Architecture-building: mobilising the lessons of the survey on Popular Architecture in Portugal

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Abstract

Within the history of Portuguese architecture, a significant place is granted to a survey conducted on vernacular dwellings in the mid-1950s. This article examines how this survey has been remembered and enhanced, mobilised and updated ever since, playing a part in the empowerment of architecture as a discipline, as a profession, and as a matter of culture in Portugal. The main argument is that the collective and individual recollection of the Survey has extolled the aesthetic and ethical lessons it provided for architects' praxis, putting into practice the symbolic capital of an expression of culture long rooted in Portuguese discourses of national identity. This politics of memory has contributed to the recognition of Portuguese architects' authority, autonomy and identity as a profession.

Keywords: Survey, History, Memory, Uses of culture, Professionalisation, Portugal

In 1961, the Portuguese National Union of Architects (SNA) published the results of a nationwide survey on vernacular dwellings, which it had sponsored with the State's support, in the two-volume book Popular Architecture in Portugal[1]. The purpose was to record the country's different building traditions, considering their nexus with natural
and social contexts, and provide lessons for architects' practice. The Survey was an extraordinary experience for its protagonists and a remarkable enterprise for architecture at the time, becoming an enduring memory for Portuguese architects. It has been recollected by the press and academia, celebrated in reprints and exhibitions, built up as a subject of scientific interest through new research, and become the inspiration for new surveys. Much has been said about the Survey's methods, theoretical frameworks and outcomes, regarding the knowledge, practice and politics of architects. Some formulations are consensual, while others border on controversy; but the importance of the Survey is rarely questioned in the history of Portuguese architecture.

Rather than an analysis of the Survey in itself, this article is about the ways that its invocation and reinterpretation has participated in the representation of architecture as an object and a practice of culture. This has occurred within a dialogic construction of architecture as a discipline and a profession in Portugal. The main argument is that by looking at how the survey has been remembered, we can better understand the prominent role it acquired in the history of Portuguese architecture and architects. This approach takes the (re)invention of culture as a dynamic process of construing and communicating meanings. Such a process operates through the individual agency of intellectuals and the institutional structures of power, formalising cultural categories by naturalising social distinctions. Processes of remembering, forgetting and enhancing meanings of the past are also at stake, considering the past is nowadays accepted as a social and intellectual construction mediated by the interests, longings, and threats of the present.

The research for this article consisted of documentary analysis, historical and theoretical readings, and interviews with architects. These showed that, through its recollection, the Survey acquired a twofold value as heritage. The book which resulted from the Survey recorded a tradition deep-rooted in the configuration of Portuguese national identity. The survey work itself marked a significant moment in the history of architects as a particular social group. Such values are manifest in the memory of the Survey's aesthetic and ethical lessons. The latter have been called upon to account for the process of professionalisation of architects. This refers to the way occupational groups are granted the status of professions by formal and social confirmation of their exclusive right to control the access and practice of a particular abstract knowledge. The aesthetic lessons evince a broader construction of architecture by stressing the social and cultural determinants that endorsed its modern epistemological revision.
Moving away from the Beaux-Arts, modernism proposed architecture as a conscious ordering of objects, subjects and actions that gives material form to political and social projects. Within this framework, the architecture of non-architects was understood as a field of social practice, the knowledge of which required architectural proficiency. Architecture was thus empowered as a discipline of its own, sanctioning architects' autonomy, authority and identity both as a professional and an intellectual class.

**The Survey on Portuguese Regional Architecture**

The place of the Survey in the history of Portuguese architecture must be traced back to a broader cultural war fought over the bonds between popular culture and national identity. In the 19th century, throughout Europe, traditional dwellings became a subject of significant attention, expressing the romantic elites' interest in folk cultures as repositories of national identity. One significant expression of this objectification process in Portugal was the debate over a national architecture. It involved all kinds of intellectuals, and counterposed unitary and plural readings of popular architecture. Despite controversies, the idea of a specifically Portuguese house gained ground as the pedagogic and moral arguments of a particular architect, Raul Lino, suited the official nationalism of the right-wing dictatorship *Estado Novo*, established in 1933. His studies of the traditional dwellings were dissected into a set of signs that assembled a grammar of national architecture and were the basis for the social production of space by nationalist and nationalising policies. This material and intellectual production came to be known as the *Casa Portuguesa* (Portuguese House) movement.

The post-war political and social order facilitated the questioning of this folk culture's objectification by artists and intellectuals, who were inflaming a cultural war over the modalities of representing the nation through architecture. Oriented by neophysiological ideals, agronomists pointed out the misery of the countryside instead of lauding its national character. Geographers reviewed their praxis, intertwining natural and human factors in a long-lasting regional model of Portuguese landscapes and habitats. Ethnographers reconceptualised "folk" in light of culturalist theories, investigating material culture in which architecture was considered a technology of rural production.

Architects too seized the opportunity to advocate the Modern Movement beyond the Modernist orthodoxy by vindicating the humanisation of architecture and its social and political project. Their positions were officially announced in the First National
Congress of Architecture (1948), and the idea of a *Survey on Regional Architecture* was launched in 1947 by the architect Francisco Keil do Amaral to put them into practice\(^{15}\). Surveys on vernacular dwellings had actually been conducted in other countries since the 1930s. They gained ground with modern architects, as confirmed by the 10th CIAM in 1956. Although different in purpose and method, works by the Brazilian Lúcio Costa, the American-based German Sibyl Moholy-Nagy or the Austrian globetrotter Bernard Rudofsky, for instance, agreed on the need to consider the vernacular in the history of architecture, and avail the lessons it provided to the architectural project\(^{16}\). Still, the nationwide systematic inquiry, its teamwork methodology, corporate and State sponsorship, and the precedence that its published results took over other groundbreaking works on vernacular architecture\(^{17}\), explain the Survey's significance as a pioneering enterprise in the history of Portuguese architecture\(^{18}\).

The Survey was no unique experience, but it was nevertheless exceptional for its achievements at that time. Although initially rejected, the Survey was officially approved and funded in 1955, and its coordination assigned to Keil. The Survey was first made public with news on its developments published in the generalist and specialised press\(^{19}\). The full results were published as *Popular Architecture in Portugal* (1961). As asserted in the book's introduction, presumably written by Keil, the purpose was to fill the gap in architectural knowledge left by the prejudiced debates on the Portuguese House. Architects wanted to survey the country's different regions in order to confirm a category of dwelling intimately related to its diverse natural and social contexts. As the book's introduction concluded, this evinced the rationality of traditional construction, providing lessons of coherence, economy and beauty for architects' practice. At the same time, it contributed to an awareness of vernacular heritage.

To carry out the field research, Portugal's mainland was divided into six regions within which the architects found physical and cultural similarities. Due to logistical difficulties, the Survey was not extended to the Portuguese archipelagos. Despite some acknowledged arbitrariness\(^{20}\), the modern methods of human geography are recalled as influential by the Survey's protagonists\(^{21}\). Recent research on the Survey nevertheless considers the nature of such influence to have been mainly a reinforcement of the attention to diversity, as the mapping of typologies was imported by architects without a disciplinary reflection or reframing\(^{22}\). According to the Survey's participants, Keil assigned each region to a senior architect, and each of these selected two intern architects from their social network to work with. Guided by military charts, the teams
roamed for months, talked with local people, took 10 thousand photos and produced hundreds of drawings and written notes. The data collected was to conform to previously defined items of analysis regarding land use, urban fabric, materials and techniques, climate and economics, and social and aesthetic features. Such items structured the contents of the book in an effort to relate architecture to the natural and social environment. Each team organised its findings in terms of climate, geomorphology and rural activities, settlement patterns and dwelling typologies. Its members were collectively responsible for the writing of their region's chapter in *Popular Architecture in Portugal*.

Indeed, aside from the initial meetings with the whole team, the authors recall the autonomous nature of the regional inquiries. Teams were driven to adapt global criteria to local particularities. Each chapter was thus differently structured and emphasised distinct aspects of the vernacular. Once the materials were organised and analysed, descriptive texts were produced to account for the photos, drawings, charts and maps that composed a beautifully illustrated six-part book in two-volumes. The bulk of the book is, in fact, composed of small to full page, black and white photos. Drawings and texts seem almost subsidiary to the pictures (see Figure 1). It is no coincidence that intern architects like António Menéres or Francisco Silva Dias assert their photographer's skills as a decisive factor in composing the teams. The images of the granaries of Lindoso, for example, are clean captures that show architecture as rational volumes in which forms and textures are brought out by light and shadow effects (see Figure 2). In fact, as Fernando Távora stated, the coordination of regional results was mostly the balancing of textual and graphic outputs, not a discussion of contents and concepts. As a result, vernacular architecture is addressed in quite a diverse way throughout the book, notwithstanding the sense of a whole given by the teams' shared attention to vernacular architecture's rootedness in place, its purity of form, its rural setting, materials and traditional techniques.

**The Memory of the Survey**

If there has been any consensual reading of *Popular Architecture in Portugal*, it has been about its heterogeneous and aesthetic approach to vernacular architecture. From the outset, the book's introduction admits economic and theoretical shortcomings, while endorsing the teams' autonomy and their desire to portray an undervalued subject. The Survey's authors have also acknowledged a bias in the aesthetic preference for
vernacular illustrations of modern rationality. Furthermore, literature on the Survey is unanimous in detecting the particular interests of each regional team. Portugal’s Northern teams were highly concerned with settlement and social entourages, either through the lens of history or sociological perspectives. The Central teams laid emphasis on the methodological aspects of mapping out typologies. And the South's more technical and aesthetic inquiry focused on the architecture's own intrinsic features. The typological maps and charts that were systematised for each region to emphasise the diversity of the country's popular architecture might have given a sense of unity to the work. However, the different approaches manifest themselves in distinct criteria for classifying the dwellings. The result was the production of regional schemes that do not share categories of buildings or graphic representations, hindering the comparison between regions (see Figures 3a and 3b).

Nevertheless, the Survey's heterogeneity is understood both as a positive and negative outcome. The different approaches to traditional dwellings are seen as resulting in and from a scientific fragility. But they are also considered to manifest the multiple values of vernacular architecture that nowadays provide the basis for scholarly proposals for more holistic approaches to its study. Other contradictory and complementary reasonings of the Survey come to light in the written history of architecture and the recollections of its protagonists. The latter have recalled the Survey in lectures, articles and memoirs, all sharing a fascination with the rural world. However, architects emphasise different facets when accounting for their personal motivations in participating in the Survey and explaining how it was significant for them professionally. Fernando Távora, for instance, who had defended the study of Portuguese architecture in 1945 and who coordinated the work of Region 1, considered the Survey to be a confirmation of the social and cultural nature of architecture and came to stand for a particular mode of thinking and designing architecture. The head of Region 3 Teotónio Pereira, on the other hand, highlighted the Survey's impugnment of a national folk architecture, and was known for having militated against the enforcement of the Estado Novo aesthetic, and in favour of architects' professional status. Quite differently, António Menéres discovered the 'architecture of the necessary' he now displays as a disappearing heritage in photographic exhibitions. And the whole team of Region 2 researched and taught architecture as a material form of a national cultural landscape.
If *Popular Architecture in Portugal* embraces heterogeneous views on the subject, equal diversity can also be found in the professional appropriation of the Survey's lessons by its authors. In fact, heterogeneity was a feature that enhanced the evocative potential of the Survey in the building up of architecture as a discipline, a practice and a cultural matter. The growing interest of Portuguese architectural history in the subject corroborates this argument. With the first attempts to write the history of Portuguese modern architecture in the 1970s, its outcomes were highlighted to mark a turn in the Portuguese House movement, and its process was recalled to trace the empowerment of architects. It was only in the 1980s, however, that the Survey acquired a significant place in history. It was republished in 1980 and 1989 with added prefaces signed by the Architects’ Association board of directors. These celebrated the Survey's part in the architects' struggle for professional status and recognition of their specific knowledge. New research was then initiated to develop insights into popular architecture. In the following decade, *Popular Architecture in Portugal* became itself an object of scientific interest for scholars studying popular culture, architectural history and architects' practice. By then, the importance of the Survey was cemented, its methods and outcomes having inspired new research on vernacular dwellings, on architects' education and professional association, and even on architecture per se.

Within this literature, controversies have arisen regarding the Survey's pioneering role, its political achievements and groundbreaking influence on architectural language. These arguments do not challenge the value of the Survey; they simply enhance or overlook particular features in particular times for particular reasons. Studies of memory and history have highlighted how the past offers a stable place for comforting anxieties about identity in a changing world. Memory omits or emphasises specific features according to their intelligibility and meanings in the present. Because of this subjective and selective quality, memory is a powerful construct, the political and social commemoration of which perpetuates a sense of continuity and identity. The recollection of the Survey manifests such a politics of memory. The protagonists' memoirs and life paths have become intertwined fragments that draw a collective past, repeatedly re-presented by the history of architecture. Embodying and celebrating this construct of the past, *Popular Architecture in Portugal* turned into a mnemonic artefact for Portuguese architects.

Because remembering is not an objective reconstruction of the past, but its bringing forward to a present that subjectively reorders it, the memory of the Survey
provides rich material for the understanding of its place in the history of Portuguese architecture. This place includes contradictions and multiple meanings because it encompasses architects’ relationship to their past in different moments. Over time, the Survey's authors and institutional frameworks were consensually acknowledged to be biased in purposes and outcomes. But the particular interests and contexts of the Survey's recollections were seldom subjected to a critical review. The editions of *Popular Architecture in Portugal* in 1961, 1980, 1989 and 2004 provide a good example. Each one includes a new preface that lauds the experience in terms of the resulting knowledge and collective effort. However, in 1961, the Survey was presented as officially sponsored; in 1980 it was reintroduced as a political stance against the *Estado Novo*; in 1989 it was considered a catalyst in the formation of a professional conscience; and in 2004, it became a myth within the history of the Portuguese architects' association, and the ground for a Portuguese architecture's identity. Knowledge, on the other hand, was said to be the 1961 edition's achievement, which the 1980 reprint encouraged should be advanced by new research. In 1989, the subject of this knowledge acquired the value of heritage, justifying the proposition of vernacular architecture, and, in 2004, its erudite interpretation in design plans as a matter of national culture.

These prefaces have often been mistakenly read as integral parts of the Survey and discredited for their lack of historiographical objectivity. From a different perspective, however, they are valuable documents that locate meanings in time. They can help to explain how the Survey was construed as a historical event and a testimony of tradition throughout different political, social, economic and cultural contexts that simultaneously informed it and were informed by it. The materials analysed for this article showed that the memory of the Survey was built on the aesthetic and ethical lessons it is said to have provided to architecture as an object and a practice. Keeping in mind that a profession is the beneficiary of an operative discipline, the analysis of the memory of the Survey can thus shed some light on architecture's disciplinary construction in Portugal, and on the Portuguese architects' quest for recognition of their profession’s authority, autonomy and identity.

**Towards Authority**

From the start, the Survey intended to claim architects’ authority in matters of architecture. The Survey's aesthetic dimensions addressed architecture as a product of
tradition and a production of erudition. These dimensions distinguish two categories of culture – popular culture and high culture – and two scopes of architectural praxis – that of the intellectual and of the designer. Such distinction is crucial to the understanding of the Survey's place in the history of Portuguese architecture because it contributed to the broadening of architecture beyond its classic representation as art and/or technique. It was a disciplinary distinction that asserted architects' proficiency in the knowledge of architecture. But it was also a political construction that vindicated architects' social and professional role in society.

In 1961, *Popular Architecture in Portugal* presented its subject as a context-determined time-steady production of space whose major features were utilitarianism, rusticity and permanence. All literature that addresses the Survey agrees that the popular was conceived in opposition to the erudite, just as tradition and rurality stood in opposite corners to modernity and urbanity. The Survey, however, acknowledged a ground in-between. In Regions 1 and 6, for instance, the urban fabrics were presented to account for the traditional settlements' morphology, but understood as vernacular illustrations of the rational serialisation or the cubist aesthetics valued by the Modern Movement (see Figures 4a and 4b). They were mostly an aesthetic statement in favour of modernism's reconciliation with tradition that followed on the international revision of the Modern Movement, and in this sense an assertion about and of erudition.

The popular/erudite dichotomy, reasoned John Storey, has been construed since the 19th century. Intellectuals expressed their social capital and symbolic power in the enunciation of cultural categories that defined low and high taste and thus perpetuated class distinctions. Proposing a particular understanding of popular architecture from the view of upper middle-class intelectuais, architects participated in these dynamics. They were individuals with access to literature and art who had travelled the country and abroad. Some held aristocratic titles, connections with the Catholic Church or the State's apparatus, while others moved in artistic circles or left-wing organisations. In short, architects were part of the modern elite whose social function was the communication of ideas and knowledge towards the organisation of moral and intellectual life. Alike the *organic intellectuals* of Gramsci, they dialectical exercised proficiency and politics in the proposition of a social, cultural and political order.

Recent studies have considered the 1950s' twilight of the Modern Movement to have rather been an updating of modernism in face of the post-war concerns with mass
communication, social democracy, institutional status quo, and cultural authenticity. Felicity Scott, in particular, has stressed the intellectual subtext of Rudofsky's interest in Architecture without Architects. She called attention to his attack on a mass commoditised society through the critique of modern aesthetics, including the architectural codification and commercialisation of the International Style. The use of the word popular in the Survey's published results reveals a comparable positioning within the Portuguese context. Authors recall that using it rather than regional was a last minute decision to make a stand against the Estado Novo's folk objectification. It was the rescuing of this cultural category that often corroborated the Survey's interpretation as a political stance in the 1980s, both in terms of ideological beliefs and professional project.

Regarding the latter, the Survey's systematic inquiry into natural, material and social culture claimed values of proficiency and selflessness that sanctioned its scientificness from the start. As such, a particular manifestation of culture was construed as a specific field of knowledge – the vernacular dwelling. By vindicating the authority to produce such knowledge, architects enhanced their practice beyond art and technique. They empowered themselves as intellectuals, and challenged a blurring of professional boundaries with artists and engineers; the first grown out of a Beaux-Arts education, and the second generated by their undifferentiated status as technical staff in the State's apparatus. The Survey's protagonists recall the desire to move beyond the general unawareness of their distinct practice. They confirm that overcoming this lack of appreciation was an important struggle of Portuguese modern architects in the 1950s.

Unclaimed by other professions, urbanism was a flag of architects' emancipation via the SNA's statutes (1933) and the academic curricula reformulation (1945). Complying with the corporative regime, the SNA statutes legally determined the duties and rights of architects, defining a jurisdiction that embraced urbanism as a matter of architects for the first time. The curricular revision echoed the SNA concerns with the architects' lack of education on the topic by including classes of Urbanology and Design of Urbanisation Works in the graduate course to ensure architects' qualification to conduct the recently homologated Urbanisation Plans. Undoubtedly, the architect-urbanist paradigm is inseparable from the need of reconstruction dictated by the aftermaths of Second World War, and the principles and concerns with the city that grounded the Modern Movement. But in Portugal it also played a part in the competition for professional jurisdiction. Urbanism provided architects with a
distinctiveness to which the findings of the Survey on popular settlements were considered an asset and a confirmation. Such association strengthened the recollection of the Survey as an embodiment of the outcomes of the First National Congress of Architecture. Proposals from this congress endorsed the Athens Charter on urban and housing issues, while condemning aesthetic prejudice and revivalism, and promoting architecture as an exclusive practice of architects. Not surprisingly, several of the Survey's authors mobilised their learning in urban planning, continuing and acting on this inquiry both academically and professionally. The Survey became thereby associated with the emergence of a disciplinary theory and methodology in Portugal. It stood for the new modes of thinking and practicing architecture that were emerging in academic circles, journals, and urban research institutions, such as the National Laboratory of Civil Engineering.

The political act of the Survey, on the other hand, was assessed in terms of an ideological resistance after the overthrown of the Portuguese dictatorship in 1974. The Survey's proximity with a neorealist movement is manifest in the way it depicted rural life. Especially in Regions 3 and 4, images of popular architecture were put side by side with pictures of quotidian activities in aestheticised portraits that denounced the poverty of peasant lifestyles (see Figures 5 and 6). Ideological stances seem to have been taken within the cultural war waged between intellectuals and those in power. However, censorship, illiteracy and seclusion precluded the Portuguese elite's mobilisation of high culture beyond their own social milieu and moderate activism. Counter-narratives have suggested such political association to be a rather enhanced recollection of the Survey's ideological intentions in the post-revolutionary time. Some researchers questioned the implicit ingenuousness of a State that censured the agronomists' survey in the 1940s but still supported the architects in the 1950s. Others dismissed the idea of there being an official architecture to contest by highlighting the Estado Novo's heterogeneous practices of space. Such discussion belongs in a larger debate on the pervasive relationship between political actors and technical agents. And this debate was strongly promoted by several of the Survey's protagonists with leading roles in the Portuguese Association of Architects and academia. Indeed, in the leftwing entourage of the late 1970s, architects were building up architecture as a social right and a service they provided to the nation. They shaped ideologies through their professional practice in a larger struggle for hegemony that, as Gramsci warned, is not scientifically disinterested.
Towards Autonomy

Not surprisingly, as the need to profess a political alignment with the revolution faded over the 1980s, the memory of the Survey shifted towards the emphasis on the role it played in architects’ consciousness as a professional class. Granted the authority to speak about architecture, architects struggled for the autonomy of their profession in the production of space. The sociology of professions has positioned it between being a public service and a professional activity with a monopoly. Professional associations and education, it argues, are the chief arenas where groups ensure interests and seek political and social reproduction. The Portuguese Association of Architects (AAP) founded in 1978 might have been the natural heir of the SNA in a democratic regime. But its conversion into a public-law association in 1988 was the result of architects’ efforts towards the empowerment of a profession. These were manifested by the upgrading of architecture to a graduate course (1979) and the regulation of a deontological code (1984). Internal debates show that ethics and aesthetics were put together at the core of architects’ professionalisation. Not coincidentally, the Association reprinted the sold-out *Popular Architecture in Portugal* in 1980 and 1988. In its new prefaces, the Association's representatives made clear the purpose of celebrating the profession’s achievements through the recollection of a Survey whose lessons played a key role in the history of Portuguese architecture.

However, if the Survey was acknowledged by its authors to be the architects' point of view on popular architecture in the 1960s, its second life in the 1980s stressed popular architecture as a subject of architecture in more complex ways. One particular phenomenon stood out in the reassessment of vernacular dwelling – the Casa do Emigrante (Emigrant House). From the start, houses built by emigrants in rural settings with industrial materials and ostentatious decoration objectified the spatial and social mobility of people in-between rural-traditional and urban-modern lifestyles. This way, the Emigrant House evinced the emergence of new social actors and representations of the countryside. Its spreading during the 1970s was thought to threaten the traditional world registered by the Survey, and it became a widely debated issue in the public sphere. The main Portuguese newspapers published headings like "House projects with no architects. Portuguese landscape threatened with ruin." Along the way, they reported on architects’ internal debates and public accomplishments, pairing a cultural problem with a professional solution.
For their part, architects agreed that their jurisdic-tional struggle needed to be accompanied by a social construction of architecture outside the profession. Once again, the Survey provided useful arguments and material. Its lessons on the vernacular accounted for architects’ authority on heritage and urbanism, being repeatedly quoted through new research and projects in specialised journals. These were fields of intervention that bestowed on architects a distinctive competence. But they were also powerful subjects capable of reaching out to a larger audience already concerned with modernity’s threats to the built landscape. An echo of these encounters between architects and public opinion is found in the collaboration of the AAP and some of the Survey’s authors in the travelling exhibition *Casas modernas / Paisagens antigas* (Modern Houses / Ancient Landscapes). It was organised by Portugal’s Departments of Heritage, Migration and Urban Planning in 1982/83 to raise social awareness of the value of vernacular architecture. Soon after, anonymous, rural and ordinary architecture was covered by the Portuguese Law of Cultural Heritage (1985). Central and local administrations and public and private institutions followed, inviting architects to survey vernacular properties and submit plans to rehabilitate historical centres.

In this context, concerns with the need to update the static and aesthetic conception of popular culture started arising amongst researchers studying modern forms of popular architecture. Three research projects initiated between the Survey’s two reprints excelled in the efforts to overcome such shortage. One was promoted by the AAP and followed the structure of the original Survey; another was carried out by a member of this team; and the last one assembled a multidisciplinary research team. These researches intended to investigate the spaces and time overlooked by the Survey: the first two covering the archipelagos of Azores and Madeira, and the latter attending to the modern production of popular architecture. Anchored in the Survey as a state of the art or methodological framework, these new inquiries reassessed the popular-erudite relationship closer to the postmodern idea of “hybrid culture.” Popular architecture was acknowledged as a cultural form where different references and actors intertwined in the blurring of previous boundaries. This conceptual revision helped overcome former prejudices, and led to the embracing of the "commercial vernacular" or "modern realism" as legitimate subjects for architectural scholars. In the course of time, the *implicit dialogues* between the mid-century architects and social scientists in the understanding of popular culture became *explicit*. Along the way, however, architecture’s disciplinary boundaries were challenged.
The Survey's affinities with geography and ethnography, in regard to methodologies and subjects of research, explain why *Popular Architecture in Portugal* has been understood to offer trans-disciplinary knowledge\(^7^4\). But the Survey was furthermore considered innovative research in architecture\(^7^5\) and the genesis of a Portuguese theory of architecture\(^7^6\). Subsequent research projects in the 1980s were thereafter associated with the birth of the first generation of architect-researchers in Portugal. These surveys' interdisciplinary subtext led to other disciplines' growing interest in the subject. Yet they also urged some of the Portuguese architects to take up the study of popular architecture within their discipline, by arguing that they held the specific methodologies, analytical tools and conceptual framework to understand it\(^7^7\).

In a parallel, architects' acknowledgement of the postmodern idea of the popular did not mean a renunciation of its former conception, but rather an extra aspect of its explanation. Although the use of different terms to designate popular goes back in time, they were mostly synonyms that highlighted a particular argument. This could be political, as in the Survey's *popular*, or disciplinary, as in Moholy-Nagy's choice of *native* to stress architecture's primordial and innate features\(^7^8\). The interviews conducted with the different survey's authors show that, nowadays, they alternate terms in an attempt to scientifically define what was previously designated as popular: it is vernacular because innate; traditional because inherited; regional in natural determinations; rural in lifestyle; anonymous because endogenous; and spontaneous instead of deliberately designed. Likewise, hybrid expressions of architecture are differently categorised according to their agents and the direction of popular-erudite appropriations. Architects strived for the authority to pronounce on all categories of architecture, but these were not considered in the same terms. The idea of art as high culture and popular culture as nature is still based on a social distinction that sanctions the cultural difference between the praxis of architects and non-erudite producers of space\(^7^9\). Such a distinction explains the distance between critical regionalism and the regional vernacular, and is crucial to understanding the importance attributed to the Survey in architects' most recognised practice – the architectural project.

**Towards Identity**

One of the most debated issues regarding the memory of the Survey is the aesthetic lessons it is said to have provided to a specifically Portuguese architectural design. Implicit in *Popular Architecture in Portugal*, this association was theoretically
built up in the 1990s. By the time of the book's last reprint (2004), it was a formulation rooted in the history of Portuguese architecture. The argument is that the Survey's achievements presented architects with an alternative to the orthodox Modernism and the nationalistic clothing of buildings, by informing territorial, technical and culturally engrained designs. The topic is not new. As mentioned before, Sibyl Moholy-Nagy's work on vernacular in the 1950s wanted to provide architects with sources of inspiration for a more adequate and environmentally responsive practice. And Rudofsky also admitted the potential of such inspiration in architectural design. Architectural history, furthermore, has been reviewing the bonds between modernism and vernacular traditions. It presently argues in favour of a dialogical relationship which mainstream history has tended to see as a dichotomous one.

Likewise, the Survey is considered to have shared the Modern Movement's concerns with housing, rationality, purity of forms, and realistic views on social life. Yet it is also asserted to have gone a step further, by relating modernist universal principles with particular settings, and thus reconciling modernity and tradition. Popular Architecture in Portugal is said to have privileged modernist aesthetics and fundamentals by publishing vernacular images of whiteness and horizontality, patterns of repetition and plain structures (see Figures 7, 8 and 9). Notwithstanding, the book explains such affinity in the vernacular response to local raw materials and climate. Some of the Survey's protagonists downplay the influence of vernacular precepts in their architectural designs. Others reduce it to the use of traditional materials and techniques. Indeed, the teams were looking for popular architecture's diversity also in its building technologies. Their concern is manifest in the illustration of several construction processes. Namely, in Regions 5 and 6, the production of building elements like rammed earth or roof tiles were documented step by step (see Figures 10a and 10b).

Regardless of different attitudes, a "Third Way" of architecture was considered to resurrect tradition by engaging with place according to a modern rationale. Ascribing a sense of culture to practices of space, it was afterwards celebrated as a form of critical regionalism by Kenneth Frampton's quotation of Portuguese architecture. Portuguese architects were then credited with a role in the international scene, in a time of anxieties posed by Portugal's adherence to the European Union (1986), and its expected cultural and professional de-differentiation. In the articulation of a Third Way architecture, architects and their ‘masterpieces’ became a daily subject in the media during the 1990s,
producing symbolic representations fit for political and economic uses. Competitions and awards reinforced architecture's artistic nature, bringing architects closer to a sense of autonomy, involvement and selflessness that built architecture akin to a Bourdieuan field of cultural production.

This mediatisation favoured a star-system, with impacts on the multiplication of schools and professional profiles, the market's oversaturation, and the aestheticisation of architecture. Ultimately, architecture as art became grounds for national pride, architects and buildings being quoted as repertoires of Portuguese identity. The impact that public investments in architects and architecture had on its social resonance should not be undervalued. Lisbon's Expo '98 illustrated it. Certainly, this reinforcement of the architect-artist paradigm was far removed from the Survey's lessons. But, simultaneously, it supplied an arena for the celebration of its authors and their Third Way as national accomplishments. A good example was the award of the Pritzker Prize to Álvaro Siza Vieira (1992) and Eduardo Souto de Moura (2011), the two best-known heirs of Távora's views on architecture. Of course, there are counter-narratives that frame the Third Way in a "critical internationalism" and there were counter-movements that resumed eclectic aesthetics. Yet, according to its last reprint, the Survey registered a cultural landscape just as much as it set up the basis for a modern and original re-appropriation of culture, both being now considered part of Portugal's identity by architects.

Indeed, the increasing concern with the past since the 1980s led to a multiplication of investments in heritage. According to Lowenthal, heritage stopped being exclusively enunciated by the elites in terms of their monumental history and erudite culture, to embrace modern times, popular culture, and a wide range of social actors. The importance of the Survey can be understood in terms of this modern conception of heritage. On the one hand, *Popular Architecture in Portugal* is a testimony of a lost world that stands for Portuguese cultural authenticity. Its relationship with issues of national identity has been duly asserted. And though the disappearance of the vernacular lifestyle was barely anticipated in 1961, by the 1980s, it was a national concern that architects seized on to promote their role in society. The Emigrant House was a lever here, as it threatened a symbolic landscape which was rescued from oblivion by architects who claimed the "civic and cultural responsibility" to do so. Moreover, although the 1980s' surveys considered hybridism in their assessments, they did not dismiss the authenticity of the old conception of the popular. Rather, they analysed its
transformations and proposed criteria for its conservation that accepted erudite "modern interventions", but dismissed popular "fake regionalisms". A confirmation of this is found in the display of the Survey's photographic holdings as records of heritage in exhibitions organised by its protagonists.

On the other hand, the Survey objectifies the specificity of Portuguese architects' architecture. It is said to have set the tone for a quest that goes back to the Portuguese House movement. It is called on to illustrate the Portuguese architects' innate sensibility to vernacularism. And it punctuates a turning point in modern practices of architecture. In short, the Survey stands for a popular/erudite dialectic that is said to have originally interpreted the international canons of architecture into a Portuguese specificity. Symptomatically, the last survey conducted by the architects' association – IAP XX (2004-2006) – assumed structural and methodological inspiration from the original one, but listed and publicised 20th century architecture by architects in Portugal. It assembled items from the Portuguese House movement, Critical Regionalism, Modernist and Post-modern architectures. This repertoire is no longer concerned with aesthetic or theoretical ambivalences. Instead, it builds an identity of Portuguese architecture in-between tradition and modernity that has been ratified by the legal protection of several works as national heritage.

It is not an overstatement to say that Portuguese architects have acquired an ontological security, especially considering the completion of their professionalisation process in 1998, when the Portuguese Association of Architects was converted into the Order of Architects. Afterwards, architects' concerns regarding their profession-building seems to have focused on identity issues. A sense of continuity and collectiveness has been built up by the celebration of architects' history, heroes and struggles. In the process, the 1950s events received particular attention. The Order reprinted the First National Congress' proceedings (2008) and Popular Architecture in Portugal (2004), distinguished the Survey's authors with honorary membership (2003), and created an online database with its photographic materials (2011). The uncritical reproduction by new research of the Survey's role in the history of Portuguese architecture is quite suggestive of Lowenthal's assessment of modern heritage as an act of faith. Nonetheless, its memory is continually called upon in more profound updating of knowledge on vernacular dwellings and architecture per se, even in the building up of new fields of research.
Final Remarks

For Portuguese architects, *Popular Architecture in Portugal* is a reference and a classic in Portuguese literature. The question raised was how the Survey came to be granted such a meaningful place in the history of Portuguese architecture. The main argument was that its recollection and interpretation supported, and was upheld by, the construction of architecture as a particular subject and practice of culture, a distinctive discipline and profession. What was initially considered as a way to produce knowledge became cultural and intellectual capital mobilised by architects in different modes of thinking about and creating architecture. As one of its authors stated, "it is not that the Survey triggered any of these movements, it simply adduced abundant material for their acceleration".

Throughout this article, the memory of the Survey was revisited taking into account a broader framework to shed light on the processes behind its re-presentations. It was shown that the Survey's memory has been construed through the selection and enhancement of its aesthetic and ethical lessons. The first addressed the process of (re)inventing culture, stressing architects as intellectuals, and popular and modern architecture as national culture. This process was shown to take on different hues over time and articulate the structure of institutions and the agency of individuals. Such relationships directed attention to the Survey's ethical lessons and the role it played in the history of architects as an occupational group. By reinforcing architects' authority on popular architecture, the Survey was called on to confirm architecture as a discipline that included but extended beyond architects' design practice. In doing so, it endorsed architecture as a field of knowledge in its own right, sanctioning architects' quest for a jurisdictional definition that would grant them the exclusive right to control access to and the practice of their profession.

In short, the Survey grew into symbolic capital put into practice through the mechanisms of memory and its innate affections, enhancements, and functions of social cohesion and continuity. Throughout time, it was re-presented by acts of remembering, forgetting and aggrandising, which reconfigured its meanings and values in light of different contexts, intelligibility and longings. In the course of time, popular architecture was built up as national heritage and the Survey became professional heritage. Heritage, after all, is not a matter of truth and objectivity, but the social and intellectual appropriation of a past that embraces attributes of originality, continuity and
greatness. It is not a proven testimony of history, but the symptom of a collective relating to the past. It depends on the group's reproduction of meanings in practices and discourses, yet also on the individual interests and powers behind a particular version. Only thus can the Survey be fully comprehended as it is presented by the president of the Order of Architects in the last reprint: a "love story" between Portuguese architects and Portugal's cultural landscape that provided "the original contribution of the Portuguese to international modern architecture" and will help the nation to "survive in a global, competitive world".

Architecture and identity are brought together by the Survey. This association is not new. Artists and intellectuals have long been known to celebrate the nation, voicing higher aspirations while dealing with their own questions of identity. In Portugal particularly, architecture has been a recurrent subject in the objectification of national culture. Architecture's tangibility and inhabitability makes it a privileged subject for construing the past because it spatialises representations and practices in material settings that support, report and shelter collective memories. So the place of the Survey in the history of Portuguese architecture must be understood. It offers architects a field of disciplinary claims which other mnemonic apparatuses, like the 1st Congress or the star-system, are less able to uphold. Debates on education and associativism were of major importance to the professionalisation of architects, but they hardly echoed broader social concerns with the built environment. Vernacular and popular architecture, on the other hand, stand for a politically and socially sanctioned territory of national culture. They therefore endorse architecture as a distinctive field of social practice and intellectual knowledge beyond, though not excluding, the erudite production of space.

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Figures captions

Figure 1. A page sample of *Arquitectura Popular em Portugal*, Region 1 © Arquivo Ordem dos Arquitectos - IARP/OAPIX.

Figure 2. Granaries of Lindoso, Region 1 © Arquivo Ordem dos Arquitectos - IARP/OAPIX.

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Figure 6. House interior in Gralheira, Region 3 © Arquivo Ordem dos Arquitectos - IARP/OAPIX

Figure 7. Pias village, Region 5 © Arquivo Ordem dos Arquitectos - IARP/OAPIX

Figure 8. House in Maria Vinagre, Region 6 © Arquivo Ordem dos Arquitectos - IARP/OAPIX

Figure 9. Row houses in Picanceira, Region 4 © Arquivo Ordem dos Arquitectos - IARP/OAPIX

Figure 10a and 10b. Rammed earth construction, Region 5 © Arquivo Ordem dos Arquitectos - IARP/OAPIX

Notes and References

1 Sindicato Nacional dos Arquitectos, *Arquitectura Popular em Portugal* (Lisbon, SNA, 1961). This work was republished by the Associação dos Arquitectos Portugueses in 1980 and 1988, and by the Ordem dos Arquitectos in 2004.


3 Barbara Misztal, *Theories of social remembering* (Maidenhead, Open University, 2003).


Translation of *Inquérito à Arquitectura Regional Portuguesa*, the original name of the Survey. Due to the title of the final publication, it is also known as the Survey on Popular Architecture. Some protagonists recall the Survey's renaming to be a last minute decision based on the will to counterpose the official version of folk architecture. Note that the Portuguese word *popular* stands for both the English *popular* and *folk*.

8 David Lowenthal, *The past is a foreign country* (Cambridge University Press, 1985).


13 Orlando Ribeiro, *Portugal, o Mediterrâneo e o Atlântico* (Coimbra, Coimbra Editora, 1945).


19 Examples of news on the generalist and specialised press are, respectively, Francisco Keil do Amaral, 'Acerca dum Inquérito à Arquitectura Regional Portuguesa', *Gazeta Musical de Todas as Artes*, VIII: 89-90 (1958), pp. 137-139; and 'Inquérito à Arquitectura Regional Portuguesa', *Arquitectura*, 66 (1959), pp. 55.


21 Region 1-Northwest: Fernando Távora (coord.), Rui Pimentel and António Menéres; Region 2-Northeast: Octávio Lixa Filgueiras (coord.), Arnaldo Araújo and Carlos Carvalho Dias; Region 3-Centre: Francisco Keil do Amaral (coord.), José Huertas Lobo and João Malato; Region 4-around Lisbon: Nuno Teotónio Pereira (coord.), António Pinto de Freitas and Francisco Silva Dias; Region 5-Southeast:
Observations regarding recollections by the Survey's authors result from interviews conducted by the author with Silva Dias (10 October 2012), Teotónio Pereira (6 November 2012), and António Menéres (27 December 2012, 20 February 2013, 11 April 2013), and interviews conducted by João Leal with Fernando Távora and Teotónio Pereira (1996), transcribed and filed in private archive, by Tiago Saraiva with Celestino de Castro (30 November 2004), available at the Multimedia Centre of the University of Lisbon's Faculty of Architecture, and by Rodrigo Ollero with Pires Martins (14 August 1999), Mata Antunes (6 September 1999), Celestino de Castro (23 November 1999), Silva Dias (15 June 1997) and Fernando Távora (2 December 1997), published in Letter to Raul Lino: Cultural Identity in Portuguese Architecture (Manchester, University of Salford, 2001, PhD Thesis).


Fernando Távora, *O Problema da Casa Portuguesa* (Lisbon, Aléo, 9, 1945).

Távora is known as the teacher of the Oporto School. His theoretical and practical work set the tone for an idea of a school built on a cognitive methodology that intertwines time and place, tradition and modernity, art and humanism, and takes drawing as its chief instrument of conception. Cf. Eduardo Fernandes, *A Escolha do Porto: contributos para a actualização de uma ideia de Escola* (Minho, UM, 2010, PhD Thesis).


Carlos Carvalho Dias, *Memórias de Trás-os-Montes e Alto-Douro nos 55 anos do "Inquérito à Arquitectura Regional Portuguesa"* (Guimarães, Opera Omnia, 2013).


E.g. Ana Tostões, *Os Verdes Anos na Arquitectura Portuguesa dos Anos 50*, op.cit.

E.g. Rodrigo Ollero, *Letter to Raul Lino*, op. cit..


Helena Maia, Alexandra Cardoso and Joana Leal, *Dois Parâmetros de Arquitectura Postos em Surdina. Leitura crítica do Inquérito à Arquitectura Regional*. Caderno 3 (Oporto, CEAA-ESAP, 2013). This
work published the results of a research project that took the data collected by the Survey to study the identity of architecture as an object with its own specificities.


40 An exception is the research project which results were published in Helena Maia, Alexandra Cardoso, and Joana Leal, Dois Parâmetros de Arquitectura Postos em Surdina. Leitura crítica do Inquérito à Arquitectura Regional. Caderno 4, op.cit.

41 Idem.

42 Pedro Brandão, O arquitecto e outras imperfeições: ética, identidade e prospectiva da profissão (Lisbon, Livros Horizonte, 2006).


44 John Storey, Inventing Popular Culture, op.cit.

45 Antonio Gramsci, Cadernos do Cárcere. Caderno 12 (Rio de Janeiro, Civilização Brasileira, 2001 [1932]).


48 Ana Ribeiro, Arquitectos portugueses – 90 Anos de vida associativa 1863-1953 (Oporto, FAUP, 2002).

49 Idem.


51 Sindicato Nacional dos Arquitectos, 1º Congresso Nacional de Arquitectura (Lisbon, Gráfica Santelmo, 2008 [1948]).

52 For example, Silva Dias is a Professor of Urbanism in the School of Lisbon, holding a PhD on the roots of Portuguese southern urbanism; while Teotónio Pereira is a renowned urban planner, responsible for several major plans of modern Lisbon.


56 Rodrigo Ollero, Letter to Raul Lino, op.cit.

A good example is Teotónio Pereira, see Nuno Teotónio Pereira and José Manuel Fernandes, 'A arquitectura do fascismo em Portugal' in *O fascismo em Portugal* (Lisbon, Regra do Jogo, 1982), pp. 533-551.


Along with the Survey’s protagonists, the present research included interviews with the authors and other participants of the surveys conducted in the 1980s, namely: Cristina Santinho (4 June 2013), José Manuel Fernandes (12 June 2013) and João Vieira Caldas (8 July 2013) regarding the survey which results were published in *Arquitectura Popular dos Açores*; Victor Mestre (16 April 2013), who carried out the survey published in *Arquitectura Popular da Madeira*; and Isabel Raposo (9 October 2013), one of the authors of *Casas de Sonho*. References to these authors’ recollections and reasoning are based on interviews, unless explicated otherwise.


Domingos Tavares, *Francisco Farinhas: realismo moderno* (Oporto, Daphne, 2008).


Nuno Teotónio Pereira, 'Prefácio da 3ª Edição', op.cit.


Ana Tostões, 'The Survey as a knowledge process, research a critical tool', op. cit.
Interviews with the authors and other participants of the surveys conducted in the 1980s.

Hilde Heynen, 'Anonymous architecture as counter-image', op. cit.


This argument was notably developed by Ana Tostões, *Os Verdes Anos na Arquitectura Portuguesa dos Anos 50* (op. cit.). It has been reproduced ever since in architectural literature.


Ana Tostões, 'The Survey as a knowledge process, research a critical tool', op. cit..

Term coined by Fernando Távora, 'As raízes e os frutos', *Diário de Lisboa*, 3 July 1986.


Expo’98 was transformed into Parque das Nações, a residential, business and leisure neighbourhood, highly rated mainly due to its architectural and urban features.


Nuno Teotónio Pereira, 'Prefácio da 3ª Edição' (op. cit.)


António Menéres, *Memórias do Tempo e do Património Construído* (op. cit.).

Victor Mestre, *Arquitectura Popular da Madeira*, (op. cit.).

Rodrigo Ollero, *Letter to Raul Lino* (op. cit.).

Ana Tostões, *Os Verdes Anos na Arquitectura Portuguesa dos Anos 50* (op. cit).


A significant part of the Survey’s published and unpublished pictures is now available online at http://www.oapix.org.pt.

Research increased greatly after the implementation of the Bologna Accords in Portugal (2005).

103 Helena Maia, Alexandra Cardoso, and Joana Leal, *Dois Parâmetros de Arquitectura Postos em Sardina. Leitura crítica do Inquérito à Arquitectura Regional. Caderno 3* (op.cit.).


106 Helena Roseta, 'Prefácio da 4ª Edição' (op.cit.), pp. VI-VII.