
HoST - Journal of History of Science and Technology
Vol. 13, no. 2, December 2019, pp. 142-148
10.2478/host-2019-0017

WORK IN PROGRESS

The National Institute for Scientific Research (INIC): Pathway and Influence in Portuguese Science Policy (1976-1992)

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Abstract: My Ph.D research project aims at writing the history of the Portuguese National Institute for Scientific Research (*Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica*, INIC) (1976-92). Although INIC is an important institutional actor in the development of the Portuguese scientific system, it has been mostly absent from the history of the Portuguese institutions of science policy. INIC was founded after the Carnation Revolution of 25 April 1974 in a context in which institutional coordination of scientific research had already become a priority. The political instability of the post-revolutionary period, together with the expansion of the scientific system, resulted in institutional tensions and conflicts involving the scientific community, the higher education community, and other institutions tangent to INIC, that led to its extinction in 1992. Based on INIC's archive and complemented by secondary sources and interviews, this project proposes to bring this institution into the historical narrative of the Portuguese institutions of science policy.

Keywords: Science policy; organization of science; history of scientific institutions; history of science; public policies

INIC, a forgotten history

The Portuguese National Institute for Scientific Research (*Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica*, INIC) was created on July 1976, under the tutelage of the Ministry of Finance and Planning in the aftermath of the Carnation Revolution (25 April 1974), which ended the right wing dictatorship *Estado Novo* (1933-74). It doubled as a scientific institution, through its research units, and as coordinator of the national science policy, particularly regarding research at universities.¹ Although it was a new institution, INIC inherited most of its mission, structure, and staff from the Institute of High Culture (*Instituto de Alta Cultura*, IAC). IAC, in turn, was the last structure of a long institutional lineage that originated in 1926, holding a wide range of competencies related to the coordination and funding of science *and* the promotion of Portuguese culture and language. After the fall of the dictatorship, this lineage was not interrupted but it was reshaped: IAC was renamed Institute of Portuguese Culture (*Instituto de Cultura Portuguesa*, ICAP), retaining the Portuguese language and culture promotion component; the science-related mission originated a new institution, INIC.

At the beginning, INIC integrated 100 research units and 300 research fellows; with the decolonization process (1974-75) (which followed the Carnation Revolution), it also incorporated the research units that were under the tutelage of the Overseas Provinces Research Board (*Junta de Investigações Científicas do Ultramar*, JICU). INIC gave continuity to most of IAC's mission statement and practices,² maintaining the autonomy of the research units: even though most research units and staff were located within universities, sharing spaces and participating in the academic life, they still enjoyed administrative and scientific independence. This situation was welcomed by the researchers but was strongly criticized by the universities and remained a source of tension until INIC was extinct and the research units were put under the tutelage of the hosting universities.

In Portuguese historiography, INIC is essentially a non-history, built mostly in relation to and through its dynamics with parallel institutions, namely the National Board of Scientific and Technological Research (*Junta Nacional de Investigação Científica e Tecnológica*, JNICT) and the National Laboratory for Engineering and Industrial Technology (*Laboratório Nacional de Engenharia e Tecnologia Industrial*, LNETI). Very little attention has been paid to INIC and rarely in detail. This fact is intriguing, as the assessment of its results is impressive: in 1988, at the peak of INIC's activity, there were over 4300 researchers under its wing, distributed by 125 research units and, during the 16 years of its existence, INIC funded over two thousand

¹ “Decreto n.º 538/76 de 9 de Julho dos Ministérios da Administração Interna, das Finanças e da Educação e Investigação Científica,” *Diário da República* I Série, no. 159 (1976): 1508–12.

² Luísa Henriques, “The Dynamics of a National System of Innovation and the Role of the Non-Profit Space: Portugal as a Research Laboratory” (PhD diss., École Nationale Supérieure des Mines; Universidade Técnica de Lisboa. Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestão, 2006), 115–22.

master and Ph.D. scholarships in Portugal, and over six hundred scholarships abroad, not to mention various indirect forms of support, such as publishing and travel grants.³

When, in 1988, JNICT was restructured, becoming a de facto funding agency,⁴ it stepped directly over the competences of INIC. JNICT had a very different genesis: it was created in the late period of the dictatorship (1967), strongly entangled with the political power, being brought into being *directly under* the President of the Council,⁵ António de Oliveira Salazar, by the influence of Francisco Leite Pinto, a man of science and of the regime.⁶ It was the first Portuguese institution featuring the term “science policy” in its mission and it would not only survive the revolution but strive under the democratic regime, especially after the integration of Portugal in the European Economic Community (1986). It started by having a very distinct function of its IAC counterpart, not as a funding agency but on the level of planning and coordination. Like INIC, it also lacked political support to fully enact its function of science coordinator, hopping over several ministries as the governments switched. It was, however, very successful in assessing the Portuguese scientific system, assuring the Portuguese participation in several international bilateral bodies (OTAN, OECD, UNESCO, and European Science Foundation) and, probably most important of all, it was able to bring together the scientific community on several instances, such as the meetings “Simpósio Nacional de Ciência e Tecnologia para o Desenvolvimento” in 1979, and the “Jornadas Nacionais de Investigação Científica e Tecnológica” in 1987.

The relevance of JNICT in the development of the Portuguese Scientific System is historically and institutionally acknowledged.⁷ Thus, it is central to this project the study of INIC’s role in this process and to understand the institutional dynamics that led to its sudden demise in 1992, being outlived by the JNICT, which inherited INIC’s remaining competencies. For this purpose, I will present a INIC-centered narrative, addressing its role as part of a larger institutional ecosystem, unveiling its life, conflicts, demise and extinction, as well as the possible reason beneath the institutional amnesia that casted a shadow over INIC.

This research project will also strive to trace INIC’s institutional lineage, as well as to describe its agency mainly concerning the management of institutional spaces that overlaid with other

³ INIC, *Relatório do Instituto Nacional de Investigação Científica: 1987-1988* (Lisboa: INIC, 1989).

⁴ “Decreto-Lei n.º 374/88 de 21 de Outubro do Ministério do Planeamento e da Administração do Território,” *Diário da República* I Série, no. 244 (1988): 4288–97.

⁵ “Decreto-Lei n.º 47 791 da Presidência do Conselho,” *Diário do Governo* I Série, no. 160 (1967): 1337–42.

⁶ Beatriz Ruivo, *A Génese da Criação da JNICT* (Lisboa: Sinapis Editores, 2016).

⁷ The current public agency supporting science, Foundation for Science and Technology (Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, FCT), situates itself as successor of JNICT, <https://www.fct.pt/20anos> (accessed on October 4, 2019).

institutions. In this sense, INIC will be looked at as a “*mediator*,”⁸ in the methodological sense of the Actor-Network Theory, i.e., an actor able to set territories, strategies and cross paths with other actors of the Portuguese institutional panorama.

Designing the roadmap for the narrative: theoretical framework, sources and methodologies

The research project is organized in three main stages. The first one is the mapping of the scientific system, both on the level of the scientific institutions and of the science-policy institutions, before, during and immediately after the activity of INIC. This stage doubles as a state of the art, as it will be accomplished mainly by using secondary sources, i.e. the available bibliography on the history of the *Estado Novo* regime scientific institutions of science and science policy.

The second stage will focus on INIC’s institutional history and will be heavily built on its rich archive, which is the central source of this project. INIC’s archive is part of the Archive of Science and Technology (ACT), at the Foundation for Science and Technology.⁹ It is composed of 272 linear meters of documents, grouped in around 10,000 folders. From these, around 80 percent consists of personal files, mostly related to individual Ph.D. funding, and 10 percent are research units’ processes, containing administrative elements and miscellaneous communications between the unit and INIC; and finally, there is INIC’s internal documentation itself - administration minutes, reports, accounting and various types of correspondence. The ACT also lodges two other archives, which conveniently complement this research: (i) JNICT’s archive, essential to assess the relationship between INIC and JNICT, as well as to thoroughly understand and explain the integration of INIC into JNICT; and (ii) the personal archive of Roldão Dias Agudo, who was president of the INIC from 1980 to 1983.

Additionally, I will also make use of IAC’s archive. It is preserved at the Historical Archive of the Camões Institute and offers information regarding the Portuguese scientific system, preceding INIC, as well as details of the transition from IAC to INIC, as for example, the technical personnel transfer. In a complementary way, insights regarding the discussions taking place at state, public and legislative levels will also be analysed, respectively at the Historical Parliament Archive, newspapers and National Television archives, and the Official

⁸ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social: An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Oxford University Press (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁹ Maria Fernanda Rollo, Paula Meireles, Madalena Ribeiro, and Tiago Brandão, “História e Memória da Ciência e da Tecnologia em Portugal. O Arquivo de Ciência e Tecnologia da Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia,” *Boletim do Arquivo da Universidade de Coimbra* 25 (2012): 233–261.

State Gazette of Portugal (*Diário da República*).

The third and final stage moves away from archives and takes advantage of the fact that it is still possible to interview some of the actors of INIC's history. In this context, I will conduct semi-directive interviews, mixing the methodologies from Sociology and Oral History.¹⁰ The choice of the interviewees is based on the information collected during the first and second stages and on their availability from a set of individuals who either took direct part of INIC's institutional life and other cohort institutions or that were at some sort of vantage point, either upstream or downstream, e.g. state institutions or scientific research institutions. This particular element of research has the potential to contribute to other ongoing or future projects and I intend to make it integrally available to the public, using an online platform, complying to all ethic norms.

Regarding the theoretical framework, the historiography on science and technology policy is vast. Two references should be highlighted: the *journal Science and Public Policy* and the edited volume *The science of Science Policy: A Handbook*.¹¹ This edited volume holds a great variety of articles, allowing the positioning of this project in the international field of science policy studies. Directly relevant for my project is the concept of "*Institutional Ecosystem*," used by Daniel Sarewitz¹² to describe the complex dynamics between scientific institutions and the use of science in society, useful to assess the diversity of possible paths within specific contexts. The concept of "*social contract of science*," proposed by David Guston¹³ will also be relevant from a methodological perspective, as it describes the relationship between science and the state, producing nuanced narratives about science and political power, which I deem critical to look at the creation of INIC in the context of the transition from the dictatorship to the democratic regime.

Portuguese historiography on this subject is recent. Excluding the celebratory accounts or memories, the works by Beatriz Ruivo¹⁴ on the evolution of the Portuguese research system, and of Luísa Henriques¹⁵ on the panorama of Portuguese institutions related to science policies during the twentieth century (including the non-profit sector) are the most relevant

¹⁰ Verena Alberti, *Manual de História Oral* (Rio de Janeiro: FGV Editora, 2004); Charles Briggs, "Learning How to Ask," *Language in Society* 13, no. 1 (1985): 1–29; Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2nd ed. (Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, 2005).

¹¹ Kaye Husbands Fealing, Julia I. Lane, John H. Marburger III, and Stephanie S. Shipp, eds., *The Science of Science Policy: A Handbook* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2011).

¹² Daniel Sarewitz, "Institutional Ecology and the Social Outcomes of Scientific Research," in *The Science of Science Policy*, eds. Fealing et al., 337–49.

¹³ David Guston, *Between Politics and Science: Assuring the Integrity and Productivity of Research* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁴ Beatriz Ruivo, *As Políticas de Ciência e Tecnologia e o Sistema de Investigação* (Lisboa: INCM, 1998).

¹⁵ Henriques, "The Dynamics of a National System of Innovation."

to this research. Henrique's dissertation also features a rare and elaborate account on INIC and its lineage, that served as a primer for this project. More recently, historical studies on other institutions¹⁶ were published; for my work, those by Tiago Brandão¹⁷, on JNICT, are particularly relevant.

Final remarks

This is a work in progress and several stages have been fulfilled. The secondary sources related to the science-policy institutions in Portugal were assessed, especially those related to the post-1974 period, a step essential to the understanding of the existing profiles, functions, and contributions to the agenda for research and development. The main primary source, the INIC Archive, has been thoroughly examined and a significant amount of relevant documentation has been digitized, according to the preliminary nuclei of interest: Annual Reports, Executive Commission Minutes, Research Unit Processes and Research Fellow Processes. During the investigation several smaller nuclei were added to the project: *Conta de Gerência*,¹⁸ through which a quantitative analysis the effect of INIC in scientific practice can be assessed; and, at the JNICT Archive, documentation related to the transition of 1992 that will allow for better understanding of the relation between the institutions and the effects of the extinction of the INIC on the funding of Research Units. In this context, four cases particularly complex and tense will be analyzed: ITQB, Interdisciplinary Complex I, Interdisciplinary Complex II and the Lisbon Astronomical Observatory. These sources were also able to identify several individuals, who are still able to provide statements, strengthening the Oral History component of this project.

When I complete this project, I expect not only to guarantee a place for INIC in the historiography of science institutions, but also to contribute to a better understanding of the current shape of the Portuguese scientific system acknowledging it not as an inevitability, but a result of a dynamic institutional ecosystem that disappeared with the extinction of INIC.

¹⁶ Quintino Lopes, "A Junta de Educação Nacional (1929/36). Traços de *europização* na investigação científica em Portugal" (PhD diss., Universidade de Évora, 2017); Paulo Jorge Vicente, "A Comissão INVOTAN. Políticas e Internacionalismo Científicos na década de 1950" (Master's thesis, Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, 2012).

¹⁷ Tiago Brandão, "A Junta Nacional de Investigação Científica e Tecnológica (1967-1974). Organização da Ciência e Política Científica em Portugal" (PhD diss., Universidade NOVA de Lisboa, 2012); Tiago Brandão, "A Formação da JNICT e a Política Científica no período pós-Abril," in *40 Anos de Políticas de Ciência e de Ensino Superior*, eds. Manuel Heitor and Maria de Lurdes Rodrigues, 187–234 (Lisboa: Almedina, 2015).

¹⁸ Folders containing various types of expenses documentation.

Furthermore, I believe that these narratives, besides historically valuable, have the potential to contribute to the self-knowledge/identity of the Portuguese scientific community and, even, to inform future political decisions regarding the future of the scientific research system.