

Exploratory Workshop Scheme

Standing Committee for the Humanities (SCH)

ESF Exploratory Workshop on

Looking at Iberia from a Comparative European Perspective: Literature, Narration and Identity

Lisbon (Portugal), 12-15 October 2011

Convened by: Santiago Pérez Isasi and Ángela Fernandes

SCIENTIFIC REPORT





Index

Index	2
Executive summary	3
Scientific content of the event	5
Results, outcomes and future activities	8
Final programme	10
Final list of participants	13
Statistical information on participants	16





Executive summary

The ESF Exploratory Workshop "Looking at Iberia from a Comparative European Perspective: Literature, Narration and Identity" was held at the Faculty of Arts, University of Lisbon, on October 13th and 14th, 2011. The twenty-one participants, coming from eleven European countries (see List of Participants for details), arrived in Lisbon on Wednesday, October 12th, and left on Saturday, October 15th. All invited scholars did come to the meeting, and the workshop was also attended by the ESF Representative, Petter Aaslestad, and by Rita Reis, the post-graduate student from the University of Lisbon who worked as local organizer.

Participants were accommodated in a hotel near the University (10 minute travel, by subway), and could meet at the arranged welcome dinner on the very evening of arrival. General atmosphere was immediately cheerful and friendly. During the following days, coffee-breaks and meals were privileged occasions for informal interaction: lunches were provided on campus; dinners were arranged at selected restaurants, close to the hotel on Thursday, and by the river Tagus, on Friday.

The workshop was planned for two days, with three round-tables and one final session of summing-up and discussion in each day (cf. the "Final Programme", below). The round-tables brought together either three or four papers on related topics, and included a rather long period of discussion after the presentations (45 to 60 minutes). Participants were generally very respectful of the time accorded to their talks, and the timetable was carefully followed throughout the meeting, allowing time for vivid and challenging debate in all sessions.

The working language of the Workshop was English, and most papers were delivered and discussed in this language. However, for the sake of convenience, three scholars made their presentations in Spanish and one in Portuguese. Since the Iberian languages were the mother tongues of most participants, and considering the literary texts and the cultural contexts analyzed belonged to this linguistic universe, debate occasionally swayed between English and Spanish, and sometimes also Portuguese and Catalan. Above all, the convenors made all efforts to assure general understanding and communication, and tried to make sure the participants were feeling comfortable and willing to engage in discussion, despite being more or less fluent in English.

This Exploratory Workshop aimed at analyzing some of the key issues regarding contemporary Iberian Studies from a comparative European perspective, by creating a privileged space for dialogue, debate and networking between distinguished experts in different aspects of Iberian literature, history and culture. More precisely, the Workshop focused on the concept of Iberia itself: its scientific accuracy; its validity as a starting point for scientific and academic work; its relation with other, more established terms, concepts and identities (such as Spanish, Portuguese, Catalan, Basque or Galician, but also Romance, European or Western identities); and, more specifically, its relation with the mythical, historical or literary narratives constructed to support such collective identities, and their inter-dependency, conflicts, overlapping, similarities and contradictions.

All interventions (as explained in detail in the "Scientific Content of the Event", below) dealt with this general theme of the Workshop, although, as the meeting progressed, a series of topics of interest and debate were identified as our core themes and future areas of study. Among them, we may mention: the methodological and theoretical location of Iberian Studies; issues of identity and representation within a plurilingual, multicultural Iberia; the image of Iberia as a complex cultural space, as viewed from the inside and from the outside, with special attention to the relations between Iberia and the rest of Europe; and Iberia as a space in translation, showing a continuous process of self- or mutual transformation.





The overall conclusions of the Workshop, which will be further explained in the chapter on "Results, outcomes and future activities" in this report, consisted in the affirmation of the existence of a specific (even if not altogether recognized) field of Iberian Studies, within the broader field of Comparative Literature or Comparative Cultural Studies. Moreover, it was stressed the relevance of conceiving a set of tools, concepts and methodologies to treat Iberian cultural interrelations, which could be then applied to other areas of Europe or to the idea of Europe itself. Finally, the Workshop participants agreed on the determined decision of exploring and widening this field further with future activities directly derived from this meeting, such as publications, networks and projects.





Scientific content of the event

The meeting began on Thursday morning with a short welcome session, during which the Convenors presented the topic and aims of the workshop, and made the acknowledgments to both the ESF and the local host institutions; the Director of the Centre for Comparative Studies and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts from the University of Lisbon attended this session and stressed the importance of the event, and of scientific collaboration at an European level. Then, the ESF representative, Peter Aaslestad, had the occasion to present the European Science Foundation and explain the main objectives and tasks of the Standing Committee for the Humanities.

During the two days of meeting, there were six round-tables, bringing together three to four papers on related topics, and two sessions of summing-up and discussion at the end of each day (Cf. the Final Programme, below).

On Thursday morning, Round-table I was dedicated to delve into the problems of "Iberian Studies and their theoretical context". Santiago Pérez Isasi (University of Lisbon, PT) started with an overall view of the field of Iberian Studies, revising tentative definitions and sketching a "state of the art", which showed the growing interest in recent years for this area of research (through publications, scientific meetings and academic associations). He finally mentioned the need of institutional recognition, structured networking and deeper reflection about the epistemological location and the political implications of Iberian Studies - this ESF exploratory workshop aiming at meeting all these needs. Then, Jüri Talvet (University of Tartu, EE) proposed a reflection on contemporary problems of Comparative Literary Studies, noticing some lack of theoretical reflection on the complex contacts between literary phenomena. He stressed the need of some renewed perspectives on translation practices, especially when considering texts from very distant historical and/or linguistic contexts; this may be crucial when envisaging the European diffusion of the Iberian literary heritage. The last talk was by Maria Fernanda de Abreu (New University of Lisbon, PT), who discussed the concept of Iberia as "an identitarian mega-frame" whose "singularity" has been shaped in both historiographical and literary discourses, in Portugal and Spain, especially since the 19th century. She described this process of building an Iberian identity, facing both the inner diversity of the Peninsula and the wider European context, as the consequence of "an anxiety of difference" (towards the outside) and "an anxiety of unity" (towards the inside). This complex process was immediately commented in the subsequent discussion, which highlighted the need of a comparative approach to Iberian issues.

After the coffee-break, Round-table II brought together papers on "The Iberian Peninsula as a Cultural Space". Cristina Almeida Ribeiro (University of Lisbon, PT) started with the quest of the concept of Iberia in late medieval and early modern times, coming to the conclusion that there is no trace of the perception, then, of such a geographical or cultural unity. Nevertheless, she noticed the constitution of common frames of reference within medieval Iberian cultures, which ask nowadays for a new analysis from an Iberian point of view. Leonardo Romero Tobar (University of Zaragoza, ES) presented, then, the main aspects of Juan Valera's theory of Iberism, in late 19th century. The discrepancies between Valera's private and public writings in what concerns the project of an Iberian political union show both the inner contradictions of Iberism and the deep literary and artistic background of this movement. Finally, John Macklin (University of Glasgow, UK) proposed a new look on Iberian modernisms, taking into account contemporary cultural and ideological concerns. He argued that this revision of modernisms, as multiple and complex processes, may be a touchstone to a more accurate study of the intertwined processes of artistic production, cultural dissemination and political debate in complex cultural spaces such as Iberia. The following discussion stressed the literary dimension of Iberian inner relations, thus noticing the strong and ancient artistic basis of Iberia as a cultural space.





In the afternoon, Round-table III dealt with "The Construction of Iberian Identities". Derek Flitter (University of Exeter, UK) talked about the opposition between north and south as a key motive in Romantic identitarian discourses developed in the Peninsula. Juan M. Ribera Llopis (University Complutense of Madrid, ES) focused on the discourses about the Catalan linguistic and literary regeneration produced by Castalian authors from 1877 until 1939, and identified a general process of neutralization of any Catalan difference. Helena Buffery (University College Cork, IE) analyzed the importance of translation and self-translation in the process of revival and re-definition of Catalan culture since the 1970s. She argued that, being Iberia a multilingual zone, the attention to translation practices enables a deeper insight into the dominant moves towards collective (self)identification and (self)recognition, and this may be one of the most relevant fields of research in Iberian studies. Maria Graciete Besse (University of Paris IV Sorbonne, FR) presented a reading of Portuguese reconfigurations of Iberism during the 19th and 20th centuries, taking as her theoretical frame Eduard Glissant's concept of Relation. She noticed that most literary representations of Iberian inter-relations seem to sway between utopian views of a future peninsular union and the repetition of national identitarian commonplaces, thus building a conceptual opacity that actually makes all dialogue impossible. During the discussion, it was mostly stressed how Iberian Studies must deal with this difficult guestioning of both internal "specific" identities and a rather diffused common Iberian identity.

The last session of the day was dedicated to sum-up the issues dealt with during the first three roundtables. The convenors made a summary of the main ideas put forward by the participants, and they all also engaged in this final discussion. It was generally agreed that the rationale of Iberian Studies may be described as the constitution of a new way of looking at the Iberian complex, based on comparative methodologies, and thus aiming at overcoming binary structures as well as any sort of established frontiers. Iberian Studies deal with the cultural and artistic representations of a multiple-layered space, with a long and complex history. It is beyond doubt that more (and renewed) research needs to be done in order to bring to light not only the Iberian complexity but also the relation of the Iberian case to global contemporary phenomena.

The second day of the Workshop, Friday, October 14th, started with **Round-table IV**, dedicated to the analysis of "Iberian Literatures, Spaces and Identities". Craig Patterson (University of Cardiff, UK) presented "a postcolonial reading" of the Galician nationalist author Rodríguez Castelao, examining his ideas upon racial identity and suggesting he voices a specific discourse about the Other that should be placed within a wider context of exile and diaspora writing. Crina Voinea (Ovidius University of Constanta, RO) discussed the concept of "acorianidade"; she focused on the literature from the Portuguese archipelago of the Azores and wondered about the constitution of a regional and insular literary identity. Jaume Subirana (Open University of Catalonia, ES) talked about the work of contemporary young Catalan novelists, stressing how they question in their fictions, in a new and complex way, the possible identity of the Catalan-speaking lands, as immigration and global diaspora became crucial aspects of 21st century Catalonia. Finally, Jon Kortazar (University of the Basque Country, ES) proposed his reading of Bilbao-New York-Bilbao, the 2008 novel by the Basque author Kirmen Uribe. He argued that this novel offers a "post-national" perspective on identity extraterritoriality and trans-nationality being the key elements in this new kind of national identification. The following discussion emphasized the contemporary trend towards the literary questioning of regional "specificities", which, in the Iberian frame, allows for a more global and relational outlook.

Round-table V took place after the morning break, bringing together papers on the "Representation(s) of Iberia". Ângela Fernandes (University of Lisbon, PT) proposed a reflection upon the place of the Iberian cultural identity within the Romance world, remembering the status of the Peninsula as a borderline location since the time it was part of the Roman Empire. She argued that the historical role of Iberia as the Western margin of Europe makes it a privileged scenery in the literary representation of cultural crossroads. Pál Ferenc (Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, HU) explained how the image of Portugal and the Portuguese history was widespread in Hungary during the 19th century thanks to the reading of the Portuguese epic poem *The Lusiads*, by Camões. The literary representation of the Portuguese people offered then an important model in central Europe. Esther Gimeno Ugalde (University of Viena, AU) presented a panorama of contemporary Iberian cinema, noticing that there





seems to be a growing interest in films that represent the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Peninsula. She mentioned several recent films that reflect Iberian multilingualism, and considered worth analyzing the relation between the language choice in film productions, often sponsored by regional institutions, and the will to consolidate local identities. In the end of this round-table, the main topic of debate was the role of language in the "national" identification of artistic works, which becomes an especially controversial issue in the Iberian multilingual world. The linguistic criterion was described as one important aspect involved in the definition of "nationality" in art, but also depending on the kind of artistic production to be considered.

After lunch, we had Round-table VI, dedicated to discuss "Iberia in/from Europe". Gabriel Magalhães (University of Beira Interior, PT) presented a reflection on the implications of Iberian comparative studies for European studies, stressing the importance of the Peninsula, as a complex cultural crossroads, in the so much necessary rediscovering of the "hidden life of Europe". Teresa Pinheiro (Chemnitz University of Technology, DE) discussed the concept of Area Studies and examined its potentialities for Iberian and European Studies, as these new epistemological fields seem to be emerging in recent years. She pointed out the cross-cultural and comparative perspective that may hence be privileged, eschewing traditional national focus and opening up new possibilities of analysis of a broader range of social and artistic discourses. Roberto Vecchi (University of Bologna, IT) argued for a revision of the traditional outlook towards Iberian "specificities". Evoking Gramsci's reflection on the "South", he proposed a new vision of Iberia(s) as a relational concept, which may also help a more comprehensive reconfiguration of the European-self. César Domínguez (University of Santiago de Compostela, ES) explored the connections between the concepts of Iberian, European and World literatures. He stressed the importance of further research into the dynamics of literary edition, translation, teaching and canon formation, in order to clarify the political and cultural transfers that have occurred and keep occurring within the Peninsula and between Iberia, Europe, and a broader worldwide context. All these reflections about the place and the importance of Iberia within contemporary and future Europe were then debated among the participants. Being a privileged crossroads, in space and time. Iberia asks today for a new approach and hints at a new concept of cultural community, where more complex (and eventually weaker) bonds demand for a stronger and more conscious commitment from all those belonging to it.

In the very last session of discussion, the convenors summed-up the main topics dealt with during the two days, and presented some ideas for follow-up activities, inviting final remarks both from the participants and the ESF representative. All conclusions, as emerged from this final session, are described in the next section from this report.





Results, outcomes and future activities

The results and future outcomes of this ESF Exploratory Workshop can be described from two different perspectives: on the one hand, and from the point of view of the scientific conformation of the field of Iberian Studies, this Workshop has resulted in the identification of some of the key issues that need to be further researched in future stages; on the other hand, from a practical and organizational point of view, the Workshop has allowed us to delineate some future actions that will hopefully strengthen and consolidate this field.

Scientific results of the workshop

Being an "Exploratory Workshop" which dealt precisely with the constitution and scientific foundations of a new scientific field, it was not this meeting's main objective to provide definitive answers to the key questions involved, but rather to identify and clarify those same questions, and to spot some key aspects of the field that will become the core of future investigations.

These are some of the areas that should (and will) be considered in the future:

- a) Iberian Studies within the European context: theoretical and methodological definitions
 - After these two days of discussion, it became evident that there are still in fact literary phenomena that need to be studied from an Iberian perspective (multilingual authors, plural identities, frontier cases); but also that, in fact, an Iberian point of view can be applied with promising results to an even wider set of phenomena, some of which have traditionally been considered from a monolingual, national(ist) perspective. It was also agreed that Iberian Studies should be regarded, at least within the frame of this network, as belonging to Comparative Cultural Studies, in relation with the latest European approaches to Area Studies. In other words, they grow on the base of Comparative Literary Studies, but encompass a wider scope of objects and cultural phenomena such as art, history, journalism or cinema. The critical, methodological and theoretical tools and frames developed for and within this Iberian context may therefore be reusable for other fields and geographical areas, thus contributing to a redefinition of Comparative Literature and a better understanding of the construction and representation of plural and multilingual identities through art and literature.
- b) Iberia as a cultural space: historical and contemporary perspectives
 - This study of Iberian literatures as a multilingual, unitary but complex system demands a tentative definition of Iberia itself: Iberia should not and cannot be considered as a closed or isolated cultural space, but rather as a rhizome of internal and external relations; it is a complex "semiosphere" which creates multiple centers and peripheries, insularities and exiles, but which also has a strong internal coherence and cohesion that allows for its unitary consideration as a scientific object. This conception of Iberia as a cultural "space" should simultaneously be complemented by the addition of a chronological axis: while some periods of Iberian cultural and literary history (namely the 'Golden Ages' and the turn of the 19th-20th centuries), have already started to be studied from this Iberian point of view, others, such as the Middle Ages or the 18th century, still lack research works that approach them from such perspective.
- c) Identity and Representation

It became clear from the very first discussions that it is imperative for Iberian Studies to avoid the temptation of creating a new mythological or ontological definition of Iberia, based on ideas of specificity or exotism. Instead, a vision of a complex cultural poli-system emerged, in which any discourse should be considered within its cultural and institutional context of production, and in relation with the difference(s) that it includes, eludes, hides or represents. It should also be remembered that Iberia (i.e., Iberian writers and scholars) looks at itself and compares itself with the external *other* (in many cases, Europe), just as much as this European *other* looks at Iberia and defines it; and both looks (the external and the internal) are mutually interconnected, in ways that are still to be researched and understood.





d) Translation as a subject and as a tool

Although not one of the original key issues in the programme, after the discussions the topic of translation, both as a research object and as a methodological tool, became apparent as one of the fundamental areas that needs to be worked further and which has the potential to integrate different views, objects and, of course, linguistic areas within Iberia. Translation Studies (in its linguistic, but even more so in its cultural sense) deal with issues of power and representation, difference and identity which are at the very core of Iberian Studies too: translating texts, in the widest sense of the word, from one Iberian culture to another can be considered as a tool for integration, but also as an act of aggression, assimilation or submission, depending on the specific ways in which these processes are implemented.

Future actions related to Iberian Studies

As a result of the ESF Exploratory Workshop, and especially during the last session specifically devoted to the discussion of "Follow-up activities", a series of actions and strategies were designed to further develop the field of Iberian Studies, and to keep the momentum gained during the meeting.

Some of these actions are immediate and are already being carried out; others are to be developed in later stages. These actions include:

- a) The creation of an e-mailing list devoted to the discussion of topics related to Iberian Studies. This list is for now a closed and private list intended as an organizational tool for the group, but it has the potential to be transformed into a wider or even general way to disseminate news and initiatives related to the field of Iberian Studies. (Already implemented)
- b) The formation of an institutional and formal network between European researchers, centers and departments, which will strengthen and give visibility to the informal and personal networks already created with this Workshop. (To be developed in later stages)
- c) The implementation of a website to unify sources, events and information regarding Iberian Studies, which could be used both as a communication tool and as a tool to give visibility to this network. (To be developed in later stages)
- d) The preparation of the following publications:
 - 1. A monographic volume consisting on the "adapted proceedings" of the meeting. This volume will not simple include the texts read by the participants during the Workshop, but a reformulated and reworked version which will include the suggestions and contributions of other participants. To ensure this, a system of work-groups or peerreviews will be created among the participants in the Workshop and contributors to the volume. (Already under development)
 - 2. A basic text-book on "Iberian Studies", which could be used both as a reference book for teachers of Iberian Studies worldwide, and as a tool for the field to gain visibility both in the academic and the scientific world. (To be developed in later stages)
 - 3. An "Iberian Studies reader" containing basic texts which propose, question, deny or problematize the existence of Iberia as a cultural or literary space; these texts could be both literary and scholarly texts of all ages. (To be developed in later stages)
- e) The development of specific projects and sub-projects within the field of Iberian Studies, to be submitted to competitive funding calls both at national and international level. The announcement of a Pre-Call of the Joint Research Programme of the HERA Network (<u>http://www.heranet.info/news/new-trans-european-humanities-funding-opportunity</u>), with the topic "Cultural Encounters", appears to be an opportunity for Iberian Studies with an European perspective.





Final programme

Wednesday, 12th October 2011

Arrival of all participants in Lisbon Welcome dinner for participants

Thursday, 13th October 2011

09.30-09.45	Welcome by Convenors Santiago Pérez Isasi / Ângela Fernandes
09.45-10.00	Presentation of the European Science Foundation (ESF) Petter Aaslestad (Standing Committee for the Humanities, SCH)
10.00-11.30	Round Table I - Iberian Studies and their Theoretical Context Chair: Ângela Fernandes
10.00-10.15	"Iberian Studies: A State of the Art and Future Perspectives" Santiago Pérez Isasi (Universidade de Lisboa, PT)
10.15-10.30	"How to Research Iberian Literatures from a Comparative European Perspective? Premises and Contexts" Jüri Talvet (University of Tartu, EE)
10.30-10.45	"Ibéria, a procura de identidade literária: Uma jangada de pedra?" Maria Fernanda de Abreu (Universidade Nova de Lisboa, PT)
10.45-11.30	Discussion
11.30-12.00	Coffee / Tea Break
12.00-13.30	Round Table II - The Iberian Peninsula as a Cultural Space Chair: César Domínguez
12.00-12.15	"Is there Iberia in Late Medieval and Early Modern Times?" Cristina Almeida Ribeiro (Universidade de Lisboa, PT)
12.15-12.30	"El Iberismo de Valera" Leonardo Romero Tobar (Universidad de Zaragoza, ES)
12.30-12.45	"Modernism and Modernity: Iberian Perspectives" John Macklin (University of Glasgow, UK)
12.45-13.30	Discussion
13.30-15.00	Lunch (on Campus)





15.00-17.00	Round Table III - The Construction of Iberian Identities Chair: Esther Gimeno Ugalde
15.00-15.15	"North and South: Iberian Identity Formation in Romanticism and Post-Romanticism" Derek Flitter (University of Exeter, UK)
15.15-15.30	"Apreciaciones centropeninsulares sobre la regeneración literaria catalana" Juan Miguel Ribera Llopis (Universidad Complutense, Madrid, ES)
15.30-15.45	"Catalonian identity in the 'Translation Zone" Helena Buffery: (University College Cork, IE)
15.45-16.00	"Reconfigurações do Iberismo entre paixão e utopia" Maria Graciete Besse (Université París IV Sorbonne, FR)
16.00-17.00	Discussion
17.00-17.30	Coffee / tea break
17.30-18.30	Conclusions from first day
20.00	Conference dinner

Friday, 14th October 2011

09.30-11.30	Round Table IV – Iberian Literatures, Spaces and Identities Chair: Cristina Almeida Ribeiro
09.30-09.45	"Galician Identity and Race: a Postcolonial Reading of Castelao" Craig Patterson (University of Cardiff, UK)
09.45-10.00	"Açorianidade(s). Identity, narrative, myths" Crina Voinea (Universitatea 'Ovidius' Constanta, RO)
10.00-10.15	"Who are we. Young Catalan Novelists Write about National Identity" Jaume Subirana (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Barcelona, ES)
10.15-10.30	"La novela de Kirmen Uribe y la identidad en sociedades complejas" Jon Kortazar (Universidad del País Vasco, Vitoria, ES)
10.30-11.30	Discussion

11.30-12.00 Coffee / Tea Break





12.00-13.30	Round Table V – Representation(s) of Iberia Chair: John Macklin
12.00-12.15	"Iberian and Romance Identities: The Literary Background" Ângela Fernandes (Universidade de Lisboa, PT)
12.15-12.30	"Do Portuguese Pipe/Toot Merrily – The Image of Portugal, Portuguese History and People in Hungary during the 19 th Century" Pál Ferenc (Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem, Budapest, HU)
12.30-12.45	"Reasserting identities: Iberian Cultures and (Language) Diversity in Contemporary Cinema" Esther Gimeno Ugalde (Universität Wien, AU)
12.45-13.30	Discussion
13.30-15.00	Lunch (on Campus)
15.00-17.00	Round Table VI – Iberia in/from Europe Chair: Santiago Pérez Isasi
15.00-15.15	"Europa, a letra dos números. Do alfa da literatura comparada peninsular ao ómega da literatura europeia comparada" Gabriel Magalhães (Universidade de Beira Interior, Covilhã, PT)
15.15-15.30	"Iberian and European Studies – Archaeology of a New Epistemological Field" Teresa Pinheiro (TU Chemintz, DE)
15.30-15.45	"Thinking from Europe of an Iberian 'South'" Roberto Vecchi (Universitá degli Studi de Bologna, IT)
15.45-16.00	"Literatures in Spain: European Literature, World-literature, World Literature?" César Domínguez (Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, ES)
16.00-17.00	Discussion
17.00-17.30	<i>Coffee / tea break</i>
17.30-19.00	Discussion on follow-up activities
20.00	Conference closing dinner

Saturday, 15th October 2011

Departure of all participants from Lisbon





Final list of participants

Convenors:

Santiago PÉREZ ISASI (PT)

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Ferenc PÁL (HU) Vice-dean for International Affairs ELTE BTK

Craig PATTERSON (UK)

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Dipartimento di LLSM Università degli Studi di Bologna

Crina VOINEA (RO)

Cátedra de Limbi Romanice Facultatea de Litere Universitatea «Ovidius» Constanta



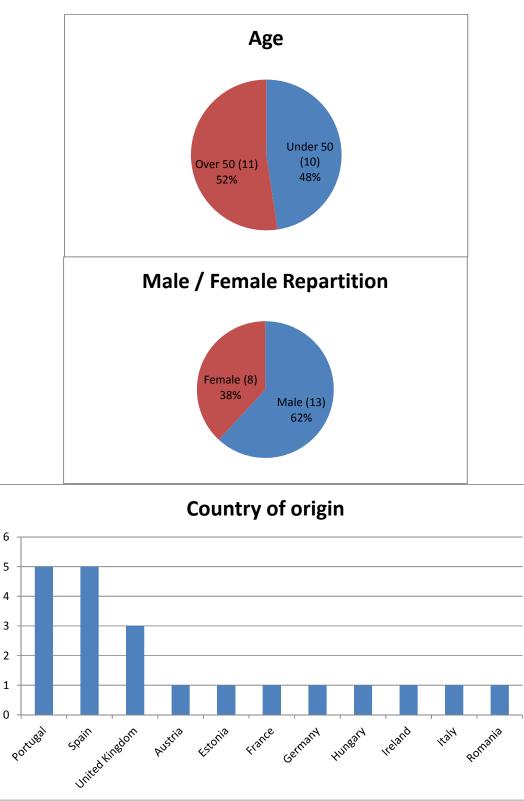


Local Organiser:

Rita REIS (PT) Centro de Estudos Comparatistas Faculdade de Letras Universidade de Lisboa



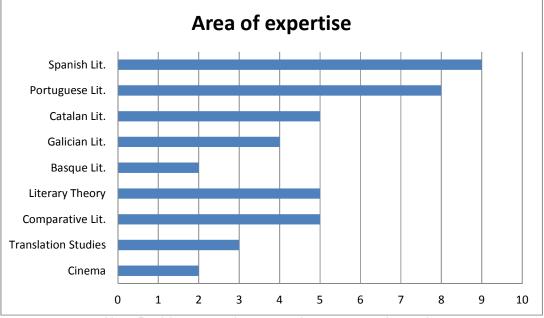




Statistical information on participants







Note: Participants may have more than one area of expertise