this agency co-operates with other governmental organisations (Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Rural Development, Ministry of Internal Administration, Ministry of Equipment, Planning and Territorial Administration and Ministry of Environment) to launch specific programmes of research.

The European Union, and more precisely the different Directorate General of the European Commission, constitutes another institution that have been given a significant support to the internationalisation of the Portuguese research teams.

The significant organisations that undertake studies under the subject of Human Dimensions of Environmental Change are the following:

- **Universidade Nova de Lisboa / Gabinete de Investigação em Sociologia Aplicada (SOCINOVA - Group of Research in Applied Sociology)**

The Group of Research in Applied Sociology (SOCINOVA) from the New University of Lisbon has a research unit denominated Land, Environment and Rural Development Research Unity (LERUD). The research team has work experience inside Portugal, the European Union countries and in Angola. The Co-ordinator of this Research Unity of SOCINOVA, is Prof. Nelson Lourenço.

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- **Centro de Investigação da Universidade Atlântica (CIUATLA - Research Centre of the Atlantic University)**

The Research Centre of the Atlantic University (CIUATLA) is a multi-disciplinary research unit whose vocation is to promote and support research in the areas under Atlantic University jurisdiction. The Centre's objectives are based on establishing conditions for research within the framework of the University, articulating research work, capitalising on synergies and enabling the trans-disciplinarity, scientific training of University's teachers and researchers. The research areas underway at the Centre are linked, in a process of gradual consolidation, to the areas taught at the University which cover courses in management of the environment, land management and urbanism, information systems management and management and strategy. The line of research 1 of the centre is denominated: Land, Environment and Rural Development.

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These two groups of research (SOCINOVA / CIUATLA) are associated in a network, coordinated by Prof. Nelson Lourenço) that aims to understand the **changes in land use** through the analysis of the impact of the human and biophysical dynamics. The **articulation between the human and biophysical factors** which is at the root of land and soil use contributes to the understanding of the complexity of the regional dynamics through the **comparative analysis of local case studies**.

The researchers have essentially concentrated on the study of the complex interaction defined by the social systems, land use and their consequences in relation to ecological systems that are reflected in the landscape and the state of the environment with a view to sustainability.

These research teams are also participating in some projects and networks of discussion in the framework of Land Use and Land Cover Change (LUCC) Science Project like:

NELDA - *European and International Research Network for Land Use/Cover Data Development* - a multinational and multidisciplinary network in the framework of the ENRICH Program; and with **COSTED** - *Committee on Science and Technology in Developing Countries* - Regional Land Cover Changes Sustainable Agriculture and their Interactions with Global Change.

- **Grupo de Ecologia Social (GES - Social Ecology Group from the National Laboratory for Civil Engineering)**

The Social Ecology Group from the National Laboratory for Civil Engineering (GES / LNEC) has been developed research under two main subjects: Social Ecology and Environment and Social Ecology and Urban Habitat. This research group also co-operates with other research groups inside LNEC.

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- **Centro Nacional de Informação Geográfica (CNIG - National Centre for Geographical Information)**

The National Centre for Geographical Information is an organisation from the Ministry of Equipment, Planning and Territorial Administration. This centre develops research related to the territorial ordnance, natural resources, environmental and regional planning.

There are three main areas of research: Environment and Regional Planning; Natural Resources Management and Social Sciences. It is a priority to this centre to apply the knowledge obtained from the research on the resolution of specific problems.

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- **Instituto Superior de Agronomia, Departamento de Economia Agrária e Sociologia Rural (ISA - The Higher Institute of Agronomy, Department of Agrarian Economy and Rural Sociology)**

In the Department of Agrarian Economy and Rural Sociology the research teams are focused mainly on the effects of the utilisation of the Agri-environmental measures. Also the study of the advantages and costs of the environmental programmes is a significant subject of research.

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- **Universidade de Aveiro, Departamento de Ambiente e Ordenamento**
(Aveiro University – Department of Environment and Ordnance)

The Department of Environment and Ordnance of the Aveiro University develops interdisciplinary research more focused on the Physical aspects of the environment. However there are two main subjects related to the human dimensions of environment: Territory Planning and Sustainable Development and Policies of Development, Innovation and Territorial Dynamics. This main themes of research frames different studies on Territory Ordnance and Management of Environmental Vulnerable Areas; Society, Environment and Policies of Development and Territorial Planning System and Environmental Policy.

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- **Centro de Estudos Geográficos da Universidade de Lisboa (CEG -**
Geographical Studies Centre from the Lisbon University)

This centre of research was one of the pioneers of the environmental studies. O. Ribeiro gave a significant ecological perspective of the interactions nature / man activities. Today there are four main lines of research in this centre: Physical Geography, Human Geography, Regional Geography and Geo-Ecology and Environment. This specialisation of the research reflects the lesser significance of the integrated studies on the geographical studies.

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- **Observatório Permanente sobre Ambiente Sociedade e Opinião Pública (OBSERVA** - Permanent Observatory on the Environment, Society and Public Opinion)

The permanent observatory on the Environment, Society and Public Opinion, is an organisation created by two University Institutions (ISCTE – Superior Institute of Sciences of Work and Enterprise; ICS – Social Sciences Institute). It aims to promote the study of the social components of the environment.

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- **Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (FCT** - Foundation for the Science and Technology)

The Foundation for the Science and Technology is an institution depending from the *Ministério da Ciência e Tecnologia* (Ministry of Science and Technology) which aims to organise, promote and fund scientific research in Portugal.

This agency supports research projects in different scientific areas and there is a specific area of research related to the Social Sciences. The projects have a duration of 2-3 years and the funds can vary, according with the project dimension and duration, from 12 500ECU and 150 000ECU.

The research on the Human Dimension of Environment is also undertaken on other organisations. Although it was impossible to introduce some of the projects undertaken in this institutions in consequence of their lack of reply we present those institutions:

- Centro de Estudos Sociais da Universidade de Coimbra (CES – Social Studies Centre from the Coimbra University)
- Universidade do Algarve (Algarve University)

- Universidade Nova de Lisboa (UNL – New University of Lisbon):
 - Departamento de Geografia e Planeamento Regional (Department of Geography and Regional Planning)
 - Faculdade de Economia (Faculty of Economy)
 - Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia (Faculty of Sciences and Technology)
- Instituto Superior das Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa (ISCTE – Higher Institute of Sciences of Labour and Business)