Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

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Introduction

This chapter presents and details the methodologies applied to study the *Orquestra Geração* (OG hereafter). Adopting different theoretical perspectives raised various research questions requiring the application of diverse methodological approaches within the framework of exploring the case of OG – a complex and multidimensional case. This correspondingly sought to grasp the multifaceted reality of this musical, social and pedagogical project and deepen knowledge about the intervening participants, that continually interact with each other, expressing and confronting different points of view as well as sharing rich social and musical experiences and feelings that converge around a single, common objective: growing, while making music together.

One aspect worth highlighting is how the interaction established over the course of this study between team members, with different academic backgrounds in the social and human sciences, enabled the discussion of different perspectives thereby developing the individual look of each researcher alongside a collective view about the OG. To a certain extent, the interactions reflected and accompanied the development of the project over the course of the time and space defined by the study, ensuring researchers grew with the orchestra and developed their views on the multiple interactions established by the OG participants – founders, mentors, sponsors, coordinators, teachers and maestros, students and their respective families.

The description and the justification of the methodologies shall follow the approximate chronological order of their application throughout the study. The selection of methodologies stemmed from the needs encountered by researchers in the successive phases of the study as they explored the complexity of this project in their fieldwork and related their reflections with the literature review. Thus, this chapter presents the case study as the general methodology followed by diverse

methods and techniques for data collection: documental analysis and project mapping; questionnaire survey of the teachers, interviews with the founders, coordinators, music teachers, students and their families; and as well as observation and recording of the musical practices taking place within the contexts of classes, rehearsals, camps and concerts.

Research questions

The two pillars of this research are the socially inclusive reach of the OG project – the possible relationships between music and social inclusion developed through the orchestra and the processes of socialisation that occur within its framework – and the questions emerging from the implemented music pedagogy, which are determinant to the success of the project and to the musical, social and educational growth of the young musicians. Thus, there are various research questions that this study seeks to explore:

i) What principles prevailed over the founding of the OG, what objectives were set and what results did the project aim to achieve?

ii) How do participants deal with the probable tensions between the objectives of social inclusion and musical excellence?

iii) How did the project implementation and coordination process take place at social, musical and educational levels?

iv) What were the social and musical interactions established among participants through orchestral practice?

v) What impact has the project had on the participants and their immediate environment (school, family, peers, and friends)?

vi) What pedagogical approaches have been developed to achieve the goals of social inclusion and musical excellence? What reflections have these approaches had on the personal and musical development of the young students?

vii) What perceptions do the young participants hold about the benefits of musical learning on their lives?

Justifying the methodology

In order to explore and understand these multiple questions, a 'multi-method' approach was adopted (Robson, 2011) with complementary methodological options: an initial quantitative approach followed by a qualitative study, together deemed appropriate in terms of the study objectives and phases and were constantly articulated with the theoretical perspectives.

Below, we shall describe and justify the research methods, techniques and instruments applied as well as the context, the participants, the procedures of data collection and their interpretation. The design and procedures of some specific methods and their respective analysis are presented in the following chapter: the two models of analysis for the organisational and systemic structure of the OG (ch. 5), a narrative by one of the study team members in a dual role as an OG member and researcher (ch. 7), and the sociological portraits of the young participants (ch. 8).

The general research methodology is that of the *case study – Orquestra Geração* – an empirical study of a specific phenomenon within its real-life context (Yin, 2009). This seeks to grasp the nature of the case, its specific features, activities and ways of functioning; its historical, physical and sociocultural contexts; and as well as other cases within the 'main case' (Stake, 2008).

In some phases of this research, the data informs the theory within the framework of the *Grounded Theory* approach. This strategy highlights the processual and interactive nature of this research, thus, the 'need for systematic interactions between data and ideas as well as the properties of the research design and data analysis, which remain in constant dialogue' (Atkinson & Delamont, 2008, p. 301).

The qualitative approach sought to return deep and profound knowledge about the phenomena studied. Triangulation – contrasting the data collected through the utilisation of various methods – responded to the needs of listening to multiple voices, in different places and with different perspectives on the same reality. The

interpretation and meaning were central to this research and assume that the same activity might be grasped in different fashions by different participants, taking into consideration the ways in which they interrelate with the various phenomena that make up this case study. In this sense, subjectivity is both assumed and negotiated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

In the initial phase of research, necessarily exploratory, the ***mapping*** of the OG took place across its diverse territories and institutions (local government, schools) in which the project takes place, and that enabled the identification of the diversity of its intervening actors. ***Documentary analysis*** was also carried out on the official documentation produced since the launch of the project and provided by the OG Board, including the identification of the sponsors (official or others) and of other social intervention projects implemented in the same populations. This documentation – annual activity plans, timetables and lists of participants, contacts for schools and teachers, internal regulations and reports and musical repertoire lists – was analysed to identify the structure and means of project functioning and to prepare the fieldwork.

To obtain a deeper approach, four OG nuclei were selected in accordance with the following criteria: geographic location; characteristics of host neighbourhoods; and source of financing (public or private). Three of these nuclei are situated on the outskirts of Lisbon, the location of the project headquarters and its major geographic area of implementation, and another nucleus is in the north of Portugal: Miguel Torga (Amadora) and Vialonga, the first nuclei set up in 2007; Apelação, from 2009, a neighbourhood identified by the directors as particularly difficult for project implementation, and Amarante, from 2010, which belongs to a different geographic context[23].

In the second phase, we applied the following methods: ***direct observation*** of the ongoing musical activities (instrument and music theory classes, ensemble music, rehearsals and concerts); ***non-structured interviews*** with the project mentors and directors held in different phases in order to better accompany the project's growth and development; ***semi-structured interviews*** with music teachers, coordinators and

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[23] Cf. Chapter 2.

other persons responsible for the project's pedagogical dimensions; interviews with students, which originated *sociological portraits*; and *focus group interviews* with the parents and guardians of students. Although not planned at the outset, a small *quasi-experimental study* was also carried out in the Vialonga school in order to better understand the possible relationship between students' participation in the orchestra and their academic results given that this is the only school with integrated music lessons and, therefore, with homogenous classes of OG students.

Description of the methods and procedures

Questionnaire for music teachers

In the 2012-13 academic year, we carried out a *questionnaire*[24] survey with the 94 music teachers teaching in 13 of the 17 OG nuclei. The questionnaire, with open and closed questions, had 37 questions organised into two sections: the first attempted to characterised the profile of the music teachers (gender, age, academic and complementary education and training, professional qualifications and experience, instrumental practice and musical preferences); the second section inquired about the teachers' pedagogical experiences and practices in the project and their opinion as regards the quality and appropriateness of the teaching methods and materials, the musical repertoire and the project in general.

The questionnaire was placed online for a three-month period with music coordinators and teachers informed via email. The quantitative and qualitative data collected were then analysed by statistical software (IBM SPSS Statistics) and by qualitative content analysis, respectively.

Observation of classes, rehearsals and concerts

The period dedicated to fieldwork was adapted to the school calendar and participant availability. In the visits to the nuclei, carried out by various researchers over a two year, observation took place of music theory classes, individual instrument

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[24] In the appendix.

classes, study camps, instrumental groups and orchestra rehearsals, and concerts. These *observations* enabled the gathering of material on real contexts (Robson, 2011) and included *field notes* and *video records*, some of which were subject to analysis. The data incorporate not only descriptions of actions, interactions and dialogues but also moments of reflection by the observers revolving around their readings of events occurring during their periods of observation.

The *in situ* visits took on an ethnographic character through field notes and informal conversations, with researchers accompanying the participants in their practices, interactions and discourses and experiencing the rehearsal sites and zones inhabited, which together adds a great depth of understanding of both the project and its intervening actors.

Individual and group interviews of participants

Almost all of the interviews carried out with OG participants were individually based. We opted mainly for *semi-structured interviews* with *open-ended questions* (Schmidt, 2004), which were answered by music teachers, nucleus coordinators, school directors, maestros, mediators and students. *Non-structured interviews* took place with founders, mentors, directors, national coordinators and OG sponsors. We also held *focus group interviews* with students' families (Kamberelis and Dimitriades, 2008). All the interviews were sound recorded and then subsequently subject to transcription, analysis and categorisation.

The interviews held with OG directors, school group directors, nuclei coordinators and music teachers approached transversal themes to those responsible for the project, including: its history, objectives, organisation and project structure, positioning on the tension between social inclusion and musical excellence, involvement in project implementation and perceptions around the impact generated for academic achievement and student development.

The OG directors and coordinators were also asked about the criteria used for the recruitment of teachers. The school directors received questions about their relationships with the schools and with the OG project and their perceptions about

how the orchestra interacts with the school community and with the other projects ongoing at that school.

Instrument and music theory teachers were asked about their own academic and professional backgrounds, the characteristics of the subjects they teach, the pedagogies they use and their relationships with the students, with the project and the different subject fields. This analysis focused upon the teachers' profiles, their teaching strategies in the classroom and their opinions about the different subjects.

Some themes had been previously defined while others emerged over the course of the analysis. The categorisation of the responses revealed the emerging themes that underwent adjustment over the course of this process. In order to better grasp the OG music teaching process, content analysis of the interviews was duly complemented by observations in the classrooms, music camps and concerts.

The students' families interview script spanned the characterisation of those interviewed (professional and musical experiences) and included the following items: perceptions of the relationships that the pupils maintain with the school and with the orchestra; their perceptions of any eventual transformations taking place in students and their families; the overall image that they have of the project (including its management, teachers, repertoire and orchestra concerts); and in what ways they see their participation in the OG project as an opportunity for a professional future for their children. These interviews took place inside the schools and the responses were categorised according to their relevant themes[25].

Tables 1 and 2 present a summary description of all the fieldwork undertaken.

Position	No. interviews
Members of the Board (Wagner Dinis and Helena Lima)	3
Mentors (Jorge Miranda)	1
Sponsors (Representatives of the FCG and EDP Foundations)	2
Former National Coordinators	1
National Pedagogical Coordinators	2
Maestro / National Artistic Coordinator	1

Table 1. Summary of general interviews

[25] Cf. Chapter 4.

Position	No. interviews
Director of the Amarante Cultural Centre	1
Directors of Schools	4
Nucleus Coordinators	4
School Coordinators	2
Music Teachers (Instrument and Music Theory)	23 (19 + 4)
Participants (children and adolescents)	54
Parents and Guardians	6
Mediator	1
Orchestra employees	2

Table 2. Summary of Interviews at selected nuclei

Interviews with young participants and sociological portraits

As already detailed, semi-structured interviews were held with young OG participants; some of these were subject to a process of categorisation in order to enable a first approach to the transformative power of music and the ways in which this might eventually be occurring within the OG framework (Veloso, 2015).

Based upon these interviews, we drafted *sociological portraits* (Lahire, 2002), a methodology adapted in a flexible fashion so as to provide scope for the voices, views and experiences of these young musicians as well as operationally attaining an outline of their life histories, specifically the key moments on their trajectories and respective processes of socialisation and internalisation of their dispositions[26].

The selection of the interviewees took place in accordance with the following criteria: diversity of ages and school backgrounds (general education and specialist music education) and territorially distinct contexts (Metropolitan Area of Lisbon and Amarante). The interview script sought to obtain data on the different socialisation contexts of participants, especially: family and kinship; school; eventual participation in the labour market; place of residence; friends and affective circles and, finally, the OG. Data was gathered to characterise the family household and the school record of the young respondents. We approached their experiences and views on the project, the eventual impact of orchestra participation on their lives as well as their discourses about their future professional and life projects. In certain cases, the data gathering ran two interview sessions in order to obtain greater depth about the respondent trajectories and clarify and deepen certain themes.

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[26] Cf. Chapter 8.

During the process of drafting a total of thirty-five *sociological portraits,* team members exchanged information, and the portraits were validated by at least two researchers and therefore resulted from a collective process. This then proceeded with transversal analysis of all the portraits, seeking to detect shared and regular aspects among them as well as unique features through the categorisation of the relevant aspects.

Quasi-experimental study

The data collection process registered the opinions (statements) of various OG members (directors, coordinators, and teachers) about improvements to the academic performance of orchestra participants in relation to other school students in which the nuclei were located. While this topic did not feature among the initial research objectives, we carried out a quasi-experimental study (Tuckman, 2005), on the academic results of OG participant students, following its proposal by the research consultant, In the EB 2.3 Vialonga School, we gathered and compared academic performance data (grades and pass rates), over the course of five academic years (from 2009/10 to 2013/14), for two classes belonging to the OG and two classes that did not[27].

The variety of methodological approaches applied in this study emerged from the desire to respond to the initially raised research questions and correspondingly gather diverse and different data with different methods. This also and above all sought to *observe* situations of musical practice involving young musicians, teachers and maestros, and *inquire* of the participants about their opinions regarding the project and its implementation, and extending a voice to its core participants: children and young people.

The following chapters present the analysis and the discussion of the results within the framework of deepening the knowledge and better understanding the multifaceted reality of this social, musical and educational project.

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[27] Cf. Chapter 4.

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