

The background is a complex line drawing in a sketchy, etched style. On the right, a large, dark, winged figure stands prominently, holding a long staff or pole. The figure has a helmet or headpiece with wings. To the left, a coastal town is depicted with various buildings, including one with a dome and another with a tower. A lighthouse is visible on the far left. In the middle ground, a large ship is docked at a pier. The overall scene is a detailed, textured illustration of a coastal setting.

*What if we can be  
— heroes for more  
than one day? The  
improbable possibility of  
an independent artistic  
career in Portugal*

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# What if we can be heroes for more than one day? The improbable possibility of an independent artistic career in Portugal

LIBRARIAS  
HYPOTHESIS  
HISTORIA  
PERIODICAL

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**Abstract.** In the history of modern Portuguese alternative music, female names do not abound for different reasons. They seem almost invisible. It was from this premise that we studied a specific case in order to determine the causes of this 'almost' invisibility in Portugal, and its consequences in terms of recognition abroad. Our main goals are to determine the causes of the improbable possibility of a Portuguese female former musician to proceed in a career in indie music, as well as to provide a new content of study, that of an Alternative History, concerning social background and music in Portugal. In view of our objectives, we chose the case of Ondina Pires as our study corpus, she who left a legacy of self-discipline and resilience in the alternative Portuguese music scene. Due to the lack of Portuguese detailed studies in the area of an Alternative History of Music in Portugal, concerning the role of women in Portuguese indie music, we opted to make a descriptive study based on the corpus under analysis, and embodied in the views of academic authors, most of them foreigner. This descriptive and historical study provides a reflection on three parallel dimensions. If they had taken on other outlines, in an Alternative History universe, then it could have made it possible for Ondina to be a hero for more than one day, not giving up her musical projects.

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Keywords: Alternative History; music; audiences; cultural and social environment.

## 1. Introduction

In the history of Portuguese rock and alternative music we find only a few women who were able to perform, sing, play an instrument or/and compose especially in the late 1970s and during the 1980s [1]. Ondina Pires was one of them. She was born in 1961, a special year in the Portuguese history for the worst reasons: the beginning of the Colonial War between Portugal and its former colonies, massacres in the north of Angola, the occupation of Goa, Damão and Diu by the Indian National Union, and its subsequent loss for Portugal, amidst other catastrophes. Portugal was enduring a long dictatorship of fascist nature under Professor António de Oliveira Salazar's leadership whose sinister and patronizing policies conducted Portugal to isolation and almost oblivion among the other nations, especially the democratic ones. The economic, social and cultural gaps between the different social classes were profound and severe, particularly in the countryside, something that gave birth to a huge number of emigrants travelling illegally towards countries like France, Germany and Canada looking for better living conditions.

Ondina comes from a working-class family that despite the fact of having scarce financial means was considerably eager for cultural goods, such as books and newspapers. At home, there was a radio transistor, which had a relevant role in Ondina's musical formation; her mother used to sing and her father was keen on painting, drawing and reading. One should consider DNA legacy as an important biological condition that affects the individual, and additionally the familiar environment. By adding the two factors plus a special sensitivity, one may conclude that all these elements together shaped Ondina. She grew up facing scarcity of money and means to develop her artistic and musical abilities, but even though she managed to play the drums, sing, perform, compose, and draw, and lately to write books, during a long time. She be-

came one of the Portuguese alternative female musicians because she was persistent, fighter, and, in a certain way, eccentric. She gave up music on July 2008 and started other intellectual activities until now. Social and cultural background, financial issues, her role in Portuguese indie music as an active agent in the new-born Portuguese Alternative History of music make Ondina Pires the ideal artist to explore the questions to be discussed in this work.

Through the analysis of Ondina Pires's particular life, we aim at exploring the dimensions that affect the career of many Portuguese indie artists of her generation, and identifying the key aspects that could imply a divergent outcome. Having this in mind we determined three different dynamics to understand if a Portuguese independent musician or artist, such as Ondina, can or cannot be a hero for more than one day.

Firstly, the political and social environment where Ondina Pires was born helps to contextualise her trajectory. She experienced and witnessed the end of a 40 years dictatorship, which compelled the country to close on itself economically and culturally speaking. She was a twelve-year-old girl who saw the Carnation Revolution with its new-born democracy, which did not evolve in such a way that it could re-shape the majority of the Portuguese people's minds to a broader way of thinking, feeling and acting. Resilience, cultural references and power of will are discussed in this first section.

Secondly, Portugal is a small country always struggling against bankruptcy and always trying to have a voice in the world. Portuguese musical and cultural markets are small and they do not have much place for alternative or experimental projects in terms of professional career. Most foreigner audiences ignore Portuguese independent artists and musicians. The main or alternative channels of information do not promote them. Especially from 1970s until today, the world was

designed to receive only the Anglo-American power and influence — politics, art, economics, and other. Even in terms of communication between people from different nations, the *lingua franca* is always English. In small non-native English-speaking countries, those who dare to be alternative face economic difficulties to ensure the viability and sustainability of their projects.

Finally, which makes the effect of the previous one worse, is the fact that Portugal does not integrate the dominant socio-cultural, political and economic framework in the globalization. It is the Commonwealth countries that dictate the market rules, specifically the bond rating agencies in London and New York, and more recently Asian countries as China, India and Japan too. The same economic reality occurs with major or minor record music labels. There are thousands of them around the world, and a big amount of them is British and American. In the current days, some Portuguese tiny record labels struggle to sell their products, both Portuguese and foreigner alternative musical projects: Hey Pachuco, Groovie Records, Thisco Records or Chaputa Records, among others. However, small labels are no more than DIY agenda. To make, promote and sell musical products have a high cost especially to independent bands and composers because they do not earn anything and sometimes, they even spend money in record studios alongside intellectual and creative efforts for nothing. Small labels sell for small niches of audiences and capitalize everything for them, which is not much. Economics matter very much.

This work is divided in the following sections: **Methodology**, where we explain the chosen material and research approach; **Background**, which presents the socio-cultural and historical context for Ondina Pires' artistic path; **Portuguese audiences and cultural environment**, where we explore further the characteristics of Ondina Pires'

main audiences; **Economic Circumstances**, an in-depth analysis to the effects of the economic dynamics on Ondina Pires's and indie artists careers; **What if the economic circumstances of the country and Ondina's family background were different?**, where alternative divergent key aspects are probed and identified; **Future Perspectives: the past that got away**, which deals with other dynamics regarding the scope of the work and future research; **Conclusions**; and **Round Table Insight**, where we provide insight how the interaction with peers and audience during our first presentation of this research influenced the present work.

## 2. Methodology

In view of our objectives, we chose the case of Ondina Pires as our study *corpus*, she who left a legacy of self-discipline and resilience in the alternative Portuguese music scene. Due to the lack of Portuguese detailed studies in the area of a History of Alternative Music in Portugal, concerning the role of women in Portuguese indie music, we opted to make a descriptive study based on the *corpus* under analysis, and embodied in the views of academic authors. Thus, Ondina Pires is simultaneously the *corpus* of the study and her own researcher.

We have chosen the experiential perspective as the main methodological approach, alongside the use of Alternative History. Based on the principles of narrative inquiry [2] and using the self-experience, as research tools we chose informal documentation such as clippings from magazines and newspapers<sup>123</sup>, books, drawings, discography, Ondina's graphic diaries and on her

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- 1 <http://umbigomagazine.com/um/2015-07-10/ondina-pires.html>;
  - 2 <https://www.rostos.pt/inicio2.asp?cronica=9002899>;
  - 3 <http://www.punk.pt/2015/06/27/exhibition-under-ventures-by-ondina-2/>

own words, through a methodological approach centred on her life history. The chosen methodology forms on the collection of historical information about cultural policies in Portugal before and after the 25th of April 1974 with a focus on music and on the Portuguese people consumption of musical and cultural commodities. The Portuguese socio-cultural parallelism with other countries in the Western world was not forgotten. This allowed to clearly identify and explore several dimensions that affected the possibilities of a successful artistic career for a female indie artist in Portugal, such as Ondina.

Furthermore, from such analysis we were able to conclude the socio-historical divergences that can permit to explore her trajectory through alternative chronologies, thus resorting to Alternative History as research tool for analysing how the course of Ondina's life might have been different in case she had had favourable economic circumstances.

### 3. Background

#### 3.1. Music, Portugal, and Female musicians: from the First Portuguese Republic to the eve of the Carnation Revolution

During the First Republic (1910-1926), educated republican women such as Carolina Beatriz Ângelo, Ana de Castro Osório, Maria de Lourdes B. de Sá Teixeira, Regina Quintanilha, Carolina Michaëllis or Adelaide Cabete tried to gain the right to vote. They also struggled for the same opportunities as men and developed bold educational programmes to literate thousands of children, 'Even without the right to vote, women go forward to their emancipation (...) war allows women to an important role in different areas' [3 p160]. In addition, in the musical field a few educated women stood up in the musical field by joining philharmonic bands and small chamber orchestras, 'Female musical group in Porto, in 1915. Music was

one of the few accepted activities socially accepted that women had to escape from their home routine' [3 p158]. Music was considered a pastime and not a cultural need, and for women it was rather difficult to flourish in the world of music, arts, literature, science and politics, unlike men.

Throughout the roaring twenties, Portugal received the USA popular music influence — jazz. However, this musical style only reached the merging bourgeoisie who had money to spend in parties and clubs, a small cosmopolitan slice of the Portuguese society that used to go abroad or buy gramophones and records, 'If the *nouveau riche* is the main animator of night clubs, certain aristocrats, artists, employees and people in search of social promotion are too' [3 p49]. Independently of 'Estado Novo' policies<sup>4</sup> and despite the poverty and illiteracy of many Portuguese citizens, especially women, a recent and powerful technology arrived in Portugal — the radio, in 1928. Some kind of revolution occurred in the core of the urban social tissue with its expansion.

*Emissora Nacional* was the first Portuguese official radio channel. Through it, more demanding listeners could listen to classical music and it broadcasted theatre plays too. There was no place for songs sung in English or other languages nor for songs with lyrics against the regime. The blue pencil of censorship was always present both for songs and for books, newspapers or magazines. When the first radio regulation laws were introduced in 1930, soon radio transistors became a popular gadget in all urban *bourgeois* homes.

By the early 60s, many national and international events had changed, as well as the heads of the various radio channels. 'In the passage from

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'Estado Novo' or 'New State' was Salazar's corporatist and authoritarian government that ruled Portugal from 1933 until 25th April 1974.

the 1950s to the next, there is an expansion of the schedule and the emergence of a new type of programs and programmers.' [4 p83] There were more young people working in the radio, especially some producing musical programmes as *Em Órbita* (1965) dedicated to young urban people emitting Anglo-American music. The popularity of radio in Portugal has always been permanent for most Portuguese people, especially among housewives and elderly people. 'Radio soap operas, sports programs and programs dedicated to housewives maintained the popularity of the previous decade, adding to Anglo-American music programs' [4 p93]. Moreover, in the late 50s, television started competing with radio and revolutionized the customs. Suddenly, Portugal was a little bit nearer the world.

### 3.2. Ondina Pires and pre and post Carnation Revolution in Portugal

Ondina Pires grew up during the 60s listening to the radio. She used to search for foreigner singers and bands and loved to listen to a Morocco radio channel [5]. That was exotic, odd and fabulous. She hated *fado* and pseudo-folklore music. Her mother supported Ondina's musical and fashion tastes perhaps because she did not like Portuguese mainstream mood for darkness and sadness crystallised in the *fado*. Despite the fact they had not a record set player, they were always trying to catch other music styles as rock'n'roll or classical music on the radio and later, during the 70s, recording national and international groups in cassettes.

During post-Carnation Revolution, the Portuguese radio channels provided tonnes of *música de intervenção* (protest songs). Pop, rock or experimental music were not played on the radio and soon the audiences forgot that Portugal also had had its rockers, 'yé-yé' songs and Beatlemania.

'With the nationalization of television and radio (...), protest songs invaded the media and musicians were dragged by a 'revolutionary responsibility for their songs and assumed a strong political militancy, concretized, namely, through the constitution associations dedicated to reflecting on the role of the new society (...)' [6 p33]. The *fado* was almost obliterated, considered a 'reactionary' musical style. At the same time, rock and pop were considered 'capitalist and alienating' musical trends. 'After the Revolution, Portuguese rock practically disappeared from the pages of the first Portuguese popular music magazine, in the period between the end of the Estado Novo and the transition to democracy (1969-1976) - 'Mundo da Canção' [World of Song] - and everything that was foreign was often denounced as one of the faces of imperialism.' [7 p60-61].

As Ondina mentioned in her interviews<sup>5</sup> and documentaries on modern music in Portugal, between 25th April 1974 and mid-1976 protest songs were the new mainstream trend on the radio and on television. About this issue author Côrte-Real states: 'On television, on radio, on record players and recorders, on the streets in cars equipped with powerful megaphones, circulating freely throughout the country, protest songs were always in the air' [8 p158].

The new generation that could afford to buy jazz, rock and other Anglo-American musical styles was unaware that there was a pre-history of the same genres in Portugal before the Carnation Revolution. Ondina was one of them. As soon as punk rock triggered in UK, radio men as late António Sérgio and a few other broadcasters tried to introduce the new style as well as heavy metal, experimental projects and a myriad of forgotten musical styles alongside punk looks and attitude. In magazine *Música & Som*, in 1977, re-

porter Manuel Meneses describes the punk look in Kings Road, London: ‘(...) young people profusely decorated with safety pins, razor blades and chains scattered throughout their clothes and hair, which is usually short and spiky, dyed in bright colours’ [9 p17]. Therefore, from 1977 until 1997, there were radio programmes broadcasting what was being done abroad among some Portuguese musical projects [10].

In 1977, Portuguese punk rock bands as *Aqui del Rock* or *Os Faíscas* were possible due to the Anglo-American punk counterculture influence, ‘António Sérgio, in his radio program *Rotação*, introduced the ‘spirit 77’. By using this expression, he referred to everything that was coming from England. From Sex Pistols, The Damned, The Stranglers to other groups.’ [11 p19]. In that time, young people as Ondina were sensitive to punk rock, pre-punk with bands as The Stooges, New York Dolls, Velvet Underground, Wayne County and the Electric Chairs, Suicide or even to free experimental jazz projects as the Lounge Lizzards. In the same bag, there were some names as King Crimson, Jimi Hendrix, Meredith Monk, Lydia Lunch, Pierre Henry, Roxy Music, Stockhausen or ethnic music from Mongolia, Tibet, and Kenya and so on. For young men and women as Ondina, everything that was strange, strong and vibrant was cool.

Since 1977 until 1988, Portuguese pirate radios and university radios were also a good resource to find young people broadcasting ‘unknown musical pleasures’ [12]. However, in 1988 it all ended with government severe laws, ‘Similar to pirates of the old South Seas, pirate radios stormed the radio ether waves in the 1980s. But on December 24, 1988, (...) the sound of hundreds of radio stations became silent’ [13]. Some fanzines as *Desordem Total* or *Subversão*, magazines as *Música & Som* and newspapers as *Blitz* or *Êxito*, contributed a little providing some information but were ineffective for the most part of the Portuguese

readers and listeners because they were not totally à la page with what was happening in Portugal and abroad. Spanish, French, British or American magazines were expensive.

To conclude this brief historical context, we must add that male musicians led the majority of Portuguese musical projects; only a few young women were determined to do something that could mean a lot for them and for the audiences such as Xana, lead singer of Rádio Macau, Anabela Duarte, lead singer of the experimental and alternative band Mler Ife Dada, or Lena d’Água, lead singer of the Beatnicks. To illustrate this last statement, Ondina Pires was a girl who dared to play the drums on stage, to make songs and sing, an unusual fact in Portugal during years 1984-1986. This ‘feat’ was recorded in photographs and in some demo tapes (Figure 1). Also, in 1985, in an interview, the lead singer of the Portuguese band *Salada de Frutas*, Lena D’Água, explains what she feels on stage: ‘I get electric at a concert. I have to give people a ‘click’. I have to connect them with me as if there was no other opportunity to do so’ [14 p32]. Pop, rock and indie musical styles were able to ‘grow up’ in Portugal, especially during the mid ‘80s, because the Portuguese economy started growing up gradually. Entry into the European Community was no longer a mirage. On 1 January 1986, Portugal became a member of the Communities. This historical event gave hope to those who wanted to form a small band, purchase the basic instruments and record their music. Music contests promoted by Rock Rendez-Vous, an old theatre converted in a ballroom, were also fundamental to originate a ‘rock frenzy’ among the youngsters. In our research, we were not able to find any experimental and alternative projects similar to Daphne Oram, Laurie Anderson or Meredith Monk works made by Portuguese women during the 70s, 80s and 90s. If they exist, they remain unknown.



Figure 1: Ondina Pires, 1985, Bar Café Concerto, Bairro Alto, Lisbon, co-founder, drummer, vocalist and composer of *Pop dell'Arte* (image from Author's personal archive and collection).

#### 4. Portuguese audiences and cultural environment

The path for those who demanded for more alternative artistic and musical expressions was always difficult and complex, and it still is. Informal blogs and a few surveys conveyed on the digital platforms show audiences' trends and markets. For instance, the blog *Cidadania Já* in an article called 'Portuguese musical tastes' shows that *fado*, Portuguese hip-hop and *pimba*<sup>6</sup> are the most appreciated musical styles by the majority of the Portuguese' [15 p1-5]. We were unable to find in-depth studies on the musical tastes of the Portuguese, which reflects a certain indifference in relation to cultural references, namely, musical, by the entities that promote education and cul-

ture. What we know about the Portuguese reality in relation to musical tastes and the purchase and sale of listening media is empirical. Gone are the days of greatest hit lists from Portuguese magazines such as *Musicalíssimo* or *Música & Som*.

National surveys and interviews would be relevant to know more about Portuguese musical tastes, markets and other, as empirically we are aware that those who buy and consume classical, experimental and alternative styles in Portugal are a minority. Spiritual and material recourses as education, sensitivities, trends and the purchase of cultural assets are the means to understand what kind of audiences exist in our country. As author Paula Abreu points out, 'This is because, as foreign sociological literature has abundantly shown, the structure and dynamics of cultural demands and offers are strongly correlated with resources' [16 p319].

The fact that Portuguese young people (15-25 year-old boys and girls) are not acquainted with past and present alternative musical styles is odd and a paradox. They grew up in a technical environment embedded by DIY philosophy which comes from small Portuguese record labels as *Dansa do Som*, *Ama Romanta* and *Milk Shake-Bee Keeper* ('80s and 90s). In the current days, one has online infinite possibilities to surf the Internet and learn more about music of all eras, but most do not do it. In the past, for example, from 1960 to 1990, young people of that time were interested in buying, listening or following their musical groups. Listening supports such as mp2 and mp3 or Netflix replace CDs, cassettes and vinyl. This has a cost in terms of author rights and the permanent affection for special bands or/and names. American musician and writer Ian Svenonius is very critical on digital supports and DIY dynamics: 'DIY was the byword through postpunk and on the indie era. Now, with the economy destroyed by computers, DIY is no longer a philosophy as much as a requirement' [17 p77].

6 *Pimba* is an unsophisticated pop music with a repetitive melody, simple lyrics and often with na accordion and synthesiser accompaniment and its toe-tapping beats get people up and dancing, which is why it is so popular at the summer festivals.

Nowadays, we observe a new national and international phenomenon that one of a powerful advertising machine behind a mainstream bubble-gum musician/singer sponsored by a mark. Angolan musician Anselmo Ralph is the perfect example of this and he became popular in Portugal: ‘In 2009, he sang released another hit, ‘Cupid’s pain’, and from then on he has never stopped. Two years later, he released ‘Cupid’, which broke sales records and originated 50 concerts in three months. Coca-Cola noticed him and started sponsoring him’ [18]. or people simply listening to what DJs offer in public facilities. In the past, a Portuguese band or musician faced difficulties in making themselves known and projecting their works nationally and internationally, now the situation has become much worse because their work merges with thousands of international proposals. However, if he or she has economic stability, he or she will manage to build an independent musical career. After all, everything in life depends on money.

## 5. Economic circumstances

As we have said before, Ondina was born still during the ‘Estado Novo’. Her adolescence was, therefore, spent in the period after the revolution of April 25th 1974. If this was synonymous of profound political, social, economic and cultural transformations, this does not mean that the following years brought the most favourable circumstances for the development of the country. On the contrary, and as Augusto Mateus points out, the second half of the 1970s and the 1980s witnessed the articulation between political transition and economic crisis. And there were several factors that contributed to this [19].

Still during the ‘Estado Novo’ and as a consequence of the colonial war, the State was forced to open up the Portuguese economy to international capital, seeking integration into the world econo-

my by strengthening relations with the European economy [20]. But for a small country with a small market like Portugal, integration into wider economic spaces is only beneficial in periods of worldwide economic expansion. This was even the case in the 1960s, when Portugal experienced remarkable economic development as a result of industrialisation and the remittances from emigrants who left the country at the time [21]. If in 1950 Portugal had a per capita income of less than \$200, 47% of the population was engaged in agriculture and cork, wolfram, wine, wood and canned fish industry. Therefore, these represented the majority of exports. In the early 1970s, per capita income was around \$900, only 1/3 of the workforce was employed in agriculture and more than 60% of exports were manufactured goods [21].

However, Portuguese economic growth did not result from any endogenous dynamics but was mainly a consequence of economic growth in more advanced European capitalist countries. At the same time, it was essentially based on the growth of the secondary sector - manufacturing industries and construction - having some effects on tertiary activities, but without generating positive effects on agriculture [21]. In fact, this process meant an absolute stagnation of agricultural production which, in turn, had two important consequences: the growing dependence on food imports and a massive exodus from rural areas in most of the country. According to Mário Murteira [21], this growth process can also be considered a process of underdevelopment, in the sense that the Portuguese economy became increasingly dependent on external factors. This implied a progressive mismatch between the structure of production and the exploitation of resources and the basic needs of most of the population.

This scenario gave rise to strong class struggles and workers’ demands [20]. Not only strong pressures for higher wages, but also for different

power relations at the level of factories, companies, sectors, in short, in the national economy [21]. At the same time, the end of the colonial war resulted in the return of more than 350 thousand people from Africa, mainly from Angola, placing the country and especially the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon, to which the majority of the ‘returnees’ converged. These people faced serious challenges in terms of employment, housing and social conditions as well as those who were already in Portugal. In December 1975, unemployment reached 10% of the resident active population, not counting the 70 thousand unemployed among the ‘returnees’. On the other hand, the cost of living was rising rapidly [21]. This situation led to two interventions by the International Monetary Fund. The first intervention took place in 1977, at a time when goods were rationed, inflation was rising to 20%, there was strong conflict and political instability, and the Portuguese currency - ‘escudo’ - was devalued. The second intervention took place in 1983, during the period of the so-called Central Block, an emergency Government, formed by an alliance between the two major Portuguese political parties, which was considered the best way to fight the serious economic situation of the country [22].

In a social and economic scenario like the one we have just described, and for an independent musician/artist who, like Ondina, did not belong to the highest classes in the hierarchy of Portuguese society, the pursuit of an artistic career and its choice as a professional option became difficult.

## 6. What if the economic circumstances of the country and Ondina’s family background were different?

Given the configuration that the three dimensions we present here have taken on, Ondina Pires has chosen to give up her career in independent

and experimental music. Today she is a secondary school English teacher and a translator. Although she remains a music lover with an attentive and reflective view on the current national and international musical scenes, she no longer plays an active role in the sphere of musical creation. In fact, from an artistic point of view she has dedicated herself essentially to writing and to the fine arts, without these ever having been assumed as a viable professional option.

However, if the economic context experienced by Ondina and, even more importantly, if her family socioeconomic background were different, she would have been able to pursue her artistic career until today, without the need to dedicate herself to another profession. This means that if Ondina had belonged to a higher social strata this would have functioned as a safety net, allowing her to maintain her experimental projects, both in music and in other artistic areas. After a period of artistic work outside the country, today she would live in Portugal and would remain active in terms of musical creation, not only through her personal projects, but also by dedicating herself to the composition of soundtracks.

The importance of this variable - socioeconomic background - has been identified by several national and international researches. In general, these studies argue that the family background of these actors, that is, their class origin is an enhancing element of their involvement in sustainable artistic careers [23, 24]. The ability of social actors from privileged backgrounds to use family economic resources is fundamental in insulating them from much of the precariousness and uncertainty associated with their career [25].

In the Portuguese case, Guerra [1, 26, 27], Abreu et al [28] and Oliveira [29] also confirm the importance of class background for pursuing careers in the alternative rock, punk and independent music scene. The research they have

conducted shows that, for the most part, the protagonists of these music scenes belong to a middle and educated class associated with liberal professions in artistic, intellectual or scientific fields. At the same time, they reveal that this advantage in terms of economic, social and educational capital was already present in the families of origin, since in most cases they have a higher level of education than the majority of the Portuguese population and belong to the middle or upper classes. There are few exceptions to this framework.

## 7. Future Perspectives: the past that got away

This data leads us to argue that if Ondina had possessed a similar safety net, her trajectory would have been different. As such, an alternate chronology should depart from that specific divergence and explore the new hypothetical past, or alternative personal history, of Ondina, and contrast it with other artists that had no such economic constraint. Furthermore, that could also be cross-referenced with the ‘gender’ dimension, i.e. indie female vs indie male artistic careers, and the matter question of the Portuguese language as an obstacle to success for indie artists, either in the Lusophone context or otherwise.

However, it is not feasible to do that sustained analysis and alternate chronology construction within a single work. The present article extensively reviewed and discussed three dimensions that affect the construction of an alternate chronology for Ondina Pires, as indeed they affected her path. It also clarifies which aspects from those dimensions can substantiate alternate chronological divergences that not only probe a path where she was able to follow with success and artistic career but can allow transversal analysis regarding the artistic paths of other Portuguese and Lusophone indie musicians. Due to the dimensions presented, the analysis of their scope

and depth can be a valuable resource for other research studies, from areas that approach cultural, sociological and historical studies.

## 8. Conclusions

The analysis carried out shows us that, in the different dimensions here discussed, the context experienced by Ondina did not allow her to *be a heroine for more than one day*. At least in order to ensure the economic viability of her musical and artistic trajectory. But everything could have been different if Portugal had not lived through 40 years of dictatorship which were also 40 years of economic, social and cultural closure with strong impacts that are still felt today in the attitudes and behaviours that shape Portuguese society. And, perhaps of greater importance for Ondina’s trajectory, everything could have been different if her family background had been socioeconomically more favourable. Under these conditions, Ondina would have continued her career in music and other artistic languages, in the experimental sphere, making it her main professional activity.

## 9. Round Table Insight

Our oral presentation and interaction with peers and audience during the Second International Meeting of ‘What if?...’ World History’s round table have enriched the reflection exercise we had already started when preparing our intervention. More specifically, they helped us to deepen and develop the analytical axes that we had previously identified. At the same time, it was extremely interesting to have a comparative perspective, in terms of the ethics and DIY experience, from a European country that, unlike Portugal, did not experience a period of dictatorship. This concrete aspect made us reflect more strongly on the intense vestiges, on the strong marks that this period continues to have in Portuguese society, in the most different spheres, almost fifty years after

the Carnation Revolution. Also, in this interaction, the importance of seeing artistic and/or intellectual work repaid by those looking for it was underlined. Professor Samuel Etienne pointed out this principle by presenting his French scientific fanzine *Zines*. Any and all work must be paid in order to provide for the subsistence of those who do it. This principle is of a moral and ethical order.

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