Creative Production and Management in the Performing Arts

Modus Operandi

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Artists, producers, and managers

Anatomy of a relationship

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Anatomy of a relationship

Creative producers and arts managers – a living portrait

A clear majority (74%) of our interviewees stem from families with no financial constraints, and a significant majority (70%) say that their family had regular cultural habits, being connoisseurs, consumers, and, in some cases, practitioners of the arts. Many report early experiences of cultural enjoyment with their family (visits to exhibitions, attending performances) and, in some cases (not many), the family's proximity to the arts has even led to small informal work experiences, even before adulthood:

> We've always had a family environment that was very much geared towards books, films and more: my father worked in public television all his life, so sometimes we were part of children's television programmes or attended as members of the audience. We even read texts for an educational programme!
>
> (IT6)

> Every summer, fifteen artists would come and stay at our house, all sleeping on top of each other. (…) I grew up in this melting pot. My mum would give me 500 escudos and say, 'go on, look after the artists!' I was 7 or 8 years old and I'd chase the whole gang around. I was a precocious producer!
>
> (IT18)

However, the experiences the subjects most identify as being 'determinant' of their affinity with the arts (and, in many cases, their career choices) are those related to early artistic practice and/or cultural participation in school/amateur theatre groups.

> From age 15 I was part of the theatre group in high school, and that was the first budget I had to manage! We did Pirandello, and it was an

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> incredible thrill and discovery in my life. It saved me, actually. I had a tough adolescence, and as an introvert, the theatre was a radical change. But it was evident right away that what I wanted to do in theatre was production.
>
> (IT3)

> Ever since I was a little girl I've always practised ballet. I've always had an appetite for the arts, I sang and played the guitar. From age 18 I was part of Madalena Victorino's Atelier Coreográfico, which was absolutely defining for me. It was my gateway.
>
> (IT10)

Their speeches emphasise the importance of approaching the arts during school, regardless of age. There is even a prevalence of memories linked to experiences during university:

> I was involved in university theatre for nine years, which ended up being decisive for my career choices.
>
> (IT22)

> It was important to have joined TEUC [University of Coimbra's Student Theatre]. I auditioned in my first year without knowing what to expect or being prepared. I say it was important not so much because I took part in shows or workshops but because of my experience in the organisation. At TEUC, everyone does a bit of everything, and I was treasurer, vice-president, I did production.
>
> (IT19)

These experiences seem to be relevant to the point of overcoming family contexts that are less close to the arts, as in the case of IT14 or IT16, whose parents had only completed primary school and who, until they graduated, had practically no habits of cultural participation:[1]

> [I remember] turning up on Monday, the day we had lessons with Cristina Grande, and she'd ask, 'so what did you go see over the weekend?' Well, we were kids just out of high school, and our weekends didn't necessarily include going to the museum or the theatre. The fact that she insisted on that question week after week was very important; at a certain point we began to feel ashamed of having spent the weekend watching TV or drinking. So I started to get more involved. Going to an exhibition, seeing a film, a show, and slowly I began to enjoy the cultural scene.
>
> (IT16)

> This teacher would always tell us that she would see 'x' show the following Friday and that whoever wanted to should come along. So, five or six of us would go see shows with her before going out. Nowadays I can see how clever she was because she encouraged and accompanied us, but without making us feel that she was 'taking care of us', which at 16 or 17 we wouldn't have allowed! And that's how I started seeing a lot of theatre and liking it so much that later, when a teacher told me I could study production within a theatre degree at university, it seemed like a path for me.
>
> (IT14)

In general, the family/socialisation context and the early possibilities of contact with the arts seem to have been determinant in the trajectories of producers and managers. Still, we cannot affirm that this resulted in a case of univocal social recruitment. In some cases (namely IT14, IT16 or IT22), the economically less favoured family background and the absence of references to cultural participation in childhood and adolescence did not prevent them from building a path towards the cultural field after accessing higher education. Somewhat contradicting this data about relatively well-off family environments and deep-seated cultural habits, several interviewees reported that their families had resisted their choice of a career in the cultural field. The data further shows that it was a cross-sectional phenomenon, in terms of age, geography, and the degree of intensity of the family's proximity to the arts:

> For my parents, theatre was out of the question (…) at that time it was not at all an obvious career path.
>
> (IT1)

> I ended up studying law, a bit because of family pressure. From my family's point of view, it was unthinkable at the time to pursue a career in the arts. At that time, culture wasn't seen as a career path that could be dignified and notorious. I remember that when my career choice became clear, my mum reacted badly at a certain point. She thought I had many qualities and that I was wasting them.
>
> (IT10)

> My parents were never fully at peace with my choices, and for a long time, they did not see my work as a real profession.
>
> (IT22)

It is all the more interesting to note that although there was no resistance to attending a course in the cultural field, the choice of the area of *cultural*

management, in particular, was not well received/understood by the family, even once again, in the case of economically favoured families with regular cultural habits, as is the case with IT4:

> My father finds it very difficult to deal with my profession, in the sense that, for him, success is based on the economic power you acquire through the profession, which is not a value of this profession, or at least not the main one. So he has the attitude, 'OK, architecture is the way to go, that's where the intelligent people are, and then there are the others, who do stuff'. So I guess in his eyes I do *stuff*.
>
> (IT4)

The choice of this professional path seems to be, almost always, still a "tough option to uphold", as Cunha (2007:100) states, insofar as there are "a series of perceptions surrounding this profession, seen as an activity that does not offer professional stability"

> Nowadays, my parents are more relaxed because they see that I'm managing, but they still don't really know what I do. What do I get out of bed for? They ask me if everything is going well or comment on whether I will change jobs, and that's about it.
>
> (IT14)

which, consequently, can generate tensions and misunderstandings within the family and the social environment. The difficulty of this choice is also related to the fact that, even for those working in the field themselves, it does not appear self-evident and is not set up from the outset as a 'profession' (not to mention a viable and economically and socially recognised 'profession'). For most of them, the journey to realise this area as a possible profession took place little by little, by feel and, above all, by experimentation:

> I did production work at school, more or less unconsciously, because I didn't even realise that production was a profession. Little by little I began to realise that there was a potential in that, another way to be in the world of artistic creation.
>
> (IT25)

> Gradually, it began to make sense that the world of entertainment could become my professional future.
>
> (IT16)

A significant proportion (39%) states that, when choosing a higher education course, they were unsure what to study, mainly because of the

difficulty in identifying courses compatible with an area they could not define exactly. They knew they wanted to work in the arts, but not as artists:

> There was not much [higher education] on offer for those who were interested in having a profession linked to the arts but who did not necessarily want to be an actress.
>
> (IT1)

> I wanted to be in the arts world, but I didn't know in what capacity. I wasn't an artist.
>
> (IT19)

This slow and diffuse approach aligns with the conclusions of similar research that we have been referring to, Dubois (2019) and Cunha (2007). Dubois, for example, also mentions that, in his sample, almost half of the respondents (candidates for arts management training) stated they wanted to work in the cultural sector but did not mention a specific area. He even finds a mutually convenient correlation between this "fluidity or indeterminacy" and the possibility offered by a profession still under development, in the sense that they can 'shape' its contours according to their personality and aspirations (2019:24). Dubois calls this phenomenon 'projective uncertainty', meaning that individuals project their traits onto the jobs they seek.

> Working in the arts helps us understand others and work as a team. I deeply believe that one way of trying to change the world for the better is through the arts, with a focus on listening to others. If this potential for change exists, I want to be a part of it.
>
> (IT22)

> The supposed impossibility of greater cohesion, justice, professional ethics, collaboration, dialogue between creative formats and modes of production between structures/independent creators and institutions moves me. I'm interested in transitional places (…).
>
> (IT13)

In a way, the openness and heterogeneous dispositions they present seem to anticipate – and fit in with – the "non-linearity of expected career trajectories: instead of making normal progress throughout their career in the same job", producers and managers will most likely experience a succession of jobs comprising "multi-faceted roles that may vary from one context to another. In this sense, the ambiguity of their 'professional career plans' (…) reflects their realistic anticipation of future trajectories that are

very difficult to predict" (Dubois, 2019:69). Often, our interviewees say that it was only after 'x or y' job that they understood and/or identified their profession, and, in many cases, this recognition was belated:

> When I started working in production, there was no role of the producer. My children couldn't explain at school what I did.
>
> (IT8)

> I think when I started working at [the theatre], in 1990 I believe, that's when I became a 'producer'.
>
> (IT6)

For Cunha, these choices are often "made almost intuitively", with the individuals being "driven by the change in the labour market itself, when the need to professionalise the sector becomes more evident" (Cunha, 2007:98), and this is what we also observed in our fieldwork. A few people claim that they "never really made a decision; things just happened" (IT6), and others cite the professionalisation and growth of the area as a reason for pursuing it: IT7 was working in another area of the cultural field, when "the fact that arts management in Spain was very developed [caught her] attention". These are all signs that their (individual) professionalisation was taking place practically at the same time as the field's professionalisation, which also accounts for the remarkable variety in knowledge and initial training characteristic of the area.

Our data reveal a predominance of initial training in artistic areas (48%), and social sciences and humanities (52%), ranging from history/art history, heritage management, art studies, anthropology, sociology, sculpture, information science, architecture, photography, law, to, of course theatre and dance. A diversity that crosses generations, although a background in law and history is less common among the younger ones, and more targeted training, such as artistic studies or production (as a branch of the theatre course), is more common. However, these minor variations confirm the broad recruitment base in higher education courses that continue to characterise this area, which is consistent with its multidisciplinary nature. The breadth and diversity of entry qualifications thus keeps this field of work open to "interprofessional participation" (Cunha, 2007:120), a "family of occupations" (DiMaggio, 1987), the core of which can be considered fragmented (DeVereaux, 2009) or opaque (Chong, 2002). However, according to Dubois (2019:22), this vagueness is not necessarily a flaw unless we take "the most formalised occupational sectors as a measure to assess all occupational groups" (Abbott, 1988; Demazière & Gadéa, 2009). Instead of this amplitude

> constituting a passing imperfection that needs to be corrected, it may well be one of the factors explaining why individuals pursue these careers: the diversity of access routes makes arts management seem like a relatively open area, and the flexible definition of occupations allows people with diverse motivations to get involved, offering them a degree of freedom in their jobs and making the idea of failure seem more distant.
>
> (Dubois, 2019:22)

The relative vagueness of their initial choices, combined with the diversity of degrees they have opted for, in no way undermines the conviction that they will end up having chosen the profession they wanted.

> Actually, I really like this, I can't see myself doing anything else.
>
> (IT20)

> I can't see myself doing anything else but this.
>
> (IT16)

> I'm very dedicated to my work, I love what I do, I truly do!
>
> (IT25)

As also reported by Cunha, "the passion that everyone has for what they do, the certainty that they have chosen the right professional path despite the difficulties and uncertainties that were always present during the trajectory taken by each individual interviewed here" (2007:104) and by Dubois, "in the vast majority of cases, these are deliberately made choices, at least as far as the attraction towards the cultural sector is concerned" (2019:63). The fact that there is no single-entry route to these professions and that, in them, legitimisation is mainly done through practical experience, should not dissuade us from considering their very high level of education. In fact, 100% of the interviewees have a bachelor's degree and almost half (43%) have a postgraduate or master's degree. This means that, similarly to what Madeira noted, although there is no "academic apprenticeship to specifically train cultural programmers [read, in our case, producers and managers] in Portugal, there is no disengagement from the academic field in legitimising professionalisation" (Madeira, 2002:32). In this respect, these professions seem to be in line with other cultural occupations in general, where high levels of education are common (Dubois, 2019; Martinho, 2013). Along the same lines, the number of professionals with specialised training (even if it does not entail a degree) is extremely high: more than two-thirds (74%) have pursued specialisation/deepening courses during their working life. The size and duration of our survey do

not allow us to respond to the hypothesis that this increase in educational level is accentuated with each generation, as Dubois (2019:32) supposes. Similar to this researcher, the lack of longitudinal data prevents us from accurately understanding these dynamics. Still, it seems clear that competition in this area is high, which will reinforce the importance of specialised diplomas for newcomers (Chauvel 1998, cited by Dubois, 2019). Does the "fact that women hold the most educational capital help explain why there are more women than men in these careers", as Dubois (2019:8) argues? We will discuss this issue in Chapter 4, but for now, let us state the obvious: almost 80% of the interviewees were women, which is consistent with studies in other geographies and contexts (Cuyler et al., 2020; Dubois & Lepaux, 2018). Moreover, if it is difficult to have accurate data on the situation in Portugal, given the lack of systematic and micro-level data, we can infer from studies and reports from other countries[2] that there is a vertical gender gap in this sector, where women are over-represented in support functions, and under-represented in creative areas (as artistic directors, writers, directors, etc.). It is because of data like this that we need to problematise the predominance of women in the areas of production and management, as it may indicate one of the multiple ways in which inequality expresses itself, to an apparently benign degree, in the professions and in the cultural labour market. Consequently, there is no way of carrying out a critical analysis of the profiles of producers and managers without embedding that analysis in a reflection on the inequality that exists in the fabric of the culture workforce.

Another relevant aspect is recruitment. Cunha had described a two-way entry scenario, one determined by happenstance, where certain circumstance as opportunities eventually led people to the profession of cultural manager; other in which there would be a more conscious and objective choice (Cunha, 2007). The biographical accounts of our interviewees, however, do not allow us to place them clearly in one or the other scenarios. If, on the one hand, it seems true that the older individuals found production and management more 'accidentally' and after sometimes having previously pursued other careers (IT2, IT6, IT8, IT10, IT12), the trajectory of the others is not compatible with Cunha's description of an 'already conscious choice of becoming' professionals in the field, as we have seen from the descriptions of their progressive approach to the profession, as well as the hesitations they still reveal regarding their (self-)designation. On the other hand, an increasing level of formality in recruitment processes appears to be evident: several interviewees, especially younger ones, applied for jobs following advertisements or, more often, through opportunities passed on by friends and colleagues, which indirectly signals the existence of peers belonging to the same 'universe of professionals'. Nevertheless, this trend towards formality is not accompanied by an increase in the level

of specification of the advertisements – the sample we collected in 2021, juxtaposed with the 2016–2018 sample, shows no significant variations in the indicators we analysed, being identical to the one described previously.

The specialised training courses that many attended were fundamental in gradually establishing a common professional sphere and important in providing students with several connections to active professionals. But despite being more frequent among younger interviewees, specialised training is not mentioned often in job advertisements, from which we deduce that "it has not yet become an access requirement for jobs in the field" (Martinell, 2001:30).

> Nobody teaches you to be a producer, academic training was not fundamental.
>
> (IT13)

> It wasn't my CV that was decisive, it was the coincidence that we crossed paths at a festival.
>
> (IT14)

> My beginnings were very self-taught and spontaneous, I would pass in front of the theatre, there was no application, there was only an intellectual affinity.
>
> (IT4)

Getting started is not something that agents consider difficult, quite the contrary. They state that "entering the labour market was easy" (IT15) and that "in production, it's relatively easy to land your first jobs" (IT13). (The hardships seem to come later, regarding working conditions, burnout, and future expectations. We will get to that in a moment). Producers and managers, unlike programmers or curators (Madeira, 2002:43), are not usually hired 'by invitation' – which can perhaps be related to the 'place' they occupy in artistic structures, something that will become more explicit in the upcoming section of this book. At least half of them explicitly mention the importance of volunteer experiences, internships and scholarships as facilitators of their integration into the labour market, emphasising more formalised (and paid) internships. With these various aspects in mind, it is possible to make a distinction, even if tenuous, between "a generation that became professional based on experimenting/doing" (IT25) and a generation that has entered the profession with some know-how. This chasm is not without questions

> This new generation of producers has already been on production courses. If there is a course, it will equip people with a series of useful

> tools, but I still think that it's really through professional experience that you develop the necessary skills. (…) I don't think that to be a good producer, you must have studied production. Nor do I think that everyone who takes a production course is necessarily a good producer. (IT6)

> I'm talking about production from the late 1990s, everything is different nowadays. But I still find it ironic [professionalisation through courses] because the academic area in production must be tied in with the field, otherwise it doesn't make sense. (IT13)

but it inevitably points to the future. The generational background of our interviewees and the recent nature of these specific courses mean that it is still relatively early to fully discuss their suitability and impact.

As we have already stated, we have chosen to focus on the subjective experience, and symbolic representations of the arts management profession, instead of exploring their material conditions. We can only do this, of course, thanks to the robustness of the scientific contributions that have successively documented the socio-economic context of artistic labour. In particular, our analysis is indebted to the previous work of Van Assche (2020), Borges (2020), Pewny (2011), Quintela (2017), McRobbie (2016), and Menger (2005), among others, who have described the specificities of cultural and creative work, its models, modes and working conditions and made it possible to illuminate its paradoxes: precariousness and atomisation, low pay, instrumentalisation of the desire for individual fulfilment and identity mobilisation; and those who have established the link between modes of work in the arts as the prototype of new modes of work in late capitalism. The work of Boltanski and Chiapello (1999), *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, was seminal in that it established the phenomenon of mutual accommodation between the ways of working and organising creative activities and the requirements of the neo-liberal capitalist system. Indeed, in recent years, particularly during the pandemic, the fragility of a system based almost exclusively on freelance work became evident, and the arguments that hold the artistic class co-responsible for adhering to the neo-liberal model are now well known. Notably, Boltanski and Chiapello (1999, reed.2017) have made it clear that the yearnings for less hierarchy and more flexibility, combined with an *artistic critique* that has emphasised issues of identity and autonomy, are said to have contributed to the weakening of the social critique of exploitation, and to the reproduction of the neo-liberal logic, interested in the success of competitive, highly motivated and self-managed individual workers/entrepreneurs. If we consider these broad lines that have recurrently served to define artistic work, we find no

reason to generally exclude producers and managers from this portrayal, and it is pretty clear, both in recent studies, and in the trajectories and discourses we have analysed, that they face the same vulnerabilities. Concerning the structuring of work, producers and managers, like artists, flexibly perform intangible labour in the context of temporary projects, and for this, they are in a situation of continuous multitasking and networking, and of 'permanent stand-by' (Standing, 2011), since stopping or even slowing down is perceived as leading to the unaffordable risk of 'losing opportunities'. On this matter, we have previously mentioned that the intense 'professional nomadism' in production and management (in the wake of successive and overlapping projects but also due to the specific process of on-the-job professionalisation, which encourages mobility and the accumulation of a diverse portfolio of skills) may overexpose these professionals to the precariousness arising from project-based work. Still, there is no longitudinal research capable of supporting this hypothesis. Truth be told, the specificities of artistic work in terms of its relationship with precariousness are of less interest to us than other aspects of work in this area, since, as far as precariousness itself is concerned, it increasingly corresponds to a reality that cuts across the whole of society (even if it affects individuals with different social and educational capital in different ways). With this in mind, we adopt the definition of precariousness proposed by Van Assche as a "process of normalisation of socio-economic insecurity" (2020:248). We find that it is perfectly discernible in the professional and personal situation of our interviewees through a combination resulting from the degradation and transformation of labour rights (or lack thereof) with the well-known particularities of work in the artistic field: informality of labour relations, non-existent or intermittent contractual relationships, low remuneration, predominance of project work, constant uncertainty due to the fragile ecosystem of public funding, particular schedules of the activity, and weak culture of organisational development, among other aspects. As to labour instability and low pay, these are experienced by the majority of our interviewees (namely IT3, IT4, IT6, IT9, IT13, IT14, IT17, IT19, IT20, IT24), who report being "underpaid", having experienced "difficult times", not having a job contract or, when they did, this happened many years after they entered the labour market. IT4 summarises: "My formal relationship with labour (…) has been miserable". The exception comes from those currently working in the public sector who are either silent on the contractual and remuneration aspects of their work (IT2, IT10, IT15, IT21) or report different experiences:

> I have a very peaceful history with the formal side of work, perhaps because I've always worked in the public sector. I think that all civil

> servants earn very little, although I can't complain given the prevailing practices in the sector.
>
> (IT23)

It is, in fact, the institutional context in which they work and not their profession that is the defining element of their working conditions, as Cunha (2007:3) also points out:

> Their social status and salary vary enormously according to the size and resources of the organisation in which they work. Even if they perform similar functions, there is a gulf between the salary of a cultural manager in a large national theatre or in a small independent company.

While it is normal for variations to exist according to the scale and budget of each organisation, in several other professions, these disparities do not seem as significant as in the case of the arts, as a result of the almost total deregulation of this labour market. This deregulation might help explain two phenomena the interviews point to: a continuous exodus from the independent to the public sector, and a frequent change to similar professions that are perceived as having higher status and benefits. IT23 alludes to this: "Some change profession (…) for the sake of status. Many producers go on to do programming, for example". In her analysis of cultural programmers, Madeira had already made the point that the "concern for stability (…) is parallel to the strategy of survival in the face of intermittency", often translating into "professional integration into bureaucratic institutions or in the process of bureaucratisation" (Madeira, 2002:30). In our analysis, this dynamic is confirmed by the intersection of strictly labour and remuneration issues with the instability generated by project work. IT14 explains: "When you live at the mercy of a possible grant, and your life stability is threatened every two years, it's brutal". In the wake of Menger's (2005) research into the constitutive uncertainties of artistic work, Van Assche begins by stating that the central core of artistic precariousness rests on uncertainty about the reception of their work, but goes on to make an important distinction, one we can also identify with, between the precarious core of artistic work (ontologically uncertain in its nature, realisation, reception and aims) and precariousness as the unequal distribution of risks and social protection, something that is already in the realm of what societies do or do not want to protect and fund. This distinction seems particularly important to us, as the dynamic of self-precarisation of arts workers has become evident. By virtue of their choice to work in this field, they have been willing to sacrifice material benefits in exchange for the possibility of carrying out their chosen activity, thus becoming

susceptible to exploitation. As we have seen, producers and managers too have made a deliberate choice to work in the arts, so 'self-precarisation' also applies to them. Distinguishing, on a sociological level, their susceptibility to precarisation from the 'government precarisation' (Lorey, 2009: 198) as a result of neoliberal policies will be important if producers and all other cultural workers are to be able to renegotiate their situation of precariousness, without perceiving it as a fatality for which they would ultimately be doubly responsible – for having chosen to work in the arts and for "suffering from the idea that the show must go on" (IT20), i.e. for devoting themselves to the job despite economic difficulties. Also in the words of IT20: "For a long time I held a romantic view of theatrical structures, [I had] the idea that what I earned was secondary to other things, other values".[3] Inextricably linked to this unstable, precarious and poorly paid arrangement is the predominance of project work, which we have already mentioned. Currently, in the context of the performing arts, as in any other area, having or offering a long-term or indefinite labour contract is increasingly a kind of 'anomaly' in the social order of a world that looks to have definitively moved into the 'gig economy' era. Let us consider the scenario of atomisation, fragmentation, and very high individualisation of work in this area. The effects on the organisational panorama of the arts are hardly surprising: permanent work, inside or outside the context of a company, has been replaced almost entirely by temporary work framed in one or several projects – "people are spread over many things", as IT31 explains.

It is salient to keep in mind that the on-the-job professionalisation, the incomplete trajectory of the profession itself, and the 'passion' involved in choosing this professional path are often confused, as not everyone associates the rationale of project-based work with precariousness:

> This project has become a life project. (…) That conditions how you see your own work.
>
> (IT24)

> I think I need to be passionate about what I do, and perhaps that's also why I've had to jump from project to project. This profession takes up much of my space and personal life. I devote a lot of my time to projects.
>
> (IT5)

In any case, the effects of project-based work are indeed amplified by the "vicious cycle of fundraising" (Van Assche, 2020:129) since most of the funding available is temporary and conditional. We are not only dealing with an extraordinarily fast-paced reality and its effects on the labour market or the concept of employment but also witnessing the erosion of the 'institutions' that used to organise our world and around which we created

our meanings of life. Richard Sennett, a leading sociologist on the mutations of capitalism, goes so far as to say that this transformation of the temporal regime of work has a significant ethical implication: "working in a way that goes against long-term logic shakes the foundations of human character" – a statement so forceful that we are tempted to see a certain nostalgic exaggeration in it. But Sennett explains: the fact that institutions are now 'fleeting and erratic in their temporal frameworks deprives individuals of a sense of narrative movement', that is, it becomes more difficult to project the course of one's life, but above all, to develop a narrative of identity and life story, forcing the individual to 'dispense with any lasting consciousness of self' (2007:126). Is it this 'mental precariousness' of which Laermans (2004, quoted by Van Assche, 2020: 224) speaks that makes it so difficult for the professionals I have interviewed to imagine their future?

> Like boxers, we may start to flag after thirty, that is, not be able to do on four hours' sleep any longer, and then we begin to grumble about taxes, and to feel that the aim of society is to put us all out of business. It is then good to remember that artists have existed and persisted, like the snail and the coelacanth and other unchanging forms of organic life, since long before governments were dreamed of Patricia Highsmith.[4]

The profession is often portrayed, albeit with various exceptions, as one in which it is difficult to foresee a future and even more difficult to grow older.

> I can't project myself too far into the future, I confess. (…) I can't imagine an executive producer working on it for 40 years. I don't think it's physically possible.
>
> (IT3)

> I don't know what's the way forward. Maybe I'll live in the countryside, grow vegetables, I won't starve. I hope I don't grow old in this profession, I'm looking for another way to work. I don't know how to do anything else either, I feel the need to work on things that make a difference.
>
> (IT17)

> Independent production can be very tough. It's very unbalanced between what you give and what you get. Why must we give up our personal life because we love this job? I don't see myself growing old in production.
>
> (IT22)

> Maybe production is an early career job? I seriously doubt that doing production is compatible with getting older (…) I have doubts because

> of motherhood, I have doubts because of exhaustion (…) You hear among colleagues, when you're 45, that idea 'I have to change my life', it's no longer sustainable…
>
> (IT23)

The testimonies I collected also point to a worrying relationship between the profession and age, which is another specific dimension of temporality:

> If you have a child, that's a problem; if you're over 40, that's a problem, because maybe you don't want to work all those hours anymore; if you're 20, you don't have enough experience yet – there's even a problem of age discrimination here, a kind of golden age (…) in which you use people up to the limit of their possibilities and then replace them with someone else, which isn't very smart because there's no ballast of experience that endures.
>
> (IT4)

> I know very few producers who grow old in the profession, it's very tough, there's a lack of respect, and there's clearly 'ageism'. You want 'cannon fodder' because of the crazy hours, personal availability, willingness to socialise…
>
> (IT9)

On the topic of time, many interviewees say that the lack of resources (namely, the small size of the teams) means that they have to work long hours, which, in turn, leads the organisation to fulfil many of the elements of social life that become compromised as a result of this dedication – hence many mention 'fun' as one of the aspects they value most in their work. The identifiable relationship between the object of the work in the cultural area, regardless of whether it is in the artistic area or in cultural management itself, and the imaginary conception of leisure time and the fruition of artistic pleasure can, in many cases, camouflage excessive working hours. This is also due to the 'personal-professional blurring' that is so pronounced in the arts to the extent that Van Assche describes this merging of social relationships as 'frolleagues' (friends + colleagues). While many claim that this particular way of experiencing work should not be victimised, I found (throughout the research and my own working life) evidence of this being problematic:

> With all the people who gravitated around the company, I created a very personal, intimate relationship, I even considered them friends. Also, because you don't have time for anything else, it ends up being your home, your family. But at the same time, it was a way for me to be

> involved and give my all. When you feel that something is yours, you're going to be at your best, stand up for the project, and you're going to deny that there's anything wrong.
>
> (IT19)

The overwhelming pace at which people work in production is by far the most disturbing sign of a problematic time management in this profession, often resulting in extreme fatigue and burnout.[5] Virtually, all the people I interviewed have had some kind of contact with situations of burnout – either themselves or colleagues – or are aware of the proximity of this professional risk.

> The workload was really overwhelming. The only thing missing was sleeping there, and sometimes it was non-stop.
>
> (IT6)

> I worked a lot. I was there before 9 a.m. and often left at 11 p.m. I had a meltdown, I couldn't handle the work, I was exhausted.
>
> (IT13)

> It's very tiring, you never stop working. Even when you leave the office, you always have work on your mind. I get eczema, my feet get so sore they bleed. I became anxious when I wasn't. You start to develop pathologies that didn't exist in your life because the level of stress and responsibility increases, increases, increases.
>
> (IT3)

> I've been very close to exhaustion several times, very close, like, really on the edge.
>
> (IT4)

> These days it takes me longer and longer to recover from festivals. All the producers mention this, it's typical, the festival ends, or the premiere arrives, and you get sick. Now it's taking me longer and longer to feel well again, my body is winning the fight.
>
> (IT20)

> I've always been aware of the existence of burnout in this profession, I feel it close, from other producers, from friends to whom it happens. I was always afraid it would happen to me. I think the strain is obvious, it starts off as a very physical thing, and there's never enough time off to compensate for it, and it escalates because in the industry there's a lack of respect for the producer's downtime, not the crews'; there's a concern

> for the crews' downtime but not the producer's. This creates enormous pressure on the people who do production.
>
> (IT14)

> I was overworked, underpaid, very tired, no matter how hard I tried to hide it for a long time. My friends told me that I wouldn't stop working, but I always came up with arguments to excuse and justify it, basically, to say 'I'm doing this because I want to', which is a way of protecting yourself, because to put up with it, to keep going at that pace, you have to tell yourself that you want to be doing it.
>
> (IT19)

The way producers and managers work is undoubtedly part of the acceleration framework in which the arts (also) operate. The duality of the term 'speed', denoting both the measurement of time and the quality of being fast and prompt, serves as an effective metaphor to contemplate the acceleration phenomenon. Although acceleration is indeed a central value of capitalism, it would be naive not to notice that the capitalist system has also co-opted slowness: "slow movement is a privilege of the rich" (Kunst, 2010:130). Nowadays, programmes and initiatives that advertise an appreciation of time, adding it to their 'menu', can be seen everywhere in order to capture and try to neutralise all criticism of their way of functioning without really questioning it. The producers I spoke to also mentioned that they are increasingly aware of the risk of burnout and that "we have to start thinking about being cared for" (IT4). However, Van Assche criticises the paradox that self-care guarantees the continuation of our ability to work. She also rejects individual 'deceleration' as a tactic against neoliberal forces, insofar as slowing down, in this context, "is not subversive but an accelerationist way of doing so" and has already become "a commodity in itself" (2020:264). In the discourses of the producers I interviewed, I easily found echoes of the "rechargeable individual" that Van Assche speaks of: the one who has to recharge in time to avoid burnout and then return to the same system that caused his exhaustion. It is also precisely because of this paradox that, in the following chapters, our research moves to the organisational/collective dimension, where some deceleration tactics can be experimented with, instead of this fallacious strategy of incorporating yet another individual responsibility: monitoring our 'remaining battery time'. Given this, it is paramount that we pay more attention to transformations in modes of operation and production than to speed. It is therefore useful to return to the logic of project-based work to note that, despite an undeniable greater awareness of the risks of exhaustion, the established and dominant mode of production is that of 'projective temporality' (Kunst, 2010). Constantly churning out projects, applications, and dossiers, producers, like artists, are the perfect expression of those

beings who, according to Kunst, sell the present on the cheap in exchange for a project design. Considering the specific tasks and responsibilities of producers and managers, I would go so far as to say that perhaps they are more deeply immersed in a projective temporality than the artists, since even during intense periods of creation, close to the premiere – moments of experiencing the 'now' par excellence – they hardly fail to keep in mind the approaching deadline, the dossier of the show that needs to be put together, its future viability, the funding applications. Their task is actually to project, and they are always tied to potential fulfilment and future action, which means that they sometimes "let the present slip away" (Kunst, 2010:24). The feeling of being off balance, of vertigo, is familiar to many colleagues. It presents a conspicuous inconsistency that they 'live' in the future yet lack the social and economic stability to envisage forthcoming opportunities. Outside the strictly contractual labour context, the prevalence of project-orientated logic is also slowly beginning to be questioned by people who have designed and implemented projects all their lives. That is why we need to start talking about 'de-projecting' and ask ourselves: "how to escape from the project mentality? How to work with longer timeframes? How to establish a culture of support and care?". These are defining questions regarding the organisational modes of the performing arts, to which we will return later.

Looking back, my last work experience as manager for a theatre company presented all these warning signs. As years went by, my life began to revolve more and more exclusively around work, the people I worked with, and our work calendar. Despite everything we know today about the models of self-exploitation induced by neoliberal capitalism, many will insist that this fluid coexistence between the worlds of work and personal life is an inextricable feature of working in the arts. I too believed this for far too long. The work was excessive, but it's hard to admit that the intensity with which we lived it seemed to have no parallel in life 'outside'. My friends and family seemed to live in a slow-motion space-time, their lives unaffected by the permanent passions and calamities imposed by the rhythm of artistic creation, touring and planning. My calendar didn't coincide with theirs: they planned the next weekend; I planned the next three years. The "project" I had in hand was always more urgent than the present, and so coffees, birthdays and spontaneous conversations kept being postponed. I couldn't answer the phone or return calls: I seemed to be always travelling, or at a rehearsal, or a meeting, or smoking a late-night cigarette at the back door of some theatre, in never-ending conversations with my colleagues, also people producing and managing theatre

shows and theatre venues. We might have been failing our dear ones, but we understood each other's miseries and shared jokes and "magical" moments and that was intoxicating. Until it wasn't.

Arts managers and producers: a specific know-how?

We have said before that we will not go into depth in distinguishing the work of 'producers' from the work of 'managers' in the arts. We prefer to explore a 'real definition' of these professions, exploring their nature and idiosyncrasies, rather than proposing a 'nominal definition', i.e. seeking to clarify to which sets of competencies or to which functional descriptors we can competently assign one or other designation. This approach follows an integrative – and to some extent, essentialist – view of these two professions, in terms of the required competence profiles and functional areas. This is, in fact, the sense of most of the testimonies we gathered: that, from a substantive point of view, these are similar skills profiles, the distinctions being largely based on the level of experience, institutional work context, etc. Such an apparent coincidence does not dispense with the problematisation we have been making regarding the lack of specialisation in the area, which could be one of the contributing factors. That is, the current specialisation deficit may partially explain the overlaps between the two professions even if, from our analysis, it is not clear that this is the most important distinction to be made towards a greater field specialisation. As far as knowledge is concerned, our interviewees highlight two domains: the *artistic* (including references to generic knowledge in 'Art History' or 'cultural programming' but also the necessary specialisation in terms of one or more artistic disciplines/areas) and the *managerial* (mentioning knowledge related to the design and implementation of projects, to operational tools such as foreign languages or IT, and, to a lesser extent, financial management). The analysis of interviewee responses unveils a hybrid knowledge set essential for production and arts management. This set values both 'artistic' and 'technical' knowledge as equally important and interdependent. In the field of competencies, three types stand out: *organisational* (interviewees repeatedly highlight 'organisational and planning skills', consistently emphasise the ability to 'develop and implement effective work plans' and 'manage resources' of various kinds), *relational* (interviewees stress the centrality of knowing how to 'build relationships', to 'engage in dialogue', to 'listen', to 'speak the same language as the project' in which they are involved, to 'be diplomatic', and to know how to articulate and have 'argumentative capacity'), and *critical* (they refer to the need for 'critical positioning of the producer concerning the project', an 'adequacy of methodologies' to the specificities of the project, and reiterate

the importance of 'problematisation and reflection'). The combination of these three types of skills – *organisational*, *relational*, and *critical* – points to a complex and wide-ranging configuration of these professions, something which, as we will see below, is somewhat at odds with the 'place' – effective and symbolic – that the professions occupy in terms of practices and representations; with the different 'roles' they are called upon to fulfil; and, to a certain extent, in conflict with the more common and tendentially objective nomenclatures ('producer' and 'manager' indicating much more technical and pragmatic functions than the complexity they apparently involve). Finally, it is more difficult to typify the profusion of 'human traits' that all interviewees, without exception, point out as indispensable for the (competent) exercise of the function: repeatedly, they refer to the indispensability of 'calm', 'humility', 'curiosity', 'intelligence', 'availability', 'attention', and 'commitment'. Many even say that merely the right knowledge (technical and artistic) or skills (organisational, relational and critical) are not enough to work in the field; they say that "you have to have certain personality traits" or stress that "you need to have many more human characteristics than technical ones". That a large part of the tasks of producers and managers are in the field of intermediation may partially explain the insistence on a certain type of 'personal' skills and competencies, but there is a subliminal narrative that these professions, despite their designations and tasks, cannot be reduced to their technical dimension. Their underlining of this aspect is interesting if we consider that it comes at a time when the professionalisation trajectory is not concluded, since it seems to indicate a discomfort about how it is being carried out (some even explicitly say: "I think we're professionalising without any real direction" – IT3). By stressing less objectifiable aspects of the profession, insistently using vocabulary from the domain of 'sensitivity', 'personality', and 'passion', they practically contribute to its de-professionalisation, considering that these aspects they classify as essential can hardly be incorporated into a teaching programme or even acquired through experience. What exactly are they trying to tell us with these statements? What could this discomfort be? We believe that analysing the 'place' and the conditions in which the profession is practised, which we will do in the next section, will help us make sense of these questions. In any case, their claims are supported by several authors (Beirne & Knight, 2002; Pick & Anderton, 1996; Rubim, 2005). Linda Rubim, for example, states that

> the primary requirement (…) is sensitivity coupled with knowledge, enchantment, and political and social commitment to culture. Without such attachment, closeness, passion and commitment – no matter how good the technical training – the recent graduate will never be a full professional in the cultural field.
>
> (Rubim, 2005:28)

Daniele Sampaio, in her description of the producer's tasks, also insists on "highlighting the complexity and creativity inherent in the exercise of cultural production and management, whose activities require a high degree of sensitivity, listening, precision, interest in others, flexibility, planning, criticality, aesthetic refinement, leadership and entrepreneurship" (2020:231) – combining personal dispositions and technical skills in a single enumeration. Suppose we add to this multiplicity and complexity the question of specialisation or enrolment in a particular artistic field or the number of spheres of action in which producers and managers can be active. In that case, the issue becomes even more complex. Martinell (2001:19) lists the sectors, scopes, and fields of action of cultural production and management, composing a gigantic list, which includes the "performing arts" (theatre, dance, opera, circus, etc.), the visual arts (galleries, museums, crafts, etc.), heritage (museums, archives, libraries, etc.), music (auditoriums, festivals, and recording industry circuit), literature and publishing (festivals, publishing awards, and dissemination), and audiovisual (radio, cinema, television, content, etc.). He also adds what he dubs a 'generalist' scope (management of municipal cultural and civic facilities and centres, associations, international cooperation networks). In our research, we circumscribed our gaze to the field of performing arts (due to our professional background and knowledge, but also to ensure the viability and depth of the research), yet we must call on this extraordinary spectrum (to which we had already hinted when discussing nomenclatures) to complete this difficult analysis of 'what producers and managers do'. The structuring of the cultural field by sectors, from a professional and institutional point of view, with each sector having its own specificity, "leads to the co-existence of multiple identities that result in a relative group unity" (Dubois, 2019:3). Describing 'what producers and managers do' in the domain of performing arts sometimes results in extremely detailed and, simultaneously, astonishingly unspecific descriptions:

> [The producer is engaged in] how to ensure (resources for the materialisation of the project), how to guarantee (conditions for the creation, distribution and fruition of the project), how to mediate (relationships between the different agents and sectors that make up the creative process of a cultural product), how to plan (the different stages that involve the creation and completion of the project), how to execute (the countless actions carefully distributed between the pre-production, production and post-production stages), how to manage (people, vanities, frustrations, fears, dreams and ambitions), how to define (the actions that will guarantee the future of the project), how to administer

> (human, material, economic and creative resources), how to seek (partnerships, funding and exchanges), how to resize (the work, based on countless daily micro-decisions that will directly reflect on how it will be presented to the world), etc.
>
> (Sampaio, 2020:90)

The key study by Instituto para a Qualidade na Formação (IQF) (2006) was tasked with defining the professional profiles for the 'performing arts sector', and indeed they separate the 'producer' from the 'manager'. We set out to analyse them in detail, drawing up an interpretative grid based on the parameters derived from the predominant responses in the interviews, namely (in terms of domain: technical, artistic; in terms of competencies: organisational, relational, and critical). The analysis indicates numerous similarities between the activities outlined in both profiles. A similar analysis was carried out with regard to the knowledge set that the said professional profile attributed to either one or the other, where the overlaps are even more evident, suggesting certain interconnections (the producer profile mentions management skills and the manager profile mentions the need for production knowledge). The only major differences lie in programming (which can be included in the cultural management profile) and in two or three specificities ('technical equipment' and 'legislation' for some, 'leadership' for others).

This is what David Conte and Stephen Langley mean when they say that the titles vary but the core functions are the same and that perceptions can vary depending on who is the observer: an economist will value the extent to which a manager combines labour and capital to produce a show or project; a sociologist will tend to see the theatre manager as someone who influences a particular organisational context (Conte & Langley, 2007:4). Patrícia Pires (2017:68) states: "the skills of a producer are similar to those of a manager and encompass three broad areas" – conceptual, technical, and human relations. Orozco (2012:21) distinguishes (based on Bonet, 2007) four pillars for a cultural manager, which, once again, emphasise the overlaps and intersections: production, training, creation, and dissemination, adding immediately that, in reality, the boundaries between these pillars are unclear and that it is not uncommon for the same person to fulfil two, three or more roles. Bolán and Sanchéz (2012:30) present their activities and duties as relating to being "a representative of civil society (building communities); a mediator of conflicts (between rules, hierarchy, etc.); a provider of a holistic vision for the artistic field and a planner; and a promoter of cultural consumption"; Malzacher sees the cultural manager above all as someone who, when relating to artistic activities, "always has, after all, a socio-cultural intention" (2017:15).

While it appears clear that these professions require "theoretical, analytical and practical knowledge" (Rubim, 2005:29), it is difficult to confine them to an exclusive plane, which often means that, as Dubois says, they are professions "mostly defined in the negative: they are not about artistic creation, nor about technical work, critique or teaching" (2019:3). The questions build up: Where should these professionals be placed on a 'technical sheet'? In the 'artistic team'? In the 'technical team'?

It is tedious to compile various approaches from different cultural, traditional, and geographical backgrounds, which, recognising and highlighting the idiosyncrasies of each context in which producers and managers operate, will tend more and more to point out multiplicity, intersections, and hybridities than to elaborate rigid typifications, hardly in line with contemporary reality. From the point of view of our research, we argue that there are perhaps other distinctions that are worth paying more attention to, as they derive less from the labour-institutional context in which a producer or manager works, or from the experience they hold – that is, they derive less from circumstance – and more from the nature of the relationship with art that they establish; in other words, the distinctions that interest us most are those that can reconfigure the relationship between creation and production. One area that exemplifies this topic is the ongoing dynamics of sub-specialisation, which have sparked renewed debates regarding whether the commonly used names are accurate. This is the case with the discussion on the possibility of a 'creative producer'.

Sampaio considers that "production and management are matters intrinsic to creation, and not autonomous activities separated from the creative process", adding that "the so-called executive tasks are not, as we have realised and contrary to what is usually propagated, devoid of imagination, reflection and thought" (2020:231). Similarly, Rubim (2005:25) considers that the "role of production has a relevant dimension of creation, imagination and invention". However, both unequivocally safeguard that "the creativity of the producer (…) cannot and should not be confused with the singular activity of the artist" (Rubim, 2005:25), clarifying that "they do not intend to propose a new place for production or question the hierarchisation of credits" (Sampaio, 2020: 231). Sampaio is bolder, postulating that by looking at production as a creative activity, it is the very notion of artistic creation that becomes more comprehensive, coming to admit and recognise the other "elements necessary to the exercise of creating a work of art" which results in "admitting the collective/collaborative nature of creative processes in art" (2020:233). Such a statement may seem simple, especially considering the recurrence of the expressions 'collaboration', 'collaborative', and 'collective' in the characterisations of artistic work. Sampaio's point becomes clearer only when she states that this 'new'

look at production "also means the possibility of moving away from our current view of others who 'serve' us" (2020:233).

Despite the disagreements around the distinction between producers and managers, or the difficulties and inconsistencies regarding the designations, the discussion has rarely called into question the nature of these professionals as 'support staff', in Becker's (1982) sense. They constitute, with more or less variations and evolutions, the 'organisational component' that "make artistic creation and its presentation to an audience possible but do not have a creative function" (Dubois, 2019:2). Nowadays, several different voices have been questioning this rationale, and this is a reasoning that we are interested in exploring, in line with the stated objectives of this research. We refer to the demonstration of the creative nature of production through the observation of the particularity of each artistic project and how each one requires the elaboration of a unique strategy:

> Producing Teatro Praga's 'Jângal' is not the same as producing a show by Filipe La Feria or 'D.Quixote and Sancho Pança' by Teatro do Bolhão. (IT20)

> I don't go about the production of each show (…) in the same way, I have to design different strategies that fit each project. (…) a producer is not limited to replicating procedures from one artistic project to another. (IT14)

Also, we point to a possible reinterpretation of the role of producers and managers, which, more than a transformation or evolution, means an expansion of the modalities of exercising the profession and its range of possibilities. Thomas Schmidt, who has been critically analysing the 'ankylosed' state in which he considers the organisational and leadership structures of German public theatres to be, sees the need for introducing the 'creative producer' profile, who can act as "artistic advisor and even co-develop the staging" (2013: 118), rebalancing what the author considers to be a system excessively concentrated on the figure of the director. For Schmidt, the creative producer, in addition to production functions, can take on "programme-dramaturgical tasks" and/or "general coordination" (idem, 130). In his opinion, the introduction of this figure and the adjustment to the management model it entails would translate into a "win-win situation, with more artistic freedom for artistic directors and more overall supervisory capacity for production" (idem:131). For Kay (2014:55), the attention placed upon this figure of the 'creative producer' in recent empirical studies suggests above all its "robust straddling of the worlds

of theatre and management". This means that the producer may conceive or initiate a project (it is important to elucidate that we are not referring to creators who are self-producing or who are also producers); or that they may carry out their profession in order to realise an artist's vision. In any case, the 'creative producer' is an "agent who acts in perspective, in dialogue with the artist – and not submitted to the artist's discourse" (Sampaio, 2020:205). This understanding of the producer is "in contrast to how the term is conceived in theatre and performance literature, in which the emphasis" remains mainly associated with money, i.e., with the economic viability or the practical realisation of a project. Nevertheless, the most interesting interpretation, in our view, of this figure of the creative producer emerged recently from an informal reflection[6] by a Swedish producer, Lina B. Frank. Frank posits three types of producers: *support-based producers, ideas-based producers, and practice-based producers* (it is in the latter that she includes her professional practice). The support-based producers would correspond, in practice, to producers or executive producers, as they are most often identified in Portugal. As the name suggests, they facilitate, support, and/or implement the project/vision of another (artist or group of artists), providing a service or ensuring a function. Therefore, it is not the fact that they are contractually dependent on the artists that defines them, but the type of relationship they establish with them – of service, support, execution/implementation. Nor is it a question of level of responsibility, as in this context, we can have junior producers, executive producers, production directors, if these terms are used to distinguish levels of experience and responsibility. A production manager may be a supporting producer throughout their career. This is one of the many reasons why this distinction (interpretative, not necessarily resulting in autonomous designations) interests us. The *support-based producer* is one of the most common formulations in Portugal and corresponds to an understanding of the relationship between creation and production that is (still) the majority, often translating, as we shall see, into a subordinate relationship (Lapierre, 2001). On the other hand, *ideas-based producers* would be producers who implement their own ideas, or whose reason for entering a project is their adherence to the artistic idea. Thus, this type of producer establishes a relationship with artistic creation that presupposes an emotional or intellectual 'activation', making them get involved in a particular project, of which they may or may not be the author or co-author. It is not difficult to realise that these two typologies would already correspond to two totally different ways of producing and managing artistic and cultural projects, even, for example, in terms of the distribution of risk. A support producer always works *for* the artist, i.e., the artist has to hire them for their team or contract their services directly or indirectly.

In the second case, artists and producers may decide to share the artistic and financial risks in a different way, and the relationship between them is less hierarchical and less like an employment or service relationship. In the final category, the *practice-based producer*, the producer works mainly on a type of project that interests them and that they have pre-defined; they correspond to their 'artistic practice' as a producer, in the sense that they are the result of their constant research and specialisation. Ideally, they are only involved in projects aligned with their artistic values and interests, according to their work and research. This may correspond broadly to a discipline (theatre, circus) or, more often, to a particular artistic language/area or project typology. Thus, the practice-based producer could have a practice exclusively or predominantly linked to community theatre, sound performance or theatre for children and youth – just to name a few. Interestingly, this type of producer will often lead or co-lead the projects or be a co-author. In any case, they tend to be on equal terms with other partners/collaborators when it comes to designing and running the project, as well as sharing the associated artistic and economic risks. This does not entirely exclude the possibility that this producer, once the project has started, acts in practice as a support producer, carrying out exactly the same functions and mobilising the same type of skills. In that case, it will have been (also) their artistic choice, which holds the potential to change the relationship between creation and production radically. It is common for this type of producer to have their own websites/social media platforms[7] with a description of their 'practice', their portfolio – texts and other elements that define their 'mission' or artistic and social intentions.

Helen Goodman (2015)[8] defines the practice of creative production more simply: as a mode in which the line between artist and producer is intentionally "blurred". For this creative producer, it is about realising that "it's not just all about the artist's career; it's about nurturing a collaborative team and putting the professional development of the producer and the artist [choreographer, in the original] on an even footing". Mixing creative issues with administrative aspects in meetings, for example, or being involved in the creation from the beginning (rather than following rehearsals from time to time to find out 'how the creative process is going') allows, according to the experiment Goodman and choreographer Lola Maury carried out in their collaboration, "for a dialogue in creative consultation that improves the work". Interestingly, Goodman states that this is possible thanks to a 'less defined' role of producer, which seems to support our argument that, more than insisting on hierarchical distinctions between 'producer' and 'cultural manager', or between 'producer' and 'executive producer', we should be paying attention to this kind of transformations and hybridisations. Goodman and Maury assume, in fact, that

they are "reforming preconceived ideas of the producer-artist relationship, exploring a model that encourages openness and reflection on our practice". Our interpretation of this speculation around typologies is that it is liberating (because it breaks away from the tired and mistaken distinctions between producers, executive producers and production directors, and even managers) and expansive (in that it points to various ways of exercising the profession, all compatible and non-hierarchical), so perhaps we make good use of it by problematising it and relating it to discussions in the field.

A defining triad: invisibility, subordination, and pragmatism

How can we have a conversation about things we only sense?

> People who write history books give too much importance to 'notorious' moments and too little to periods of silence. […] Silence is a sign of disaster and often of crime. […] Silence is necessary for tyrants and aggressors, who ensure their actions go unnoticed. […] It would be interesting for someone to investigate the extent to which mass media are in the service of information and the extent to which they are in the service of silence. What occurs most: what is said or what is kept quiet?"
>
> (Ryszard Kapuscinski, 2018:278)

In this segment, we will examine how the interviewees define the 'place' of production and management based on a specific consideration of the relationship between creation and production. We propose using three analytical categories: *invisibility*, *pragmatism*, and *subordination*, suggested to us as constants based on Kay's (2014) exploration. In it, the author proposes several formulations to characterise the work done by cultural managers in theatre that we considered very pertinent to our research hypotheses. Thus, we decided to transform these concepts, which appeared dispersed in Kay's work, into fundamental axes of analysis and test their applicability in the examination of the empirical results of our enquiry. This analytical triad proved to be so consistent with the interpretations suggested by our interviewees that we can say that they accurately describe the current situation of the production and arts management professions, the trajectory of professionalisation and legitimisation that we have been reporting notwithstanding. Even more interesting is that this triad of characteristics is also discernible in our analysis of the specialised literature, so we will constantly cross-check the data collected with the bibliographic and documentary analysis.

Indeed, the empirical data we collected revealed strong evidence of significant contradictions as to the pervasive idea of 'collaboration'.

Specifically, our analysis suggests a more complex and asymmetrical relationship than the rhetoric of 'collaboration' in the performing arts would suggest. Through the interviewees' testimonies, it was possible to pinpoint recurring elements in the accounts of their professional lives that make a significant contribution to understanding some of the constraints to which these professions are exposed, and the overcoming of which – we believe – would be useful for the entire artistic field, particularly given the ethical and sustainability challenges that so definitely mark this turn of the century.

From a methodological point of view, three important reminders are in order: the first is a generic one, recalling what was said at the beginning of this chapter and in the introduction, about the description of the sample and how the data collected was processed; the second is about the fact that this triad was used to analyse the empirical results, but did not influence the conducting of the interviews, which were biographical in nature. At no point in the interviews were these concepts even mentioned or questions asked that explicitly related to them. This distancing allows us to look confidently at the subsequent analysis we carried out, in which this triad proved to be very consistent with the discourses produced by the interviewees. Finally, a reminder that is specifically relevant to what follows about the delicate nature of some of these testimonies. In fact, for this section, we relied on the testimonies of many producers and managers, obtained over several hours of interviews, some of which were shared with us with reservations, or off the record, or in some cases only hinted at, with the interviewees preferring not to go into detail. It must be said that the fact that most (but not all) of the interviews served both as the basis for this research and as material for a stand-alone publication may have produced an effect of excessive restraint on their part since they were aware that their accounts were going to be published. Bearing this in mind, we should consider the excerpts I chose to reproduce in the book as only part of what was actually said or suggested and reflect in depth on what they mean, not just the words that were said but those that were not uttered or transcribed and try to capture and make sense of the implicit narratives.

The reasons we can identify for this 'restraint' (in addition to the aforementioned circumstance of the book) have to do, at first, with the "tendency not to publicly externalise less positive aspects" that Martinho identifies as one of the features resulting from the uncertainty of working life in the arts (Martinho, 2020:6). But they may also have something to do with the reflexivity deficit we mentioned earlier: many of the people interviewed (almost all of them, in fact) are not used to talking about their work in public or even talking about themselves in public. It may also be that the interviewees aim to protect the reputation of people and organisations and, due to the limited size of the artistic community in Portugal, fear potential

misinterpretation and reprisals. The interviewees repeatedly pointed out the difference in terms of discursive power and mediatic coverage between artists, artistic directors, or programmers, on the one side, and producers and managers, on the other, as if to justify a certain amount of caution. Although this research and the claims made in its context were in no way intended to 'expose' cases or take an accusatory stance, there did seem to be a fear among the interviewees (and perhaps even in myself as an interviewer, researcher and worker in the same environment) that the people with whom/for whom they worked or were working would become targets. As one of the interviewees confided to me at one point, 'it's our word against theirs'. Even though these were interviews in the context of research, we have to take into account that they were also conducted with a publication in mind; that they were conducted by someone (myself) who was part of the milieu and had some (albeit limited) public visibility; that they involved the minimal apparatus of purposeful meeting, recording, consent – all of which makes us consider these interviews as 'relational labour' (Vieira, 2020) and, above all, as 'public transcript', in the sense of James C. Scott (2013[1992]). Scott – whose study of forms of resistance to oppression was a crucial anchor for analysing the interviewees' discourses – is clear in stating that "public transcript as a shorthand way of describing the open interaction between subordinates and those who dominate" (2013:28), so we must look for meaning in the hints, in the gaps, and value the substance of the testimonies, even if they seem to contradict what we think we know about the collaborative 'ethos' in the arts, about the fragile position of artists in society, about precarious working conditions, about the designations of 'company', 'group', 'collective', 'team'; even if they contradict attitudes expressed by the same groups of people (producers and managers) in other public contexts. These contradictions have to be understood in 'a kind of situational logic' (Scott, 2013:15), in which sometimes 'both parties tacitly conspire in misrepresentation' (Scott, 2013:28). Given the inherent difficulties in working in the arts, the precarious working conditions, considering the weaknesses and discontinuities of public investment in culture, among other aspects, is it in anyone's interest to further weaken these work environments by exposing their contradictions and failures? In a highly competitive market, in which there is a huge 'reserve army workforce', in which recruitment and ways of entering the profession are very much marked by informality and conditioned by networks of sociability and personal contacts, is it not obvious that the 'public transcripts' and the 'hidden transcripts' are going to be quite different? We use 'hidden transcript' in the sense Scott coined it, that is, as "hidden transcript to characterise discourse that takes place 'offstage', beyond direct observation by powerholders" (2013:31). We emphasise these aspects as they align with

our ethical and methodological approach proposed from the outset: that of valorising 'history from below', doubting the comprehensiveness and fairness of a history of the performing arts that has systematically excluded female cultural producers and managers from its research and narrative. Even though, as we can see, it requires enormous care, we are convinced by the results achieved that the decision to create an inclusive listening space for these less common voices was the right one, by allowing them to be considered without being mediated by others (as happens, for example, when a director is asked about the process of working on a show) and, above all, to the extent that this decision makes it possible to challenge, from now on, how the 'official discourse' is produced and received. It is a question of problematising the processes of research and production of historicity in this domain, assuming that it is a realm with little consensus about what is actually happening (Caust, 2010) and remembering that the way in which the art world is perceived depends, largely, on the vantage point from which we place ourselves in that world (Thornton, 2009).

> During this research, there were several circumstances in which these testimonies had direct consequences. I have received several echoes of repercussions of varying content and significance, some favourable, others adverse. In many cases, becoming aware – through the opportunity for reflection that the interview provided – of some aspects of their work, and of the personal and professional relationships around them, may have been enough to forge a new behaviour within the team they belonged to, or an adjustment in their attitude towards their role and potential. This was conveyed to me in private conversations with several interviewees following the interviews. In other cases, they told me of reactions to their testimonies (which have since been partially published in book form) that ranged from surprise to disbelief: we know how hard it is to deal with the demands of 'proof' that inevitably fall on 'whistleblowers'. They also mentioned a 'revelation' effect whereby speaking candidly about certain issues could lead to the realisation that some experiences were not isolated incidents but rather ongoing situations of bullying or abuse of power. Scott had already said so, concerning a public statement that enunciates what many had already suspected or whispered: "The content (…) was stale; it was saying it openly (with witnesses) to [your] face that was remarkable (…). The first open statement of a hidden transcript, a declaration that breaches the etiquette of power relations, that breaks an apparently calm surface of silence and consent, carries the force of a symbolic declaration of war".
>
> (Scott, 2013:33)

Dichotomies and misconceptions: pragmatism

The producers and managers interviewed within this research express their unease and vexation with the frequent amalgamation of their profession with administrative and bureaucratic duties or its reduction to the financial sphere. Here are some excerpts to illustrate this sentiment:

> I feel that we're getting further and further away from the moment of creation. At times, the producer is a machine working in front of a computer who forgets that what he's doing is producing an artistic object.
> (IT3)

> In essence, the producer is not administrative staff… nor should be. Producers need to step out of their role as 'grid' specialists, be the artists' greatest allies, and become mediators for the redefinition of those grids.
> (IT13)

> We live in a bureaucratic inferno. (…) [The] amount of time I spend reviewing contracts, filling out annexes 1 and 2, and filing tax returns, among many other tasks of this kind, is too much, it's too unproductive, it's heavy timewise, maybe 80 per cent of my time, it's a burden. But there's another perspective on production – a view of the project that isn't the one the artist has – which is useful. So production carries the administrative load, but it's not, it can't be, reduced to that.
> (IT4)

> It really pains me when I'm labelled as the person who deals with budgets and the financial side because it's a really poor stereotype, highly reductive, because sometimes we only get to the figures at the end. First, we have to understand the project, realise what it needs, and how we're going to do it, so much goes on… before the budget. It's all too common and I get annoyed, sometimes even irritated when people associate my tasks only with the administrative side and financial management. (…) This labelling is very unfair.
> (IT2)

While it is undeniable that production and management professions have a practical and action-oriented aspect, it is equally undeniable that their being a part of the artistic field adds complexity and difficulty when it comes to reducing them to tangible operations. The testimony of one of the interviewees is illustrative in this respect:

> When I try to [describe what my profession consists of], and I'm talking about reviewing contracts, partnerships, emails, organising work plans, all that, yes, it's part of it, but… that's not it. (…) It implies an artistic sensibility, an understanding of the artistic object which goes beyond a

> pragmatic relationship of 'this is it, here's how I'll do it', because otherwise, the result is far worse.
>
> (IT4)

As one of the interviewees said, the question is not to remove production from the *sphere of utility* – because it is indeed useful for the artist to have another perspective and involvement in the project – but to prevent the profession from being reduced to a *utilitarian dimension*. It is not about denying the practical aspects of cultural production and management professions but rather questioning their increasing association with the economic and financial sector and being absorbed into administrative functions. This is important because identifying too strongly with this sphere could have long-term implications for these professionals' identity and work scope of these professionals in the long term. In other words: if producers and managers increasingly see their time taken up by administrative activities, if they continue to be represented as necessary mainly because of 'bureaucracy' and 'money', if they are distancing themselves from creative processes and strategic thinking due to lack of time and confidence, how can they claim for themselves a sphere of intervention that is useful to art and artists *beyond the purely functional dimension*? Our thesis is that, unless this cycle is mitigated, production and management as *extra-artistic and quasi-market pursuits* will inevitably become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Let us consider the content analysis of the interviews, after systematising the responses on this topic. These findings indicate that a significant majority of respondents, when describing their daily work practices and responsibilities, believe that their practical aspects are overemphasised in comparison to the entirety and intricacy of their job's purpose and potential. Specifically, three lines of argument are discernible in their discourses: (a) that their responsibilities and capacities are often reduced to the financial sphere; (b), that their time and duties are disproportionately occupied with administrative-bureaucratic tasks; and (c) that they usually feel that the complexity associated with the exercise of their functions is undervalued.

Table 2.1 Discourse analysis – pragmatism

Response inclination	*Respondents*
Pragmatism understood as a reduction to the financial sphere	IT2; IT1; IT15;
Pragmatism understood as a reduction to administrative/bureaucratic tasks	IT6; IT3; IT13; IT14; IT4; IT19; IT2; IT17; IT18;
Pragmatism understood as an underestimation of the complexity inherent to the exercise of the profession	IT6; IT3; IT13; IT4; IT22; IT19; IT23; IT24; IT7;

This reduction to pragmatism is experienced in different circumstances and has both practical (inefficiency) and symbolic (devaluation) repercussions. Let us consider personal experiences (mine), cross-referenced with reports I have collected. Scenario#1: having to deal with the purchase of air travel, comparing prices on various websites, but not being authorised to buy them since the use of the credit card is an exclusively purview of the artistic director; once the most economical/convenient trips have been found, the producer sends them to the artistic director; frequently, by the time they go to buy them, some of the flights have already sold out, the prices have changed, etc. Scenario#2: being introduced by the artistic director, in meetings with programme directors and other external interlocutors, as the person 'who deals with the money'; this symbolically circumscribes the sphere of action of production/management, which is unlikely to feel legitimised, in the context of these meetings, to intervene in matters relevant to the artistic project that go beyond its financial dimension. Scenario#3: during a creative process involving several one-off collaborators, tensions and disagreements emerge regarding fees; the artistic director assigns responsibility 'to production', even though decisions about the remuneration of project collaborators have been taken jointly; the artistic director does not refrain from intervening in matters of payment for collaborators of their projects but conveniently steps aside when problems arise, leaving production to reconcile any issues.

Laermans (2015:307) refers to this when he says that whenever a project/structure has a producer, the artistic work is "organisationally purified of everything economic by transferring this 'impurity' to a purely managerial body". In her research, Ivonne Kuesters expresses astonishment at the endurance of this notion in which the producer/manager "is seen as someone who supports the artists by dealing with the administrative and financial aspects, but who does not intervene or participate in the creative processes to even the smallest degree" (Kuesters, 2010:44). Also Bendixen (2000) asserts that these professionals are commonly perceived as facilitators who ensure that projects remain within reasonable budgetary constraints. Interestingly, much of the sociological research on cultural managers (Peterson, 1986, DiMaggio, 1987, Chiapello, 1998) fails to tackle this dual perspective. The research appears to be based on the flawed belief that roles and functions in the artistic universe can be separated more or less precisely and that the cultural manager's part is primarily confined to the financial sphere. Here, Kuesters even argues that Bourdieu's (rightful) central place

of influence in cultural studies will also reinforce this view. If we consider, for example, how Bourdieu characterises gallerists and publishers (who can be compared, to a certain extent, to cultural managers, if we resort to the generic classification of 'cultural intermediaries', which we have already problematised), we see that they are described as "merchants in the temple" (Bourdieu, 1996:216) and the way in which their functions are conceptualised is equivalent to "an act of intrusion, like a trespass of economic disposition into the arts", which positions these functions very close to the place of 'exploitation' (Kuesters, 2010:44). Moreover, this reduction of production and management professions to the administrative and financial sphere is also in clear conflict with the very motivations that justify the choice of this area by these professionals. In fact, our research findings support those of identical studies conducted in other nations, as we observed in the previous segment (Carvalho & Pires, 2019; Kay, 2014; Sampaio, 2020; Tyndall, 2006): the interviewed producers and managers clearly highlight the artistic element as the defining aspect of their profession and the determining factor in their choice of this career path. The conclusions of the study by Dubois and Lepaux validate this assertion. These authors speak of the pursuit of this profession as a 'genuine choice', and even say that "choosing a career in cultural management means wanting to work in the cultural sector and not wanting to perform managerial tasks" (2018:22). Beirne and Knight also reinforce the idea that for many cultural managers, "separating management from the specific [artistic] context in which they work is not sustainable" (2002:76); Brkić states peremptorily that "arts management is not just about management; it is fundamentally about the arts" (2009:5); and Vellani argues that cultural managers are distinct from "managers in general (…) because they have a mission and an ethos of their own" (2019:29) which derives from their necessary "proximity to art" and responsibility for "maintaining its integrity" (idem:37). Besides, it is in the framework of the arts and the social sciences and humanities – and not in management, economics or law – that the overwhelming majority of these professionals have trained, as we have seen. Not only do their choices regarding university education but also their descriptions of their involvement in the arts (as spectators, musicians or dancers, participants in workshops promoted by cultural institutions, etc.) demonstrate a fundamental dedication and passion for art and culture. It can be inferred that it is crucial for the profession to uphold its identity in this area. The conclusions reached by Carvalho and Pires (2019:158) are also relevant to our discussion: they define the practice of cultural production and management as a "field eager for professionalisation, but without wanting to lose the inherent wings of creation. (…) Management is an artistic and technical choice with hybridity in its DNA". This epithet of 'hybrid' seems more fitting when describing the nature of

production and management professions, as opposed to the commonly used terms which overly focus on the divergence from the artistic dimension. Firstly, because producers and managers are 'creative professionals' with multidisciplinary thinking and training, they are 'managers of complexity' (Melendo, 2010:25), and secondly, they operate in complex organisations with multiple stakeholders and purposes (Byrnes, 2009). In our empirical research, these complexities were referred to numerous times in different ways, and it was possible to identify four main lines of argument (see Table 2.2), namely: (a) complexity as the difficulty of defining the function; (b) complexity arising from the multiplicity, overlapping and constant alternation of functions/types of task/dimensions; (c) complexity in terms of the intellectual performance requirement of the function, i.e. the range of knowledge and skills needed to perform it; and (d) complexity in terms of the emotional demands of the profession.

The relationship between production and management activities and pragmatism can be misleading since behind apparently simple tasks there is usually a set of considerations, decisions and negotiations that involve knowledge, thought and decision-making skills. Says Daniele Sampaio, from her research at the Jerzy Grotowski Centre:

> If we think about the touring of a show, to use another example, even when it involves only a few destinations, it involves complex logistics comprising a series of actions, such as organising a detailed action schedule, defining teams (technical, artistic, administrative, local), managing calendars (group and personal), drawing up itineraries to inform project members and partners about how and when the different phases of the tour will be carried out, prior contact with the cities and local producers, strategic choice of accommodation (to optimise resources), selection of partner establishments, publicity plan, creation of the project's visual identity, graphic design, drafting of press releases, relations with funders, budget management, conflict management, dealing with unforeseen events, etc. This illustrates a typical problem within the production of theatre groups and artists.
>
> (Sampaio, 2020:91)

In our interviews with producers/managers, the concept of complexity, multiplicity, and breadth is prominent, as verified by Sampaio's research:

> The cultural producer is concerned with how to enable (resources for the accomplishment of the work), how to guarantee (conditions for the creation, circulation and fruition of the work), how to mediate (relationships between the different agents and sectors that make up the creative process of a symbolic good), how to plan (the different stages that involve the creation and implementation of the project),

Table 2.2 Discourse analysis – complexity

Response examples	*Response inclination*			
	(a)	*(b)*	*(c)*	*(d)*
"The complexity of production is very difficult to explain" and "it's very tiring, you never stop working. You leave the office and you're always thinking about the job". (IT14)	✓		✓	✓
"In smaller independent structures, the producer is polyvalent and often accumulates several functions (production, technical, communication…)". (IT6)		✓		
"The truth is that it's really difficult to describe what production is. I've even found it difficult to explain what I do to the artistic directors themselves! I could be making an application for 300,000 euros and then call a hotel to complain about a room infested with bedbugs or go searching for golden shoes. This was my previous week". (IT19)	✓	✓		
"I don't find it easy to explain my job". (IT3)	✓			
"There's the rationale that the producer, in addition to this role, does all the administrative work, is a financial manager, does communication and marketing, is a stage manager, supports technical work and even has to be a bit of a lawyer". (IT22)		✓		
"This profession is so demanding: it goes far beyond this email and that piece of paper. It's the relationship, the emotional flow generated between me and that individual or that object that produces a brilliant result, otherwise it's bland".			✓	✓
"Because it's so people-based, it's emotionally very intense and volatile". (IT4)				
"A good producer is a producer who thinks. They have a mind of their own and are therefore able to give the artist what they need, not just what the artist thinks they need. You have to be very autonomous, be able to find solutions, and have the ability to move forward". (IT17)			✓	
"A good producer has multiple skills: he's someone who can solve problems that arise unexpectedly, and who can do so without losing his cool; but he's also someone who has a great argumentative capacity, who knows how to build relationships, with artists, with colleagues…" (IT15)			✓	✓
"A cultural producer has to have skills in cultural programming, in the arts, in financial management, he has to master languages, he has to have computer skills. At the very least, you must realise that you need to be involved in all these matters". (IT12)		✓	✓	
"You have to gather a lot of data and information from many different areas. And [it's] extremely demanding on a personal, psychological, philosophical and physical level". (IT23)			✓	✓

> how to execute (the countless actions carefully distributed between the stages of pre-production, production and post-production), how to manage (people, vanities, frustrations, fears, dreams, ambitions), how to define (the action that will guarantee the survival of the project), how to manage (human, material, economic, creative resources), how to seek (partnerships, support, exchanges), how to resize (the work, from countless daily micro-decisions that will directly reflect on how it will be presented to the world), etc.
>
> (Sampaio, 2020:90)

Van Assche confirms: within 'production work' are administrative tasks (paperwork), organisational tasks (booking travel), but also "more substantive tasks directly related to creative work such as watching videos of rehearsals, writing texts for programmes and press releases, etc." (Van Assche, 2020:159). However, the hybrid nature of these professions primarily originates from their distinct correlation with art – a relationship that is not accurately depicted by conventional metaphors. It is not exactly a matter of understanding production and creation as 'two sides of the same coin' or as 'best friends' (Brilhante & Martins, 2018). Rather, the *integrative* function these professionals perform seems to be the fairest translation of their contribution to artistic and cultural projects. Recent research, on the other side of the Atlantic, reached similar conclusions after fieldwork in Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo:

> It is interesting to note that, for managers, art and management, in general, are not considered separate issues. The product (art) and the medium (management) are thought of as integrated elements.
>
> (Carvalho & Pires, 2019:145)

Ricardo Carvalho and Sanyo Pires highlight that arts managers possess a blend of expertise in art *and* management, combining practical skills with an emotional connection to cultural objects. The hybridity of these professions will come from "understanding both the symbolic and imaginary support needs of the creative process (…) and the material, social and political needs that also sustain it" (2019:148). And Kay's comprehensive research concludes that managers and cultural producers engage in a continuous and dialectical integration process. The author argues that this process is "so profoundly practised and absorbed they have no conscious realisation that they do it" (2014:232), and this may clarify why many still rely on opposing or complementary metaphors to describe their work.

Indeed, some specialised literature has already observed this narrowing of viewpoints. Kuesters (2010:52), for example, clearly challenges this

perception of cultural managers as simply "financial caretakers working in the arts, competent but not artistically engaged", arguing that this view "gives rise to a very vague notion of what it is that these professionals actually do and fails to understand their roles and practices". As per Kay, this binary, simplistic, and, at times, negative perspective is evident in the majority of dedicated literature on cultural management, theatre and performance studies. This perspective has not been surmounted, even with collaborative experiences like *devising*, where the management element still remains a 'necessary' component, almost detached from the project (Kay, 2014; Lapierre, 2001). The results of our empirical research are akin to those of Kay but also those of Kuesters, revealing "various signs of combining rather than separating conditions" (Kuesters, 2010:45). It is, for example, common for cultural managers to use the pronoun 'we' when describing projects and objectives, as opposed to strictly financial demands and objectives, thereby placing themselves alongside the artists in their identification. And their explanation of the significance of their work's artistic and creative dimension in their work is insightful. It reveals that

> the idea that functional areas should be separate from artistic components and that cultural managers should not be involved in artistic aspects, is strongly contradicted by them. For them, their activities are both artistic and financial – with a clear tendency to blend the two.
>
> (Kuesters, 2010:46)

Their conception of production/producer, management/manager is inseparable from knowledge, sensitivity, and proximity to artistic creation:

> [We must] preserve the proximity between the producers and the artistic project.
>
> (IT6)

> What drives me is an enormous admiration for the urgency of the creative act, for its creator. I'm compulsively a spectator.
>
> (IT3)

> The most beautiful thing about being a producer is actually accompanying artistic creation, it's the thrill of seeing and understanding what's happening.
>
> (IT13)

> The cultural manager is someone who has to understand the two very clear dimensions of this profession, a more rational and objective side, the numbers, the deadlines, and an understanding of what artistic

creation is, the emotional side. The good cultural manager is the one who knows how to make this connection.

(IT10)

There really has to be a sensitivity towards the object you're working with. Sensitivity, emotional involvement, taste, whatever it is that goes beyond a pragmatic relationship of 'this is it, here's how I'll do it'.

(IT4)

You must understand, artistically and dramaturgically, what choices are being made, otherwise you won't be able to defend the work. You have to be able to defend the work on an artistic level, but from the producer's point of view. What distinguishes a good producer is the ability to comprehend and defend an artistic project. To write texts defending projects, you must understand them. Production and creation really have to work together, from finding the money to defining what's on stage.

(IT22)

My view of a cultural producer is that he is a mediator linked to creation (since there is no creation without mediation).

(IT12)

Management, in our case, implies a creative involvement that becomes paramount to the development of the projects we plan and materialise.

(IT9)

I don't believe in a producer who works mostly with budgets without getting involved in the artistic project. There has to be harmony between all the dimensions (…) I need to feel the project and its people, because I need to talk about it.

(IT1)

It's fundamental for a producer to understand the process of artistic creation. A producer has to grasp what that process is, they have to know how to deal with creators. It's this dimension that means that this isn't just about dealing with contracts or fiddling with Excel. At the end of the day you have to go on stage and know how to be an interlocutor with those people and that object.

(IT24)

As a producer, I have to remain enthusiastic, fascinated even, with the artistic object we are producing. (…) the most important thing in production is the artistic object, not the actual production.

(IT17)

> A producer has as much place in a rehearsal room as in an office doing applications.
>
> (IT18)

This does not mean, however, that they have, in the current paradigm of production and management, enough space and legitimacy to enhance this hybrid condition and explore everything that their proximity and understanding of the specificities of artistic creation could provide, since their functions have been limited in practical and conceptual terms, and difficulties, crystallisations, and misunderstandings persist in this relationship:

> Both artists and producers need to recognise the intimate relationship between creation and production. This dialogue is not always possible or clear.
>
> (IT22)

> If producers have time to immerse themselves in artistic processes, they will work better and preserve themselves more, emotionally and intellectually. It's imperative to connect with the reasons why they're doing what they're doing, to create a commitment, a long-term relationship, rather than the accelerated turnover we're seeing today.
>
> (IT7)

> I often say that we have to go 'downstairs' [to the rehearsal space] more often to remind ourselves what we're doing here.
>
> (IT3)

> I feel sorry for not being able to see all the rehearsals, and sometimes I think that many of the challenges facing the production are rooted in this lack of connection, with the fact that artists and producers are less and less in the same room.
>
> (IT1)

Overcoming this 'lack of connection', misconceptions and pronounced dichotomies will, in the first place, involve recognising this *status quo* and discussing it publicly (partly what we propose in this book), but it may also involve allowing the emergence or affirmation of the figure of the 'creative producer', a figure to which we have referred to previously and that is already relatively present in other artistic ecosystems. Adding to what we have said before about the different modes of practice that the term 'creative production' encompasses, and for the purpose of relating the concept to this analysis from the perspective of pragmatism, we call upon Kay's research, which defines the 'creative producer' as someone whose profile "stands in contrast to the way in which the term 'producer' is conceived

in the theatre and performance literature surveyed, where the emphasis remains on the *commercial* producer" (2014:55). We need to keep some distance from such a blunt characterisation, as the commercial aspect of theatre is of considerable importance in the Anglo-Saxon context. This reinforces the notion of the 'producer' being linked "with ensuring the profitability of investment", as mentioned by Freshwater (2009:30). Yet, Kay's definition, like Tyndall's, is more distinctly positioned in the performing arts context developed in the not-for-profit sector, which is why we are interested in their description of the *creative producer* as someone who can either be committed to "realise an artist's vision" or "leads in navigating between a bold vision of an idea, and how feasibly – and brilliantly – to deliver it" (Tyndall, 2006:1). Sampaio, a Brazilian arts manager and researcher, also shares this possible existence of a profile "affiliated with an artistic project and whose action is intrinsic to the creative process", as "an agent who acts in perspective, in dialogue with the artist – and not submitted to his discourse". Regardless of the degree of involvement in art-making itself, and their possible role as initiator/leader of a given project, the idea of a creative producer is based firstly on recognising that the 'ways of doing' production are or can also be creative, to the extent that "the particularity of each artistic project requires these agents to devise equally unique strategies that enable their creation, fruition and resizing in time and space" (Sampaio, 2020:205). In this regard, the testimony of one of our interviewees is enlightening, so we believe that a lengthy transcription is useful:

> A 'creative producer' would stem from this meticulous knowledge of the field of creation, or of the individuals who move within it. A creative producer is someone who can bridge the gap between the ideas of the artistic director with whom they collaborate and the realisation of the project. They are effectively a creative *input* for that project to be fulfilled. Not only do they try to establish the right bridges to the right interlocutors, but they also add ideas that may derive from the discussions, meaning they are able to anticipate the implications of a particular idea and its possible developments. This can happen at the creation stage, allowing it to be implemented in a more consolidated, more complete form. Meanwhile, a creative producer can also step a little into the realm of programming, in the sense of someone who asks questions and is a kind of consultant. Someone who is close to the artists or artistic directors and can ask the right questions so that the project develops in a broader sense. And also propose a dialogue that favours a specific creative context, books they can read, people they should meet and ideas they should be exposed to. (…) The artist must include the producer in the creative process, not just when it comes to 'I need pink balloons',

> but by sharing ideas on how they are developing what is not yet visible because this allows the producer to find solutions in a more unexpected way. This relationship of trust has to be established from the very first moment without it feeling like interference. (…) But in Portugal there is no room for this, for two reasons: the small size of the structures, and the hierarchical issue that still prevails in many organisations in relation to production.
>
> (IT4)

This situation reveals the necessity of defining the roles and capabilities of producers and arts managers, and affirms the absence of specialisation and professionalisation, which could be attributable to the fragile context of funding of the arts in Portugal – about 20 years ago, Madeira already stated that "the existence of specialisation requires an economic framework that is absent in the case of expensive art" (Madeira, 2002:18). More recently, several other researchers, in different geographies and socio-cultural contexts, have made an identical diagnosis, which indicates that it is less a question of a national and/or historical-contextual specificity, and more of the real difficulties and dilemmas of legitimising these professions in the artistic field and the need to "overcome contradictions" (Carvalho & Pires, 2019:148). IT30 tells us:

> I'd say I'm a creative producer. It took me a while to define this because production, in a way, covers so many areas that it's hard to find the right name for what we do. [Some] older artists I think wouldn't like the expression because they claim the word 'creative' for themselves.

Ivonne Kuesters is somewhat surprised to find that, in the interviews she conducted, the characterisation of the cultural manager's role "is entirely in contrast to the role of the artist". This difference, she says, "is so emphasised that it seems impossible for the cultural manager to have any influence on the art" (Kuesters, 2010:44). This is contradicted by the reality of their professional practice: "cultural managers constantly and very subtly alternate between artistic and financial orientations and demands" (Kuesters, 2010:55). As a matter of fact, Kuesters once again doubts the usefulness of the Bourdieusian notion of 'double personages', since cultural producers and managers will sometimes work exclusively according to artistic criteria, other times according to economic/management criteria and, more often than not, they will even merge the two. In his analysis of the German theatre system, Thomas Schmidt also describes the separate and profoundly dichotomous way in which artistic and management work is carried out and perceived, considering that the theatre has had difficulties changing its mentality and viewing both domains in an

integrated way. Schmidt even says that "abolishing this dichotomy is one of the first and most important tasks of modern cultural management" (Schmidt, 2020:1). In turn, Behnke revisits the typologies of DiMaggio (1987) and Mulcahy (2003)[9] not in order to criticise or update them, but to point out that this type of typology based on empirical studies would have the added advantage of confirming that "under the umbrella of 'arts administrator' there are by no means only management-type personalities but also – realistically – behavioural objectives that escape the economic mentality" (Behnke, 2010:28). He draws on the theoretical perspective of fields (again, Bourdieu) to state that the "cultural manager moves mainly in three fields": the political, the artistic creation, and the economic (Behnke, 2010:29). This conception aligns with our previous characterisation and leads us to propose that production and management should definitely no longer be seen as a technique:

> I increasingly understood that for each artistic project there was a specific mode of production, which, in my view, seemed to demand from the production professional other qualities beyond the 'mere' execution of the project.
>
> (Sampaio, 2020:39)

Due to its complexity, implication with the artistic dimension, and hybrid nature, it is concluded that cultural management and production require fluency in both the mundane tasks of management (securing funding, designing budgets, controlling calendars, planning) and "the visionary tasks of bringing artistic experiences to the public. The role [of the producer and manager] goes beyond the *petit fonctionnaire* into the creative universe" (DeVereaux, 2011:8).

The failure to question this 'modus operandi' has resulted, in Portugal, in a strong prevalence of the idea of production as 'executive production' and the idea of management as 'administrative management', to the detriment of other more intricate and comprehensive formulations. Our analysis of recruitment adverts revealed a consistent pattern in the demand for executive producers: over 70% of the jobs advertised were in the sphere of executive production.

Referring to our prior discussion on the deficit of reflexivity, it is conceivable that the overly pragmatic approach towards production and arts management, not only in practices and representations but also in the specialised literature, is contributing to the lack of problematisation in this field and to the persistence of binary and inaccurate perspectives regarding the creation and production process. The logic seems to be that if production and management belong to the universe of the pragmatic, then there is no need to waste time thinking about it. The very titles of the

sparse dedicated publications in Portugal reveal the operational inclination towards the 'how-to', so let us see: in 2006, the "*Guide* to the Visual and Performing Arts"[10] was published, coordinated by Miguel Abreu; in the next year, the "*Manual* of cultural production: some reflections on the subject", by Conceição Mendes; the "*Manual* of performing arts production", by Patrícia Castelo Pires, in 2017. Admittedly, all these works – and others like them – sought to respond to a fundamental need of the profession: its systematisation. To this end, all of them have provided the appropriate framework, compiled a glossary of concepts and names, and described know-how, steps, and common procedures. These are significant and rather scarce contributions that reinforce their importance, both as a resource to support specialised training and in the process of thoroughly establishing these professions and their respective framework (legal, labour, and social). Nevertheless, it is evident from our research, as asserted by Kay (2014) and DeVereaux (2009) (about the Anglo-Saxon context), that the issues of production and management are addressed much more from a practical perspective, and that the dedicated publications tend to be excessively based on 'how-to' approaches, dependent on the somewhat dispersed aggregation of 'case studies', and not very problematised (DeVereaux, 2009). In the field of teaching, the situation seems to be identical. Umbelino Brasil, a professor at the Federal University of Bahia, says that when he teaches about production, he faces problematic methodological and pedagogical issues, namely "the scarcity of books on the subject". He emphasises that there are some, but "most of them seek to provide material to the reader in a technical and pragmatic way" (Brasil, 2005:117). Brasil goes so far as to say that the straightforward and practical language of these books will facilitate better understanding but ends up constituting "an endorsement of the advantages that technology can have over knowledge" (idem, 118).

We are thus presented with a situation where the necessary documentation tasks related to the development and establishment of these professions appear to have been satisfactorily completed. In other words, we can now find multiple sources referencing the technical and interpersonal skills required to practice these professions. What has not happened since then, it seems, is the publication of reflections on *how* these skills have been effectively incorporated into the concrete experiences of the subjects, into the artistic structures in the country, what dynamics have been set up with the growing presence of these specialised agents working alongside creators, and, above all, to what extent the expansion of these professions has given rise to a dedicated field of study, reflection, and discussion. In other words, despite the initiatives to describe and systematise the profession, and even some efforts to question it and report on its inherent ambiguity,[11] it can be seen that its development has not resulted in a routine of problematisation

or public discussion about the constitution of a dedicated field of reflection. We are not alone: in most countries, these professions have been bound to their pragmatic aspect. In some cases, this is due to their origin in business management. In others, it is because of the 'economisation of culture' created by the creative industries agenda. And in still others, it is a result of their evolution from addressing tangible challenges posed by public policy implementation (Bolán, 2019) and the expansion of their administrative apparatus. We should also emphasise another factor that has contributed to maintaining this narrow understanding of production: the lack of reflexivity on the part of its agents, in the sense that the producers themselves have, perhaps inadvertently, contributed to a definition of their role that is excessively 'problem-solving' oriented (production as a "circumstance of making do"); and/or have proposed definitions that borrow the vocabulary of business management, which is manifestly insufficient and inadequate to deal with work in the arts, such as definitions in which cultural management is tantamount to the administering of resources with the aim of offering a product or service; or definitions such as the one proposed by FEAGC in its code of ethics: "cultural management is an organisational process of promotion and intermediation, which makes use of the efficient administration of resources in a given context to offer cultural goods and services". Furthermore, as we have already stated, it is uncommon for these professionals to stop and reflect on their practice, record it, and critically elaborate on it, which does not mean that their practices are avulsive or devoid of thought. In this regard, Sampaio states:

> Although the agents claim that they never stopped to develop a way of working, that most of the time they acted only intuitively, that the work consisted of "making projects happen", and that it seemed quite natural to them to solve problems, despite all this, we understand that what they were doing was a rudimentary – and not inefficient – way of strategic planning.
>
> (Sampaio, 2020:94)

Moreover, the concept of 'strategic planning', commonly linked with production and management, can be deemed corrupt due to the emphasis placed on 'toolbox' methods. These approaches are frequently implemented without sufficient reflection, adaptation, or consideration of the artistic field's specific circumstances, relying instead on grids, methodologies, and schemes used and trialled primarily in commercial organisations. Questioning the pragmatic bias of production and management will therefore also mean asking: although such approaches make planning and management issues accessible, do they not constrain the possibility of approaching the

task creatively and/or freely? The practice of strategic planning (a complex exercise involving planning, critical thinking and prospective thinking), and the preparation of an activities plan and its schedule (a partly administrative exercise) can be easily confused. A similar confusion often occurs between 'administration' and 'management', which Martinell helps to distinguish and we summarise here for its relevance. While *administration* is usually associated with "procedures, norms and monitoring that ensure the correct use of resources", being a "more mechanical act" often linked to "traditional and pyramidal" ways of working, *management* means "using knowledge and know-how as mechanisms for continuous improvement" (Martinell, 2001:12); this means that the concept of management (as opposed to administration) will be less associated with hierarchy and more with innovation, and will be more linked to organisation than control.

By pointing this out, we do not mean to dismiss some of the language and some of the tools from conventional management that production and management have appropriated, but rather to emphasise that it is the *place* from which these professionals use them that determines their suitability for the artistic field. Producers and managers have to deal constantly with "a certain mentality that understands culture as an activity (mainly of diffusion) and with few technical and conceptual demands" (Martinell 2001:22). A comparable finding was reached by the European initiative Creative Lenses,[12] which advocated for the creation and customisation of 'business models' for cultural undertakings. One of the conclusions of the study they carried out at the end of the initiative was that the critically mediated construction of a management model adapted to each project enabled a way of thinking that was initially seen as managerial or market-orientated to be transformed into an open-ended process, through which the agents were able to develop the skills and confidence to better identify their objectives and implement a strategy. It is therefore a matter of reconceptualising management models as a heuristic process, which implies a critical, intellectually involved stance on the part of producers and managers.

The relationship between creation and production has been the subject of several artistic appropriations translated into works of art[13] which, beyond the underlying criticism of state support systems and the commercialisation of culture, constitute interesting experiences of confluence between two dimensions that are, after all, symbiotic:

> The rigour given to artistic investigations extended to the way everything had to be organised in its production phase, since these two aspects were not independent of each other. The wooden floor influenced the way the body acted.
>
> (Sampaio, 2020:135)

A good producer is an invisible producer: invisibility

What is considered 'success' in arts management and who can dictate it? What exactly is the contribution of producers and managers to artistic projects? What is expected of them beyond the competent use of Excel sheets and calendars?

Some argue that the relative invisibility of professions that support artistic activity is similar to that of other social occupations that are associated with the domestic and community sphere (such as housework, informal care, and voluntary social leadership, for example), as opposed to economic production (Durán, in Orozco, 2012:17). This argument holds true, as these professions mainly correlate with roles that women typically undertake.[14] However, we believe that it is worthwhile to reflect for a moment on the specific conditions of invisibility of production and management in the performing arts, especially since, unlike the other 'support' professions mentioned, they fall within the scope of *public visibility*. As we saw in the previous chapter on the professionalisation of the sector, public recognition is a very significant indicator. Interestingly, in Brazil, Helena Cunha points to the telenovela 'Celebridade', aired in prime time by Rede Globo in 2004, as an important milestone in the trajectory of social recognition of the cultural production profession. In it, the protagonists, Maria Clara and Laura, are producers, which may have made the profession, "still recent and in the process of being established, visible to the vast majority of the Brazilian population" (Cunha, 2007, cited by Rubim & Rubim, 2012:37).

To begin with, we should remember that these are professions that remain relatively invisible from the point of view of their inclusion in the state's administrative and legal apparatus, which is, to a certain extent, contradictory to the rhetoric that has been established – in Portugal as well as internationally – around "the potential of the creative industries and, more recently, the creative economy" (Quintela, 2017:18). This contradiction has been identified from multiple perspectives, the most interesting of which centres on the fact that

> the subject of creative work has often been ignored or only dealt with in a very general way, (…) as a result of the preponderance of macroeconomic perspectives which (…) generally prove to be very little concerned with analysing and problematising the concrete conditions in which artists and other cultural and creative workers operate.
>
> (Quintela, 2017:18)

Thus, not only do we remain in a situation of scarcity of reliable statistical data on labour in the cultural sector (Gomes & Martinho, 2009; Santos, 2010), which hampers scientific research on certain types of cultural workers,

but we also still do not incorporate the existence of these professions in economic classification systems and legal and administrative descriptions. As mentioned, this situation reflects recent professionalisation rather than a specific lag in one geography or another. As an example, Rucker states that one of the persisting problems is precisely the "invisibilisation of cultural management as an economic activity", pointing out the contradiction of talking a lot about "the contributions of culture to the economy, but doing little to recognise the people who work in the management of cultural goods and services" (Rucker, 2012:147). Furthermore, she highlights her personal case, whereby her activity as a cultural manager is not reflected in the activity code registered in the tax system. This situation directly contributes to the issue of invisibility: "if we do not exist for the State's metrics, we will hardly be able to create a place in the social imaginary" (Rucker, 2012:148). The formal aspect of invisibility is not our primary focus of inquiry. Instead, we are interested in examining various forms of public invisibility in fields such as art history, academia, technical documentation, and websites, as well as private invisibility as identified by producers and managers.

In a recent publication, Maria João Brilhante identifies the urgency of a debate around the specific dimension of production, proposing that we begin "to explore the topic of how creation and production are linked in order to (…) understand what production consists of, what its place is in artistic activity" (2018:6), and points out the obvious contradiction that, "production is still somewhat invisible" yet has "an increasing role and responsibility in theatre structures" (ibidem:25). Our fieldwork analysis appears to support the paradox that production and management remain invisible despite their increasing importance and level of responsibility. As IT20 states, "the producer carries the project on his shoulders", highlighting the mismatch between their significance and invisibility:

> There's an interesting paradox: the producer is invisible, that is, he doesn't appear, but he can't disappear.
>
> (IT13)

> The producer doesn't get the applause, the newspaper reviews or the public recognition. When everything goes well, it's hard to get noticed. Success isn't associated with the producer, we're invisible.
>
> (IT19)

It is also clear that this 'invisible' place is something that many take to be inherent to the profession, with one important caveat: a distinction is made between visibility as something that fundamentally belongs to the artistic sphere, which is understood as *public recognition* and *of the public*,

and visibility as valorisation and recognition by peers (in particular, by the artists who work with them directly).

> I don't think we producers, cultural managers, the people behind the scenes, in the offices, are looking for any kind of public recognition. I don't think it's important for the theatre audience to know who I am, I don't work for that. But I do care about being recognised by my peers.
>
> (IT16)

Many claim that they prefer to be backstage, which is in line with their professional roles and their personal connection to the arts. Let us remember that the alleged motivation of many of them for choosing to work in the cultural and creative sectors is rooted in unforgettable artistic experiences as *audience members*, and most of them did not want to become artists in the first place. Nevertheless, we should not fail to value the distinction they make between public visibility (which most say they do not want) and fair recognition (which most say is far below desirable), nor should we shy away from pointing out some divergent paths that may challenge or present themselves as an alternative to the *status quo* of production invisibility. These divergent viewpoints are indicative of more ambiguous or questioning stances on this matter:

> It's not about protagonism, it's about space (…). And, at the end of the day, why can't the producer play a leading role?
>
> (IT22)

The issue of invisibility is expressed in a very particular way by women producers and managers: on the one hand, pointing out 'behind the scenes' as their 'comfort zone', on the other, voicing that the recognition they deserve for their contribution to the projects they are involved in is far below what they would consider fair. Diverse in their contexts and detailed in the experiences they report, the interviews reveal some groupable patterns of response (Table 2.3), in which invisibility appears associated with (a) a devaluation of the profession/its role, (b) the difficulty in associating the contribution of production and management to the 'success' of a project, but also (c) as a sign and symptom of the 'professionalisation deficit'.

Most interviewees no longer attribute the invisibility of production and management exclusively to their recent professionalisation:

> Nowadays there is a name for the profession and an understanding that it has a place in the artistic process.
>
> (IT4)

Table 2.3 Discourse analysis – invisibility

Response inclination	*Respondents*
Invisibility understood as devaluation	IT3; IT13; IT4; IT22; IT20; IT12; IT8; IT15; IT16;
Invisibility understood as difficulty in associating the contribution of production and management to the 'success' of a project	IT13; IT14; IT19; IT2; IT1;
Invisibility as a sign and symptom of the 'professionalisation deficit'	IT17; IT7; IT3; IT10; IT23;

The answers seem to point more to the problematisation of this 'place', and their disappointment is perceptible:

> I feel like my name is called out more when things go wrong and that's sad. When things go well, it's hard to get noticed. Success isn't associated with the producer, we're invisible.
>
> (IT19)

This state of affairs cannot be dissociated from the deficit of reflexivity that we have been pointing out, in line with Summerton and Hutchins (2005). The demanding and intense nature of their work, with multiple deadlines, often leads them to perform their duties unconsciously and with limited time for reflection. As a result, they are the first to forget themselves, including the language they use. IT1 says:

> Saying 'Paula works in production' is different from saying 'Paula is a producer', we have to acknowledge this more. We have to recognise our role, others don't recognise us because we also have trouble recognising and appreciating ourselves. (…) We have to feel that the success of the projects is also ours.

These traces of invisibility are compounded by the fact that those who produce and manage cultural organisations and projects do not record their experience or systematically analyse their working practices (Kay, 2014); they rarely write and publish about their experience; and their role and contribution is usually not recognised in dedicated programmes, catalogues and publications (Summerton & Hutchins, 2005). In addition, it is relevant to mention the possibility (and challenge) of establishing a type of producer with a distinct relationship to creation and artists, who is more engaged in the creative process and, to that extent, may be willing to open a debate on the authorship of the projects to which they contribute.

> I developed skills in funding, touring, event management and audience development, and also essential administrative tasks. (…) But then I started to feel restless. I began to question my critical positioning in relation to the work. Apart from writing nice sentences in funding applications or moderating post-show talks, I had few opportunities to contribute creatively. I had the talent to raise money and organise touring dates, but this didn't feel like enough. I wanted to be able to take similar 'leaps of faith' as artists do. I never really wanted to be an artist, but I also didn't want to function exclusively as a facilitator of other people's ideas.
>
> (Helen Cole, interviewed by Kate Tyndall, 2006:15)

The blurring of the boundaries of authorship has occurred on numerous fronts, even within the strictly artistic professions – we allude to the tensions between 'artists' and 'performers', for example, or the successive historical emphasis on certain agents over others in describing creative activity: "historically, the 17th century was considered the century of the actor, the 18th century of the set designer, the 19th century of the playwright and the 20th century of the director" (Sampaio, 2020:57). Currently, the emphasis on the credits of the creation of a work remains centred on these categories, even if it is increasingly easy to identify a vast list of other agents equally necessary for the conception and presentation of a show, and that, from a postmodern perspective, all these concepts can be reconfigured. In recent months, for example, an intense debate[15] has erupted around the authorial dimension of translation, in which a translators' movement is demanding that their names also appear on book covers alongside the authors. Rogério Nuno Costa, whom we interviewed in the context of a piece about the Ballet Contemporâneo do Norte, told us: "We need to problematise the idea that only the artistic director has an active position in the creative process, neglecting the possibility of agency and authorship of a performer who manages and metabolises the materials of another" (Costa, 2020:184). Now, if we try to replace, in his statement, 'performer' with 'producer/manager', we verify the relevance of the assertion and the adequacy of the 'metabolic' function applied to production and management as a transformative process of creation. In this sense, we ask: if, in 2006, the extension of the authorship dimension to light, sound, scenery, and costume design, previously considered exclusively technical and instrumental areas, was mentioned (IQF, 2006:106), could we be facing another moment of broadening the authorial sphere, fuelled by the growing importance of 'support' professions and also due to the 'desacralisation' of the author, from structuralist critique to participatory practices? In any case, this appears to be a minority issue amongst our interviewees. For the majority, invisibility was seen as a sign and symptom of devaluation and lack of professionalisation, and also

posed a challenge in terms of being linked to the 'success' of a project. Even when they feel part of that success, it has little to do with the concrete role they played or the contribution they may have made:

> I thought I was successful because the works or the artists I was managing were successful. It was not about recognition in terms of my own professional contribution. I had to find ways to claim my piece of the success pie…
>
> (Aleksandar, in DeVereaux, 2009:57)

Above all, questioning the invisibility of production must include questioning visibility and the very definition of 'success'. If we accept – without questioning – the discourse of success surrounding certain historiographies, we may be creating an illusion about these people's journeys, as if 'success' were a territory of consensus, as if the path to it were linear, coherent and free of failures, and above all, as if it were the exclusive result of the talent of a few. We ask, like Sampaio: "could it be that the processes that act in the artistic/intellectual consecration of certain historical subjects do not conceal the labour and sweat that the construction of such trajectories requires?" (Sampaio, 2020:36). Furthermore – and this is more decisive for what we are currently analysing – the fact that we fail to scrutinise and discuss the meanings, decisions and operations, namely aspects of production and management, which give rise to what is understood as a trajectory of 'success' in the arts, might not contribute to making other agents invisible and "romanticising the image of artists?" (Sampaio, 2020:36). We consider this a critical point: production and management, rather than 'claiming a slice of the pie' of success, could, considering their decisive intermediary role, endeavour to discuss the hegemonic and highly restrictive understanding of 'success'. If we recognise the weaknesses of an idea of success based on extreme competition, linearity of paths, exploitation and *burnout*, the cult of celebrity, and the fascination with 'international touring', we will have to make the formulation of alternative narratives of success our (own) task. This question may have a more immediate scope, in that it will allow us to include the interstices, the impasses, the various agents, etc., in the construction of the meaning of 'success', but it is also relevant in the field of cultural policies since the idea of success, defined at each moment depending on the socio-political context, will always be a basic premise for public funding. One of the spheres in which the narratives of success are (literally) written are the specialised publications, with their critiques, reviews, and analyses. From the point of view of this dedicated literature, it can be said that it largely ignores the specific field of production and management, even when it recognises their growing importance

(Brilhante & Martins, 2018; Kay, 2014; Summerton & Hutchins, 2005), thereby reinforcing the signs of *invisibility* to which we have referred. Susan Kay (2014) even thoroughly reviewed the literature on cultural management, theatre and performance studies, and artistic studies, concluding that the production/management component is almost always portrayed as a 'necessary evil', an element practically *external* to the project. An issue of the magazine Observatório Itaú Cultural confirms that the gaze we have cast on artistic and cultural institutions and dynamics has, to a large extent, "neglected cultural workers", concluding that "we still need to sharpen our gaze on the subjects that make up our institutions" (2019:6). It is with this specific dimension of invisibility that our study most closely communicates, questioning and deepening "the discussions on how histories of the performing arts have been constructed: histories of what, for whom, based on what sources" (Vieira, 2020:68), and challenging the "tradition coming from an art history based on 'artworks' and 'authors'" (idem, 67). This attention to what is chosen to be archived in the performing arts means searching through the 'subjects of the archive', looking for the voices of producers and managers in the scarce mention of this dimension in the dedicated literature.

In any case, the almost total absence of bibliography on production is the most relevant invisibility: "if you ask me for a bibliography on production, I can't really answer" (Guilherme Gomes, in Brilhante & Martins, 2021:51), with the exception, as we have seen, of the production of practical manuals. As an example, the influential magazine Sinais de Cena, which has been in existence for more than 15 years, does not have, to date, any issue dedicated to production, and in the important annual update of theatre publications from the previous year, there are practically no publications on production and management among the hundreds of references. Of course, this does not mean that this should be an attribution of a magazine such as 'Sinais de Cena' (although the extent of this absence and its implications is debatable), but we use it as a signpost of this invisibility because the way in which a show is written about determines how it will be remembered. Perhaps it is time for 'the silent archives' to gain a voice, inside or outside existing publications.

This invisibility is also quite evident in academia, not exactly in terms of course offerings, but in the sense that there are no 'arts management departments', specialised teaching staff, or even doctorates in the area, because a theoretical field associated with cultural production and management has not been established or delimited, nor is there a consensus that these areas are capable of producing a type of knowledge and problematisation that constitutes an autonomous scientific field. This is why several possible disciplinary frameworks remain open for the time being – this book, for instance, is based on a PhD research developed in the context of a doctorate in 'artistic studies'.

I must admit that I was somewhat surprised to receive the news that I had been awarded a PhD scholarship by the FCT,[16] since the area I proposed to investigate did not fit easily into any of the evaluation 'panels' and could easily be rejected on the pretext that it belonged to another panel. This meta-reflection on the difficulties of epistemological and disciplinary delimitation of my research was, in fact, included in the application text itself. The choice of Artistic Studies and the option of linking the research to the Arts panel would prove to be the right one. Perhaps a certain predisposition to discovery was worth it, since, as Ursula Rucker ironically noted, "registering research on cultural management in SICYTAR [equivalent to FCT] is a task with a high creative component" (Rucker, 2012:149). An exceptional circumstance or a sign of change? The fact is that there are still no incentives for research in this area in the national scientific system, so the sustainability of the research paths envisaged here is far from guaranteed.

Despite an increasing offer of university courses and specialised professional training, trajectories and representations of production and management careers remain intimately associated with informal learning and an emphasis on acquiring skills through experience, reinforcing "that skills and expertise obtained informally can paradoxically compound a prevailing sense of invisibility and lack of legitimacy" (Kay, 2014:41). This also contributes to the slow increase in recognition and visibility that, for example, the range of competencies 'validated' by a "classic MBA" has (Summerton & Kay, 1999:9). Moreover, as Dods and Andrews (2010, cited by Kay, 2014:40) point out, it is increasingly common for these professionals to seek legitimacy outside their sector, which makes it difficult for them to value the knowledge and skills they have accumulated informally, favouring self-deprecation (Beirne & Knight, 2002:75) where issues of invisibility are (also) rooted.

Is invisibility a state or a characteristic of these professions? The answer is not straightforward, but pointing to the first option seems safe. Both the professional and academic environment and the practices and representations have their share of responsibility in maintaining a state of invisibility of producers and managers, although we should clearly distinguish the circumstance of 'invisibility' from that of 'being invisibilised'.

> There is a substantial difference here between being a subject and an object. In this regard, the condition of 'invisible' – of a subject – does not necessarily mean a lesser status. On the contrary, it can reveal how much discretion, contemplation, otherness, listening, giving and loyalty certain roles can require.
>
> (Sampaio, 2020:117)

It is no wonder that many of our interviewees describe themselves as 'discreet' or as 'behind the scenes' people, or that they speak of production and management as an expression of a posture 'of being of service' to the arts and the work of artists. Invisibility as a characteristic of the profession is therefore not necessarily seen as something negative, but even as a particular skill that producers develop by knowing, for example, "when to interrupt a rehearsal" or how to manage a "moment of creation that is delicate, that is tense", trying to "keep the concern to myself so that he [the artist] is not hindered" (IT24). As a result, their actions are 'invisible' insofar as they are poorly documented, but also because they often express "intentionality, sensitivity and acumen in knowing when, where and how to be present or absent" (Sampaio, 2020:189). On this point, we recall the words of Thomas Richards, interviewed by Sampaio about Pollastrelli's work in the Jerzy Grotowski Centre:

> The artist remembers that, while working at the table with Grotowski, they suddenly realised that, although they hadn't asked for anything, cut and seasoned avocados appeared, as well as something to drink. (…) Shortly afterwards, and once again suddenly, they realised that Pollastrelli was no longer in the flat. But nobody had seen her leave. She simply disappeared, made herself invisible and left when she thought she was no longer needed.
>
> (Sampaio, 2020:188)

If invisibility as a necessary *modus operandi* to perform some production tasks is therefore relatively consensual among its professionals, the same cannot be said in terms of their public invisibility, whether at the level of specialised publications or in the visibility given or not given to them in the context of the projects they are part of. In order to compare the views of our interviewees with a broader and more heterogeneous set of data, we examined the websites and social media accounts of 18 artistic organisations founded no earlier than 2012.[17] What we found was that a large majority – 83% – of the structures made no mention of production in their official communication channels; 72% did not identify anyone as responsible for production; 89% did not indicate any email dedicated to production; in the only two cases that did, production used a generic email (such as info@ or producao@…), while the artistic direction, for example, had an email with their personal name. This scenario reflects a de facto invisibility that persists even in the more recently established artistic structures.

Finally, it is worth noting the implications of invisibility regarding the recognition of production and management skills in the context of cultural policies, particularly when considering the numerous production and management operations that continuously take place in performing arts

micro-organisations. The few producers and managers who access the public and media sphere are the exception from a contingent seldom heard or read about. Indeed, the dominant discourses on cultural leadership (Caust, 2010; Hewison & Holden, 2011; Hewison et al., 2010) "tend to focus on those who occupy prominent positions in medium- and large-scale organisations" (Kay, 2014:134), even though this is in profound contradiction to the characteristics of the organisational fabric of the performing arts, which is largely dominated by micro-scale organisations and self-employed workers.[18] This bias can reinforce the opinion that small organisations are just a 'miniature' version of large organisations, presupposing an 'inevitable progression' in that direction and resulting in a series of inappropriate norms and expectations about what effective leadership is (Summerton & Kay, 1999). This form of invisibility strikes us as relevant because it sidelines the experiences and expertise of countless cultural workers who organise and manage culture in their daily work, accumulating deep and diverse experiences, but who are rarely the focus of reports, discourses on 'good practice' or inspiration for changes in cultural models and policies: "It is a curious contradiction of our sector that it does not hesitate to associate cutting-edge/innovative work with the artistic work of tiny organisations" (Kay, 2014:134), but does not use the same criteria to value their specific forms of management and leadership.

A place to belong: subordination

If production is invisible in the dedicated literature, this does not imply that it is not *referred to*. In reality, the term 'production' appears frequently, but normally as a general reference to the modes and contexts of tangible production of a show or project, which may involve everything from the details of staging to financing or even cultural policies. This broad range of expression accounts for its frequent appearance in publications and discourses, yet it does not necessarily translate to effective attention. On the contrary, when they are mentioned, production and management almost always appear in a subsidiary way: the focus is on the show, the company or the project, thus subordinating the production. In addition to this recurrent use of the term 'production' to refer to a wide range of aspects, it is also necessary to take into account the number of cases in which the terms 'production', 'modes of production' and 'management model' are confused with terms with other meanings, from 'production' in the sense of 'artistic creation' (we often read about 'artistic production') to 'production' as the equivalent of 'industrial production', in the sense of massification; the confusion also sometimes arises with the models and modalities of funding itself (for example, in 'co-production'), often suggesting the discussion of state support mechanisms. All this ambiguity or,

more specifically, the polysemy of these expressions (especially the term 'production') makes it difficult to accurately document how production and management appear in verbal or published discourses. For example, the indexes to publications are virtually useless in this respect. This thoroughness does, however, have the advantage of alerting us to the importance of paying attention to the vocabulary that describes this field and the way it often points to stereotypes (manifested in the traditional divisions between artists and managers) that seem to have become embedded in the language and representations of artists and the artistic milieu:

> The mad artist needs the calm bureaucrat and the dualism of uncreative manager/unmanageable creator allows both sides to retreat into their respective comfort zones.
>
> (Bilton, 2007, quoted by Kay, 2014:24)

The producers themselves often use imagery and ways of describing their relationship with creation, and with the artists, that are indebted to this well-demarcated trench, even if this is a tension that many see as essentially positive:

> To me, the tension between production and creation always feels like arguing with a friend, so we'll never get angry by the end of the argument. It's always the idea that we're going to disagree about something, but that won't jeopardise what we want to do together.
>
> (IT5)

> "You'll always have the creative group, which is more concerned with experimentation than feasibility, and the group that has to make things happen in practice". But this tension "between the more creative and the more Cartesian" is positive.
>
> (Luciana Guimarães in Sousa, 2019:62)

Nonetheless, even if the producers sometimes resort to this division in their discourse (not least because they are trained in this language…), the results of the in-depth analysis of the research we carried out contradict this antagonistic view. In their description of their daily lives, roles and responsibilities, their motivations, and spectrum of intervention, it is clear that producers and managers operate a constant and very subtle alternation between artistic and financial orientations, to the point of being able to merge them in their daily function and practice, resulting in a field that is definitely more hybrid than the binary/antagonistic or even *complementary* formulation might indicate. We corroborate Kay's (2014) view that

the recurrent formulation of production as opposed to creation is a sign of production's place of subordination. Many authors (notably Bilton & Leary, 2002) claim that it is the persistence of the 'myth of the artist as genius', as well as the maintenance of a Manichaean view of art vs. money, that feeds the separation between the creative functions and those of production and management, and suggests that it has repercussions on the way we look at artists and managers. In most references to production, there seems to be, according to Heras, "a dominant ideological conditioning that circumscribes the tasks of show business into a drastic division, such that there is still an insistence on separating the artistic part from the productive part" (2012:26). For Kay, this division is clearly illustrated in the dual leadership model[19] employed in many performing arts organisations, comprising artistic direction and executive direction, whose "relations are frequently portrayed in terms of a hierarchical power struggle between the artistic and the managerial" (2014:24), something that resonates with some of our interviewees' responses:

> It's difficult to put managers alongside artistic directors, but it's something that has to be done. In the performing arts, for example, these two figures are not yet presented as a duo.
>
> (IT10)

It is somewhat surprising that this figure of the artist as genius remains somehow present in the imaginary surrounding creation and production, given the numerous attempts at deconstruction to which it has already been subjected, not only by the artists themselves but also by the sociology of art itself. In effect, Norbert Elias' deconstruction of Mozart's genius would have already removed art from the 'sacred' ground, operating its 'deautonomisation' (art would have no value on its own) and its 'deidealisation' (art would not be an absolute value). Bourdieu's question "who created the creators?" already signalled the overcoming of the fetishism of the 'work', inaugurating an understanding of art as inscribed in social history. Becker (1982) also contributed decisively to the understanding of artistic work as 'a network' of activities coordinated by a significant number of people, which would mean that all artistic creation would involve different specialities and competencies, from the conception of the idea, through its execution, and including the numerous support activities, and even activities related to fruition, reception, and criticism. It is this complex and eminently collaborative social organisation that Becker calls 'art worlds' that dismantle – or at least problematises – the notion of individual genius or individual artistic path, still recurrently celebrated in artists' biographies and autobiographies. These summary references and other important

theoretical explorations only serve to indicate that one would expect that the professions of production and management – which, in some way, embody the relationship between art and society, and unequivocally integrate the 'network' of activities that support artistic creation – are not still hostage to such strong representations of opposition. The perpetuation of these representations is curious, even if we know today that so many artists are directly involved in the production and management component of their activities and careers, even if they try not to show it publicly. In her study of the functioning of the Jerzy Grotowski Centre, Sampaio clearly identifies this facet of the artist as a participant in production:

> At various times, we perceive that Grotowski is an active agent in the consolidation – including financial – of his project, which contrasts significantly with the image, recurrently associated with the creator, of an isolated artist, removed from the practical world.
>
> (Sampaio, 2020:144)

Sampaio is convinced that

> the realisation that Grotowski was permanently attentive, present and active in the production and management of his trajectory can foster an important discussion within the artistic world, especially in sectors in which it is still believed that it is possible to create without getting involved with the administrative matters of the work. Here, we are facing a notion of creation more comprehensive, according to which the other elements necessary to the exercise of creating are admitted and recognised in their importance, and not seen only as accessories.
>
> (Sampaio, 2020:233)

A deeper analysis of these misconceptions requires examining the relationships established between artists, and producers and managers in their daily working contexts, so we return to the results of our field research. We found that there are markedly hierarchical relationships in the context of cultural organisations, with many producers working in a very pronounced logic of direct subordination to artists and reporting low levels of autonomy. Most of the answers fell into one of two categories: either they had to do with the vertical organisation of work (a), or they related to issues of power discrepancy (b).

Table 2.4 Discourse analysis – subordination

Response inclination	*Respondents*
Subordination as an excess of vertical organisation	IT3; IT4; IT8; IT9; IT18;
Subordination as a discrepancy of power between artists/artistic directors and producers/managers	IT14; IT10; IT20; IT12; IT15; IT16; IT17;

Given the relevance of this data to the study of modes of work in cultural organisations, we will look more closely at organisational aspects in Chapter 3. For now, we want to point out how these two response inclinations manifested themselves in our fieldwork. Concerning vertical work models, for example, 74% of the respondents in our survey expressed some kind of discomfort and/or criticism at the persistence of excessive hierarchies within the organisations they worked for.

> In many structures, producers should be called assistants because that's what they really do. They're basically the jack of all trades. My experience has always been hierarchical. You do what you're asked, get the costumes or do the per diems. That's no longer enough for me. I like to work in a context where the first person plural is used.
>
> (IT9)

> I think fewer and fewer people want to be producers because they've realised what the profession entails, they're no longer willing. It always seems to benefit the hierarchy for the producer to have a subordinate position.
>
> (IT13)

When analysing the relationship between creation and production, Sampaio notes that it felt

> as if for someone to occupy the place of prominence, it was necessary to have the willingness of others to act as pillars of support, providing a space of constancy or balance for the consummation of the central agent's functions.
>
> (Sampaio, 2020:116)

It is indeed echoed in some of our interviewees' testimonies:

> There is an expectation that production fulfils certain functions and that you stick to them; there is almost a fear that your position as an artist will shine less brightly in the presence of someone who supports you, there is a fear of losing a certain place that is exclusive to creation.
>
> (IT4)

But it could also reveal traces of a kind of resentment:

> Many cultural professionals did not – and some still do not – take kindly to the entry of professionals from other sectors into the cultural field, as if they were getting the resources that would otherwise be channelled to artists and culture itself. In truth, we need to see the entry of these

> people into the cultural sector as a step towards the professionalisation of the area and, consequently, the drawing in of new resources that would not come into the sector without them.
>
> (Corrêa, 2004:44)

Although many claim that the prevalence of vertically organised structures is increasingly a thing of the past

> I came from a structure (…) which was one of my first jobs, with a very formal set-up: there was the director, who you called Mr., then there was the production manager, both you treated very formally, then there was the executive producer, which was me, well, when I started I was the production secretary. It was a very tight hierarchy.
>
> (IT3)

> The new generation is very different, I think they will tend to be more egalitarian. They grew up in a world where production already existed. In my world, the guardianship of artists was very strong throughout, in relations with producers, programmers and the State.
>
> (IT6)

the majority make a myriad of references to the 'producer as a kind of servant', to the difficulty of exercising the function beyond the limits of 'executing the orders of the artistic direction', and to low levels of autonomy contrasting with high levels of supervision and control. These data are particularly relevant if we consider that the group analysed echoes a great diversity of professional registrations, size of organisation, and age/experience, among other variables.

> I feel that a respectful relationship has been lost between creators and producers, of understanding the role of the producer and how important it is also during creation, to become, more recently, a role that is increasingly instrumentalised. There are structures run by artists in which the producer is a kind of servant.
>
> (IT3)

> All the artistic directors I've worked with end up making me feel that I'm threatening their power. That's why I'm always stepping back, dialling it down… otherwise things explode.
>
> (IT20)

> The hierarchical issue still prevails in many structures in relation to production (…). In fact, what happens is that he [the producer] is clearly below, in most cases. Because the normal arrangement is that you receive instructions from the artistic director to do something.
>
> (IT4)

> In Portugal, we have a profile where the artistic direction is predominant over a group of associated producers who are subservient.
>
> (IT15)

We have to remember the insufficient professionalisation and specialisation to properly contextualise this situation. In the independent sector, many production tasks are (still) carried out by artists, "who see them as 'uninteresting pragmatic problems'" (Van Assche, 2020:159). This is to say that many artistic directors are still, voluntarily or involuntarily, consciously or unconsciously, production directors of the organisations. João de Brito admits this:

> I think that most artistic directors are, unofficially, production directors, because they think about the big picture. At that moment, the projects are the 'apple of their eye', so they embrace them in a vast scope that, in my opinion, encompasses production.
>
> (Brilhante & Martins, 2021:29)

But what exactly does 'encompassing production' mean? As we have seen, many producers view this attitude as a reduction, inferiorisation, and invisibilisation of their role, and this is perceptible even in the most microscopic of decisions. Says an artistic director, for example, about establishing contacts:

> The invitation never goes from the production email, it's always sent via my personal email (…) I make a bit of a point of it, it's not that I can't delegate, but I think it has another charm for it to be personal.
>
> (idem:30)

The misconceptions in the representation of production and management functions, and the poor understanding of their role and potential, give rise to somewhat bizarre situations when transposed to everyday work. One of our interviewees (IT17) says that "producers don't do production all the time when they're with the artists, they do 'a bit of assistance'", which reminded me of a recent episode in which I was involved.

We agreed to meet at 10 a.m. at the venue where the sessions were to take place. I was part of the team that would be conducting the selection process. Let's say it was an audition to choose about ten artists from a pool of 20 applications. The interviews had already been pre-booked by the producer, every 45 minutes. They provided us with a room with everything we needed, a printed list of names and mobile phone contacts for all the candidates. We could start. No one was absent, so the day went smoothly and the interviews followed each other as planned. Throughout the day, however, the producer was at the entrance to the room, greeting people and asking them to wait a few minutes. At the end of the day, when the selection had been made, the committee drafted an email to all the candidates with the result. It was then up to the producer to send out identical emails to everyone. In short, this producer's whole day consisted of playing the roles of 1) receptionist (greeting people arriving for interviews and asking them to wait if we were not available) and 2) administrative (sending emails that had already been drafted to email addresses that had already been listed and organised in an Excel spreadsheet). Not only did they not have any significant input into the process they was following (which would have been legitimate, depending on what was at stake), but their working day was tied up with tasks that the rest of the team could do. The venue had a permanent reception desk, so when candidates arrived, they could simply have identified themselves and be directed to the hall next to the interview room. As for the entrances and exits to this room, a simple A4 sheet taped to the door saying something like 'Interview in progress. Please wait" would have solved the traffic problem. Finally, if a bunch of people had already done the most important thing, which was to write the emails announcing the result, why on earth couldn't they send them instead of delegating it to the producer?

For some, it is the abundant precariousness in the sector that justifies maintaining this situation:

> In many structures there is a logic of subservience that is not healthy (…) but there is the question of hierarchy and power inside and outside the organisations, the fear of losing your job. So you're forced into silence.
>
> (IT9)

For others, training is responsible for this misconception:

> Especially in academia, it's still taught that a producer can be someone who carries water, serves coffee and does this and that. If the artists and producers who are studying see production treated in this way, they will go out and reproduce these behaviours, at least until they are able to challenge them.
>
> (IT14)

However, others point to organisational aspects:

> Because the mentality of artists is to give orders, so if they have a producer, they're an intermediary, and the artists end up doing the same work. For that, do it yourself! More than half of the producer's work would disappear if people did it themselves. Use the producer to book a rehearsal? Please talk to each other! The producer is now an assistant and intermediary. There should be an assistant, yes, on stage, but not an errand boy. I think this has happened because of the artist's 'it's my company' mentality. In practice, it doesn't help them that much.
>
> (IT17)

> Artists and cultural agents, including producers, tend to set up cooperatives and associations but, in reality, in most cases they all want to be bosses. To be in control. But they seem to be ashamed of taking on this controlling role.
>
> (IT12)

It is possible to find parallels with this situation in various testimonies from producers working in other countries, which rules out any determining variable of national context. Francesca Horsley, an experienced British producer, states that "artists are often unwilling or unable to relinquish control, leaving many producers underutilised" (Horsley, 2009:2). We find a kind of testimony-confession in the retrospective look of an artistic director, Susan Jordan:

> In the old days, when I hired producers, I kept direct control (…) I controlled the money, all the decisions, the rehearsal schedules. I never clarified the roles: basically all I really wanted was someone to work on the marketing and the practical stuff. But I recognise now that the role of producer is so much bigger than that. A producer has to be empowered, and if they're not, in practice, they become a 'jack of all trades' – do this, do that, do anything.
>
> (Jordan, S. cit. by Horsley, 2009:2)

In short, it seems to us that there is a significant difference between pointing out, from a sociological point of view, the evolutionary trajectory of a certain set of intermediary agents and actually looking at the conditions in which these specific professions work. Although not all interviewees feel the same about this situation of subordination, there are two ideas on which almost all interviewees objectively converge: in contesting the binary antagonism between creation and production, and in characterising their role as producers or managers as *ideally* being on a par with artistic direction but, in *reality*, operating in a very pronounced system of direct subordination. The testimonies collected effectively and unequivocally point to a more complex and asymmetrical relationship than the rhetoric of collaboration between artists and producers would suggest and tell us that there are recurring elements, among them, the excessive hierarchical configuration.

Notes

1 I am referring, of course, to the notion of cultural participation as participation in the sphere of 'institutionalised culture', which, as we know, does not subsume other instances and contexts of cultural participation.
2 For example, the report *I Informe sobre la aplicación de la ley de Igualdad en el ámbito de la cultura dentro del marco competencial del Ministerio de Cultura y Deporte*, October 2020, Observatorio de Creación y Cultura Independiente; or the report *Gender Equality. Gender Balance in the Cultural and Creative Sectors*, Voices of Culture, 2019.
3 Over the three years of our field research, particularly following the publication of 'THE PRODUCERS' and the various conversations and reflections that arose, I noticed a gradual departure from this discourse amongst the producers. It seems to me that they are increasingly recognising the distinction between the passion for what they do and the conditions in which they work. I will return to this and other signs of evolution later.
4 I suspect the master of suspense might know everything about arts management: Highsmith, P. (1987:137) Plotting and Writing Suspense Fiction, Lisbon, Relógio d'Água.
5 Hanemann and Kalff (2013) refer to exhaustion, burnout, and depression as the symptoms of the "autonomy disease".
6 We mention that this is an informal reflection as it was a blog publication on the theme, in which the producer tentatively rehearsed the definitions that we have elaborated here. As far as we have been able to ascertain, she has not delved into the topic or worked on its development. A reference of this text is included in the bibliography.
7 See, for example, Beckie Darlington's page – creative producer: https://www.haus-projects.com/about, or Helen Goodman's: https://khoraproductions.com/about/.
8 See "The creative producer – a new collaborator in dance production", accessible at https://www.theguardian.com/culture-professionals-network/2015/jun/16/creative-producer-collaborator-dance-production-two-to-tune.
9 DiMaggio proposes three guiding/characterising typologies of cultural managers' actions: aesthetic orientation, managerial orientation, and social orientation.

In turn, the typology put forward by Mulcahy, although it partially coincides with that of DiMaggio, is broken down into four types: the 'intendente' (closer to an artistic director), the 'impresario', the 'manager', and the 'entrepreneur'.

10 Updated and expanded successor to the Guide to the Performing Arts – Theatre and Dance produced by Cassefaz in 1995, a truly pioneering work.

11 Many of these publications do include some passages that give an account of the multiplicity of roles and formats that the figure of the producer can assume; however, they are usually (1) very short and (2) reduce the existing ambiguity to the enunciation of the different relationships that production can assume in relation to creation (executive production, producer-creator, etc.), rather than actually discussing the complexity inherent in the function.

12 Creative Lenses was a project funded by the Creative Europe 2015–2019 programme. It brought together 13 partners from nine countries, including independent cultural centres, cultural networks (IETM, Trans Europe Halles), and universities (such as the University of the Arts London). It has produced several articles and reports, accessible at https://creativelenses.eu/.

13 A few loose examples come to mind from shows/performances I have attended that incorporated critique of the labour and funding systems of the arts into the conception/dramaturgy itself: 'Eleanor! Eleanor! Eleanor!' by Eleanor Bauer, 'The application' by Juan Dominguez or 'Mystery of Culture' by David Marques.

14 We develop this further in Chapter 4.

15 See https://lithub.com/the-movement-to-put-translators-names-on-book-covers-is-working/?fbclid=IwAR2b7qrKl9Ryon0 Qb1geB6JpbMY8NEpiF37__AQzSu RZpRVQlaM6bUPc41w.

16 Foundation for Science and Technology.

17 We chose 2012 so as to focus on more recent, rather than older artistic strucutures, to allow us to capture recent changes, if there were any.

18 See Survey of Arts and Culture Professionals: Report#1 Cultural employment and social and labour profiles, OPAC, 2021 (Neves, 2021).

19 See Chapter 4 for an elaboration of this subject.

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