

RESEARCH NOTEBOOKS

OLAVO SETUBAL CHAIR OF ARTS, CULTURE AND SCIENCE

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CULTURAL EMERGENCIES IN LATIN AMERICA: FROM HISTORICAL TO CURRENT EVENTS IN BRAZIL

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São Paulo


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Olavo Setubal Chair of Arts, Culture and Science
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INTRODUCTION

The Olavo Setubal Chair of Art, Culture and Science was created in 2015 and officially launched in February 2016, being the first Chair of Art and Culture at the University of São Paulo (USP). An initiative of the Institute for Advanced Studies at USP (IEA-USP) in partnership with Itaú Cultural, the Chair aims to foster interdisciplinary reflections on academic, artistic, cultural and social issues at the regional and global levels. Funded initially for five years, it supports two programmes: *Global Networks of Young Researchers* and *Leaders in Art, Culture and Science*.

Global Networks of Young Researchers focuses on fostering and promoting in-

terdisciplinary projects for early to mid-career researchers up to 40 years old. As part of this programme, the Chair played a key role in supporting the activities of the first edition of the Intercontinental Academy (ICA), a joint venture between the IEA and the Institute for Advanced Research (IAR) at Nagoya University, Japan, under the auspices of the University-Based Institutes for Advanced Study (UBIAS) network. The ICA brings together young and senior researchers to study a single topic with an interdisciplinary focus, during two immersive periods at the respective campuses of the two institutes.

The first edition of the ICA was organized by the IEA in April 2015. In March 2016, the Institute for Advanced Research of Nagoya University received, in turn, the participants for them to continue their studies

on the theme “Time”, which they had begun in São Paulo. Thus, a new academic platform was created that so far has generated three other editions: Bielefeld and Jerusalem (2016), with the theme “Human Dignity”, Birmingham and Singapore (2018-2019), which dealt with “Laws: Rigidity and Dynamics”, and the fourth, currently underway, involving the Institute for Advanced Transdisciplinary Studies (IEAT) of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) in the city of Belo Horizonte, and the Réseau Français des Instituts d’Études Avancées (RFIEA), based in Paris, which is addressing the theme “Intelligence and Artificial Intelligence”.

The *Leaders in Art, Culture and Science* programme follows the pattern adopted by the José Bonifácio Chair, installed at USP in 2013. Each year, it has as its holder an exponent of the artistic, cultural, political, social, economic, scientific, or academic world, who guides the activities of the Chair during his or her tenure.

The first holder (2016/2017) was Sérgio Paulo Rouanet, philosopher, political scientist, diplomat, and essayist, former National Secretary of Culture and author of the cultural incentive law (*Lei Rouanet*) that bears his name. The second incumbent (2017/2018) was Ricardo Ohtake, architect, graphic designer and cultural manager, director of the Instituto Tomie Ohtake (Tomie Ohtake Institute), former Secretary of Culture of the State of São Paulo and former director of the Centro Cultural São Paulo (São Paulo Cultural Centre), the Museo de Imagem e Som (Museum of Image and Sound) and the Cinemateca Brasileira (Brazilian Film Archive). The third holder (2018/2019)

was Eliana Sousa Silva, social, cultural and educational activist, founding director of the Association Redes de Desenvolvimento da Maré (Maré Development Networks Association), a civil society institution that operates in the areas of territorial development, education, art and culture, the right to public safety and access to justice, identities, memory and communication in the Maré *favela* complex in Rio de Janeiro. Exceptionally, the fourth tenure (2019/2020) was held jointly by two professors: Paulo Herkenhoff, critic, curator and art historian, former director of the Museu de Arte do Rio (Rio Museum of Art – MAR) and of the Museu de Belas Artes do Rio de Janeiro (Fine Arts Museum of Rio de Janeiro), and Helena Nader, biomedical and full professor at the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP), who has combined teaching and scientific activities with academic administration, leadership of scientific entities and adviser to research funding agencies.

In 2020, the second five-year term of the Chair began, while the partnership between the IEA-USP and Itaú Cultural was renewed for another five years. To inaugurate this new cycle, we were honoured to welcome cultural anthropologist Néstor García Canclini, the first non-Brazilian to hold the Chair. Born in La Plata, Argentina, in 1939, Canclini has been living in Mexico since 1976, where he is a researcher emeritus of the National System of Researchers and research professor in the Department of Anthropology of the Autonomous Metropolitan University, Iztapalapa Campus, in Mexico City.

For his tenure in the Chair, Canclini proposed the project “The Institutionality of Culture in the Current Context of Sociocul-

tural Changes”, in order to discuss changes in the institutionalisation of culture in the face of current transformations: the weakening of public and private cultural institutions during the neoliberal crisis, and the increasing dominance of digital applications over the institution; the trajectories of independent movements in relation to the reconfiguration of cultural markets and the habits of audiences and users; the “de-citizenship” of party politics and sociocultural changes in the formation of the public; and the exercise of human rights in the context of technological controls, new resistances and alternative forms of social organisation.

To support him, two post-doctoral fellows were selected: Juan Ignacio Brizuela and Sharine Machado Cabral Melo. Each presented research projects aligned with the Canclini’s proposal, enabling the investigation to be both deepened and expanded beyond Brazil to other countries in Latin America. Juan Brizuela is researching into how public culture has been effectively institutionalised over the course of the past few decades in Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico, focusing on the Pontos de Cultura (Points of Culture) programme and the Cultura Viva Comunitária (Community Living Culture) movement. Sharine Melo’s research addresses the networking actions articulated by artists, cultural professionals, and other members of Brazilian civil society that resulted in the drafting and implementation of the Aldir Blanc Cultural Emergency Law (Law No. 14.017, of June 29, 2020).

Research Notebook No.1 – The Institutionalisation of Culture and Sociocultural Changes was published in July 2021 and

includes content from Canclini’s virtual inauguration, such as his lecture entitled “Institutions Out of Place”, in addition to the welcoming speech given by Teixeira Coelho, Emeritus Professor at the University of São Paulo, and the conversation between Canclini, Teixeira and Carla Pinochet Cobos, a social anthropologist at the Alberto Hurtado University in Chile on “Institutions or Platforms: Project and Events.” Also included is a text by the two post-doctoral fellows giving details of the research programme.

This second publication outlines advances in the research and some preliminary findings, such as the existence of connections between the process of drafting and approving the Aldir Blanc Law in Brazil and the construction of networks driven by the Points of Culture scheme in Brazil, as it was replicated in several Latin American countries.

We invite everyone to follow this thought-provoking research that will illuminate and contribute to reflection on the issue of the institutionality of culture in the face of current sociocultural changes. Happy Reading!

Liliana Sousa e Silva, Executive
Coordinator, and
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CULTURAL POLICY: INSTITUTIONS, CREATORS AND CULTURAL COMMUNITIES

Néstor García Canclini

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Clifford Geertz (2019, p. 135-138) asserts that “politics is not coups and constitutions”, but one of the main arenas where culture — structures of meaning through which men shape their experience — is publicly developed. For the anthropologist, political processes are always broader and deeper than the institutions that regulate them. Geertz also refers to a type of knowledge that is tacit but difficult to demonstrate: the ways in which a country’s politics reflect its culture. To paraphrase the author: where else could Brazilian politics exist but in Brazil? However, what can be said when the question is inverted and the object of politics becomes precisely the shapeless and contradictory field called “culture”? In the 1980s, a time of re-democratisation in Brazil and many other Latin American countries (but also of the

advance of neoliberal capitalism), several aspects of culture and politics seemed adversarial (GARCÍA CANCLINI, 2019, p. 45). Still, at that time, many of the crucial issues which are evident today were already emerging. In the 1990s and 2000s, what was once seen as an obstacle to economic modernisation became, in the discourse of UNESCO and national governments, an engine for development. Terms of neoliberal origin such as “creative economy”, “entrepreneurship” and “productive chain of the arts” competed for space with notions of economic solidarity or cultural democracy.

Geertz’s (2019) assertion that politics does not happen only in coups and constitutions acquires another meaning in recent years, on a Latin American scale, when we see the strength achieved by cultural

movements and by those from other fields of civil society - such as feminist, indigenous, Afro-American, environmentalist and urban ones - that energise the political life insufficiently represented by parties. Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru all attest to this reconfiguration, which has cultural components at the core of the mobilisations: ethnic and gender-related claims, as well as innovative musical, visual and performative aesthetics. The Chilean mobilisations are perhaps the most eloquent example of this political *and* cultural character; in turn, they show that transformative activation can help us rethink what has been installed as institutional “normality”, leading to a new Constitutional process where a large majority are in favour of a democratic and participatory programme.

If modern thinking has concentrated the exercise of politics in the states, the last decades have highlighted the fundamental role of other social players, such as private associations, community cultural groups, and multinational companies. Thus, debates on policies for culture and the arts have gained new dimensions by including the interactions between governments, social groups, and institutions that traditionally have not intervened in these areas (GARCÍA CANCLINI, 2019, p. 50). New inquiries arise as digital communication advances, penetrating a significant part of the social fabric. Increased access to the tools of production and dissemination of content coexists with the growing power of large corporations, with the formation of social bubbles and the proliferation of fake news and misinformation. In this tangle of increasingly rapid so-

cio-cultural transformation, what is meant by the institutionalisation of culture? Is it just the result of the actions of local and national governments, or of a broader process of social participation? Are YouTube channels and Zoom rooms cultural institutions with the same claim to legitimacy as museums, theatres, and movie theatres? (GARCÍA CANCLINI, 2021). Who has access to these institutions? Which inequalities persist and what new ones erupt in our societies? These factors point to new ways of living and the exercise of citizenship.

In recent years, Brazil, like other Latin American countries, has experienced intensively the paradoxes that exist between processes involving politics, culture, and the institution. In May 2016, shortly after the impeachment of then-President Dilma Rousseff, the Ministry of Culture (MinC), created in 1985, was dissolved for the second time (a similar event having occurred between 1990 and 1992, during the government of Fernando Collor de Mello). However, the decision was reversed within ten days, largely in response to the cultural protesters occupying federal buildings in several cities throughout Brazil. This episode illustrates a profound institutional crisis from which emerged a social process that contributed, in part, to maintaining the position of culture at ministerial level within the federal hierarchy. Changes, however, do not only emerge in one direction. With the election of Jair Bolsonaro as President of the Republic, the Ministry of Culture was again demoted into a Special Secretariat, this time within the Ministry of Tourism. But debates about the National Culture System and other institutional actions

have gained strength, driven in large part by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the sector and by the activism of civil society and community groups.

Another process impacted by both institutional advances and setbacks is the policy initiative behind the Living Culture movement and the Points of Culture. A cultural initiative developed in Brazil in 2004, the Living Culture movement is a public action focused on strengthening art, education, and citizenship at the local level, focused on community-based sociocultural organisations. The Points of Culture are at the heart of the approach and the concept has been adopted across Latin and Central America, in countries such as Peru, Paraguay, Chile, Colombia, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Argentina, and Uruguay. Ironically, on precisely the same day in May 2016 that President Michel Temer's caretaker government extinguished the Ministry of Culture, then responsible for the Points of Culture, the responsible employee published the detailed regulations governing the National Living Culture Policy¹, which had been established by Law 13.018 on July 22, 2014, but had remained unregulated until then.

The paradoxes and contradictions in the field of culture were accentuated by the public health emergency arising from the Covid-19 pandemic that, in Brazil and other countries, worsened as of March 2020. On the one hand, the arts and cultural sectors were amongst those most affected by the resulting economic crisis, with the compulsory closure of venues, social distancing mea-

asures, and audience restrictions considered necessary to control the spread of the virus. On the other hand, however, access to some artistic production, especially that in a digital format, expanded during periods of lockdown and remote working.

The governments of several countries, including France, the UK, Spain, Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil, included the cultural and artistic sectors in their emergency financial support efforts. Even so, these actions were not enough to avoid many institutions cancelling their programmes and cultural professionals facing unemployment and social difficulties, even the very question of survival. Inequalities deepened while, at the same time, more people gained access to artistic and cultural activities through their smartphones, tablets, smart TVs, and computers with internet access.

In some countries, such as Mexico, the last five years have seen the paradox of the Consejo Nacional de Arte y Cultura (National Arts and Culture Council) being promoted to ministerial status and an expansion of its powers, while suffering a reduction in its budget — first during the presidency of Enrique Peña Nieto and then in the current administration of Andrés Manuel López Obrador. The activities of museums, cultural centres, theatres, and Community Culture programmes has been restricted during the pandemic, severely reducing box office sales. There have been very few specific financial support programmes for artists, cultural workers, institutions and independent groups at this time. Our next research paper will seek to analyse the difficulties faced by the sector and the subsequent mobilisation of critical movements.

1. Federal Gazette (DOU), Normative Instruction No. 8, May 11, 2016

These reflections continue the general investigation into the institutionality of culture and sociocultural change discussed in Research Notebook No. 1 (GARCÍA CANCLINI et al, 2021). Since September 2020, when the current term of the Olavo Setubal Chair at USP began, we have sought to identify and compare the emergence of cultural movements in Brazil with those in other countries in Latin America. Our research has included analysis of quantitative data, interviews, and field observations. Notebook No. 2 presents the interim results of this research stage, carried out by Néstor García Canclini, Sharine Melo and Juan Brizuela. The overall theme is an examination of the transformative processes affecting contemporary culture and communications, with special attention to the similarities and differences between the deinstitutionalisation of the sector and the trajectories of social movements, subsequently unfolding into two separate but interdependent projects.

In “The Energetic and Broad Melody of Events,” Sharine Melo investigates the social activism that gave rise to the Aldir Blanc Law in Brazil (Law No. 14.017, of June 29, 2020), which establishes an emergency support scheme for the cultural sector

during the public emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The study was conducted mainly through interviews with activists, managers, artists, and cultural professionals who networked intensively, lobbying for the approval and implementation of the law, in addition to conversations with beneficiaries of the scheme.

In “The Cultural Emergency in Rural Bahia,” Juan Brizuela highlights the territorial dimension of cultural institutionalisation, with special attention to the Living Culture Programme and the Points of Culture in the rural areas of Bahia. Based on interviews with local actors, the text addresses issues related to territory, social and religious disputes, and the relationship between the centre and the periphery, the rural and the urban, in Brazilian cultural geopolitics.

We end with “Epilogue: Points of Culture in Latin America”, which enriches the research into the Aldir Blanc Law and the cultural emergency in rural Bahia by examining the processes involved in transnational seeding of grass-roots cultural institutions which are in equal parts fragile and powerful, organising at the community level and supporting the growing movement for cultural rights and citizenship.

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THE ENERGETIC AND BROAD MELODY OF EVENTS: REPORTS ON THE ALDIR BLANC LAW

Sharine Machado C. Melo

Introduction

This research was born of astonishment: in the midst of a state of emergency, a right-wing government invested the largest amount of money ever in the history of Brazilian cultural policies in a programme to support artists and workers in the cultural sector. Signed into law by the president in June 2020, Federal Law 14.017/2020, baptized the *Lei Aldir Blanc* (Aldir Blanc Law)², set aside R\$3 billion (c. US\$590 million) from the National Culture Fund (FNC)³, to support the sec-

2. Aldir Blanc was a Brazilian lyricist, composer and story writer who died in 2020 from complications arising from Covid-19.

3 Created in 1986, under the name of Fundo de Promoção Cultural (Cultural Encouragement Fund), with the goal of capturing and allocating resources to artistic and cultural projects at a federal level. In 1991, it became part of the Programa Nacional de Cultura (PRONAC) and, in 2012, the Sistema Nacional de Cultura (SNC). Its budget is funded from the Treasury, donations and funds that were not used in

tor most affected by the social and economic crisis resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic. The law set up a mechanism to make emergency payments to workers in the cultural sector, provide grants to artistic and cultural spaces, and support cultural activity through public calls to the sector for grant applications, awards, and other related actions.

The allocation of funding was decentralised: between September and November 2020, R\$1.5 billion were transferred by the Federal Government to the states and almost R\$1.4 billion were transferred directly to municipalities throughout the country⁴. Accord-

previous financial years. The FNC has a discretionary nature. The destination of the resources is decided by a committee on the basis of proposals received from government organisations, federal entities and civilian society.

4. As of 20 June 2021, R\$1.00 (one real) is the equivalent of US\$0.20. That means the Aldir Blanc Law

ing to official data, 75.84% of the 5,570 Brazilian municipalities received resources from the fund, almost doubling the number of municipalities participating in the National System of Culture (SNC)⁵ between 2012 and 2021. At the end of 2020, the balance unused by the municipalities reverted to the states, while in 2021 the sector succeeded in extending the fund for a further year, which has generated more than 400,000 jobs (BRASIL, s.d.) so far. Aldir Blanc Law funding has been supporting cultural activity in states and municipalities of all sizes, activating forums, articulating networks and social movements in both the peripheries and centres of Brazilian society. While many problems have been reported during the creation and implementation of the programme: bureaucracy, lack of interest from public managers, tight deadlines, and difficulties in access to the funds, it is important to highlight the advances – if not practical, at least theoretical – underlying its conception: universality, decentralisation and response to an emergency. It was from the application of these three principles that a significant number of artists and cultural

has invested around U\$590 million dollars in artistic and cultural activities between 2020 and 2021. For comparison, the largest budget ever received by the Ministry of Culture was c.R\$6 billion, in 2013. However, this amount was shared between every unit in the Federal Cultural System and was not destined for a specific programme.

5. The Aldir Blanc Law encouraged the debate about the National Culture System (SNC), composed of forums, conferences and local cultural projects. Incorporated into the Federal Constitution in 2012 and inspired by the Sistema Único de Saúde (National Health Service – SUS), the SNC provides for joint actions between the Federal Government, states, municipalities, and civil society to implement public policies for culture and the arts. Due to a lack of federal funds, the number of municipalities participating in the system has fallen in recent years.

sector workers received public resources, either as a monthly stipend or as support to cultural projects and spaces.

The feeling of astonishment becomes even greater when we realise that the Aldir Blanc Law was not just the result of the work of public managers, but of thousands of artists, technicians, cultural activists, and researchers who met through videoconferencing, made their presence felt on virtual networks – dodging fake news and social bubbles – and put pressure on Congress to approve this mechanism to support culture and the arts. What lay behind these actions? Was it just the material needs of an economic class deeply affected by the crisis, or was it a utopian dream? What stirred so many artists and cultural professionals to participate in a movement that gave a tantalising glimpse of the possibility of the active participation of society and changes in the direction of policies for the sector? What activated the collective desire to defend and transform institutions?

An in-depth interview was the chosen methodology to approach these themes. To date, 23 people⁶ living and working in the states of Bahia, Ceará, Espírito Santo, Maranhão, Minas Gerais, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Tocantins and the Federal District have given their testimonials. They include activists, public managers, culture counsellors, artists, technicians, and beneficiaries of the programme. The interviewees were selected on the basis of the network concept proposed in the 1980's by a number of sociologists,

6. Because this is about a partial presentation of results of the research, some interviews were not included in this text, being in the process of transcription and editing.

including Barry Wellman (1988)⁷. That concept sets aside the supposition of a coherent group arising from geographical proximity or resulting from the relationships and mutual interest of friendship, occupation, and kinship. Instead, the authors perceived – even before the growing virtualization in the 21st century – that the social fabric can also be composed of personal communities, often dispersed and tinged by affective, professional, and political interests, among others. It is the strength of the ties between its members that makes a network more or less dense. This rhizomatic configuration, although consistent, was one of the reasons for the reach and effectiveness of the movement which led to the Aldir Blanc Law, which brought together people from various regions of a continental country living and working in profoundly different, and unequal, conditions.

With this approach in mind, a first exploratory interview was conducted with the manager and cultural activist Célio Turino, one of the main articulators of the programme which resulted in the Aldir Blanc Law. From the initial conversation, we

mapped actors and institutions that actively participated in its formulation and implementation: points of culture, artistic form groups, cultural producer associations, and state and municipal manager’ forums. Then, the main names mentioned by the interviewees were cross-referenced with data obtained through field observation (in video sharing apps, social networks and news sites), considering, among other factors: the frequency of their participation in meetings and virtual conferences, those managers active in the creation of the law or authors writing about the topic.

Geographic, gender, and socio-racial diversity were also considered when selecting participants, in addition to the ease of contact and their availability for an interview. The main points addressed in the conversations with managers, counsellors and activists were: the social movements that engendered the law, the factors that hindered or facilitated its creation and implementation, the involvement of civil society, the importance of the National System of Culture, public and private funding sources, and impressions of artistic and cultural institutions. At a later stage, we contacted

Interviews	Main groups, collectives, institutions and programmes mentions	Main persons mentioned	Crossing	Contact for interview
Célio Turino	Congreso Nacional	Jandira Feghali	Citada también por Marcelo das Histórias, Gabriel Portela, Xaú Peixoto y Valquíria Volpato	Contacto para entrevista por e-mail.
		Rodrigo Maia		Sin contacto para entrevista.
		Benedita da Silva	Citada también por Xaú Peixoto y Valquíria Volpato	Entrevista realizada con su asesora.
	Artistas	Zélia Duncan		Sin contacto para entrevista.
	Puntos de Cultura	Marcelo das Histórias	Citado también por Cícero Belém y Xaú Peixoto	Entrevista realizada.

Figure 1: Example of cross-referencing data for choosing respondents for the survey.

Source: prepared by the author from interview data.

7. WELLMAN, B; BERKOWITZ, S. D. Social Structures: a Network Approach. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988.

beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries of the programme and technical professionals who work in the production of performing arts presentations, musical shows, and visual arts exhibitions. In these cases, the conversation gave priority to aspects of the culture and way of life of the interviewees, their artistic production, the difficulties faced in accessing Aldir Blanc funding and the benefits it brought.

The social distancing used as a pandemic containment measure prevented in-person interviews, but videoconferencing enabled us to contact people throughout Brazil. Despite the virtualization of the research, the geographic sense was not lost, integrating itself into the networks and bringing to light many of the local specificities. The situation is common to the object of study: although anchored in territorial movements, the articulation of the movement in support of the proposed law was only possible through the use of digital technologies to support meetings, information sharing, the dissemination of educational materials, training, and other actions. Computers, tablets and cell phones are also the means supporting many cultural works, in some way instigating aesthetic renewal. Thus, the virtual environment has a double implication, constituting, at the same time, both the object of the research and its methodology.

The articulation of the sector which led to the Aldir Blanc Law cannot be reduced to technological issues, nor to discussions of legalities. If the movement sought an institutionality - which can be incorporated, among others, in the elements of the National System of Culture - it also allowed simultaneous and, at times, discordant voices to be heard. It is here that a greater part of our interest in the topic converg-

es: couldn't the actions be powerful examples of some of the ways of thinking and approaches to the exercise of citizenship that stand out in today's society? At times they are intense, scattered and rapid (like the Wall Street occupations in 2011); at other times they are more objective and strategic (like the continuous pressure for the rights of minority groups). Another characteristic that seems to be common to many contemporary movements has to do with what Deleuze and Guattari (2015, p. 119) call an "event": "an unstable state that opens a new field of possible things" or a "phenomenon of foresight, as if a society suddenly saw what was intolerable and also saw the possibility of something else." Is this the spark that illuminated the historical ineffectiveness of policies for culture and the arts in Brazil in the midst of an unprecedented health and social crisis?

It was, however, the ideas of another philosopher of the event that most inspired the research. Known for studying power relations, the last course of lectures that Foucault (2011, p. 165) gave before his death, *The Courage of Truth*, was concerned with the need to combat everything that prevents us from living as an exercise of invention or freedom - and not as a mere result of external forces. The object of his investigation was Cynicism, a philosophical current that emerged in Ancient Greece and perpetuated itself over the centuries. In Foucault's reading, the cynics seek changes both in the conduct of individuals and in the general configuration of the world, and art would be one of the main vehicles of this doctrine, both through the transgressive way of life that conditions the work of some artists - especially those of the modern movements - and through the re-

fusal of “social norms,” “values,” and “aesthetic canons.” The author is not referring to the often-misrepresented problem of the sometimes complacent, sometimes transgressive relationship between artists and institutions. What the philosopher suggested, in the year of his death, is the unprecedented interest in life which transpires in art and social activism.

When studying networked social movements, Drica Guzzi (2019) relates Fou-

culture in a broader sense that are claiming their place in cultural policies and aesthetics, challenging institutional boundaries. Indeed, what longings for participation in society and in its transformation do these glimpses of hybrid processes reveal to us?

A few years ago, Canclini (2012, p. 28, 227, 246) was already alerting us to the fact that we have moved away from “the times when artists discussed what to do to change

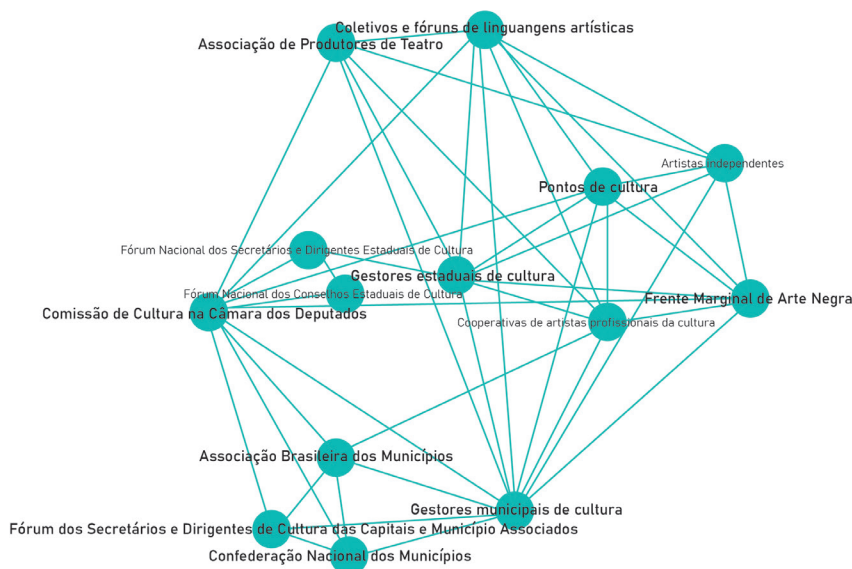


Figure 2. Network of institutions involved in the creation of the Aldir Blanc Law

Source: Prepared by the author using the Gephi app on the basis of field observation data and interviews.

cault’s investigations to an ethics that articulates the invention of the self and action on the world: a kind of crossing or contagion capable of creating collective bodies, which express the power relations of an era. Incidentally, the debate about the domains of art and culture has also expanded with the Aldir Blanc Law. Museums, theatres, and galleries have been joined by indigenous settlements and *quilombola*⁸ communities; the visual and performing arts have been joined by regional traditions, food cultures, and other spheres of

the⁹world.” “Art,” for him, “now works in the tracks of the ungovernable.” However, even if they are unable to act fully in support of social transformation, culture and art still retain a singular characteristic: they work with immediacy, understood not as “a mystical

8. TN: Quilombolas are Afro-Brazilian residents of Quilombo rural settlements first established by escaped slaves in Brazil.

9. Artistic collectives and forums; Association of Theatre Producers; Independent artists; Points of Culture; National Forum of State Cultural Secretaries and Administrators; State cultural managers; National Forum of State Culture Councils; Black Art Marginal Front; House of Representatives Culture Commission; Professional artists cooperatives; Brazilian Municipal Association; Municipal cultural managers; Forum of State Capital Cultural Secretaries and Administrators and Associated Municipalities; National Confederation of Municipalities

state of contemplation of the ineffable,” but as a “dynamic and critical disposition”, as “the perception” of “other possibilities of existence that make dissensus necessary.” Canclini refers to an “aesthetic disposition” that, “aware that art is not autonomous, knows that the possibility of opening to the new, capturing it or letting it escape” is linked to practices “that operate amidst unequal conditions.” Although they do not magically suppress conventional habits and structures of crafts and languages, these practices can be as “training” to recover our ability to speak and act.

Few social movements in Brazil’s recent history have been able to bring together as many disparate forces as the one that culminated in the Aldir Blanc Law. Could it be that the positive result stems from both a joint perception by all the parties involved of something intolerable occurring and a joint openness – under different conditions – to what may come? Key aspects of the movement’s successful articulation are: an immediate and shared desire for change in the midst of a global threat, the integration of multiple interests in pursuit of a common purpose, and principally, the encounter between a plurality of ways of life, without, however, reducing their diversity to a single narrative. But the truly novel factor may be the political intelligence shown by the main agents involved: while networking techniques were an important factor, so also was the consistent and extensive knowledge of Brazilian cultural policies and legislation, accumulated over the years by social movements that for decades have been consolidating themselves in the country.

Even when effectively coordinated, the articulation that led to the Aldir Blanc

Law is also the result of a profusion of stories, meanings, and affections that converged and culminated in a great event. How to organise them? In his “Interesting Preface” to *Pauliceia Desvairada*, Mário de Andrade (1987, p. 70) - who, like few others, knew how to listen to the dissonant voices of his time - states that the “words do not merge like sounds, but shuffle, become incomprehensible”. Later on, the author of *Macunaíma* answers in advance those who, perhaps, do not admit his theory:

If you have ever had, by chance in your life, a strong, unforeseen event (of course you have), remember the disorderly tumult of the many ideas that rattled through your brain at that moment. These ideas, reduced to the telegraphic minimum of the word, did not continue because they were not part of any sentence, had no answer, no solution, no continuity, they resounded, piled up, overlapped. Without connection, without apparent concordance - although born from the same event - they formed, through very rapid succession, true simultaneities, true harmonies accompanying the energetic and broad melody of the event. (ANDRADE, 1987, p. 70-71)

Bearing in mind the “disorderly turmoil of the many ideas” that make up the process which formed the Aldir Blanc Law, we have not found any other method than the collection and pasting of fragments to demonstrate some, still partial, results of our research. However, as the poet says, “there is an order in the unleashed fury of the elements” (ANDRADE, 1987 p. 66). Canclini (2012, p. 120) agrees: “the open configuration of the object does not allow to say anything about it. “There are precise contexts and actors that intervene in the construction of

meaning,” he adds. The anthropologist emphasises that the novelty emerging in theoretical debates has stemmed not from the “truth” of what is said by the researchers, nor from the political implications of the studies carried out, but mainly from the conditions of production and communication of knowledge, from its textual and institutional mediations. What a researcher claims to have found in the field is conditioned by what is previously said about the topic, by the relations established with the group studied, and by the academic community. Thus, the work gains body when it includes interactions, illuminates fractures, contradictions, unexplained aspects and various perspectives, seeking to recreate multiplicity, offering the plurality of manifestations found, transcribing dialogues and reproducing the dialogic character of the construction of interpretations (GARCÍA CANCLINI, 2004).

In a commentary on the process involved in writing *The Falling Sky*, written in partnership with the Yanomami shaman Davi Kopenawa, French anthropologist Bruce Albert (2015, p. 540-541) suggests that when using interviews and other ethnographic methods, the researcher is faced with “a vast and

profuse oral pre-text, at once multi-fragmented and protoform, produced in the womb of a dialogue.” “In this immense and proliferating archipelago of narratives,” Albert continues, the author must “seek a coherence and bring forth a written voice.” These were some of the principles that drove this text. The participants are introduced as they are quoted. The excerpts from the interviews have been edited for readability and fluidity. The chronological order has not always been respected, and they have been grouped according to the theme addressed in each topic, accompanied by visual records, contextualisations, and brief theoretical interventions. Certainly, there are absences and gaps: after all, how to capture the totality of an event? Naturally, personal choices have been made in the editing process. But we hope, at least, to record some intersecting recollections of a movement that succeeded in opening up an extensive field of possibilities in the midst of a deep social crisis.

The Intolerable

The story begins in March 2020, when the first social distancing measures to combat the Covid-19 pandemic were adopted in



Figure 3. Mapping the Research Respondents

Source: Prepared by the author.

Brazil. Theatres, museums, cinemas, and cultural centres were closed, performances and festivals were suspended, and about 870,000 artists and cultural sector workers, employed and freelancers, lost their means of support (MOURA, 2020). According to the Creative Economy Observatory, in April 2020, 79.3% of culture professionals cancelled between 50% and 100% of their activities; in May, the percentage was 77.4%. Between March and July, 65.8% of organisations cut back on contracting freelancers and 50.2% dismissed their employees. In addition, 71.2% of individuals and 77.8% of organisations had no financial reserves to sustain them for more than three months. But the sector was not completely paralysed: 45.1% of individuals and 42% of organisations developed new projects; 12% of individuals and 18.8% of organisations also invested in new sources of revenue (CANEDO; PAIVA NETO, 2020, p. 13).

Remote working was one of the options available to keep other economic sectors active. The need for physical spaces, such as theatres and galleries, the materiality of the works themselves and dependence on technical equipment meant that this alternative was not feasible for many artistic and cultural activities. Even so, according to the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), the potential for remote working in these areas is greater than in many other areas of the economy: in July 2020, the percentage of employees in the cultural sector working remotely was 22.5%, while it was only 11.2% in other activities and occupations (GOES, 2020). This is discussed in the accounts of Mana and Ronei, technicians at Funarte São Paulo Cultural Complex (Com-

plexo Cultural Funarte São Paulo)¹⁰. They talk about unemployment, their professional situation, fear of infection and the difficulties of performing their activities remotely:

[Mana] *It's essentially face-to-face work, we have to be in the space, in the theatre or concert hall. This was impossible for many colleagues. There are several movements and manifestos, like SOS Technique, involving audio professionals. They are totally helpless. There are few professionals who opt for a steady job. Most are freelancers. People found themselves asking: "What am I going to do? How am I going to reinvent myself professionally?" The groups Women in Audio and SOS Technique got together to organise food baskets. All to help colleagues who were unable to work. This area is different from essential services. Not that culture and art aren't essential, but at that stage we couldn't work. It is difficult even for those who already have a name in the sector. They have a support structure, professional equipment, and, even then, they have difficulties. What can we say about those who have no support structure? It is difficult to get through this situation of need, of survival. How to reinvent yourself in the midst of chaos?*

[Ronei] *Those who are on a fixed salary and have had the opportunity to continue by working remotely are managing to pay their rent, food, transportation, and are trying to take care of their mental health so they don't freak out with the fear of getting infected. But it is remote work in name; physically it is im-*

10. Space to artistic and cultural presentations of the National Foundation for the Arts (Fundação Nacional de Artes), Brazilian federal agency.

possible. We depend on the space, on the equipment. Those who don't have this opportunity are suffering from unemployment. Even the freelancer, in normal times, was able to keep paying the rent. Now, there are older people as well, not only young people, people who have been in the technical area for many years, who can't support themselves, and have returned to their parents' home, or to the countryside, have gone to their brother's home or found stability in another job. I have friends who have managed to stay in the place where they lived before the pandemic because they became bakers, or have opened a small candy store. They no longer have the prospect of working in the cultural sector. There are people who don't have that kind of time, urgency is knocking at the door and the situation is desperate.

Traditional cultures have also faced serious difficulties. President of the Union of Quilombola Rural Black Communities of Itapecuru-Mirim (UNIQUITA) and resident of the Quilombo Santa Rosa dos Pretos, in Maranhão¹¹, Seu Elias Pires relates his concerns:

[Seu Elias Pires] *The traditional festivities have stopped. We are discussing how to start again when everything passes. The price of things such as food has skyrocketed so that it has gone beyond the budget of the communities, the municipalities. Everybody is relying on their reserves. After all this, everybody will have to plan for life. We don't know how we*

¹¹ A state in the Northeast of Brazil where many of the quilombos are concentrated: areas that are occupied by the descendants of those who were enslaved, now certified by the Federal Government to ensure the access of the population to social programmes and the protection of their traditional culture.



Figure 4. festivity in the Quilombo Santa Rosa dos Pretos, São Luís (MA), before the pandemic of COVID-19
Source: By kind permission of Elias Pires



Figure 5. Celebration at Quilombo Santa Rosa dos Pretos, São Luís (MA), before the Covid-19 pandemic
Source: By kind permission of Elias Pires



Figure 6. Cultural space at Quilombo Santa Rosa dos Pretos, São Luís (MA), with activities suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic
Source: By kind permission of Elias Pires

are going to live from now on. Not only the traditional communities, but all the people of Brazil. It is going to be a little difficult to rehabilitate people in what they stopped a year and a half ago, two years ago. We don't know when the pandemic will stop. We hope it will stop right after the vaccine, that it will go away, that it will leave the people. We are worried about how we are going to start our festivities again. If we don't start again, after the pandemic, we might lose our traditions. This is one of our concerns in the quilombola community. We are asking our saints, the patron saints of the community, to show us the way: which way are we going to go? We don't want to lose our traditions, no way. People here are dying to play the *Tambor de Crioula*¹², but we cannot. We have the festivities of Santo Antônio, of Nossa Senhora Sant'Ana, of Nossa Senhora da Conceição, of the Divine Holy Spirit... Everything is suspended for this reason.

The perception of an historical rupture or suspension of the course of action is recurrent in accounts of how the COVID-19 pandemic has been affecting the arts and cultural sector. But the emergency also appears to have revived debates about institutions and the role of the state in fostering and protecting culture and the arts. Deputy Municipal Secretary of Culture of Belo Horizonte, Gabriel Portela recalls that the crisis is affecting the whole world, which somehow demands new governmental actions in the area:

[Gabriel Portela] *The pandemic is a historical fact. In our generation, it is unheard*

12. Dance of African origin, usually performed in praise of São Benedito.

of to experience something like this. The pandemic has made it possible for the state to help society in some way. Whether it was emergency aid or aid to the private sector, the suspension of formal CLT [Brazilian Labour Laws] employment contracts, all these measures that the government took opened up a field of possibilities. In this context, the parliamentarians more linked to the cultural agenda saw that they could implement emergency actions, just as several countries announced measures to mitigate the impact of the pandemic in the cultural area. You see the French Ministry of Culture making announcements. England, even countries that have a liberal stance, from an economic point of view, are taking social and economic action to protect culture.

The Rescue of the National Culture Fund (NCF)

With the emergency came the first proposals for a federal aid mechanism for culture and arts professionals, among them the Bills 1089/2020¹³ and 1075/2020¹⁴. The second, by Benedita da Silva¹⁵, was adopted as the original proposition which led to the Aldir Blanc Law, with Jandira Feghali¹⁶ as rapporteur. Even before the social mobilisation, the programme was made feasible by its link to the National Culture Fund. Since the begin-

13. Project from the Federal representatives José Guimarães, André Figueiredo and Fernanda Melchionna, regarding the concession of emergency benefits to cultural sector workers.

14. Project from Benedita da Silva, regarding the payment of a minimum wage to culture workers.

15. Federal congresswoman for the state of Rio de Janeiro since 2011.

16. Federal congresswoman for the state of Rio de Janeiro since 2011.

ning of the claims, the knowledge about public management and the search for institutional-ity have called the attention in the movement, in opposition to the misinformation spread by social networks, a certain distrust of the civil society about democratic bodies and, mainly, the disbelief in political participation, often related to cases of corruption and illicit interests. Célio Turino and Gabriel Portela report:

[Célio Turino] *We had a meeting, on April 30th, with Rodrigo Maia¹⁷, who committed to forward the urgency of the law. The meeting was requested by federal deputy Perpétua Almeida, from the PCdoB of Acre. Present were: Jandira Feghali, who would be the rapporteur, federal deputy José Guimarães, from the PT do Ceará, and federal deputy André Figueiredo, also from the PDT do Ceará¹⁸. The last two presented the first law proposal that incorporated the concept of cultural space. This law was attached to the law proposed by deputy Benedita da Silva, which did not include the concept of cultural space. It was a subsidy for individuals and also released*

resources for open calls for project grants. But no amounts were mentioned, nothing in that sense. At the meeting, besides me, there were Zélia Duncan and Rodrigo Maia. They asked me on the spot to calculate how much it would cost, more or less. I said it would be around R\$800 million to R\$1.2 billion. Maia thought the value was feasible, agreed, and committed himself. We looked for justifications to put an amount to the vote and we realized that the accumulated accounting balance in the National Culture Fund since the last century was R\$2.87 billion reais. So, we arrived at R\$3 billion¹⁹.

[Gabriel Portela] *There was some wisdom about the negotiations, and it was understood that the resources from the Federal Government were not new. In fact, they were to come from unused balances from the National Culture Fund, from some time ago. This made it easier. It is different from going to the Government and saying: “Take three billion from your budget.” Instead, you say: “Look, you already have this money there, this money has not been used for years, so let’s put it on the street”.*

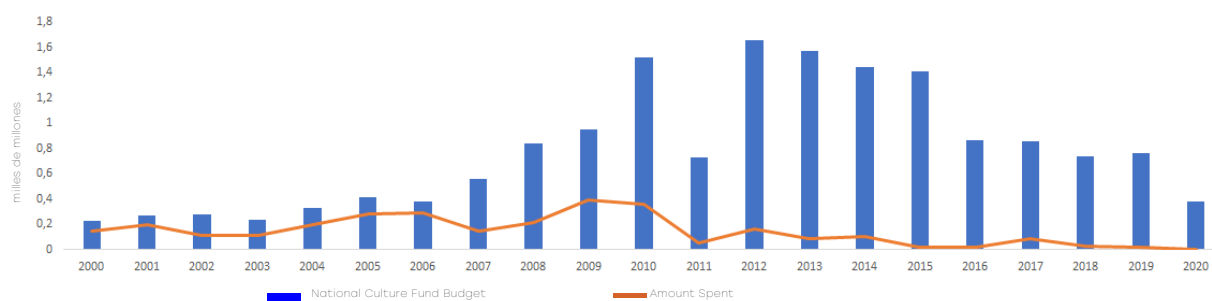


Figure 7. Budget and used amount from the National Culture Fund, from 2000 to 2020, in billions of reais²⁰

Source: Panel of the Federal Budget. Available at: <https://www1.siof.planejamento.gov.br/painelorcamento/>.

Accessed on 9 February 2021.

17. President of the Congress between 2016 and 2021.

18. PCdoB (Brazilian Communist Party), PDT (Democratic Labour Party) and PT (Labour Party) are Brazilian parties.

19. Even though it comes from the accounting balance of the Fundo Nacional de Cultura, the R\$3 billions destined to the Aldir Blanc Law received the budget line of “COVID-19 confrontation (Provisional Measure)”.

20. Selection: Budget Item: 42902 - Fundo Nacional de Cultura, 54902 - Fundo Nacional de Cultura, 55903 - Fundo Nacional de Cultura. Amounts adjusted by annual IPCA (Consumer Price Index), (2020).

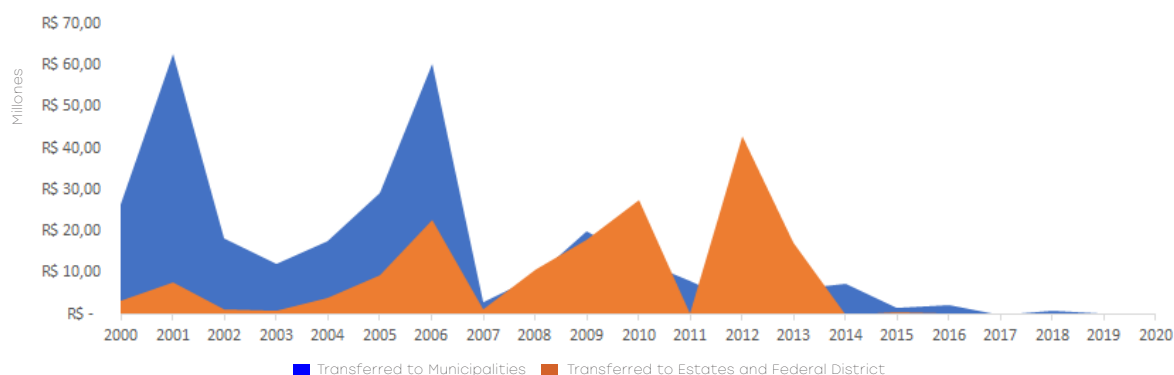


Figure 8. Funds transferred from the National Culture Fund to Municipalities and States between 2000 and 2020, in millions of reais²¹

Source: Panel of the Federal Budget. Available at: <https://www1.siof.planejamento.gov.br/painelorcamento/>. Accessed on 9 February 2021.

In fact, the federal budget for culture has been reduced year upon year for some time, which makes the amount invested in the Aldir Blanc Law remarkable. The application of the resources in the National Culture Fund was also significantly low: on average, only 19% of the fund had been spent over the last two decades. In addition, the transfer of funds from the Federal Government to states and municipalities has not been a regular practice. Over the years, the transfer has been restricted to discretionary decisions, which vary according to the interests of successive administrations. Therefore, the use of the NCF's accounting balance and the possibility of distributing and decentralising the budget seemed to be the clearest links between the Aldir Blanc Law and the National System of Culture, where the main pillars are advisory bodies, planning and funding at the federal, state and municipal level.

21. Selection: Budget Item: 42902 - Fundo Nacional de Cultura, 54902 - Fundo Nacional de Cultura, 55903 - Fundo Nacional de Cultura. Amounts adjusted by annual IPCA (2020). The individual amounts of these transfers are not significant and are shown in the graph.

The internal consultant for the Municipal Secretariat of Culture and Tourism for Cachoeiro de Itapemirim (ES), Valquíria Volpato explains:

[Valquíria Volpato] *With the Aldir Blanc Law, we finally had a legal basis for the funds from the National Culture Fund to reach us, for the first time, using the National System of Culture. It was going to be fantastic! Our System has been just a dream for some years. We wanted to see a balance between the cultural plans of advisory bodies, municipalities and states, the National Plan, and the funds. The funds are pots of money, funnels that capture resources that, once in the public coffers, are distributed through calls for proposals. The fund-to-fund transfer, the mobilisation of artists through advisory bodies and conferences, were always a bit lacking. The municipality was halfway there: it had an advisory body, but no funding, maybe it had a plan? It was very messy. Aldir Blanc managed to take money from the National Fund surplus. I keep thinking: if it was a surplus, how*

much did we not use? Brazil didn't really know what the resources in the cultural fund were.

Gabriel Portela has a different view:

[Gabriel Portela] *I find the narrative that Aldir Blanc contributes to the effectiveness of the National System of Culture dangerous. For me, the System establishes an institutional logic. To say that it is a fund, an advisory body, is insufficient. They looked a lot at the National Health System (SUS) as a model.²² But, when we talk about public health, the service provide is the state itself, at all levels, which provides the hospitals, the doctors, the health clinics. When we talk about culture, it is society itself that provides the service. It follows a different logic. The movement that helped to establish the public structure for culture, the advisory bodies, was positive. But there can be no National System of Culture without public policy. Because I handed out some money, are we talking about a system then? No. Without national policies, without the Living Culture Programme, without PRONAC [National Culture Program], without these great programmes and policies that, historically, have been important for the states and municipalities, there is no National System of Culture.*

Although there is no consensus that the National System of Culture has been strengthened, it was certainly the conference model, one of the main components in the process that led to the Aldir Blanc Law, which

22. Brazilian public healthcare system established by the Federal Constitution of 1988, providing universal and free access to healthcare, which acts as a model for other important systems, such as education and culture.

was most effective. The movement appropriated messaging applications, socio-technical networks and video communication tools to hold the meetings in which managers and civil society representatives participated. According to Célio Turino, Gabriel Portela and Marcelo das Histórias, manager and cultural activist:

[Célio Turino] *After the meeting with Maia, we started mobilising. Until then, it was a small group, of just 15 people. It was a WhatsApp group. When they asked me to help, I called some friends. As soon as the meeting of April 30th finished, I recorded an audio message communicating what had happened, and this audio went viral. Managers and cultural movements started getting back to me.*

[Marcelo das Histórias] *Two movements emerged at the same time. One of them was coordinated by Mídia Ninja and Fora do Eixo²³, which we called Teia Cultural (Cultural Web) at first and then the Popular Ministry of Culture. There, we gathered together articulators, State Secretaries of Culture, and parliamentary advisors from several progressive parties. We started to meet weekly to see what we could do to face the pandemic. The other group was set up by Célio Turino. He created a term, “basic income” or “emergency income”, and set up a group that was called Art is Life. Then we changed it to Convergência Cultural (Cultural Convergence). The group was focused on conceiving, formulating and making public policies for the sector. From these*

23. Social movements that emerged with the programme Pontos de Cultura, created in 2004 by the Federal Government to certify and finance entities that act in socialcultural actions.

two groups a third action emerged, which we called the Cultural Emergency Law. We understood that we needed to baptise the law with a name, so that people wouldn't be fighting for Law number 1.089, 1.071... We took the initiative to set up a web-conference. We understood that we needed to mobilise and sensitise both administrators and activists.

[Gabriel Portela] *It was something that we hadn't seen for a long time in the cultural area: the very broad engagement of civil society, of cultural movements, around a single focus – the Law. I think there was a key factor that made this possible: the internet. Several popular culture conferences took place. There was a meeting, in which I participated, where there were a thousand people in the Zoom room. We understood, with the pandemic, that it was actually possible to articulate actions, in fact, to become closer, because of the internet.*

A Common Purpose

If, on the one hand, the movement promoting the Aldir Blanc Law had significant political and theoretical consistency, on the other hand, the decentralisation of resources has exposed the difficulties faced by both national and local administrations: from lack of professional training to low budgets, precarious working conditions and poor organisational structures. With the need to train public agents, support networks emerged that strengthened the movement:

[Marcelo das Histórias] *When we saw that the resources would be allocated and administered locally, we started think-*



Figure 9. Facebook page of the School of Cultural Policies
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/escolapoliticasculturais/>.
Accessed on 22 August 2021.



Figure 10. Observatory of Cultural Emergence
Source: <http://observatorioemergenciacultural.org/>. Accessed on 22 August 2021.



Figure 11. Education material from the School of Cultural Policies
Source: <https://linktr.ee/escolapoliticasculturais>. Accessed on 22 August 2021.

ing about a School of Cultural Policies. We understood that if decentralisation was to be effective, administrators and cultural agents needed to sign up for the process quickly. This started to trigger a movement towards self-training. Institutions, other movements, and the culture secretariats started to produce courses. There was a surge in training even before the Law came into force. Nationally, there are two training efforts: the Observatory of Cultural Emergence²⁴, an attempt at social participation that moved beyond being an advisory body; and the School of Cultural Policies, established to support national thematic dialogues and produce content. I don't know any other law that has set up a YouTube channel with 14,000 subscribers, and created an Instagram community of 20,000. That is, a community was created to support the implementation of a law, a community of knowledge, a theme-based community, all focused on the Aldir Blanc Law.

WhatsApp groups also facilitated the exchange of information and contributed to the agility and effectiveness of the move-

ment. According to Xauí Peixoto, manager and cultural activist, and Gabriel Portela:

[Xauí Peixoto] There was a big conference, followed by mobilisation in the individual states. Then the culture sector started to mobilize - managers, advisers, forums, artists, and other workers. And it started to spread. There was a time when we lost control of who was running the conferences. We tried to keep up. Marcelo participated in one, Santini in another. Célio would spread the word all over. This became an example of a movement in practice, of incredible networking. As these groups were spread throughout Brazil, the information and mobilisation spread very fast. We started to create individual State groups. We had a set of standard messages to inform people as fast as possible. Then we informed each state about the national groups. Soon Bahia, Amazonas, and Acre joined. In short, people from all the states started coming in. We sent messages: "This is the mobilisation group for the Law. Call everyone". They got in touch, and soon the group had sixty, eighty, a hundred agents.



Figure 12. YouTube channels network, producing and sharing content about the Aldir Blanc Law
Source: Prepared by the author using the Gephi app, using data collected on YouTube.

24. Website created to mediate contact between city administrators and civilian society about the implementation of the Aldir Blanc Law.

[Gabriel Portela] *A central aspect of this process was our reliance on managers from other municipalities. For example, there is the Fórum Nacional de Secretários e Dirigentes Municipais de Cultura (National Forum of Municipal Culture Secretaries and Managers), which was not doing anything but started to operate again after the Aldir Blanc Law appeared. But participation was not very organised – it was a bit confusing. Starting from the need to exchange information, to think together, as public managers of culture, we set up another group, formed by our contacts: “Ah, I know the Secretary of Culture for São Paulo”. Someone else knew the Secretary from I don’t know where. We set up a really powerful group representing about twelve municipalities, most of them state capitals, and started having weekly meetings to exchange ideas, to analyse the situation, to share problems, to look for joint solutions.*

According to the interviewees, the movement was able to bring together people from various cultural and arts sectors, even from historically divergent currents. However, participation in the movement was more intense from the grass roots arts area, with the vital participation of the Points of Culture networks. According to Célio Turino and Elaine Dutra, President of the National Forum of State Councils of Culture (CONECTA):

[Célio Turino] *The greatest involvement came from circus artists, Points of Culture, folk guitarists, ballroom dancers, and so on. We were incorporating everyone. As it was a process of listening, I am talking about a pro-*

cess of progressive consensus. This goes back to Ancient Greece, but it also reflects today’s community culture practices. Chiapas, with Zapatismo²⁵, is all about progressive consensus... Here too, we were incorporating the concept of “space”, incorporating “food culture”... A series of propositions...

[Elaine Dutra] *In Maranhão, we include the Federação Maranhense de Capoeira (Maranhão Capoeira Federation), the Federação das Entidades Folclóricas e Culturais do Estado (State Federation of Folklore and Culture Entities), some popular culture companies, such as Sotaque de Imperatriz. In São Luís²⁶ there are several forums with the active participation of representatives of music, performing arts, popular culture and from other municipalities, besides some municipal cultural advisory bodies from our State. It was a very rewarding process. There was also the Boi de Zabumba people, the Zabumba Club. There are several groups of bumba-meu-boi²⁷ articulated in the Boi de Zabumba Club, with Seu Basílio Durans, who has been organising the festival for many years. There was also the União dos Bois de Orquestra. There was the council of Tambor de Crioula do Maranhão. They were all actively involved.*

Despite the optimism of the articulators, some people felt constrained from participating in the process, either because

25. Uprising occurred in 1994 in the Mexican state of Chiapas, with national impact, especially made to the indigenous and poorly populated areas. The zapatismo honors Emiliano Zapata (leader of the Mexican Revolution of 1910).

26. Capital of the state of Maranhão, Northeast region of Brazil.

27. Artistic manifestation of artistic cultural typical from North and Northeast parts of Brazil.

of issues of access to digital communications technology, or because they didn't feel represented by the movement in general. The artist Urânia Munzanzu, who works in the Frente Marginal de Arte Negra (Marginal Black Art Front), in Salvador, Bahia, speaks about the group's struggle to participate and be recognised, not only in the context of the Aldir Blanc Law, but in cultural policies in general.

[Urânia Munzanzu] *I was encouraged by a friend, a cultural manager, who said to me: "So, what are you going to do?" This ques-*

tion stayed in my mind. In fact, I didn't know what we were going to do. When the movement began in Brasília, in Rio de Janeiro, for the creation of the Aldir Blanc Law, we started to get together. Other groups of artists also got together and we started to think that, if this Law was in fact approved, and this resource was made available, if we didn't get together as black artists, we would be left out and the money would come for aesthetic purposes, for the creative leisure of non-black artists, who have another structure. We, black artists – especially in the case of Salvador, a city that



Figure 13. Post on the Instagram page of the Cultural Emergency Law
Source: <https://www.instagram.com/leiemergenciacultural/>. Access on May 22, 2021.



Figure 14. Post on the Instagram page of the Cultural Emergency Law
Source: <https://www.instagram.com/leiemergenciacultural/>. Access on May 22, 2021.



Figure 15. Web conference broadcast live via YouTube
Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ofe9hyH5EDg>. Access on May 22, 2021.

pulsates with art and culture, but that is extremely neglectful of the black community that produces it – would be left out. We have been meeting since then, every day, to talk about what has been happening to each of us, because there was a repressed need to talk, to externalise, to vent our pains, not only of this moment. So, we began to understand that we needed to actively make demands of the state, of the city.

Even with disagreements, general mobilisation and the participation of various social groups in the conferences generated a multiplicity of demands that were, to some extent, incorporated into the Law:

[**Marcelo das Histórias**] *Jandira Feghali²⁸ reported three or four times, updating her impressions as she participated in the process. There is an interesting fact: until the managers' web conference, the law was aimed at municipalities with more than 50,000 inhabitants. It was in a web conference that, listening to the demand, she changed and proposed an unrestricted law, for which any municipality could sign up. There is another interesting case: Jandira participated in a web conference in Pará and inserted the issue of food culture in Article 8. She made this demand in Pará and did the same with the gauchos²⁹, who wanted to put Centres of Gaucho Tradition in the Law: "Let's enter into an agreement." She put "Centres of Regional Tradition". It was an incredible experience over 15 days, where the democratic process was fully involved in drafting the bill.*

28. A member of the Federal Congress, representing the Brazilian Communist Party.

29. A collective name for people born in the Brazilian state of Rio Grande do Sul.

This comprehensive involvement of civil society was only possible because there is a long tradition of social, cultural, and artistic movements in Brazil. Managers and activists Ana Paula do Val and Cícero Belém talk about the theme:

[**Cícero Belém**] *Little by little, civil society had been becoming more and more involved in the discussion of cultural policies, and we gained a lot of power in 2003, when Gilberto Gil³⁰ became the country's Minister of Culture. Seminars were held all over Brazil, and the discussion about the National System of Culture began. We never let go of the ball, we never let go. The society was assuring this participation, was building it. I think that we, from the City of Palmas (Tocantins), were one of the most active councils. A council with a history of struggles, sometimes for more, sometimes for less.*

[**Ana Paula do Val**] *In the city of São Paulo, there are not only the peripheral movements, but there is also a huge diversity of cultural movements, especially the more organized groups of activists in the different art forms that, historically, are part of the discussion about public policies in the city, such as theatre, dance, cooperatives and, in recent years, music, audio-visual, among others. In the last culture conference, in 2013, other identities and forms of organisation emerged demanding involvement in this discussion about public policy. We had a series of new cultural actors, the peripheral, the black, the indigenous, the young, the deaf, groups that historically did not occupy these spaces. In the*

30. Minister of Cultura in Brazil between 2003 and 2008.

drafting of the Aldir Blanc Law, the classes I mentioned - cooperatives, managers, producers, directors of several art forms, people and groups that work in the more professionalised or, let's say, more hegemonic cultural production - have mobilised more strongly. The mobilisation here in São Paulo has been strong, both at the state and municipal level. But there were already other mobilisations before this. You can't say: "The Aldir Blanc Law appeared and everybody got organised". No, the FLIG-SP [Forum of the Coast, Interior and Greater São Paulo] already existed, as did the Broad Front of Baixada Santista, a series of other movements of peripheral cultures, popular and traditional cultures, live culture, theatre, dance... these movements and collectives had already been fighting for public policies since the early 2000s. However, these movements were not collaborating with each other; each one followed its own flag and its own agenda. However, when the Aldir Blanc Law appeared, these movements joined in a general mobilisation, setting up specific forums (the Capital Forum and the State Forum) so that the Aldir Blanc Law could be implemented. This process created demands that put the various organisations and cultural actors in dialogue.

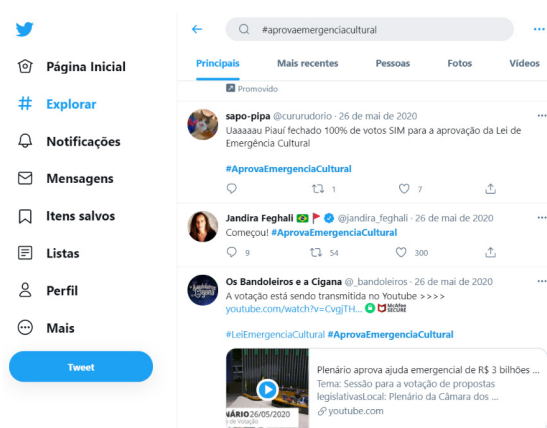


Figure 16. Twitter page
Source: <https://twitter.com/>. Access on June 6, 2021.

One more vote!

Much has been discussed about the de-politicisation process and threats to democracy, especially when political strategies that efficiently include machine algorithms with social media surface. Contrary to the most pessimistic predictions, the organisers of the Aldir Blanc Law used social networks and instant messaging applications not to merely reproduce and spread content, but as a strategic way to win favourable votes of each of the federal representatives for the bill. It is necessary to take into account the social and health emergency that in some way facilitated the acceptance of the Bill by Congress. But, besides the historical situation, it was the combination of traditional party politics and networking that led to the almost unanimous approval of the Law in Congress.

[**Marcelo das Histórias**] We mapped out the votes, organised voting by state, created several systems and lists to put pressure on the representatives... Jandira worked in Congress to convince her colleagues to broaden the vote. The state culture secretaries worked closely with the governors and the federal deputies. That is, a way was created to mobilise all sides of the National Congress in favour. This led to an almost unanimous vote, with the exception of the Partido Novo [New Party]. In the Senate, we lobbied in the same way and the senators voted unanimously in favour of the bill.

[**Xaú Peixoto**] At the time of the pandemic, there was a strong feeling of togetherness, of comradeship. We used to monitor the vote. We would tell the state group: "Such and

such a federal representative has confirmed". We would tell a larger group of articulators: "One more vote!" This mobilised the movement: "I want to know about my representative." Everybody said: "One more, one more, one more". It was incredible, because in Ceará we got 22 votes, regardless of party, support base, ideology. People got more excited: "Go Ceará!" and so on. In all the speeches by all the representatives, from all the parties, this historic conquest was confirmed. Guimarães said: "Boy, I have never seen such an extensive mobilisation, or one so effective as the one for the culture sector". This was very important for us to understand, knowing that we can mobilise based on our own agenda.

According to [getdaytrends.com](https://www.getdaytrends.com), the hashtag #AprovaEmergenciaCultural reached the second position in the national ranking and the 23rd position in the global ranking on Twitter on 26 May 2020, the date of the vote on the proposal in the House of Representatives. On that same day, the virtual session in the house, which lasted six hours, was broadcast live and watched by more than 43,000 people.

Will the resources arrive?

After the approval of the Aldir Blanc Law by Congress, a slower process of regulation began, led by the Federal Government. The next stage was for states and municipalities to adhere to the programme and plan their actions³¹. All states and 75.84% of the mu-

nicipalities had their plans approved for the transfer of resources (BRASIL, n.d.). Bureaucratic issues, short deadlines and depositing the amounts agreed were some of the difficulties, as discussed by Marcelo das Histórias, Gabriel Portela and Luisa Cela, Executive Secretary of Culture of the State of Ceará:

[Marcelo das Histórias] *People went through a process of articulation in the Congress, followed by approval by the President – and then it was time to regulate the law. Everything was left to the municipalities and to the states. The application of the law is decentralised and very different in each municipality. It is the same with the states. There is no uniformity. The regulation has loopholes, there could have been some national guidelines.*

[Gabriel Portela] *The states and municipalities were left to their own devices. The Federal Government said: "We've done our part, we've made the resources available, the rest is up to you". This is evident in the federal regulation, which simply said: "How you are going to do it is your problem. It is expressly stated that the responsibility is yours". This produced a problem and, since the Federal Government did not take the lead in this process, everyone found their own way to solve it in whatever way they could. It is good that the states and municipalities have some level of autonomy at this moment, because each one knows its area and the best way to apply the resources, but the lack of common understanding about important issues for an emergency sup-*

31. In 2021, the deadline for the payment of the resources of the Aldir Blanc Law was postponed by one year. At the time of the interviews, the proposition was

that the municipal and state plans for the Aldir Blanc Law should be finalised and executed between September and December 2020.

port programme, which nobody has ever executed before, has created discrepancies. From the administrative and legal point of view, I think this was one of the biggest challenges.

[Luísa Cela] Of course, in the forum we had political differences between the states. The urgency made this practically disappear. It was great. We had regular meetings and everybody participated. Of the 27 federations, maybe we had 20 present all the time and synchronised with what we needed to do. This is true for civil society as well as for us, who, sometimes, would get tangled up in political and ideological issues that did not support the articulation of a more strategic action. The Aldir Blanc Law, the pandemic, changed things, leading to clarity of purpose: “Let’s put our differences aside for a while because we have a mission to accomplish now.” This was a determining factor because we had to produce a lot of material, a lot of planning that was surreal, given the time we had. When we were final-

ising the text of the law, when it was debated and passed in Congress, we kept lobbying, but we were already preparing for the execution of the law, because we had nothing. We didn’t have a system, a form, guidance on its regulation. We had to do all this in one month. If we had had to depend on the state of Ceará alone, we wouldn’t have been able to do it.

In fact, after the excitement of the creation and voting phases of the law, managers and civil society were faced with the social inequalities and political difficulties that are always so present in Brazil.

[Valquíria Volpato] We lifted the rug and identified the dirt underneath it. Now what were we to do with it? And that was the surprise. The municipalities were desperate, wanting to set up councils, to put artists into a straitjacket. This is not the democratic way. The artist has to be interested in participating. What happened with the Aldir Blanc law was very cool:

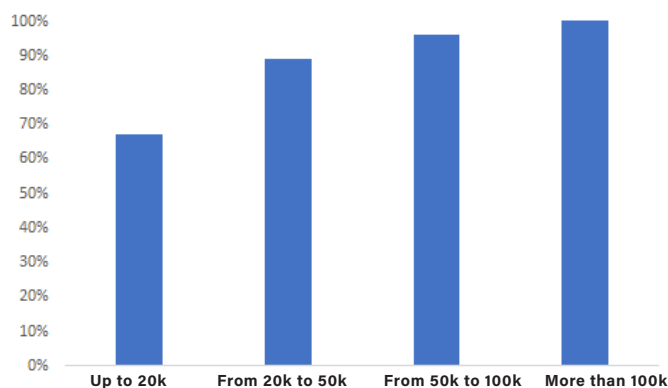


Figure 17. Percentage of Brazilian Municipalities able to receive funding under the Aldir Blanc Law, by number of inhabitants
Source: Portal Sistema Nacional de Cultura. Available at: <http://portalsnc.cultura.gov.br/indicadorescultura/>. Access on May 28, 2021.

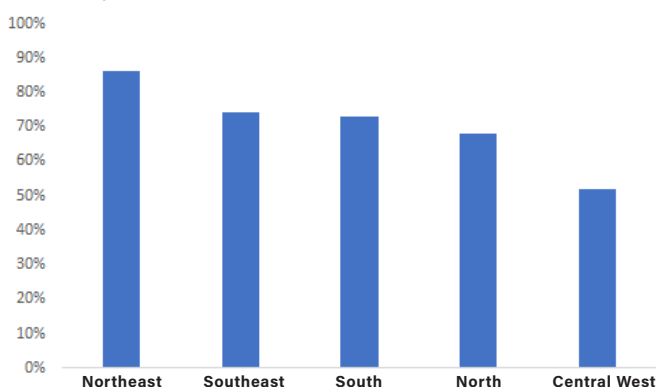


Figure 18. Percentage of Brazilian Municipalities able to receive funding under the Aldir Blanc Law by Geographical Region
Source: Portal Sistema Nacional de Cultura. Available at: <http://portalsnc.cultura.gov.br/indicadorescultura/>. Access on May 28, 2021.

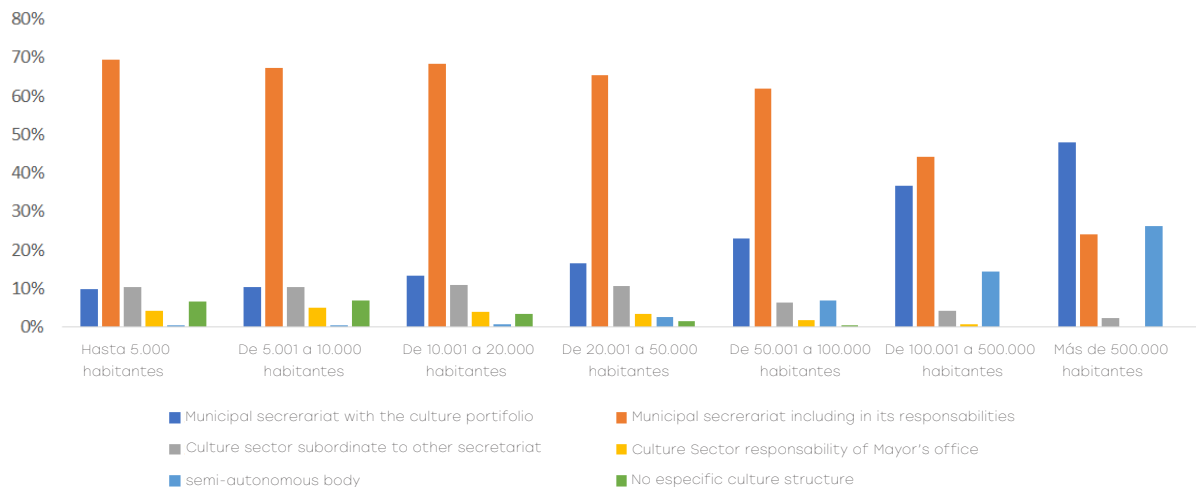


Figure 19. Percentage of the Brazilian Municipalities with a structured cultural area in 2018, by number of inhabitants. Source: IBGE, Diretoria de Pesquisas, Coordenação de População e Indicadores Sociais, Pesquisa de Informações Básicas Municipais 2018. Available at: <https://www.ibge.gov.br/estatisticas/sociais/saude/10586-pesquisa-de-informacoes-basicas-municipais.html>. Accessed in August, 2021. Up to 5 k inhabitants

the artists found common ground. It managed to unite voices from all over the country to deal with the same theme. But I ask: is it only because there was money involved? Is it only when the cause has money at the end of the rainbow that people will come together to discuss it? Wouldn't it be the time to discuss a legal regulatory framework, to talk only about the cultural sector? Shouldn't this also be a flag for our artists to follow, in the local councils, in Congress? Where is the enthusiasm? Where are we heading? What needs to be done for the engagement to happen? Is it really just the pandemic? I want to believe that the Aldir Blanc Law and the whole process has been the start of a new phase in the cultural thinking of this country.

With the lack of structure and the tight deadlines, some of the municipalities were unable to commit to the transfers, and the funds reverted to the states. The municipalities with less than 20,000 inhabitants had the least access to the programme. There were also regional differences: the Northeast

municipalities were the ones that presented the most plans and, therefore, the ones that got the highest proportion of fund transfers from the Federal Government.

The divergences shown here reflect historical gaps in the country's cultural policies. According to the IBGE, among the municipalities with more than 500,000 inhabitants, only 48% had a specific culture and arts secretariat in 2018. Of the smallest municipalities, those with up to 5,000 inhabitants, 69% had municipal secretariats in conjunction with other public policies. In addition, of the 5,570 Brazilian municipalities, only 654 (12%) had effective culture plans. This situation was unfavourable to the decentralisation of Aldir Blanc's resources, especially if we consider that only 32% of the municipalities had some form of fund already established to receive the federal funding.

[Valquíria Volpato] *I suffered a lot with municipalities that would not be able to*

execute the law, even though there were other possibilities, like not applying the resources through the fund. Here in Espírito Santo, of our 78 municipalities, we had less than half with a system already set up, with active culture agencies, with the legislation in place for the fund. That is, the Aldir Blanc Law revealed how the cultural sector, at the end, mirrors the informality of the artist, but also how the public administration is unstructured. We don't have qualified personnel, a professional who is concerned with quality in the sector and who understands, in fact, how it should be treated. There is no point in making it happen if, when it gets to the municipality, there is no fund set up, no awareness in the local council, no legal department that understands the size of the proposal.

Even with structural difficulties, the possibility of obtaining resources from the Federal Government also increased the pressure from civil society on local managers:

[**Gabriel Portela**] *At the grassroots - which is something we haven't seen for a long time, especially in smaller municipalities - civil society was making demands on local entities: "Hey, Mayor, what are you doing to implement the Aldir Blanc Law?" This generated something that was very interesting: the establishment of local committees, local management councils to implement and execute the Law. In the case of Belo Horizonte³², we set up a committee. There were 21 people: 10 from civil society, 10 from public authorities and a representative from the Federal Univer-*

32. Capital of the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais, Southeast region of Brazil.

sity of Minas Gerais, who we also invited. We formulated the proposal for the execution of resources, the design of the mechanisms, the application process, the public call for applications, how it would work; we took it to the Committee and debated it. It was a tiring process: participation is not easy, but it is worth it because the result tends to be much better. There is a validated result, built with the participation of civil society.

[**Urânia Munzanzu**] *There is something that we do not take into account in civil society, and that we started to understand in this dialog with the State: there is a huge resource being made available, but how to make it operational if there are no staff? The Cultural Foundation of the State of Bahia had three or four people in its financial department, enough to handle the normal workflow. To execute the Aldir Blanc funds, to distribute this resource, they would need 60 people. We had reports that the directors and some managers of the Cultural Foundation asked the governor and the State to send staff, otherwise there would be no one to execute the funds. There are also these issues that need to be adjusted and thought through. You are going to send resources, but you need to commit the institutions to make it possible. There may be people available, but not in that sector, in that directorate or in that department. There has to be a collective effort.*

Another especially sensitive point in the implementation of Aldir Blanc were the applications for funding. As part of the National System of Cultural Information and Indicators (SNIIC), Cultural Maps were

introduced in 2015 using open source software to collaboratively update data about the sector. According to the law, this record of individuals and companies operating in the cultural area was to be used for the payment of subsidies to cultural spaces and other actions. According to its articulators, Aldir Blanc has innovated by creating a possibility of cultural fomentation that was not tied into competitive calls for project funding.

[Célio Turino] *Subsections I and II of the Act deal with mapping and universal access. This has had an effect that has yet to be fully understood. It goes way beyond a quota policy because, if access is universal, funding is for all. One only has to demonstrate that the cultural space has been in regular operation for two years, and it is entitled to receive funding. In the same way as it is sufficient for someone to demonstrate that they are a cultural worker. This is something that can be used to support future, permanent public policies, such as, for example: subsidies to stable artistic bodies in society or to cultural spaces, not on the basis of merit or competition. The concept of a cultural space also includes symbolic spaces. The indigenous village is a cultural space. There are cooperative and identity spaces, many more than those recognised in the western, urban concept of art as something disassociated from daily life. It is art incorporated into the process of life.*

However, in the vast majority of Brazilian states and municipalities, the Maps had not been updated for years which, added to technical problems, made it even more difficult to implement the programme:

[Valquíria Volpato] *Some municipalities here, among them Cachoeiro de Itapemirim, did not use the Cultural Map because it made it impossible to speed up some stages of the process. This demonstrates the digital precariousness in the automation of the information. Our national registry is about to fall apart as well. These would be obvious problems if only there was someone actually responsible for them. A new tool had to be established and many people couldn't use it, there were a lot of problems, and people are still stuck with the map. The national registry was not fed. We let it die.*

Besides the technical issues and the possibility of universal access to public policies, the debate about the registries points to processes which legitimise what is understood as art and culture in each location:

[Ana Paula do Val] *When you build a map, you are building a set of understandings about what is visible in that mapped territory. The registry was one of the main challenges of the Aldir Blanc Law, since there is no tradition, especially in the municipalities, of mapping or registering cultural workers in their municipalities. There is the general idea: "It's an innovative law", but I think we need to understand the context. There was no way to perform a miracle, an exemplary mapping. Most managers didn't even know what a cultural registry was, since many didn't even believe that there were cultural workers in their municipalities. In addition, the short deadlines required us to be strategic in mobilising people and cultural practices that were invis-*

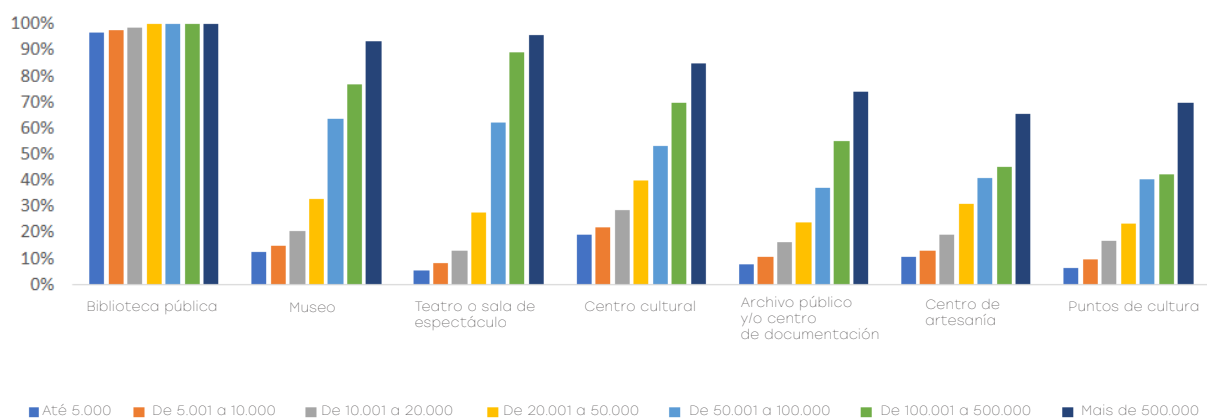


Figure 20. Brazilian municipalities with cultural spaces in 2018, by number of inhabitants

Source: IBGE, Diretoria de Pesquisas, Coordenação de População e Indicadores Sociais, Pesquisa de Informações Básicas Municipais 2018. Available on: <https://www.ibge.gov.br/estatisticas/sociais/saude/10586-pesquisa-de-informacoes-basicas-municipais.html>. Access on August 16, 2021.

ible in the territory and in the eyes of these managers. Another challenge was regarding the tools and technologies used for the registration. There is no point in putting a form on the internet and thinking that people will magically come across it and fill it in. Mapping needs mediation, and mediation starts with an understanding of culture that the municipality will sign up for – who will be mobilised, recognised as a cultural worker, and also how these players will be communicated with.

The otherness

According to IBGE, in 2018, only 31% of Brazilian municipalities had cultural centres, 26% had museums, 21% had performance venues, and 17% had Points of Culture. Only public libraries are to be found in most of the country's municipalities. Once again, the municipalities with the highest number of inhabitants are the ones that have the most cultural spaces.

Public Library Museum Theatre or Hall Cultural Centre Public Documentation Centre Craft Centre of Culture

[Ana Paula do Val] When thinking about the Aldir Blanc Law, we need to think about scales: small, medium, and large municipalities. In the case of the State of São Paulo, the majority (more than 80%) are small municipalities. In them, the concept of institutionality of culture is practically zero. The majority don't even have a secretariat; culture is linked, via departments, to other areas, such as education, tourism, sports, environment, among other arrangements. In this sense, access to financial and human resources (culture managers) is also extremely scarce. Institutionality starts to appear in medium-sized municipalities. This is something that, in the process of the Aldir Blanc Law, held many municipalities back from implementation. Many of them even declined to accept and distribute the resources or were not able to fulfil all the stages involved. Another issue that became very evident was the relationship between public management and civil society. What we noticed is that the less institutionalised the municipality, the greater the difficulties with dialogue and mediation with civil society, as there is a lack of knowledge about the mechanisms for social participation in the processes of making and

implementing local policies. Due to the lack of practice and political openness of the administrations to build this process in a democratic and participatory way, there were many issues and asymmetries in the implementation of the law. The difficulties were great.

But the absence of institutions does not mean that there are not equally relevant forms of artistic and cultural creation and fruition. At the end of the 20th century, authors such as Hans Belting (2006, p. 23-24) had already addressed the anguish caused by what seemed to be the end of a framework: “The more the internal unity of an autonomously understood art history disintegrated, the more it dissolved in the whole field of culture and society. Just as several currents of contemporary art coexist, the multiplicity of cultures has come to claim its place inside and outside institutions, sometimes getting confused with social and political desires”. In the wake of these reflections, Isaura Botelho (2016, p. 49-50) states that the debate on public policies for the sector has also been moving from the almost restricted universe of the arts to its more comprehensive dimension, which includes notions of law and citizenship. The author proposes a change of axis, from the concept of “democratisation” to that of “cultural democracy,” which “presupposes the existence of diverse publics” and “the inexistence of a single paradigm for legitimization.” The effective reach of institutional actions remains to be seen as identity processes become clearer and spaces more fluid. The emergence and persistence of cultural and artistic practices that have little or no connection to institutions - either due to

lack of access or not fitting into the existing structures - was one of the main experiences of those involved in the Aldir Blanc Law:

[Marcelo das Histórias] *There is a layer that produces culture independently of the organisation. The cultural institutions serve a small number of artists in Brazil. There is an elite that takes ownership of the financial mechanisms and a great part that does not reach this level of institutionality, that produces culture using its own resources. I will give an example: how many samba circles take place at the weekend in Brazil? Even when SESC³³ units put on three shows at the weekend, the number is very small when compared to the number of samba and capoeira circles. Even the phenomenon of country music: there are dozens of small venues and bars. In short, all of this is a market that brings together what is informal, precarious, and that unleashes a process that is much bigger than institutional actions. But institutionality is important because it can define deeper, more systemic policies.*

It is also necessary to consider artists – and entire cultures – who do not understand art as something separate from other aspects of daily life and, therefore, do not always adapt to institutional formats. Actress and producer Andreia Duarte, who lived in the Xingu Indigenous Lands for a time, tells us about her experience.

[Andreia Duarte] *In my research, there is an interest that is less linked to language*

33. Serviço Social do Comércio, private Brazilian institution, created in 1946 by the Decree-Law 9.853 and recognised by the foment to the arts and to the culture. For more informations, consult: <https://www.sescsp.org.br/>.

– despite having a greater experience with theatre – and is more linked to an idea of creation as transformation of the world. For me, it is very important to understand how indigenous people deal with art, which is in their daily lives, not necessarily linked to the market, but always in a potency of transformation and creation. There are many indigenous cultures, but I speak from references that I have been learning more and more from living with various intellectual leaders and artists from different peoples. I also speak from values that are common to these peoples. There is something coincident in the aesthetic production which will always be political because there is no aesthetic that does not have a meaning, that does not have a reason. These are values of an artistic production that is in life. To talk about art is not to talk about the market, originally. Within the community, you paint yourself, you produce a basket, everything you produce has many symbols, many collective meanings. This was something that affected me deeply when I lived with the Kamayurá, because I lived a more affective period in my life than when I lived a life where there is the need for urgency, to pay bills, to work, of madness, of consumption. I think that there is another pace of life there. But there is also a delightful relationship: “Shall we dance and sing? Is there going to be a party tomorrow? Shall we play a flute?” I think it’s important to see that there is an aesthetic beauty in that flute that has a cosmological meaning.

Seu Elias Pires and Seu João Batista, leaders of *quilombola* communities in Maranhão, also talk about the way their cultures are present in the community’s daily life, not only as aesthetic fruition, but also as religious

experience or political resistance:

[Seu João Batista] *Our ancestors from Africa have already been brought with their legacy. Previously, when one spoke of African heritage, it was a “cause” for society. The work of the African roots, with our enchanted³⁴ ones, with our Afro-Brazilian cult, was the resistance movement for our people. If it wasn’t for the respect for our ancestry, we wouldn’t exist today, because it is a very strong resistance. Thank God, we worship and we will not stop. In our worship we play our Tambores de Mina³⁵, our Caixa do Divino³⁶, our Coco³⁷. We worship with our dances, our drumming, because we believe in what we are doing. Our drumming is the stronghold of freedom for all our people, passed from generation to generation.*

[Seu Elias Pires] *I have a little grandson here. When he was one year old, wherever he went, he hit chairs, things, he hit the Tambor de Mina. We made a little Creole drum for him. He was already playing the big drum. He used to drag it around the house and play it. This tradition has been passed on to the younger ones. We don’t even worry much here. In our quilombo we have more than five people that play the big drum. We have more than 50 people that play the quereré, that play the meião, that play the matraca³⁸. This culture*

34. Spiritual entity present in the traditions of African roots.

35. African-brazilian cult, characterized by trance sessions.

36. Percussion instrument used in traditions of African roots.

37. Musical genre typical from the North and Northeast regions of Brazil.

38. Musical instruments used in the traditions based on African roots.

has been passed on to our young people. When you see it, the young people come, sit by the drum, play the drum without anyone teaching them, without anyone showing them. It comes naturally to them. Thank God!

By blurring the boundaries between art and culture – at least as far as the possibilities of institutional support are concerned – Aldir Blanc has also shed light on other aspects of life in society: which elements of society can actually appropriate the set of mechanisms that today allow us to exercise citizenship? In addition to institutional gaps, some conditions have made access to the law difficult, revealing, once again, Brazil's social inequalities. The bureaucratic language of the public notices and access to technology were the main problems reported:

[Seu Elias Pires] *The notices imposed a very severe restriction against our reaching the resource. It was very difficult for people. I am glad that we argued here with the mayor of the past administration and were able to create a Secretariat of Racial Equality. We were able to make some registrations for our people. This happened in a short period of time because, when the public notice was published, it was suspended for many days due to people in the municipality not knowing how to work with it. They went after the information. In a few days, they had to open a bank account, they had to register, they had to do I don't know what... It was a bureaucracy. Banco do Brasil (Bank of Brazil) wouldn't open an account, you had to open one at the internet cafe. The cafe wouldn't do it... The internet was down, the system wasn't working... It*

was madness! And with the pandemic! There was still that! The pandemic! You couldn't be in crowded spaces. We think there was a lot of bureaucracy because our people don't have this knowledge. Our people do not know technology. This technology just came out a little while ago. I, for example, have a cell phone. I use WhatsApp as much as I can. I don't get into other things, I don't know. My little girl sometimes does some things here, but I can't do difficult things. Taking a picture and sending it is the most I can do, making an audio too. But I am not used to other things. This is more for the young. You need to have internet, to have a cell phone to have access to the edicts. So, it was really hard.

[Andreia Duarte] *There are many indigenous communities that are more isolated, inside the forests. There are many contexts. Each context is different. I think it's worth saying that the communities do not fit one model. There are many different lives. There are people who don't have access to the internet, who never will, but who are a great singer or a great wise man, from the roots. There is that young person who is super excited, who is wanting to go to the city. They want to trade, they want to hang out. They go and return to tell everything to the community. Young people go out a lot. But they go back to their communities and continue doing their rituals, living there. There are also people that move to the city. There is everything. So, thinking about edicts is something very complex, in which language, for example? In what way? The knowledge of reading, of writing, is a technique like any other. You will learn how to make a basket, you will learn a chant. Sometimes there are chants*

that last eight hours. You are going to learn how to create a ritual, which has as much or even more value than learning how to read and write. On top of all this, Portuguese is the second or third language. Sometimes a person speaks Kamayurá, Waurá, Yawalapiti³⁹ and will have Portuguese as a second or third language. It is not a question of intellectuality, of capacity. It is a question of contact, of the need to communicate. So, how are the public notices thought out? To what extent do they really reach the communities? And to what extent will the person who is there in the community stop and take the time to write a project?

Perhaps it is valid to add to Andreia Duarte's questions: to what extent are institutions capable of welcoming different cultures and ways of life? How far do collective desires persist?

Fol Espoir

In a commentary on the film *The Castaways of the Fol Espoir*, directed by Ariane Mnouchkine, Danilo Miranda (2013) says that we inhabit at least two worlds: "one hard and sinister, that of impending war" and "another fanciful and no less cruel, that of a shipwreck driven by the ambition of men." Based on a collective creation by the Théâtre du Soleil and freely inspired by the work of Jules Verne, the production tells the story of a filmmaker who, on the eve of World War I, shoots a silent movie in the attic of a cabaret: the film follows emigrants from Wales who, in 1899, travel to Australia, but are shipwrecked in Tierra del

Fuego (Argentina), where they try to build a new society. Narrated in several temporal layers, *The Castaways* deals not only with utopias and deceptions in search of another world, but also with the possibilities opened up by cinema and its relationship, at times friendly, at others conflictive, with theatre.

As in Mnouchkine's film, Aldir Blanc gives us a glimpse of possible worlds, but also sees projects shipwrecked amidst the pandemic and old problems, such as bureaucracy, social inequalities, political difficulties, and, mainly, the inconsistencies of an activity that is exercised for pleasure and the precariousness shared with professionals from other areas, between fabulation and reality.

[**Urânia Munzanzu**] *There was in the cultural sector a kind of blasé idea that it was an option for people to be able to... excuse the term, but screw creativity, fruition, anything that is not guaranteeing life at this moment. We are artists, but we are dying, and we are dying much more because we are in a professional sector that treats us in an absolutely inhumane way. There is no retirement plan, no structure, no policy. There is no policy for culture. A few minutes ago I was talking to my uncle, who is also an artist, and who is 70 years old. He said: "look, we can't grow old. We don't have any kind of rights. We don't even have the right to housing as artists. Our expectation was that this resource would arrive and that we could breathe, that we could have this resource, I would not say as recognition, because recognition is a very deep word to explain this, but as some stable sign of humanity, of respect for the life of artists, for the life of the people who make*

39. TN: Indigenous tribes of Brazil.

culture, who produce the culture of this country, which is part of what it sells as an image.

Again, the paradox between what cannot be endured (not only the health emergency, but also inequalities and professional precariousness) and opening to the new (the creation, the becoming, despite the risk and threat to life) comes to the fore. In reflecting on cinema, Deleuze (2005, p. 29) resorts to the image of the intolerable not as a violence or brutality, but in the aesthetic and romantic sense of something “too powerful”, “too unfair”, or sometimes “too beautiful [...] that exceeds our sensory-motor capacities.” However, the philosopher also suggests that the intolerable is not separate from a “revelation” or “an inexhaustible possibility.” Might not this be the intersection between art, culture, social movements, and public policy, which drove Aldir Blanc?

[**Urânia Munzanzu**] *We have a flow of works and events never before seen in the country. Production is at an all-time high. This is the side that makes us dream, that makes us wake up every day and get out of bed. There are a lot of beautiful things being produced, there are a lot of people. I am touched, because there are many capable people, who can sing, who can write, who can dream a little bit and not die of agony, as we were dying.*

If, at the beginning of the 20th century, cinema was a technological novelty, today it is the internet that occupies that space. Researcher Rogério da Costa (2019) relates the enthusiasm for the invention of the cinematograph, whose revolutionary potential

was explored by directors such as Eisenstein, to the dream of a full democracy that emerged with the beginnings of the World Wide Web. Today, images and social media are entangled with the advances of capitalism, but they also open cracks. The contradictions between individualism and the possibilities of remote communication, between the common and the private, become even more evident during the pandemic. For this reason, there is no way to talk about the Aldir Blanc Act without addressing, even if briefly, a certain aesthetic innovation brought about by social distancing and the need for encounter. It is not about formalism, but about the human power to renew thought, reinvent forms of expression and languages, and reach new audiences. Tatiana Delfina, from Grupo Nós do Morro, Ronei, and Carol talk about the sometimes conflicting, sometimes complementary relationships between the virtual and the face-to-face, and what can emerge from the interaction:

[**Carol**] *I have seen some cultural centres with very skilled professionals who can talk about the works of art, with a well-developed discourse. They are guiding visits to the museums. These were good experiences in this sense. But there is a loss in what is common between the visual arts and theatre, that they require presence. I get emotional because I remember some elementary school classes, in public school, where the teacher used to bring picture cards. She would say: “this one is by Tarsila do Amaral, this one is from Modernism, this one is from Pointillism”, talking about the avant-garde schools. I remember when I had the chance to see some of these paintings in person. How distant it is! It is frighteningly distant! Maybe*

you can, in the formal scope, access the making of a pointillist painting. You say: "I see the dots, the question of colour. But the impact it has on people is an experience that is lost.

[Ronei] *My partner is in the audio-visual field. She says, "It's a movie. I am from the theatre and I say: "No, it is a filmed play." It's different. I don't know anything about a film crew. But I know that there are professionals dedicated to reproducing a certain scene on a screen. It is a singular thought. There are groups that are linking one artistic language with another. For example, a director of photography does some theatrical filming, which is geared towards the audio-visual segment and not towards a theatrical performance. It is filmed, but it is not cinema. I don't even know what words to use. But it is happening. Something new is emerging. And it has reached other audiences. The public watching the show on film is not the public watching it live. I have heard this a lot: "My aunt, great-grandmother, on the other side of the country, watched my play here in São Paulo. In her city there isn't even a theatre." It is a person used to the cinema who, somehow, was captivated to watch a filmed theatre play.*

[Tatiana Delfina] *You film the play. When you move on to editing, there's a second director, essentially, who joins the theatrical vision and devises the editing code. It's very funny. I would watch the footage in its sequence. There was a theatre piece there. When it goes to audio-visual, I watch it and think: "You missed that..." But you can't have everything in the audio-visual. "You missed the bomb explosion!" It is not necessary to have the explosion in the audio-visual. The noise is already a reminder.*

Then we say it is not theatre. I, at least, think this way: it is not theatre because theatre has an audience, it has eye-to-eye... We say: "It is art, but I still don't know if it is theatre. It is art.

Conclusions

For Canclini (2012, p. 180), art still exists precisely because "we live in the tension between what we desire and what we lack, between what we would like to name and what is contradicted or deferred by society." This brief report has tried to show that the experience of the Aldir Blanc Law goes beyond the technical issues involved in the formulation of public policies, addressing aspects such as social engagement, the integration of diverse interests, the possibilities of exercising citizenship, and the longing for transformation. Ultimately, the debate concerns the ways in which culture and art help us give meaning to life and participate in the invention of the world.

[Andreia Duarte] *I think that the Aldir Blanc Law should be permanent. The more investment in culture and art, the better, the more possibilities for transformation we will have, the more reach we will have. I speak from the experience of having worked with art and culture for more than twenty years. You see how it transforms people. You understand better. You are more critical of the place where you are — you have more courage to create other ways of being. This is very important for us, to end the idea that life has only one possibility: this state of being born, studying, working, buying a house, and dying. I think the Aldir Blanc Law is important, especially because it has financed many projects.*

For me, if there were 500 applicants, I would want the 500 to be approved, within an ethic, obviously. An ethic of the whole and that is able to understand the diversity of people in their contexts. But one that increasingly brings possibilities for people to realise their desires of life, of creation and their works, that the quilombolas remain, that the indigenous remain... Let there be a feminist movement, a trans movement, a homosexual movement... Let it be everybody! That's what I think!

If the movement for Aldir Blanc brings with it something of the cynical philosophy, as Foucault (2011) would say, it is because it gets in touch with otherness: not only with the different cultures that multiply the current accounts, but especially with the worlds we project from the agreements and disagreements of the collective experience.

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THE CULTURAL EMERGENCY IN RURAL BAHIA

Juan Ignacio Brizuela

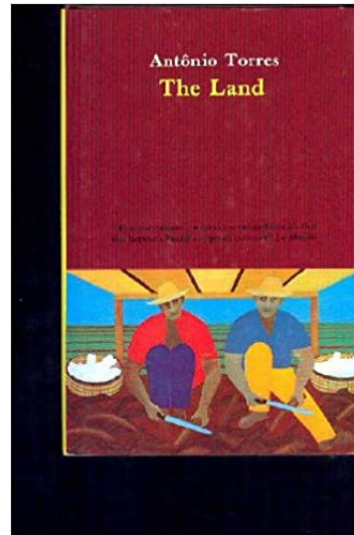
Introduction

There are several ways to bring the non-Brazilian public closer to what it means to live in Bahia, in the Northeast of Brazil; to understand its diverse territories and to understand the sheer scale of the state. Jorge Amado's book *Bahia de Todos-os-Santos: guia de ruas e mistérios (Bahia of all-saints: a guide to the streets and mysteries of Salvador)* (2012), first published in 1944, is a good example, as its title is as true as it is contradictory: the city of Bahia. Of course, Amado is referring to the state capital, Salvador, but it is common to confuse, in the imagination, the metropolis with the entire and vast State of Bahia, treating both as if they were one and the same. *Os Sertões (The Backlands)*, by Euclides da Cunha (2010), a classic of Lusophone literature published in 1902, is another work which might support this illusion,

with its portrayal of a landlocked, harsh, dry and backwoods Bahia⁴⁰. In this context of great Brazilian writers, we should also mention a work that is well known in Brazil: *Essa Terra (The land)*, by Antônio Torres (2011), a novel originally published in Portuguese in 1976. Torres and his work would be linked to a small town called Sátiro Dias, a reference of this particular universe of Bahia's hinterland - between the city of Bahia and the backlands - that we will use as a starting point when we reflect on the processes of institutionalisation, deinstitutionalisation and reinstitutionalisation of culture in these latitudes.

40. The famous book by Mario Vargas Llosa, *The War of the End of the World* (2008) is also set within this other imaginary of a more rural and peasant *backland* in the Bahia city of Canudos.

Figure 1. English edition of *The Land* by Antonio Torres (2000). Source: <https://www.amazon.com/Land-Antonio-Torres/dp/0930523245>



Although there is no consensus among researchers – nor among its own inhabitants – about the borders of what are, effectively, the main macro geographical regions of the extensive territory⁴¹ of the State of Bahia, we identify some socio-cultural and geographic areas, geo-cultural areas, in a summary of reflections by Rodolfo Kusch (2012) and Manuel Garretón (2003), that, without the rigor of a professional geographer, can help to illustrate the complex administrative division of the state, as well as the diverse spatial identifications actually to be found beyond Salvador. With this caveat, we shall highlight the Bahian regions of Recôncavo, Litoral, Chapada Diamantina, Oeste, Sertão, and Agreste (Rural).

The name of the region Recôncavo refers to the concave nature of the bay, in its quality as a geographical accident. The municipalities of the region retain a strong African connection, linked to the historical process which established the first capital of the Portuguese colony in America; they are an important part of the state population,

41. For those who want to go deeper into this theme, we recommend *Territórios da Bahia: regionalização, cultura e identidade*, edited by Angelo Serpa (2015). Available on: <http://books.scielo.org/id/6p3mz>

but occupy, proportionally, a smaller territorial extension. In turn, the municipalities on the Bahian coast, the Litoral, from the north to the far south, are more associated with idyllic beaches, large hotel resorts, and other tourist ventures. The Chapada Diamantina region is a plateau, located at a considerable height above sea level, with mountains, rivers, and waterfalls in municipalities with milder temperatures, much of which is a large National Park. The Sertão region can be defined almost in direct opposition to the coast: it is a large, semi-arid area, with a very hot climate and associated with “Vidas Secas” (Barren Lives), as in Graciliano Ramos’ book (2020). The inhabitants, the *sertanejos*, are folkloric figures, associated with the peasant imaginary, as we observe in the mid-winter São João festivities, important throughout the Brazilian northeast. The Oeste, literally the west of Bahia, has a very different history, related to an occupation linked to soybean agriculture since 1980 in a process of internal migration from the south of Brazil to the northeast, in a contraflow to the traditional internal migration routes in Brazil, that traditionally flow in the opposite direction. Because of their geographical location, these

municipalities are usually more linked to the states bordering Bahia, such as Piauí, Tocantins, Goiás and Minas Gerais, than with their capital city, Soteropolitana.

Finally, the Agreste Baiano (Rural Bahia) is a region that is in the midst of the Litoral, the Oeste, the Chapada, the Recôncavo, and the Sertão. Although it does not fully identify with any of them (maybe a little more with the Sertão), at the same time it feeds off a little of each one, a hybridisation related to the economic exchanges and the socio-cultural interchange with the surrounding municipalities of the other regions. This region refers to a past connected by the railway, a modernity without the modernisation so characteristic of thousands of Latin American municipalities. Are its populations “rustic” ? Do they meet the dictionary definition of rustic communities far from the

coast, such as ‘bumpkin’ or ‘yokel’: rough and rugged; with a lack of urbanity, little education and citizenship? And, if all this were true, would the Agreste’s cultural institutions also be called “rustic” ?

The institution calls me⁴²

The Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT - Workers’ Party) has governed the State of Bahia since January 1st, 2007. This administration has changed the rules of the cultural policy game⁴³ in at least three aspects: **institutionalisation**, **democratisation**, and **territorialisation**. In terms of its legal-institutional structure, we see a process of cultural strengthening with the creation of a specific Secretary of Culture (Secult-BA), an increase in public funding via the State Fund of Culture, and the continued support for the State

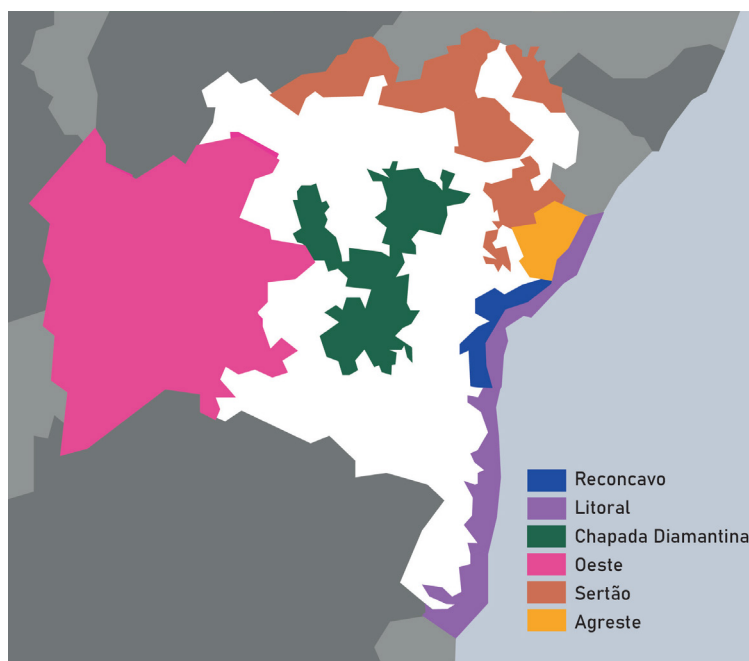


Figure 2. Map Illustrating the Six Main Sociocultural Areas of Bahia

Source: Prepared by the author.

42. This subheading and the three following ones are inspired by the division in Antônio Torres’ book, *The Land*. In this case, the subheading that appears in the book is “The Land Calls Me”.

43. Researchers like Albino Rubim (2014) would say that it, effectively, inaugurates the public politics of culture in a *state* level.

System of Culture, which we will explain in more detail below. In addition, the search for greater democracy and transparency in cultural management has led to replacing the traditional form of “counter-politics” (a favour-based economy, with a high degree of elitism, where the distribution of public funding is discretionary) with a policy of open, public and competitive calls for public funding, mainly via specific public funds for culture and art. Finally, the territorialisation of culture is translated into an innovative cultural management and administrative planning tool, in which the 15 million inhabitants of 417 municipalities throughout the state of Bahia are divided into 27 Identity Territories (IT), which are managed not only by Secult-BA, but by all state public departments and agencies. This means thinking about distribution criteria by artistic languages, for example, but also by identity territories, with minimum project percentages previously assigned to each department, precisely to avoid concentration in large municipalities, especially in the municipalities of the Metropolitan Region

of Salvador (RMS). The Northern Coast and Bahian Agreste (Rural Bahia) (TILNAB) is one such territory.

A systemic cultural administration regime - with strategic, participative and territorial planning – has been adopted at the Federal level, with the National System of Culture; at the sub-national level, with the State Systems of Culture and, of course, at the local level, with the Municipal Systems of Culture. The CPF⁴⁴: Council, Plan, and Fund for Culture is a simple and didactic acronym used to explain its main elements. The cultural policy councils seek to widen participative management and the construction of cultural citizenship in all spheres of government, with consulting, inspection, regulatory, and, eventually, executive management competencies. The culture plans are to be implemented over a ten-year strategic horizon, based on a territorial diagnosis that allows for the establishment of goals, objectives, and indicators for each of these processes. In turn, the culture funds are an opportunity to ensure not only a minimum allocation of public resources for the artistic and cultural

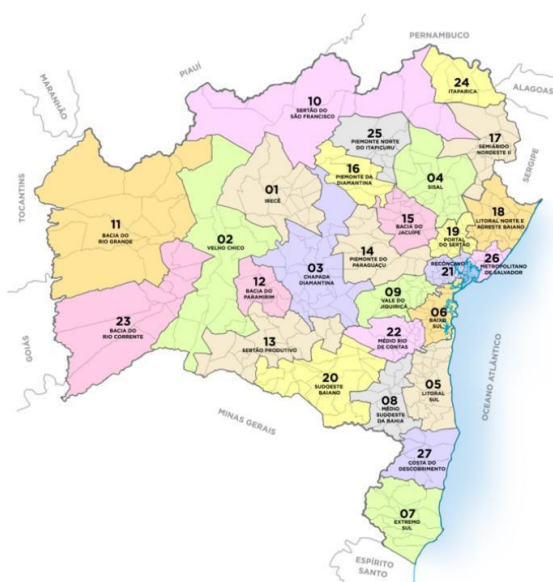


Figure 3. Identity Territories in the State of Bahia
Source: <http://www.cultura.ba.gov.br/modules/conteudo/conteudo.php?conteudo=314>

44. In Brazil, the acronym CPF stands for *Individual Taxpayer Registration* which, in practice, works almost like an identification document similar to DNI (National Identity Document), very common in other Latin American countries. Although it has a tax purpose and is not an Identity Card – that is another document, Registro Geral (RG – General Registration) – CPF is an easy acronym to remember in Brazil.

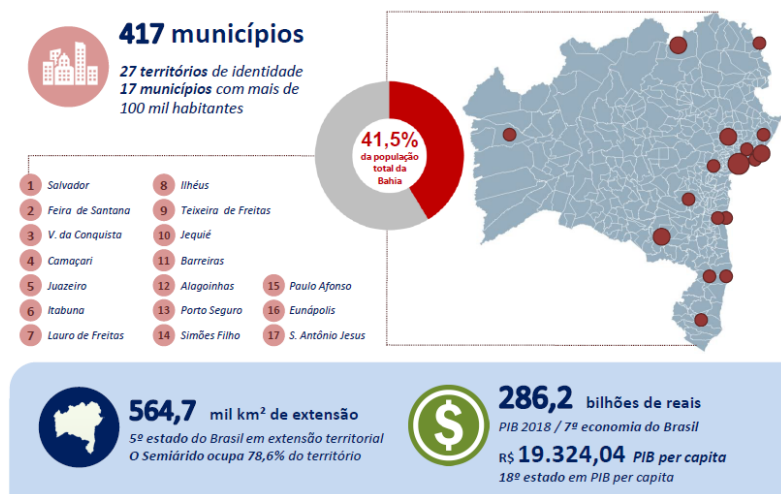


Figure 4. General data on the State of Bahia⁴⁵

field, but also to structure more transparent and regular processes, as in the case of open calls for applications for awards and funding. There are other elements that are part of the culture systems, but, initially, we will use these basic elements to describe the situation of the municipalities in rural Bahia. As we

can observe in Figure 5, Sático Dias is a municipality that, since 2009, has been expanding the institutionalisation of its cultural activities, starting four years before Alagoinhas, the municipality with the highest population in the territory:

Town	Inhabitants	National Culture System	Municipal Culture System	Culture Council	Culture Funding	Culture Planning	Aldir Blanc Law
Sático Dias	19.644	X	X	X	X	X	X
Esplanada	36.882	X	X	X	X		X
Pedrão	7.298	X	X	X	X		X
Alagoinhas	150.832	X	X	X	X		X
Entre Rios	41.654	X	X	X			X
Inhambupe	39.499	X	X		X		X
Rio Real	40.475	X					X
Itanagra	6.445		X	X			
Catu	54.424			X			X
Aramari	11.332						X
Conde	25.630						X
Crisópolis	21.040						X
Itapicuru	35.256						X
Jandaíra	10.691						X
Olindina	28.152						X
Ouriçangas	8.557						X
Acajutiba	15.129						X
Aporá	17.673						X
Araçás	12.143						X
Cardeal da Silva	9.240						X
Total:	591.996	7	7	7	5	1	17

Figure 5. Public Institutionalisation of Culture in Rural Bahia

Source: Prepared by the author on the basis of official Federal, State and Municipal data.

45. Graphic showing data of Bahia, such as municipalities, population, territorial extension and economy.

A key figure who helps us understand this very specific process of cultural institutionalisation is the lawyer, cultural activist, former culture secretary and member of the Municipal Council of Culture of Sátiro Dias, Dr. Paulo Roberto da Cruz Junior. In 2020, Paulo Cruz was also responsible for monitoring the Points of Culture at Secult-Baia.

[**Paulo Cruz**] *The story of Sátiro Dias is as follows. My town is a very small town. The road to get to the town is in terrible condition, but it will be fixed soon. So, in the year 2000, when I was very young, I was already involved in some cultural activities in the town, but more focused on the school. We used to dance, for example, the quadrilha junina (square dance). I danced a lot of quadrilha. I liked it, I loved it. That motivated me to find out more about culture in general, the local culture.*

[**Paulo Cruz**] *My dream was to become an artist. And with this I persuaded other people to join. I managed to form a group of more than 20 people, young people my age, and we started to form cultural groups. We formed a quadrilha group in São João. We danced a lot, we won many prizes with our group, it was called “Xote Baião⁴⁶.” And that*

motivated us, culturally. After that, we went looking for more things, more information. We started a theatre group called “Alfa Cena.”

The festivities of São João, traditionally held throughout the month of June and, especially, during the week of the 24th – the day of São João. It mixes Christian religious traditions with Afro-Indigenous art and culture. They are, moreover, important tourist and cultural activities supporting the local economy of thousands of municipalities in Northeastern Brazil.

[**Paulo Cruz**] *All this before I was twenty. Then I discovered that my city lacked culture. That is, it had nothing cultural. I discovered that my town did not invest in culture. I found out that in my town culture had no importance, even though we had a writer who was already established at that time, Antônio Torres. We even have a town library named after him, and that was my source of knowledge. There, I looked for information about culture in the Federal Constitution, I went after the municipal laws, which said nothing about culture. And after that I started to get involved directly in cultural issues.*

Figure 6. Town of Sátiro Dias (Bahia, Brazil)
Source: View from a drone, Sátiro Dias City Authorities (2017)



46. TN: Xote is a music played to the sound of the accordion and the dance that follows it, often performed at popular dances in the Brazilian Northeast. Baião means: Musical rhythm, typically northeastern, spread from 1946 onwards by the singer, composer and accordion player, Luís Gonzaga; Northeastern folk dancing and singing, accompanied by a guitar.



Figure 7. Sátiro Dias
Municipal Library
Source: Sátiro Dias Municipal
Library (2016).

Paulo Cruz registers different artistic and cultural activities that he has been discovering and performing in his city since he was twenty years old, such as the *quadrilha junina* (a collective manifestation of dance and music typical of the São João festivities), the formation of a theatre group, or the library named after Antônio Torres. At the same time, he points out that there was “nothing cultural”; that is, there was no public investment in culture, no laws or municipal structures that encouraged or supported these or other cultural practices. To have a basic notion of the reality of these twenty rural municipalities of Bahia, in terms of classical cultural institutions, none of them have a typical city museum, as might be commonly found in other Brazilian municipalities.

[Paulo Cruz] *Well, I formed the theatre group and started doing it. Later we got – I got, actually – a project through the state government called “Chapéu de palha” (Straw hat). And this project was a dance teacher with a theatre teacher for the city, who spent*

15 days with the group teaching theatre and dance. And our group got better and better at this. With this project, we were able to put on a show called “Lagoa das pombas” (Pigeon Lagoon), which tells the story of the municipality, and we did it in a public square. A lot of people came. Everybody went to see the show.

[Paulo Cruz] And then we got a taste for it and put on a show called “Paixão de Cristo” (The Passion of the Christ). And every year, without fail, we put on the Passion of the Christ. Every year it got bigger and bigger. It reached a level where we had 80 young people involved in the production. We did an itinerant show. We went out to other places in the municipality; we took the production to another municipality. This aroused a lot of interest in me, including the political issue.

We highlight here other elements that help us understand the artistic and cultural circuits in places distant from the big municipalities. On the one hand, art teachers (such as dance and theatre teachers, for ex-

ample) come from elsewhere, which is why it is necessary to prepare specific projects and provide the minimum feasible conditions to be able to offer even introductory courses. In addition, there are no theatres or other scenic spaces available, so open spaces and public squares are often used as stages. Finally, religious traditions, in this case of the Catholic Church, are mixed with both the festivities of Saint John and the performance of the Passion of the Christ, which not only makes it possible to include additional cast members and increase visibility, but also to travel to neighbouring towns to give performances.

[**Paulo Cruz**] *And so we became cultural activists. Not just artists, but also cultural activists. So, in 2008 we got together. I knew that in order for the city to be able to evolve culturally, we had to have a cultural body. Researching, I said, look, we could have a Municipal Council of Culture. At the time, I did some research on the internet, although the internet there was very limited, we didn't have much access. But I managed to get a computer there and, together with a friend of mine, I did some research and we managed to find out, to understand, how we might have a Municipal Council of Culture.*

[**Paulo Cruz**] *So we started to put pressure on the politicians. We had demonstrations, marches, drew attention in every way. Then, one fine day, the mayor of the time sat down with us and said, "let's create a law for the Municipal Council of Culture". So, we held that meeting, wrote the text, and took it to the City Council. When we got there, we put more pressure on the councillors and, in 2008,*

we succeeded in passing the law that created the Municipal Council of Culture. And as I was the most active person involved, I became the first chairperson of the Municipal Council of Culture of Satiro Dias. I was the representative of the civil society and, even so, I was chosen as chairperson. Something rare at the time and infrequent, even today.

In the eight years from Paulo Cruz's first dreams of becoming an artist in 2000, to becoming the first chairperson of the Municipal Council of Culture of Satiro Dias in 2008, the phenomena and initiatives of cultural institutionalisation have multiplied throughout Brazil, in addition to the territorialization processes of artistic practitioners, groups and associations. In fact, the citizen councils of participatory management also stand out in Brazil, which are instruments widely used in almost all fields of public policy since the 1980s in the areas of health, social services, education, territorial development, and tourism, among others.

[**Paulo Cruz**] *I was invited to meetings of the state and federal governments about promoting local and regional culture. At that time there were many Culture Conferences and this was very important. And I already participated as a councillor. However, the city government did not give resources to the council to do anything at all. It was a council that only fought with the government because it had nothing. And, even so, they fought for us to have a minority in the council. But we always managed to get by and the chair stayed with us. There was no other way.*

The culture conferences, along with the citizens' councils of cultural policies, are tools of participatory management that date back to the Brazilian Constitution of 1988, which gained force during the administrations of Gilberto Gil and Juca Ferreira at the head of the Ministry of Culture, during the two presidential terms of Lula da Silva (2003-2006 and 2007-2010).

The institution maddens me⁴⁷

[Paulo Cruz] *In January 2009 I was invited to take over the town's new culture portfolio. I focused on the four axis of the Municipal System of Culture listed in the law, so that I could build the cultural foundation of the city. I wrote the draft project and sent it to the City Council. Almost all of the proposals passed. The Municipal Council of Culture already existed. We created the Municipal Culture Plan and the Municipal Culture Fund. The only thing that was left to be created was the Municipal Secretary of Culture, which didn't come about because of the mayor's political ambitions, who wanted his son-in-law to be Secretary of Culture and not me. That's why he didn't let it go through, so that I wouldn't have the status of Secretary. Even today the city still doesn't have an exclusive Secretary of Culture portfolio. The project is still there in the Chamber and nobody is returning to it.*

Systemic management and strategic planning are other public policy tools that, as we saw earlier, have been introduced with more vigour recently, inducing the creation of

local, state (subnational) and federal culture systems. Besides the famous CPF – Council, Plan and Fund for Culture – other elements are included, such as an exclusive municipal organ responsible for culture, a system of information and cultural indicators, the holding of sectorial and general conferences on art and culture, among other processes.

[Paulo Cruz] The four years that I spent in government (2009-2012) were, I think, the best years for culture in the city of Satiro Dias. With very little money, we received a monthly grant of R\$1,800 from the State Fund for Culture. I would let it accumulate for three months to be able to do a project. So, I managed to set up a marching band for the town, called FanSati, and a town orchestra, OfSati. I brought in a drama teacher from the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA) to our theatre group from Satiro Dias who, by coincidence, I found out was also from Satiro Dias. So, we took advantage of it. With this we were able to agitate the town.

The Bahia State Culture Fund is one of the most institutionalised and well-established cultural policy tools at a territorial level. Created in 2005, this state mechanism distributes the largest amount of the sector's funding through open calls for proposals and small transfers to other funds, as pointed out by Paulo Cruz in Satiro Dias. Although it is not a large resource, we are talking about an uncommon and extremely innovative procedure, with a level of complexity that does not exist in other states in Brazil and, much less, in other Latin American countries, from Mexico to Argentina.

47. In this case, the subheading that appears in Torres' book is: "The Land Maddens Me".

Figure 8. Bahia Culture Funding (2021)⁴⁸
Source: Secult-BA website



Figure 9. Sátilo Dias data in National Culture System⁴⁹ (2021)



However, day-to-day administration extends beyond the formal mechanisms of local administration, as Paulo explains:

[Paulo Cruz] *Today we have the three founding elements; I think we were the first town to have them because I was the one in charge of culture, who cared a lot about culture. Even today I care a lot. So, when you put someone in place who really cares about culture, things move. But most of the managers appoint people who have no interest, specifically a lack of interest in awakening the interest of young people in culture. Because, in their minds, an interest in culture brings power and*

they can lose their positions to these cultural agents. When culture is strong, it is contagious within the population. This was the fear of politicians in my time.

[Paulo Cruz] *I fought a lot, I resigned from my position about ten times because the mayor didn't want to release the funds for the projects. So, sometimes he would give me an authorization, for example, a project that costs R\$10,000. He would give me authorization for R\$3,000. I was a little crazy, I would tear it up and throw it in his face and say: look, my resignation is here, like this. I won't stay here anymore. Then he wouldn't sign it, and we reached an impasse. After quite a struggle, he would release the funding.*

48. Culture Fund; What it is; How to submit a proposal; Projects and activities supported; Your Culture Fund Proposal; Legislation; Funding Options; Guide for Proposers and Sponsors Reports

49. National Culture System's website with data on Sátilo Dias.

The institution casts me out⁵⁰

In 2009, both in the national context and at the state level in Bahia, frequent stimuli were offered to promote these processes of cultural institutionalisation throughout the country. However, beyond the efforts of a government administration, there are social practices and “ways of doing things” ingrained at the local level that often clash with the new practices that these institutional models offer.

[Paulo Cruz] *In 2012, the mayor for whom I was the secretary lost the election. So, in 2013 another mayor took office and scrapped the culture mechanism, didn't continue the process, didn't put people capable of making this alteration in charge, and ended up destroying all the projects; none have been visible in Sático Dias until today. But then, at the end of 2013, I went to São Paulo. I needed to do that, to disconnect myself from that world there because I was living more for the sake of culture than for myself. Sometimes, as a city employee, I would take my salary and invest it in cultural projects instead of paying my college tuition. I started studying law in 2008 and spent two years without taking courses while I was Secretary. So, it was time to take a break from Sático Dias and take care of my life a little bit. Then I went to São Paulo, where I spent almost seven years. I got my law degree there.*

The Rio de Janeiro-São Paulo axis, between two of the main cities in south-east-

50. In his book, Antônio Torres uses the following subheading: “*The Land Casts Me Out*”. In Portuguese, the original word is “*exotar*”, a regional onomatopoeic expression that refers to the shout used to startle chickens: “*xô! xô!*”, equivalent to “shoo” in English.

ern Brazil (together with Belo Horizonte, the capital of Minas Gerais, and Vitória, capital of Espírito Santo), is part of a “cultural battle” with the rest of the regions, especially the North and Northeast, in terms of concentration of public resources and job opportunities.

The institution takes me back⁵¹

Paulo Cruz returned to “this land”, his hometown of Sático Dias, several years later and in a completely different context. Everything became even more challenging when he took charge of the Points of Culture in the State of Bahia and, further on, participated in the cultural reinstitutionalisation process that occurred throughout the country with the approval of the Aldir Blanc Law during the COVID-19 pandemic.

[Paulo Cruz] *I returned to Bahia from São Paulo in 2019. In early 2020, I was invited to become the Director of Cultural Citizenship (DCC) at Secult Bahia, in the city of Salvador. We are responsible for the Points of Culture and the Cultural Citizenship Directorate. We have today accredited more than 500 points of culture in the State of Bahia so far. Recently, we had only 275 points of culture, but we decided now, with the advent of the Aldir Blanc Law, to carry out a new accreditation and have added more than 300, which has resulted in well over 500 points of culture accredited today by Secult Bahia.*

51. In this case, the adaptation is literal of one of the subheadings from Torres' novel, that in Portuguese originally says “*This land loves me*”. In English, it was adapted to “*The Land Takes Me Back*”, which also fits in this context.

As detailed in this Notebook (MELO, 2021), the Aldir Blanc Law established an emergency fund for arts and culture estimated at R\$ 3 billion reais, approximately U\$ 500 million dollars at the December 2020 exchange rate. One of the actions carried out in Bahia with resources from this fund was the Cultura Viva Award, targeted by the Cultural Citizen Directorate at all Bahia's Points of Culture, including those recently awarded in an open call for applications to certify self-recognised community organisations and groups as cultural groups. This award programme was the first of its kind to be held in the state of Bahia. As a result of this new open call, the number of Points of Culture in all of Bahia has almost doubled. In the Agreste (Rural), specifically, this territorialization started with one certified point of culture in 2004; it increased to seven in 2014, the last call officially held by the Federal government; and, currently, it has 14 cultural organisations registered in nine municipalities (out of a total of 20 in the territory).

And yet, why did this policy only reach many municipalities in Bahia, including the town of Sátiro Dias, in 2020? Paulo explains the situation as follows:

[Paulo Cruz] *The truth is that the scarcity of information was very great. For example, the internet in the city was very problematic. We didn't have access to much information. We didn't have conditions to institutionalise the cultural groups. And the Points of Cultures could only be formally registered legal entity. At that time, it was much more expensive to set up a legal entity than it is today. So, it was very difficult, much more difficult. It simply wasn't something we could do.*

[Paulo Cruz] *At that time, I myself created the Association of Artists of Sátiro Dias, we formalised everything, drafted and approved statutes, took formal minutes, did everything. But we didn't have the resources to register the association. But not now. For example, in this new point of culture registration process, we also*

Figure 10. Points of Culture in the Agreste of Bahia (Rural Bahia)⁵². Source: Prepared by the author.



Pontos de Cultura	Municípios	Estado
Associação Beneficente Cultural Ilê Asé Oyáni do Ilê Axé Oyá Ni	Alagoinhas	BA
Associação Cultural Euterpe Alagoinhense	Alagoinhas	BA
Fundação do Caminho	Alagoinhas	BA
Ilê Axé Oyá L'adê Inan	Alagoinhas	BA
Banda Marcial Cultural Estudantil de Aramari-BA - BAMACEA	Aramari	BA
Associação dos Músicos Catuenses	Catu	BA
EMUC-Catu	Catu	BA
Siribeira	Conde	BA
Associação de Desenvolvimento Comunitário do Assentamento Boa Vista III	Esplanada	BA
Coletivo Cultural do Terreiro Filhos de Kambaguange	Inhambupe	BA
Associação de Moradores, Marisqueiros, e Pescadores de Abadia	Jandaíra	BA
Associação Beneficente Rural de Pedrão	Pedrão	BA
Associação Humanitária Pelegrino do Sertão	Sátiro Dias	BA
Grupo Cultural Tribo do Junco	Sátiro Dias	BA
Ponto de Cultura Potes de Sítio Santana	Itanagra	BA

52. Map and table showing the Points of Culture located across the State of Bahia.

had this difficulty. So, I, as Director, registered the points of culture. But then we were careful to also certify the cultural groups, which we call cultural collectives. So, now it is not necessary to have a formal legal status to be a point of culture – today it is only necessary to be a cultural collective that has the characteristics of a centre of culture. Yes, it's true. Inclusively, we have created two Points of Culture in Sátiro Dias now.

That is to say, the policy of Education, Citizenship and Culture - *Cultura Viva* (Living Culture), which was born in 2004, had all the intentions in its goals of reaching the groups and initiatives that someone like Paulo Cruz and so many other local cultural agents have been carrying out for many years. However, the fact that it required a degree of formality as a legal entity was a great difficulty for many of these collectives. There were artistic and cultural groups that, as we have seen, were building circuits and dynamics of greater or lesser magnitude. But they did not have the objective resources for their institutionalisation, at least in the way it is usually understood in a modern perspective. This could be one of the reasons that explain why, in 2004, when the programme that includes the Points of Culture began, only one cultural organisation was effectively recognised in the dozens of municipalities in the Agreste of Bahia (Rural Bahia); the *Fundação do Caminho*, in the town of Alagoinhas.

Everything starts at some point / The hand of God / When everything was nothing, the beginning

[**Brother Cristóvão**] *The idea [of the Points of Culture] was very good because it*

opened a possibility of supporting groups that were not linked to the state capitals; it was not São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador... It was created for those groups where it was always so difficult to create something funded by commercial sponsorship, very complicated. The Points of Culture have opened up the possibility of receiving funding, of having contact, and also, of doing more serious work. The concept has allowed us to do some things outside the main cities, it has been a kind of popularisation of culture, the chance to show the local culture.

Krzysztof Wita, better known as Brother Christopher, has lived in the Agreste of Bahia (Rural Bahia) as a monk in the Taizé Community since 1998. Founded in France in 1940 by a 25-year-old Swiss Calvinist pastor, Roger Schutz, this ecumenical congregation meets in small fraternities, where the brothers live in disadvantaged communities in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. In the Santa Terezinha district of Alagoinhas, the Taizé community started the *Fundação do Caminho* (Foundation of the Way), which is responsible for educational projects, supporting a full-time inclusive school, the Nova Esperança Community School (New Hope Community School - ECNE), and offers vocational courses for local teenagers and young people. Adenor de Jesus is one of the people responsible for this institution, much respected in the region:

[**Adenor**] *I am from Salvador. I am not a son of Alagoinhas. But I already had contact with the Taizé community, I always came and worked with them. I lived with them for five years and my first contacts at the time*

were within this coexistence, when it was an associate. It was from there that Brother Michel called me to work with him in 2009. After his tragic death, as he was the guiding light of the institution, we got a little lost, because everything went through him, both the financial part and the projects. At the time, the chairman who was supporting him did not want to return. So, we took the team that was left here and took over.

[Adenor] I was working for the Alagoinhas local authority and provided support in the IT area. Then the Director of Culture received a call - this was at the time, if I am not mistaken, of Lula's government, when Gilberto Gil took over the Ministry of Culture - he received a communication there which he couldn't really understand, so he called us from the Technology and Information Technology (IT) sector. Then he said: there will be some people coming. And when I went to see, in fact, it was the people from the Ministry of Culture who came here. They were visiting the different areas to find out which institutions would be interested in becoming a Point of Culture. Seeing an opportunity, I went to find Brother Michel. He, along with another colleague, wrote the first proposal - and sent it to the Ministry of Culture - which, I don't know if it was the following year, was approved.

This way of selecting the first Points of Culture also appears in the reports of Célio Turino (2013), founder of the programme and in charge of the MinC Secretariat that signed the first agreements. That is, it was a selection of institutions with formalised legal personality, chosen from indications from

municipalities and shift managers. Other cultural institutions in the city were contacted, but for different reasons were not part of this first moment. So is registered by Carlos Eduardo de Jesus Santos, currently responsible for the centennial Alagoinhas Philharmonic and also Centre of Culture do Agreste Baiano (Rural Bahia):

[Carlos Eduardo] There was a project, Points of Culture, which was Federal rather than State. It was a connection between the local authorities and the Federal government. But the local authority had to collaborate with some counterpart funding, at first. And then Euterpe was going to be approved; but, for some political reason - which I don't know - it ended up not being registered. It was in 2005, more or less, that this possibility emerged. I wasn't involved at the beginning, it was another Chairperson of the Philharmonic.

One of the main new aspects of this programme was that, instead of creating cultural structures and physical spaces, it sought to support initiatives that already existed in each of the municipalities. The Points of Culture are one of the actions of the Cultura Viva (Living Community) programme, which also includes proposals for Digital Culture, and a dialogue with ancestral and community knowledge (Griô⁵³ Action), reading agents and living culture, awards for best practices, living school, culture and health, Junior Points of Culture with activities for children,

53. TN: Meaning of Griô - In Brazil, an individual who, in a community (e.g., religious or folkloric), holds the memory of the group and works as a diffuser of traditions.

and meetings called “*teias*” (webs) (TURI-NO, 2013). Another innovative proposal was that, instead of supporting specific projects, it sought to stimulate the actions of these institutions in a continuous way over time, so the length of the agreements was three years. This gave us approximately US\$24,000 a year in 2005. Thus, a very different paradigm was generated in terms of the relationship between cultural organisations of civil society and the State. However, “be wary of those bringing gifts:”

[Adenor] *In fact, the Foundation - and previously the Association - only existed because of Brother Michel, who had a certain following abroad and most of the resources were international. Then, with his death, the foreign funding decreased and we had to reverse the process. Today it is the other way around. But we had a lot of support from people who knew him, and we kept going. Today we are organised, we already own things, what we know how to do: accountability, where the money comes from, we plan for one or two years.*

[Adenor] *The funding, I think, only came a year later, something like that. So, in 2009 there were many things still open, still unaccounted for, because we didn't know where the paperwork was, we had to retrieve all the documentation. And one of the things in this project's work plan was the issue of the studio, where they sent a little “kit”, which was a soundboard, a little microphone, a little sound box to be able to do the work. This involved me because I am also a musician and I know a bit about this area. From then on,*

we brought other people in. We acquired a computer and started to make recordings that here, in Alagoinhas, were more complicated. Recordings like this, a bit amateurish, but it started to bring good results.

We note that another prominent element in this public cultural initiative was the proposal to equip all the selected cultural points with a Multimedia Kit. The aim was that the organisations participating in the programme should have basic equipment for recording and editing audio and video, all using open source software.

[Adenor] *Pedro Jatobá knows all about this technology of collaborative cultural production, because he already participated in it back in Recife. We took a Rap group that performed there. This technology of collaborative cultural production works well, we use open-source software, we try to be always within the same concept. Right now, I use Linux. When I was in the Alagoinhas local authority, I implemented Linux in the public servers, as before almost all of the software they were using was unlicensed, Windows was hacked. Here my machine is Linux, the machine at the Foundation is Linux. Only when there is hardware incompatibility is there a problem, it happens a lot. The manufacturers develop new equipment and don't make drivers available for it. But the Linux people, with time, end up doing some reverse engineering and manage, one way or another. But today I use Linux to produce, at least in the cultural part.*

Figure 11. Unfinished
Church in Alagoinhas
© Estudio Criatividade
Visual



Figure 12. Taizé Community
Mural (Alagoinhas)
© Estudio Criatividade
Visual





Figure 13. Euterpe Filarmônica
Centre of Culture (Alagoinhas)
Source: Photo courtesy of Heitor
Rocha Gomes.



Figure 14. Performance by
Euterpe Filarmônica (Centro de
Cultura de Alagoinhas)
Source: Collection of the Euterpe
Filarmônica de Alagoinhas.

Euterpe: the musical muse

The Cultural Association Euterpe Alagoinhense was established in 1893, according to its official website, with the proposal of “taking musical knowledge to other people, especially the needy, who would not have cultural alternatives. (FILARMÔNICA EUTERPE ALAGOINHENSE, 2021). It also records how this cultural institution disputed for years with the orchestral society União Ceciliana, with which there was tension and fights involving the town’s “high society”. More recently, these discussions had ended, but failures in administrative management and lack of public interest led to these century-old cultural institutions being ostracised

to an extent. In 2008, the Euterpe was selected as a Bahia Point of Culture, with the project *Tocando em Frente* (Playing Ahead), working to train new musicians and preserve the philharmonic musical culture. The conductor and educator responsible, Carlos Eduardo, explains how this transformation from an Association to a Point of Culture happened:

[Carlos Eduardo] *When we applied for the Points of Culture scheme, it was a teacher named Conceição who first showed me the open call for proposals. She helped me write the application. We put together the information and she designed the whole structure of the Point of Culture for the application, in 2008. The Secretariat of Culture of*

the State of Bahia itself, within its limitations, made it possible for Points of Culture to have a refresher course, training, help with accountability, help with administration, in fact, all of this resource. This was really important to an institution that used to manage very small amounts when it had to start managing budgets of around R\$60,000 per year – paid in instalments of R\$35,000 and R\$15,000.

Unlike the 2004/2005 process, as Carlos himself pointed out earlier, 2008 saw the first public, open and decentralised call for Points of Culture in Brazil. That is, with the goal of multiplying the number of projects and organisations benefited, agreements were made with States and Municipalities with more than 500,000 inhabitants to substantially expand the reach of this cultural program.

[**Carlos Eduardo**] *If we compare the situation to what it was before we had this financial support in terms of structure, chairs, shelves, musical instruments, the structure of the headquarters itself, the lighting. As a whole, the equipment, the multimedia kit that was mandatory, we started to have computers, which we didn't have, television, camera and camcorder has changed everything for us; The question of equipment changed the question of visibility, it changed because people started to see more of the institution. It also changed the way the town, the authorities looked at us. Of course, on the one hand, it was positive; on the other hand, it was negative. The positive side is that we had visibility and were able to get money to buy things that we needed. For example, we were able to repair an instrument*

that was broken, solder it, do all the renovation, even buy new instruments.

[**Carlos Eduardo**] *And on the other hand it was bad, because when the institution started having money, we started having problems. First, there is that company that sells to us for a lower price and sometimes couldn't issue a tax invoice and then, with money, we couldn't buy from them anymore because they don't issue invoices. This creates a problem. Other public entities, which helped to a greater or lesser extent, stopped contributing because the Philharmonic was receiving this resource. And then the politicking began, trying to get closer to us in order to take advantage of it. So, this is the bad part of the flow of funding into the institution.*

We can see how the territorialization and sedimentation of an innovative public policy of culture is not something easy to manage on a daily basis. The fact that there are several institutions, spaces, and artistic groups with unsatisfied needs often generates more tensions than understanding within the local cultural area. Added to this process, once the institution has more resources, more material, more labour, it begins to wonder how it will be able to sustain itself in the medium and long term, since, in general, these community ventures are neither commercial nor profitable.

[**Carlos Eduardo**] *The orchestra itself was more than 120 years old, and already had some instruments. Of course, not all were in perfect order, but with the resources that came from Points of Culture we were able to refurbish*

bish some and buy others. We also received support from FUNCEB's Music Directorate, from the state government of Bahia, and we were able to buy more instruments, for the purchase of instruments and computers. There were other open calls for proposals that we won and we bought more instruments. There were other partnerships with the municipality, we bought more instruments, but not more wind instruments, but more percussion and musical instruments, such as chimes, musical bells, rain sticks, instruments with more effects that work more with children. I mean, we have been buying and renovating instruments all the time; this process of having this equipment has not stopped.

[**Carlos Eduardo**] Because before, we had a serious problem, we had many people who wanted to take part in the activities and few instruments. Now we have the instruments but it is the people who are lacking, which is what we are working on. We have already worked on the question of the physical and internal structure, i.e., from the outside it is not very attractive, but internally it is more structured, the question of all the equipment, both the chairs and the instruments, in order to then work more closely with the staff, with the people.

From each of the conversations we had with the cultural agents related to the Cultura Viva programme, we also observed some difficulties appearing which are common to other cultural spaces and groups.

The terreiro⁵⁴ and the city: The Afro-Brazilian social form as a Point of Culture⁵⁵

[**Nando Zâmbia**] For some time now we have been operating as a Point of Culture, understanding that the terreiro is also a place for artistic activity. From 2008 on, practically, we no longer find in *candomblé* simply a relationship of religare, of religion; we start to see the perspective, also, of culture, preserving culture. When we start to understand the composition of the population of Brazil and understand the African people as a people that has contributed emphatically and decisively, we see the terreiros as contemporary quilombos.

[**Nando Zâmbia**] So, we demystify this in our minds, because we talk about art inside the terreiro; mainly theatre, which, until the 2000s, was an art form inherently directed at the bourgeoisie. Alagoinhas is a city in which the bourgeoisie had a theatre, but it was far from the centre and difficult to get to. The rest of the city had not embraced the area and it could only be accessed by car, there were no buses. So, we know very well who is being cut out by the establishment.

There are Points of Culture that fit more easily into a modern perspective of cultural institutions, such as an orchestra, a cultural production company, a space for artistic activities; a socio-educational foundation

54. TN - Meaning of Terreiro: a place of worship for *candomblé* or *macumba*, a courtyard in where rituals of *candomblé* or *umbanda* take place.

55. Here we honor the reflections of Prof. Muniz Sodré, Professor at IEA/USP, in his book *O Terreiro e a Cidade – A Forma Social Negro-Brasileira (The Terreiro and The City – The Black-Brazilian Social Form, in free translation)* (1988).

with a cultural profile. However, when we get to organisations rooted in indigenous and African traditions, very common throughout Brazil and the rest of Latin America, the line between what is - or is not - a cultural institution starts to blur. This is an issue not only for academic scholars, but also for their own members and communities, such as Onisajé and Nando Zâmbia from the *candomblé terreiro* in Alagoinhas *Ilê Axé Oyá Ladê Inan*.

[Onisajé] *The first contact with the term Point of Culture was when there was a radical change with the creation of the Ministry of Culture, essentially created in Lula's first term when Gilberto Gil took over the portfolio. In this context, he created the advisory bodies for different art forms, and I participated in long debates, via videoconference in the one for theatre, representing theatre outside the large urban centres that needed a voice. Rural theatre exists! Together with Nando Zambia, Fabiola Nansurê and several other artists, which is my origin. We are creations of this theatre. I started doing theatre here in the countryside, in a public school and then in the Terreiro.*

[Onisajé] *Then there was a candomblé temple, close to ours, that, around 2008/09 - the time we won our first public funding for a theatre group - was certified and able to access project funding. We, however, had not yet fully understood that Ilê could be a cultural space for the arts. So, we had applied for funding under an open call and were approved while, at the same time, this terreiro, close to us, was certified as a Point of Culture and was able to access Federal funding and*

support earmarked for this purpose. We did theatre inside the terreiro, that is, candomblé is culture and we still did theatre inside the terreiro. Why didn't we continue with the certification process? We thought we had everything that was needed to access the funds, and then, we looked at ourselves and said: wow, we are also a Point of Culture!

We often find cultural groups and spaces that know the Points of Culture proposal, especially from a public policy of self-recognition that starts with the Federal government and is also territorialized at local and state levels.

[Nando Zâmbia] *I think the decentralisation that started with the progressive thinking government, decentralised Brazil, also, in several fronts. I believe that they took it even further when the Points of Culture appeared. That, in truth, the grass roots of culture are at the local level, the local authorities that act, or should act, in the local area. This brings a more complex understanding of what this culture would be that is no longer focused on the capital, which is no longer focused on the Southeast, on the big urban centres, already past it. They cannot handle the complexity of Brazil, after its industrialization, no more! We need to go back to our roots. And the Points of Culture are here to embrace this identification and these identities that the Brazilian people need.*

[Nando Zâmbia] *We consider ourselves as counterculture, together with the other Points of Culture in Brazil. There is a major push for the decentralisation of culture and*

decentralisation of the understanding of culture. Because we broaden and amplify this understanding. So, this makes us more plural, in an attempt to be one. Points of Culture are the resistance, in favour of the complex, the plural, plurality – it is all this that represents Brazil, not only a country that is always turned towards Europe or the United States.

Pandemic and pandemonium? Politics, religion and public culture

[**Brother Cristóvão**] *I am a member of the Taizé Community. The mother house is in France. We are an ecumenical community where the monks are Evangelical, Protestant or Catholic, a community of about 100 brothers of various nationalities, from different areas of the world, various religious traditions and different cultures. We have been living since 1978 in the poor outskirts of Alagoinhas, in an area called Santa Terezinha. When the brothers arrived here, they started the work of building communities; housing projects for regions like Buri, Catuzinho, Riacho da Guia. Later, an association called São Benedito was created, at first to support the school, our social work. Then, in 2001, this Association became the Fundação do Caminho (Foundation of the Way) and this institution took over part of the school, offering a full-time education.*

[**Brother Cristóvão**] *We have extended children's lesson time here from 7:30 am to 4:30 pm, and we have also started to work almost entirely with the deaf. We are respected for our teaching of the deaf and blind, we work to include children and teenagers in education. In addition, since the beginning*

we have worked in culture, especially in music. The local authority took on the formal part of the curriculum and the Foundation took on the afterschool part, with classes, especially in music; a lot of tutoring, art, capoeira⁵⁶, sports, science, a library... all of these.

A phenomenon as interesting as the spread of Points of Culture throughout the country - and in rural Bahia in particular - is the increasingly frequent involvement of religious groups or, more directly, of churches, in cultural projects, local administration and culture councils. The relationship between culture and religion is a historical one throughout Latin America, whether linked to the phenomenon of transforming Catholic churches into museum spaces or, more recently, of intangible heritage with the inclusion of religious practices of indigenous and African origin. Even more so with the phenomenon of neo-Pentecostal churches, which intervene in party politics, in public administration, and in the dispute over the meaning of several artistic and cultural practices. Episodes of violence, racism, and religious intolerance have multiplied, for which they are frequently held responsible. However, is there empirical evidence to support this direct relationship? Or is the phenomenon much more complex than this superficial reading which is, to some extent, loaded with ideological and religious prejudice?

In the case of rural Bahia, this also manifests itself in the day-to-day processes of institutionalisation, de-institutionalisation, and reinstitutionalisation of public culture at the municipal level. In Sátiro Dias, for

56. Capoeira is a Brazilian martial arts/dance style.

example, the tensions and disputes within the culture council and the current elected local authority, in charge of local government since December 2020, are drawing attention. In the words of Paulo Cruz:

[Paulo Cruz] *In 2020, the culture portfolio manager dismissed me as chairperson of the council and dismissed all the previous councillors, calling a new meeting. This he did through the official gazette. Then I thought, great, he's dismissed me, but at least he called for new elections. A new meeting to set it up again, that's great. But he feared that the chairperson could, at any time, have access to the Secretary of Education's funds. That made the public administration afraid. So, here's what he did. First, he prohibited cultural groups from participating in the sectoral council, saying that only legally constituted entities could take part.*

[Paulo Cruz] *We fought, we went on to the internet, we went on to the streets, we went to social media to protest this. Because in Sátiro Dias, the cultural groups don't have the financial resources to formalise their associations as legal entities, they don't have this ability. They can participate as individuals or as cultural groups. And he didn't want to let them, because he knew that if they did, we would have the majority on the sectoral council. And, by having a majority, we would have the chairperson and the board on our side. What did he do? He asked the evangelical churches connected to the government to be part of the council. Because they have legal status. That is why the council was left with so many evangelical churches as members.*

The informality and legal precariousness of artistic and cultural groups, something common in the poorer outskirts of towns and cities, and much more so in the rural areas of Brazil, were the perfect excuse to incorporate these sectors close to the government to the municipal council of culture. At some point, beyond technology - digital applications and other forms of cultural consumption that exist globally - religious institutions in contemporary Brazil seem to be territorially disputing the spaces, audiences, and messages of artistic and cultural practices in society. For Carlos, from the Philharmonic:

[Carlos Eduardo] *In fact, we cannot consider the churches as competitors, because they are going to win by 1000 to zero. They will be way ahead, because they have the encouragement of the parents. The purpose of the church is to advocate for God. So, the father is already a member of the religion and will make his son do the same. That's because the father is in the middle, he's in the religion. So, automatically, he will encourage the son to learn the instrument and the son will do so. In our case, most parents have never picked up an instrument in their lives. And many think that life is limited to food and clothing, the basic biological needs. Their life does not include an activity that elevates the soul or that strengthens feeling. So, we have to work on this, too, to face this challenge with the parents. Of course, showing them the need to enrich their creative leisure.*

[Carlos Eduardo] *In other words, the church, in relation to the movement of philharmonics and Points of Culture, will come*

out quite ahead. Very, very much so. And there isn't only the Christian [church] in Brazil. The Christian and Catholic ones come out ahead, but there are evangelical churches, like Baptist and others where the pastor will do the work for the young kid, for that child to stay, because the father will encourage them. The father will bring them, even if he has to go to another town, he will take the child there. And the child goes because the father is a point of reference, both of his parents.

In the case of religious spaces of Indigenous and African origins, can we say that something similar occurs? Why is a Candomblé terreiro understood as a cultural space and, in particular, as a Point of Culture?

[Onisajé] I think it's important for a Candomblé terreiro, in the outermost parts of the countryside, in rural Bahia, to show through its cinema, its dance, and its theatre, what it has rooted here, its history. Alagoinhas



Figure 15. Virtual campaign against religious intolerance⁵⁷
Source: Disclosure on Ilê's social media.



Figure 16. Ilê's Project supported by the Aldir Blanc Law⁵⁸
Source: Disclosure on Ilê's social media

57. Picture showing a candomblé ritual, with a disclaimer against religious intolerance.

58. Banner to promote an event held by the Ilê's Project.

Ilê Axé Oyá L'adê Inan inicia reforma custeada por financiamento coletivo mas ainda precisa de doações

Além de ser um espaço litúrgico e de acolhimento, o terreiro Ilê Axé Oyá L'adê Inan é conhecido, no município de Alagoinhas, também como um espaço dedicado às artes. Em seus 16 anos de história, foram inúmeras as vezes que o barracão abriu suas portas para receber apresentações de teatro, exibições de filmes, oficinas e residências artísticas, movimento que foi interrompido devido ao surgimento de sérios problemas em sua estrutura. Mas as rachaduras nas paredes do barracão já estão com dias contados! E que graças às doações de centenas de pessoas que participaram do financiamento coletivo – a famosa “vaquinha” – já foi iniciada a reforma do barracão, que será ampliado e ganhará novo telhado.



Mãe Rosa de Oyá - FOTO: ADELÓYÁ OJU BARÁ

do terreiro, Mãe Rosa de Oyá conta que as instalações do terreiro sempre foram precárias e improvisadas, e que reformar o espaço é também sinônimo de resistência e continuidade da fé e história da população negra, além de garantir a proteção à integridade física das pessoas e do lugar sagrado. “Após a violência que sofremos em maio de 2019, percebemos que a gente precisava se fortalecer para con-

tinuar abrindo a nossa casa para as artes, para a cultura e para a comunidade”, disse Mãe Rosa lembrando do ato de intolerância religiosa realizado por um grupo de neopentecostais contra o terreiro. Por conta disso, além da reforma no barracão, os muros do espaço também serão reforçados. A grande contribuição do Ilê Axé Oyá L'adê Inan à cultura do município foi reconhecida ano passado pela Secretaria

de Cultura do Estado da Bahia (Secult/BA), que lhe conferiu a importância de Ponto de Cultura. Sacerdotisa da casa, a dramaturga Onisáé destacou que através das artes são elaboradas narrativas positivas sobre o Candomblé, desmistificando pre-

conceitos e estigmas, e perpetuando os saberes dos povos de terreiro. “Acreditamos que esse reconhecimento pode potencializar a relação do nosso espaço com fontes financiadoras e apoiadores das artes, para produzirmos mais e alcançarmos um pú-

blico cada vez maior e mais diverso”, afirmou. Apesar das obras já iniciadas, o terreiro e Ponto de Cultura continua recebendo doações, pois o valor levantado ainda não cobre todos os gastos com a reforma. “Aceitamos doação de material de construção, dinheiro e até mão de obra”, brincou Nando Zâmbia, também filho da casa. “Estamos todos aqui metendo mão na obra, mas quem não quiser ser ajudante pode colaborar mandando um pix”, lembrou ele. A chave pix do terreiro e Ponto de Cultura Oyá L'adê Inan é o e-mail oyaladeinan@gmail.com. “Este concreto que levantamos hoje é metáfora para a nossa resistência, é a firmeza do nosso quilombo contemporâneo que nos fortalece desde os nossos ancestrais”, poetizou Zâmbia.

Figure 17. Interview with Mother Rosa – Ilê Axé L'adê Inan of Alagoinhas⁵⁹
Source: Sua Cidade em Revista (Issue 46, June 2021).

Figure 18. Centre of Culture Ilê Axé L'adê Inan of Alagoinhas
© AdeloyáOjuBara



Figure 19. Centre of Culture Ilê Axé L'adê Inan of Alagoinhas
© AdeloyáOjuBara



59. Newspaper page containing an interview with Mother Rosa from the Ilê Axé L'adê Inan of Alagoinhas talking about the projects held there.

itself can be studied from this moment from the Points of Culture, mainly the ones that invest in education and study the history of Alagoinhas. Many of the things in Alagoinhas have been revised, if I can say... it's just that I don't like the word "rescued," I think it's awful. But it was revived, and this has to do with the action of the Points of Culture, with the necessity to understand individuality and subjectivity in the midst of such an extensive worldwide collective. And now with this completely digitalised world, with the backwards motion caused by the pandemic, because the pandemic anticipated the future, according to Nando Zâmbia. This phrase is not mine. But the pandemic anticipated the future! So, the possibility for access and expansion is much bigger. So, the idea of identity empowerment... And our desire...

The cultural practices that are being revised, deinstitutionalised and re-institutionalised cross artistic forms and manifest themselves across all the city's social classes. This impacts audiences as much as youth and family participation, and it translates into episodes of racism and more explicit religious violence.

[Onisajé] *We picketed against religious hatred, we closed the street and managed to make the first Xirê⁶⁰ of Ladê Inan street in July 2019. Because we were attacked here. The Christian fundamentalists, well, they came and did many things here. It was*

60. TN: Xirê is a sequential structure of songs for all orixás worshipped in the house or even by the "nation". The word "xirê" means playing, dancing, and it denotes the joyful tone of the Candomblé party, where the orixás come to Earth themselves to dance and play with their children.

horrible. And we mobilised to respond to what had happened. Then, we suddenly realised that if we were able to project films onto a wall we could show some films about racism, homophobia, violence, drugs, and invite the community around the terreiro to see them.

[Onisajé] *There are people who don't come into terreiro because they are evangelicals. You have part of a community who are members of the terreiro community, who are the children of saints, the children of the children of saints and their relatives – there are also other people from the surrounding neighbourhood who don't feel comfortable about entering the terreiro for religious reasons, but we want to talk [with them], as much as possible. So, it's at the planning stage. We are still organising everything. Our Point of Culture has been operating for 11 years, in a self-taught way [laughs], and now that we are becoming a formal institution we will discover other accesses.*

This serious episode had strong repercussions in national media, but it is not an isolated incident. The problems manifest in daily life in artistic and cultural sectors, especially in those more linked to Indigenous and African practices.

Final considerations: Discover your village, and you will understand the whole world

The phrase that we reproduce as the heading for these final reflections is attributed to the Russian novelist Leon Tolstoy. However, much time and many translations later,

it may have suffered some transformations of context and meaning. In any case we use it as an approach to understanding, in an intensive and localised way, some contemporary processes of institutionalisation of culture, in order to, later on, apply our knowledge of this same phenomenon to other Brazilian territories, or in other parts of South America.

We continue with a restlessness sustained throughout this publication – and throughout the research process at IEA/USP – summarised in the beginning of our article published in the *Caderno de Pesquisa* N. 1. “What institutions will we discuss if, in our territories, they do not exist?” (BRIZUELA; MELO, 2021, p. 43). We observe an effort by civil society and organised community groups in the municipalities of Rural Bahia to build artistic and cultural circles. In addition, they actively support political-cultural articulations to institutionalise these processes in the public cultural sphere. The study of the Points of Culture in these territories allows us to get to know, with some level of intimacy, the scope of these processes, their difficulties, and their main actors.

Moreover, in relation to the defining characteristics of modern cultural institutions, we observe that, in the case of the Points of Culture in rural Bahia, it is very difficult to separate these entities from their social, educational, and even religious dimensions. Because of their community profile, their publics and circuits, they end up sharing (and, to a certain extent, competing with) more with other community institutions than with contemporary cultural institutions and groups defined in a classical and more restricted sense.

In summary, we believe that if we better understand the processes of institutionalisation, de-institutionalisation and re-institutionalisation of our “village,” we will have more of the tools needed to understand these same phenomena at a Latin American and global level.

Respondents' profile

01. Paulo Roberto da Cruz Junior – Lawyer, actor, former Secretary of Culture of Sítiro Dias, Director of Cultural Citizenship at Secult-BA, MBA in Labour and Social Security Law and culture maker.

02. Adenor de Jesus Sousa – President of Fundação do Caminho. One of the creators of the Produtora Cultural Colaborativa (Collaborative Cultural Producer) and Point of Culture of Alagoinhas – training, production and promotion of artists from the Rural Bahia and the surrounding region.

03. Krzysztof Wita (Brother Cristóvão) – Born in Poland, member of the Taizé Community of Alagoinhas. He is responsible for the video and photography studio Criatividade Visual.

04. Carlos Eduardo de Jesus Santos – Saxophonist, Art educator with a degree in the health area, coordinator and band leader of the Filarmônica Euterpe of Alagoinhas orchestra since 2007.

05. Onisajé – Ph.D. in Performing Arts from UFBA. Coordinator of the Point of Culture Oyá L'adê Inan.

06. Nando Zâmbia – Actor, illuminator and black producer. B.A. in Theatrical Interpretation from UFBA. Coordinator of the Point of Culture Oyá L'adê Inan, planner and executor of FESTA – the Arts Festival of Alagoinhas.

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EPILOGUE: THE POINTS OF CULTURE IN LATIN AMERICA

Néstor García Canclini

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Sharine Machado C. Melo

As we have seen, it is impossible to explain the process of drafting and sanctioning the Aldir Blanc Law in Brazil without considering the pre-existing background of artistic and cultural organisation and mobilisation; among them, the networks springing from the Points of Culture. The Cultura Viva Programme, launched in July 2004, is an innovative approach to bringing the artistic and cultural area into community groups traditionally distant from the so-called “fine arts”. Over the last couple of decades, this public cultural initiative has not only extended beyond the borders of Brazil to the rest of the continent but has also supported similar initiatives in other continents. In fact, the Cultura Viva movement, which emerged from the Points of Culture, has been transformed into Cultura Viva Comunitária (Community

Living Culture) through exchanges with other Latin American countries.

We would like to end the interim reflections in this Notebook with some notes on the transterritorialisation process involving the Points of Culture programme and the Cultura Viva Comunitaria movement in Latin America. On October 26, 2015, the II Congreso de Cultura Viva Comunitaria (2nd Community Living Culture Congress) started in El Salvador, Central America, where hundreds of mediators and cultural managers from various latitudes gathered to discuss the implementation and expansion of Points of Culture throughout Latin America. The purpose of these congresses, besides bringing together government representatives (such as Alexandre Santini, then Director of Cultural Citizenship at the Brazilian Ministry

of Culture) with cultural leaders, was to seek new contexts and strategies for institutionalising community-based cultural policies. The first congress took place in 2013 in La Paz, Bolivia, while the fifth was held in Quito, Ecuador in 2017. These three countries usually have little visibility at a continental level as spaces of political and institutional articulation. However, the systemic and synergetic policy building and grounding of these events were fundamental to the process of transnational territorialisation of Points of Culture and Community Living Culture in Latin America. This took place, as we saw earlier, in a context of tension and general deinstitutionalisation of public culture in a number of countries in the region, such as Brazil, Mexico and Argentina.

In addition to Santini, the Brazilian delegation at the El Salvador congress included Célio Turino, one of the creators of the Cultura Viva Program during his stint as Secretary of Cultural Citizenship at the Brazilian Ministry of Culture (2004-2010) – as mentioned in previous texts – but who, at that time, was participating in the event as a member of civil society. These figures are some of the visible faces of a deep and transnational sedimentation process that coexists with the fragility of many cultural institutions throughout Latin America. With this process, new interactions develop between artists, points of culture, and community organisations in resistance movements that seek to ensure citizen participation and fight for cultural rights.

Chacras de Coria, for example, is a district of just over 10,000 inhabitants in the Department of Luján de Cuyo, in the Prov-

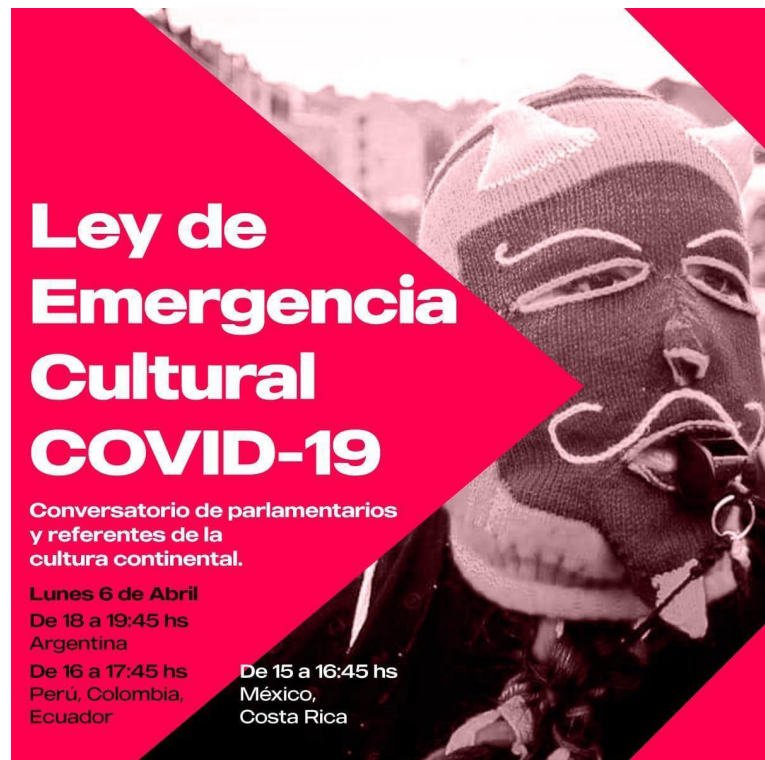
ince of Mendoza, in the northwest of Argentina. In this territory, the Asociación Chacras para Todos (Chakras for All Association), a member of the Red Nacional de Teatro Comunitario (National Network of Community Theatre), the Red Mendocina de Teatro Comunitario (Mendoza Community Theatre Network), the Argentine Points of Culture, and the Latin American movement of Cultura Viva Comunitaria, has been operating since 2008. In April 2020, one of the leaders and founders of this community-based territorial organisation, Silvia Bove, offered to collaborate with other leaders of the movement, such as Jorge Blandón (Colombia) and Alexandre Santini (Brazil) to discuss with parliamentarians from the different countries the cultural emergency experienced in all the nations of the continent. From this virtual meeting, in which Brazilian leaders such as Célio Turino and Jandira Feghali, among others, also participated, Santini himself points out the incorporation of the strategic proposal to symbolically adopt the Law of Cultural Emergency as a guideline for the political dispute at all levels of public policy and administration in each of the countries.

This type of meeting and Latin American articulation between social movements, community leaders and political representatives is far from being something exceptional, and has been repeated with some frequency since at least 2009 and the World Social Forum, held in Belém do Pará, in the Northern region of Brazil.

In the trajectory that extends from the birth of the Points of Culture in Brazil in 2004, through the consolidation of the continental movement of Cultura Viva Co-

Figure 1. Flyer to publicise the Latin American discussion about the Cultural Emergency⁶¹

Source: Publicity material produced by Chacras para Todos (2020) for the social media.



munitária in 2013, to reach the Aldir Blanc Cultural Emergency Law in 2020, we observe increasingly strengthening complex transnational connections, from which the popular and community dimensions are consolidated into a fundamental axis of this new institutionalisation, deinstitutionalisation and cultural re-institutionalisation processes in Latin America. However, this developing process is coming to fruition in the midst of a general decline in investment by States in cultural programmes and institutions, in addition to a national economic recession and a declining in-person audience at events because of the pandemic.

Ongoing questions

In order to scale and evaluate the importance – and the paradox – of what has happened in Brazil, we are working to compare Brazilian state policies and the mobilisation of cultural workers during the emergency with what happened in other Latin American countries. The meaning of what took place in each society – as well as the repercussions of deinstitutionalisation/re-institutionalisation – is also to be found in the interaction with the dynamics of closures and re-openings of cinemas, museums, theatres, and other cultural venues during the pandemic. In addition, there is the partial replacement of cultural events in physical spaces for in-person audiences by streaming on home screens.

Other questions are posed at this time: how does the weakening of cultural offerings in physical spaces, and the respec-

61. Flyer to promote the event in support of the Cultural Emergency Law.

tive public agencies responsible, articulate and contrast with the dynamism of digital platforms? To what extent do the new modes of access and socialisation of these agencies reaffirm their character as institutions? It is apparent that the material and urban organisation of cultural life has shifted towards remote access to catalogues of cultural offerings from transnational corporations. Since this trend began before the pandemic, it is difficult to predict what direction it will take once the health risk is over or has subsided. We do know, however, that either direction of this process will offer distinct possibilities for the development of cultural citizenship: it is easier to reopen a museum or a film library for face-to-face audiences than to do so when the supply of art and communication has been redesigned in digital formats and is managed by companies on an international scale.

The documented information and interviews we have gathered show the deepening complexity of this panorama. We will return to these questions in the final book of our research, compiling the voices and interpretations of different actors: institutions, artists, independent movements. Part of the attraction of this open process, which presents the different faces of a year and a half of emergency, lies in the way by which the perspectives and analyses of the pre-pandemic time are restructured. This instability is an incitement to conceptualise the criteria and research in cultural administration, the links between physical territories and virtual networks, and the evaluation of consumption and access. It forces us, in turn, to be prudent and open to the unexpected.

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In the pandemic, the partial replacement of cultural events, held in closed venues, by streaming on home screens has been radicalized. How do the weakening of cultural offerings in physical places - and of the public bodies responsible for these actions - articulate with the dynamism of digital platforms? To what extent do the new models of access and socialisation of artistic and cultural content allow us to say that virtual platforms and networks are institutions? In order to dimension and evaluate the importance - and the paradoxes - of what is currently happening to the institutionality of culture, we are working with some comparisons between State policies for the sector and the mobilisation of cultural workers during the pandemic, in its territorial and glocal dimension, in Brazil and in other Latin American countries. In fact, the meaning of what occurs in each society is configured in interaction with the dynamics of closures and reopenings of cinemas, museums, theatres and cultural centres during the health emergency period.

Néstor García Canclini

Olavo Setubal Chair of Art, Culture and Science (2020/2021)

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