

# NEW(?) ACTORS IN SCIENCE COMMUNICATION

## The role of Scientific Associations

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Cristina Palma Conceição

*Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL),  
Centro de Investigação e Estudos de Sociologia (CIES-IUL)*

Ana Delicado

*Instituto de Ciências Sociais da Universidade de Lisboa*



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# Questioning the role of scientific associations in PCST

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- Learned societies are among the earliest science communicators  
E.g. Public lectures and demonstrations in early modern science
- Disciplinary scientific societies became more focused on services for members
- Organisations such as the Royal Society played a key part in the contemporary movement for PUS
- Most PCST studies address other institutions

*How do scientific associations participate in the PCST field?*

# The research project

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## **SOCSCI: Scientific societies in contemporary science**

Funding: FCT (national agency)

Duration: 2 years (2010-2012)

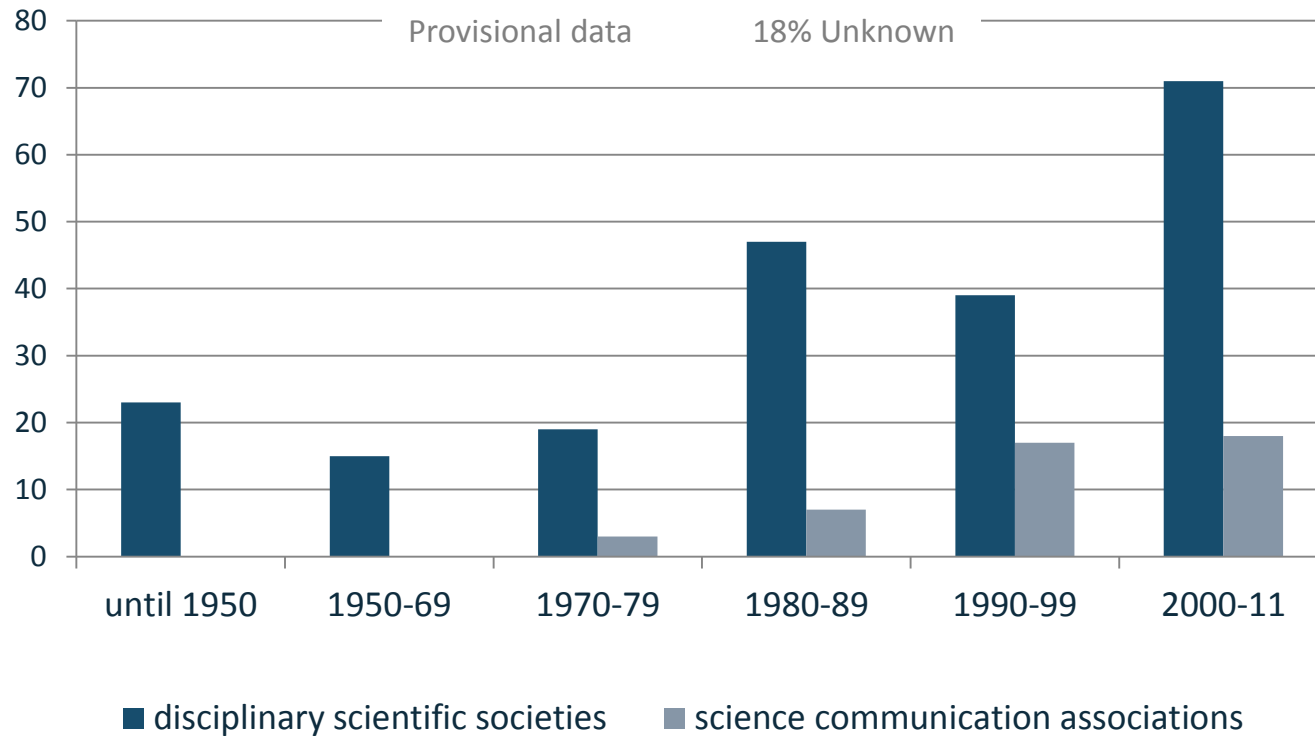
Aim: to draw a panorama of scientific societies in Portugal and to study the associative behaviour of scientists working in Portugal

Methods: census + survey of scientific societies  
case studies - interviews to directors, document analysis, ethnographic observation at events, surveys of members  
survey of scientists working in Portugal

Typology: disciplinary scientific societies  
science communication associations  
professional associations of scientists

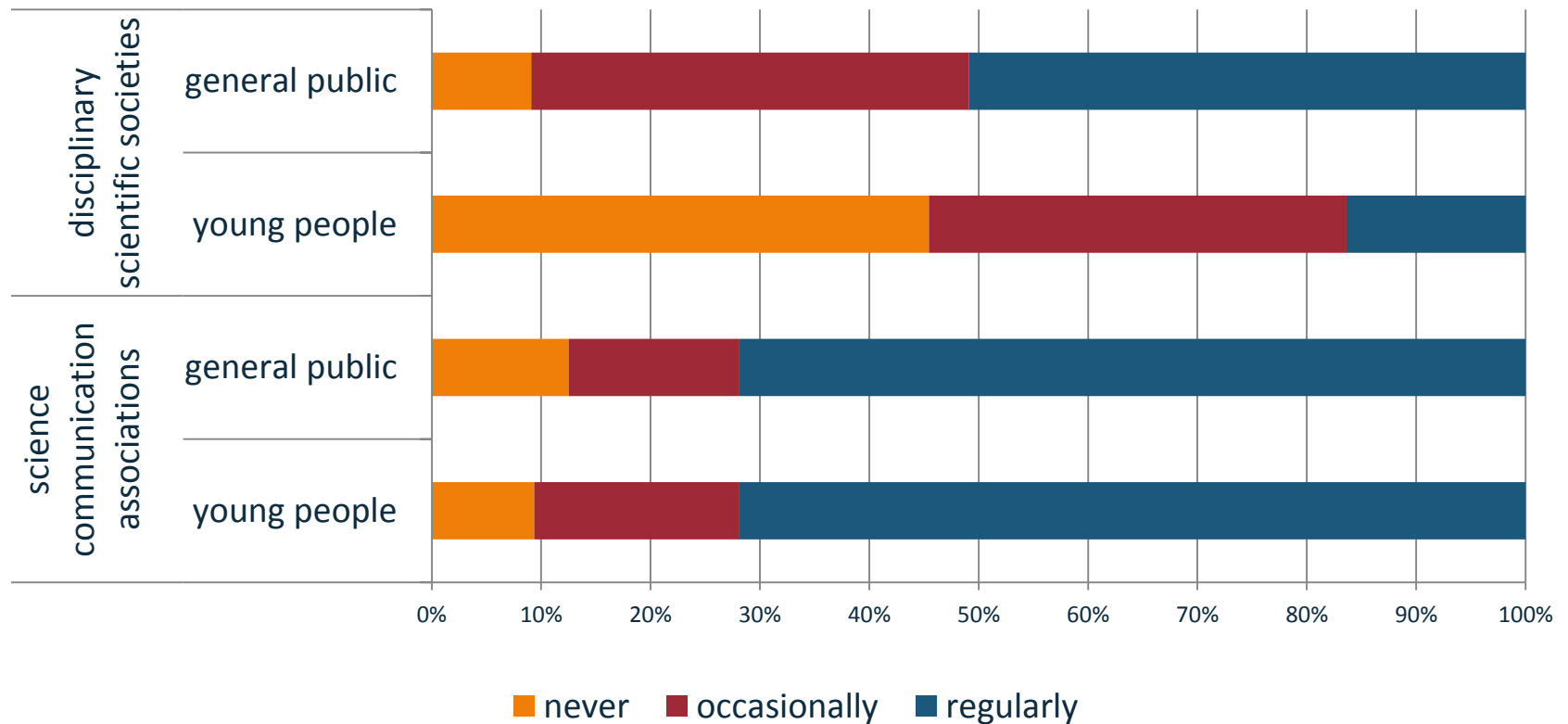
# Scientific associations in Portugal

## Scientific associations in Portugal: year of foundation



# Scientific associations in Portugal

Frequency of PCST activities, for youth people and the general public, by type of association



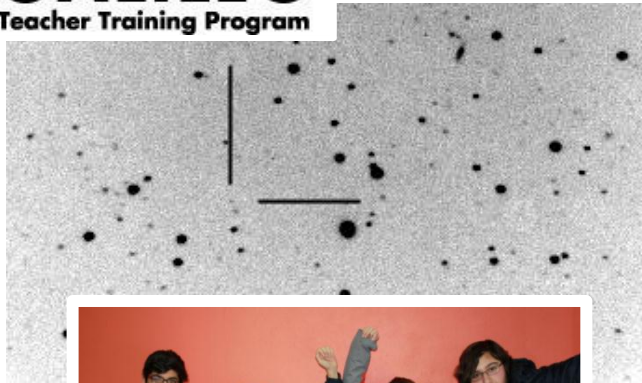
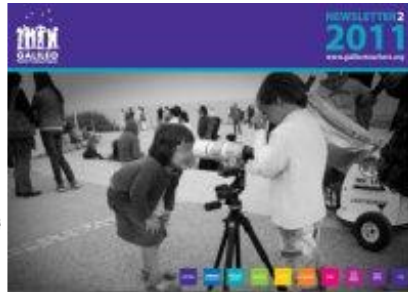
# Most common PCST activities (for both types of associations)

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- Contacts with the media/journalists
- Public talks directed at adult audiences
- Public talks at schools
- Competitions for young people (most in disciplinary societies)
- Collaboration with schools for experimental learning of science (most in science communication associations)
- Promotion of public science demonstrations/observations (almost only in science communication associations)
- Engagement of amateurs in scientific projects (only in science communication associations)

# Some examples

(science communication associations)



Discovers of the Asteroid 2011 BG 16  
(students from the Secondary School of Alvide, Portugal)



# Scientific associations: *new actors in science communication?*

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## Disciplinary scientific societies

“old” players in the field of science  
with an increasing participation in PCST  
generally using traditional forms

## Science communication associations

“newer” in the field of science  
strongly engaged in PCST  
sometimes exploring new approaches



***Thank you!***

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<http://www.socsci.ics.ul.pt>  
[cristina.conceicao@iscte.pt](mailto:cristina.conceicao@iscte.pt)