

Department of Applied Social Sciences

M. Luísa Sousa

PhD candidate in History
of Technology

CIUHCT, SOCIUS, SHOT,
T2M, and ToE member.
Has articles published and
communications presented in
these areas.



The diffusion of the automobile in Portugal in the 20th century

Centro Interuniversitário de História das Ciências e da
Tecnologia (FCT/UNL) in co-supervision with Université
Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris 3



Objectives

Contribution to the History of Portugal: to work on the **appropriation processes** of the construction of the automobile system in Portugal;

Contribution to Mobility and Transport History in Europe: to **integrate the Portuguese case in the so called peripheral countries**, contributing to a larger view on the construction of the European automobile system, so far centred in economically stronger countries;

Contribution to the History of Technology: to **debate the relations between technology, culture, and society**, inquiring on the role of technology in social transformation, such as cultures of use in a peripheral country as Portugal.

Methodology

Framed in the History of Technology's methodologies, this work privileges a **contextualised approach** of the technological and cultural development, considering the specificities of Portuguese history in this period and its relations with Europe and the unbalances of **centre and periphery relations**.

This analyses is done through the study of the evolution of the **socio-technical system of motorised mobility** (infrastructures/roads; regulation of the circulation/legislation) and of the **role intermediary and institutional actors** had in that process (automobile and touring clubs, State corporatism organisms, road administration, engineers, politicians).

Expected Results

The **political, societal and technical options** of the construction of the system of motorised mobility were influenced by:

- The **"lobby" of a group of private automobilists**, who had close relations to the political regime and an important role in how the system was constructed. An **elitist and leisure use** of the private automobile was therefore favoured.
- The transport policy of **coordination of land transports**: long-range mobility being seen as a prerogative of the railways, rather than of road commercial transport and the failed visions of a **transport's network**.
- The creation of a **Road Administration Board (JAE)** and the training of road **engineers** was essential to the modernisation and planning of Portuguese roads, and materialised the local appropriation of international standards and knowledge.

Funding: Fundação para a Ciência
e a Tecnologia, Ministério da
Educação e Ciência

