

Challenges and New Possibilities – African Studies in Brazil and the South-South Connection

Livio Sansone

Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais,
Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador da Bahia, Brasil

Introduction

I assume I owe the invitation to contribute to such a prestigious book to my experience in the Centre of Afro-Oriental Studies (CEAO) of the Federal University of Bahia, Brazil, which was created in 1959 and is one of the oldest in Latin America, more than to any actual specialization in African Studies. In my work as facilitator of African Studies in Brazil, maybe even as *passeur* of African Studies, together with a group of colleagues, I have tried to incorporate African Studies in the mainstream of social studies as part of a larger effort to decolonize our production of knowledge by developing new South-South links and promoting what I call a new horizontal curiosity, as a way to counter our historical vertical obsession with the Global North. This is being done on shifting grounds as the political context has changed considerably over the last couple of years. In terms of US-Brazil relations, we have moved rapidly from a horizon dominated by the couple Obama-Lula to a very different one defined by the match between Trump and Temer,¹ and from a world where there seemed to be no end to globalization and in which the US was central to a different world dominated by the globalization of nationalism. This is a world characterized by anti-globalization feelings and by what Zygmunt Bauman and Carlo Bordoni called the “loneliness of the global citizen” (Bauman & Bordoni 2014: 55) – in which, again, the US is central and a bad example. This challenges many tenets of globalization theory and also shows that national borders are in many ways stronger than

¹ [Editor’s note: Michel Temer, President of Brazil at the time this article was written; the President of Brazil at time of publication is Jair Bolsonaro. Lula = Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva – President of Brazil 2003 – 2010.]

ever; visas have become harder to get (even, and most painfully, South-South) and Northern donors have decreased their commitment to social research in Africa and Latin America as they thoroughly changed their agenda from development aid and governance to prevention and control of immigration. It goes without saying that these new developments have had an impact on African Studies in Brazil.

In fact, in preparing this text I could rely on a number of older and more recent reports on African Studies in Brazil written by 'proper' Africanists. Some were more positive, such as Zamparoni (1995), Trajano (2012), Marques and Jardim (2012), and Macagno (2014); while others, such as Michel Cahen's 2013 study, were more critical. As we all know, African Studies are not a natural fact and, in each country, there is a history of social engineering behind it, and Brazil is no exception to that. When discussing African Studies in Brazil, maybe more so than in other countries, ethnicity and demography have to be kept in mind, because they end up representing motives for developing African Studies: in Brazil, whites account for just about 45 percent of the total population and in certain states they are well under 30 percent. The majority of the population is of African and/or of mixed African/Native American/white origin. On top of this, even more than in most other countries in the Americas, with the possible exception of Cuba and Haiti, in Brazil, Africa has historically been an important topic that has never left our national and foreign commentators indifferent (Luis Felipe de Alencastro 2000; Schwarcz 1999; Sansone 2003 and 2011). When it comes to the racial composition in Brazil, these commentators either loved it or abhorred it. The percentage of 'Africans' among the Brazilian people and, accordingly, the 'African' content in Brazilian popular culture, has started to acquire more positive connotations as of late, after having been considered an onus or a 'problem' for centuries. This has happened through a process of inversion of meaning and patrimonialization of an intangible culture, thus transforming it into a 'heritage.' This heritage has also come to be seen as something that contributes to make the country (and its people) 'special,' on account of its blackness and African origin (cf. Sansone 2013).

Of course, in such a context (similar to the US), politics of identity or race have impacted the development of African Studies. The main difference in this respect between the US and Brazil, besides the relative precariousness of our academic establishment when compared to that of the US, is that the relationship has been thus far more virtuous than vicious

– there is no major tension between the more consolidated tradition of Afro-Brazilian Studies and the more recent tradition of African Studies.² In many ways, African Studies have come to the fore in our universities as part of the overall process of social reparations for the historical racial injustice in our country, often as a result of powerful claims lodged by black activists as well as from within Afro-Brazilian Studies.

Hence, African Studies have had a profoundly political history in Brazil: as has been said, they owe a lot to Black activism (which means a vast array of organizations and movements, from a wing of the Catholic Church to Marxist and more radical groups) and the world of Afro-Brazilian religion – where memories of Africa have been cherished even in the toughest times – as well as to a pioneering group of anticolonial and left-leaning historians who, starting in the 1980s, have insisted that the history of Africa is important to Brazilian history and society. Even in terms of timing, politics are quite present in our history. Sadly, a comprehensive history of the South-South still needs to be written. It would be beyond the scope of this short paper to write exhaustively on the topic, so the focus will be on the development of African Studies in Brazil during two specific periods of our history, corresponding to two attempts to reposition Brazil along the South-South axis.

African Studies originated with the progressive government of Goulart³ and his new foreign politics, interrupted by the 1964 coup; from 2002 onward, they were revamped by Lula and Dilma⁴, whose government was unfortunately the victim of a new, now more silent, coup in 2016. Since then, the growth of African Studies, as well as the investment in the African continent from the side of the Brazilian government, have come to a new halt.

The period between 1958 and 1964 was seminal. With the support of the Foreign Office, as well as some academic support, and very much in line with the then new foreign policy, which meant a *de facto* association of Brazil with the Non-Aligned Movement, two research centres were created: in 1959 the Centre of African and Oriental Studies (CEAO) at

² In fact, the only MA and PhD program in African Studies in Brazil, and one of the very few of Latin America, is the Posafro (Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Ethnic and African Studies) at the Federal University of Bahia, which started in 2005.

³ João Belchior Marques Goulart, 24 president of Brazil, 1961–64.

⁴ Dilma Rousseff, 36th President of Brazil, 2011–16 (impeached and removed)

the Federal University of Bahia and later the Centre of Afro-Asian Studies (CEAA) at the Candido Mendes University in Rio de Janeiro.

In the period between 2002 and 2016 there was a number of quite important changes that contributed to the creation of a more positive political and cultural climate for African Studies: in 2003, the 10369 Federal Law made the teaching of African and Afro-Brazilian culture compulsory at all levels of education. However vague and underfunded the program was, the law was a Copernican Turn and led to a new multiculturalism in education which, coupled with affirmative action in university admittance (which also became a federal law soon afterwards), created a new positive climate for a thrust towards internationalization. All of a sudden Africa – and blackness in general – changed status ‘from onus to bonus.’

The next point of discussion will be the current status quo. These days there is a number of centres that operate as a network, often exchanging contacts and visiting scholars from the African continents: The CEAO in Bahia – plus the unique Posafro (interdisciplinary graduate program in ethnic and African Studies), the Centre of African Studies (CAA) at the University of São Paulo (USP), the CEAA and a Research Group in African History at the Universidade Federal Fluminense (UFF) in Rio, plus a number of new Centres of African Studies at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG) in Belo Horizonte, the University of Brasília (UNB) and the Federal University of Pernambuco (UFPE) in Recife – these are generally part of the office of foreign relations of the university. In the northern town of São Luis, at the Federal University of Maranhão (UFMA), a group of young scholars recently has set up a centre and an undergraduate program in ethnic and African Studies. Last but not least, there is the University for International Integration of the Afro-Brazilian Lusophony (UNILAB) – the new university founded less than ten years ago at the height of the Lula government, which focuses on the integration of Brazil with Lusophone Africa. Here, approximately 30 percent of the students are Africans (mostly from Guinea-Bissau) or from Timor.

A few years ago, the Brazilian African Studies Association was founded and, in 2018, has over 350 members. There are two academic journals covering African Studies, *Afro-Ásia* in Bahia, which is freely available online in pdf (Afro Asia 2018), and *Africa* in São Paulo (África 2015). There were a number of translation projects into the Portuguese language, also in partnership with UNESCO, that have aimed at translating the classics and at producing much-needed teaching material for middle and higher

education. Moreover, with more intensity since 2002, many junior and senior African students and scholars have been invited to Brazil to teach or to take courses, as well as for intensive doctoral schools such as the *Fábrica de Ideias* (Factory of Ideas), which has taken place once a year since 1998. Some of them have established themselves within Brazilian academic life. The next section of the paper will focus on a number of challenges.

Because of insufficient funding, it has been hard to stabilize and consolidate South-South exchanges. During the period from 1998-2015, the resources for making the South-South interchange happen came mostly from the Dutch foundation South-South Exchange Programme for Research on the History of Development (SEPHIS) (which was closed down in 2016, by the, at that time, much less progressive Dutch government), a number of funds of the Ford Foundation (especially focusing on South Africa) and, increasingly, Brazilian federal funds. There has been very little funding from private companies.

The second challenge, if not bottleneck, is the limitation of geographic focus. Brazilian African Studies focus on the PALOP countries (Portuguese-speaking African countries), on account of the common official language and occasionally also because of historical connections; South Africa, on account of the opportunities offered by the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) connection as well as the existence of important points of comparison (such as the existence of extreme inequalities, the problems with HIV-AIDS, problems with violence, disputes about land rights, etc.); and Benin and Nigeria, on account of studies about slavery, Brazilian returnees to Africa, and Afro-Brazilian religions.

The third main challenge derives from the kind of studies that can be undertaken, especially from a distance. There is a strong emphasis on literature: more than half of the PhD theses in African Studies are in the field of literature, with a focus on Mozambique, Angola, and Nigeria. On top of this, there is a lot of archival research – also thanks to networks and digital archives – done from a distance, not on the continent, coupled with very short, albeit intensive, periods of residence in Africa, whenever possible. Generally speaking, it has been difficult to do fieldwork in Africa, because of the fragility of the South-South partnership, but it has been done notwithstanding.

Here, in passing, a comment needs to be made on the politics of funding: over the last two decades, Brazil has changed status from a country where ‘tropical research’ is undertaken to a ‘tropical research country’:

quite an epistemological change, which is, of course, rife with contradictions. When compared to Europe, in Brazil there has not been a process of long-term structural investment in African Studies (or in any Area Studies, for that matter). When money was available, it was used to pay grants to African scholars or to enable fieldwork in Africa, rather than in establishing institutions or libraries. This kind of funding has certainly contributed toward making African Studies in Brazil exciting, but it has also led to a certain institutional fragility.

Let me now turn to a number of bonuses of our effort to develop African Studies. In spite of its inherent precariousness, African Studies done from Brazil (or from any other place in the so-called Global South) can offer refreshing and new perspectives on Africa, if only because of its different angle of observation and, in general, less of an 'imperial aura.' This becomes evident when the research topics of the projects, all of which in some way reflect the Brazilian context, are considered: inequality and poverty reduction, land rights, female leadership in social movements, slavery and its aftermath, returnee black Brazilian communities, heritage and national biographies, Creole cultures or populations.

In Brazil, and, arguably, all over South America, African Studies cannot and must not be developed along the same lines as in the Global North. Brazil does not have the same (colonial) history or the same resources for doing that; nor is there a similar ethnographic or historiographical sensibility. It is imperative that Brazilian African Studies ask their African colleagues, and their organizations for the social sciences, such as the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA), what they need and expect. And that question should be asked over and over again.

The good news is that there is a growing 'horizontal curiosity' in both Africa and South America, and this should be built on. Much more than before, Brazilian PhD students opt to spend their very valuable 'sandwich grant'⁵ in an African university – we should bear in mind that it is difficult to travel internationally from Brazil and for many young Brazilian scholars the PhD travel grant or, in some cases, a post-doc grant is an important investment in future contacts. Traditionally, Brazilian social scientists prefer to travel to the US, France, and the UK – and tend to go back to the same foreign institution after obtaining their PhD, whenever they can get funding.

⁵ A colloquial name for the PhD travel grant received by young Brazilian scholars.

Doing African Studies from Brazil is also a way to decolonize the minds of scholars, as well as 'oxygenating' their curricula, stimulating a South-South perspective at the cost of Brazil's historical 'vertical obsession' with the North. This is a very good reason for putting so much energy in this avenue of research rather than repeating what has been done in terms of African Studies in the Global North. Furthermore, this is not only an attempt to add something new to Africa Studies, but also to establish connections that, if only on account of the precariousness, are on a less unequal basis.

In closing this first part of my paper, I want to stress that the South-South is still fragile and very much subject to the 'whims' of national and international politics. Generally speaking, progressive governments emphasize it more than conservative governments which, at least in our region, tend to be more in line with the US. I would therefore like to suggest to organizations such as the biannual European Conference on African Studies (ECAS) to make it one of their priorities to help making the South-South axis more sustainable. The encounter across continents can stimulate research and support the re-orientation of funding towards the South-South. This is especially important in our changing world, where, for instance, three of the BRICS countries are in a crisis and under the risk of isolation.

In sum, the following are the challenges for the near future: Consolidating centres, journals, and programs, thus guaranteeing their sustainability; finding a place for African Studies in the main disciplines of the humanities (in Brazil, there are no development studies); contributing to the empowerment of graduate studies in African countries, also in association with CODESRIA and the Latin America Council of Social Sciences (CLACSO) in the context of the social sciences.

In Brazil, the development of African Studies has to do with a relatively new and growing South-South curiosity and perspective. The South-South perspective is an urgent and topical political project, especially for the development of a truly 'universal' perspective on issues of identity formation on either ethnical or regional basis, nationalism, racism, the interconnection of racism and populism, the reproduction of difference, and the impact of technology on identity formation and cultural production. We are also convinced that the production of knowledge for such a purpose needs to be interdisciplinary and multicentered. However, for this very reason, the South-South connection and its perspective are not a natural fact in the social sciences and require quite a degree of social

and theoretical, methodological, and political engineering – even more so in the present ‘era of extremes.’ It is worthwhile to ask ourselves why it has taken so long for it to make its way into the ‘mainstream’ of the social sciences – that is, to move from being a political manifesto, the intellectual penchant of the Bandung conference movement, on to become a tool towards decolonizing our practice as researchers.

We need to discuss the future of South-South exchanges, with special emphasis on Africa. This is especially important nowadays, because even though most of the researchers and research centres in the South have historically had many connections with African Studies in the North, and many of these contacts and networks have been very important in our effort to re-position African Studies from the South, I am afraid we have to start imagining a situation co-determined by decreasing support from Northern donors. Many agencies from the Global North are withdrawing their support and are leaving the Global South to fend for itself. All this considered, in order to develop a new agenda, I suggest a number of steps:

To begin with, the South-South requires a *new ethnographic sensibility*: Historically, as seen from the South, our curiosity has mostly been focused on South-North, rather than South-South. This is the way the study of poverty, violence, and ethno-racial tensions has developed as social problems in Latin America. Furthermore, regional comparisons, such as the inequalities in education, have mostly been made between, for example, Brazil and the US or France, rather than between Brazil and, for instance, South Africa. This is due to a number of reasons, related to funding, networks, academic careers, global hierarchies in specific fields of study and, more generally, the geo-politics of knowledge. These determine what the places are where research is to be carried out and what those are where data is processed, stored, and made available through publication. However, over the last two decades, there have been some changes so that; today, in investigating the ways in which Brazil can contribute to the development of Africa, we can even speak of a certain South-South Orientalism and Africanism. Orientalism and Africanism were the quintessence of the way people in the Global North were conceptualizing the Global South. Nowadays, images of the South also travel across the South itself. China, Malaysia, South Africa, India, Turkey, and Brazil especially have become new actors in the Global South, making new things happen and creating new images of (under) development. Brazil is therefore part of a larger trend, but, at least when it comes to state-sponsored initiatives, is trying to make a difference, as

Brazilian policy makers claim. So, in their statements, Brazilian diplomats argue over and again that, unlike China, Brazil is not just in Africa to make money. In reality, however, Brazilian companies in Africa have been pursuing profit just like any other company, and they often operate (for instance in regards to pollution, corruption, or labor relations) as ruthlessly as most other companies. However, because they operate in close connection with Brazilian diplomacy in Africa, they are compelled to keep a certain 'developmental' profile, at least in their public narrative. It is necessary to deal with this larger complexity of South-South economic exchanges as well as to focus on a number of academic exchanges that show both the advantages and drawbacks of South-South connections. There are a number of concrete cases of Brazil-Africa projects that can be seen as good news.

To name just two examples, there is first the the National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq). It has for almost two decades managed the ProAfrica Program which requires that, in order to qualify for funding, the Brazilian research team needs to identify a research team in an African country of similar academic standing; accordingly, funding is in part made available directly to the African partner-team. Secondly, several Brazilian graduate programs, as part of their effort to internationalize, have singled out similar graduate programs in Africa with which they cooperate and exchange faculty as well as students on a somewhat equal basis, even though most of the funding comes from Brazil.

In fact, during the creation and 'coming of age' of the social sciences in Brazil, the South-South connection was important right from the start, albeit more implicitly than explicitly. For Latin American Studies and especially Afro-Brazilian Studies this is self-evident. The construction of the notion of Africanism, largely through the pioneering work of Melville Herskovits from the 1930s, is a very good example of a process that, even if it was working 'South-South,' treated the South – that is, West Africa – more as a source of inspiration and gave it little agency of its own. Pretty much the same can be said in regards to many of the categories associated with the construction of race, racialism, and racism. In the construction of these categories, local and foreign agendas have been intertwined right from the start. In spite of this, it has proven quite hard, in the case of Bahia, to make the move from object to subject in the social sciences (Sansone 2012). Soon the notion of Africanism travelled back to Africa, as well as the idea that Africans can be divided

into two big groups, the Bantu and the Sudanese, roughly corresponding to Nietzsche's division between Apollonian and Dionysian – a polar perspective held by Ruth Benedict and later Melville Herskovits and the Brazilian researchers inspired by him (Herskovits 1941). This polarity was a South-South creation, relating West Africa to Brazil by reminding of and even re-establishing historical links where time had severed the cultural continuity between the two shores of the Atlantic. It was largely the result of the work of those that one can call the 'white heroes of the Black Atlantic' (Melville Herskovits, Pierre Verger, and Roger Bastide). Brazilian scholars (first of all Edison Carneiro and Arthur Ramos) and African scholars take part in it mostly as 'informants.'

Over the last few decades, the sociology, flows, and networks of the South-South has been changing thoroughly. Nowadays, this process is taking place in a context that is changing even more rapidly, due to the advance and consolidation of globalization. Below, several examples of this change, along with new actors or catalysts, will be discussed:

- South-South voyages are no longer the prerogative of priests, anthropologists, and diplomats. In recent years, they have involved black activists, capoeirists, musicians, candomblé priests, students, business leaders, Pentecostal pastors, advertisers and marketeers, as well as adventurers. Researching these new personal trajectories and the survival strategies that these evince strikes me as important. There are those of better-known characters, such as the famous musicians Gilberto Gil and Martinho da Vila and the lesser-known, but more numerous, Brazilian capoeira *mestres* (masters) who, over the last two decades, have been setting up capoeira schools and associations in several African countries.
- The emergence of the internet⁶ and new communication technologies in general.⁷

⁶ It is worth noting that a large amount of information exists on the web concerning the topics discussed in this text. The exhibition on the web of what, until recently, were relatively isolated cultural phenomena continues to grow exponentially, shifting from invisibility to hyper-exposure. This should be taken into account in our research methodology, as well as in the subject-object relation during research.

⁷ See the exhibition "Africa Away From Home" curated by Antonio Motta, in 2011, at the *Museu Federal da Abolição* in Recife, which shows how much mobile phones, blogs, Orkut, Facebook, and Skype have altered the play of forces in day-to-day Brazil-Africa relations.

- The strengthening, now in the Global South too, of a set of international agreements and laws intended to support and divulge not just heritage per se, but more specifically intangible or ‘living’ heritage. There are plenty of publications on this topic starting from the early 1990s, the same years the term globalization started to be used in the social sciences (Featherstone 1990).
- The maturing of the democratic process, which has by itself generated a growing demand for internationalization and opening, both in Brazil (or Colombia) as well as in many African countries.
- While the Global North becomes increasingly invisible or unpredictable, as seen from the South, there are new economic actors in the South: BRICS and others. There has been amazing growth, both of the number of embassies across the South and of economic exchange – of course according to the rules of capitalism, but still a novelty. Presently, this general growth of interest in African cultures and commodities experiences a crisis since Brazil, South Africa, and India have become more inward-looking in terms of their foreign relations – for example, cutting down embassy personnel in the South to focus again on the North or making visas more difficult to obtain for citizens of the Global South. In the case of the Lusophone countries there is a growth – or, in a certain sense, the revival – of the influence of Brazil (and of Angola) in terms of culture, music, and popular religiosity, which has introduced more variety into the relationships with Portuguese-speaking countries – among which Portugal no longer dominates as a source of inspiration.
- Even though nobody knows exactly what the term ‘Global South’ means, a new field of studies has developed with at least three qualified journals that have the ‘catchphrase’ Global South in their title: *The Global South Journal* (Indiana University, merely one person from the Global South is on the editorial committee with approximately 30 people from the Global North); *Bandung: The Global South Journal*; and the E-bulletin *Global South*, once promoted by the now demised Dutch SEPHIS program.

When all this is taken into consideration, several questions emerge. How can a new curiosity for the South in the South, within the humanities, be developed? How can the many peripheries of the Global South be engaged in this process? How can African Studies in Latin America and Latin American Studies in Africa be constructed? Such “Studies” have

often been seen as a natural outflow of political priorities – such as in the case of colonial studies in Europe and Area Studies, especially in the US – as well as of intellectual dynamics and ethnographic sensibilities developed in the North, especially in the former colonial *metropoles*.

One good example of what to develop further are joint research projects based on themes that are relevant to both Africa and Latin America, rather than centered on priorities established by Northern donors. Efforts in this direction have been made by CLACSO and CODESRIA. This could also help in seeing regional cooperation as a trampoline to transcontinental cooperation, rather than its opposite. Africa and Latin America are, in many ways, very similar and comparative; collaborative research could develop projects on a vast variety of topics, such as: the link between violence and poverty; durable and extreme poverty and the processes of identity formation and cultural production they engender; the impact of new communication technologies on daily life, especially socialization and economical activities; social movements; sexual culture; (dis)organized crime; urban (un)planning, especially patrimonialization of historical city centres; the globalization of UNESCO criteria which often operate as global icons with local meanings; the politics of tangible and intangible heritage.

Looking at one of them, namely heritage, or heritage preservation and heritage economics, this is a topic that deserves a careful South-South perspective and that can offer interesting insights into how we can promote such a perspective. Many of the continuing contradictions and tensions notwithstanding, the overall quality of exchange between the North and the South has changed dramatically, and to the better. Over the last century and a half, we have moved from encounters in the North – such as expos, exhibits, museums, or circuses where a sort of exotic image of the South and the South-South was created – to collaborative projects with a somewhat equal distribution of power and responsibilities between partners in the South. The field of intangible heritage is especially interesting, if only because our two continents are, as it were, the continents of the intangible, with few regional exceptions (mostly Egypt and Mexico). They are, in any case, the regions where the list of intangible culture has grown the most over the last two decades. There is already at least one comparative South-South research into this topic, by Evaldo

de Barros (2014), that compares the patrimonialization of the dance and performance of *bumba meu boi* in Brazil and *timbila* in Mozambique.⁸

Apart from the change in ethnographic sensibility discussed in the previous section, there are two more things that African Studies in Brazil need to do to create their new agenda. It requires improving the methodology by refining the techniques of comparison, not only questioning what is compared and why the comparison is made, but also going beyond the large scale of comparison that is commonly used. For instance, in ethnic studies, there is a tradition of comparing nations, or the colonial styles of different empires, but there has been much less of an endeavor to compare cities (conceived of as systems of opportunities), cultural phenomena and their reinvention or revival, the politics and practices of different heritage sites, biographies of national leaders, processes of patrimonialization of, for example, a music genre, politics of archeological excavation in various sites, and so forth.

Lastly, there also needs to be an advance in terms of university politics and their general funding. In Brazil, the situation is ironic: The country is seen as too “wealthy” to receive funding from the US and, to some extent, from Europe, but the way the money is spent seems rather whimsical. The BRICS, which seemed the engine of the South-South, are nowadays much less evident as leaders. As has been said above, South Africa, Brazil, and India have become much more provincial. The real question is how to conceive the South-South exchange so as to make it sustainable. Based on our own resources (perhaps also crowd-sourcing plus the support of a selected number of private companies) as well as the support of key centres in the North such as the University of Bayreuth, ours ought to be an exchange based on the win-win principle, where both sides benefit somewhat equally.

Personally, I am convinced that, rather than operating once again as gatekeepers between Africa and the Americas and arguing endlessly over what defines black cultures or what exactly ‘Africanism’ is, as scholars (especially anthropologists) from many countries have tended to do, social scientists from the North as well as the South should act as fa-

⁸ *Bumba meu boi* is a popular dance and music combination of African origin performed all over Northern Brazil which was declared a national cultural heritage about a decade ago. *Timbila* is also a music and dance combination which originated in central Mozambique and had become popular already under colonial rule; it was declared a national heritage of the country about ten years ago.

cilitators, creating bridges rather than channeling or funneling, if only because there are millions of Afro-Latins and tens or hundreds of dynamic African cultures, i.e., too many to fit into broad categorizations of what being black, 'afro,' or African could be. In fact, in Brazil, we have also been challenged in our traditional description of the tenets of Afro-Brazilian culture, for instance by the new Pentecostal churches and their increasingly influential political mouthpieces.

Finally, there is the issue of how new communication technologies, in spite of the fact that they offer new challenges to the practice of the social sciences in the Global South, can also offer new opportunities for collaborative projects, based on new combinations of distance and face-to-face teaching/learning (such as in international doctoral schools), crowd-sharing, crowd-sourcing, and new forms of collective curatorship of research data in a variety of genres.

Two examples of what can (and should) be done with a critical as well as creative use of communication technologies will briefly be expanded upon, although there certainly are more possibilities. The first example is the PhD intensive summer school 'Factory of Ideas,' which has been going on for the last 19 years and started to practice the South-South connection before the term "Global South" was even invented as a catchphrase. With a heavy teaching load and discussing projects in full-time immersion workshops, it creates networks and makes internationalization accessible to students from universities in the periphery and from disadvantaged backgrounds. The course introduces ideas from abroad, while presenting Brazilian research and ideas to a broader audience.

The second project is the Digital Museum of African and Afro-Brazilian Heritage – a museum without ownership which is centered on four key notions: digital repatriation, digital donation, digital ethnography, and historiography (investigating on the net but also through the net) and, overall, digital generosity. The Digital Museum could very well be an important tool for a transnational South-South network centered on supporting the development of African Studies. Its technology is very simple and always based on "poor technologies" (Sansone 2013) as well as open sources software and platforms, and it can easily be shared. It could be a good tool for both teaching and doing research – as a digital repository as well as an instrument to circulate our research findings by means of digital exhibits.

The Factory of Ideas has thus far managed to survive by becoming a network of graduate programs, which together produce and raise funds

for this summer school (even though it is always a challenge to get funds for African students to attend). The Digital Museum, however, has a tougher time, struggling for sustainability in a context where, both in Brazil and on the African continent, thus far, there has been little investment in the field of digital humanities, despite the political progress in the field, such as adopting Creative Commons in our practice. Both projects, in order to yield their best fruits, require continuity of planning and investment, consolidation, and constant experimentation. This, again, begs the question of the politics of funding of the South-South.

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