

**CULTURAL POLICIES SUPPLYING RECOGNITION: AFRO-DESCENDANCY
IN ARGENTINA BETWEEN “PROGRESSIVISM” AND THE NEW (ULTRA)
“ANARCHO-LIBERTARIAN” RIGHT**

**Políticas culturais suprindo reconhecimento: afrodescendência na
Argentina entre o “Progressismo” e a nova (ultra) Direita “Anarco
Libertária”.**

**Políticas culturales supliendo reconocimiento: afrodescendencia en
Argentina entre el “progresismo” y la nueva (ultra)derecha “anarco
libertaria”.**

Mg. Viviana Parody

Doctoranda en Antropología Social por la Universidad de San Martín, Argentina; Equipo de Antropología del Cuerpo y la Performance, Universidad de Buenos Aires (ICA, FFyL, UBA); Instituto de Estudios de América Latina y el Caribe Facultad de Ciencias Sociales de la Universidad de Buenos Aires (IEALC, FCS, UBA).

E-mail: viviparody@yahoo.com.ar

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ABSTRACT

In this article, I analyse the evolution of cultural policies related to Afro-descendants in Argentina since the Bicentennial. To do so, I begin by challenging the very idea of “cultural policy” as it is conceived from various perspectives in Latin America, and more specifically in Argentina. Using multi-situated ethnographic work that encompasses both state action and the agency of protagonists, as well as ethnography in regional organizations, I analyse the transition of these types of recognition policies between progressive governmentality and the recently inaugurated national government of the “new libertarian right.” I assess continuities and ruptures in recognition policies during this period (2010-2025), characterized by the alternation between these two (racialized) ideologies of government.

KEYWORDS: Cultural Policies - Afro-descendants – “Libertarian” Argentina.

RESUMO

Neste artigo, analiso a evolução das políticas culturais relacionadas aos afrodescendentes na Argentina desde o Bicentenário. Para isso, começo discutindo a própria ideia de “política cultural” tal como é concebida sob diversas perspectivas na América Latina e, de forma restrita, na Argentina. Usando trabalho etnográfico multissituado que abrange tanto a ação estatal quanto a agência dos protagonistas, bem como etnografia em organizações regionais, analiso a transição desses tipos de políticas de reconhecimento entre a governamentalidade progressista e o recém-inaugurado governo nacional de “nova direita libertária”. Estimam-se continuidades e rupturas nas políticas de reconhecimento nesta fase (2010-2025) caracterizada pela alternância entre estas duas ideologias governamentais (racializadas).

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Políticas Culturais - Afrodescendentes - Argentina “libertaria”.

RESUMEN

En el presente artículo analizo el devenir de las políticas culturales referidas a afrodescendencia dadas en Argentina a partir del Bicentenario. Para ello parto de poner en discusión la propia idea de “política cultural” según es concebida desde diversas perspectivas en América Latina, y de manera restringida en Argentina. Valiéndome de una labor etnográfica multisituada que tanto abarca el accionar estatal como la agencia de los protagonistas y la etnografía en organismos regionales, analizo el tránsito de este tipo de políticas de reconocimiento entre la gubernamentalidad progresista y la inaugurada recientemente por el gobierno nacional de la “nueva derecha libertaria”. Se estiman continuidades y rupturas de las políticas de reconocimiento en esta etapa (2010-2025) caracterizada por la alternancia entre estos dos idearios (racializados) de gobierno.



PALABRAS CLAVE: Políticas Culturales- afrodescendencia- Argentina "libertaria".

INTRODUCTION

As this dossier argues, the postwar social contract—alongside the rise of human rights and the creation of multilateral organizations—generated a new humanitarian horizon whose center of gravity shifted toward “minorities”. Defined along ethno-racial, generational, or gender lines, these “minorities” gave rise to new forms of political agency less concerned with redistributive inequality and more attentive to “diversity” and pluralism.

Sustained by enduring patterns of exclusion that were historically justified by different scientific theories (Seyferth, 1983; Catelli, 2020), these subalternized sectors mobilized demands for justice from the late twentieth century onward under the standards of identity politics (Segato, 2007), managing to erode the pre-established relationships between the state, national societies, and “minorities”. In this way, “multicultural” models for managing difference flourished, generating on their way new technologies of governance (with national-regional characteristics), which in Latin America reached constitutional status already in the 1990s in most of our countries (Parody, 2011). In this trajectory, moreover, such “minorities” also gained prominence in terms of political representation, in alliance with major progressive parties and under the logic shaped by representative democracies¹.

In this paper, I am interested in problematizing the cultural policies regarding Afro-descendancy in Argentina between two key moments: the bicentennial period (2010-2015) and the “libertarian” period (2024 onwards). The first period involved some advances focused on recognition, which were mostly reflected in short-term state-managed cultural policies (Anechiaricco, 2018; Parody, 2019), having been “conceived from below” since the late 1980s, articulated with the national and popular political trend in the framework of opportunities provided by the bicentennial (2010-2015), only to later face a period of retreat (2015-2019; 2024 onwards). This Argentine process of expanding national narratives around the Bicentennial is what I refer to as corresponding to a “late multiculturalism” (Parody, 2019), understanding that the Latin American bicentennials served as a backdrop for pluricultural national narratives, and that in the Argentine case, this moment addressed the lack of multicultural governance that other Latin American countries had already achieved

¹ The contemporary case that best illustrates this is the tenure of Francia Márquez as Vice President of Colombia, alongside the election of Dorina Hernández as a congresswoman; as well as the case of Susana Andrade in the Senate of Uruguay.



in the 1990s (Parody, 2026a).

Largely derived from allegories of difference already developed in Mercosur (Brazil and Uruguay), the recognition policies regarding Afro-descendants enabled certain advances in pluralism within Argentina, only to later face, in the contemporary context, the plateau or misstep typical of “right-wing” and “far-right” governments in their civilizational drive (i.e., denial, Europeanization, and whitening). In the framework of this article, I will understand the latter trend (which in Argentina begins with the “libertarian” government of Javier Milei and which in Brazil was confined to the government of Jair Bolsonaro) as part of the regional reactionary reflux that followed the “post-neoliberal” period of rights expansion brought about by the so-called Latin American “left turn” (Kessler & Vommaro, 2025). The “resistance” processes of today’s “far-rights” (Semán, 2023) seem to bring us face to face again with some unresolved variables of these progressive movements (Parody, 2022). Therefore, I understand these contemporary social formations (such as Argentine “anarcho-capitalist libertarianism”) as part of a new historical-global cycle of the “right-wing” (Dvoskin, 2022; Ouviaña, 2022) that contributes to the undermining of human rights and all types of agreements initiated since the postwar era² (Kharas et al., 2022; Arredondo, 2022).

Due to reasons of length, this paper will focus solely on cultural policies, understanding them as recognition policies. To this end, I will first review the political-cultural processes that emerged “from below” in the 1980s and 1990s, as an Afro-descendant movement that later contributed to these recent governmental advances. In the second section, I will analyze the impact of “progressive” governmental policies (2004-2015; 2019-2023) and “right-wing” policies (2015-2019; 2024 onwards), reflecting spiraling cycles of intentions ranging from recognition to their dismantling in two stages: with the governmental entry of *Juntos por el Cambio* (2015), and with the recent assumption of *La Libertad Avanza* (2024), as a radicalized affirmation in which these policies are severely curtailed. I propose to analyze in more detail how the practices and discourses regarding Afro-descendants have been articulated/re-articulated/disarticulated in each of these periods, which culminate in the “new libertarian right” as a reactionary trend that seeks to reaffirm the Europeanized project of the late nineteenth-century National State, dismantling—not only rights acquired by various “minorities”—but also the “inclusion” possibilities introduced

² According to the United Nations (UN), multilateralism refers to coordinated action among at least three countries. In contrast, the current tendency among “right-wing” governments is centred on unilateralism (each country acting on its own and solely in pursuit of its own interests) and bilateralism (an alliance between two countries, generally limited to the interests of the more powerful one).



by progressive multicultural narratives of the nation during “national-popular” governments. The “battle for meaning”³ in this period of regression also has a clear intent, which is one of “recognition and reparation” for those sectors that, within the progressive narrative, would have been “damaged” by virtue of their whiteness, masculinity, elite status, or age, among other variables (Laje, 2022). We will see that the denial of the articulation between the different systems of oppression as a cause of redistributive inequity (i.e., the denial of structural racism as a characteristic of Latin American societies) was expressed in Argentina both under progressive governments and during the governmental terms of “right-wing” and “far-right” administrations, although naturally in a differential manner and with significant distances between these trends, which is of interest to analyze here in cultural terms (i.e., in terms of signs, imaginaries, representations, legitimations/delegitimations, always within the framework of power relations).

I approach this type of analysis through Latin American perspectives on new social movements (Escobar et al., 2001), and the dialectical exercise that can be carried out between recent publications (Annechiaricco, 2018; Broguet, 2016, 2017; Parody, 2019, 2022, among others) and a broader ethnographic memory (Parody, 2016). I thus depart largely from the notion of cultural policy that has prevailed in Argentina, which identifies it almost exclusively with “the set of interventions, actions, and strategies that various governmental, non-governmental, private, or community institutions implement in order to satisfy the cultural, symbolic, and expressive needs and aspirations of society” (García Canclini, 1987). In contrast to this conception of “culture”, I prefer to understand cultural policies as the process generated when different sets of social actors, bearers of disparate cultural practices and meanings, come into conflict with the dominant cultural order, transforming into the source of processes that must be accepted as political (Escobar et al., 2001). In recent decades, the reduction of this notion to a form of state institutionalism has tended to be reinforced in the region (Bayardo, 2005), especially in that version of “Ibero-American” cultural policies which, although defined by multilateral organizations and regional centers as a “movement”, actually constitute mobilized social capital “from above” to supply sectors of cultural workers/managers who, in recent years, have come to form a state-regional elite⁴ (Santini, 2017). This dynamic is generated in

3 The far-rights have been waging their “cultural battle,” drawing on some concepts and methodologies from critical theory (Laje, 2022).

4 This is the case of the Latin American Institute for the Promotion of Community Living Culture, created under the auspices of multilateral organizations through the IberCultura Viva program, which brings together 255 participants from 182 municipalities and 19 Ibero-American countries “in a space of collective learning,” where progressive officials from different countries in the region reposition themselves at mo-



the logic of competitive funding distribution, generated from global capital put into circulation by these organizations, facilitating both the strengthening of these sectors at the local-regional level and depoliticized versions of difference presented in an arena characterized by the fiction of equality. Regional adherence to these types of definitions of “cultural management”, which grew alongside “living” multilateralism (Martinell, 2001), intersects with secretariats and divisions of “diversity”, exceeding the distances between “right” and “left”, while highlighting those governmental trends that are currently shaping up against any rhetoric of difference (sexual, racial, age-based, among others), as seen with the so-called “far-rights”, which can thus be defined as “neo-fascisms” (Gómez, 2024; Piva, 2024).

At a time marked by the rise of those versions of developmentalism whose greatest achievement has been to define “culture as a good” (Mondiacult, 2022), I draw on that strand of cultural studies constituted through an intellectual project of Gramscian lineage, whose methodological framework revolves around radical contextualism (Grossberg, 2016). I also privilege regional cultural studies whose key interpretive framework engages with identity politics (Grimson, 2004, 2007, 2011, 2014; Segato, 2007), insofar as “the cultural” is understood within this circuit of Latin American academia as a political positioning whose analytical center orbits relations of power more than “artistic goods” (Grimson & Bidaseca, 2013; Restrepo, 2012, 2015).

“AFRO CULTURE” AND DEMOCRATIC RISE

As I have mentioned in previous works (Parody, 2014, 2016), Argentina’s democratic reopening enabled the reception of border migrants, among them Afro-Brazilians and Afro-Uruguayans, who in Buenos Aires became involved in the dissemination of Afro-descendant performative expressions, making cultural work their main source of income (Domínguez, 2004; Parody, 2016). Despite the fact that their labor conditions never surpassed “informality”⁵, their varying numbers did not obscure the unprecedented impact of their actions in the cultural circuit of Buenos Aires. This led, over the course of decades, to local musicians initiating processes of *retraditionalization* (Martín et al., 2007) with reference to an “Afro-Argentine music,” an “Afroporteño” or “paranaense” candombe (among others), cultural diacritics useful for “the localization of Africa within the Nation” (Segato, 2007).

ments when new right-wing or far-right governments come to power.

5 This is the sociological category used to statistically measure labor access conditions (formal/informal).



Applauded by society in the 1980s amidst the fervor of the “destape”⁶, these forms of expression began to be curtailed by the 1990s, while also becoming increasingly unacceptable to a society that started denouncing these cultural centers for “noise disturbances”. The proliferation of exotic forms of Afro-dance and percussion practices intended for shows, commercial performances, and advertisements also began to operate in an inversely proportional manner to their suppression. As Fanon (1956: 42) states, exoticism is one of the most effective forms of this simplification, since “the constant affirmation of ‘respecting culture’ does not mean considering its values, but objectifying it, categorizing it, imprisoning it, embedding it”.

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In addition to the low social acceptance and complaints from neighbors, the instability in the real economic possibilities of the youth population for paying for classes in a context marked by inflationary crises, further contributed to the fragmentation of these “Afro” cultural worker groups, who relied on “alternative” spaces as support for their *collective*⁷ cultural work. The informality of labor income, which remains characteristic of the cultural work sector in Argentina, often leads to “socially black” cultural workers (Ferreira, 2008) having no access to other rights—such as housing or healthcare—thus affecting the continuity of their work performance. Thus, the solutions for survival in the 1990s ended up being addressed individually, resulting in the significant loss of the *communal* capital of these initiatives. On the one hand, I understand the racialized social categorization of “black” as a stigma applied to Afro-descendants *based on phenotype*, which is constitutive of Latin American societies historically shaped by colonial domination as a system of power

6 This colloquial term has been used to refer to moments when, with democracy, bodies (especially female ones) were able to begin to be displayed more freely, following certain standards of exoticism.

7 This should be reconsidered in the context of the proliferation of “the community-oriented.”



based on racial hierarchy. I highlight this concept because the stigma in question exempts Afro-descendant subjects who are phenotypically non-black (“white”)⁸. At this point, I align with the specific approach to cultural policies at the intersection of racialized social relations, which cannot be overlooked in a critical analysis (Ferreira, 2008; Carvalho, 2002)⁹. On the other hand, I refer to the term *communal* through the perspective put forth by Silvia Federici (2018, 2020), for whom the “common” is not synonymous with public goods but with cooperation, mutual care, and community management of life as a form of resistance against capitalist accumulation and expropriation. This perspective entails the practice of a *counterculture* in defense of the means of subsistence.

At the same time that they favored the *communalization* of Afro-Latin American cultural workers, the “alternative” institutional spaces that brought them together after the democratic reopening also responded to the youth demand for *embodied* learning as a site of knowledge construction (Citro and Ascheri, 2012; Wortman, 2003), in a country where rationalism and civility had deeply penetrated the institutions. As a result of all these processes, it was gradually possible to “fill the streets of Buenos Aires with drums”, *without* the support of state cultural policy and with a sector of society always “against” these practices¹⁰. I refer to the idea of *communalization* through the concept developed by James Brown (1990), which refers to processes around cultural practices (generally “traditional” or “folkloric”) through which a sense of belonging emerges from the reconfiguration of social identities, providing the foundations for activism (in this case, ethnic-racial activism)¹¹.

8 The unemployment rate differs from 6.2% to 8.2% between non-Afro-descendant individuals and those who are Afro-descendant in Uruguay. See the “Observatory for Monitoring the Implementation of Affirmative Actions for Afro-Descendant People” of the Ministry of Social Development (MIDES): https://visualizador.gobiernoabierto.gub.uy/visualizador/api/repos/%3Apublic%3Aorganismos%3Amides%3AObservatorio_Afrodescendiente.wcdf/generatedContent.

Argentina does not have disaggregated statistics nor clarity regarding the racial criteria used for measurement; even so, this issue is evident in the National Map of Discrimination produced by National Institute Against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI): <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/noticias/el-inadi-presenta-el-nuevo-mapa-nacional-de-la-discriminacion#:~:text=Lo%20que%20revela%20el%20nuevo,vivido%20alg%C3%BAn%20tipo%20de%20discriminaci%C3%B3n>.

9 Luis Ferreira also pointed out this process, characterized in parallel by the ethnicization of “candombe” as a cultural policy of the Black movement in Uruguay, and by the resulting de-ethnicization produced through the reappropriation of this practice by new social actors from the socially white middle classes.

10 In Argentina, collective drumming practices often require “police permits” to be performed in public spaces. This restriction of public space for certain percussive cultural expressions was only addressed by the Afro-descendants Program (2010-2015).

11 En este punto coinciden las teorías latinoamericana y norteamericana sobre nuevos movimientos



State support did not come until the 2000s, when some cultural workers teaching these disciplines were able to become part of the *Cultural Program in Neighborhoods* of the City of Buenos Aires. As a result, the first "Afro" dance workshop and the first *candombe* workshop began to be taught in "official" cultural centers, although by socially white students of those migrants who, until the Bicentennial and long after, remained unpaid¹².

The differentiated entry of cultural workers into formal employment according to racialized criteria should be understood as the result of a complex set of factors, whose mediation in pursuit of guarantees of equality falls under the responsibility of the State and its institutions, rather than that of groups or individual actors (INADI, 2013, 2022; INE, 2011). The process through which some socially Black Afro-Latin American cultural workers finally gained access to a formal cultural work circuit (albeit as "contracted" employees¹³) required around thirty-five years of unpaid labor, a lawsuit against the metropolitan State, and specific ministerial resolutions through which a program was created (distinct from the *Cultural Program in Neighborhoods*) capable of ensuring the teaching of these disciplines in terms of "own" education or "quilombola culture".

In this legal framework, "quilombola culture" referred to ways of life sustained around common cultural practices acquired through coexistence or cohabitation, which was understood by the State as an "ancestral" legacy (Wagner de Melo, 2009) and by academia as a process of cultural re-signification and resistance; that is, as "a-quilombado" spaces and subjects (Olivera Souza, 2008). These were, in 2009, the typical characteristics of the activities developed by the remaining collective of cultural workers from the late 1980s, who became part of a highly mobilized *interracial* group during their last eviction (2006-2009). Eager to maintain their "autonomy" and with legal status granted, they finally obtained a plot of land as a result of the legal dispute carried out against the Ministry of Culture of Buenos Aires (2006-2009). The *Afro-Cultural Program*, however, created then by resolution 1083/09 to guarantee the allocation of resources to the group in the acquired plot, would only come into effect ten years later, reversing the "quilombola" characteristics once inscribed by the group, who had previously filed the lawsuit, since the new resolution (1776/19) brought about a new organizational model: a Consultative Council with an

sociales (Brow, 1990; Escobar et al, 2001).

12 The exception was the entry of Claudio Artigas Martirena (of Afro-Uruguayan origin) into his work at the Fortunato Lacámara Cultural Center. This was possible because he adapted the "traditional" formats of *candombe* "transmission" to classroom settings with two-hour lessons.

13 El Programa Cultural en Barrios implica, desde los años 80, trabajo asalariado; desde el Bicentenario, el desempeño en áreas de cultura se realiza, en cambio, mediante contratos a término de meses.



“agenda” and its respective “operational managements” (cited from the resolution), with renewable positions and *ad honorem* duties, but also with promises of annual contracts for “Afro-descendant workshop instructors”.

Similar processes have been decoded in various regional studies as *ethno-governmentalities* (Lepe-Carrión, 2018, p. 160)¹⁴. In this work, I understand the processes occurring between the *Afro-cultural movement* and the Ministry of Culture of the City of Buenos Aires as corresponding to the governmentalization of a discourse on “Afro culture” which, following the configuration of networks of Afro-descendant organizations, tended to expand toward the interior of the country—especially during the period 2010–2015—thereby configuring a national political field constituted by this population (Parody, 2019). Referring to this type of transition in the Brazilian case, Jorge de Carvalho noted in 2002 that Afro-descendant and Indigenous groups that had historically been subalternized had maintained, up to that point, a relationship of oppression with political powers, though they were well aware of how to deal with those oppressive *elites*. This dynamic became more complex toward the end of the twentieth century, first with the arrival of NGO logics—characteristic of the 1990s—and later with the process of institutionalization of their activities within the state sphere:

Each Black, Indigenous, or mestizo community had already established certain pacts—both ritual and political— (...) and knew how to survive within that unjust order while managing to maintain a certain perspective of their own... From January 1995 onward [in the Brazilian case], these communities had to begin engaging with a much larger number of political, economic, and social actors, in addition to the already familiar regional power. State and private foundations, national and international NGOs, international and global organizations, commercial entrepreneurs linked to tourism, and environmental movements all came to interfere in the destiny of communities producing traditional culture... (Carvalho, 2002: 3).

What Carvalho describes, as I have analyzed in other texts (Parody, 2019), mirrors the situation in Argentina since the arrival of international “Afro” activism networks in the 1990s, and especially with the involvement of “Afro” activists in the state sphere (2010). Among the costs of this entry was a marked tendency among young Afro-descendants to form restricted peer groups, reducing their prior connections formed within the context of secondary education to future imaginaries

¹⁴ In his case, Lepe-Carrión refers to “the role of intercultural pedagogical discourse during judicial proceedings conducted under the Anti-Terrorism Law” enacted in Chile with respect to the Mapuche population.



solely based on performances tied to “ethnic” identity. As has been previously expressed (Fernández Bravo, 2013: 260), the legacy of multiculturalism contains the paradox that, without its emergence, certain measures would have been impossible; yet, its entry is ensured by an essentializing matrix. As Restrepo (2012, p. 89) put it, it is often “not difficult to find apologias of difference that ultimately become a discourse of anti-modernity” once they enter the state-sanctioned rhetoric, which manages to neutralize the inherent conflict of these “resistance” processes.

For the new generations, cultural or ministerial work could well be seen as a career opportunity that did not contradict their “Black consciousness”¹⁵. This was the case for a brief period during which a new generation of activists from the *Afrocultural Movement* worked within the state, until the *ad honorem* coordination of the space established by the first generation (with the creation of the *Afrocultural Program*) was pointed out to these young people as “laborally incompatible” with their work (for several months, also unpaid) in the National Ministry of Culture.

“AFRO CULTURE” IN A “PROGRESSIVE” AND “LIBERATORY” LENS

Even with its ambiguities and contradictions, the involvement of some activists in state roles facilitated the first public cultural policy for and by Afro-descendants in Argentina. This policy operated between 2010 and 2015 through the *Afro-descendant Program* within the Ministry of Culture of the Nation, in conjunction with the *Afro-descendant Area* of the Secretariat of Human Rights. In both cases, the agendas focused on implementing recognition policies. Although those leading the Secretariat of Human Rights always tended toward a more internationalist profile¹⁶, both officials entered the roles aligned with different Kirchnerist/progressive currents.

15 The *Black Consciousness Movement* was a political-economic movement of left-wing *anti-apartheid* activists in South Africa (1960-1976). In Brazil, Black Consciousness Day is commemorated every November 20th in honor of *Zumbi*, leader of the *Quilombo dos Palmares*, and a symbol of Black resistance—of which the term “Black consciousness” serves as a synonym. Both terms refer to a struggle “against the system”, rather than a gradual transformation of it or an “inclusion” of Black people into the “white” state system.

16 The *Afro-descendant Program* was led by Javier Ortuño, an Afro-Argentine musician from an Afro-Uruguayan family and an activist in the MILES (*Movement for Latin American Integration of Social Expression*, led by Luis D’Elía). At the Secretariat of Human Rights, Carlos Álvarez, of Afro-Uruguayan origin, took charge. Álvarez had been part of OMA (*Organizations Mundo Afro*) in his native Uruguay during the 1990s and became a Kirchnerist activist after arriving in Argentina in 2004. Both were part of the civil association *Africa y Su Diáspora*, alongside Balthazart Achkast, through which they established the Consultative Council (CONAFRO), coordinated with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to raise national awareness for the 2010 census. Carlos Álvarez, now with stronger ties to Montevideo due to Argentina’s “far-right” government, remains a key figure in international spaces (Geneva/UN), alongside Emanuel Ntaka, playing a significant role in Afro-descendant representation abroad.



Subsequent to the Bicentennial (2015-2019; 2020-2024), various recognition actions followed a mixed management model, where resources were primarily allocated by state institutions, while the criteria were set by local Afro-descendant organizations. The cycles between “right-wing” and “progressive” administrations unfolded with some distinctions in approach, yet also with some unexpected areas of convergence.

The main rupture of the *Juntos por el Cambio* government (2015) was marked by the dismantling of the collaboration between the state and social movements, specifically through the termination of state roles held by leaders who had been appointed by the *Movement for Latin American Integration of Social Expression* (MILES), such as those involved in the creation of programs like the *Afro-descendants Program*. Following this, the imprisonment of several political leaders from popular backgrounds not only had political-party characteristics (all were aligned with various factions of Kirchnerism), but also racial connotations: those who were judged, and who continue to be deprived of their freedom, were leaders of social movements who, even while participating in partisan politics, identified as Indigenous or “Black” (Afro-descendants), besides meeting the “face bearing” condition—i.e., they presented a phenotype opposite to the “porteño” whiteness of the City of Buenos Aires (socially non-white faces, whether or not they held ethnic identity registration)¹⁷. The Afro-descendant and Indigenous activists grouped around these political-party leaders also faced their eradication from the political scene under the *Juntos por el Cambio* government (presidency of Mauricio Macri, which took office in 2015)¹⁸.

It is evident that, even after the departure of this “right-wing” government, with the rise of Peronism/progressivism (in 2020, under the government of Alberto Fernández and Cristina Fernández de Kirchner), these “racialized”¹⁹ political leaders were still not released. As Stuart Hall (2010) argues, all of us receive ethnic-racial attributions, and these are always articulated with class and gender identifications (Viveros Vigoya, 2022). Certain racial tensions had already emerged

17 I am referring to Luis D’Elía (MILES) and Milagro Sala (Túpac Amaru Neighborhood Organization). Regarding the Indigenous movement and its stance towards Kirchnerism after the *Bicentennial of the Peoples*, see Briones (2015). For a discussion on the first leader and his racial self-perception, see Frigerio (2009).

18 I am referring to the complete disappearance from the political and cultural scene of Javier Ortuño, Balthazar Akaschk, among others, who, organized within the civil association *África y su Diáspora*, had gained the support of MILES, the social movement led by Luis D’Elía.

19 I follow Stuart Hall (2010) in what pertains to racialization, and Marguilis and Urresti (1999) specifically in regard to the *racialization of class relations*: for the elites with a whitened imaginary, there exists an unequivocal association between Blackness, barbarization, and poverty.



within the progressive alliance, which had been anticipated both by national-popular organizations (such as MILES) during Cristina Fernández de Kirchner's government (2010-2014), and by civil associations of university-educated Afro-descendants, more aligned with a "Black middle class" (Viveros Vigoya, 2022). This was expressed by these "racialized" leaders from popular sectors as the phrase "we want more dark-skinned people in government" (Frigerio, 2009). It was also echoed by Afro-descendant associations with university education under the slogan "Blacks to the polls, whites to the lists"²⁰:

Institutional racism creates invisible barriers when it comes to political representation... (...) The myth of Argentina's whiteness leads us into the identity drift we are caught in... (...) Since the return to democracy, there has been a system that does not address the needs of the people—with an undeniable interregnum in the improvement of the quality of life for the Argentine people during the presidencies of Néstor and Cristina Kirchner. However, the overall result is that those who go hungry, those who are killed by the police, those who struggle to find work, those who end up imprisoned, etc., have always been the same: we are the Black men and women. (Federico Pita, *Canal Abierto*, December 2, 2024)²¹

With the rise of Macrismo to government (2015-2019), it became evident that those Kirchnerist political lines constituted by "white" middle classes continued their governmental roles, as if this "right-wing turn" had never occurred, or had been limited only to general budget cuts. In contrast, during the same period of Macrismo's rise (2015-2019), government programs led by social movements of more popular origins, such as the *Afro-descendants Program* fully developed by MILES, were literally destituted and looted: they were evicted from their offices in the Ministry of Culture on the same day Mauricio Macri assumed office, and their technical and digital equipment, along with all information produced between 2010 and 2015, was seized²².

An internal racial border was thus formed within the confines of progressivism, which was not truly willing to play the cards of multiculturalism or its own revisionism.

20 Federico Pita, an Afro-Argentine who is socially considered white, is the founder of the organization *Díaspóra Africana de la Argentina* (DIAFAR).

21 <https://canalabierto.com.ar/2024/11/29/federico-pita-negros-a-las-urnas-blancos-a-las-listas/>

22 Personal telephone communication with Javier Ortuño on the day following Mauricio Macri's inauguration.



The celebrations of the Bicentennial, in this sense, had already foreshadowed this when Afro-descendants and Indigenous peoples were represented in the main national celebratory event through the old strategy of “foreignizing” difference—often employed when “cultural diversity” is proclaimed only in reference to foreign populations, even when the population in question is Argentine, yet still *assigned* a foreign identity: these populations were consistently referred to/perceived as “Bolivian” when they were from Jujuy, or as “Brazilian” when they were Afro-Argentine. In these celebrations, Afro-descendants were also portrayed as anchored in the colonial past, which largely came to reproduce the stereotypes about Afro-descendants that are often associated with school commemorations (Ocoró Loango, 2011).

During the second presidency of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner (2011-2015), some Indigenous peoples gathered in the ENOTPO (*National Meeting of Territorial Organizations of Indigenous Peoples*) camped for nine months in public spaces without being received by the presidency. In other words, in terms of “ethnicity,” Kirchnerism itself carried unfinished tasks. However, the biopolitical strategy differed diametrically between progressivism and “the right”, just as today both political spaces differ in their “strategies” (racist and openly xenophobic) from those of the “far-right”.

With the rise of Macrismo to the national government (2015), although the *Afro-descendants Program* was dismissed, the *Directorate of Diversity and Community Culture* that housed it continued under new coordination, as did the *Secretariat of Human Rights*, where both former and new Afro-descendant and Indigenous officials remained or were reassigned across various programs. The *Afro-descendants Program* was reconfigured as the *Afro Culture Program* and, for a period of time, was led by two young Afro-descendant Argentine activists with a background in the musical field²³.

Although it might seem that nothing had changed under this new “neoliberal” or “right-wing” framework adopted by *Juntos por el Cambio* (2015-2019), under their government, the death of a new “Afro” activist (in this case, of African origin) occurred. He was found in the streets just meters away from where another activist-cultural worker had been murdered in 1996 (Parody, 2016)²⁴. It is precisely within these political frameworks (neoliberal and “right-wing”) that the magnitude of the effects of representation can be verified (Hall, 1997). Meanwhile, in contrast to the

23 Emanuel Ntaka and Yael Martínez, the latter representing a new generation of activists within the *Afrocultural Movement*, an organization that, in 2010, won the lawsuit against the Government of the City of Buenos Aires, with Mauricio Macri serving as the Chief of Government at the time.

24 I’m referring to the also unresolved case of Massar Bá (2016) that occurred exactly twenty years after the José “Dolphin” Acosta Martínez (1996).



“autonomy” aspirations of the first generation of activists and cultural workers, one of the main aspirations among the new generations of Afro-Latin American migrants who arrived after the 2000s was undoubtedly public sector employment. This, on one hand, implied logics of “des-aquilombamiento” (de-communalization), and on the other hand, it materialized in the cases of officials who already had municipal roles and, through this “(re)emergence,” began to identify as Afro-Argentines. They then took on new responsibilities (in tourism, culture, or education), with their terms of service being either long or short depending on the fortunes of the political party trajectory.

As I have pointed out earlier, the guaranteed continuities involved both racialized and macro-economic criteria: the entire wing of the Ministry of Culture aligned with the influx of international funds framed in an “Ibero-American” perspective, led by “white middle-class” and “youthful” sectors of progressive militancy, continued during the Macrismo period, although some coordinators of its programs were later dismissed with the arrival of Javier Milei, they were strategically repositioned in regional roles²⁵. With the same public funds (due to their global origin), the programs under the *Directorate of Diversity* of the Ministry of Culture of the Nation continued supporting “civil associations” and “grassroots organizations” (groups without legal status) during the Macrist period, allocating economic funds for the maintenance of *Cultural Points*, a program originally implemented in Brazil that, starting in 2015, expanded to the global Ibero-American scale through regional meetings that mobilized large population sectors to events (funded by the OEI, along with the same competitive funds granted) that gave space to some community leaders, while many already professionalized sectors of cultural management had an undisputed presence²⁶.

The logics of global capital, when made available for “culture,” are viewed as virtuous by both “the right” and by national-popular government projects. *Cultura Viva Comunitaria*, in this sense, seems to have operated (and continues to operate) as a compensatory counterpart to both small- and large-scale cultural industries: while it

25 This is the case of the coordinator of the *Cultural Points Program*, Diego Benhabib, who was dismissed from the Ministry of Culture of the Nation in Argentina, but continued his regional work within the framework of *IberCultura / Cultura Viva Comunitaria*. Undoubtedly, in addition to professional capabilities, international connections played a key role in advancing the careers of “progressive” officials. For previous generations of public cultural officials, the situation tended to be the opposite, as demonstrated by the career of Jorge Telerman, mentioned in note 10.

26 In these meetings, although a few Indigenous or “Afro” Cultural Points participated, it is crucial to note that the discussion topics were driven by multilateralism, not by social actors themselves. Moreover, participants were required to be devoid of any redistributive claims in order to take part. Therefore, it is feasible to define these Ibero-American events as “culturalist” in nature.



tends to address the needs of those sectors that have joined the social space created by these types of regional cultural policies (a space largely made up of networked civil associations that previously adhered to “self-managed” and territorially situated logics), it also facilitates the entry of global capital (part of which is allocated to “provide economic support” for these sectors or groups identified as “cultural points” based on these nodal or networked logics).

Upon leaving the *Directorate of Diversity and Community Culture* (founded by MILES) and being transferred to the *Directorate of Sociocultural Programs*, the *Afro Culture Program* was disconnected from the proposals of the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI) (*Cultura Viva Comunitaria*) and its funding. This also determined the artistic-cultural trend in the management of the program, which preceded the rise of the “far-right” to the state. Similarly, throughout the entire post-Bicentennial period (2015-2024), programs or offices like the *Market of Cultural Industries* (MICA), seemingly so opposed to *Cultura Viva Comunitaria* in terms of defining cultural policy, maintained their continuity, albeit during certain periods driven by inertia.

With a blatantly xenophobic, racist, patriarchal, and free-market discourse, the government of Javier Milei reduced a myriad of national ministries to the Ministry of Human Capital. Initially, the *Secretariat of Culture* came under direct control of the Presidency of the Nation, and within the *Undersecretariat of Cultural and Artistic Promotion*, the *Directorate of Cultural Promotion* was created and eventually housed the *Directorate of Sociocultural Programs and Training*. Under it, the *Afro Culture Program* continued to operate; meanwhile, the *Directorate of Diversity and Community Culture* (and the *Cultural Points Program*) were dissolved.

It is of interest to this work to trace the imaginary representations of these different sectors of cultural workers in public administration, as the boundaries of gender, race-ethnicity, and social class among them are decisive in the configuration of public cultural policies and, therefore, in the transformation/reproduction of society. This, in turn, shapes the horizon of any cultural policy, as conceived in this article (Escobar et al, 2001).

“AFRO CULTURE” AND ETHNO- GOVERNMENTALITIES

As soon as the “libertarian” government assumed power, within the cultural industries sector (workers who were socially “white”, middle-class, and university-educated), the lack of cultural intelligence by the “far-right” was immediately



acknowledged and speculation arose that the coordination of the *Directorate of Sociocultural Programs and Training* under this new government might end up being led by “a former singer from the band *Mambrú*”²⁷. This individual was one of the Afro-descendant officials who had previously been in charge of the *Afro Culture Program* during the presidencies of Mauricio Macri and also Alberto Fernández. This imaginary played into the disdain that this sector of “progressive” cultural workers had towards Javier Milei’s government, whom they believed they had survived only because they were dedicated to cultural “industries”. The worst thing this progressive sector could imagine in relation to a “far-right” government was that a program or directorate might be led by an official whose primary qualification was being a TV star²⁸: they understood that a musician exposed to **television culture** would be devoid of any “political consciousness”. However, this directorate was not occupied by Afro-descendant officials, but it is still worth delving deeper into the figure they criticized, as they ignored both the individual’s trajectory and the multiculturalist rhetoric, which they also understood to be purely “neoliberal” and “American” in origin.

As a singer-songwriter and activist, between 2020 and 2024, under the coordination of the *Afro Culture Program*, Emanuel Ntaka supported both the artistic endeavors of Afro-descendants and cultural actions aimed at reclaiming “Afro culture”, including a monument dedicated to María Remedios del Valle (a figure of Afro-Argentine resistance)²⁹ that was attended by the Minister of Culture, Tristán Bahuer, and it was set on fire in 2023, three months before Javier Milei assumed office. This recognition policy, carried out as a form of cultural policy, was framed within the *International Decade of Afro-descendants* (UN, 2015-2024), to which Argentina adhered in 2017 during the government of Mauricio Macri.

Son of Blues Ntaka (a jazz musician and activist from South Africa during the apartheid era), Emanuel Ntaka had indeed entered the artistic world through a television contest program³⁰, although he had also been a victim of violence at the

27 *Mambrú* was a male “pop” vocal group formed in Buenos Aires in 2002, following the selection of its members through a television program.

28 Given the ethno-racial and class distances, this was conceived as “frivolous” by the socially white sectors within the Ministry.

29 On November 8, 2022, *National Day of Afro-Argentines and Afro Culture*, the monument to the captain of the Army of Independence, an Afro-Argentine woman considered the “Mother of the Nation,” was inaugurated at Plazoleta Alfonso Castela (in the San Telmo/Constitución neighborhood).

30 Emanuel Ntaka has always utilized television media to raise visibility for Afro-Argentines. On February 5, 2023, he did so on the entertainment program hosted by Julián Weich, a renowned Argentine TV host. In 2022, he also appeared on the *Investiga* program on *Paka Paka*, a children’s channel, where he explained *apartheid* to young viewers: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qluEcVQpjHs>. It can be said that, in this sense, his connection to the entertainment world is strategic.



hands of a *skinger*³¹:

In 2001, something very unpleasant happened to me when I was leaving work as a bartender³² at a nightclub in [the] Belgrano [neighborhood]. I was studying [music] at the Manuel de Falla Conservatory and had that job to support myself. While waiting for the bus, a group of *skinheads* approached me and started attacking me; they called me, among other things, “black piece of shit,” which, unfortunately, I had already become accustomed to. But then they said something that caught my attention: “Go back to your country”. I’m Argentine and I was born here...! Anyway, I ended up in the hospital! Following this incident, many organizations that worked for Afro rights and advocacy contacted me to support me, filed a report with INADI, and offered me emotional support... [Through these organizations], I understood that being Afro-Argentine is not about skin color but about recognizing oneself... (Interview by Liliana Podestá with Emanuel Ntaka, March 21, 2024, for *La Nación* newspaper).

In relation to the artistic proposals or the types of aesthetics exercised by Afro-Argentines who do not enter the circuit of *retraditionalization* practices with colonial attire, the coordinator of the *Afro Culture Program* understood at the beginning of 2024 that:

From my artistic side, I’ve always collaborated by trying to raise awareness about rights. [During his performances with the group *Mambrú*], the most powerful aspect was that an Afro-Argentine was seen in a major mass media, that I was chosen from among many people. The people from the community told me that they were with me, that I represented them, and at that moment I didn’t realize how important that identification was. Since 2016, I have been coordinating the *Afro Culture Program*, and there we work with communities and organizations, generating actions to raise visibility for Afro-Argentine, Afro-descendant, and African culture...³³ (Interview by Liliana Podestá with Emanuel Ntaka, March 21, 2024, for *La Nación* newspaper).

31 A “skinner” is a member of a violent youth group with Nazi ideology, originally known as *skinhead* in the United Kingdom in the 1960s.

32 It is noteworthy that, similar to the murder of José “Delfín” Acosta Martínez, urban bars hire and/or invite ethno-racial diversity, while simultaneously becoming key sites for the subsequent exercise of racism (once the nightclubs are closed or just meters away from them).

33 <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/espectaculos/personajes/emanuel-ntaka-del-recuerdo-de-su-padre-y-la-lucha-por-los-derechos-de-los-afrodescendientes-al-nid21032024/>



What is, in terms of multiculturalism, the concrete scope that the "right" then covers in Argentina? In the period from the Bicentennial to the rise of the "libertarian" movement, the rhetoric of inclusion undoubtedly corresponded to progressivism, despite its "late multiculturalism" and the internal boundaries it faced in *dealing with* and *not dealing with* "the racial". However, its discourse maintained intact the mid-20th-century national formation of otherness (Marguilis, 1999; Catelli, 2019), and moreover, it failed to recover the place of "racialized" popular leaderships either in the Ministry of Culture or in political life, which led to a shift in its approach to the "communitarian", "moving" from social movements to the "Ibero-American" cultural scene, where, following the rise of the "far-right", progressive Argentina sought refuge to continue its hegemonic construction³⁴.

In total contrast to the inclusion discourse upheld by progressivism, the "far-right" entered the government at the end of 2023, defining a "we" that recruits those affected by policies of inclusion/identity, against the concrete expansion of rights granted in bicentennial Argentina:

The New Right will have to shape its "we" in the men tired of the constant demonization of their sex, but also in the women fed up with the recurring and compulsive ideological victimization in exchange for legal privileges; in the heterosexuals pushed everywhere to assume guilt that isn't theirs, but also in the homosexuals waking up from the political instrumentalization that reduces their "pride" to what they do in their beds; *in the whites* who, in many places, are being told that their race is cursed, but also *in the blacks* who have realized that nothing good has come from the hatred and self-marginalization that the *establishment* seeks to impose on them; in the nationals who see how uncontrolled immigration – even fostered in certain areas – harms their job opportunities, destroys their culture, and makes their neighborhoods more unsafe, but also in the legal immigrants who do not have to accept that others arrive without even meeting the requirements that they themselves fulfilled; in the entrepreneurs of all sizes who do not accept that socialist policies destroy the wealth they generate for the recurring benefit of the political caste, but also in workers and laborers who don't see how the new causes of the left, such as "inclusive language," "gender transition," or "vegan diets," can have any relation to the real problems in their lives... (...) ... also in the young people who are realizing that nothing imposed by the UN, blindly followed by states, ... (...) ... can truly be "rebellious" or "anti-systemic" (Laje, 2022, p. 485).

34 I refer both to the "Ibero-American" space (*IberCultura Viva*) and to intellectual epicenters (such as CLACSO).



As I have mentioned (Parody, 2022), progressive governments succeeded in expanding the scope of socially accepted gender and sexuality configurations, and these new forms were adopted in the legislative, social, and cultural spheres. This is evident in Law 26.618, which in Argentina enables civil unions between two people of the same sex, and Law 26.743, which establishes the right to gender identity, both enacted between 2010 and 2012 under the two consecutive governments of Cristina Fernández de Kirchner. In the same way, in 2010, the first public policies dedicated to Afro-descendants were launched (through the Ministry of Culture and the Secretariat of Human Rights of the Presidency of the Nation), which increasingly came to be framed as policies concerning “migrants and refugees”: gender policies did not challenge the Nation’s narrative in the same way that the incipient local multiculturalism seemed to, which led to a multitude of disputes within feminist movements³⁵. Following the trajectory of other Latin American right-wing movements, and especially those in Europe and North America, the “libertarian” government is shaped by reinstating values (sex-gendered, racialized, and age-based) that were displaced by these “inclusion” policies, in a clear articulation between neoliberalism and conservatism (Parody, 2026a).

Although the recognition actions maintained their “cultural” imprint, parallelly, the configuration of plans, programs, and a specific directorate within the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights was achieved and, even though this line of work was inaugurated alongside the *Afrodescendants Program* in 2010, it thrived post-2015 by aligning with the progressive circuit and thus distancing itself from popular social movements. Nevertheless, in the 2023 report on the implementation of activities for the *International Decade for Afro-descendants (2015-2024)*, the Secretary-General of the United Nations highlighted that our country urgently required updates both in relation to the inclusion of vulnerable groups and the penalization of discriminatory acts, as well as regarding the definition of racial discrimination, which, according to our documents, was found to be “misaligned with international standards.”

Among the reparative measures, the report highlighted the promulgation of Law No. 26.852 in 2013, which established November 8 as *National Day of Afro-Argentines and Afro Culture*, although it noted that the visibility achieved “still had not managed to become entrenched in the collective memory, beyond the involved community and certain state spheres related to it, and would require further efforts from the State” (UN REPORT, 2023, p. 2). It also highlighted the establishment of the *National Commission*

35 For three years, the *National Women’s Meeting* was contested by indigenous women and gender-diverse groups in terms of the *Plurinational Meeting of Women and Dissidences*. The discomfort was caused by the attempts at “multinationality”, which the progressive government resisted.



for the Historical Recognition of the Afro-Argentine Community (INADI), which made it possible to resume the regional Afro-descendant meetings that had been initiated in 2011 by the Secretariat of Human Rights. In terms of cultural policies, the 2022 National Call “Argentina, Culture, and Afro Roots” stood out, along with activities in national museums, all aligned with “progressive” cultural policies and were the result of a consultative process led by the *Afro Culture Program*, although many of them continued during the government of Mauricio Macri (2015-2019) and saw some strengthening during the subsequent government of Alberto Fernández (2020-2024).

Prompted by this report, INADI released a new *National Map of Discrimination* (INADI, 2022) and announced the launch of the National Plan Against Discrimination 2022-2024. This plan, however, remained in the project stage as the “libertarian” government entered office and found the progressivism unable to realize it and battered by the effects of COVID-19. Characteristic of a “far-right” government, Javier Milei’s administration took a stand against all these “inclusive” measures, with actions such as the closure of INADI immediately upon taking office. The national formation of otherness that the “libertarian” national narrative appeals to directly refers to the conflict between *civilization and barbarism* (Sarmiento, 1845), and to the “conflict of the races in America” (Sarmiento, 1883). Along with this, the deployment of “far-right” security forces in the streets ensures the perpetuation of the silencing of social movements (and the perpetual detention of their leaders), just as it was ensured for almost a decade by the “mark on the edge” of progressivism that operated as its prelude.

This dynamic of *demobilization* of ethnic/racialized sectors took place in Argentina parallel to the *rise* of social movements along the Pacific Belt, as evidenced by the “riots” in Chile, Ecuador, and Colombia, where indigenous peoples and Afro-descendants played a leading role, therefore giving rise to governments such as those of Gustavo Petro and Francia Márquez in Colombia. This course of history had already been anticipated two decades earlier at the World Social Forum (2002). The debate at that time opposed “NGOism” to “social movements”.

CONCLUSIONS

While recognition policies have predominantly been adopted in Argentina as cultural policies, following a series of problematizations regarding how the notion of “cultural policy” is understood, in the introduction to this work I considered it necessary to offer other interpretations of the term, developed within an



interdisciplinary framework of exchanges and critical studies, with the ultimate goal of encouraging post-cultural ways of conceiving difference (Restrepo, 2019). In the case analyzed, this could counteract the effects of the *governmentalization* of “Afro culture”. In this process, we observed how the boundaries *between* the cultural and the political are narrow for historically marginalized population groups. Their actions are not accounted for by the notion of “cultural policy”, which is typically confined to the artistic realm and the actions of the state sphere (Canclini, 1987; Ochoa, 2002).

Undoubtedly, in the Argentine case, it was under national-popular standards that some “structures of opportunity” appeared for Afro-descendants. The origins of this achieved synergy must be found in the political mobilization that occurred during the previous decades, in which communal capital operated without state mediation as a guarantee. In Argentina, whether the mobilized flow through recognition policies leads to a horizon of *justice and development* (UN, 2015-2024) depends as much on political-party alignments as on diplomatic action and the “politically correct” support of networked Afro-descendant civil associations, which is not possible under a “far-right” government that also disregards and challenges human rights as a paradigm.

Recalling that “Afro culture” is always defined through a series of specifically situated standards according to historical time and place, we are then faced with the question of what possible futures, in the name of “the cultural”, could be envisioned by rescuing from oblivion that collective and incessant process of meaning-making which (according to Escobar, Álvarez, Dagnino) is capable of shaping social experience, *in order to reconfigure hierarchies* and/or the racialized statuses within them. Such was the case with the Afro-descendant social movements mentioned, which, through the exercise of cultural activism — that is, by placing *culture and politics* in contention — sought to establish “Afro culture” at moments when they were striving to transform the inequalities behind which porteño/Argentine racism was camouflaged. For them, the Bicentennial served as the main context in relation to a multicultural “opportunity framework” that had not fully developed.

Under the standards of the “right”, we saw that racism intensifies as a social practice, contradicting polite discourses. In contrast, under the “far-right”, racism is upheld as a banner, making the articulation of various collectives (Afro-descendants, indigenous peoples, migrants, the dispossessed) crucial in their ability to demand *in an antiracist lens* for the right to life for a larger number of sectors, especially in the face of recurrent biopolitics. This would require “de-culturalizing” inequalities, in order to shift the focus of struggles more towards the lens of relations of exploitation



and processes of subjugation (Restrepo, 2012, p. 37). This is not clear when racism is named in unsituated terms, reducing the scope of struggles to the proliferation of civil associations that operate in "politically correct" terms without heralding winds of change. To put it more colloquially (Segato, [1997] 2007), multiculturalism carries within it "the trap" of essentialization, meaning it can also create ethnic *elites* who, once aligned with power, may end up betraying the principles that guided them throughout their trajectories, which is not exclusive to "ethnic groups" but applies to the political class in general. It is the Afro-descendant trajectories themselves that, at moments of their political engagement in the centers of power, can either reverse or confirm this fate.

What the State resolves in cultural policy inevitably pertains to national being, to the definition of an *extended* or *restricted* "us." Therefore, *governmentality* is always *ethnogovernmentality*: those who hold the State imagine the Nation as a reflection of their own *imago* (Segato, 2013). In parallel, as the developmentalist conception of cultural policies supporting the progressive *elites* of Latin America evolves (MONDIACULT, 2022, 2025), the State also seeks to pave the way that connects it with global capital (Parody, 2026b). Along the way, it makes use of its own pending issues.

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