

peripheries and Participation at the heart of Cultural Policies

# having a voice

peripheries and Participation at the heart of Cultural Policies

COORDINATION  
Pedro Costa  
Ricardo Venâncio Lopes

[havingavoice.eu](http://havingavoice.eu)



peripheries and Participation at the heart of cultural policies

# having a voice

## **“Having a Voice: Peripheries and Participation at the Heart of Cultural Policies”**

Book of proceedings

### COORDINATION

Pedro Costa and Ricardo Venâncio Lopes (coord.)

### AUTHORS

Álvaro Domingues  
Ana Rita Alves  
André Amálio  
Attaher Maïga  
Emmanuel Négrier  
Gerty Dambury  
Hugo Cruz  
Marcia Tiburi  
Milena Dragičević Šešić  
Pedro Costa  
Ricardo Venâncio Lopes  
Tiago Mota Saraiva

### EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

Bruno Castro  
Cláudia Hortêncio  
Clara Antunes  
Emmanuel Négrier  
Elisabete Tomaz  
Félix Dupin-Meynard  
Giada Calvano  
Giuliana Ciancio  
Jovana Karaulić  
Jose Pestaña  
Lluís Bonet  
Luca Ricci  
Luisella Carnelli  
Margarida Perestrelo  
Marta Martins  
Milena Dragičević Šešić  
Pedro Costa  
Ricardo Venâncio Lopes  
Tažana Nikolić

### EDITING AND PUBLISHING

Dinâmia'cet - iscte - Centro de Estudos sobre a Mudança Socioeconómica e o Território / iscte - Instituto Universitário de Lisboa / Artemrede - Teatros Associados

Lisbon, Portugal · October 2023

### PHOTOGRAPHY

Pedro Jafuno

### TRANSLATION AND PROOFREADING

Sandra Young and Amy Bell

### GRAPHIC DESIGN

Rui Guerra

### PRINTING

Persistente Artes Gráficas

Costa, P. & Lopes, R. V. (coord.). (2023). “Having a Voice: Peripheries and Participation at the Heart of Cultural Policies”, Lisbon: Dinâmia'cet - iscte | Artemrede - Teatros Associados

Keywords: Peripheries, Participation, Culture, Cultural policies, Southern

Print Run: 150

ISBN: 978-989-781-854-7

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Moita and Barreiro field trip hosts: Câmara Municipal da Moita; Fórum Cultural José Manuel Figueiredo; CEA - Centro de Experimentação Artística; Baía do Tejo Barreiro Business Park; and ADAO - Associação Desenvolvimento Artes e Ofícios.



ARTEMREDE

dinâmia  
'cet - iscte



fct Fundação  
para a Ciência  
e a Tecnologia





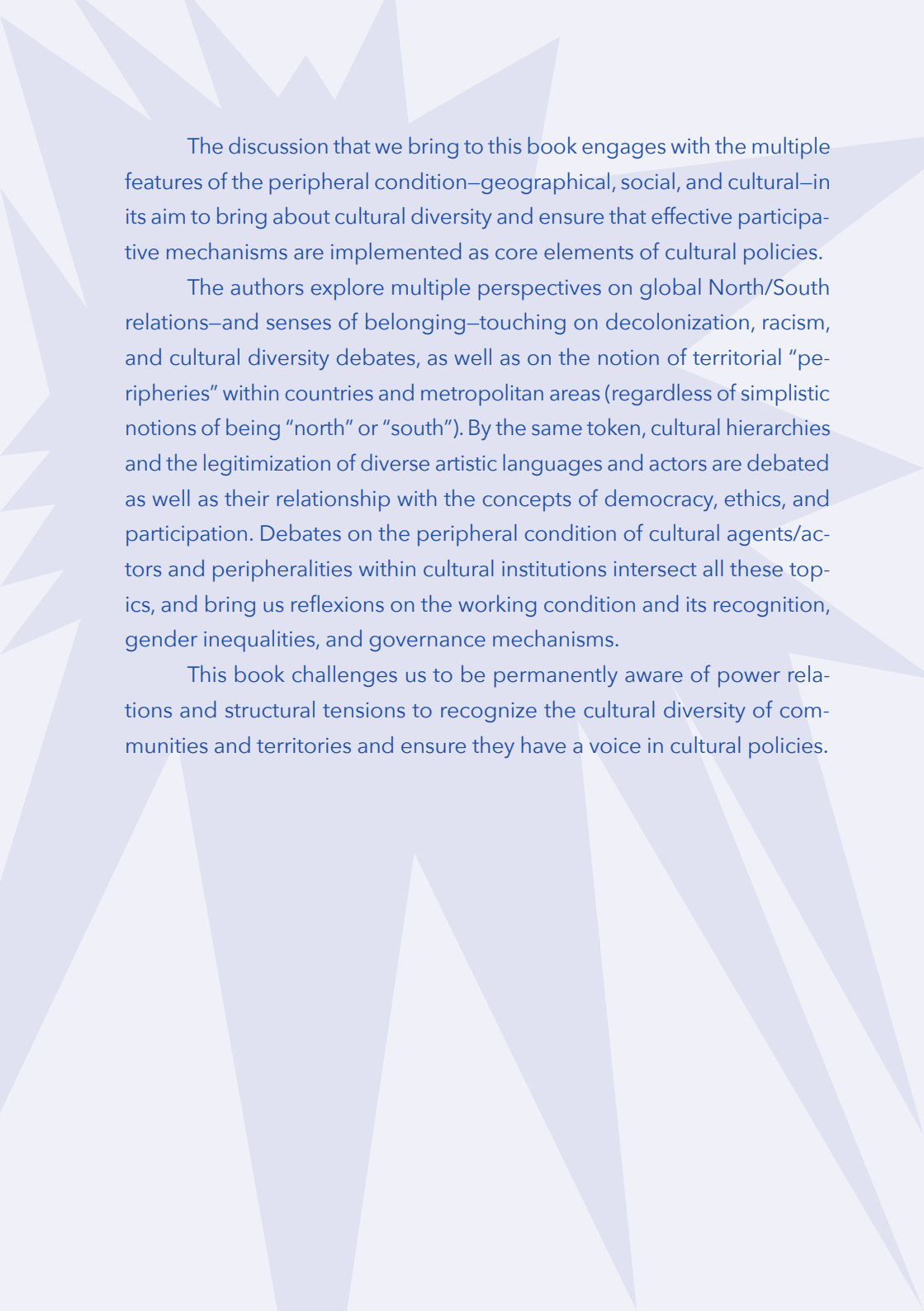
# Prologue

PEDRO COSTA

RICARDO VENÂNCIO LOPES

This book brings together texts presented at the conference “Having a Voice: Peripheries and Participation at the Heart of Cultural Policies” held in Lisbon, Moita and Barreiro during November 2022. “Having a Voice” brought together researchers from two different European projects—“Stronger Peripheries: A Southern Coalition” and “Be SpectACTive!”—with Lisbon’s artistic community to have a broad debate on the most relevant issues concerning participation in the cultural field, particularly focusing on the peripheries.

The conference gathered cultural managers, artists, and researchers from Southern and Eastern Europe, but also from the Global South and Global North, and from the multiple peripheries within each of these, to disentangle the complexities of peripherality and discuss mechanisms to empower and give a voice to the cultural diversity of these territories and how to ensure it is heard and considered within cultural policies.



The discussion that we bring to this book engages with the multiple features of the peripheral condition—geographical, social, and cultural—in its aim to bring about cultural diversity and ensure that effective participative mechanisms are implemented as core elements of cultural policies.

The authors explore multiple perspectives on global North/South relations—and senses of belonging—touching on decolonization, racism, and cultural diversity debates, as well as on the notion of territorial “peripheries” within countries and metropolitan areas (regardless of simplistic notions of being “north” or “south”). By the same token, cultural hierarchies and the legitimization of diverse artistic languages and actors are debated as well as their relationship with the concepts of democracy, ethics, and participation. Debates on the peripheral condition of cultural agents/actors and peripheralities within cultural institutions intersect all these topics, and bring us reflexions on the working condition and its recognition, gender inequalities, and governance mechanisms.

This book challenges us to be permanently aware of power relations and structural tensions to recognize the cultural diversity of communities and territories and ensure they have a voice in cultural policies.

# Contents

## Prologue

PEDRO COSTA AND RICARDO VENÂNCIO LOPES..... 4

## Periphery, Peripherality and Counter-Peripherality

MARCIA TIBURI ..... 8

## Community Artistic Practices and Civic/ Political Participation

HUGO CRUZ.....29

## Bread and Roses - Being the Centre? Peripheries and Cultural Policy

EMMANUEL NÉGRIER .....39

## Thinking the Periphery: Self-production, Displacement and Resistance

ANA RITA ALVES.....49

## Quinta do Ferro, from Participation to Gentrification.

TIAGO MOTA SARAIVA .....61

## Culture in Peripheries: Moita and Barreiro

PEDRO COSTA AND RICARDO VENÂNCIO LOPES.....69

## Periphery

ÁLVARO DOMINGUES .....85

## Recent Processes of Decolonization in Portuguese Theatre

ANDRÉ AMÁLIO .....100

## Maaya Cultural Entrepreneurship: The Entrepreneurial Model of the Festival sur le Niger

ATTAHER MAÏGA.....113

## **Decolonize the Arts: Presenting the Collective**

GERTY DAMBURY.....122

## **Conclusions**

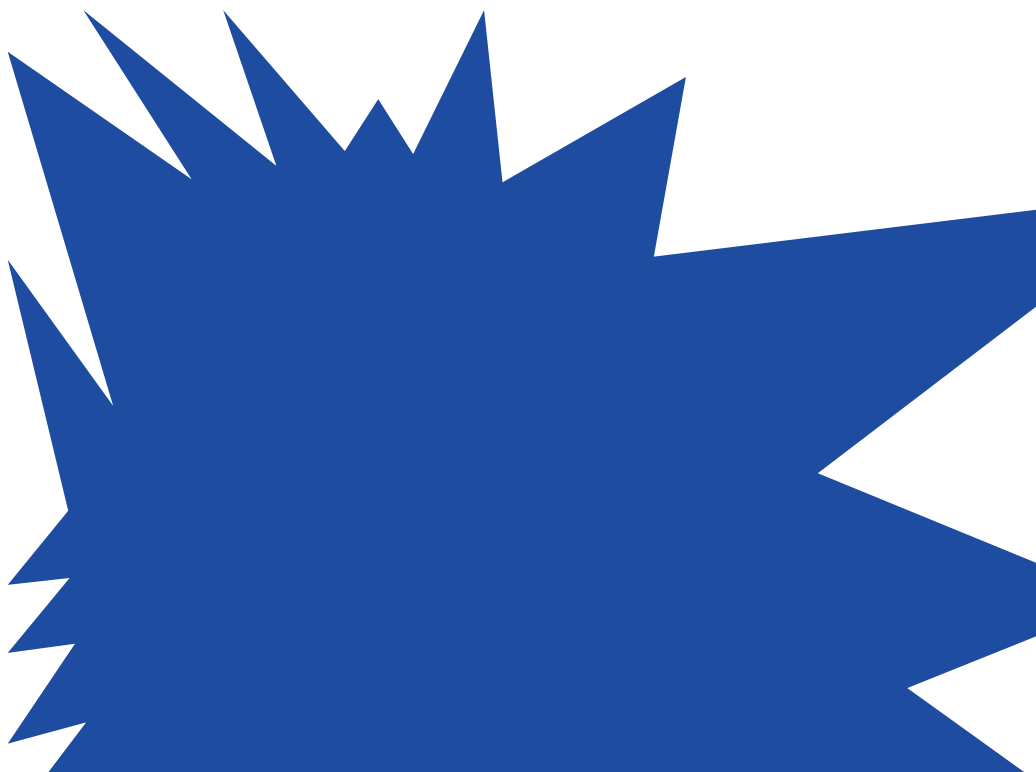
MILENA DRAGIĆEVIĆ ŠEŠIĆ .....140

PEDRO COSTA.....151

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

## **“Having a Voice: Peripheries and Participation at the Heart of Cultural Policies”**

.....164





# **Periphery, Peripherality and Counter-Peripherality**

MARCIA TIBURI

“They took everything from me, but not my soul.”

*Paulina Chiziane*

### **PERIPHERY, PERIPHERALITY AND COUNTER-PERIPHERALITY**

The notion of periphery operates on both logical and epistemological levels, that is, ways of speaking and forms of knowledge stem from it. The notion of periphery also operates on ethical and aesthetic levels, in ways which homogenize personal and collective action. At the same time, it is a political operator at work in the field of culture.

The word periphery comes from the ancient Greek περιφέρεια (periférea) meaning that which is far from the centre. The periphery is linked to edges, margins, borders, and limits.

To understand the periphery, it is necessary to analyse the conditions of possibility inhabited by what we call “culture” in general and what we call “culture of the periphery”, as well as the space that emerges therein, namely, the peripheral areas that become centres themselves. When we hear the Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembène (1923-2007) saying that Europe is not his centre, but the periphery of Africa, we get an indication of what is at stake in this debate. It involves subjects

and autonomy, of the individual—“subordinated” by the centre—who revolts and, in doing so, revolts against common assumptions and obvious contradictions which, in turn, creates new meaning.

I use the term peripherality to talk of a generative category. Peripherality—and not only the peripheral state—is the category that helps us to understand the function of an epistemology which creates peripheries; the idea of zones that flank a centre, whatever centre that may be—geographical, material, physical or conceptual—where this centre is the starting point that positions the margins negatively. The notion of periphery implies peripherality as a form of logic. The logic of peripherality is driven by the theoretical and practical principle that creates a centre and, therefore, also creates a margin. A whole power structure develops around this logic. And where there is power, there are human bodies and the need to control, or even kill, them.

If, in geographic terms, the periphery is the edge of the city, it is also the universe into which the body of the *Homer sacer* is cast—a figure turned outlaw, abandoned by the law, living on the edge of political and legal life (Agamben, 1998). That is, it is about the “killable” body, like the body of slum dwellers, of trans and transvestite people, of lesbians and gays, of homeless people and other “bare lives” of capitalism. But it is also about the bodies of women persecuted by feminicidal states and domestic feminicides in homes transformed into margins. Peripherality as a logic implies the notion of the margin. The margin is what emerges from the centre in a kind of variable geometry. Sometimes the margin can exist within households.

There is, however, a poetic and equally practical response to the epistemological and linguistic pressure to create peripheries that is peripherality. We can call it counter-peripherality. It refers to the transformation of the margins into centres unto themselves.

If peripherality implies a movement that concentrates aesthetic, ethical, economic, and political power, counter-peripherality is the

movement that decentres power. If peripherality concentrates power by casting what does not fit outwards, counter-peripherality centres the margin. It recentres focus on the margin until the very idea of centre implodes.

Counter-peripherality arises from an awareness of the game peripherality plays, in its naturalization of terms such as subaltern, minority, inferior, foreign, stranger, brown, slum. Counter-peripherality brings these divisions to the surface. When addressing bodies expelled from the centre, counter-peripherality reveals the mechanisms of humiliation and subalternization which are in fact deep-seated political technologies set in motion by peripherality.

Without diminishing the role of the power and violence in the peripheral process to be deconstructed, counter-peripherality exists from the moment in which peripheries become a centre unto themselves through collective self-designation, as well as when individuals become aware of their peripheral condition.

To say one is “peripheral” is, therefore, an act of self-labelling that, in and of itself, suggests a cultural revolution. And revolutionary acts are inherent to culture, for there is no culture without struggles for recognition and the production of self-identity.

#### **FOR A CULTURE OF OPENNESS TOWARD THE OTHER**

Culture is a complex, symbolic, self-producing and reproducing system that is also changeable and dynamic. It spans everything humans make and produce, as well as the way they transform their world and themselves.

Culture alludes, therefore, to the construction of worlds: both symbolic and material, linguistic and poetic. Culture speaks to ways of living: to ways of thinking, feeling, and acting. As such, it exists throughout the generations alongside all peoples and their history. Wherever you are, when someone is born, culture exists already, but human action always

adapts and transforms it. No matter how rigid a culture may be, it will undergo transformations and give rise to other cultures.

Culture creates and recreates itself, but it can be manipulated by power. When culture is instrumentalized by power, it loses its human dimension, its role as a producer of symbols and becomes something purely decorative.

What Theodor Adorno called “dissociated consciousness” (Adorno, 1959) in his *Theorie der Halbbildung* [Theory of Superficial Education] helps us to reflect on this. Dissociation from consciousness treats culture, activities, and cultural assets as merely decorative. Decorative discourse about art and reductionist discourse about culture form part of this facade. They do not seek to transform society, an inherent and desirable aspect of cultural processes as historical ones.

Now, we must construct culture to overcome dissociated consciousness, that is, to raise awareness that culture involves every aspect of life and that the goods and activities defined as “cultural” are essential in forming individuals and society. Transforming the world means transforming subjectivities, relations, and actions. This is why today it is so important to use intersectional paths to develop the relationship between cultural activities and productions and other areas, such as education and communication.

A well-known European anthropologist said that one characteristic of Brazilian “Indians” was openness to the other—he even used the inappropriate word “Indian” in his famous book *A World on the Wane* [*Tristes Tropiques*] (Lévy-Strauss, 1955). Openness to the other implies curiosity as a cognitive and ethical parameter. To be open to the other is to be open to dialogue and to the democratic experience in general, itself an experience of friendship and listening.

The moral and epistemological principle that should govern every reflection and action regarding culture is openness to the other. To transform the world is to transform the way we relate to the other, be it an-

other person, nature, or culture. In geopolitical terms, the other is the inhabitant of the periphery, and the periphery is territory as the other.

Openness to the other can be elevated to an ethical-aesthetic-political principle to guide the transformation we seek. This can lead us to the politics of friendship that we must build for the dialogue and coexistence we all desire.

We reflect on transformation aiming to set transformative action(s) in motion. And yet, the verb transform requires an object. When somebody transforms, they transform something. We need to understand what it means to transform and what we should transform. We are seeking a still faceless utopia because it will take on the faces of those willing and able to invent it.

Thus, every transformation project entails the principle of participation, and participating bodies are an essential feature. These “other” bodies should be treated as essential in the process. The world will not change unless the paradigm relating to the “other” changes. The other must be present within transformation processes. We will call this paradigm shift the culture of openness to the other. This change that will not occur unless we are willing to face certain aspects of our history, namely, the colonial issues from which we, as global citizens, can learn so much.

### **REDESIGNING A TERRITORY, LEARNING TO SAY ONE’S OWN NAME**

The idea of periphery implies the notion of centre, the centre-periphery being a key axis of the capitalist epistemology, constructed as far back as the emergence of the so-called European modern era between the 15th and 16th centuries. The act of colonization forms part of the capitalism that emerged at that time, together with the ideology of colonialism that was born with the invasion of the territory, arbitrarily named “America” (Tiburi, 2021). Coloniality<sup>1</sup> as a structure and producer

<sup>1</sup> Quijano, Aníbal. Coloniality of Power and Social Classification. “As the characteristics of current power evolved, new societal identities of coloniality were created—Indians, Blacks, Olives, Yellows, Whites, Mestizos—as well as the geocultural identities of colonialism, such as America, Africa,

of symbols is the culmination of all this and it is coloniality that installs the concept of periphery that is always produced and reproduced in power structures.

In this sense, the territories colonized by Europe and recolonized by the current “internal colonizers”—patriarchal and capitalist oligarchs—were the first peripheries. Today, a peripheral Europe has been formed through capitalist colonization and the logic of peripherality that creates sub-worlds and sub-countries.

It is important to raise awareness in Europe of the historical process by which the inhabitants of the territory colonized under the name of America carried out a transformative cultural action. I refer to America not only because I come from a Latin American country, but because there are transformations there that can help us reflect on the theme of periphery here as well. Today, the Andean and other groups of peoples, upon whom the names “Indians” and “indigenous” were imposed in acts of inaugural epistemological violence promoted by the so-called “Global North”, have started using the term *Abya Yala* to refer to their territory. With this gesture they have transformed what was the periphery of the world into their centre.

*Abya Yala* means land in all its maturity or splendour. The use of this term implies a cultural action. It is a poetic political response to the epistemological violence that destroyed the culture of these peoples. The violence was symbolic, but also physical, material, and economic. It was a violence of one culture against another culture. At the same time, these peoples have maintained a long cultural resistance process, a true cultural production.

This example should help us understand the transformative importance of culture and regard cultural acts as transformative linguistic acts.

---

Far East, Near East (later, Asia), West or Europe (Western Europe, later). And the corresponding relations between these subjects, in which the experiences of colonialism and coloniality were merged with the needs of capitalism. They wove together to create a new universe of intersubjective relations of domination under Eurocentric hegemony. This specific universe is what would later be called modernity.”

In this context, self-designation is an act that defies imposed hetero-designation. It is a fundamental linguistic and cultural act. It has the power to recreate a world or to create another world. Abya Yala has become a statement of self-identity in rejection of the imposed identity (Quijano, A., 2009).

I present this to reinforce what is at play throughout this text: every practical transformation is, at the same time, a symbolic one; that is, a linguistic transformation that reflects the spirit of culture. In this case what is at stake are the words used to either say or hide things, as described by the Bolivian philosopher Silvia Cusicanqui (Rivera, 2010).

The peoples to whom I refer are the Inca, Aymara, Quechua and many other Andean peoples, as well as the peoples who live in Brazil, from the Tupinambá to the Apurinã, from the Guarani to the Krenak. They experienced an epistemological war, that is, a war of cultural conquest. The response to this war was an act of linguistic freedom, capable of restoring the stolen culture.

Therefore, the designation of Abya Yala is more than an act of resignification. It is a symbolic intervention that redraws this territory's history. It is about redrawing the history of a place, about returning the present time to this place. In a profound sense, this symbolic intervention restores meaning and history to the oppressed and the descendants of the victims of colonization.

There is another example that sharply reveals the transformative and restorative power of the cultural linguistic gesture in question.

In Brazil, people classified under the signifier "indigenous peoples" have realized the revolutionary character of naming in their cultural resurrection process.

In 2017 the writer Daniel Munduruku made an important statement at a literary event (Seganfredo, 2017). In front of a huge audience, he said, "I am not an Indian". He stated that there were no Indians in Brazil. And he explained to the people that he was not an Indian, but a



“Munduruku”. The self-affirmation surprised people who naturalized the language of coloniality.

This surprise clearly vanishes when we become aware of the implicit violence demonstrated by Christopher Columbus upon arrival in Guanahani in 1492, where he imposed the name “Indians” on the inhabitants there, for lack of concern about who they were.

I do not want to tire you with the story of the invasion of those territories, although there are still people in Europe who inappropriately label that moment with the term “discovery”. The discovery-invasion dichotomy is telling. While “discovery” covers up the violence, “invasion” exposes that same violence. The world we want to transform is precisely the world that covers up and maintains violence through silence. Today we seek the sense of culture that will emancipate us from this lie. We seek historical truth, and this requires a hermeneutical respect for personal and territorial identities and responsibility for a multiple and multipolar world whose production relations overcome capitalism.

### **THE ANTHROPHAGIC BANQUET**

In a way, we use periphery today in the same way. Initially the term periphery was used pejoratively. Like the words “Indian” and “indigenous”, “peripheral” has been appropriated by these so-called “peripheral” people and used in ways that go beyond the capitalist logic that coined it. Today, the subjects of the periphery have appropriated the term “peripheral”. Other characters have long been doing the same since they learned to use hetero-designations in a positive way. People who have been hetero-designated as blacks have appropriated the negative labelling to make it positive. They have relativized the absolutizations, thereby overcoming a codification of power. Gays, lesbians, transvestites, gypsies and so on have all done the same. The dogmas inherent in imposed labelling were neutralized to such an extent as to lessen or even eradicate their power over the victims.

Therefore, we are witnessing a profound transformation and an important aspect of this process in what we can define as an “anthropophagic appropriation” of these concepts. Notice that I say “anthropophagic”, and not cannibalistic. This implies an important symbolic transformation.

Perhaps some of you know the Brazilian thinker Oswald de Andrade who coined the notion of “anthropophagy” in his *Manifesto Antropófago* [Anthropophagic Manifesto] (Andrade, 1976) in Brazil, during the first half of the 20th century. Anthropophagy refers to the devouring of foreign concepts and ideas, aesthetic, and political forms. A method of symbolic devouring, that transforms the subject of the action. The object of anthropophagy modifies the subject.

If we analyse the concept of periphery today, we can say that it has been taken over anthropophagically by the hetero-designated peripheral subjects. They have eaten their enemies, their tactics, their customs, their ways of being and doing; they have eaten their gestures, their sorcery, their spells, their knowledge, and even their cunning. They have eaten the evil eyes cast on their bodies during historical processes in which enmity was greater than openness to the other.

Just as Daniel Munduruku is no longer Indian, just as America has become Abya Yala, today’s periphery is no longer the periphery of capitalist hetero-designation but is the anthropophagic banquet in which everything is mixed. The periphery becomes a centre unto itself by eating—though not always digesting—the centre. Periphery turns everything from out there into identity. The *gambiarra* (a term used in Brazil to define a temporary solution to a problem, a quick fix)—or the *geringonça* (a gadget)—is the periphery’s way of being.

As it transforms, the word periphery will soon cease to be used. The concept we are working with is therefore provisional, as are the things that are eaten, as are precarious arrangements to solve problems. Anthropophagy is cultural transformation through the critical appropriation of culture in the periphery.

In Brazil, in Latin America, or in Abya Yala, despite the pro-coup, white, racist, oligarchies who oversee us, indigenous people are now active in public life and of the National Congress. From Africa there is already talk of Afropolitanism (Awondo, 2014), or of “Afropeanism” (Miano, L., 2020) pointing to other geopolitics. Therefore, it is not difficult to see that the notion of centre-periphery has already been overtaken by the notion of periphery as its own centre. If the periphery has become a centre itself, it is because its subject, in thought and action, is no longer a subaltern who accepts submission. Today, we can speak of the “periphery” as a space where consciousness is produced and where the position of periphery is transformed as responsible self-centring before the other.

If the notion of peripherality is provisional, soon we will be using more poetic names to define the world that remains after the current neoliberal destruction on the path to its apotheosis. I mention the great destruction not to frighten you, but to alert you to the urgency of halting the advance of neoliberalism as the economy of fascist politics. Cultural efforts now must work to prevent fascism from advancing, or, as the German philosopher Theodor Adorno (1974) said, to prevent a repetition of Auschwitz.

### **REBIRTH IN ADVERSE CONDITIONS**

Rebirth in adverse conditions is exactly what the so-called peripheral territories have done until now. Where there should be no art; where there should be no beauty; where there should be no economy or politics, freedom or autonomy, was specifically where culture moved people towards emancipation. These are acts of daring, because making art—just like doing politics—is an act of daring and, moreover, an act of freedom. And it is this act of freedom that we are seeking; not this kidnapped signifier of freedom, stolen and in turn controlled by liberalism and neoliberalism.

The binomial centre-periphery is part of the logic that constitutes coloniality as a deep-rooted process which produces dichotomic values such as superior-inferior, black-white, man-woman, heterosexual-homosexual. The term centre-periphery is part of capitalism's binary pattern of devouring and cannibalistic logic, which we can oppose with the anthropophagic aesthetic logic I mentioned earlier. We can call this devouring logic *patriarcapitalism*, that is, a system that reiterates the old utilitarian ideology both through a system of understanding, a mentality, and the associated feelings as well as a pattern of actions and practices. I am referring to production and reproduction-related practices—not only of labour, but also of culture, particularly when it becomes industrialized. That is, we are confronted with repetitive patterns of thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. But the patterns are not only characterized by repetition but also by serial reproductivity. The reproducibility of thought and action means that human beings copy machine-like behaviours. For this reason, subjectivities need to be produced industrially. This is what capitalism expects from the bodies it flatters while sucking the spirit out of them.

This cannibalistic devouring of the spirit by capitalism is carried out through the cultural industry, with its mechanisms to empty and fill subjectivities and its offerings of cognitive and sensorial prostheses.

It must be said that the sense of culture we seek opposes all of this. We are looking for cultural senses and practices that liberate subjectivity, that help us save our imagination and allow us to construct life as a work of art.

It is relevant, in this context, to comment on the cultural industry and the formation of cultural consumerism, that is advancing and modelling its own patterns of behaviour through which slaves collaborate in the enslavement process, enslaving themselves and becoming robots when they allow their bodies to be invaded, and when they allow their perceptions to be colonized.

The human body mimics machines by copying their functioning. In the same way, what we call fascism today is namely a manipulation of the masses towards authoritarianism. This manipulation originates from a culturally-implanted language game based on the consumerism of language itself, through the compulsion to repeat the linguistic cliché of hatred and the capitalist religion in which to consume is the rule.

Now, capitalism, just like fascism, requires that each individual surrenders to their executioner as if they were free to do so, which is why the mystique of freedom is so important, and even affects culture.

Similarly, we can say that the coloniality generated by capitalism functions by using humiliation as a political technology of power, but that it has become the standard in games of intersubjectivity necessary for capitalism.

### **ETHICAL-AESTHETIC-POLITICAL ALCHEMY**

I raise these questions assuming that European inhabitants and citizens may also benefit from them. If inhabitants of non-European places have been placed in inferior positions and have suffered and continue to suffer territorial, xenophobic, and racist prejudice, if they have been marked by the authoritarian ideas and words of others, if they have been deprived of their histories and identities, if their ancestors have been violated and killed, and yet they have survived; it was not by chance, but because of the effort put into creating culture. Today, these people are rising from the rubble of violence and silencing and are reproposing the survival of their own culture, the reinvention of culture, and thus the transformation of their own lives.

We must replace the culture of humiliation, associated with the culture of rape and harassment, with a culture of dialogue. This culture of dialogue, in turn, can open paths through intersectional cultural projects, involving art education, to be promoted on a global scale. Certainly, we can work on projects for our communities, but it is important that such projects do not erase the universal character of the challenges we face

today when we do not know how to rebuild the public sphere and the means of production.

Transformation requires we understand the dialectics of processes involving individuals and groups, collectives, and how the neoliberal fascist project desires to manipulate the masses. The way neoliberalism has defiled the economy and fascism has sullied politics can help us to understand the transformation process as an ethical-aesthetic-political alchemy.

This ethical-aesthetic-political alchemy is the process of transforming from a state of putrefaction to a state of excellence. I am talking about ways to overcome the state of sadness, of cognitive and moral humiliation, of material and spiritual poverty, to a state of well-being and so-called good living (*sumak kawsay*), when we become one again with the land in which we live, instead of the uprooting to which we are subjected as urban slaves at the service of capital.

It is not a matter, therefore, of continuing to resist and survive in the context of neoliberalism, a theological-political economy that wishes to destroy the planet and bring about the death of humankind and all other species in the name of the cult of capital. It is about overcoming this theological-political economy in search of another economic and political model, and this happens through culture and an understanding of territories where we can create our culture.

### **POLITICS OF FRIENDSHIP, POLITICS OF LISTENING AND OF DIALOGUE.**

The politics of friendship, of listening and of dialogue represent a path of resistance and the construction of another possible world. In this context, the very concept of democracy undergoes an urgent and necessary transformation. The degeneration of democracies into fascist demagogues all over the world can be dismantled in the name of a world which upholds *sumak kawsay* (Crespo & Jefferson de Oliveira, 2020), an Andean concept that points to a possible future.

I have defended the idea of a culture of dialogue as the presence of difference. This is not possible in a world in which this very presence, a basic human right, is prevented or curtailed.

The politics of friendship are precisely the politics of the right to be present. They are the politics of acceptance and reparation. They are not politics of imposition. They are the politics of openness to the other. They are the politics of listening, not phallogocentric politics. They are politics of generosity against the avarice that characterizes patriarcapitalism. They are ecological policies, that integrate processes of caring and inclusivity, well known in women's culture, in popular feminisms that are advancing through Bolivia and other Abya Yala territories.

On the same note, I suggest that we reflect on the politics of friendship as a theoretical and empirical project. A potential example of this may be poetic-conceptual experiments in the form of dialogical laboratories stemming from transdisciplinary performative experiments between philosophy, anthropology, sociology, human rights, literature, and the arts.

We need to develop philosophical-social and artistic-pedagogical methodologies which involve the collaboration of subjects and institutions that long to build and consolidate a democratic society in an organic and micrologic way.

Ideas of recognition, of otherness, and of the shared past need to be pragmatically developed in a way that can produce present and future forms of coexistence.

The production of an intensely democratic imaginary emerges as a conceptual, epistemological, and ethical-political operator, a productive and transforming category that can lead us to new social and political directions.

Across the globe we are treating the future as if it were something mystical, something that could be magically contained and accomplished in the present. This stems from the technological mentality

invading all aspects of life, defining a new ontology whereby human beings become more and more “robotized”. This loss of connection with the human condition is an effect of the increasingly mystified relationship with technological devices and their magical promises. We believe in hyper-connectedness, but this does not guarantee that we have reached the dimension of otherness that we are to each other. Not realizing this is what leads us to every form of social catastrophe.

All over the world people from all countries consume technological products, access the Internet, and participate more and more in social networks as if this world of means had become a world of ends in itself. The notion of human community depends on the exercise of language, which, since the beginning of time, has been defined by dialogue. Dialogue is, by definition, the use of the language of difference that requires the presence of bodies.

The current dialogical experience is marked by the new digital technologies. However, in the current context, human beings are in full ecstasy with the present time as if it were the future, forgetting their limits and the very otherness that challenges them.

Technological devices have been changing our interpersonal relationships, as well as the relationship we have with our own subjectivity. We are connected digitally but separated in many ways. It is beyond interesting that at the same time as we are fully digitally connected, authoritarian tendencies, naturally antialogical, are advancing so fast in several countries. Dialogue has not advanced at the political level, and we lack the sense of a covenant to build global justice and peace. Enmity is the principle that governs all of this, and it must be confronted.

We need to invest in processes that allow us to move forward in sustaining dialogue as a way in which communities are democratically erected and sustained. To speak of dialogue is to speak of competencies for recognition. These competencies are less and less natural in a world increasingly mediated by technologies. Therefore, aware that



they are cultural productions, we must try to understand how they can be produced. The politics of friendship must be produced in such a way that they reflexively and sensitively confront the politics of enmity (Mbembe, A., 2017).

We can use culture to trace a path of resistance and construction of another possible world in which the very concept of democracy undergoes an urgent and necessary alchemy. Democracy becomes radical democracy, a space of collective construction in which there are no hierarchies, but symbolic webs of protection and mutual respect.

In this sense, the well-known concept of *sumak kawsay* can indeed help us. As the focal point of Andean thought on difference, *sumak kawsay* means to live fully and as one with the world. In it, a different relationship with the body and with the living body of Pachamama emerges, the earth as the world where we are situated and that gives meaning to the human adventure we can now experience.

## **TO CONCLUDE**

I want to conclude by saying that I am delighted to be able to talk about this topic as a Latin American thinker, coming from Brazil, a country colonized by Portugal. We have over 500 years of shared history, marked by colonialism and the derived violence and suffering. Today we are united around the theme of peripherality, because each one of us occupies a different place in this geopolitical and economic scale and as societies reproduce, subjects that embody peripherality differently necessarily emerge.

I love this moment, the fact you are paying attention to me, a Portuguese-speaking Latin American feminist who has experienced transformation in the context of peripherality. In the mouths of Brazilians, the Portuguese language has been well chewed—as I do now—and language use also forms an essential part of the cultural transformations that move us. We are currently living through an important historical

transformation: today, women are aware of their position as women and precisely because of this they call themselves feminists. Nowadays there are women who speak out and who are listened to. There is something surprising about this considering the brute force of patriarchy.

In that sense, it is fascinating to see the historical turns that coloniality takes. I say this as a person from the South who came involuntarily to inhabit Europe. Today I live in France in political exile. I irritated the fascists in my country. The Europe I inhabit is, for me, a space on the margins, a concentration camp. My country, in turn, is a death camp, so I am better off here, because at least I am alive, unlike Marielle Franco, a human rights defender, self-denominated black and peripheral. She was killed by death squads that held federal power for four years. They have just been defeated in the elections, but their violence continues, and it is not easy to contain them.

Although my country has been turned into a death camp, it remains, for me, a kind of centre. I mean a centre in the sense of direction and reference, centre in the sense of axis, but a centre, so to speak, without centrism. I say this precisely to confront Eurocentrism, and you should notice my citation policy that, thus far, mainly gathers thinkers and examples from worlds beyond Europe.

My goal is to place the foreigner before you and at the centre of the discourse to change how we listen. I think of the foreigner as the immigrant, the exile, and the asylum seeker. I intend to open our ears to a politics of openness, which we will call "the politics of listening". Considering that the neoliberal project is destroying the democracies of the world and generating more and more immigrants, exiles, and asylum seekers, it is necessary to help these populations to reconquer their territories, so that they do not need to submit to the condition of being a foreigner.

Incidentally, the condition of exile, which is becoming increasingly common as democracies are destroyed, is unique when reflecting on

the centre-periphery relation. Being exiled, an inhabitant of the margins, one is neither in the centre nor in the periphery. The exiled person is neither here nor there. They occupy a gap between worlds. Their place is in the state of exception, which in turn becomes the new order replacing democracies.

The theme of exile provides much substance to reflect on subjectivity in the capitalist era. An exile is someone who inhabits the state of exception in body and in life. In this sense, being exiled is also a feeling experienced by those who feel displaced in the world.

From the ethical-aesthetic-political alchemy method perspective that I suggested, we can say that the exiled individual enjoys certain advantages in their guise as a ghost citizen. Exiles can turn to any side and question centres, recreate new centres. Today's exiles are people from democracies destroyed by the power projects of neo-colonizers, the neo-imperialists who are advancing neoliberalism, the political economy of eternal fascism. In the future, if democracies continue to be destroyed, we will have a kind of territory of landless people, a fluctuating nation of exiles, people without citizenship. It is imperative that we consolidate democracies so that this does not happen, so that people are assured rights, and those who defend the rights of other humans and of nature are not massacred.

In this sense, the idea of democracy can advance towards territories. Democracy needs to be a principle on which territories become autonomous and able to recognize the other, their identity, and also the internal other, the foreigner understood as a friend and not an enemy.

In addition, considering the advance of a multipolar world, we can also rethink the right to a cosmopolitan citizenship, for human rights defenders and for all human beings in a better world for all. A world in which no one will need or want to leave their territories for the threats they face therein.

During this conference we are reflecting, thinking about what we do. We are also thinking about what we can do based on what we think. We need, therefore, to think about every aspect of what is in our minds, remembering that we take what we think from what others think. Dialogue implies an awareness of this process of being influenced and affected by thought and discourse outside us and of projecting that awareness into the world through contact.

Thinking is a complex concept that implies countless mental acts. However, we can focus on a few ways of thinking: logically, ethically, aesthetically, and politically.

A 19th century philosopher, as well known as ill-famed, said that philosophers had been concerned with explaining the world, but that it was necessary to transform the world.

At that time, this same philosopher spoke of a spectre hanging over Europe. Such was the spectre of communism. After the fascist war on communism, it became a mere imaginary enemy in a system that controls the imaginary. The function of the imaginary enemy was to promote war and capture consciousness.

However, this ghost has frayed the landscape of capitalist totalitarianism, to which we have become accustomed through long processes that adulate and seduce each one of us to join the masses. It is a fact, however, that after the communist—and the socialist, anarchist and feminist—demands, we and the world will never be the same. We transform the world knowing that this will not happen without deep reflection and a commitment to change.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Adorno, T. W. (1959). Theorie der Halbbildung. In A. Busch (Hrsg.), *Soziologie und moderne Gesellschaft: Verhandlungen des 14. Deutschen Soziologentages vom 20. bis 24. Mai 1959* in Berlin (S. 169-191). Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke.
- Adorno, T. W. (1974). Erziehung nach Auschwitz, In: -, *Stichworte; kritische Modelle 2*. Frankfurt, Suhrkamp. Translated by Aldo Onesti.' In: COHN, Gabriel (org). (1986). *Coleção "Grandes Cientistas Sociais: Adorno"*. São Paulo. Ática. Available at: <https://goo.gl/GhhyZP> or in translation by Wolfgang Leo Maar: <http://goo.gl/hkflJW>
- Agamben, G. (1998). *Homo Sacer: le pouvoir souverain et la vie nue*. Paris: La Seuil
- Andrade, O., de. (1976). O manifesto antropófago. In: TELES, Gilberto Mendonça. *Vanguarda européia e modernismo brasileiro: apresentação e crítica dos principais manifestos vanguardistas*. 3ª ed. Petrópolis: Vozes; Brasília: INL.
- Awondo, P. (2014). L'afropolitanisme en débat. *Politique Africaine* 2014/4 (N.136). pp.105-119. <https://www.cairn.info/revue-politique-africaine-2014-4-page-105.htm>
- Crespo, C. & Jefferson de Oliveira, B. (2020). Sumak Kawsay / Suma Qamaña: Horizontes Alternativos de Sociedad y Cultural desde los Imaginarios de los Pueblos Indígenas Andinos. *Revista Temas em Educação*, [S. l.], v. 29, n. 1. DOI: 10.22478/ufpb.2359-7003.2020v29n1.50868. Available at: <https://periodicos.ufpb.br/index.php/rteo/article/view/50868>. Accessed on 7 Sept. 2023.
- Lévy-Strauss, C. (1955). *Tristes Tropiques*. Paris: Plon, 1955.
- Miano, L. (2020). *Afropea. Utopie post-occidentale et post-raciste*. Paris : Grasset.
- Mbembe, A. (2017). *Políticas da Inimizade*. (M. Lança, Trans). Lisboa: Antígona. (2016) p. 250
- Quijano, A. (2009). Colonialidade do Poder e Classificação Social. In *Epistemologias do Sul* / org. Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Maria Paula Meneses. Coimbra: CES/ Almedina
- Rivera C., S. (2010). *Ch'ixinakax utxiwa. Una reflexión sobre prácticas y discursos descolonizadores*. Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón, Pinturas. 80 pp.
- Seganfredo, T. (2017, 21 November), Daniel Munduruku: "Eu não sou índio, não existem índios no Brasil", <https://www.nonada.com.br/2017/11/daniel-munduruku-eu-nao-sou-indio-nao-existem-indios-no-brasil/>, Nonada.
- Tiburi, M. (2021). *Complexo de Vira-lata - análise da humilhação brasileira*. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização brasileira

# **Community Artistic Practices and Civic/ Political Participation**

HUGO CRUZ

This text begins by borrowing an idea from Portuguese poet Sofia de Mello Breyner, "Art does not explain, it engages", as it efficiently summarizes the participative processes activated in community artistic practices. This idea encapsulates a long-standing opposition of views, and which emerges with particular intensity in the context of these practices during challenging historical moments for humanity, such as the one we are currently experiencing. This opposition of views refers to the social impact of culture versus the artistic value of this type of work. Thus, it is possible to invoke a perspective of opposition between the concepts of "art for art's sake" and "art with a social function", respectively emphasizing the associated dangers of alienation regarding social realities and the instrumentalization of art. Contrary to this hermetic binomial approach, it is interesting to assume, as defended by Bishop (2012), that "art and society are not meant to be reconciled or collapsing, but sustained in continuous tension" (p.6).

It is precisely because the approach is artistic that it builds knowledge idiosyncratically, which can enhance its relationship with the social dimension. In other words, it is essential to consider the intrinsic impact of art in the relationship it establishes with its social impact. Therefore, it is also necessary to talk about cultural and artistic impact, as well as social impact.

## **PARTICIPATION**

In this reflection, the concept of participation is seen as a common denominator to artistic and social approaches. When we talk about participating, we talk about “taking part”, “sharing” and “communication” (Ventosa, 2001). Participation implies the distribution of responsibilities and commitments in decision-making processes and respect for the political and civic rights of citizens, regardless of their differences (Sullivan & Transue, 1999). The nature of participation is to be voluntary and to enhance self-expression, to be directed towards everyone, in the sense of their involvement in decisions that impact the daily lives of individuals and communities. In this context, I highlight the right to participate in the cultural life of the community as a central element to realizing citizenship and democratic life, as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Constitution of the Portuguese Republic.

## **COMMUNITY ARTISTIC PRACTICES**

Community artistic practices are located as a hybrid field defined around collective creation, connection to the socio-political context, horizontal relationship between professional and non-professional artists, flexibility and openness of processes and results, shared authorship, critical reflection of artists and audience, joint negotiation and decision-making, as well as connection to the real concerns of citizens (Cruz, 2015; 2019; 2021 b).

The choice of the designation “community artistic practices” is justified by the need to reinvent the idea of community art from the 1960s



and 1970s. This decision emphasizes the following aspects: 1) it reinforces the idea of experimentation, openness to the process and disciplinary intersections, as well as valuing the practice and how it is constructed beyond the artistic techniques used. It also promotes the integration of alternative modes of functioning, regarding artistic production, analysis and reception; and it encourages open work, according to Eco (2009), perceiving each work of art as unique and a proposal for living in a shared world. 2) It values what comes before and after technique and spontaneity/genuineness, although they cannot be separated. The work of the artist thus functions as a bundle of relationships with the world, giving way to other relationships, and so on, in an infinite sense (Kuppers, 2007). 3) The community designation mobilizes community operating principles for creation processes, which impacts the relationships that are established between professional and non-professional artists, and also with the wider community.

In addition to access to cultural fruition, these practices also refer to the involvement of non-professional artists in the modes of cultural and artistic production. The relationship proposed in these practices is based on a bottom-up logic that comprises different aesthetics without predefined hierarchies between them. Several proposals have tried to organize cultural and artistic participation, generally conceiving them as a continuum that goes from non-participation, to incipient/illusory participation, to arrive at levels of greater autonomy in artistic creation (Brown et al., 2011; Dupin-Meynard, 2018).

### **THE QUALITY OF CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC PARTICIPATION**

In this context, the quality of cultural and artistic participation must be the central focus, above accepting the preconceived idea that participating for the sake of participating guarantees a positive artistic experience in itself (Menezes, 2003). Paying attention to this dimension can reduce the risk of generic ideas that associate participation with a "pan-

acea” or the involvement of individuals in a previously defined action, in its form and nature, without being defined by the individuals themselves. Democracies are showing immense signs of fragility, aggravated by the pandemic and the war, and it is in this scenario that participation has been called upon for its potential as a powerful contributor to the development of processes to reinvent systems and institutions. It is in this context that cultural and artistic participation has also gained centrality in contemporary artistic creation.

The quality of cultural and artistic participation thus refers to the creation of a place with singularities, alternative to everyday language, which allows for the conceptualization of aesthetic development as one of the dimensions of integrated human development. Attention to this quality can help to expand the creative potential and reduce the risks of instrumentalizing these practices.

## **THE RESEARCH**

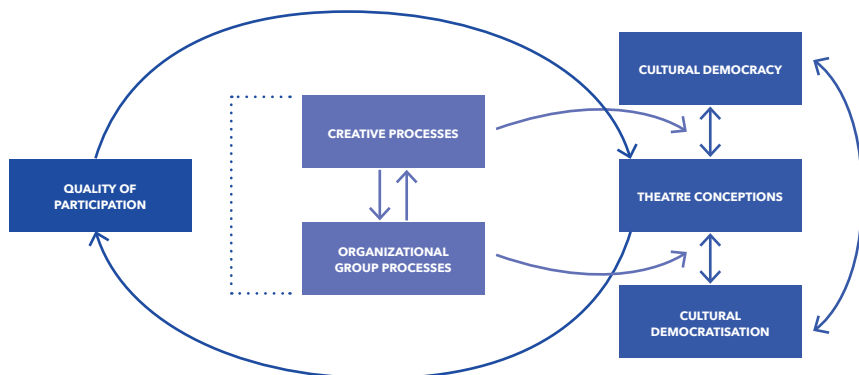
Three quantitative and qualitative studies were undertaken in Portugal and Brazil between 2017 and 2020. They involved 31 theatre collectives and more than 300 people who participated in this type of artistic practices. With these studies it was possible to identify the main elements of the quality of cultural and artistic participation: building a sense of effectiveness, connection, and mutual influence between creative and organizational aspects of these practices; the continuity of these types of actions; a predominantly procedural view, in which the final result is regarded as just one more moment in the processes; a presence of plurality and reflection; shared decision making; connection to the territory; involvement in creating meaningful and concrete issues related to everyday life; social interaction based on emotional aspects in addition to rational/concrete ones and abstraction; balance between action and reflection; the challenge of the actions developed; artistic methodologies that combine the artistic, educational and community

dimensions; perspectives of “learning to do” and “learning in action”, an eminently practical character; instrumental issues (e.g., appropriate schedules and locations) and the relationship with spaces of creation and presentation; horizontal and trusting relationships (Cruz, 2021a/c; Cruz, Bezelga, & Menezes, 2021).

According to the studies, it was possible to develop an organizing summary of five interrelated dimensions that structure this quality. The proposal includes an intensity gradation that varies differently throughout the processes in each of the dimensions, but which have mutual influences. The first dimension refers to the “forms of participation” of non-professional artists. The dimension “dynamics of creative processes” can be more result-oriented or process-oriented. The “fundamental

FORMS OF PARTICIPATION OF COMMUNITIES	DYNAMICS OF THE CREATIVE PROCESS	CORE THEMES	RELATIONSHIP PROFESSIONALS AND COMMUNITIES NON PROFESSIONALS	SPACES OF CREATION AND PRESENTATION
Passive (relationship with others)	Exclusively oriented towards the product (show) and centered only on individual "gains" of professionals and non professionals  Presentation of a show by professionals with community concerns	Without relationship with the communities where they present themselves, but with community concerns (professional)	Artists (actors) + artists (artistic direction)  Artists (actors) + artists (artistic direction) communities (non professionals)	Private spaces  Centres and/or peripheries
Intermediate (collective actions)	Participation of non professionals in some phases of the creative process  Participation of non professionals in all phases of the creative process  Group autonomy	Search on the communities where they present themselves (professionals)	Communities (non professionals) + artists (artistic direction)  Communities (non professionals) + artists (artistic direction) in a logic of monitoring	Public-private spaces  Connection between centres and peripheries
Active (community practices)	Oriented towards the process and product (show) and centered on individual and collective "gains"	Research on the community (professionals and non professionals)	Communities (non professionals) without monitoring by professionals	Public spaces

**Figure 1.** Structural dimensions of the quality of experiences of participation in artistic processes (Cruz et al., 2020).



**Figure 2.** Cycle of community artistic practices (Cruz et al., 2021).

themes” refer to how the theme is chosen and the research around it is developed. The dimension “professional and non-professional relationship” emphasizes the type of relationship established and the role of each person in it. Finally, the “spaces of creation and presentation” takes form in the gaps between public/private, centre/periphery and local/global. The effectiveness of cultural and artistic participation seems to depend, to a large extent, on the quality of the opportunities for participation they provide, connected to the specificity of the artistic approach.

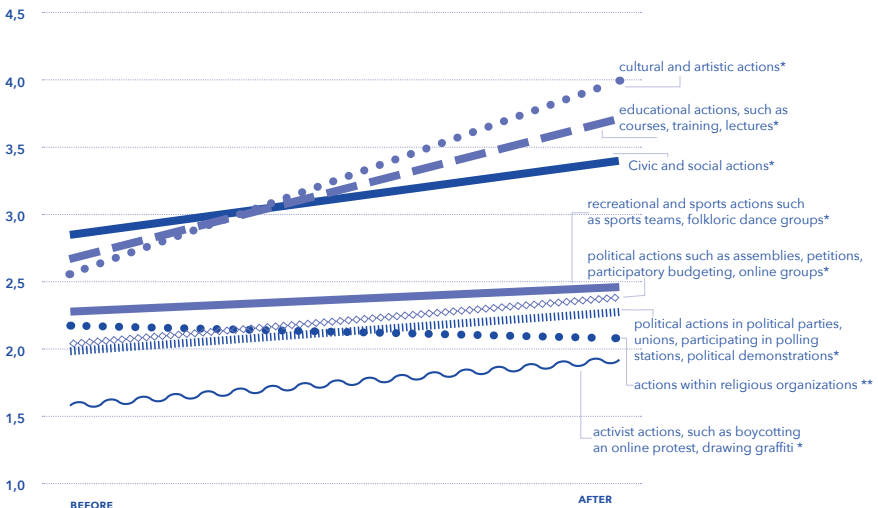
The quality of participation is manifested in the interrelated dimensions—creative processes and organizational group processes. These work dynamics, activated by the specificity of theatrical approaches (performance, physical theatre, devising, improvisation and anthropological research) seem to contribute to the development of theatre conceptions that express processes of democratization and cultural democracy. In addition, the quality of participation and theatre conceptions are related in a cyclical way, feeding back into their development process.

The last study used a questionnaire<sup>1</sup> built from qualitative studies and further examined the links between the defining elements of cultural

<sup>1</sup> The questionnaire “Community artistic practices and civic and political participation” (Cruz, Bezelga & Menezes, 2021) includes several dimensions, such as personal motivations for artistic creation, quality of cultural and artistic participation, as well as civic and political participation.

and artistic participation and civic and political participation. Through exploratory factor analysis, different scales emerged: personal motivations (personal and social development, theatrical technique, and socio-political); theatre conceptions (theatre for the sake of theatre, theatre and politics and theatre centred on real problems); quality of cultural and artistic participation and positive environment for creation and perceived global effects (individual and group/community and institutional).

Regarding the perceived effects, data analysis indicates an increase in the same type of actions after integration into the groups. For example, the development of aspects related to the quality of cultural and artistic participation can have an influence on the promotion of curiosity, willingness to learn, critical thinking and, thus, on later integration into training/educational actions and/or in civic/social actions.



\* significant for  $p < .001$  · \*\* not significant

**Figure 3.** Effects perceived by participants following their involvement in artistic creation groups (Cruz, 2021 b).

## FINAL REFLECTIONS

Based on the data presented above, community artistic practices are indeed well positioned to actively contribute to rethinking artistic creation, as well as civic and political participation, in the context of the current challenges we face (Cruz, 2023). Thus, when reflecting on artistic creation in the present and future, different points emerge that can be achieved at different levels:

- It can be viewed as a space for artistic experimentation, as well as political and community innovation.
- It can be used to reinvent spaces for creation/presentation and technologies for relating to audiences, experimenting with a path of greater proximity, intimacy, in an environment of care that does not separate life and art.
- It can lead to a greater ability to take risks in creation.
- It can lead to openness and dialogue to different aesthetics.
- It can lead to attention to reciprocity, continuous collaboration, more autonomy, and self-organization of these practices.
- It can be developed in spaces and based on concepts that are more connected with nature and non-human communities, with environmental sustainability concerns, but also sustainability in the production, creation, and circulation of artistic work.
- It can support the effective participation of local communities in the definition of policies, programmes, and creations.
- It can support the construction of a common vocabulary between teams and parties involved, as well as between cultural, social, educational, health, and environmental policies.
- It can be used to recreate devices for ongoing training with and between the different local agents that form the multi-sector network's practices.
- It can achieve greater proximity to citizens and blur the lines between art and life.

Returning to the beginning of this text, explaining less, and engaging more will, perhaps, be one of the greatest challenges we face now!

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bishop, C. (2012). *Artificial hells: Participatory art and the politics of spectatorship*. New York, NY: Verso.
- Brown, A. S., Novak-Leonard, J. L. & Gilbride, S. (2011). *Getting in on the act: How arts groups are creating opportunities for active participation*. San Francisco, CA: The James Irvine Foundation.
- Cruz, H. (2015) (Coord.). *Arte e Comunidade*. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian. [https://issuu.com/suricatadesignstudio/docs/artecomunidade\\_cap04\\_singles](https://issuu.com/suricatadesignstudio/docs/artecomunidade_cap04_singles)
- Cruz, H. (2019) (Coord.). *Art and Hope: PARTIS Iniciative Trajectories 2014-2018*. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian. <https://gulbenkian.pt/en/publications/arte-comunidade-percursos-da-iniciativa-partis/>
- Cruz, H. (2021 a). Práticas artísticas comunitárias e participação cívica e política: ações de grupos teatrais no Brasil e Portugal. *Pitágoras 500*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.20396/pita.v11i1.8664825>
- Cruz, H. (2021 b). *Práticas artísticas, participação e política*. Lisboa: Edições Colibri.
- Cruz, H. (2021 c). Artistic creation and participation in Portugal and Brazil: the urgencies of today. In Prentki, T. London: *Routledge Companion to Applied Performance*.
- Cruz, H. (2023) (Coord.). *Art, reinvention and futures*. Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian. [https://gulbenkian.pt/publications/arte-reinvencao-e-futuros/?fbclid=IwAR3P6zCQ1lsouvMwe1L4DVQGYLTNLNKGnEIA0vaFQtBH-xt\\_s8NQVdALyuQ](https://gulbenkian.pt/publications/arte-reinvencao-e-futuros/?fbclid=IwAR3P6zCQ1lsouvMwe1L4DVQGYLTNLNKGnEIA0vaFQtBH-xt_s8NQVdALyuQ)
- Cruz, H., Bezelga, I. & Menezes, I. (2020). For a typology of participation in the community artistic practices: the experience of three theatre groups in Brazil and Portugal. *Revista Brasileira de Estudos da Presença*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.1590/2237-266089422>.
- Cruz, H., Bezelga, I. & Menezes, I. (2021). The quality of participation of Brazilian theatre collectives in contexts of community artistic practices. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 26(4), 621-637. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569783.2021.1908883>
- Dupin-Meynard, F. (2018). Creative residencies: how does participation impact on artists, venues and participants? In Lluís Bonet & Emmanuel Négrier (Eds.), *Breaking the fourth wall: proactive audiences in performing arts* (pp. 106-115). Elverum: Kumskaipsverket.
- Eco, U. (2009). *Como se faz uma tese*. São Paulo: Perspectiva.
- Kuppers, P. (2007). *Community performance: an introduction*. London: Routledge.
- Menezes, I. (2003). Participation experiences and civic concepts, attitudes and engagement: Implications for citizenship education projects. *European Educational Research Journal*, 2(3), 430-445. <https://doi:10.2304/eeerj.2003.2.3.8>
- Sullivan, J., & Transue, J. E. (1999). The psychological underpinnings of democracy: a selective review of research on political tolerance, interpersonal trust and social capital. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 50(1), 625-650. <https://doi:10.1146/annurev.psych.50.1.625>
- Ventosa, V. (2001). *Desarrollo y evaluación de proyectos socioculturales*. Madrid: Editorial CCS.

# **Bread and Roses - Being the Centre? Peripheries and Cultural Policy**

EMMANUEL NÉGRER



## **INTRODUCTION**

Bread and Roses was the anthem of women textile workers of Lawrence, Massachusetts in the early 20th century. The lyrics include "Hearts starve as well as bodies. Give us bread, but give us roses". This idea of a struggle for both the material and the symbolic was taken up during the mobilization of the English gay and lesbian movement alongside the Welsh miners' strike in the 1980s. It is directly related to the way we need to think about the periphery in cultural, not just geographical, terms.

In this presentation, I offer a reflection on the use of the notion of periphery in the cultural domain. At the outset, I would like to say that this use is paradoxical. The paradox is that the evolution of this notion makes the reference to the periphery very complex. However, despite this complexity, peripherality remains a central issue in our democracies. It is all the more central when we approach it in the cultural domain.

## **BIRTH AND EXTENSION OF THE PERIPHERAL QUESTION**

First of all, I would like to recall the origin of the concept of centre/periphery. One of the great thinkers of centre-periphery relations is Samir Amin, in particular through his work: *Unequal Development* (1973). He is situated in the Marxist perspective of criticism of capitalism, but he brings a new historical and economic vision, compared to the classical domination of capital over labour. He indicates in particular that there is a difference in the relations of domination between two spaces: in the central space of capital accumulation, the proletariat has a certain capacity for autonomy and social elevation, to constitute the middle class. In the spaces far from the centre, the exploitation of labour takes much harsher, and even violent, forms, which deprive the proletariat of autonomy and capacity for elevation.

Samir Amin therefore pleads for an awareness, by the peripheral countries, of their condition of exploitation, and for the claim to be a new centre of world economic exchanges.

The centre-periphery vision is therefore, from the outset, a complexification of the relations of domination. It adds the spatial dimension to the simple economic aspect.

This vision has subsequently been used in a variety of ways. In political science, it has been used to show how public policy implementation, conceived on a central scale, was negotiated on a local scale. The idea is different here: the negotiation of the rule in peripheral spaces ultimately allows for social and political integration. In a democracy, the norm is not imposed brutally. It achieves efficiency through compromise. The centre-periphery relation becomes, beyond domination, a strategic interaction. In that interactive sense, we can speak of "peripheral power" (Grémion, 1976).

In electoral analysis, this notion of periphery is now used by geographers and political scientists to explain certain political behaviours, in particular the emergence of the extreme right. For them, the

motivation of the far-right voter is negative and is precisely linked to his or her peripheral situation, which is experienced as a lack of resources, an ostracism, which is expressed by the radicality of the vote (Lévy, 2022). The centre-periphery vision becomes a lever of critical mobilization. It is itself the object of controversy: is it enough to be far from the urban centre to be dominated? There are indeed thousands of dominated citizens who live in the heart of urban centres (Ripoll & Rivière, 2007). In fact, the majority of them live in the heart of urban centres throughout the world, and don't vote massively for far-right parties (Négrier, 2012).

By extending the notion of periphery to that of margin, we are witnessing a multiplication of peripheral or marginal situations, according to the diversity of their origin. Social class, gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation are today dimensions that divide societies; or by which one tries to divide them. Such a diversification drives to a more complex framework. There is a difference between what is complicated and what is complex. An issue is complicated when you know how to do it, but it's going to be hard to do. An issue becomes complex when you don't know how to do it.

The complexity of the peripheral issue today is related to the fact that these peripheral situations do not refer to the same social groups or individuals. One can be spatially marginal and socially dominant; one can belong to a sexual minority and be ethnically or culturally dominant.

The complexity of the situation is due to the lack of alignment between the peripheries. The perspective of realignment, intersectionality—i.e., the convergence of the margins to impose a new centre—faces great difficulties because of the contradictions between the respective interests. Another difficulty is the strategic divergences concerning the centre, or the centralities of our current societies. Indeed, if the peripheries have multiplied, it is because they also correspond to a plurality of possible centralities, that is to say of principles of domination. But the

coherence between the centres is much stronger than that between the peripheries, even if centrality is not free from internal contradictions, which are politically useful.

If peripherality has become complex, it nevertheless remains at the heart of democratic issues. This is very clear when we address the cultural dimension of the issue.

## **CULTURAL PERIPHERIES**

To understand the importance of the peripheral issue in culture, I will take three examples, each of which illustrates the problems we face. The first example is retrospective, about cultural policies in Southern Europe. The second example deals with the sociology of cultural practices. The third example concerns a current research project on festivals.

### **A) CULTURAL POLICIES IN SOUTHERN EUROPE**

This project was developed through a South European academic network (Pôle Sud, 1999). The challenge was to analyse the singularity of cultural policies in Southern Europe. We started by criticizing theories based on the alleged origins of a Southern European essence in culture. Historical, political, anthropological hypotheses were challenged: Southern Europe was different and less dynamic because of the recent experience of authoritarian regimes; it was different because of the singularity of its family structures; it was different because of forms of political clientelism exerting a strong influence on the cultural sector (Négrier, 2007).

None of these reasons explained the great diversity of public policies within this supposedly coherent ensemble in its peripheral location. Indeed, they were also present in other countries (an authoritarian past in Germany, political clientelism of which there is ample evidence elsewhere). The only singular element that we focused on was rather that Southern Europe was a laboratory for the hybridization of cultural poli-

cies. They are at the same time influenced by the market, by the public institution, but also by much more diffuse forms of self-organization, of inventive bricolage, more or less connected to cultural institutions.

The lesson of this first example is that no peripheral situation can be defined by a single criterion. In particular, the idea that the periphery is “backward” implies that the central models are more “advanced”, in a condescending way. This idea is not only a typical (and questionable) attempt to change space into time. It is also perfectly reversible. Are not the periphery and its inventive tinkering the cutting edge of contemporary cultural capitalism? Isn’t the creativity of the periphery both a constraint and a resource that central actors do not have at their disposal, due to their conservatism linked to vested interests?

## **B) PERIPHERIES IN THE STUDY OF CULTURAL PRACTICES**

The major sociological surveys on cultural practices (in France, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, or the United States) show the diversity of peripheral situations, from a social point of view. Everywhere the diploma is the dominant centrality. The higher the level, the more intense and varied the cultural practices. Bourdieu and Peterson are still right (Coulangeon, 2021). But this variable is not enough. We must also add the geographical criterion, which influences the level of cultural practices. We must also add the criterion of gender, which influences the type of practice, more than the intensity: women are over-represented in the audiences of dance and literature and under-represented in the audiences of jazz and vintage car magazines. We must also add the criterion of age, to understand the specificity of young people’s cultural tastes, for example (Glévarec, 2013). This question of youth culture is at the heart of a paradox very well identified by the anthropologist Carles Feixas, during a BeSpectACTive! conference in Novi Sad, this year: while youth is culturally hegemonic (almost everyone wants to be young, even in the senates of our liberal democracies), young people constitute a periphery of the social system

where they find it increasingly difficult to integrate (Feixas & Nilan, 2006). This is the paradox of the weak hegemony of youth.

But this research has an important bias: the sociology of practices is mainly concerned with the way in which people respond to an institutional, public, or private cultural offer. It therefore confirms, without necessarily wanting to, the hegemony of the centre. And above all, this sociology is silent on the value that people attribute to their cultural practices. Our current research on the social value of culture, with Félix Dupin-Meynard,<sup>1</sup> shows that the dominant value of cultural policies, which remains aesthetics, is not the one that dominates the appreciation by people in their cultural experience. More precisely, the aesthetic value is almost never identified in itself and separately. It is always linked to a sensory, social experience, in a particular spatial and temporal context. There is thus a social and political paradox of the aesthetic value. In a sense, it is another weak and questionable hegemony.

The lesson of this second example: the sociology of cultural practices confirms the diversification of the criteria of cultural peripherality, but it also leads to discuss the relevance of institutional models defining the value of culture.

### **C) THE PERIPHERY AT A GLANCE: THE EXAMPLE OF FESTIVALS**

To work in the cultural field is to work in a space of power relations. The experience of ten years of research on festivals allows us to become aware of the role of social sciences in the confirmation or the contestation of forms of domination in the cultural field. Festivalization has, everywhere in Europe, put an end to the cultural exception that the events represented. They are today a legitimate instrument of cultural policy. However, when the question of festivals is raised (by elected officials, cultural actors, journalists, etc.), it is always the same types of fes-

<sup>1</sup> Uncharted project is an international research network funded by European Union (H2020) whose objective are Understanding, Capturing and Fostering the Societal Value of Culture - <https://uncharted-culture.eu/>

tivals and their problems that are considered legitimate: large festivals, with a high level of public and private recognition, with problems of cost, audience, artistic exclusivity, and today of sobriety. However, when we count all the festivals in a country, these large festivals represent only 6% of the total number of events. Thus festivals are viewed unequally in a way that reinforces the domination of certain actors and promotes their problems as the legitimate problems of a sector, to the detriment of others (Djakouane & Négrier, 2021). The social sciences, with their own instruments of analysis, bear considerable responsibility on this point.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE?**

The peripheral question has thus exploded, there are a plurality of criteria for being in or out, and the centre-periphery relationship is also a question of perspective. It is therefore time to ask the Leninist question: what must be done?

Faced with an unsatisfactory situation, Albert Hirschmann has worked on the possible ways people react. "Voice" speaks of public protests (strike, demonstration, etc.); "exit" speaks of defection, of voluntary distancing; "loyalty" speaks of obedience out of respect for the order, to which one could also add "apathy" (Bajoit, 1988), which means total inaction. It seems to me that Stronger Peripheries and BeSpectACTive! show a fifth attitude: "alternative building" (certainly thanks to the European centre, certainly with actors who are very well known in their artistic fields, but by carrying out alternative projects with citizens, often in peripheral spaces: rural, in underprivileged neighbourhoods, with youth, etc.).

The title I was given for this keynote was "Being the centre". This title needs to be discussed. Does the peripheral "cause" imply that the periphery becomes the centre? This is not necessarily a good idea. According to Claude Lefort (1981), a post-Marxist philosopher of the late 20th century, the democratic invention is precisely the questioning of the centre. Democracy is the empty throne. Democracy is the weak

centre, because it is always in question. The mission of the periphery is therefore to be the nightmare of the centre, not its replacement. It is not a matter of becoming the centre, but of betraying it. To illustrate this idea, I will refer to two Nobel Prize winners in literature, one Portuguese, the other French.

In *Ensaio sobre a Lucidez*, José Saramago tells the story of an election in which the people defect, first by not voting, then by en masse blank voting! The political centre becomes paranoid, ridiculous. It decrees a state of siege. The people remain joyful, make fun of the power and its theatricality. The people (here: the periphery of the political system) do not seek to become the centre. It recovers a critical function by irony. It shows that the king is naked. The periphery is the nightmare of the centre.

In all her literary work, Annie Ernaux evokes the question of class defectors: those who were born in a working-class environment, but whose path (educational, professional) leads them to a bourgeois status (Ernaux, 2008). This is her case. In her literary work, she claims a flat writing, without embellishment or “bourgeois” style effects. It is through this writing that she reveals her popular milieu, of her periphery. She makes exist, by the art, a social space considered as unworthy by the (political and literary) system. By doing so, she rejects two ordinary ways of considering the periphery: miserabilism and populism. Miserabilism is the condescending recognition of the periphery. It is recognized only on the condition that it remains peripheral, and that the centre remains itself. Populism is the claim to make the periphery, with a risk of demagogy, the new centre. This double rejection, by Annie Ernaux, allows first of all to consider the periphery as an alive space, socially and culturally. It is not defined by the lack of what the centre has. The periphery is not deprivation, it is humanity. This rejection also allows us to see the centre as it is: not the place of legitimacy, but the place of a questionable pretention. I therefore plead to discuss the relevance of the peripheries in claiming centrality with the aim to make society.



**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Amin, S. (1973). *Le développement inégal. Essai sur les formations sociales du capitalisme périphérique*. Paris: Éditions de Minuit
- Bajoit, G. (1988). "Exit, voice, loyalty... and apathy. Les réactions individuelles au mécontentement". *Revue Française de Sociologie* n°29-2, p.325-345
- Coulangeon, P. (2021). *Culture de masse et structure de classes. Le goût de l'altérité*. Paris, PUF.
- Djakouane, A. & Négrier, E. (2021) *Festivals, territoire et société*, Paris, Les Presses de Sciences Po, series: "Questions de culture".
- Ernaux, A. (2008). *Les années*, Paris: Gallimard
- Feixas, C. & Nilan, P. (2006). *Global Youth? Hybrid Identities, Plural Worlds*. London: Routledge
- Glévarec, H. (2013). *La culture à l'ère de la diversité*. La Tour d'Aigues: Éditions de L'Aube, collection *Monde en cours*
- Grémion, P. (1976). *Le Pouvoir périphérique*. Paris: Le Seuil
- Hirschmann, A. (1970). *Exit, Voice and Loyalty. Responses to decline in firms, organizations and states*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press
- Lefort, C. (1981). *L'invention démocratique. Les limites de la domination totalitaire*. Paris: Fayard
- Lévy, J. (2022). *Géographie du politique*. Paris: Odile Jacob
- Négrier, E. (2007). "Políticas culturales: Francia y Europa del Sur". *Política y Sociedad* vol.44, n°3, p.54-70
- Négrier, E. (2012). "Le Pen et le peuple. Géopolitiques du vote FN en Languedoc-Roussillon". *Pôle Sud* n°37, p.153-164
- Pôle Sud* n°10 (1999). *Les politiques culturelles en Europe du Sud* (special issue)
- Ripoll, F. & Rivière, J. (2007). "La ville dense comme seul espace légitime ? Analyse critique d'un discours dominant sur le vote et l'urbain". *Les Annales de la Recherche Urbaine* n°102, p.120-130
- Saramago, J. (2004). *Ensaio sobre a lucidez*. Porto: Editoria Caminho

# **Thinking the Periphery: Self-production, Displacement and Resistance**

ANA RITA ALVES

In 2020, Welket Bungué shot *Treino Periférico* [Peripheral Workout], a thought-provoking short film on bodies as peripheral territories housing memories, odour, and taste. In the film, *Raça* [Race] (Bruno Huca) and *Coragem* [Courage] (Isabél Zuaa) walk, dance and talk about urban landscapes and their meanings, claiming the peripheral workout as the only way to expand the universes hidden behind every window: black and ancestral universes that once inhabited the streets of *Mocambo* (Lisbon) or the alleys of *Fim do Mundo* (Cascais)—peripheral places within and near the city of Lisbon—essential for black people’s well-being and lives under the name of, yet beyond anti-blackness. And, although some of these self-produced spaces, such as *Cova da Moura* (Amadora) or 2° *Torrão* (Almada) have resisted the erosion of political time, the overwhelming majority of Lisbon Metropolitan Area neighbourhoods—as real or imagined quintessential urban peripheries in Portugal—collapsed as a result of public policy. Thousands of families were displaced when machines reduced everything to dust, leaving the also peripheral inhabitants of the buildings in the surrounding areas in “safety”, such as in the case of *Urbanização de Vila Chã* right next to the self-produced neighbourhood of Santa Filomena (Amadora) (Vila Cha, n.d.). Evicted

or relocated in often far-away and overcrowded neighbourhoods, the inhabitants of what was then the periphery of the periphery were peripheralized to public housing projects (Alves, 2013, 2021; Ascensão e Leal, 2019), where home—now, in the building—was no longer where the heart was, often contrary to expectations. It was under the auspices of enforcing that agreed on the back of the 1974 Revolution—and, in part, doing so—that the Special Rehousing Programme (PER) was responsible for destroying historical communities, giving way to speculative urban plots, roads, new urban designs and city projects that, time and again, excluded the plundered bodies of racial capitalism from the most valuable urban areas. It pushed Black, Roma, migrant and impoverished populations to new urban margins, expanding the city beyond its own borders, building a second periphery of monotonous constructions often segregated from the rest of the social fabric (Idealista, 2019; Alves, 2013, 2021). If urban development had turned self-produced neighbourhoods located on the outskirts of Lisbon into centres, relocation pushed them away.

Between what fell and what remained, the periphery was now more spacious. Whether self-built on lands they actually owned, such as the case of Brandoa (the biggest self-built neighbourhood in Europe, in Amadora), or on informally claimed lands now subject to eviction, their formal ownership having been denied, the periphery was now able to welcome masses of people, who had arrived not from the provinces or the archipelagos of the Azores or Cape Verde, but from Lisbon city centre.

\*

Property investment funds, non-habitual residents (Decree-Law 259, 2009), golden visas (Presidential Decree 138, 2012) and the tourism industry were said to be the only possible solutions to the consequences of the financial banking crash, while at the same time this crash was

declared to be the direct consequence of individual choices made by a European periphery that had—they said—dared to live beyond its means (Observador, 2015; SIC Notícias, 2014). And, as such, this debt's interest would have to be paid with life or death (Pordata, 2022). I remember Ricardina, evicted from her house in the neighbourhood of Santa Filomena, humiliated, wrapped up in a sheet, in 2012 (Público, 2012), as I remember Maria who, in 2017, committed suicide in Penacova before the enforcement officers, the National Republican Guard (GNR) and the spring arrived (Silva, 2015).

Faced with a financial crisis that now was consuming a whole country, violence and plundering spread like a political grammar, overrunning the borders of bodies, as peripheral territories, and peripheralizing others. The financial collapse of a semi-peripheral economy revealed the position of southern countries as subsidiary to the northern and central European economies (Santos & Reis, 2018). This affected tenants and small business owners. At times beneficiaries of rent freezes or subsidized loans (Ribeiro & Santos, 2019), these people were now evicted on the pretext of extensive works, rent arrears or for failing to comply with bank loan terms—since property will always be valued more as an asset than a social good in the capitalist system. Housing had publicly and definitively become a financial asset.

I still imagine that it was during this peak that those violently evicted from the periphery—heralds of the gentrification processes now swallowing up the capital—expected what was happening in Amadora to be linked to the events in Lisbon, but no. The eviction of families, the elderly and groups who had historically lived in neighbourhoods like Intendente and Graça (in the centre of Lisbon) were understood more as a tragedy than as a farse. In the end Lisbon was not Amadora, and Graça was certainly not Santa Filomena. That would mean recognizing that those living in Amadora and Santa Filomena were also humans, who deserved just as much protection and care as those in Lisbon. In Amadora, the im-

possibility of seeing Black and Roma people faced with the violence of the evictions as victims was consolidating socialist political hegemonies; in Lisbon it seemed to transform into widespread public commotion. Evictions were finally considered a tragedy and housing a constitutional, fundamental right that must be protected. As such, the centrality of certain bodies and territories, together with notions of legality and property, legitimized those who could belong and should, therefore, remain.

At the time, the amount of news, complaints from residents, collectives, and associations, as well as growing daily protests and organized demonstrations put the right to housing on the public agenda, increasing pressure on local and national authorities. I remember how Lisbon City Council was forced to negotiate and assure 16 families the right to remain in a building in Rua dos Lagares (a street in a popular Lisbon neighbourhood) in 2017 (Habita, 2019; Público, 2017), just how I remember the opening of a Comprehensive Intervention Unit for the Accompaniment of Evictions helpline in 2018, that reflected a will to at least monitor evictions (Lisboa, 2018). These measures were a sign that the authorities were concerned and recognized evictions as a problem that deserved institutional attention and intervention, in contrast to what had been happening in Amadora, where public programmes and local authorities were the cause of the evictions, and the national government stayed silent, shielded by the principle of non-interference in local authority business. Without opposition, the tragedy worsened and intensified. During this time a flurry of housing measures were implemented: Secretariat of State for Housing in 2017; New Generation Housing Policies in 2018; the new Urban Housing Rent Regime was partially derogated “to reinforce the security and stability of urban renting and protect particularly vulnerable tenants” (Decree-Law 13, 2019, p.1173); the Basic Housing Law in 2019 that, among other things, prohibited evictions where no other housing options were provided; a new Housing Ministry in 2023 (Decree-Law 83, 2019).

While it may be true that, to now, this package of measures, namely the New Generation of Housing Policies, has taken a palliative approach to resolving the country's widespread housing precarity and that, according to Ana Cordeiro Santos (2019), these measures preserve "the regulatory framework" of the property sector and "promote its interests even further" (p.301), it is doubtless that political power mobilized only when the hecatomb went beyond bodies as peripheral territories, through private holdings and with public support. However, public housing evictions now added to private market evictions (Saaristo, 2022). To be sure, public housing came under greater pressure as the financial crisis, increased rent, overcrowding and the absence of provisions to re-house large family units, made living unsustainable for the most impoverished, often single parent, families. While the State often justifies these evictions saying they restore legality and disincentivize the squatting of houses already assigned to other families, as local authority workers often argue, it is still curious that the increase in evictions seem to have gained visibility precisely as they prepare to implement a new public housing policy, the Programme to Support Housing Access - 1st Right. Local authority assessments and Local Housing Strategies (ELHs) have revealed that, instead of the 26,000 households identified by the National Rehousing Needs Survey in 2018, a total of 80,000 families require rehousing (Jorge, 2022). As local authorities undertake these tasks, and the Housing and Urban Rehabilitation Institute (IHRU) prepares to municipalize its housing stock, these evictions may have been used to empty houses previously identified as solutions in the Local Housing Strategies. If so, as with the Special Rehousing Programme, the "First Right"—a public policy aimed at eliminating inequalities in access to housing—seems to cause forced evictions, which makes families homeless or pushes them outside the municipality entirely. Urban transformations in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area reveals how peripheries have been expanded, to a large extent, through processes that increase housing precarity and

outright eviction, coordinated by national and local authorities, working with the private market. With no authorization to remain, inhabitants of the city of Lisbon are left to move to neighbouring municipalities like Amadora or Almada to find their own housing, pay rents they cannot afford or live in overcrowded conditions, often in extremely unsanitary spaces, guesthouses, basements, and ground floors plagued by premature death, as happened in Mouraria, in February 2023.

\*

I have worked for the last decade in this context of profound change and loss, in which evictions and rehousing are changing the face of cities, to analyse the intersection between race, territory, displacement and political violence in the council of Amadora. Perhaps specifically because of this, it felt natural to accept the invitation to speak at this conference. However, I must confess that as time passed and I urgently needed to consider exactly what I could bring to an interdisciplinary discussion about the relationship between peripheries, cultural policies, and participation, I started to ask myself about the meaning of the word periphery beyond its empirical uses. I scoured the literature for academic articles that debated the concept, without success. Frequently used in Portuguese academic and media contexts, only geographer Álvaro Domingues (1994/5) seems to have explored the concept's possible meanings, something he would do again at this conference, demonstrating how the debate is largely untouched. As argued by sociologist Loïc Wacquant's article, "What is the Ghetto?" (Wacquant, 2004), the concept of periphery itself—just like the concept of ghetto—seems to be primarily descriptive not analytic. So, although periphery is commonly used to describe urban margins and, sometimes political and economic ones, it is difficult to find sociological definitions.

The concepts of urban periphery and of the suburbs have become so banal that today it is difficult to find a clear and agreed on definition of



these concepts. It is not admirable that this is so, these concepts are usually used in a negative and relative way, that is, in contrast with a centre.

It is the degree of distance from a centre that clarifies the peripheral position (physical, social, morphological, etc.). This is, the further away, the greater the visibility, positioning, power and clarity of the attributes of the central condition. As regards the household unit, periphery means, in this case too, not the density or the intensity of the internal interrelations on the local level, but on dependency, a reporting to central areas and destination places of swing inhabitants. (Domingues, 1994/5, p.5).

Therefore, to think today about periphery(ies) seems to require a provincialization of the centre and to explore the polysemy of a concept that translates spatial relations but also complex economic and political realities. The periphery is relational, scalar, and hierarchical, conveying ideas about space (border, access), power (economic and political) and knowledge. The periphery is simultaneously an invented and a real space that retells the relation between racial capitalism, territory, industrialization, migration, housing, urbanization, class, race, and violence. And, if inhabiting the periphery means being subject to forms of "organized abandonment" (Bhandar, 2022), that correspond to the way in which a "group of institutions, both public and private, operate to promote private gains at the cost of specific populations", to inhabit the periphery may also mean that "freedom is a place" (Gilmore, 2022), through the creation of aesthetic and political practices and languages of resistance and emancipation. Although Portugal is not Brazil—where ideas of periphery and the peripheral were widely appropriated and reassigned meaning by those who inhabit them, serving to make violence visible, highlighting the production of perspectives, cosmologies and value, and demanding humanity and rights—the peripheral condition has also been reclaimed, in the Portuguese context through categories such as the "Margem Sul" (Lisbon South Bay), "Linha de Sintra" (Sintra Railway

Line), “BSF” (the Santa Filomena neighbourhood) or “Gueto Six” (the 6 de Maio neighbourhood).

However, the concept of periphery has essentially been defined, in public debate, by the academic, mediatic and political centre<sup>1</sup> in an attempt to make it legible in its eyes. Therefore, contrary to what is often said, the periphery is not an invisible space, but is made visible through specific devices and framings that oscillate between denouncement, criminalization, exoticization, and voyeurism. The proliferation of news, reports, studies, and films in recent decades that focus on the periphery, particularly those about self-produced and rehousing neighbourhoods, is proof enough of the fascination that those who do not live in the periphery feel for it (Alves, 2013, 2021). Also, the way in which sovereignty and urban security have come together in public policy implementation; whether in housing or security, policies involve the profiling of bodies and territories declared dangerous, such as the Special Rehousing Programmes or the Sensitive Urban Zones (ZUS). That is, in a context in which the State is hyper absent in terms of rights, but hyper present in terms of abandonment, that it justifies through the criminalization of bodies as peripheral territories, the periphery is essentially a space imagined and invented by political discourse, then made real—as (institutional) stories and practices produce reality. However, the periphery is, by its very condition, a space of resistance, a space of critical thinking and of collective organization. It spreads through a collection of grassroot associations (such as Moinho da Juventude), in political initiatives such

---

1 A series of articles that demonstrate this can be found here: <https://revistaperiferias.org/materia/viajando-por-periferias-diversas-e-criativas-de-lisboa/>; <https://journals.openedition.org/eces/5361>; <https://www.repository.utl.pt/handle/10400.5/16541?locale=en>; <https://www.dinheirovivo.pt/opiniao/portugal-uma-periferia-cada-vez-mais-isolada-14027453.html>; <https://www.jn.pt/nacional/especial/especulacao-empurra-moradores-para-periferia-de-porto-e-lisboa-9128963.html>; <https://amensagem.pt/2022/05/20/os-mapas-que-contam-lisboa-alem-da-geografia-brito-guterres/>; <https://www.publico.pt/2022/08/26/culturaipylon/noticia/ulisses-periferia-festival-faz-galinheiras-principio-lisboa-2018141>; <https://www.cmjornal.pt/sociedade/detalhe/municipios-perifericos-de-lisboa-com-aumento-da-procura-e-do-preco-das-casas>; <https://repositorio.iscte-iul.pt/handle/10071/1304>; <https://www.dn.pt/sociedade/a-violencia-na-familia-e-o-caldeirao-onde-muita-desta-delinquencia-ganha-forma-14934484.html>

as the Residents Assembly (2017) or in cultural or artistic production, highlighted by rap sung in Cape-Verdean and books which dare to not forget the places that no longer exist (Borges, 2012; Cardoso, 2022). In fact, as the anthropologist Faye Harrison (1988) argued, the periphery “while formed in large measure by discrimination and exclusion, has historically been an important locus of critique, and creativity. And it has been a significant intellectual front for anti-racist, anti-colonial, and anti-imperialist struggle.” (p.114). I do not intend to argue that the periphery is limited to self-produced neighbourhoods or public housing, but that these, in the Portuguese context, represent the essence of the idea of periphery. The remaining urban sprawl that surrounds the centre of the city, its suburbs—one of the variants of the peripheral condition—would also be a part of it, as well as the precarious housing or the impoverished self-produced and public housing neighbourhoods that cling on in the centre of the city. In fact, the periphery, which is scalar, relational, and hierarchical, accumulates meanings that do not conform to spatial aspects, but that translate, in space and through its reproduction, specific power relations, closely linked to those who inhabit them. In this way, it can be argued that the idea of periphery materializes a collection of global power relations established within the sphere of racial capitalism, to be tackled, to a large extent, through peripheral workouts and action.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alves, A.R. (2013). Para uma compreensão da segregação residencial: o Plano Especial de Realojamento e o (Anti-)Racismo. Dissertação Final do Mestrado em Migrações, Interetnicidades e Transnacionalismo. Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas. Retrieved 20 November 2021 from <http://hdl.handle.net/10362/11581>.
- Alves, A.R. (2021). *Quando Ninguém Podia Ficar. Racismo, Habitação e Território*. Lisbon. Tigre de Papel.
- Ascensão, E. and Leal, M. (2019). Análise espacial, *PER Atlas*. exPERts Project. Accessed on 9 July 2021 from <http://expertsproject.ics.ulisboa.pt/analise.html>.
- Bhandar, B. (2022). Organised state abandonment: the meaning of Grenfell. *The Sociological Review*, 4th October. <https://thesociologicalreview.org/magazine/october-2022/verticality/organised-state-abandonment/>.
- Borges, S.V. (2014). *Na Pó Di Spera: Percursos nos Bairros da Estrada Militar, de Santa Filomena e da Encosta Nascente*. Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Principia. Lisbon.
- Bungué, W. (2020). *Treino Periférico*. Portugal, Guinea-Bissau. 00:20.
- Câmara Municipal de Lisboa. (2018). "Intervenção integrada de acompanhamento aos despejos", 1 June. Accessed on 10 October 2022. <https://www.lisboa.pt/actualidade/noticias/detalhe/intervencao-integrada-de-acompanhamento-aos-despejos>.
- Cardoso, M. A. (2021). *A Pedreira dos Húngaros*. Lisboa: Chiado Editora.
- Domingues, Álvaro. (1994/5). (Sub)úrbios e (Sub)urbanos: o mal estar da periferia ou a mistificação dos conceitos?. *Revista da Faculdade de Letras - Geografia*, I Série, Vol. X/XI, pp. 5-18.
- Gilmore, R. W. (2022). *Abolition Geography. Essays Towards Liberation*. London and New York: Verso.
- Harrison, F. (1988). Introduction: An African Diaspora perspective for urban anthropology. *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development*, 17 (2/3), Black Folks in Cities Here and There: Changing Patterns of Domination and Response. pp. 111-141.
- Idealista. (2019). "Terrenos da Pedreira dos Húngaros sem interessados - este mês há novo leilão em Oeiras", 1 April. Accessed on 10 October 2022. <https://www.idealista.pt/news/imobiliario/habitacao/2019/03/29/39228-terrenos-da-pedreira-dos-hungaros-sao-mais-de-14-mil-m2-sem-interessados-este-mes>.
- HABITA. (2019). "A Rua dos Lagares mostra-nos que é possível travar os despejos", 19 April. Accessed on 10 October 2022. <https://habita.info/a-rua-dos-lagares-mostra-nos-que-e-possivel-travar-os-despejos/>.
- Instituto da Habitação e da Reabilitação Urbana (IHRU). (February 2018). *Levantamento Nacional das Necessidades de Realojamento Habitacional*.
- Jorge, S. (2022). Habitação em Portugal. Perguntas que carecem de respostas. *Intelcities*, pp. 28-29.
- Observador. (2015). "Pedro e os mitos. O que Passos disse e não disse - em oito frases polémicas". Accessed on 15 October 2022. <https://observador.pt/2015/06/19/7-frases-polemicas-passos-coelho-disse-mesmo-isto>.
- Pordata. (2022). "Óbitos de residentes em Portugal por algumas causas de morte". Accessed on 15 October 2022. <https://www.pordata.pt/portugal/obitos+de+residentes+em+portugal+por+algumas+causas+de+morte-156-235702>.
- Portuguese Government. (2019). Decree-Law 83/2019, 3 September. *Diário da República* 168/2019, Series I 2019-09-03, Article 16.
- Portuguese Government. (2019). Law 13/2019, 12 February. *Diário da República* 30/2019, Series I 2019-02-12. p. 1173 - 1181.

- Portuguese Government. (2012). President of the Republic Decree 138/2012, 9 August. *Diário da República*. Series I –No. 154–9 August 2012, Article 3.
- Portuguese Government. (2009). Decree-Law 259/2009, 23 September. *Diário da República* 185/2009. Series I 2009-09-23, Article 16.
- Público. (2017). “Câmara de Lisboa impede despejos na Mouraria com licenciamento expresso”, 8 August. Accessed on 10 October 2022. <https://www.publico.pt/2017/08/08/local/noticia/moradores-da-mouraria-em-lisboa-va-o-poder-continuar-nas-suas-casas-1781694>
- Público. (2012). “Câmara da Amadora volta a demolir no Bairro de Santa Filomena”. 20 November. Accessed on 15 October 2022. <https://www.publico.pt/2012/11/20/jornal/camara-da-amadora-volta-a-demolir-no-bairro-de-santa-filomena-25617952>.
- Ribeiro, R. & SANTOS, A. C. (2019). Financeirização da habitação e desigualdades socioterritoriais: um estudo comparado das Áreas Metropolitanas de Lisboa e do Porto. *Análise Social*. LIV (4): 726-758.
- Saaristo, S. M. (2022). “Informal Modes of Governance: Negotiating Evictions and Housing Rights in Lisbon, Portugal”. *Radical Housing Journal* 4(1) (Special issue on Carcerality, Housing Precarity and Abolition. <https://doi.org/10.54825/SKGV4690>.
- Santos, A.C. & Reis, J. (2018). “Portugal: uma semiperiferia reconfigurada”. *e-cadernos ces* 29. pp. 57-75.
- SIC Notícias. (2014). “Portugueses têm de deixar de viver acima das possibilidades (2014), Sic Notícias”, 24 October. Accessed on 15 October 2022. <https://sicnoticias.pt/economia/2014-10-24-Portugueses-tem-de-deixar-de-viver-acima-das-possibilidades-6>.
- Silva, R. (2017). “ Maria, entre o despejo e a morte, escolheu a morte”. *Esquerda.net*. 14 March. Accessed on 15 October 2022. <https://www.esquerda.net/opiniao/maria-entre-o-despejo-e-morte-escolheu-morte/47574>.
- Wacquant, L. (2004). Que é o Gueto? Construindo um conceito Sociológico. *Revista de Sociologia e Política*, 23. pp. 155-164.
- Vila Chã. (2008). “Mina em festa a pensar no futuro”. 15 April. Accessed on 15 October 2022. <http://vila-cha.blogspot.com>

# **Quinta do Ferro, from Participation to Gentrification**

**How public policies can drive land value decreases, increase precarity and create better conditions for private real estate funds to operate and profit**

TIAGO MOTA SARAIVA

I'm the author<sup>1</sup> of the urban plan proposal that came out of the participatory process held in the neighbourhood in 2016 and 2017. From then on, I also followed the fight for its visibility and, nowadays, I'm taking part in the city council-led urban regeneration process as technical support to the *Amigos da Quinta do Ferro* (the Landowners' and Tenants' association).

Quinta do Ferro is a neighbourhood that stood in the shadow of the city, located in between the touristic historical area of Santa Clara/Graça and a dense residential area mostly built over the last fifty years that starts at Rua Leite Vasconcelos. In March 2022, in an article published by the daily newspaper Público (Muschketat, 2022) (and after several articles and television reports highlighting the poor conditions of the neighbourhood), Quinta do Ferro was defined as an "island of poverty" in Lisbon city centre. In 2015, José Rosa (landowner of a small property within Quinta do Ferro and now President of the Landowners' and Tenants' Association) knocked on our door at Working with the 99%. He had seen a television programme (SIC Notícias, 2016) in which ateliermob and Working with the 99% had participated and explained their work methodologies. His main question was: shall I sell the plot I own or is there any possibility of regenerating the whole area? This was the first time I heard about Quinta do Ferro.

The movement started with the constitution of an informal group. This group organized the first meeting on 15 March 2016, at the Auditorium of the São Vicente local council. Seven landowners partici-

---

<sup>1</sup> This article is written by someone that has been working in Quinta do Ferro since 2015.

pated and provided information about other people who might be interested in participating. On 3 April, in a meeting held at the Working With the 99% + ateliermob architecture office, participation doubled. From this meeting, a group was created to meet with the local council (*Junta de Freguesia de São Vicente*) and to try to gather more information on residents and owners.

In June, a partnership promoted by the cooperative Working with the 99% and working alongside the informal Quinta do Ferro Landowners' and Tenants' Association, the *Clube Desportivo da Graça* and Urban Sketchers of Portugal, applied to the BIP/ZIP programme for funding<sup>2</sup>. The *Quinta do Ferro Participa* proposal was approved for one year of funding. Within the scope of BIP/ZIP, on 20 November 2016, a *Magusto*<sup>3</sup> was held at the Santa Clara Market—the first successful event that gathered tenants and landowners—, and the Urban Sketchers of Portugal started recording everything from events to daily lives. On 9 January 2017, the neighbours' association was formally registered as a collective.

The Working with the 99% team spent the following year developing its participatory planning methodology. The first step was a local survey organized over two days. This survey was answered by more than four dozen residents. One third were female, mostly aged over 51 years old. On average they had lived in the neighbourhood for 24 years. People liked to live there; they wanted to stay in the neighbourhood but mostly asked for building renovations. Basic needs were identified: lack of sanitation facilities, structural problems, and house leaks, unhealthy urban spaces due to the accumulation of waste and rats. Tourism was identified as a problem that was increasing rents and daily expenses. At the same time, the local council was building a carpark on a public plot. Residents stated they

---

<sup>2</sup> BIP/ZIP program is a Lisbon municipality programme that supports one-year projects by local and non-profit institution over the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city.

<sup>3</sup> Magusto is a Portuguese popular celebration of Autumn where groups of friends and family get together to eat baked chestnuts and drink two traditional Portuguese alcoholic beverages: jeropiga and água-pé



didn't need more places to park their cars and asked for a public square they could use. In this first attempt at participation, with a clean sheet for proposals, people asked for a square with intergenerational public spaces, pavement improvements, more green areas, and urban gardening.

We thought we had a programme, but our first drawings were rejected.

During the first local assembly to discuss the basic structure of the urban plan we realized that urban gardening was something that sounded good but what people really need was decent, affordable houses and urban public space. Our first proposal, based on the 40% who prioritized a green park and 26% who asked for urban gardening in the survey, seemed obsolete. In theory all people had was this idyllic view of a greener city which they tended to replicate. However, when the problem was more grounded and adapted to its pragmatic situation, priorities changed. People talked more about decent houses, public spaces, and connections than urban gardens.

Tenants defend fair rents, landowners—some with low incomes—defend public engagement on urban and building renovation. To make the first plan sketch, people had to concentrate on what really mattered to them. This was also when we started to be considered as urban planners, and not as people with good intentions that promote surveys and gatherings.

## **DISURBANISM**

The disurbanism in Quinta do Ferro is quite clear with buildings in states of disrepair, no pavements, and littered streets. It's easy to visualize it, to find an image that shows it. However, landowners have, from the beginning of the process, complained of the obstacle that the council represents. Every time someone tries to get a renovation building permit, the council takes a long time to answer and often say no. Sometimes, the answer never comes. This also constitutes part of the structural idea of State absence that people may feel at Quinta do Ferro.

On 14 October 2021, Ricardo Veludo, the city councillor for urban planning (2019-2021) answered<sup>4</sup> a question posed by Ana Jara, a local elected Communist Party MP. The response stated that, since 2013, the city council had received 57 renovation/new construction project proposals. Eight were approved or in process to be approved, four were rejected and the developers were informed. Even though Ricardo Veludo stated that all projects had received feedback at some point, people are right in what they say. The city council's urban planning department seems to ignore proposals from locally based developers, but it has been fast to consider new/big investors that operate all over the city.

The 2017 urban plan never received a formal answer. Several meetings were held, but the most important informal feedback was given, in 2019, when the Lisbon urban planning director, Paulo Pais, declared in a meeting held with the locally based association that the only way Quinta do Ferro could be renovated was if it lost its small-scale property ownership structure and a big real estate developer became a major owner. Then, the council would be interested in entering into a partnership to undergo urban renewal. Despite this meeting, no formal feedback was given.

In the meantime, during COVID19 lockdown, social support services seemed to be unaware of the desperate conditions in Quinta do Ferro. Over the first weeks of lockdown, several COVID19 positive cases were reported, and some people couldn't stay at home. The association played an important role in identifying inhabitants in need of basic food baskets provided by the local and city councils. An absence of state policies, welfare, and services; an attitude that low-income landowners should sell their property and that tenants should wait and not protest about poor living conditions all contributed to the disurbanist mindset.

---

<sup>4</sup> These responses are recorded in internal council document: OF/249/GVRV/CML/21

## **VISIBILITY**

With COVID19 outbreaks and local elections approaching, Quinta do Ferro erupted on the news. There were dozens of articles and TV news on Quinta do Ferro. The local government started to feel the pressure and Ricardo Veludo declared he would solve Quinta do Ferro's problem during 2021.

Veludo always referred to the work done in 2017/18 with the local association as incompetent. From then on meetings were held just so the city council representatives could present their ideas. Just like during the fascist regime, the idea that, in "these kinds of neighbourhoods", people don't know how to discuss urban problems and the council should state its position and decide everything.

At the start of 2021, the council opened a new neighbourhood survey on its own. The social reality in the area has changed since 2017. New tenants have arrived. They tend to be younger and there are more immigrants, namely from Nigeria but also São Tomé and Príncipe. Their living conditions, on the other hand, are still precarious despite the price of rent. Some people living in poorer conditions were interested in decent houses outside of the neighbourhood and managed to be relocated by the council. Some, also living in precarious conditions, remained. There were no public and clear criteria on priorities. Landowners started to receive aggressive letters to force them to renovate their houses, threatened with high fines.

Visibility made some people leave the neighbourhood, to live in proper houses, but it also created very strong opposition with those who were not prepared to do that. On the other hand, real estate agencies reinforced their investment in the area sending letters and sellers to try to convince landowners to sell.

## **GENTRIFICATION**

Disurbanism promoted by the municipality was the first step towards gentrification. Land value decreased with state absence and peo-

ple tended to think that nothing could be done. Visibility exerted huge pressure on landowners. Gentrification was started by low-income landowners who started to lose hope in urban renovation and didn't want to get fined.

This public policy created the conditions for real estate developers to start an aggressive process of land buying, knocking at people's doors and sending letters.

Properties started to be on sale for one-fifth of the price had they been in Graça or Santa Clara (500 metres away). Real estate developers managed to start their business by buying at very low prices, but they also needed an urban plan.

### **THE URBAN PLANS**

The 2017 urban plan, discussed with residents and landowners, was structured by three main ideas:

- a. Gentrification may only be avoided if low-income owners were kept in the process. Land structure should be kept and urban renewal over the densest area should be seen as a process of urban acupuncture and negotiation.
- b. Several affordable housing buildings were proposed on non-built-up areas, mostly public owned. In 2016/17 this was discussed, and the city council urban planning and housing departments were interested in the idea.
- c. Presence of a public square to connect and integrate Quinta do Ferro with other neighbourhoods, as well as a transversal pedestrian way to connect the plan area from north to south. This connection will create an easy way to go walking from Rua Leite Vasconcelos to the Gil Vicente state school. This will create a new and interesting pedestrian solution for younger people to cross the area.

What the city council showed to the inhabitants and landowners at the end of 2022 was a schematic urban plan that represents a blank slate ideology in relation to the more populated and older area of Quinta do Ferro. Plots are totally reconfigured into an orthogonal alignment to the streets and landowners are informed they will be able to construct (from sketch) an average of 75% of the total building area that they now have. They lose current building rights and switch to having future construction rights on a future collective housing building with several owners. The percentage lost is justified by a process of “equalization” (péréquation) where the square metres lost are taken as “payment” to cover all area infrastructure costs. Owners will also have to insure the costs of the new buildings and organize themselves in groups of three landowners to build a three-storey building. Future developers could also try to buy others’ constructions rights in a private property accumulation process, stimulated by the city council.

Quinta do Ferro social mobilization, visibility, and its relationship with urban planning is a very interesting process to be analysed, evaluated, and decomposed on different levels. This is the point of view of someone that was (and still is) engaged in the process but has learned so much about the inflexibility of power structures faced with diverse approaches and how they are part of the processes of gentrification and production of private real estate plus values. Quinta do Ferro’s plan is not yet approved, but the social structure we found in 2015 is already, more and more, dismissed.

However, this process is still under way. There is still no approved plan. No urban construction works have started.

#### **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Muschketat, N. (2022, March 26). Quinta do Ferro: uma “ilha” de pobreza em Lisboa à espera das promessas da câmara. Público. <https://www.publico.pt/2022/03/26/local/noticia/quinta-ferro-ilha-pobreza-lisboa-espera-promessas-camara-1995715>

Espaços e Casas No. 343. (2016). SIC Notícias. <https://vimeo.com/148073113>.

# Culture in Peripheries: Moita and Barreiro

PEDRO COSTA

RICARDO VENÂNCIO LOPES

Moita and Barreiro—both over on the far side of the Tagus River, are seen as “peripheral” cities within the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. They allow us to reflect on the role that local cultural and creative milieus have on territorial development, and the way they feed identity(ies), and the cultural, social, and economic restructuring processes on a peripheral city in contemporaneity. The programme includes an overview of and a visit to the creative scene of both municipalities, understanding the importance of their locally-rooted context. Some of the most important local cultural agents and stakeholders (artists, cultural programmers, municipalities, and institutions) will welcome us to share their knowledge on this alternative cultural scene.



BRR 2022

Photographs of Pedro Jafuno, in Fórum Cultural José Manuel Figueiredo, CEA - Centro de Experimentação Artística, Baía do Tejo Barreiro Business Park, The old CIN factory, Walk in Barreiro old town, ADAO - “Having a Voice” party

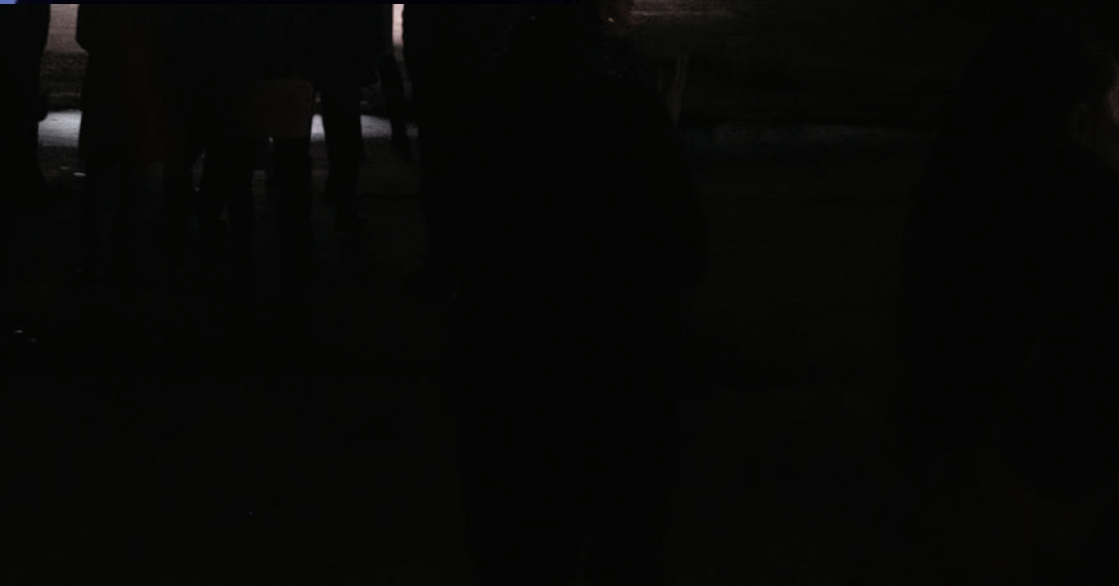
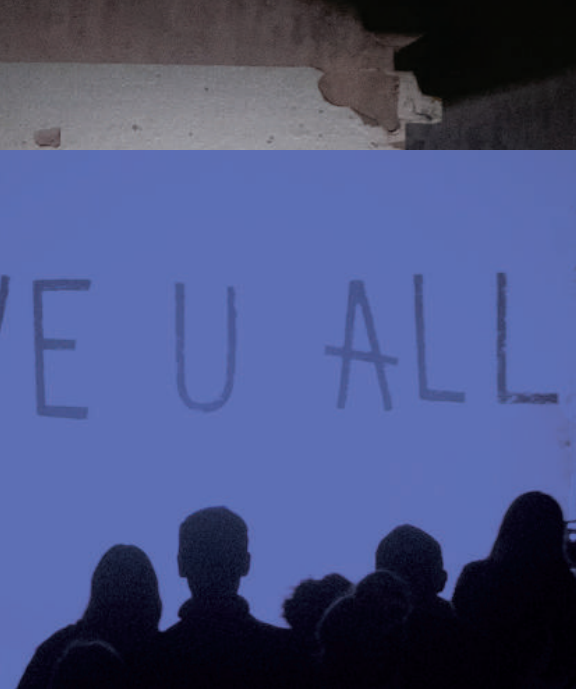












































# Periphery

ÁLVARO DOMINGUES

Whether in its reference to apparently clear meanings or when discussed generically, the peripheral condition is far from self-explanatory, allowing for contradictory meanings that tend to position the periphery negatively. Pierre Bourdieu (1992), for example, when he explains how different positions and social fields interact to define “the rules of art”, reminds us that art described as peripheral may carry very positive connotations, speaking to how its position outside the centre offers a degree of freedom—in artistic practice and expression and in ways of making and communicating. Thus, the periphery can escape “surveillance”—that is, dominant visibility codes and regimes constructed and upheld by key regulatory agents and devices within the art sphere such as museums, gallery owners, critics, magazines, awards, etc.



The inferiority and negativity often assigned to the peripheral status is therefore counterbalanced with existing on the margins and, consciously or not, benefiting from this status; resisting; challenging the central power and trying to escape its control; demanding that the rights of minorities be recognized; and for them to be the “other”, and not the unknown, the “barbarian” or the “savage”. As such, the periphery can either enjoy the benefits of the centre, or simply organize one’s existence and degree of autonomy and, at the same time, enjoy the marginal/peripheral condition to facilitate different bridges and relations with other centres and other peripheries (of other centres). On the edge, different margins can enjoy a certain recognition for self-identifying between each other (*self-inter-identification*) as an overarching marginal condition that aspires to be positively discriminated (the so-called Third World, for example, or a totally different one, the “interior”). As Iversen (2019) argues:

Claiming to be culturally or ethnically different tends to build a stronger case than claiming to be economically disadvantaged. Adding territoriality to the case often makes it even stronger. Regions that are perceived as culturally and ethnically different seem to possess a larger toolbox for performing positive marginality than marginalized groups that are perceived differently. (p33).

In economic theory, the centre and the periphery occupy opposite places, within and outside the system. Within, the peripheral state is a key element to the prosperity of the centre, which drains all resources and advantages from the periphery. In the periphery, inequality is exploited in nearly every way—in salary levels, social and environmental abandonment, in insecurity, in extractive attitudes, in violent employment relations, etc. Outside, the periphery simply exists as that on the margin, a sort of *terra incognita* that contributes little or nothing to maintaining the chequered geographies of unequal development. Since the 1970s, the



sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein has been the most influential critic of the ideological foundations of modernization, emphasizing the exploitative relationships and unequal exchange at global level between the so-called advanced economies—the hard core of the capitalist system, the “centre”, and the less developed world, the “periphery” (Wallerstein, 1979). Andre Gunder Frank (1978) has also done important work in this area, looking at dependent development and the mechanisms that reproduce underdevelopment. Today, the geopolitics of the global economy is multipolar and distributes asymmetries and dependencies of several orders and geographic areas. The so-called “Global South” is one of the most used metaphors to designate the mobile geography of inequality and poverty (Sousa Santos, 2015).

In the context of urbanism, the periphery frequently occupies a bizarre position that designates urbanization methods “outside the city”, with no real understanding of what qualifies or disqualifies urbanization as one thing or another. David Wachsmuth (2014) takes three themes used frequently in the characterization of cities—the city/countryside binary, the city as a self-contained system and the city as an ideal type—and argues:

The most fruitful way of understanding the traditional concept of the city and its persistence in the North Atlantic in the face of a qualitatively transforming urban landscape is as a phenomenological category—a practical understanding of urban space—which distorts what it represents. The concept of the city is not “obsolete”, and we do not need to “reinvent” it for contemporary urban conditions. The concept of the city is ideological. (Wachsmuth, 2014, p.90)

When, in the 19th Century, industrial capitalism produced new, never seen before, forms of urbanization in countries such as England,

the urban condition was not adequately revised to understand these changes. Before, "city" was taken to mean all urbanization, in terms of place and social formation. After said industrial revolution, a new type of urban life resulted that was called the periphery or the suburb. This differed from the city, which was familiar and came from the past with all its materiality and exceptionality and, above all, with a luminous imaginary that so often characterized it. The designation of periphery thus allowed the city—taken as a cohesive body, a coherent system with clear boundaries, a centre and morphologies endowed with legibility and intelligibility—to avoid confrontation with the extended and accelerated innovations and contradictions of urbanization that emerged. Furthermore, the misery and insalubrity that characterized industrial urbanization, challenged the order and instituted powers of the time. Peter Hall (1988) transcribed several passages from a book by a London pastor (Andrew Mearns, 1883), whose denouncements led to the creation of a Royal Commission on the Housing of the Working Classes in 1884. Andrew Mearns describes an example of these miserable living conditions:

Every room in these rotten and reeking tenements houses a family, often two. In one cellar a sanitary inspector reports finding a father, mother, three children and four pigs! In another room a missionary found a man ill with smallpox, his wife just recovering from her eighth confinement, and the children running about half naked and covered with dirt. Here are seven people living in one underground kitchen, and a little dead child lying in the same room. Elsewhere is a poor widow, her three children, and a child who had been dead thirteen days. Her husband, who was a cabman, had shortly before committed suicide. Here lives a widow and her six children, including one daughter of 29, another of 21, and a son of 27. Another apartment contains father, mother and six children, two of whom are ill with scarlet fever. In another nine



**Figure 1.** Alto de Bomba - map of the intervention area (Source: Nuno Flores)

brothers and sisters, from 29 years of age downwards, live, eat and sleep together. Here is a mother who turns her children into the street in the early evening because she lets her room for immoral purposes until long after midnight (Hall, 1988), p.9.

In 1845 Friedrich Engels published *The Situation of the Working Class in England* (*Die Lage der Arbeitenden Klasse in England*), which also denounced the living conditions of the working class in urban areas in Victorian England. He wrote the book during his stay in Manchester between 1842 and 1844. Together with the work of Karl Marx (1818-1883), Engels' anti-capitalist criticism was of central importance and served to consolidate the ideological foundations of socialism. In the literary field, other authors and works—such as Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables* (1862)—, disseminated highly nuanced representations and ideological visions of poverty that ranged from moralistic or paternalistic visions of the bourgeoisie to revolutionary and emancipatory visions of the class struggle. Industrial or not, the peripheral growth of urbanization was identified as an aureole outside the city—the name, the boundaries, the imagi-

nary. Patrick Geddes, an expert on the urban England of his time and a staunch advocate of regional planning, insisted strongly on the need for a new reading of “megalopolises”, “city-regions” and “conurbations” when he writes, “do we not see, and more and more clearly as we study it, the need of a thorough revision of our traditional ideas and boundaries of country and town?” (Geddes, 1915, p.11). Throughout Chapter II *The Population-Map and Its Meaning*, Patrick Geddes illustrates and discusses the form, scale and processes of urbanization—“Greater London with its vast population streaming out in all directions—east, west, north and south flooding all the levels, flowing up the main Thames valley and all the minor ones” (Geddes, 1915, p.23)—as well as the inertia of cartographic representations, the cities represented as circles and points, of chorography and the names that the places retain, of administrative divisions... which resist the cartography of urbanization, subdividing it geographically by names and locations. They are not perfect worlds. Patrick Geddes calls them Kakotopias—the opposite of the happy Eutopias (a word used by Ebenezer Howard in his *Garden-City Utopia*, 1902) of “a neotechnical era corresponding to a fair and balanced world—where the logic of profit, of individual interest, of predatory growth and waste, of the dissipation of resources..., constructs Slums, Semi-slums, Super-slums” (Geddes, 1915, p.39).

The consolidation of the expression “industrial periphery”—a new context, a new categorization and position, removed from the city, outside it—allowed the issue to dissipate, overcoming the more than potential epistemological rupture on the concept of the city. As a result, the city still today remains in a situation increasingly ill-adapted to the complexity and contradictions of the urbanization process (Brenner, 2014). The periphery was simultaneously an “other” and an appeasement device that legitimized and naturalized a separate, subordinate condition. The city was something else; the industrial periphery, a nightmare. Maps, the language of cartography, represented, disseminated, and highlighted this situation:

Whether a map is produced under the banner of cartographic science—as most official maps have been—or whether it is an overt propaganda exercise, it cannot escape involvement in the processes by which power is deployed. Some of the practical implications of maps may also fall into the category of what Foucault has defined as acts of “surveillance” notably those connected with warfare, political propaganda, boundary making, or the preservation of law and order. (Harley, 1988, p.279)

When, much later, Henri Lefebvre announced the “right to the city” (Lefebvre, 1967), the urban question takes on another dimension. David Harvey (1973), Manuel Castells (1972) and Neil Brenner (2013), among others, take Lefebvre’s theories and develop them further. Urbanization, city, is nothing more than a metaphor to speak of a fairer and more balanced population. It is a social product and not just a mosaic of morphologies, expansions, centres, peripheries, suburbs, etc. In the critical sociology of Lefebvre, peripheralization can occur in many places, from run-down neighbourhoods in the centre to any other poverty-stricken area. Symmetrically, elites may be found, removed, in various residential neighbourhoods, such as what is considered the “golden” periphery with views of the sea or any other scenic landscape that indicates lifestyle, social status and distinction. Lefebvre explores the contradictory spaces where tensions develop between the totalizing impetus of power that (re) produces centrality by maintaining and extending the peripheral condition, sometimes by eliminating differences that homogenize the margins on the same plane, sometimes by contrasting various negatively charged processes and spheres through which inequalities manifest themselves. In the words of H. Lefebvre (2000) himself:

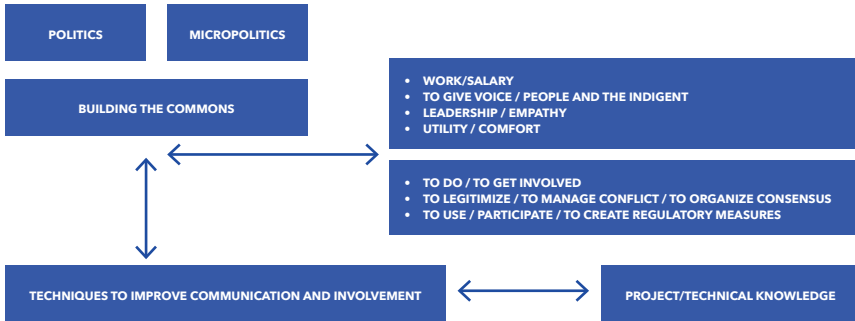
*L’urbanisation de la société s’accompagne d’une détérioration de la vie urbaine: éclatement des centres, désormais privés de*

*vie sociale - gens répartis ségrégativement dans l'espace. Il y a là une véritable contradiction. Je l'appelle une 'contradiction de l'espace'. D'un côté, la classe dominante et l'État renforcent la ville comme centre de puissance et de décision politique –de l'autre, la domination de cette classe et de son État fait éclater la ville. C'est en pensant à ces habitants des banlieues, à la ségrégation, à l'isolement, que je parle dans un livre du « droit à la ville ». Il ne s'agit pas d'un droit au sens juridique du terme, mais d'un droit temblarle à ceux qui sont stipulés dans la célèbre Déclaration des Droits de l'Homme, constitutive de la démocratie. (p.96)*

The radical nature of these statements also arises from Lefebvre and other sociologists' position in relation to the technocratic approach to planning and modern urbanism lead by DATAR (*Deletion de l'Amenagement du Territoire*). Lefebvre believes that the processes and methods used to produce space are equally important as those used to produce social relations, including the state and public policies. Space is not an abstract and formalistic category as in modern urbanism, nor does it correspond to the simple idea of an inclusive space, shared by all. Contrary to the city-ideal prior to industrial capitalism—and its romanticized imaginary—what is at stake is the critical analysis of socio-spatial processes of exclusion and segregation, and the struggle for accessibility to goods, services, and public space for the sake of greater social justice (Soja, 2010).

We can indefinitely extend the semantic fields of the periphery as an ana-





lytical category that operates within the binary system and asymmetry of centre-periphery, simplifying the diversity and multiplicity of the reality, and emphasizing domination; political, economic, or cultural hegemony; dependency; margins and tensions maintained/created through inequalities.

Below we present an initiative called the *periphery of the periphery*, located in Alto de Bomba, one of the many informal settlements of the city of Mindelo, Cape Verde. It started as an experiment by lecturers and students at an arts and technology college.

With the expressive title *Antes da Eleição Nós É Gente, Depois Indigente*, the *Outros Bairros* initiative, Mindelo, Cape Verde, was presented at the Lisbon Architecture Triennale, 2022 (Flores, 2022; Aga Khan Development Network, 2022) Maísa Fortes, resident and active participant in *Outros Bairros*, Alto de Bomba coined the statement contained in the title.

In summary, *Outros Bairros* was born of an initiative by the *Instituto de Artes, Tecnologia e Cultura*, led by Nuno Flores with financial support from the Cape Verde government housing rehabilitation and revitalization programme. Alto de Bomba, like so many other places in the city of Mindelo, is a self-built neighbourhood comprised of very simple houses and lacking any infrastructure. The Cape Verdean state is unable to meet the high housing needs of a poor population stuck in occasional or permanent emigration within a rapid urbanization context. It tolerates these occupations and develops a housing programme, *Casa para Todos*,

which is only accessible to a minority of the population with enough stability and income to guarantee a bank loan, despite the cost price. Residents oscillate between indifference and demands, accustomed to resolving things on their own accord, with family, relatives abroad, neighbours or friends. Women are central to organizing daily life, caring for children and the elderly, undertaking household chores or occasional money-earning activities. When it comes to building a house, from marking a plot to building or attempting to register and legalize it, there are countless social agents, individuals, groups, or companies, who make this self-build dynamic possible and profit from it.

All these reasons, and the entrenched reality of the situation means that urbanization operations and the registration/classification of these informally generated areas should be an absolute priority for public policy for the potential direct and indirect effects implicit in intervention practices in situ, such as the initiative led by Nuno Flores and his team (Flores, Pina & Fortes; 2021, Lopes & Flores, 2021).

### **SUMMARY TABLE**

- State gains presence through mediators who are the planners with their own office on site. The State monitors the work, formalizes a property register, a physical and social mapping of the neighbourhood and gets to know its leaders (and the “invisible”), their needs and expectations. This breaks the dangerous trend of fragmentation, of every man for himself, of the power of the local “mafias”.
- The “community” is not an entity from the outset. Initiatives, actions, constant negotiation, conflict management, the call for meetings and publicly discussed proposals and decisions become embedded and produce a more or less unstable collective, but one which is gaining shape and consistency, political representativeness, recognition of each



other, functionality, the capacity to mediate relationships and to extend the scope of collective action.

- The presence of the team of planners and construction managers on site and continuous action, constant attention to what is being learned, provide multiple and varied opportunities to connect public and private institutions, municipal services, associations and other organisations with social purposes, companies managing/producing infrastructures and services for public use. Without this institutional mesh it is difficult to structure a society, a collective, a sense of belonging, a durability that extends beyond specific projects and objectives or fields of action that existed at the beginning.
- The projects are adaptive by design, with a high capacity to articulate pre-defined rules and ways of doing, with local needs and opportunities, solving small conflicts born through processes which evolved by a more or less random accumulation of individual actions. In this way, dubious, undefined, unresolved situations are overcome which, finally, will have to stabilize when creating the solution itself.
- The hard core of the project's objectives/programme is guaranteed, and the evolutionary and reflexive method is practised, e.g. not taking the next step without evaluating what has already been done. Learning by doing, having the ability to resolve conflicts and adapt to unforeseen events, taking advantage of an unexpected opportunity, etc. Throughout the process one acquires competence, ability to perform and confidence.
- The project itself becomes an "open book" because other benefits have already been imagined, because experience has been accumulated and the will to do so has been shown, because results have been seen, because the trust

between all parties has increased, and so other more ambitious achievements can be envisaged.

- The involvement of local labour, besides being an important source of income, is also an opportunity for professional training, for discussion and participation, to feel that everyone can take part, to finally build community and participation, words that are easily used to describe things that most of the time do not exist, or do not pre-exist because they are the result of continuous, sometimes long, sometimes tortuous processes.
- These ways of building collectives break the social anomia, and the demonstration effects resulting from the process that culminated in a particular achievement may be the guarantee that this “collective capital” can be transferred to other challenges. In Alto de Bomba, what was an infrastructure and public space creation project was multiplied to create public spaces and local infrastructure—common rooms, small sports equipment, access to information spaces and communication technologies, artistic/cultural initiatives, help with schoolwork, support for single mothers, hygiene and health care, preparation of meals, etc. Basically, the institutionalization of associations, small enterprises, cooperatives, and other organisations makes the collective “visible”, organizable, producing mediators and labels for relations with other actors, institutions and initiative. This is what happened when setting-up the shoe shiners’ cooperative.
- The initiative *Outros Bairros* builds common places, tailor-made solutions, engages residents and the State, maps possibilities and ambitions, makes society visible and helps to unpick situations that were only born to handle scarcity, basic needs, survival, but also, after time working together, the opening of horizons.

For the issues and reasons outlined, the *Outros Bairros* initiative is clearly demonstrative of the meaning that the name “periphery” can contain, and how action can be organized around that. To centre the periphery is, of course a fundamental question for the initiative—the periphery as an urban margin and social condition in the margins. From the moment that the periphery has a name and becomes public through the organization of a voice and of a collective that associates resources, knowledge, projects, and political responsibility, etc. and focuses residents’ attention towards building common resources, the process becomes bigger and denser and expands beyond the place and the people there. The demonstration effect constitutes precious capital to legitimize and disseminate the issue, take it beyond its locality, position it in centres to increase its visibility and thus commit the Cape Verde government to this and other initiatives and ways of doing things.

During the process a cooperative of women cobblers was born in Alto de Bomba—Amdjer na Obra (RTC, 2022). Being traditionally a male job, this group of “Women at Work” doubled its symbolic importance. Metaphorically, paving corresponds to the very act of building a common ground. Maísa Fortes, the group leader, says in the interview quoted above that the work of her team also differs from the work of the men because it is done with care and attention. With dignity, too: Maísa insists on the importance of recognized and paid work, insisting on the difficulties of life in Alto de Bomba. The famous slogan of May 1968 in Paris, *Sous les pavés, la plage!* [Under the pavement, the beach!], gains here a real dimension of fighting for a better future, emancipating oneself from the peripheral condition.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- AKDN, Aga Khan Development Network, <https://the.akdn/en/how-we-work/our-agencies/aga-khan-trust-culture/akaa/outros-bairros-rehabilitation-programme>
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1915). *Les Règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire*, Paris, Seuil.
- Brenner N (ed) (2014). *Implosions/Explosions: Towards a Study of Planetary Urbanization*. Berlin: Jovis.
- Castells, M. (1972). *La Question Urbaine*, Paris: Maspéro.
- Flores, Nuno (2019) "OUTROS BAIRROS: as intervenções nos bairros de Alto de Bomba, Covada de Bruxa e Fernando de Pó" in [https://www.buala.org/pt/cidade/outros-bairros-as-intervencoes-nos-bairros-de-alto-de-bomba-covada-de-bruxa-e-fernando-de-po?fbclid=IwAR1\\_sC9JHZ7ntlYxw08ULvCyS3Q8ZQfyWntBFinB42nfWDQPygFoXhKqrEY](https://www.buala.org/pt/cidade/outros-bairros-as-intervencoes-nos-bairros-de-alto-de-bomba-covada-de-bruxa-e-fernando-de-po?fbclid=IwAR1_sC9JHZ7ntlYxw08ULvCyS3Q8ZQfyWntBFinB42nfWDQPygFoXhKqrEY)
- Flores, N; Pina, E. de; Fortes, E. (2021) (Iniciativa Outros Bairros) - *Voz(es) sem lugar, lugar(es) sem vozes*. Estudo Prévio 19. Lisbon: CEACTION/UAL - Centro de Estudos de Arquitetura, Cidade e Território da Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa, 2021, p. 36-44 <https://repositorio.ual.pt/handle/11144/5232>
- Frank, A. G., (1978), *Dependent Accumulation and Underdevelopment*, London: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-1-349-16014-3>
- Geddes, P., (1915). *Cities in Evolution*. London: Williams & Norgate. <https://iiif.wellcomecollection.org/pdf/b29810267>
- Hall, P., (1988). *Cities of tomorrow: an intellectual history of urban planning and design since 1880*, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Harley, J. B. (1988). *Maps, knowledge, and power in Denis Cosgrove; Stephen Daniels (ed). (1988). The Iconography of Landscape-Essays on the symbolic representation, design and use of past environments*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.277-312.
- Harvey, D. (1973). *Social Justice and the City*. Oxford:Blackwell.
- Ilfversen, J. (2019). *Europe and the Concept of Margin*, in Tessa Hauswedell; Alex Körner; Ulrich Tiedau. (2019). *Re-Mapping Centre and Periphery, Asymmetrical Encounters in European and Global Contexts*, London: University College London Press, pp.27-43. p.33 <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10070455/1/Re-Mapping-Centre-and-Periphery.pdf>
- Lefebvre, H. (1967). *Le droit à la ville*, Paris: Anthropos.
- Lefebvre, H. (2000). *Espace et politique : le droit à la ville II*, Paris, Anthropos (Communications prononcées par l'auteur entre 1970 et 1973), p.96
- Mearns, A. (1883). *The bitter cry of outcast London An inquiry into the condition of the abject poor*, London: James Clarke & Co., 1883
- Lopes, A.; Flores, N. (2021). *Outros Bairros, desafios de um devir colectivo*. Rio de Janeiro: UIA 2021 RIO: 27th World Congress of Architects, Papers: Vol.I
- RTC - Rádio Televisão Cabo-verdiana (2022) *Projecto "Amdjer na Obra": Programa de Mulheres calceteira de Alto Bomba, São Vicente*. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKakC-ycNcw&ab\\_channel=RTC-R%C3%A1dioTelevis%C3%A3oCabo-verdiana](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qKakC-ycNcw&ab_channel=RTC-R%C3%A1dioTelevis%C3%A3oCabo-verdiana)
- Santos, Boaventura de Sousa (2015). *Epistemologies of the South Justice Against Epistemicide*. New York: Routledge.
- Soja, E. W. (2010), *Seeking Spatial Justice*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Wachsmuth, D., (2014). *City as Ideology: Reconciling the Explosion of the City Form with the Tenacity of the City Concept*, Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, vo.31, January 2014, p.75-90.
- Wallerstein, I. (1979), *The Capitalist World-Economy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

# **Recent Processes of Decolonization in Portuguese Theatre**

ANDRÉ AMÁLIO

The colonial past is still very problematic for many European countries, with accusations from postcolonial thinkers and minority groups of Eurocentric thinking, structural racism, and failures to recognize the dark sides of colonial history. Simultaneously, far right European movements, based on xenophobia and nationalism, are growing, promoting the notion that Europeans should have the right to be proud of their history without any kind of scrutiny. Although these tensions are visible throughout the world and in Europe, many countries are taking steps towards a decolonization of structural thinking and making changes in the ways colonial histories are told.

This paper focuses on the case of Portuguese theatre, and the recent emergence of the postcolonial discourse on Portuguese stages. As a former colonial power, Portugal presided over one of the longest, with nearly five hundred years of global conquests, as well as enduring the longest fascist dictatorship in Europe, which lasted forty-eight years. For many years, Portuguese theatre has avoided postcolonial discourse. However, since 2014-15 the colonial past and its repercussions on the present and future of Portuguese society have become important subjects of analysis. Multiple voices using decolonizing practices to make

performance art have emerged; they speak out from different points of view and distinct backgrounds. Although Portugal had one of the longest-running colonial empires, this aspect of its history remains unknown and excluded from public debates, which makes the work these theatre artists do particularly challenging.

Besides these contradictions, Portuguese colonial history is still embellished today with nostalgic stories of the heroes of Portuguese discoveries, without acknowledging the dark sides of colonial history, such as the slave trade and genocidal massacres of the indigenous people, among others. This past is still today embedded with feelings of colonial nostalgia and the Portuguese ideology of *lusotropicalism*, that has, at its base, the narrative of Portugal as the “good colonizer”. António Sousa Ribeiro and Margarida Calafate Ribeiro, two of the most prominent figures of postcolonial studies in Portugal, point out the absolute necessity to decolonize Europe, claiming that European countries need “to re-read the past and the imperial and unequivocal language in which it was narrated to better understand the present and think the future” (Sousa Ribeiro & Calafate Ribeiro, 2016, p.6).

### **THE ESTADO NOVO AND LUSOTROPICALISM**

Although most Portuguese people have never even heard of lusotropicalism, the idea still permeates much of modern Portuguese society. The concept was developed by the Brazilian author Gilberto Freire (1933) in his book *Casa Grande e Senzala* [The Master and the Slaves]. Freire was celebrating the racial and cultural diversity of Brazil, arguing that Portuguese colonization was different from other European counterparts. In his view, the Portuguese mixed with the other races and created a more humane and fair colonization process.

After World War II, with the surge of new independent countries, the fascist Portuguese government, *Estado Novo* [New State], used the concept of lusotropicalism as its main argument for Portuguese presence

in Africa. The Estado Novo pushed a narrative that it was the regime's obligation to continue to develop their unique creation: a multicultural and multiracial country with no space for racism and discrimination. In the book *Managing African Portugal*, Keshia Fikes (2009) highlights Freire's assertions of "the Portuguese man's tendency to mate with the Other (when in the tropics) and his physiological capacity to withstand tropical conditions" (Fikes 2009, p.37). The American expert on Angola, Gerald Bender, in his book *Angola under the Portuguese*, provides further analysis into Gilberto Freire's work when he points out the incongruence of Freire's representation of the Portuguese as poor and humble colonizers that had no motivations to exploit the "native people" and "immediately entered into cordial relations with the non-European populations he met in the tropics" (Bender 2004, p3). These lusotropicalist assumptions continue to be accepted by the majority of the Portuguese population today.

In Keshia Fikes's (2009) view, the Portuguese government that followed the 25th April 1974 Carnation Revolution, excluded colonialism from the agenda during the 1980s and 1990s, as if Portugal had no colonial past, and as if it had no African-born or African-descendent population living in the country. The most important issue for the Portuguese authorities at that time was its progression towards membership of the European Economic Community (that later became European Union). Portuguese authorities maintained the Estado Novo's rhetoric of lusotropicalism to distance themselves from addressing racism, as if the Portuguese were incapable of being racists.

## **POSTCOLONIAL PORTUGAL TODAY**

In recent years, Black activists have increasingly been organizing, such as Djass<sup>1</sup>—the Association of African Descendants founded in 2016; Consciência Negra<sup>2</sup> [Black Conscience]—a political organization to fight

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/associacao.djass/about/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/lutanegra/>



for Black rights founded in 2015; SOS Racismo<sup>3</sup>—an association to fight against racism founded in 1991; Afrolis<sup>4</sup>—an audioblog for Black issues founded in 2014; Lisboa Africana<sup>5</sup>—an association focused on promoting African events in Lisbon founded in 2012; and Plataforma Gueto<sup>6</sup>—an anti-racist group founded in 2012. A key accomplishment of the Black Portuguese movement was the approval of a monument for the victims of slavery in 2017, that will be the first of its kind in Lisbon. It was proposed by Djass and chosen by popular vote, a sign that the structural decolonization movement today is gaining important visibility and support in Portuguese society.

António Costa's election as prime minister in 2014 is also poignant. Costa is the first prime minister of a European country to have roots in a colonized country, in this case Goa, which formed part of the Portuguese Overseas Empire until 1961.

There has been a recent surge of artists making work that responds to Portugal's colonial past. This includes artists who lived through the period, such as Angela Ferreira, Manuel Botelho, Isabela Figueiredo, Dulce Maria Cardoso, but also the younger generation who did not live through colonialism, including Aurora Negra, Filipa César, Grada Kilomba, Joana Craveiro, Jorge Andrade, Mónica Miranda, Raquel S., Raquel André and Keli Freitas, Tiago Cadete, Teatro Griot and myself in the work we do with the theatre company Hotel Europa, where I am the co-director. Many of these artists are not only working on similar subject areas, but also with similar methods, involving archives, oral testimonies, and autobiographical material. Two examples include Filipa César's *Transmissão das Zonas Libertadas* (2016), a documentary using the Guinea-Bissau cinema archives, and Isabella Figueiredo's autobiographical novel *Cadernos Coloniais* (2015).

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.sosracismo.pt>

<sup>4</sup> <https://radioafrolis.com>

<sup>5</sup> <https://lisboaafricana.com>

<sup>6</sup> <https://plataformagueto.wordpress.com>

## POSTCOLONIAL DOCUMENTARY THEATRE

Since the Carnation Revolution, that marked the end of the Portuguese fascist regime and the colonial empire, Portuguese theatre has scarcely engaged with the colonial past. The Portuguese theatre scholar Maria Helena Serôdio (2010) underlines the unanimous silence regarding the problematic Portuguese fascist and colonial past in the last quarter of the 20th century.

To address these gaps, since 2015, I have been creating a new type of documentary theatre, that I have named postcolonial documentary theatre. I have created six performances: *Portugal Is Not a Small Country* (2015), *Pass-Port* (2016), *Liberation* (2017), *Postcolonial Loves* (2019), *Children of Colonialism* (2019) and *The End of Portuguese Colonialism* (2019). These works have been performed in Portugal, Brazil, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Spain, and Slovakia.

Carol Martin and Atillo Favorini, two experts on documentary theatre, suggest that this work is rooted in its treatment of real matters and its use of real documents as opposed to fiction or made up situations; additionally both scholars highlight the significance of Roland Barthes's notion of "reality effect" providing "the status of legitimacy upon the artwork because what is represented is thought to have really happened or has a relationship with what is understood to be real" (Martin 2015, p.33).

Documentary theatre has been subject to criticism regarding the treatment of sensitive and personal source material in a way that can be "misleading, distorting, manipulative" (Forsyth 2011, p.143). Chris Megson (2011) argues that the process of editing source material can be viewed as problematic; for example, the verbatim playwright Robin Soans admits modifications in the source material for the clarity of the play, but seeks "to preserve the sense, tone and thrust of an interviewee's words" (Soans 2008, p.41). I have worked with the headphone verbatim technique, where the performers hear an edited version of the testimonies and transmit it to the audience while hearing it in the moment, which

faithfully respects the interviewee's words and thoughts.

The main goal was not to present only one kind of view or opinion or experience but to embrace a multiplicity of perspectives about the subject discussed and to draw on what Martin identifies as the "theatre of the real" postmodern strategies, "asserting that truth is contextual, multiple, and subject to manipulation" (Martin 2012, p.3). Martin's suggestion here is particularly important for this analysis because the matters are extremely complex and elicit very polarized views in Portuguese society; for example, some argue that the Portuguese decolonization was completely disastrous, and others see the process as a good example (Sanches, 2011).

The name postcolonial documentary theatre practice proposes a commitment to work within the frame of post-colonialism, similarly to what is suggested by Helen Gilbert and Joanne Tompkins (1996) "an engagement with and contestation of colonialism's discourses, power structures, and social hierarchies" (p.2). In my performance work I have been proposing that it is necessary to work towards the rewriting of Portuguese colonial history, to establish a dialogue with the other on-going processes of decolonization that are happening in European former imperial countries, such as Belgium or the United Kingdom.

The postcolonial frame structured all the creative process, starting with the choice of testimonies, the selection of archival material or interviewees' stories to be told on stage, in the casting of the performers, selecting people who would be able to transmit those stories and to tell their own autobiographical material concerning the colonial past. The documentary theatre practices used in this investigation—archival research, collecting testimonies, and working with headphone verbatim "scripts"—were combined during the rehearsal process with specific devising techniques and critical/political statements that came out of the theoretical analysis conducted during the investigation. This mixture of styles and processes expanded the notion of documentary/verbatim

theatre, forming a new style of theatre that is situated outside the traditional forms of documentary/verbatim theatre.

### **OTHER THEATRE WORKS**

Other artists who also work on this topic include Joana Craveiro whose work has focused mainly on the memories of former Portuguese settlers that came to Portugal after the end of the Portuguese Empire in 1974. Craveiro's performances are critical of the colonial past, particularly of the relationship between Portuguese colonialism and the Estado Novo, but by focusing mainly on the stories of white Portuguese settlers, her reflections of the past at some point neglect other stories and different points of view. Joaquim Horta, part the Portuguese theatre company A Truta, created and performed the theatre solo *Mais Um Dia de Vida* (2015), based on the book of the Polish writer and journalist Ryszard Kapuściński about the independence process and the start of the civil war in Angola, captured during his stay in that country in 1975. Horta engaged with the real and non-fiction in their performance. Horta acknowledged and made reference to my work and Joana Craveiro's work, stating in the performance that he did not know if his work was documentary theatre, autobiographical theatre or lecture theatre.

Another example comes from the Portuguese theatre company Teatro Griot, that was founded by some of the better-known black actors on the Portuguese theatre scene, such as Miguel Sermão or Daniel Martinho. This group works with different theatre directors, but often they invite the award-winning black director Rogério de Carvalho to their performances. Griot works mostly with known authors of existing theatre plays, such as Wole Soyinka, Jean Genet, William Shakespeare, amongst others. One of the founding members and artistic director of the company, Zia Soares, is the first black woman to hold that position in Portuguese theatre. The company won the Internazionale Teresa Pomodoro award in Milan, Italy in 2021/2022. Griot's performances put African traditions

on stage, mixing them with western contemporary theatre and dance.

Guilherme Mendonça is a dramaturg and theatre director who works with the colonial past. He has collaborated with Teatro Griot directing the theatre performance *Geração da Utopia*, an adaptation of the novel by the same name written by Pepetela, an important name in the struggle for Angolan independence. Griot Mendonça also works independently, as for example *Um pássaro é mais do que a sua jaula* [A bird is more than its cage] (2016) presented in Teatro Coreto de Carnide developed from interviews with Adolfo Maria.<sup>7</sup>

Another theatre group, Aurora Negra, is a collective of three Black women artists that made their first theatre performance at the Dona Maria II National Theatre, having been selected in their programme for emergent artists. Their debut happened in September 2020 with the performance Aurora Negra (that later became their company name). The performance drew from their own autobiographies, growing up in Portuguese racist society. In June 2022, they have premiered their second performance, *Cosmos*, developing their Afro-futuristic aesthetics also with an all-black cast that works with the mythologies surrounding the creation of the world combining African mythology with European myths.

Grada Kilomba is another Portuguese visual artist and theorist of African descent who works within the postcolonial frame. Kilomba is based in Berlin, where she wrote the book *Plantation Memories - Episodes of Everyday Racism*, that became an important work in the Portuguese and Brazilian postcolonial debate. In 2021, she was commissioned by the Lisbon performing arts festival BoCA - Biennial of Contemporary Arts, to do a new piece. It premiered in September 2021 in the Museum of Art, Architecture and Technology (MAAT). "O Barco/ The Boat" is an installation by the artist Grada Kilomba, composed of 140 blocks, which form the silhouette of the bottom of a ship and mi-

---

<sup>7</sup> A former member of the Angolan independence movement MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) during Angola's war of liberation.

nutely draw the space created to accommodate the bodies of millions of Africans, enslaved by European empires. In Western imagery, a ship is easily associated with glory, freedom, and maritime expansion, described as “discoveries” but, in the artist’s view, “a continent with millions of people cannot be discovered” nor can “one of humanity’s longest and most horrific chapters—Slavery—be erased”. Grada Kilomba inaugurates this work with a performance, in three acts, in which several generations of Afro-descendant communities are the protagonists. The music was produced by Kalaf Epalanga. *O Barco/The Boat* becomes a place of recognition, a garden of memory and contemplation of the future.

In 2018, with the election of the far-right government of Jair Bolsonaro as president of Brazil, a strong migratory movement out of Brazil began. This included people who did not want to live in country with a deeply conservative government agenda, neglectful of the urgency to address social changes related to Black, Indian or LGBT issues. This movement included several Brazilian artists who started to develop performances about the relations between Portugal and Brazil and the colonial past. One example is the theatre performance *Brasa* (2021) that was devised and directed by the Portuguese director Tiago Cadete who lives between Brazil and Portugal and who developed the show based on real-life stories of Brazilian artists who migrated to Lisbon in recent years. Another collaboration between the Portuguese theatre artist Raquel André and the Lisbon-based Brazilian dramaturg, Keli Freitas, includes performance *Outra Língua* [Another Tongue/Language] playing with the double meaning to the word *língua*, and with a critical view of the Portuguese language.

In the last ten years, there has been surge of performances focused on the colonial past from different perspectives in Portuguese theatre, that broaden and complexify the debate surrounding current processes of decolonization taking place across the country. At the same time as this discussion has been growing, in 2019, a far-right populist and

racist political party appeared in the Portuguese political system, named *Chega* [Enough], which started to attack all the changes proposed by the new decolonization movement. *Chega* made its way to parliament and in 2022, it became the third most voted party in the Portuguese parliament. The changes happening in Portuguese society concerning the colonial past and the current processes of structural decolonization that are on-going, are becoming broader in many mediums. Theatre is becoming a powerful, and much-needed, voice for change. At the same time, a strong current in Portuguese society is fighting those urgent changes, trying to keep the status quo of the old colonial mythology and mindset intact. This is an on-going process that is occurring in the former colonial Empires around the world, and it demands deep structural changes. It would be naive to expect it to happen without the increase of tensions and intense struggles.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Alcoff, L. (1991). *The Problem of Speaking for Others*. Available at <http://www.alcoff.com/content/speaothers.html>, (accessed: 15/11/2014).
- Alexandre, V. (Ed.) (2013). *O Império Africano - Séculos XIX e XX*, Lisboa: Edições Colibri.
- Araujo, M. & Maeso, S. (2016). *Os Contornos do Eurocentrismo - Raça, história e textos políticos*. Lisboa: Almedina.
- Ashcroft, B & Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. (2006). *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Barret, E. (Ed.) (2012). *Practice as Research*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Barthes, R. (1977). *Image Music Text*. London: Fontana Press.
- Bender, G. (2004). *Angola under the Portuguese - The Myth and the Reality*. Trenton: África World Press.
- Bethencourt, F. (2003). 'Desconstrução da memória imperial: literatura, arte e historiografia'. Ribeiro, M. C. & Ferreira, A. P. (Eds.). *Fantasmas e Fantasias Imperiais no Imaginário Português Contemporâneo*, Porto: Campo das Letras.
- Bharucha, R. (2014). *Terror and Performance*. London: Routledge.
- Boym, S. (2001). *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books.
- Brown, P. (Ed.) (2010). *Verbatim, Staging Memory and Community*. Sidney: Currency Press.
- Bruzzi, S. (2006). *New Documentary*, 2nd ed. New York: Routledge.
- Caruth, C. (1996). *Unclaimed Experience*. London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Chabal, P. (2002). *Amílcar Cabral*. London: Hurst & Company.
- Chabal, P. (2002). *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*. Indiana: Indiana University Press.
- Crow, B. & Banfield, C. (1996). *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dolan, J. (2008). *Utopia in Performance*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Fanon, F. (1967). *The Wretched of the Earth*. London: Penguin Books.
- Fanon, F. (2008). *Black Skin White Masks*. London: Pluto Press.
- Favorini, A. (2008). *Memory in Play*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fikes, K. (2009). *Managing African Portugal*. London: Duke University Press.
- Forsyth, A. (2011). 'Performing Trauma'. Forsyth, A. & Megson, C., (Eds.). *Get Real: Documentary Theatre Past and Present*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Frankenberg, R. (2005). *White Women, Race Matters - The Social Construction of Whiteness*. Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gilbert, H. & Tompkins, J. (1996). *Post-Colonial Drama*. London: Routledge.
- Gilroy, P. (2004). *After Empire - Melancholia or Convivial Culture?*. London: Routledge.
- Gluhovic, M. (2013). *Performing European Memories*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Halbwachs, M. (1992). *On Collective Memory*. London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Hall, S. (2006). 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora'. Ashcroft, B. & Griffiths, G. & Tiffin, H. (Eds.) *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Hall, S. & Evan, J. & Nixon, S. (Eds.) (2013). *Representation*. London: Sage Publications.
- Hammond, W. & Steward, D. (Eds.) (2008). *Verbatim Verbatim*. London: Oberon Books.
- Heddon, D. (2009). 'To Absent Friends: Ethics in the Field of Autobiography'. Haedicke, S. & Heddon, D. & Milling, J. (2006) *Devising Performance*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Heddon, D. (2008). *Autobiography and Performance*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hirsch, M. (2012). *The Generation of Postmemory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hooks, B. (2006). *Outlaw Culture*. New York: Routledge.



- Hooks, B. (1994). *Teaching to Transgress*. New York: Routledge.
- Jerónimo, M. B. & Pinto, A.C. (Eds.) (2014). *Portugal e o Fim do Colonialism. Dimensões Internacionais*. Lisboa: Edições 70.
- Kershaw, B. & Nicholson, H. (Eds.) (2011). *Research Methods in Theatre and Performance*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University.
- Kilomba, G. (2016). *Plantation Memories - Episodes of Everyday Racism*. Münster: Unrast.
- LaCapra, D. (2001). *Writing History, Writing Trauma*. London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Madison, D. S. (2012). *Critical Ethnography*. London: Sage.
- Malzacher, F. (2015). 'Introduction', Malzacher, F. (Ed.). *Not Just a Mirror - Looking for the Political Theatre of Today*. Berlin: House on Fire.
- Martin, C. (2015). 'History and Politics on Stage', Malzacher, F. (Ed.), *Not Just a Mirror - Looking for the Political Theatre of Today*. Berlin: House on Fire.
- Martin, C. (2012). 'Bodies of Evidence', Martin, C. (Ed.) *Dramaturgy of the Real on the World Stage*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Martin, C. (2012). 'Dramaturgy of the Real', Martin, C. (Ed.) *Dramaturgy of the Real on the World Stage*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Martin, C. (2013). *Theatre of the Real*. New York, Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mateus, D.C. (2006). *Memórias do Colonialismo e da Guerra*. Lisboa: Edições Asa.
- Mateus, D.C. (2011). *A PIDE/DGS na Guerra Colonial 1961-1974*. Lisboa: Terramar.
- Megson, C. (2011). 'Half a Picture' Forsyth, A. & Megson, C. (Eds.) *Get Real: Documentary Theatre Past and Present*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Paget, D. (1990). *True Stories? Documentary drama on radio, screen and stage*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Paget, D. (2011). *No Other Way to Tell It*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Passerini, L. (1996). *Autobiography of a Generation*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press.
- Pimentel, I. (2011). *A cada um o seu lugar*. Lisboa: Circulo de Leitores.
- Pollock, D. (Ed.) (2005) *Remembering*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Rancière, J. (2011). *The Emancipated Spectator*. London: Verso.
- Reinelt, J. (2012). 'Towards a Poetics of Theatre and Public Events: In the Case of Stephen Lawrence', Martin, C. (Ed.) *Dramaturgy of the Real on the World Stage*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ribeiro, A.S. & Ribeiro, M. C. (2016). *Geometrias da Memória: configurações pós-coloniais*. Coimbra: Edições Afrontamento.
- Ribeiro, C. M. & Ferreira, A.P. (2003). *Fantasmas e Fantasias Imperiais no Imaginário Português Contemporâneo*. Lisbon: Campo das Letras.
- Ricoeur, P. (2004). *Memory, History, Forgetting*. London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Rosas, F. (2012). *Salazar e o Poder*. Lisbon: Tinta da China.
- Said, E. (1994). *Culture and Imperialism*. London: Vintage Books.
- Sanches, M. R. (2011). *Malhas Que Os Impérios Tecem*, Lisbon: edições 70.
- Seródio, M. H. (2010). 'Assombrações do Império: A Guerra Colonial Evoked no Teatro Português no Último Quartel do séc. XX'. Available at <http://ilc-cadernos.com/index.php/cadernos/search/authors/view?firstName=Maria%20Helena&middleName=&lastName=Seródio&affiliation=&country=> (accessed on the 13.06.2017).
- Soans, R. (2008). 'Robin Soans', Hammond, W. & Steward, D. (Eds.) *Verbatim Verbatim*. London: Oberon Books.
- Stoler, A. L. (2010). *Carnal Knowledge an Imperial Power*. London: University of California.
- Taylor, D. (2003). *The Archive and the Repertoire*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Teitel, R. G. (2000). *Transitional Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Maaya Cultural  
Entrepreneurship:  
The Entrepreneurial  
Model of the Festival  
sur le Niger**

Ségou, Mali

ATTAHER MAÏGA

## **THE ORIGINS**

With a population of more than 150,000, Ségou has the offerings of a large, cultural, and structured city. Despite this potential, Segou remained a transit city that offered few concrete perspectives to its visitors, its young artists and cultural entrepreneurs.

The Festival sur le Niger was created in 2005 by Mr. Mamou Daffé and his team who sought to create a unique event that highlighted all the attractive cultural potential of the city and the region. They wanted to support the local economy and to promote the artistic and cultural expressions of Mali, while at the same time make sure that people do not just simply stop in Segou as a transit point before other destinations, but that they come to Ségou for its ambitious cultural and artistic offerings.

Since it started in 2005, the Festival sur le Niger has quickly become a major cultural event of unprecedented scope in Mali and without any real equivalent in West Africa, a true annual cultural event that takes place at the beginning of February in Ségou. The festival can pride itself today on its original programme with a global dimension.

Ségou has become a cultural capital in Mali. Initiatives have multiplied: Ségou' Art-Festival sur le Niger, the Centre Culturel Kôrè, the Mask and Puppet Festival, the Ndomo Centres, the Sininyesigui Centre, the AFATT, the Nyeleni Centre, the Soroblé Centre, the Kôrè Institute of Arts and Crafts (IKAM), etc.

The Festival sur le Niger is a multidisciplinary event and offers a programme focused on music, art, dance, theatre, craft and agriculture. It consists of fairs, a symposium, workshops, master classes and conferences, and combines the contemporary with traditional, as well as internationally renowned artists with young talents.

Beyond the artistic but also festive aspect of the event, the festival is, above all, an instrument of economic development for the region and Mali as a whole. Through the Ségou symposium and the various conferences, it encourages reflection on the various cultural and social stakes and challenges the country faces and the training of cultural professionals.

The festival has had an important impact on the mentalities in Ségou, whose inhabitants are very proud of the interest that their city, its history and its culture arouse. People living in Segou are invested in the festival's success and impatiently await each edition.

The Festival sur le Niger applies the Maaya Cultural Entrepreneurship model.

### **MAAYA CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Maaya Cultural Entrepreneurship is an entrepreneurial model with multiple objectives that combines the specific community values of Mali—called Maaya—with the general concepts of classical entrepre-

neurship. It builds, manufactures, and disseminates cultural goods and services based more on local strategies, human resources, and knowledge. It is an endogenous development model initiated by Mr. Mamou Daffé and his team.

### **WHAT IS MAAYA?**

Maaya is an integral concept of humanity based on the relationship between the individual and the community. It is an essential quality for the human being in Malian society. The principles of Maaya are applicable to every aspect of life: work, leadership, politics, education, festivities, daily life, art, science, and anything else. The Maaya emphasizes the unbreakable link between the individual and the community. It provides an ethical framework, a “model for living”.

### **ECONOMIC IMPACT**

According to the report on the Impact Study of the 10 editions of the Festival sur le Niger (2005-2014) carried out by the Cabinet BESSOC (a local consulting firm) in collaboration with the Office of Tourism of Ségou:

- Over ten editions (2005-2014), the study estimates the direct and indirect economic impact of the Festival sur le Niger in Segou at more than 16,000,000,000 CFA francs (24,390,244 EUR).
- The average per edition expenditure of festival-goers, entering the Segou economy, is estimated at 2,623,056,000 CFA Francs (3,998,561 EUR).
- The Festival sur le Niger creates an average of 1,575 jobs per edition, including 83 permanent jobs and 1,492 temporary jobs.
- The festival has developed solidarity tourism (homestay) which brings 12.6 million CFA francs (19,207 EUR) to Ségou households per edition.

From an economic point of view, this impacts on several sectors, among which we can mention the following:

- Tourism (hotels, restaurants, travel agencies, bars...)
- Handicrafts (bogolan, pottery, woven cloth)
- Agriculture (market gardeners, breeders, farmers)
- General trade (increased sales)
- Transport

Festival sur le Niger organizes the Craft and Agricultural Fair of Segou in collaboration with the CPEL (Council for the Promotion of the Local Economy) each year, with an average of 250,000 visitors per edition, more than 400 exhibitors from about thirty countries and a turnover of 800,000,000 CFA francs (1,219,512 EUR).

#### **SOCIAL IMPACT**

- The festival has had an important impact on people's mentality in Ségou. And Ségou residents are very proud of the interest that their city, its history and its culture arouse. The population, which takes ownership of the event, is nowadays invested in its success and looks forward to each edition.
- For eight years, the festival has set up a platform called the Cultural Caravan for Peace, which constitutes a space of expression and affirmation for the communities. The Caravan is a Sahelo-Saharan project for culture, peace and tolerance initiated by three festivals: Festival Taragalte (Morocco), Festival in the Desert (Mali) and Festival sur le Niger (Mali). It is a space where all the communities of Mali come together to celebrate Malian culture. The caravan strengthens the ties between communities and promotes social cohesion through arts and crafts, music, and gastronomy.

- The stages of the festival offer a great place to the traditional events (about thirty traditional troops of the various regions of Mali are programmed at each edition of the festival).
- The Festival sur le Niger is also involved in the promotion and development of Bogolan, earthen architecture and the woven loincloth in Segou through its programme SMARTS Segou; with the creation of the label of the woven loincloth of Segou, the Ségou tourism label.

### **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

The Festival sur le Niger is a large-scale event that mobilizes a considerable number of people, who consequently produce a large amount of waste (solid and liquid). Also, aware of the effects of an event of this magnitude on the environment, the Festival sur le Niger foundation has initiated a sustainability programme which focuses on the following:

- Develop and implement a waste plan to efficiently and sustainably manage waste (plastic, solid waste, etc.) generated during the festival.
- Develop and implement an energy plan to optimally, responsibly and sustainably manage water, energy, and consumables.
- Organize clean neighbourhood competition: awareness campaign in schools and sanitation of neighbourhoods and areas along the Niger River.
- Create the Niger River Observatory, a sensitization and safeguarding campaign for the Niger River, and develop green spaces through the planting of trees on the banks of the Niger River.

## THE ECONOMIC MODEL

In the context of Maaya cultural entrepreneurship, a model that enshrines the enterprise with a certain autonomy in terms of the quality of human resources and equity is recommended.

## THE FESTIVAL SUR LE NIGER FOUNDATION

The Festival sur le Niger foundation was created in August 2009 with the mission to capitalize on the achievements of the Festival sur le Niger, to contribute to the promotion of African and local culture, to the safeguarding of heritage, to the promotion of the local economy of the region, to the structuring of the cultural sector, to cultural production and to the decentralization of cultural life.

The foundation's programmes include:

- **Ségou' Art - Festival sur le Niger Programme:** *Programme dedicated to the promotion and valorization of artistic and cultural expressions through the organization of the festival.*
- **Local Economy Development Programme (LED):** *Support to the Council for the Promotion of the Local Economy of Segou (CPEL-Ségou); Coordination of the Project "Segou, creative city"; Organization of the International Fair of Segou and the Innovation and Creativity Fair of Segou.*
- **Social Cohesion and Sustainability Programme (CSD):** *This programme aims to promote dialogue, peace, cultural diversity and social cohesion in the Sahel and Sahara, but also to develop and enhance the cultural and artistic expressions of Africa, while encouraging cultural exchanges, actions to promote sustainability and environmental management.*



- *Research and Development Programme (R&D): A programme that functions as a resource centre, dedicated to research on the New Economy, cultural entrepreneurship, production and dissemination of books on local and cultural knowledge, management of cultural events, etc.*

## **FESTIVAL SUR LE NIGER FOUNDATION PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**

- **Centre Culturel Kôrè<sup>1</sup>**, a sub-regional reference centre dedicated to the promotion and safeguarding of art and culture, to education through art, to social art for behavioural change, to the production and dissemination of artistic works.
- **Kôrè Institute (IKAM)<sup>2</sup>** for an adapted training of cultural entrepreneurs and artists, with a quality teaching offer based on our social values.

## **THE FESTIVAL SUR LE NIGER FOUNDATION AND THE CREATIVE COLLABORATIONS**

The Festival sur le Niger foundation (FFSN)<sup>3</sup>, has positioned itself today as a true catalyst and model for creative collaborations and networking in Mali, Africa, and the world, based on local requirements and a qualitative practice of art.

## **SÉGOU CREATIVE CITY PROGRAMME**

The Segou Creative City programme is a Festival sur le Niger foundation initiative, in partnership with the Municipality of Segou. It was launched in 2015 on the sidelines of the 11th Festival sur le Niger in Segou and has endowed the city with a cultural policy with a sustainable cultural development programme. Its vision is to turn Segou's cultural

<sup>1</sup> [www.koresegou.org](http://www.koresegou.org)

<sup>2</sup> [www.ikamsegou.com](http://www.ikamsegou.com)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.fondationfestivalsurleniger.org/partenerariat-collaboration-internationale/>

heritage and artistic creativity into pillars of sustainable human development, the local economy, and the well-being of the population by 2030.

The city of Segou through the Segou Creative City programme was awarded by the jury of the 4th edition of the "International Prize UCLG - Mexico - Culture 21", ex-aequo with the city of Medellin in Colombia, on May 29, 2020.

Maaya Cultural Entrepreneurship is a spark for social, cultural, and economic development based on multiple objectives inspired by the values of the Maaya.

Today, in Segou, Maaya Cultural Entrepreneurship has become a catalyst in the social, cultural, and economic development of the community; an economic system based on the relationship between the individual entrepreneur and the community, between the entrepreneurs themselves and between traditional and contemporary artists.

Classical entrepreneurship is changing with the Maaya Cultural Entrepreneurship model, we are moving from an individual system without morals to a more ethical collective system, based on local or global community values.

# **Decolonize the Arts: Presenting the Collective**

GERTY DAMBURY

I first want to thank you for the invitation, particularly Félix Dupin-Meynard who first got in touch with the Decolonize the Arts collective and my friend Marine Bachelot-Nguyen, who I kind of replace here. I must admit that my first reaction was to refuse this invitation because our association is undergoing a profound restructuring and the collective's board has decided to remain silent, at least until our next general assembly. But since the invitation was more related to the history of the collective, we decided that I should go. We are experiencing this moment of silence because the recent developments in France demand that we analyse more precisely what we want to propose for societal change and what we feel we can do to achieve this goal. Though not alone, of course!

However, before I start telling you about the collective, there are a few questions that I personally wanted to address concerning the words that are used in the presentation of this panel: North and South, global art institutions, centres and peripheries, non-central cultural systems.

I want to question all these words which I first received as a tacit acceptance of the way places and peoples are designed, as a tacit agreement with the fact that there should be a centre, and therefore, it is assumed that there can be no centre without peripheries or margins. Being a person born in Guadeloupe, a “French overseas department” situated in the centre of the Caribbean, I have the feeling that I have always experienced how France placed us as peripheries of the centre (hexagonal France being that centre) and at the same time, how colonialist thought disseminated among us and persuaded us that the independent countries surrounding us in the Caribbean are inferior to that European centre. Thus, we Guadeloupeans, from the margins of France, have played at being the centre in the Caribbean, as if we were “representing” France, reproducing this dominant behaviour towards our Caribbean neighbours. So, there are centres in the margins and some parts of the South can play at being the North. However, after a first virtual meeting with Raquel and Félix, we realized that we were all questioning these words, which is interesting because the use of this vocabulary must be questioned and abandoned as soon as possible. Why not take the time to name peoples and places instead of grouping them under a general term that, once again, introduces and reinforces the notions of centre, margin, peripheries, etc. Instead of saying “an ultraperipheral region”, I prefer to speak of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and other countries. It is certainly not easy to rid ourselves of all these terms we are used to, but even if we use them between quotation marks, they shape the way we interpret places and peoples. In *Les entretiens de Baton Rouge*, Édouard Glissant says that we must change our perspective to be convinced that every centre is the margin of another centre even though the latter

doesn't appear to be a centre. Glissant invites us to decentre our way of thinking when he says that a "decentred thought is a thought that questions the legitimacy of extension and expansion, a thought that contributes to install all existing peripheries as centres and all existing centres as peripheries of something else."

This perception that people who live in the so-called North have reached an ideal state of development—ideal from a certain point of view of course (possession, wealth, science, technology)—and that people living in the so-called South need to reach the Northern state of development is the reason for the rise of all the racist and violent rejecting attitudes that are spreading throughout Europe. This is the dance danced by nationalists in France and in which the French are more and more involved.

But these nationalists—whatever their skin colour may be—inside the country itself, stamp certain people as belonging to the South and who must be expelled. You probably know about the *banlieues* (which are not the suburbs but the outskirts of large cities); these are considered a South inside the North.

But we can also add the questions of origin, identity, and skin colour to these notions of south and north, margins and peripheries, since in France, if you are Black, even though you were born into a very bourgeois family, you are automatically classified as one of the "poor people" or "member of the working class" or the so-called "diversity" that hides so many concepts.

All these notions are important if one wants to understand why the collective Decolonize the Arts was created.

### **BIRTH OF THE COLLECTIVE**

In March 2015, a certain number of Black and Maghrebi actors, actresses, stage directors and playwrights, learnt that a programme was about to be presented at La Colline, one of the five national the-

atres (with La Comédie Française, Le Théâtre National de Strasbourg, Le Théâtre National de Chaillot, Le Théâtre National de L'Odéon, Théâtre de l'Europe). A murmur spread through social media.

This programme was especially created for young people who have been rejected from the different national drama schools such as the *Conservatoire National d'Art Dramatique* in Paris. We quickly noticed the question of identity—particularly skin colour—was often hidden behind social problems. Let me make this clear: I do not mean that the colour of someone's skin is his or her identity, but we must think from the point of view of those who think it is, and who are sometimes oblivious to the fact that they do.

This programme was created supposedly as a “good deed”, in response to the multiple protests against the fact that a whole portion of French society was missing on the stages and the screens. But it was impossible for those who created this programme to admit that Black people were absent, as were people of Maghrebi and Asian descent. These people were unable to admit that this absence existed because French directors felt that the audience could not see a Black person as French, and furthermore that they had problems seeing a Black actor as a person who could play any character. I remember a discussion between Philippe Adrien—a famous stage director—and Dominik Bernard—a Guadeloupean actor. Philippe Adrien wanted him to play Oswald, Goneril's servant in *The Tragedy of King Lear*. Dominik was discussing the fact that Black actors and actresses were always playing the role of servants. He suggested that he play the part of one of King Lear's illegitimate sons: Edmund or Edgar. To which the stage director answered, “But you are Black, you cannot be King Lear's son!” I personally want to discuss the fact that Dominik spontaneously put himself forward to play an illegitimate son! Maybe he wanted to climb the stairs step by step! This, for me, is already a symptom of his own inability to propose himself as any other main character, for example the husband of one of the daughters (why not?). However,

even him playing the role of an illegitimate son was impossible for the stage director to imagine.

Let's come back to the meeting that presented this "brand new programme" to insert "diversity" onto the stage. The programme—named *Premier Acte*—had been developed by Stanislas Nordey (stage director, actor and director of the Theatre National de Strasbourg) and Stéphane Braunschweig, director of La Colline. The SNCF Foundation (the French National Railway Foundation) and Edmond de Rothschild were going to finance the whole programme. Everything was already done and decided.

All the people who were invited to this discussion were White. Social media began to buzz with this and eventually they included a Maghrebi actor and an African actor on the stage. Black women were out of the question. What a surprise?

Social media continued to buzz and we decided to invite ourselves to this meeting. This was the beginning of a large movement initiated by sixty actors and actresses, playwrights, and male and female stage directors.

The questions came from every part of the room:

- Why do you speak for us without asking us what we think of the situation?
- Why do you always ghettoize us?
- Have you thought of the real reasons why these young people who went to the same schools as the others are unable to succeed in the selection process?
- Were they born stupid or is there something:
  - a) about the school they were in?
  - b) about your selection process that denies them the right to enter the drama schools?
- Why don't you tell the truth about your real intentions?
- Even if these Black, Maghrebi or Asian-origin actors and actresses received training, what sort of roles do you see for them?



- What of the stories that are written by people from different backgrounds?
- Do you not think that the whole profession must be examined? Of writers, stage directors, technicians, actors and actresses, members of the administration? Where are they? Which posts do they hold?

At the time we had not even mentioned the people who do cleaning and security in theatres, museums, ministries and in society in general, and who are mostly Blacks and Maghrebi.

Texts were read that had already been written and had never received any kind of attention. I remember that I couldn't be present at La Colline because I had another engagement and one of my texts was read by another actress. The meeting was totally hectic! The organizers began to protest! How dare we appear like this, showing no respect for all the people who were on the stage and disrupting the event, with no consideration for the young people who had already been selected to participate in the programme *Premier Acte*, and who had finally been "granted rights" by these good-hearted people.

After the chaos, our immediate feeling was that we had to take advantage of this rare moment of unity to drive a movement that would pressure decision-makers into considering the questions debated in that space. We created a collective called *Egalité Citoyenne en Acte*, which was invited to a meeting organized by the feminist association *H/F* (Men/Women) during the theatre festival in Avignon. It took place on 9th or 10th of July in Avignon.

Many different meetings were to take place, led by stage director Eva Doumbia and finally, in November 2015, Eva Doumbia, Marine Bachelot Nguyen, Karima El Kharraze, Leila Cukierman, Françoise Vergès and I, met in a café in Paris, le Coeur Couronné (Chatelet Les Halles) to create Decolonize the Arts.

Leila Cukierman proposed the name for the association and in December we drafted a charter during a meeting in Rouen, at the *Centre Dramatique National* directed by David Bobée. The other important members of Decolonize the Arts, at the time were Sandra Sainte-Rose Franchine, David Bobée, Jalil Leclair, Yann Gael, Fabienne Pourtein, and Marc Cheb Sun.

We had very tense discussions about the words we were going to use or not. Three words were intensely discussed: *racisé* (racialized), "diversity", "visible minority". We didn't want to be called the "visible minority". What does "visible minority" mean? We are clearly called the "visible minority" because we stand out on the white board, the white background, supposedly the basis of the society in which we were born and raised. Visible minority or diversity refer to undesired personalities or groups of non-whites in an all-white assumed natural background. The terms "part of diversity", "resulting from immigration", "of the first, second, third or n+ generation" are used to avoid speaking of "colour", religion, and mainly of "race", a concept which in fact is coming back but under a camouflage.

The whole discourse was about the importance of "diversity".

The government, after having created a specific commission to examine the place of women in cultural institutions, mixed the whole thing together and one person was designated to take care of "women and diversity".

We were invited to participate to a *college de la diversité* which did nothing at all... Maybe a *Livre Blanc de la diversité* (White Book on Diversity) which is truly ironic, though the irony of it was lost on the people who produced the document.

We wrote a letter to all the directors of theatres, national drama centres, national stages, festivals. We sent 400 letters. We got one answer. In this letter we highlighted discrimination against racialized artists in theatre, which we had measured in a study of national cultural insti-

tution programmes. The figures were appalling; less than 1% of cultural institutions were headed by non-white persons.. Even in that 1%, one was a person born in Burkina Faso who directed a cultural institution in Martinique, and another person born in Benin directed a cultural institution in Guadeloupe, two French overseas departments where the majority of the population is Black. These two Black men were the only two “Black directors” in... “Black France”. The number of actors on the stage seemed to rise to some 30%, but a majority of these were Asian because France was celebrating North Korea that year. Most of those on public stages in 2015 were in France temporarily. The number of people on stage, born in France of African, Caribbean, Maghrebi or Asian descent was tiny. You can read the letter on our blog on Mediapart.<sup>1</sup>

The first public action we organized was a protest against the Molière Awards, a celebration of plays performed over the previous year. The awards are presented and decided by the *Association professionnelle et artistique du théâtre* (APAT) and supported by the Ministry of Culture at an annual ceremony, called the *Nuit des Molières* in Paris. The awards are given for French productions and performances. The Molière Awards are considered the most prestigious award in French theatre, the equivalent to the American Tony Award, or the British Olivier Award. The Molière Awards were all-white this year and still are...

Why don't we receive prizes? Not just because people who distribute them are “nasty”. This is not a moral question; it is a systemic one. A system is based on a certain notion of what Culture (with a big C) should be and what you must possess to enter the world of excellence. But we all know about this, at least concerning the “working class”. The notions of Popular Theatre, non-elitist theatre and all these sorts of questions have been debated for years. But something else must be added as far as immigrants or young people whose parents were immigrants are concerned.

<sup>1</sup> A copy of the letter can be found here: (<https://blogs.mediapart.fr/decoloniser-les-arts/blog/240216/lettre-aux-directeurs-et-directrices-de-theatres-ou-de-festivals-lettre-aux-responsables-c>)

I was born in Guadeloupe; I arrived in France when I was fourteen. My teachers took me to the theatre once or twice a year, and we studied classical plays (Molière, Racine, Corneille). I discovered modern theatre by myself. The first rows that I entirely read at the library in Montreuil were plays—Ionesco, Sartre, Brecht of course (Montreuil was a communist town), Pirandello, Camus. But apart from school, I had no opportunity to go to the theatre. I remember my mother taking me to see one funny play in Creole. It was a disaster. The play was supposed to be funny; it was only caricature. And she knew it! And she laughed heartily before telling me, when we had left the theatre “*Sa two kouyon!*”, which means “all this is too stupid!”. But I also understand that far from her people, she wanted to hear her language, to see her people’s and country’s manners and habits on stage, to laugh in Creole, to get a thrill maybe, to steups at stupid things. This play in Creole was nothing like the plays my teachers took me to: 1789 or 1793 by Ariane Mnouchkine at Vincennes, *Odyssée pour une tasse de thé* at the Theatre de la Ville, in 1974. There was a gap between what I could access with my family and what school and society expected me to know.

But let us come back to the programme we were talking about at the beginning. Though it is not formally expressed, these young people have to internalize the fact that the culture of their parents (their language, their type of humour, their beliefs, their religion, the particular things they enjoy, their different attitude to money, to sharing) is not valuable. Once they have understood and accepted this fact, they have to change, they must do everything they can to conform to a precise vision of the world which the theatre where they will have to perform has chosen to put forth.

The choice of what is excellent depends upon this particular way of seeing the world and of representing the world through the arts. For example, they must accept the role of naïve immigrant who is going to

be saved by a white character, reinforcing the vision of the gap between Europeans and let's say Africans or Vietnamese.

My mother's interest for "stupid" plays in Creole, acted by her people, has taught me something important. She could live moments of happiness even within something labelled stupid. She was not positioning herself against something, which I personally did, and this positioning was making me unhappy. I felt ashamed of some part of my culture and I know many of us—different people being so violently exposed on the white board—also experienced and still experience such feelings.

From then on I had to understand what was considered valuable and what was not and had to decide if I wanted to abandon with my own culture and part of my origin to be accepted in certain circles? Assimilation was at stake. Did I want to assimilate?

I chose to follow the path of decolonization. I had to decolonize my own mind, free myself from the image of me and my culture that was presented to me constantly.

I didn't start decolonizing with the collective Decolonize the Arts. All the actions I had been involved in since I was younger were linked to decolonization because I was born and raised on a colonized island and had seen and felt the effects of colonization since I was young.

Colonization contains decolonization because it calls for immediate struggle against discriminations, feelings of being minoritized and belittled for what you ARE and not for your actions or thoughts.

In our case, in Guadeloupe, we knew we were belittled and discriminated because we were Black. We could see, within our own family the differences that were made between the "brownies" and the others, as Audre Lorde expresses it when she talks about how her teacher treated "the brownies" at school and we also know that inside her family, she was treated differently from her lighter skinned sisters.

As Guadeloupeans, we also knew that this discrimination was linked to our history. The history of slavery. At the time the references to

slavery were purely emotional and we didn't have access to the analyses that we, as members of Decolonize the Arts insisted on transmitting to young people who came to attend our meetings.

We had to go beyond simply recognizing and observing the injustice we were facing. It came very rapidly. After a few meetings during which young students described the incredible number of discriminations they had to face, it became clear that we needed to combat the individuality that was sweating from every pore. Tears and despair were present in all our meetings. We were becoming what Jalil Leclaire called the *bureau des pleurs* (an office of tears).

But why do you shed tears? Because you have suffered. But this suffering comes from the fact that you cannot enter the paradise, or more precisely what is presented to you as the ideal entity in which you can "develop", "progress" and "succeed".

Be part of "it".

Take your share of "it".

You are invited to believe in this fiction. You yearn for a fictitious world. But first, you must understand how and why this fiction was built.

People joined us because of their personal experience (failures or guilt). However, they were not automatically clear on the words "colonialism" and "coloniality".

This is how we came to write a book that would both express the problems we were all facing but would also propose an analysis and maybe some solutions. With the help of the editor *L'Arche*, we published the book: *Let's Decolonize the Arts! (Décolonisons les Arts!)*. We invited 15 artists to express themselves around a few questions. It was a huge success.

We also sensed that some of us had political experience and a huge wealth of general and historic knowledge on the subject. We had read many authors who we had to share with the youth of this country: Blacks, Maghreb, Asians, Latinos or Whites. So, we started the Decolonize the Arts University (UDLA) meetings.

We planned to hold a monthly meeting at the University.

We started with a talk given by Françoise Verges about the way slavery has changed western life: tobacco, sugar, tea, personal relationships and how this could be seen in paintings while, at the same time the violence of slavery was absent from the paintings.

It was very educational for young people to see how Europe works. The European institutions are designed to make you believe that wealth has no origin. It just exists, at some people's disposal; those who produce this wealth are invisible. The Arts play a huge part in this fiction. You understand a great deal of your contemporary life when you dig deep in the way the Arts are the accomplice of Power. Like all institutions.

The following meetings and conversations concentrated on the rereading of Césaire, Fanon, Edward Saïd. Then we decided we needed to invite people from beyond the association. We alone could not do the whole thinking. We invited Mehdi Derfoufi for example to speak of cinema and colonialism. We invited the actresses who wrote the book *Noire n'est pas mon métier* (Being Black is Not My Job) about the way black women are employed in cinema. We also invited Algerian philosopher Seloua Luste Barbina.

But the most important UDLA conversation from my point of view was when we invited the Abenaki film-maker Kim O'Bomsawin and the poetess and Inuit Community Development Advisor Maya Cousineau Mollen to come to France. And, in a rare moment of self-congratulation, I must say that it was my suggestion.

There was a dispute taking place in Canada between stage director Robert Lepage and First Nation artists.

This is how Carly Marga, a Canadian Theatre Critic at The Toronto Star presents the dispute:

"In July, a group of Indigenous Canadians published an open letter in the Montreal newspaper *Le Devoir*, criticizing Lepage and his partners for creating a production about First Nations issues without any

Indigenous representation in the cast and little consultation beforehand. With cries of cultural appropriation on one side and artistic freedom of expression on the other, tensions rose to the point of the production's American funders pulling their support and forcing Kanata's cancellation. But in early September, Théâtre du Soleil and its storied founder, Ariane Mnouchkine, announced the play was back on.

Ariane Mnouchkine published a long letter to defend freedom of creation.

Many journalists called us to ask what we thought of Ariane Mnouchkine's decision to produce Kanata. It was about to become a French matter and what we hated above all was the obvious position the French had taken in lecturing the Canadians. Instead of answering the journalist from our point of view, we stated that the people who were asking to be heard and were not, particularly here in France were the First Nations people. So why not give them a podium to speak?

We then invited Kim and Maya to hold our December 2018 UDLA. We used our own money since we never received a penny from anyone apart from our members and people who attended the university. It was free, but we accepted donations from those who wanted and could afford to.

This is what we learned: no intellectual knowledge could, in this case, replace the concerned persons. We were not to reiterate the long history of silencing experienced by the First Nations people. We had to shut up and listen. Everyone had to shut up and listen.

This journey also meant they could see the play, which would not be performed in Canada. As Carly Marga states:

"The Indigenous community argued that their presence in the creation process would have resulted in better art and this critic—she means Herself—can't help but feel they were right." This is exactly what our two guests expressed.



In 2019, we held an action about the exhibition *Le modèle Noir*, at the Musée d'Orsay from March to July 2019.

As far as I remember, this was the first of a series of meetings on the question of Museums. It was called "Inventing our decolonial Museum" and was clearly a subject that particularly motivated Françoise Verges, our then president.

Meanwhile, the government had changed. The Minister of Culture, Franck Riester, had issued no cultural policy whatsoever and the question of the relations with the institutions was to be discussed. Should we try to improve the Ministry of Culture by having continuous meetings with the Minister's Office as we had at the very beginning of our Collective or did we need to stop these types of meetings? Confusion surrounded the word "institutions". There were relations to maintain with local level institutions, but the national level "counselling" was not appreciated by a majority of the board. Though the board proposed to have two "parallel heads" acting on two different levels, the collective was experiencing a clear schism.

Anyhow, we had three sessions about Museums, the apex being the critical visit to the Museum of the History of Immigration which had replaced the Museum of the Colonies, in the building situated Porte Dorée, which had been built for the International Colonial Exhibition in 1931.

We were also beginning to wonder about the choice of certain people at the head of institutions. It was clear that the French government under Emmanuel Macron only proceeded through manipulation. Nominations, missions given to such and such famous African philosopher, invitations to young Africans to come to the Palais de l'Élysée, the perpetual show, nominations without much change for our everyday life, combined to a continuous discourse against immigrants, while, at the same time the attacks against antiracists were everywhere in the press and at the university: the atmosphere was stifling. On top of this, COVID made it impossible for us to meet our members.

It would be too long to mention all our actions. We met many other associations, universities, trade unions, collective in other countries (Belgium, Portugal also I think, we were invited to the NYU), our members were acting every day in the field they were engaged in. We started meetings about the question of racial harassment, which is not recognized in France. David Bobée did a lot to push “diversity” in the association of the National Theatre Centres; Eva Doumbia was very active on the question of discrimination in drama school; Marine Bachelot Nguyen acted on discrimination at school and throughout society as a whole, while creating plays about Vietnam and the harassment of young Muslim women; Karima El Kharraze held important actions to link young people in French suburbs with young people in Morocco; Jalil Leclaire and Marina Monmirel were developing theatre training on the basis of Caribbean and African culture; Marina was also organizing a Black feminist film festival.

In 2020, Françoise Vergès, our president, resigned and we decided that we should not have one president anymore. The hierarchical organization of the collective must change. We realized that the type of organization we choose to adopt has direct consequences on the way we progress both in our way of thinking and in the type of actions we take. Something we had not thought about was “how to decolonize the structure of our association”.

A president, a board, members. Strong personalities emerge in this type of organization and relationships based on seduction, privileged relationships with some and exclusion of others, manipulation of the weaker...

We now have a board of seven co-presidents: Marine Bachelot Nguyen, Karima El Kharraze, David Bobée, Marina Monmirel, Jalil Leclaire, Leila Cukierman and Gerty Dambury. Eva Doumbia is not co-president, but she participates in our discussions. Some of these people had left the association for a year or two but we decided to join our forces to keep

the association and decided to take our time, to take a rest—particularly for Marina, Jalil, Leila and I who have run the association alone for two years. The four of us organized the latest action for DLA: it was a huge meeting about the book by Amandine Gay, *Une poupée en chocolat*, on the question of adoption and how adoption and colonization are linked.

**LISTEN TO THIS: WE'LL BE BACK!**

# Conclusions

# We must have a voice! Cultural collaboration needs new ethics of care & solidarity!

**MILENA DRAGIĆEVIĆ-ŠEŠIĆ**

**We had the voice!** We raised numerous ethical issues: from the meaning of participative practices to participatory arts as an agent of social transformations, of change, of the fight for social and distributive transitional justice. But, as Gerty Dambury said, it is important to notice absences, what was missing, to look at why it is missing...

My interpretation of the event, how I have listened and heard the message, depends on my own positionality. All my life I have spoken in

the first person feminine, encouraged by my strong grandmothers who saw in us, two sisters, a future artist (and yes, my sister became an architect) and a future scientist (me). Plus, I was aware that I come from a non-aligned country situated in between the two important blocks, on European semi-peripheries. Even today we, conference participants, must accept, that, despite our project name: STRONGER PERIPHERIES, we are not completely peripheries (real peripheries are not here with us: Moldova, Belarus, Ukraine before the Russian attacks... not to speak of numerous sub-regions, social classes, social and ethnic groups etc., that exist within each of the EU countries... But, going West (or toward the Global North), I "lost" my family name—too difficult to be pronounced—as in the poem "Identity Card" (1964) by Mahmoud Darwish:

Put it on record.

–I am an Arab.

I am a name without a tide,

Patient in a country where everything

Lives in a whirlpool of anger.

–My roots

–Took hold before the birth of time

–Before the burgeoning of the ages,

–Before cypress and olive trees,

–Before the proliferation of weeds.

My father is from the family of the plough

–Not from highborn nobles.

And my grandfather was a peasant

–Without line or genealogy.

My house is a watchman's hut

–Made of sticks and reeds.

Does my status satisfy you?

–I am a name without a surname.

However, I come from a family with cultural capital, but zero financial capital and zero interest in that. A family that, like any other from the southern peripheries, had numerous members in EXILE (thus, the reflection on the meaning of voluntary and non-voluntary exile, has been a constant reflection in my life, as it has been for Marcia Tiburi in her experience and positionality).

The conference has neglected some silenced voices: voices of the working class, but also academic voices that are no longer “fashionable”—do read Mircea Eliade's book *Occultism, witchcraft and cultural fashions* (1976)—we, researchers, are also guilty of following trends).

Emmanuel Négrier said: “*The emperor is naked*”, and “*What shall we do?*” How can we—artists, mediators, managers—ensure that we all are going to take responsibility...

How to rethink, as André Amálio expressed, all these relations—among them South-North relations in the Arts?

How to avoid a patronizing approach... As Rita Natálio said—we have to change the system. We must enable the voice to be taken, power to be taken, rights to be taken ... for having the voice, having the power, having the rights to become a reality.

We must all support the peripheral, the voiceless, the subaltern to take the voice. We are privileged enough to be in a situation where we can reconceptualize and recontextualize a framework of participation... through bricolage, or other ways of fostering the visibility of the diversity of peripheral practices. We can do it through research, discussions, or moving between centres and peripheries as Magda Henriques was saying. To “occupy” spaces together with the marginal and subaltern, to support their practice of resistance even when they are torn about whether to accept some job offers (is that a good enough reason) to be able to pay the bills, as Alice constantly asks herself. This ethical dilemma is always present: should she starve while making alternative spaces for herself and others; or make herself even more resilient by accepting to

interact with institutions, fully aware that institutions are (mis)using her.

Our duty: to deconstruct the populist promises to peripheries that they will become new centres.

We have spoken a lot about the importance of language: Marcia Tiburi made her points very clear. I am speaking English to you today, and further colonizing our field of research and practice by imposing English terms such as *community art*, created in a context of neoliberal capitalism. However, I instead urge us to use the term *kulturno-prosvetni rad* (*cultural-educational work*). It sounds funny in English, but I support linguistic plurality and language diversity wholeheartedly. It will open if not new, at least diversified horizons to us... We must know the names coming from different sides of the globe, and we must fight for *La culture au pluriel*, as Michel de Certeau said a long time ago... For the pluriver-sum of ideas, concepts, and contexts...

But now: what key issues came out of our three days of discussions, what I will take home?

Ethical concerns: in art practices, in empirical research, in theoretical conceptualization, in policy making...

Marcia Tiburi's reflections on the need to introduce ethical perspectives into rethinking Capitalism and Colonialism, which introduced the term culture of humiliation, something all of us from colonized, and self-colonized nations can identify with!

The need to set a transformation action:

- To transform the world through intersectionality (starting with education)
- To introduce in our work the politics of friendship, policy of listening and dialogue, conviviality, a process of care and welcoming, hospitality

We must find ways to oppose epistemological violence imposed through coloniality, but also through other forms of self-coloniality. This



is particularly poignant because WE scholars, are choosing to learn from the centre, and not from the margins... We all quote the same references: Rancière is present, Foucault also, Barthes... a bit less Bourdieu this time, but I have missed Freire, Boal, Ghandi, Tagore... and many others that could be more important to us in the peripheries than all those that we know and speak about... No authors from the southern Mediterranean were mentioned, for example...

Why have we forgotten the theories of Joffre Dumazedier, founder of *Peuple et Culture*, (theoretician of leisure–*loisir*), or Abraham Moles who introduced the concept of **mosaic cultures** (against even this logic of “a Cartesian coordinate system”) where we could situate ourselves in every moment, a kind of Mendeleev system for social processes, developed first by religions, and then by science that was uncritically worshipped as the universal knowledge.

The conference underlined the importance of context, endogenous knowledge, self-produced knowledge; and southern peripheries as a project are spaces for solidarity in sharing knowledge among ourselves...

Marcia Tiburi said: Territories conquered by Europe today have been recolonized by homegrown tycoons, oligarchs, patriarchal power, etc. But they have also been recolonized through knowledge production in which 80% of world knowledge is published in Anglo-American academic journals.

Many words were said about how to abolish periphery. Do you need to abolish the centre, or do you first have to self-denominate through an act of confrontation, through rewriting the history, restoring meanings sent to oblivion?

Violence can be seen in denomination practices... We can resist by re-appropriating: Negro in Negritude; or with the revolutionary nature of renaming: I am not an Indian—I am a Monduruku...

We must change epistemological violence through cultural action!  
How to fight for new, decolonized forms of cosmopolitanism... Is

it afropolitanism, or is it what we from the former Yugoslavia describe with a broader expression: non-aligned cosmopolitanism. But how can we revive that aspect of non-alignment, when the whole movement disappeared into oblivion, especially in Africa!

Practitioners among us insisted: cultural practices of the peripheries can transform the notion of periphery itself... Those practices are fighting the capitalist logic of binaries—although the most recent one, growth vs. degrowth, was missing. It seems we left that issue for the next conference. So, the binaries that we must confront are:

- Centre vs. Periphery
- Urban vs. Rural
- Urbanization vs. Deurbanization
- West vs. Rest
- Rational vs. Irrational
- Democracy vs. Autocracy
- Development vs. Underdevelopment
- Consumerism vs. Participation
- Consumption vs. Production/Creation
- Professionalism vs. Amateurism
- Expertise vs. Endogenous knowledge
- Memory vs. Oblivion

Or

- Official memory vs. Counter-memory (within cultural counterpublic or individual memories (as André Amálio was saying)).

Official memory facilitates collective remembrances, such as the date 25 April 1974 (the Carnation Revolution), mentioned frequently during this conference. It brought back memories for me too—the joy we felt, as students in Belgrade, following the happenings in Portugal, just as we were sad when Allende was killed in 1973. Then Chilean students

who fled the country started filling student dormitories in Belgrade; they created the first mural in Belgrade the very next year. It still lives, as a testimony of the former solidarity of non-aligned peripheries, revitalized from time to time by the care of Serbian visual artists themselves, not by the municipality. So, the culture and politics of care, hospitality, and solidarity, are not new—but they are not part of official histories of art, of cultural policies, or official memories...

As André explained, speaking against taboos in collective and national memories must form part of our discussions. In Portugal it relates to the date when slave trafficking began; in France, when slavery stopped (as it was, shamefully, too late).

The Power of Arts to retell and reopen controversial issues is truly great... We have seen shows that contribute to the "creation" of the emancipated spectator (Rancière, 1991), and the concept itself was mentioned several times. We have seen shows that foster agency and the capacities of the artistic sector in mediation, in a context of understanding, and which, at the same time, seek public-civic cooperation, balance in top-down and bottom-up policies. This we saw yesterday in different cultural centres, such as the Cultural Forum and Centre for Experimental Culture in Moita. All these centres and theatre shows seek to widen circles of participation, while artists are questioning themselves and self-reflecting. Is participation a trend, a fashion, or a need? Who seeks participation? And finally, conference workshops (which unfortunately, and unnecessarily, employed the fishbowl method), revealed several institutional and public culture-related concerns: what should a 21st century cultural institution be?

One of the key questions was: How to change and democratize public cultural institutions? For them to be open toward artists who do not come from majoritarian dominant circles. As Alice was saying, asking first about her own responsibility to deconstruct oppression in all its complexities... Refusals from numerous public institutions force perform-

ing arts “margins” to work at the intersections of education, the visual art institutional system, feminist, LGBT groups, etc. wherever it is accepted...

But Alice discussed how dancers with non-standard bodies can be recuperated as “objects” of work, in her fantastic testimony about work with Jérôme Bel on the Wizard of Oz. How he never saw or selected personally its objects of work (dancers with non-standard “ballet bodies”), directing indirectly, through assistants—through a solely online presence. Did this arise really from **ecological concern**, or more social tokenism, that contemporary artists often practice to maintain their priority status among contemporary curators who only want to bring attention to socially “engaged” artists.

Was Inês Jacques’ performance a testimony of a different approach?

Peripheral individuals in a peripheral community, thwarted by so many problems, have demonstrated the power of art to question, provoke and integrate individuals in community, regardless their individual (non)capacities. Through collective process, they sought to construct a performance that questions utopia, a social justice society, oppressive society, discussing issues from consumerism and marketing to corporate retreats, with a critical and a sarcastic approach... This process might not move the community, but it moved each individual within the project. Thus, the word continuity—in processes, in project making—permeated this conference.

That is the only way we can oppose the populism, that, as Emmanuel Négrier was saying, claims to offer “what the population needs” immediately. The role of cultural operators, as well as of us academics, is to oppose this demagogy, and the best policy is to raise capacity... for both bread and roses... Dual education, as promoted today by German speaking countries in the Western Balkans and in developing countries as a solution for unemployment of youth, in reality is the policy of giving to the poor only bread—no roses—, as there is no art educa-

tion in dual education... Maintaining the autonomy of the educational system, of art schools and universities can be the only guarantee "for both academics and students to undertake risky critical approaches?" (Dragičević & Jestrović, 2017, p.69)

Strong voices supported fighting and advocating against the predominance of project logic in the independent cultural sector, as it is asphyxiating and destroying all resources of this sector.

Advocating for stronger micropolitics and local politics as Álvaro Domingues was saying, to oppose the trend towards increasingly more infrastructure in cities and increasingly fewer people in city centres ...

All the examples presented by Tiago, Ana Rita and Antonio at Moita Cultural Forum were examples of top-down and bottom-up local politics, neighbourhood stories with whom everyone could identify... From activists to community intervention agents and researchers, all three shared a feeling that the neighbourhood is a symbol of safety for its citizens, that must have public spaces for its citizens to express themselves; if there are none, it must be self-created, but the most effective spaces are those created by civic-public partnership as seen in Moita.

We must fight the gatekeepers of history and remembrance in theatre art, in contemporary art practices. We must go back, to learn more about the history of our own activist domain, that does not enter in mainstream theatre studies knowledge (Gaio et al., 2023; Dragičević Šešić 2022). To learn about the social experiments of Augusto Boal, the intercultural theatre practices of Jean-Claude Penchenat, the first radical experiments of Theatre de Soleil, research-based theatre practices of Theatre de l'Aquarium, the activism of Jean Hurstel, and of Werkteater from Amsterdam, just to name a few that have diversified performing art spaces since the 1960s with theatre of action and social integration, in its many forms: *theatre de l'animation socio-culturelle*, invisible theatre, theatre of the oppressed. All these names have been replaced by a single notion: community theatre. This undermines their true meaning

and importance. Thus, the reduction of different names leads towards the oblivion of numerous approaches and methods of engaged theatre forms. One of the paradigmatic results of this oblivion is that the book on 20th century US theatre devoted less than a single page to The Living Theatre, despite their impact on contemporary theatre arts having been well documented and analysed in theatre studies (mostly in non-English language based, European cultures).

Thus, we must look at performances that keep memories on alternative and innovative, participative theatre forms, such as *Yellow Fever*, Eugenio Barba's last performance, and to read books like his: *Theatre: Solitude, Craft, Revolt* (Barba, 1999).

All these forms will help us, as Luca Ricci tasked us with, to give strength to participation, to cultural democracy (Belfiore & Hadley, 2018).

And as it is 100 years since the birth of Saramago, an artist born on European peripheries, among the subaltern, and who devoted one poem to the Scorpio sign (I read it in Serbian. I do not dare translate it into English and will merely quote a verse): "For you, there are no holidays, no rest, neither peace nor happiness are with you... but, never mind how your life will be short—it will offer you much!"

His talent made him grow beyond all expectations for his generation and his social class. But he was writing about and for those on peripheries, those that do not have voice as the system made walls to silence them... Thus, the performing arts must use not only the experiences of community art and must not think that participatory art started with us, that participation is a new space (to quote one of the groups), but must look at the history of the alternative, countercultural art scenes throughout the world, and find there, in all diverse experiences, our true inspiration and support.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

- Barba, E. (1999). *Theatre: Solitude, Craft, Revolt*. Black Mountain Press.
- Belfiore E. & Hadley S. (2018) Cultural democracy and cultural policy, *Cultural Trends*. 27:3, 218-223, DOI: 10.1080/09548963.2018.1474009
- Darwish, M. (1964). *Identity card*. <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/7063942-put-it-on-record---i-am-an-arab-and-the>, accessed 10th October 2022
- De Certeau, M. (1974). *La Culture au pluriel*. Paris : Union générale d'éditions.
- Dragičević Šešić M. (2022). Professionalisation of the cultural sector through the development of art/cultural management and cultural policy as academic, research-based disciplines. In Karjalainen T-M. & Simjanovska V. *The Art of Rethinking. New Era for Arts Management* (Sibelius Academy Publications), pp. 35 - 58
- Dragičević Šešić M. & Jestrović S. (2017) The University as a Public and Autonomous Sphere: Between Enlightenment Ideas and Market Demands, in S. Bala et al. (eds.), *International Performance Research Pedagogies*, Palgrave, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-53943-0\_5
- Dumazedier, J. (1962). *Vers une civilisation du loisir ?* Éditions du Seuil, Paris.
- Eliade, M. (1976). *Occultism, witchcraft and cultural fashions: Essays in Comparative Religions*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press
- Gaio, A., Joffe, A., Hernández-Acosta J. & Dragičević Šešić M. (2023). Decolonising the cultural policy and management curriculum - reflections from practice, *Cultural Trends*, DOI: 10.1080/09548963.2023.2168515
- Moles, A. (1969). Sociodynamique et politique d'équipement culturel dans la société urbaine. *Communications* n. 14 pp. 137-149 (numéro thématique : La politique culturelle)
- Rancière, J. (1991). *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*. Translation by Kristin Ross. Stanford University Press.

# Empowering the voices from the Southern peripheries

**PEDRO COSTA**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This text seeks to highlight some key ideas that emerged from the “Having a voice: Peripheries and Participation at the Heart of Cultural Policies” conference, rather than provide an exhaustive synthesis of the event. Key topics explored surrounded the ideas of participation/peripheries/peripherality/centrality of the south. Written from a personal perspective, which reflects a different positionality, this text complements Milena Dragičević-Šešić’s sharp synthesis of this same event.



From the beginning, this conference faced the challenge of responding to different objectives, associated with two different projects, with different focuses, and at different stages of development: the “Be SpectACTive” project, at the end of its two four-year cycles; and the “Stronger Peripheries” project, for which this conference was its first, in the middle of a process that will continue for another two years.

They were three very intense days, with interesting keynotes, roundtables, debates, and various side events. We also learned some important takeaways for the future, for instance, to agenda more space for debates, steer content in a way that facilitates partners to reflect on their projects and practices.

## **GENERAL ISSUES**

This brief conclusion begins with a set of cross-cutting ideas, before going into some more specific notes on each of the three main topics that structured the programme.

A first salient point is that all the main concepts and topics under discussion (centres, peripheries, participation, south, etc.), are:

- Contextual (that is, relative in time and space).
- Multidimensional (complex, debatable, which adds to the difficulty in assessing their impact).
- Often subject to manipulation and/or instrumentalization.

In the conference, the need to overcome simplistic dichotomous logics (centre/periphery; north/south; creator/spectator; production/audience, etc.) was clearly identified and supported across the board, as was the need to seek non-binary approaches to be used in discussing and analysing this subject. This is particularly important in today’s societies, that, on the one hand, are marked by the rise of cognitive-cultural capitalism, and where, on the other hand, communication is dictated over by the values of simplifications and immediacy (and emotional ex-

ploitation and polarization) supposedly in the name of communication efficiency.

The importance of being aware of the relations and power dynamics involved in these processes was another key theme of discussion. In counteracting this, the transformative power of arts and culture was also mentioned multiple times: (i) for the lives of individuals, for the production of subjectivities; (ii) in social relations; (iii) in power structures; (iv) in political action and public policies; and (v) to reconstruct the narratives and to “tell” history.

This is linked to the (greater or lesser) awareness the different participants have of the multiple possibilities (and risks) presented by the instrumentalization of culture, and of the ways this has been used by many cultural agents and public institutions, in recent years. This leads us to the broader debates surrounding culture as an end in itself, or as a “mean” by which various other objectives (social inclusion, economic dynamization and growth, urban regeneration, civic participation, etc.) can be achieved in terms of societal and territorial development. It will therefore be important to “decolonize” culture also in this sense...

## **PARTICIPATION**

Regarding participation and participatory processes, the main issue to be highlighted seems to be the fundamental importance of time. Time (and much more than what we are normally used to) is needed for the various dimensions and components of participatory processes: for the consistency of the process itself, to build effective relationships, to connect with the community, to get results (artistic and other), to be able to evaluate the impacts... This idea seems to garner unanimous support and means we all need to understand how to implement this in practice (and how to deal with the logics of operation and financing) in future processes and projects.

Another fundamental aspect of the discussions on participation was the need for a (greater) openness to the “other” and to emphasize dialogue and what we must learn from the “other” in processes. This was mentioned from a number of perspectives, with each speaker describing this need differently, using terms such as: “culture of dialogue”, “listening to the other”, “policy of listening”, etc.

This brings me to another aspect which was recognized by nearly every speaker: the fundamental role that community mediators play in the success of these processes. Regardless of the form this figure can or should take in various contexts (and realities, where there are disparities in the willingness of different actors, such as artists, cultural institutions, and promoters, as well as the communities with which one works in each specific situation), the mediator is fundamental in those processes, even if we need to continue the debate about specific names and roles he/she can assume.

Both these issues are associated with an ongoing debate throughout the conference between “having a voice” vs “giving a voice”. In fact, the use of each of these expressions completely identifies and changes the position on participatory processes. With this in mind, we had named this conference “Having a Voice”, aware of the position we wanted to express. But, at the same time, we named the small participatory experience that we carried out with the participants of the conference, between ISCTE and Barreiro, as “Giving a Voice”, thus seeking to “play” with you in this context (all of you being accustomed to promoting participation processes, to a greater or lesser extent). The idea was to expose the limitations of “participatory processes” that lacked time, involvement, with forced communities, etc.—that is, with nearly all the qualities that should be avoided—and set them against the acceptance (or lack thereof) of the outcomes (“artistic” or otherwise) of the participatory process. At the end of this playful exercise, we confess that we were a little surprised by the (very) limited protests in response to the way they (you) were invited to participate...

Another of the fundamental questions that we had, and that “hung” over the conference, without however being much discussed or questioned in depth, was about the notion of “community”. We certainly need to reflect more on this notion than we have done to now. It will be important to unravel what the “common” traits of each set of agents involved in a participatory process actually are (and when/how are they common), to understand the “cement” that builds and consolidates each community (whether they are pre-existing or created for these participatory processes). This is particularly relevant in an era marked by multiple and fragmented identities, which naturally overlap kaleidoscopically in each “community”, which we often artificialize and idealize in our processes.

Indeed, it is important to go deeper into the analysis of the role of participation in the promotion of subjectivities and, therefore, also in the construction of identities, both individual and collective, and in what is “shared”, in what builds the “common”. It was an issue that was only touched upon at this conference, which we should continue to discuss and work on.

The question of balance in the objectives of participatory processes was also discussed at length, and in particular the debate between ethics (implying here the social impact of the activities developed) vs aesthetics (and the artistic objectives of these same activities) took the floor, recovering a long-standing tradition of debate in the arts.

This is an issue that also relates to the notion of the transformational power of culture (and associated debates) which also featured prominently in the conference. It is also related to another notion, brought to the debate several times by various actors: the idea of “beneficiaries”. Who are the (real) beneficiaries of these participatory actions? Between the final recipients of productions, communities, cultural promoters, artists, society in general, and various other possibilities (in addition to the infamous “target communities” forcibly targeted in these processes as

a result of funding and other incentive systems) it is important to better understand who (and in what way, and in what senses) it is that effectively benefits (more) from these participatory processes, to use this to (re) think the way we currently design them.

## **PERIPHERIES**

The debate on peripheries has also been quite rich and fruitful, and we all seem to share a general consensus on the basic issue: the multiplicity of peripheries and conditions of periphery (geographical/cultural/political/gender, etc.) that we face, which makes it impossible to have a single discourse and a simplistic, “one-size-fits-all”, analysis of the peripheral condition. On the other hand, the multiplicity of scales for this peripherality is also accepted. It is natural that peripherality would be felt and lived differently dependant on the context of a neighbourhood, city, or region, of a certain country or continent: for example, it can be a community in a peripheral neighbourhood of a capital of a country of the “centre” of Europe; or a “central” city in a peripheral country of the European “south” or the “Global South”, etc.). Here again we are faced with a non-binary pattern, by continuums of “shades of grey” and not by clearly-defined black and white realities.

This issue necessarily leads us to question, for example, in the specific context of our projects (and in particular of “Stronger Peripheries: A Southern Coalition”) in which place(s) we are situated in relation to this peripherality, in southern Europe, in the Global North, in the various sub-national, regional, or metropolitan and urban peripheries where our activities are developed and in which context(s) we can problematize them.

Several other interesting debates related to this issue came up throughout the conference, namely, on the one hand, around the discussion between “condition of peripherality” vs “place(s) of peripherality”, and on the other hand, about the intersectionality of the peripheries, and the need to combine the different logics of peripheralization and disadvantage

(of class, of gender, of place, etc.) in our analyses and actions on the ground.

A fundamental issue that was brought to the discussion was the dual nature of the condition of periphery; on the one hand, being an expression of exclusion and marginalization (as we usually see it), but also, on the other hand, where cultural agents choose it (to be peripheral, “on the margins”, by seeking to be different, by opting for alternative objectives and processes, a vision that is often central in the cultural field and in the logics of cultural legitimation).

This discussion has led us to a series of issues that arise and that we face in everyday decisions but that often pass us by, and we fail to ask ourselves: Do we really want to be the centre? Or do we want to be the power that criticizes and transforms the centre, from outside the centre? (And much has been said about the transformative power of the periphery and the critical function of peripheries). Or do we want to be absorbed by the centre? Or do we want to be seen/perceived as new centres?

Is centre equal to power? And do we want to be the (new) power? And are the peripheries those excluded from power? Many issues can be—and have been—advanced in this line of debate.

In parallel to this we have become aware that we hear (and speak) a lot about the periphery, as being the space of the “excluded”, of a set of socially, economically and culturally disadvantaged segments, of various types, with whom we habitually work and that are usually (sometimes as a result of incentive systems) those involved in our participatory process (from ethnic or gender minorities to specific age groups, inmates or people with disabilities, for example). But what about the “great periphery”—the middle classes, the “petit bourgeoisie”, or whatever we want to call it—which is (self-)excluded from much of the cultural consumption and activities we dedicate our time to? After all, is the “majority” (e.g., 80% of the Lisbon metropolis, as some stakeholders mentioned) peripheral? Is it—or should it also be—the target of cultural performance? Is it for them and with them that we want to (also) work?

And how?

Finally, another set of questions arose in relation to the visibility and legitimation of more peripheral or less mainstream cultures. Can the culture of the periphery be legitimized from the centre? Does it need it? Does it have to be mediatized and legitimized by the centre? And from the moment it is legitimized, what are the risks of falling into “colonization” and “domination” processes? Does peripherality not also protect? A safe zone, so as not to be dominated by hegemonic modes and processes of production?

### **SOUTH/NORTH RELATION**

Unlike the previous two points, there seems to have been a greater level of consensus and unanimity in the discussions on North-South relations. The idea of the need to claim the centre, and the clear choice to do so, is much more evident here.

Contemporary transformations need us to consider South-North rather than North-South relations, as has been customary. A change of perspective is urgently needed—after all, Europe or the Anglo-Saxon world is less than 1/5 of the world’s population—will it not increasingly be a periphery? But is it true that they are (still) the centre of power and legitimation? For how long?

The role of culture in decolonizing the arts is fundamental and was a frequent topic of discussion. The role of artists, creative processes, and culture in general is important to promote and facilitate the retelling of stories, to impose counter-memory, to (re)tell History.

But the need for the South to be accepted within the systems that legitimize work and where reputations are built was also evident. These systems work at a globalized level, and it is increasingly possible for actors from the South to access them, by offering something different and unique. This is the mechanism which drives competitiveness in the context of globalization, which also affects art worlds. However, this

is not enough, as the way the South produces and creates needs to be accepted, as well as diverse logics and sources of financing. These tend to be increasingly globalized and hegemonic, automatically taking the form of the processes already accepted in the Global North, importing them, mimicking them, and often using them uncritically in other contexts. This sometimes destroys other ways of doing and governance logics that have proved much more fruitful and with more potential in “less central” contexts.

Decolonization here is also essential, thinking about issues like de-“growth” strategies, the management of time and productivism, or the ambition to always do everything. Decolonizing the arts entails decolonizing global legitimation systems. And this involves decolonizing what are considered to be the most “legitimate” artistic contents or cultural expressions, or who the most “legitimate” authors or creators or producers are, but also what ways of doing (and creating, and participating, and organizing, and being spectators...) are more “legitimate”.

## **FINAL NOTE**

The debate throughout the conference was certainly enriching. It allowed the communities of cultural agents involved in these two major projects to fine-tune a set of ideas, concepts, and practices that will certainly be useful for their/our future activity. Not only do we hope to be more prepared to understand how the multiple communities with whom we work can have an effective voice in these processes, but we hope that we ourselves, as a “community” have also gained a voice (and a more “common” one) to continue our action and reflection as agents that move in the cultural field, between centres and peripheries, between North and South, between multiple communities and individuals and processes of participation, but also processes of creation and development of consequent and quality artistic projects.

But the title of this conference “Having a Voice: Peripheries and



Participation at the Heart of Cultural Policies” included one final component evident in its tagline, that of cultural policies. This theme was perhaps the least explored.

Indeed, underlying multiple speeches and debates was the issue of public policies, but we did not enter into depth on the issue, or on the implications in terms of cultural policies of everything we have debated here—this will certainly be one of the central themes to be explored in the Stronger Peripheries Project conference in Belgrade, to be held in 2024.

# Biographies

## ÁLVARO DOMINGUES

Álvaro Domingues (1959) holds a PhD in Human Geography and is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Porto, and researcher at CEAU/FAUP. Among other works, he is the author of *Paisagem Portuguesa* (with Duarte Belo, FFMS, Lisbon, 2022), *Paisagens Transgênicas* (Museu da Paisagem 2021), *Volta a Portugal* (Contraponto, Lisbon, 2017), *Território Casa Comum* (with Nuno Travasso, FAUP, Porto, 2015), *A Rua da Estrada* (Dafne, Porto, 2010), *Vida no Campo* (Dafne, Porto, 2012) and *Políticas Urbanas I e II* (with Nuno Portas and João Cabral, F. C. Gulbenkian, Lisbon, 2003 and 2011), *Cidade e Democracia* (Argumentum, Lisbon, 2006). He writes for the Público newspaper.

## ANA RITA ALVES

Ana Rita Alves is an anthropologist and holds a PhD in Human Rights in Contemporary Societies from the University of Coimbra, with the thesis "Beyond Loss: Race, Displacement and the Political". She currently coordinates the "DAM - Digital African Memory" project within the grassroots association Batoto Yetu Portugal. Ana Rita has produced critical academic knowledge on institutional racism, public policies, territory, and political violence in Portugal for the last decade, working with several grassroots movements of peripheral self-produced and rehousing neighbourhoods. She is the author of the book *When nobody could stay: racism, housing and territory* (Tigre de Papel, 2021).

## ANDRÉ AMÁLIO

Theatre director and actor who has developed his work in documentary theatre, memory, postcolonialism and the

recent Portuguese colonial past. André holds a PhD from Roehampton University and an MA from Goldsmiths, University of London. His research was supported by Gulbenkian Foundation, GDA, and Rush. He lectured theatre directing and documentary theatre in HAMU (Prague), ESAD (Portugal) and Universidade do Minho (Portugal). He has worked as an actor/performer/dancer under directors like Anna Furse, Giacomo Scalisi, João Brites, Lúcia Sigalho, Luís Castro, Madalena Vitorino, Marie-Gabrielle Rotie, amongst others. Together with Tereza Havlíčková they co-founded the theatre company Hotel Europa.

## ATTAHER MAÏGA

Holder of a Master's degree in a foreign language (English), specialized in the management of cultural industries, Attaher has occupied the positions of Permanent Secretary, Administrator (from 2010 to 2020), and Secretary General (since June 2020) of the Foundation Festival sur le Niger. Since 2018, he has coordinated Ségou' Art - Festival sur le Niger, an international music and art festival. He chairs the Maaya Fund Board of Directors, a solidarity fund for artists and cultural actors operating in Mali since 2021. He is an accredited trainer in Maaya Cultural Entrepreneurship - ECM and is certified as a Maaya Entrepreneur by the great school of Ségou (Institut Kôrè des Arts & Métiers).

## EMMANUEL NÉGRIER

Emmanuel Négrier is a CNRS researcher in political science and directs the CEPEL, University of Montpellier. He researches and publishes on cultural policies, territorial issues, and electoral behaviour, often on all three at the

same time. He recently published: *Les projets culturels de territoire*, Presses Universitaires de Grenoble, 2019 (with Philippe Teillet); *Culture et Métropole*, Paris: *Autrement 2020*; *Cultural Policies in Europe: A Participatory Turn?*, Editions de l'Attribut, (as editor with Félix Dupin-Meynard), 2020; *La Fusion des Régions*, Grenoble: PUG, 2021 (with Vincent Simoulin); *Festivals, territoire et société*, Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2021 (with Aurélien Djakouane).

### **GERTY DAMBURY**

Gerty Dambury is a Guadeloupean writer, actress, and stage director. She shares her time between Guadeloupe and France, where she currently lives. Facing racism and discrimination since she was young, she became an activist. She took part in the first Coordination of Black Women created in the 1970s and remains a reference for black women who continue to combat racism today. In the cultural field, she founded, with five other women, the collective *Décoloniser les Arts* in 2015, to work towards change in the representations and social positions of Blacks, Asians, Maghrebi, and people of different origins born in France.

### **HUGO CRUZ**

Hugo Cruz develops his work in artistic creation and participation as a creator, cultural programmer, and researcher. His PhD dwelled on "Community Artistic Practices and Civic and Political Participation". He coordinated *Art and Community* and *Art and Hope*, among other books, and is the author of *Artistic Practices, Participation and Politics*. Researcher at CIIE -UP and CHAIA-UE, he is also part of the external evaluation team PARTIS / Art for Change - Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation / La Caixa Foundation. Consultant, trainer, and artistic director in different national and interna-

tional projects, Hugo undertakes the artistic direction of several theatre projects in co-construction with local communities ([www.artandparticipation.com](http://www.artandparticipation.com)).

### **MARCIA TIBURI**

Marcia Tiburi is a philosophy professor, writer, and visual artist, but also an eco-feminist and anti-fascist activist. She has published several books, including philosophical essays and novels. She lives in exile in France due to political persecution related to her work as a writer, artist, and activist. She currently teaches at the University Paris 8.

### **MILENA DRAGIČEVIĆ ŠEŠIĆ**

Dr Milena Dragičević Šešić, professor emerita, former President of University of Arts, Belgrade, founder of UNESCO Chair in Interculturalism, Art Management and Mediation. Milena is a Board member of the European Diploma in Cultural Project Management, Brussels, EQ-Arts, Amsterdam, as well as the UNESCO technical facility expert. She has published 20 books, 250 essays, which have been translated into 18 languages. Among her achievements, she has been awarded *Commandeur dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques* 2002, ENCATC fellowship laureate 2019 and the University of Arts laureate 2004, 2019.

### **PEDRO COSTA**

Pedro Costa is an Associate Professor at the Department of Political Economy at ISCTE and researcher at DINAMIA'CE-T-iscte (Centre for the Study of Socio-economic Change and Territory), where he coordinates the "Cities and Territories" research group. An economist with a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning, he works primarily in the areas of territorial development, planning, and cultural economics. His research activity has centred particularly on the study of the rela-

tions between cultural activities, creative dynamics and sustainable territorial development.

### **RICARDO VENÂNCIO LOPES**

Ricardo Venâncio Lopes is an architect, urban planner, and photographer, with a PhD in "Architecture of Contemporary Metropolitan Territories" (ISCTE-IUL). Researcher at DINAMIA'CET and visiting professor at ISCTE-IUL, in the Department of Architecture and Urbanism, he has authored publications, presentations, and artistic interventions in the field of urban studies, architecture, creativity, and culture. Ricardo is a member of Bagabaga Studios cooperative; of the journalism publication - Divergente; and of Traça - Architecture atelier.

### **TIAGO MOTA SARAIVA**

Tiago holds a Degree in Architecture (Lisbon), and he went on to specialize in Architecture, Territory and Memory (Coimbra). He is managing partner of ateliermob, director of the cooperatives Working with the 99% and Sou Largo. He is member of the editorial board of Le Monde Diplomatique - Portuguese edition and of the general council of ISCTE-IUL. He is on the board of the European association re:Kreators, he is a Placemaking Europe Leader and consultant of the ICC of the Council of Europe. Since 2019 he has been a visiting professor at the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Lisbon.

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

**Having a Voice:  
Peripheries and  
Participation at the  
Heart of Cultural  
Policies**

“Having a Voice: Peripheries and Participation at the Heart of Cultural Policies” held in Lisbon, Moita and Barreiro during November 2022. “Having a Voice” brought together researchers from two different European projects—“Stronger Peripheries: A Southern Coalition” and “Be SpectACTive!”—with Lisbon’s artistic community to have a broad debate on the most relevant issues concerning participation in the cultural field, particularly focusing on the peripheries.

Wednesday · 16 Nov 2022

## LISBON iscte

### 10:00 · opening session

30 min. · Grande Auditório

### 10:30 · keynote

#### **thinking change / enacting change: culture’s role in tackling social transformation**

Márcia Tiburi

Emmanuel Négrier (CNRS-CEPEL / Université de Montpellier · moderator)

60 min. · Grande Auditório

### 11:50 · roundtable

#### **Be SpectACTive! & Stronger Peripheries: a southern coalition participation for change**

Luca Ricci (Capotrave/Kilowatt) · Giuliana Ciancio (BeSpectACTive!)

Marta Martins (Artemrede) · Carla Esperanza Tommasini (Pergine Festival)

Luisella Carnelli (Fondazione Fitzcarraldo · moderator)

50 min. · Grande Auditório

### 14:30 · workshops

#### **participation as a democratic tool to reach centrality from the peripheries**

##### **Group A**

Luca Ricci (facilitator) · Tiago Mendes (rapporteur)

60 min. · Auditorium C1.04

##### **Group B**

Giuliana Ciancio (facilitator) · João Concha (rapporteur)

60 min. · Auditorium B2.03 (Ferreira de Almeida)

##### **Group C**

Massimo Mancini (Teatro di Sardegna · facilitator) · Ana Oliveira (rapporteur)

60 min. · Room C3.02

---

**Group D**

Julie Josserand (Occitanie en Scène · facilitator) · Hugo Reis (rapporteur)  
60 min. · Room B2.01

---

**Group E**

Corina Bucea (Cluj Cultural Centre) · Elisabete Tomaz (rapporteur)  
60 min. · Grande Auditório

15:40 · **synthesis**

**workshops highlights & learnings**

Ana Oliveira, Elisabete Tomaz, Hugo Reis, João Concha  
and Tiago Mendes (DINÂMIA'CET - iscte · rapporteurs)  
Lluís Bonet (Universitat de Barcelona · moderator)  
45 min. · Grande Auditório

16:30 · **book presentation**

**Be SpectACTIVE!:**  
**making culture in common. a handbook for fostering  
a participatory approach in the performing arts**

Giada Calvano (Universitat de Barcelona)  
Luisella Carnelli (Fondazione Fitzcarraldo)  
30 min. · Grande Auditório

17:20 · **keynote**

**artistic practices and political participation**

Hugo Cruz · Lluís Bonet (Universitat de Barcelona · moderator)  
40min. · Grande Auditório

**LISBON biblioteca de marvila**

20:00 · **performance**

**"HappyMerryJoyYay!"**

60min. · Inês Jacques  
Stronger Peripheries coproduction, Tandem "Connecting Dots" (Artemrede/Moita  
Municipality + Occitanie en Scène/Théâtre+Cinéma - Scène Nationale Grand Narbonne)

Thursday · 17 Nov 2022

## LISBON iscte

- 9:30 · keynote  
**peripheries: real and imagined deconstructing the peripheral territory**  
 Álvaro Domingues (CEAU/FAUP) · Pedro Costa (moderator)  
 40 min. · Grande Auditório
- 10:10 · keynote  
**peripheries: real and imagined being the centre, building communities?**  
 Emmanuel Négrier (CNRS-CEPEL / Université de Montpellier)  
 Marta Martins (moderator)  
 40 min. · Grande Auditório
- 11:10 · presentations & roundtable  
**culture in peripheries: case studies**  
 Magda Henriques (Comédias do Minho) · Fátima Alçada  
 Américo Rodrigues (Direção-Geral das Artes · moderator)  
 50 min. · Grande Auditório
- .....
- Marta Silva (LARGO) · Laure Gastal (Melando)  
 Félix Dupin-Meynard (CNRS-CEPEL / Université de Montpellie · moderator)  
 50 min. · Auditório B2.03 - Ferreira de Almeida
- 12:10 · press conference  
**Be SpectACTIVE: 8 years sponsoring cultural participation - what now?**  
 Luca Ricci · Giuliana Ciancio · Giada Calvano · Lluís Bonet  
 Emmanuel Négrier · Luisella Carnelli · Maria Gabriela (BeSpectACTIVE! ·  
 moderator) · Bruno Castro (Artemrede · moderator)  
 60-80min. · Grande Auditório
- presentation & roundtable  
**peripheries: real and imagined cultural hierarchies**  
 Rita Natálio (PARASITA) · Alice Azevedo  
 Jovana Karaulić (Faculty of Dramatic Arts - University of Arts in Belgrade ·  
 moderator)  
 50 min. · Auditório B2.03 - Ferreira de Almeida

## MOITA fórum cultural

- 14:45 · opening session  
 President Carlos Albino (Moita Municipality)  
 Vice-President Sara Rodrigues e Silva (Moita Municipality) · Marta Martins (host)  
 10 min. · Auditório
- 14:55 · presentations & roundtable/debate  
**peripheries: real and imagined overcoming intra-metropolitan imbalances**  
 Tiago Mota Saraiva (ateliermob) · Ana Rita Alves (CESC-UC)  
 António Brito Guterres · Ricardo Venâncio Lopes (moderator)  
 75 min. · Auditório
- 16:35 · screening  
**documentary set the table (BeSpectACTIVE!)**  
 80 min. · Auditório · Rita M. Pestana (director) · Cláudia Hortêncio (host)
- 18:00 · field trip  
**Culture in peripheries: case studies**  
 180 min. · Ricardo Venâncio Lopes · Pedro Costa (hosts) · *several locations*



Friday · 18 Nov 2022

## LISBON iscte

- 11:30 · **keynote**  
**displacing the centre(s): rethinking south-north relations in the arts**  
 André Amálio (Hotel Europa Company)  
 Raquel Schefer (moderator)  
 60 min. · Grande Auditório
- 14:15 · **keynote**  
**displacing the centre(s): rethinking south-north relations in the arts**  
 Gerty Dambury (Decolonizing the Arts)  
 Félix Dupin-Meynard (moderator)  
 40 min. · Grande Auditório
- 15:10 · **keynote**  
**displacing the centre(s): rethinking south-north relations in the arts**  
 Attaher Maïga (Festival sur le Niger)  
 Félix Dupin-Meynard (moderator)  
 40 min. · Grande Auditório
- 16:00 · **roundtable / debate**  
**reclaiming the center in culture: south-north relations in the arts**  
 Gerty Dambury · Attaher Maïga  
 Félix Dupin-Meynard (moderator)  
 45 min. · Grande Auditório
- 17:00 · **conclusions/takeaways**  
 Milena Dragičević Šešić (Faculty of Dramatic Arts - University of Arts in Belgrade)  
 Pedro Costa (DINÂMIA'CET - iscte)  
 20 min. · Grande Auditório
- 17:30 · **closing session**  
 10 min. · Grande Auditório

# Having a Voice: Peripheries and Participation at the Heart of Cultural Policies

.....

## Thinking versus Enacting Change: Culture's Role in Tackling Social Transformation

MARCIA TIBURI

"Doing nothing can be said. It can't be done!" (Raymond Devos)

The diversity of forms and origins of what we call "periphery" in the contemporary world forces us to reflect deeply on the change that is both necessary, possible, and adapted to all forms of peripherality. How to think about the relationships between different issues such as remoteness, domination, recognition which are, today, at the heart of our cultural development? But it is not enough to think the change. It is also necessary to imagine the modalities, the concrete solutions. Through our observations of the peripheral situation, we have identified various levers of emancipation and interdependence which will be useful to overcome the social, territorial, and democratic challenges to cultural participation.

.....

## Be SpectACTIVE! & Stronger Peripheries: A Southern Coalition– Participation for Change

Two European projects in dialogue: "Be-SpectaACTIVE!", now at the end of two four-year cycles, and "Stronger Peripheries: A Southern Coalition", at its inception.

Both projects are driven by the desire to question and then validate how cultural participation can be a driver of change. A change that firstly is internal and relates to how these organizations organize and function within each project; then it regards the artists involved in the implementation of creative processes; and finally of the communities, or rather the beneficiaries, the people, the citizens. The questions we want to discuss are: What are the ambitions

for change? How have these ambitions evolved in response to the sudden and radical changes of recent years? How have the original assumptions been affected by cultural and artistic practices, research in the field, locally driven input from the diverse partners involved? How can successes and failures become the common ground for learning and growing from both a trans-local and an ultra-organizational perspective?

.....

## **Participation as a Democratic Tool to Reach Centrality from the Peripheries**

The periphery is a deceptively simple notion. It is, firstly, a geographical notion, highlighting a spatial vision of distance in reference to centre. Today, distance takes multiple forms when thinking about contemporary peripheries and potential policy solutions. Now social, material, and symbolic dimensions of peripherality are added to simple territorial distance. The workshop and final debate endeavour to account for this plurality, but also to outline different strategies to reach centrality(ies) and engage cultural actors in the questions of identity-building and (self-)governance mechanisms. One of the major challenges will be to identify the levers that facilitate the move from a single-situation solution, which only works for itself, to creating a strategy adapted or transferable to all undesirable peripherality.

.....

## **Be SpectACTive! Making Culture in Common. A Handbook for Fostering a Participatory Approach in the Performing Arts.**

“Making Culture in Common. A Handbook for Fostering a Participatory Approach in the Performing Arts” is the fourth and final publication within the “Be SpectACTive!” framework. The handbook is conceived as a practical guide to help performing arts practitioners and organizations start or continue their path towards a more community-centred way of being and working. The first part of the book introduces a reflection on the meanings of participation, the motivations behind the decision to embark on a participatory journey, the dilemmas and tensions therein, and the different actors involved. In the second part, the authors delve into implementation-related aspects of a participatory process from conception to evaluation, complemented with practical tips and game dynamics.

.....

## **Artistic Practices and Political Participation**

**HUGO CRUZ**

Participatory and community artistic practices are nowadays gathering momentum. These practices have developed in two senses: if, on the one hand, contemporary artistic creation has deepened its participatory dimension, on the other hand, education, community and social intervention have used the arts as an alternative to con-

ventional approaches. At a time in which Western democracies and collective experience are particularly fragile, this conference seeks to cross the essential contributions of art, participation, and politics. Based on national and international experience and research in the context of community artistic practices in urban and rural territories, the fundamental elements of participatory and community artistic practices today will be discussed, as well as the potentialities and fragilities of creative processes in their connection to civic and political participation. Finally, we address/the paper addresses the concept of quality in cultural and artistic participation as a mediator for knowledge production in a field characterized by hybridity and disciplinary intersection.

.....

## **Peripheries: Real and Imagined—Deconstructing the Peripheral Territory**

**ÁLVARO DOMINGUES**

Despite the ever-delayed promises of a flattened world, we live in an asymmetric space, in geographical terms, with territories that are indisputably more central than others, the latter being constantly challenged by their diverse peripheral conditions. But the common representations of what is “central” and “peripheral”—and the allegedly related activities, cultural practices, and ways of living—usually end up adding additional layers of discrimination, stigma, and misunderstandings to the way we see and live territories

in our everyday lives. Deconstructing the notion of periphery, at different scales, is therefore fundamental as we face a permanent reconstruction of landscapes and identities, in a world where the most remote territory can be linked and anchored globally, on cultural, economic, or social planes. From the point of view of geography and territorial/urban planning this keynote speaker teases us with the multiple developments of a possible periphery, in continuously urban territories.

.....

## **Peripheries: Real and Imagined—Being the Centre, Building Communities?**

**EMMANUEL NÉGRIER**

We are always someone’s peripheral. In a multipolar world, where new forms of peripherality have been added to—or challenged—the geographical vision of distances, one can be at the centre on one dimension and peripheral on another. The growth of peripherality requires clarification about the coherence of the notion of periphery today, and the contradictions that it must face. Alongside this growth, there is a diversification of the reasons that justify a peripheral situation. To physical distance a more sensitive, symbolic, and less territorial vision of deviations from the centre has now been added. Less kilometres, more reconnaissance. The consequence of this double extension is also the multiplication of centres. Beyond these theoretical issues, the “Poli-

cy of the Peripheries” must identify prospects for action to be implemented to address and resolve them. The great fantasy of any periphery is to become one day the “new” centre. But in cultural policies, as in psychoanalysis, realizing a fantasy can turn out to be disappointing, even dangerous.

.....

## **Culture in Peripheries: Case Studies**

**MAGDA HENRIQUES · FÁTIMA ALÇADA  
MARTA SILVA · LAURE GASTAL**

Through concrete examples, these round tables will explore contrasting “peripheral” situations, as well as concrete projects that seek to respond to the challenges that these situations pose. What kinds of issues do cultural actors working in the “peripheries” (territorial, social, political) face—and how do they consider themselves to be in a peripheral situation in their local context? How do they diagnose citizen participation issues, inequalities, and cultural hierarchies in this context? What kinds of concrete actions have they invented to address these issues? What lessons have they learned from their experiments—both in terms of success and limits? To what extent are their innovations transferable to other peripheries?

.....

## **Peripheries: Real and Imagined—Cultural Hierarchies**

**RITA NATÁLIO · ALICE AZEVEDO**

Crossing and overlapping territorial asymmetries, peripheralization in the cultural field is strongly aggravated by the logics of legitimation and cultural affirmation in the artistic field. The mechanisms of mediation and reputation building, as well as the circulation of information in the cultural field, continue to be marked by rigid hierarchies, despite all the potential for flexibility brought by technological mediation processes or by the increasing assumption of the desacralization of cultural practices. Our guests in this panel help us to discuss how to overcome this peripheral condition, claiming new forms of centrality, from the perspective of the functioning of cultural institutions and the daily practice of cultural workers.

.....

## **Peripheries: Real and Imagined—Overcoming Intra-Metropolitan Imbalances**

**TIAGO MOTA SARAIVA**

**ANA RITA ALVES**

**ANTÓNIO BRITO GUTERRES**

Despite their recurrent invisibility, urban and metropolitan peripheries all over the world have been reclaiming and gaining increasing centrality in social and cultural terms. With metropolitan peripheries gaining demographic weight, but still in

a constant fight for mediatic visibility and cultural legitimacy, the creative dynamics of the metropolitan peripheries have played a fundamental role in promoting access to development in these territories. Our guests in this panel invite us to explore the idea of a multiple metropolitan area claiming a diversity of “centres” in the Lisbon cultural scene, from a territorial planning and socially committed perspective.

## .....

### **Culture in Peripheries: Case Studies**

**PEDRO COSTA**

**RICARDO VENÂNCIO LOPES**

Moita and Barreiro—both over on the far side of the Tagus River, are seen as “peripheral” cities within the Lisbon Metropolitan Area. They allow us to reflect on the role that local cultural and creative milieus have on territorial development, and the way they feed identity(ies), and the cultural, social, and economic restructuring processes on a peripheral city in contemporaneity. The programme includes an overview of and a visit to the creative scene of both municipalities, understanding the importance of their locally-rooted context. Some of the most important local cultural agents and stakeholders (artists, cultural programmers, municipalities, and institutions) will welcome us to share their knowledge on this alternative cultural scene.

## .....

### **Displacing the Centre(s): Rethinking South-North Relations in the Arts I**

**ANDRÉ AMÁLIO**

How to rethink and transform colonial history and memory through theatrical practices? André Amálio (Portugal) will discuss the work of the theatre company Hotel Europa he co-founded with Tereza Havlíčková (Czech Republic). In theatre plays such as “Portugal is not a small country”, Amálio develops transdisciplinary documentary theatre performances to address the history of Portuguese late colonialism and its ideological constructions from the perspective of the former colonizers. Autobiographical material, family narratives and testimonies contribute to a critical review of the fascist colonial regime’s mechanisms while unveiling the persistence of colonial structures in Portuguese society through phenomena such as migratory policies and gentrification. The presentation will examine dramaturgical strategies, the relationship between the social field and the aesthetic sphere, and artistic practices as historic-political instruments. In parallel, Amálio will approach the specificities of theatrical production in the Portuguese context and how Hotel Europa’s modes of production seek to dissolve and complexify the seemingly stable opposition between North and South.

.....

## **Displacing the Centre(s): Rethinking South-North Relations in the Arts II**

**ATTAHER MAÏGA**

What is organizing a performing arts festival in Mali like? Attaher Maïga will present the history and current developments of the Festival sur le Niger, which attracts up to 45,000 spectators in Mali's second largest city—Ségou. The choice of a cultural decentralization, the creation of a foundation to enhance local cultural life, the specificities of its economic and cultural development model, based on cultural entrepreneurship and links with local communities, will be discussed. We will also explore the festival's international collaborations and relations, its programmes to support young Malian artists, and the problems linked to North/South relations in the artistic sector.

.....

## **Displacing the Centre(s): Rethinking South-North Relations in the Arts III**

**GERTY DAMBURY**

Gerty Dambury, founded the collective "Décoloniser les arts" with five other women in 2015. Here she examines the specificities of representations and social positions of Blacks, Asians, Maghrebi and people of different origins in the French context, and discuss the concept of diversity from a politics of multiplicity perspective. Artists, curators, cultural programmers, and audiences have different opportunities depending on their social, cultural, racial, gender, class, or

territorial positions within and across the South(s) and North(s) in a postcolonial context. The enormous vitality of cultural and artistic production in the (various) peripheries is recurrently undervalued by global art institutions and dominant art narratives. Structural discrimination still impedes access to arts education and venues, employment, programming, and funding, while visual and literary representations tend to objectify and stereotype subaltern groups. Furthermore, when subaltern arts—and subjects—are integrated into dominant institutions, it is often at the cost of depoliticization. Simplistic binary perspectives (North-South) need to be challenged to open new possibilities for peripheral groups to claim their space(s) and deserved centrality(ies), enhance alternative modes of production and art representation, and reinvent plural value systems. Decolonizing the arts is a fundamental step to disintegrating borders and giving visibility and space for "peripheral" production in the "core" art systems.

## CREDITS

### Coordination

Marta Martins, Clara Antunes  
and Cláudia Hortêncio (Artemrede)

Pedro Costa and Ricardo Venâncio Lopes  
(DINÂMIA'CET - iscte)

Giuliana Ciancio (Be SpectACTIVE!)

Luca Ricci (CapoTrave/Killowatt)

### Organizing Committee

Marta Martins, Clara Antunes  
and Cláudia Hortêncio (Artemrede)

Pedro Costa, Ricardo Venâncio Lopes,  
Margarida Perestrelo and Elisabete Tomaz  
(DINÂMIA'CET - iscte)

Giuliana Ciancio (Be SpectACTIVE!)

Luca Ricci (CapoTrave/Killowatt)

Luisella Carnelli (Fondazione Fitzcarraldo)

Emmanuel Négrier and Félix Dupin-Meynard  
(CNRS-CEPEL / Université de Montpellier)

Milena Dragičević-Šešić, Tatjana Nikolić  
and Jovana Karaulić (Faculty of Dramatic Arts  
- University of Arts in Belgrade)

Lluís Bonet, Giada Calvano, Jose Pestaña  
(Universitat de Barcelona)

With the complicity of Be SpectACTIVE!  
and Stronger Peripheries:

A Southern Coalition's partners

### Scientific Committee

Pedro Costa, Ricardo Venâncio Lopes,  
Margarida Perestrelo and Elisabete Tomaz  
(DINÂMIA'CET - iscte)

Emmanuel Négrier, Félix Dupin-Meynard  
(CNRS-CEPEL / Université de Montpellier)

Lluís Bonet, Giada Calvano, Jose Pestaña,  
Pablo Fernandez (Universitat de Barcelona)

Milena Dragičević-Šešić, Tatjana Nikolić,  
Jovana Karaulić, Ksenija Marković (Faculty of  
Dramatic Arts - University of Arts in Belgrade)

### Executive Committee

Maria José Rodrigues, Mafalda Pifano,  
Bruno Vasconcelos (DINÂMIA'CET - iscte)

Clara Antunes, Cláudia Hortêncio  
and Inês Arromba (Artemrede),  
with the support of Ana Rita Sousa  
and Laura Gomes (Artemrede)  
& Cristiana Vaza (Torres Vedras Municipality),  
Diana Figueiredo (Pombal Municipality)  
and João Paulo Santos (Alcobaça  
Municipality)

### Communication

Bruno Castro (coordination - Artemrede),  
Miguel Melo (branding), Rui Guerra (design),  
Julieta Pracana (webmaster), Débora Pereira  
(press officer), Pedro Jafuno (photography),  
Nuno Neves (live streaming), Maria Gabriella  
Mansi (internacional press - BeSpectACTIVE!)

### Stronger Peripheries: A Southern

### Coalition and BeSpectACTIVE!

### are large cooperation

### projects co-funded by the Creative

### Europe Programme of the European Union



CO-ORGANIZED BY



CO-HOSTED AND SUPPORTED BY



WITH THE COMPLICITY AND PARTICIPATION OF



FACULTY OF DRAMATIC ARTS IN BELGRADE



UNIVERSITAT DE BARCELONA

Programa de Gestió Cultural

CONFERENCE PROMOTED WITHIN THE SCOPE OF



B — E  
s — p — e — c — t  
A — C — T  
i — v — e — !

CO-FINANCED BY



This book collects texts presented at the conference “Having a Voice: Peripheries and Participation at the Heart of Cultural Policies” held in Lisbon, Moita and Barreiro during November 2022. “Having a Voice” brought together researchers from two different European projects—“Stronger Peripheries: A Southern Coalition” and “Be SpectACTive!”—with Lisbon’s artistic community to have a broad debate on the most relevant issues concerning participation in the cultural field, particularly focusing on the peripheries. Multiple features of the peripheral condition—geographical, social, and cultural—are discussed, in its aim to bring about cultural diversity and ensure the implementation of effective participative mechanisms as core elements of cultural policies.