# Dissemination of Municipal Events - The case of the City Hall of Paredes

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***Abstract* — The present paper aims to understand how communication and promotion contribute to the success of events organized by municipal councils, with the chosen case study being the Paredes City Council. Nowadays, culture is seen as an essential heritage for communities, as it helps strengthen local identity, brings people together, and stimulates the economy.**

**Municipal authorities have therefore taken on an increasingly important role in cultural promotion, and communication is one of the only ways for them to connect with citizens.**

**In this study, the methods of promotion used by the Paredes City Council to publicize its events were investigated, as well as how these methods vary according to the scale of the events.**

**The work was developed through a theoretical review on public and cultural management and the promotion of municipal events, as well as a practical analysis of the case of**

**Paredes.**

**The methodology used for the case study was qualitative, involving an analysis of data provided by the Paredes City Council. The research reveals that good municipal communication that is clear and accessible is a key factor in engaging people and plays a vital role in supporting local initiatives.**

**However, the study demonstrated that there are still challenges to be overcome, even though municipal communication has evolved significantly. In some cases, there is a lack of a more articulated strategic plan that establishes clear objectives and allows for the evaluation of the real impact of outreach actions. The development of an integrated cultural communication plan with clearly established objectives and a good final evaluation could make the city hall's actions even more effective and consistent.**

**It was evident that there is still room for the adoption of more participatory communication. It is concluded that communication is one of the main factors that, in practical terms, rivals good event organization, and it is what ensures that events become recognized and integrated into the life of the community.**

***Keywords* — Municipal communication; Dissemination; Culture; Paredes**

## I. Introduction

A well-written introduction will provide your study with a In recent years, local authorities have taken on an active role in cultural promotion and in organizing events that enhance the territory, its artistic spaces, and community engagement. However, it is important to understand how cultural activities are communicated and promoted, as institutional communication by municipalities has become a key instrument for strengthening their image and reaching the target audiences of municipal events. In this sense, culture and communication share a common goal of fostering proximity between local government and the community, making public action more visible, transparent, and participatory.

It is within this context that the present dissertation is developed, aiming to analyze the forms of promotion and the communication practices used by the Municipality of Paredes in publicizing its activities. Rather than focusing solely on cultural effectiveness, the study seeks to understand the methods, channels, and practices of dissemination employed, as well as their impact on the promotion of local culture and community engagement.

This topic is particularly relevant at a time when Portuguese local authorities have assumed an increasingly active role in the cultural and communication domains, as a result of a process of administrative decentralization that emphasizes the autonomy of local governance.

## II. Literature Review

Culture is an integral part of life in society. In addition to being a significant element of community identity, culture also contributes to social and economic development. Therefore, cultural policy cannot be considered an isolated action, but rather an integral part of public governance strategies. Cultural policies, like public policies in general, serve to balance the interests of the State, the community, and cultural entities.

According to Jon Pierre (2000), contemporary public administration is more flexible, decentralized, and results-oriented, in contrast to the conventional model. This logic is reflected in current cultural policies, which seek to involve multiple actors (public, private, and civil society) in their design, implementation, and evaluation. For Michael Keaney (2006, cited in Ruth Glass, 2009), culture is a key element in strategies for urban development and social inclusion, as cultural policies tailored to local specificities encourage citizen participation.

In the case of Portugal, the Constitution of the Portuguese Republic establishes culture as a fundamental right, ensuring that “everyone has the right to enjoy and create culture” (Law no. 86/1976, Article 78). In recent years, cultural competences have increasingly been decentralized to local authorities, which are now responsible for providing a substantial part of the cultural offer across the national territory.

The concept of culture is complex and wide-ranging, and it is approached differently across disciplines, historical periods, and schools of thought. This makes its study essential for understanding the various interpretations of the term, which has been examined by numerous scholars, particularly sociologists and anthropologists. Its definition has evolved

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over time, following social, political, and economic changes, as well as transformations in how communities perceive themselves and relate to the world. However, the concept remains non-consensual, and therefore continues to be subject to multiple interpretations and ongoing debate (Oliveira & Alves, 2015).

One of the earliest authors to propose a universalist conception of culture was Edward B. Tylor (1871), who, according to Denys Cuche (1999), is considered the founder of British anthropology. Tylor defined culture as:

"*Culture and Civilization, taken in their broad ethnological sense, constitute a complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, art, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society*." (Tylor, 1871, cited in Cuche, 1999, p. 35)

This definition highlights the breadth of the concept, encompassing all aspects that are socially learned and transmitted. Decades later, Clifford Geertz (1973) redefined culture as:

"*A pattern of meanings transmitted historically, embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge and attitudes toward life*." (Geertz, 1973, p. 66)

Manuel Aguilera (2000) presents several arguments explaining state intervention in the cultural sector, some of which justify why culture cannot be left solely to market forces, thereby highlighting the need for public action. Among the main reasons are:

(1) culture should be given the same importance as any other area of human activity, meaning cultural policy is as important as social, educational, economic, or housing policy;

(2) cultural administration is essential to meet the cultural needs of the population, which, as a universally recognized human right, becomes a responsibility of the State;

(3) state intervention is justified not only by citizens' needs but also by the intrinsic relevance of the sector, which, beyond its economic importance, represents collective heritage, a tool of identity, and a means of social reproduction;

(4) state action is increasingly necessary to limit excesses and correct deficiencies in a sector currently dominated by market forces (López de Aguileta, 2000, pp. 33–34, cited in Reis, n.d., p. 16).

According to Carlos Reis (n.d.), for a cultural policy to be effective, intention alone is not sufficient. It requires conditions created by public administration, such as regulations, planning, budgeting, institutional structures, and qualified personnel capable of implementing these policies. Only in this way is it possible to move from ideas to action and ensure that each phase is properly executed. For this reason, the administrative and bureaucratic dimensions of cultural policy are part of the normal functioning of the State, which must ensure the necessary means to make culture a priority.

## III. Legal Framework

Culture is integrated into the responsibilities of local authorities, which are legally authorized to act in this area. The Legal Framework for Local Authorities (Law no. 75/2013, Article 1) recognizes the "transfer of powers from the State to local authorities and intermunicipal entities, as well as the delegation of powers from the State to local authorities and intermunicipal entities, and from municipalities to intermunicipal entities and parishes." Thus, local authorities are entrusted with promoting and safeguarding the interests of populations in areas such as education, culture, sport, and social action, among others.

Article 15 of Framework Law no. 50/2018 of August 16 reinforces this framework, stating that municipal bodies are responsible for "managing, valuing, and preserving cultural heritage which, although classified, is considered of local scope." According to Article 9 of Law no. 75/2013 of September 12, the parish assembly, upon proposal of the parish council, is responsible for granting financial or other forms of support to legally established institutions within the parish that develop cultural, recreational, or sports activities.

The parish council itself is responsible for promoting and implementing community intervention projects in the areas of social action, culture, and sport. It is also tasked with supporting initiatives of interest to the parish, including activities of a social, cultural, educational, sports, or recreational nature (Law no. 75/2013, Article 16).

## IV. Methodology

### A. Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative case-study approach to examine the communication and dissemination strategies used by the Municipality of Paredes in promoting municipal cultural events. The qualitative design was considered appropriate because the study seeks to understand communication practices, channel selection, message characteristics, and differences in promotional strategies according to event scale, rather than to establish statistical relationships.

### B. Data Sources and Sampling

The empirical analysis focused on three municipal events held in 2025: the exhibition *Artistas do Vale do Sousa: Liberdade Sempre!*, the *Primavera Festival da Flor 2025*, and the City Festivities of Paredes 2025. The three events were purposively selected because they represent different scales and communication requirements: a local event, a major/regional event, and a hallmark event.

Data were collected from the official communication channels of the Municipality of Paredes and from publicly available media sources. The corpus included social media publications, institutional website content, posters and other promotional materials, press releases, and media coverage. The analysis considered communication produced during the pre-event, event, and post-event periods, allowing the communication strategy to be examined as a complete dissemination process.

### C. Data Collection and Analytical Corpus

The collected materials were organized by event and communication channel. Each item was recorded according to its date, communication channel, type of content, intended audience, communicative purpose, and observable interaction. This procedure allowed the comparison of the intensity, diversity, timing, and characteristics of communication across the three events.

### D. Coding Framework

A structured coding framework was developed to analyse the communication materials. The coding categories included: (i) communication channel; (ii) content type; (iii) communication purpose; (iv) target audience; (v) frequency and timing of communication; (vi) message clarity; (vii) visual and promotional characteristics; (viii) presence of calls to action; and (ix) evidence of audience interaction and participation.

### E. Assessment of Communication Effectiveness

Communication effectiveness was assessed through five complementary dimensions: reach, visibility, engagement, message clarity, and strategic alignment. Reach and visibility refer to the capacity of communication activities to expose the event to relevant audiences. Engagement refers to observable interaction with published content and evidence of public participation. Message clarity concerns the accessibility and completeness of the information provided, while strategic alignment concerns the adequacy of the communication channels, frequency, timing, and content to the characteristics and scale of each event.

### F. Engagement Indicators

Where available, digital engagement indicators, including reactions, comments, shares, views, and other observable interaction measures, were considered in the analysis. Where platform-level quantitative indicators were not available, engagement was assessed qualitatively through observable interaction, dissemination patterns, and evidence of audience participation. These indicators were used as complementary evidence rather than as independent measures of event success.

### G. Comparative Analysis

Finally, the three events were compared according to their communication channels, content characteristics, promotional intensity, audience orientation, engagement, and identified strengths and weaknesses. This comparative procedure enabled the study to identify common communication practices as well as differences associated with event scale and positioning.

## V. Case Study

This chapter presents a case study focused on the Municipality of Paredes, with the aim of understanding how this entity communicates and promotes its cultural events, as well as evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies adopted. In the first phase, a general overview of the municipality is provided, addressing its geographical location, historical development, demographic characteristics, and administrative organization. This contextualization helps to understand the role of the local authority as an agent of local development and highlights the importance of culture as a structuring element of the municipality's identity.

The internal structure of the Municipality of Paredes is also analyzed, with particular emphasis on the divisions most involved in cultural activities and event organization, as well as the main communication channels used by the municipality, namely the institutional website and social media platforms. In parallel, the main cultural facilities of the municipality are presented, such as the Casa da Cultura, the Municipal Library, and the Cultural Center, which play a fundamental role in promoting cultural activities and bringing the community closer to these initiatives.

In the second phase, the chapter focuses on the analysis of the communication strategies of three events held in 2025: the exhibition "Liberdade Sempre!", the "Primavera Festival da Flor," and the City Festivities of Paredes. These events were selected because they represent different scales, being classified respectively as a local event, a regional-scale event (major event), and a hallmark event. The analysis focuses on the communication channels used, including posters, social media posts, institutional websites, and media coverage, as well as on the impact of these strategies in terms of audience reach and engagement.

Following the individual analysis of the three events—the exhibition "Artistas do Vale do Sousa: Liberdade Sempre!", the Primavera Festival da Flor 2025, and the City Festivities of Paredes 2025—it becomes possible to better understand their differences and similarities in terms of communication strategies. Each event corresponds to a different category within the classification proposed by Bowdin et al. (2011): the exhibition is a local event, with a more community-oriented and limited scope, mainly directed at artists and residents of the municipality and the Vale do Sousa region; the Primavera Festival da Flor can be considered a major event due to its attractiveness, differentiation, and presence across multiple communication channels; finally, the City Festivities of Paredes are clearly a hallmark event, given their traditional character, scale, and strong level of public engagement each year.

The results show that the effectiveness of communication varies according to the scale of the events. Smaller-scale events, such as the exhibition, tend to rely on more limited and predominantly informative communication, with a weaker digital presence and reduced impact. In contrast, larger-scale events, such as the "Primavera Festival da Flor" and the City Festivities, adopt more diversified strategies, with greater use of digital media and higher visibility among the public, resulting in increased levels of interaction and participation.

Despite these differences, the comparative analysis identifies several common weaknesses in the communication strategies, namely late promotion, the absence of dedicated digital channels for certain events or cultural venues, and the need to improve both the quality and frequency of visual content. Additionally, it is observed that the centralization of communication on the municipality's institutional platforms may limit the development of a distinct identity for each event. Annex 1 summarize the implications of the case in theory.

## VI. Discussion

The findings indicate that the communication strategies adopted by the Municipality of Paredes vary substantially according to the scale and positioning of the events. This result is consistent with the event management literature, which recognizes that events differ in terms of objectives, audiences, visibility, and territorial impact (Getz, 1997; Page & Connell, 2012). The comparison between the three cases suggests that event scale is not only associated with the expected level of public participation but also with the

intensity, diversity, and sophistication of the communication strategy.

The results also reinforce the role of communication as an instrument of proximity between public institutions and citizens. The literature on public administration and cultural policy emphasizes the importance of citizen involvement and locally adapted cultural policies (Pierre, 2000; Keaney, 2006). In the Paredes case, however, the existence of active digital communication channels does not necessarily translate into fully participatory communication. While larger events generate greater visibility and interaction, communication remains predominantly institution-led and information-oriented. This finding suggests that digital presence should not be equated with effective citizen participation.

Another relevant finding concerns the centralization of communication through institutional municipal channels. Although these channels provide credibility and broad visibility, the findings suggest that excessive dependence on institutional platforms may weaken the individual identity of cultural events. This observation extends the existing literature by suggesting that municipalities may benefit from a dual communication architecture: institutional channels should ensure legitimacy and broad dissemination, while event-specific channels can support audience segmentation, community building, and the development of a distinctive event identity.

The study also highlights the importance of strategic planning and timing. The recurrent identification of late promotional activity suggests that communication effectiveness depends not only on the channel selected but also on when and how communication is initiated. This reinforces the importance of treating communication as an integral component of event management rather than as a final promotional activity.

Although the empirical evidence derives from a single municipality and three events, the findings provide analytical insights that may be transferable to other municipalities facing similar challenges in promoting cultural and public events. In particular, the study suggests that municipal communication strategies should be differentiated according to event scale, combine institutional and event-specific channels, incorporate participatory mechanisms, and establish explicit criteria for evaluating communication effectiveness.

Therefore, the broader contribution of this study lies in conceptualizing municipal event communication as a scale-dependent, strategically planned, and potentially participatory management process, rather than merely as a set of promotional activities. This perspective provides a basis for municipalities to design communication strategies that are more closely aligned with the characteristics of their events and the expectations of their target audiences.

## VII. Conclusion

This study examined municipal communication strategies associated with three cultural events of different scales in the Municipality of Paredes. The comparative analysis shows that the scale and positioning of an event are important factors in shaping the intensity, diversity, and configuration of its communication strategy. The findings also indicate that digital visibility does not necessarily translate into meaningful citizen participation, highlighting the need to combine information dissemination with more interactive and participatory forms of communication.

The main contribution of the study is to conceptualize municipal event communication as a strategic and scale-dependent management process, rather than merely as a promotional activity. This perspective suggests that communication strategies should be aligned with the characteristics and objectives of each event, while combining institutional credibility with event-specific communication, appropriate timing, audience segmentation, and opportunities for interaction.

From a practical perspective, the findings suggest that municipalities should integrate communication planning into the overall event-management process, establish communication activities sufficiently in advance, diversify channels according to target audiences, and adopt systematic indicators for evaluating reach, visibility, and engagement. Such practices may strengthen not only event promotion but also the relationship between local government, cultural initiatives, and citizens.

The study is subject to limitations associated with its qualitative design, the analysis of a single municipality, and the restricted number of cases examined. Consequently, the findings should be interpreted as analytical insights rather than statistically generalisable conclusions. Future research could extend the analysis to multiple municipalities and a larger number of cultural events, combining qualitative analysis with quantitative indicators of digital engagement, attendance, audience perceptions, and citizen participation.

Overall, the findings suggest that the effectiveness of municipal cultural-event communication depends not simply on the amount of communication produced, but on its strategic alignment with the event, the audience, and the opportunities for participation that it creates.

## Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

## Appendix

| Finding from the case | Relation to literature | Broader implication |
|---|---|---|
| Larger events use more diversified communication | Consistent with event management literature | Communication intensity should be aligned with event scale |
| Digital channels increase visibility and interaction | Supports literature on communication and digital engagement | Municipalities should integrate digital channels into event strategies |
| Communication remains predominantly unidirectional | Extends participation-oriented public governance literature | Digital presence should be complemented by participatory mechanisms |
| Late promotion reduces communication effectiveness | Reinforces the importance of strategic planning | Municipalities should adopt communication calendars |
| Centralized municipal channels limit event identity | Extends institutional communication perspective | Event-specific digital identities may improve audience segmentation |
| Lack of systematic evaluation | Consistent with results-oriented public management | Communication strategies should include measurable objectives and evaluation mechanisms |

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