

DIVERSITY AND MULTICULTURALISM – RESEARCH AND DESIGN FOR BAFATÁ UPON THE 90TH ANNIVERSARY OF AMÍLCAR CABRAL’S BIRTH

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Abstract

This paper aims to present the results of research made by a group of students in the city of Bafatá, in Guinea-Bissau. This work was launched for the commemorations of the African independence leader Amílcar Cabral’s birth (1924-1973) in that city on the Geba riverbank, ninety years ago. The research was carried out by students finalizing their Integrated Masters in Architecture at ISCTE-Lisbon University Institute, with the main goal being the recognition of urban changes in Bafatá and the design of an ephemeral structure with the purpose of preserving and showing Cabral’s life and thoughts.

Bafatá’s centre is strongly marked by the Portuguese colonial presence, visible in the urban design, and in the several layers of architecture of the city. It is around the boulevard axis, in a Northeast/Southwest direction, the main entrance into town with the river Geba, that the block layout was organized (the hospital, the school, the governor’s house, the church, the post-office, the neo-Arab municipal market, and a badly damaged small pool complex from the 60s, are the most remarkable buildings). The house, where supposedly Amílcar Cabral was born, is integrated in this nucleus.

Nowadays, the atmosphere of the formal city contrasts with a huge and informal periphery surrounding this nuclear settlement. The difference between these two realities is very sharp, as the city centre of Bafatá remains sparsely populated and depressed, while the housing and main commercial activities unfold in the periphery.

The discourse of multiculturalism and ethnic unity enunciated by Amílcar Cabral since the early 50s - particularly meaningful in this period of political instability in Guinea-Bissau - was taken as a fundamental argument for the territorial development of Bafatá in the students’ designs.

Keywords: Bafatá, Amílcar Cabral, diversity, multiculturalism.

INTRODUCTION

*Oh nhá povo
Bem ouvi um historia
Oh nhá povo
Bem ouvi um musica*

*Um fidjo de Caboverde
Kes midjor fidjo de nos terra*

*Se nome
É mas grande herança
Nah historia de nos terra*

*Oh vento! Oh chuva!
Oh mar nha companheira
Bem ajudame conserval*

*Amilcar
Midjor fidjo de nos terra
Oh Nhe Amilcar!
É bo povo ta txomab!*

*Ma bo nome: Amilcar!
Ma se nome: Cabral!*

*Eh Amilcar!
Eh Cabral!*

LIMA DE BARROS, Baltasar Januário *Midjor Fidjo*.¹

This paper aims to present the results of research carried out by a group of students in the city of Bafatá, in Guinea-Bissau. This work, included in a wide post-colonial study about the former Portuguese territories in Africa, was launched due to the commemorations of the African independence leader Amílcar Cabral's birth (1924-1973) in that city on the Geba riverbank, ninety years ago, on the 12th September 1924.

The research was conducted by students finalizing their Integrated Masters in Architecture of ISCTE-University Institute of Lisbon and had as its main goal the recognition of urban changes in Bafatá and the design of an ephemeral structure with the purpose of preserving and showing Cabral's life and thoughts, for the use of the city's population. Cabral's mythical status remains a lingering presence both in Guinea-Bissau as in Cape-Verde, the birthplace of his father. Poetry and songs about him, such as the Cape-Verdean creole tune lyrics opening this section by "Nhô Balta" (*Mr. Balta*), have multiplied through the years.



Figure 1. Images of Bafatá (Hospital, school, boulevard and church, market, square with bust of Cabral and swimming pool complex).

Bafatá's city centre is strongly marked by the Portuguese colonial presence, visible in the urban design, and in the architecture of the city. It is around the boulevard running in the Northeast/Southwest direction,

¹*Oh my people!; Come hear a tale!; Oh my people!; Come hear a tune!; / Cabo Verde's son; You are the best son of our land; His name is the greatest inheritance of our land; / Oh my people!; Come hear a tale!; Oh my people!; Come hear a tune!; / Oh winds! Oh rain!; Oh mother my companion!; Come hear me save his memory; / Amilcar, best son of our land; Oh Mr. Amilcar,;It's your people that call for you!; / Your name: Amilcar; His name: Cabral; Hey Amilcar!; Hey Cabral!;* [Transcription by Marly Fonseca and Marlon de Auxiliador].

which connects the main entrance in town through the river Geba, that the blocks layout was organized. This major axis also connects the most remarkable public buildings of the city. The hospital, designed in 1946 by João Simões, is sited close to the urban settlement entrance. Characterized by a single-storey symmetric composition, this building recalls, with its pronounced tile roof, the vernacular constructions of Southern Portugal. Slightly below lies the administrative area of Bafatá -a core that includes the governor's house, with fine nineteenth century characteristics, and the school, built in an eclectic style. Buildings designed in the pattern of public architecture of Salazar's dictatorship period, such as the church, by Eurico Pinto Lopes in 1950, and the 1943 post office by Francisco de Matos, complement this urban sector. At the bottom of the main city axis, close to the River Geba is a square where Amílcar Cabral's bust was raised. The municipal market, designed in Arabian fashion, and a small pool complex from the 60's that today is badly damaged, are also sited on this spot.

Buildings of one or two floors, designed with ceramic grids and porch-areas for shade and ventilation are predominant in this area, characterizing these city blocks. The house where Amílcar Cabral was supposedly born is integrated in this nucleus.

Nowadays, the atmosphere of the formal city contrasts with a huge and informal periphery surrounding this nuclear settlement. The difference between these two realities is very sharp, as the city centre of Bafatá remains sparsely populated and depressed, while housing and the main commercial activities unfolds in the periphery. The growth along the national road was elected by the population, as the city seems to have turned its back to the River Geba, displacing its centre to the outskirts of its original limits.

The discourse of multiculturalism and ethnic unity, enunciated by Amílcar Cabral since the early 50's - particularly meaningful in this period of a new political cycle after the recent instability in Guinea-Bissau - was taken as a fundamental argument for the territorial development of Bafatá in the students' designs. Redesigning the existing territory is also a sustainable priority to protect the planets' resources. This issue should not be placed only in regard to shortage of materials and energy, but also as a chance to focus on the importance of different social realities.

GUINEA-BISSAU – AN ETHNO-GEOGRAPHICAL PORTRAIT

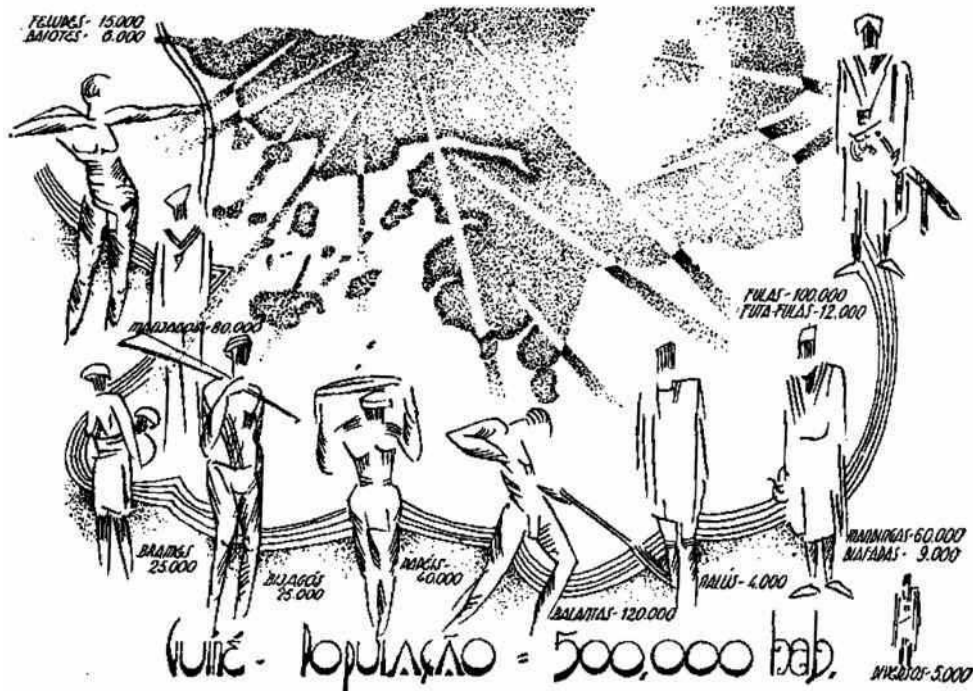
estudo etnográfico

Figure 2. "Babel Negra" (Simões, 1935, p. 25).

Guinea-Bissau, in general, and Bafatá in particular, represent both a good opportunity to reflect about our common future. Ethnic diversity is one of the most relevant issues in Guinea. The country has almost thirty different ethnic cultures co-inhabiting the same territory, sharing Animistic religions, with Islamism and Christianity.

Bafatá, with almost twenty two thousand inhabitants, is the capital of the region with the same name. In this city, the diversity is also visible in the landscape, the different ways in which the territory is occupied, fusing the culture of each group, not only with the physical characteristics of the colonial urban design, but also with contemporary demands.

Guinea-Bissau, located in Western Africa, has a population of just under one-and-a-half million. Although it is one of the smallest countries in Africa, it is still bigger than Belgium or Taiwan, with an area of 36 544 km² and a roughly triangular shape with a northern border with the Republic of Senegal that runs parallel to the equator along most of its length. The southeastern frontier borders Guinea-Conakry, while the Atlantic Ocean lies to the southwest. The word "Guinea" applies to the land of black people, as opposed to land of moors, or Mauretania, used since the Roman Empire (the Romans did not use Guinea however, but rather the word Aethiopia when referring to sub-saharan lands and people) (Euzzenat 2000, p. 457-466). Thus, it is to be found again further South in the continent, in Equatorial Guinea and the Gulf of Guinea, just above the Equator. The name figures in Angelino Dulcert's 1339 chart, to depict the lands south of Senegal, and historiographical documents sometimes use the forms "Ganuya" or "Guynea", all of which derive from the village of Gená, Genua, Djenné, Jenné, Jani or Geni, founded around 1040 AD on the Inner Niger Delta, in Mali (Dinis 1938).

As Dulcert's 1339 chart shows, Guinea-Bissau, Gambia and southern Senegal form a transition area from the land of the moors. The country is also the northernmost patch of tropical rain forest in Western Africa.

Religion is ethnically based around local deities and myths amongst 45% of Guineans, with Christianity reaching an adherence of just over 10%. Given the countries' closeness to the Sahara, Islam is practiced by more than 40% of the population.

Weather in Guinea-Bissau is warm all year round, with little temperature fluctuation. Climate is tropical wet/dry, the rainy season with southwesterly winds between June and September/October. The dry season runs from December through May, when northeasterly winds blow from the Sahara Desert, and the country experiences drought (Teixeira 1969, pp. 1348-1352).

The country has a coast line dotted with islands that form the Bijagós Archipelago, one of which, the Isle of Bolama, was the site for the country's capital under Portuguese power from 1879 to 1941, when it was moved to the city of Bissau.

Guinea-Bissau is drained by a few rivers of short length, the major being the Corubal, that has an estuary on which the present capital, Bissau, lies just under the 12°N parallel, halfway between the Equator and the Tropic of Cancer. The main tributary of the Corubal is the river Geba, which runs past Bafatá. Since Guinea-Bissau is essentially flat (its' highest point lying only 300 metres above sea-level), the river systems, and particularly the Corubal/Geba, have meandering courses.

Bissau holds more than half of the urban population in the country, which has Bafatá as the second major town. Guinea-Bissau is administratively divided into 8 regions and is the autonomous urban sector of the countries' capital. The regions being: Cacheu on the northwest and along the coast; Biombo west of the Bissau's sector; Oio, to the north and east of the latter; Bolama, which encompasses the Bijagós archipelago; Tombali, south of the river Corubal; Gabú, which covers the furthestmost territories of Guinea-Bissau – and Bafatá. Given the small size of the country and its flatness, which makes mobility relatively easy, one of its most remarkable characteristics is the fact that the Guinean population is formed by a wide number of ethnic groups with different languages, social structures and habits. Although Guinea-Bissau has been a site for several ethnographical studies, we have chosen to approach this ground resorting to the wonderful "Babel Negra" (Black Babel), a book that Fernando Landerset Simões published in 1935 (Simões 1935). Guinea-Bissau has tripled its population since, but the study remains highly valid in engaging the ethnic blend in the country, which was at that time relatively untouched by globalization. It is a deep approach into ethnic groups in Guinea-Bissau, exquisitely illustrated by the author, and with many fine black-and-white photographs by this ethnographer and Manuel J. Pires and Amândio Lopes. The book title already points towards diversity and multiculturalism. It provides a lexicon of major words in each dialect, from which we picked the various forms for the word 'man':

Anineu among the *Felupe*, which inhabit the coast line in the north of the country; *Eline* in the *Baiote* family, along the northwestern border with Senegal; *Ninte* in the *Manjaco* language, mostly spoken west of the Isle of Bissau; *Anino* among the *Papel*, which live on the Isle of Bissau proper; *Quéô* among the *Mandinga* group, that inhabit the extreme northeast of Guinea-Bissau, but also the region of Oio; *Lantê* in the language of the *Balanta*, that live in the southern part of the Oio region; *Mintchele* or *Baitchele* among the *Nalú*, a small ethnic group that lives in the southernmost part of continental Guinea-Bissau; and *Górcò* or *H'uórebe* among the *Fula* - the main ethnic group that inhabit the Gabú and the Bafatá administrative regions.

In this view, it is easy to understand why the official language of the country is Portuguese, used as a vehicular tongue between all Guineans. Forms of Portuguese origin creole are also spoken. Many of these are not contained in the nation's borders, occupying regions of neighbouring Senegal and Guinea-Conakry.

All native languages spoken in Guinea are of the Niger-Congo subfamily – namely, from the Mande (or Mandinka) and West Atlantic branches, the latter having the Fula as a wide-speaking language that reaches into Guinea-Conakry, Nigeria and Cameroon. Ethnic languages along the Guinean coast are usually spoken amongst small groups of people, in a pattern, which ranges along the African coast, from Senegal to Liberia.

In the broader African context, these peoples derive from two major groups:

- The Sudanese, mostly inhabiting the coast, are represented by the Felupe, Manjaco, Mancanha, Bijagó, Papel (dominant in the country's capital), Balanta and Biafada. The Futa-Fula are also of Sudanese stock;
- The Guinea Coast group, extending eastward into Nigeria, reaches the outskirts of the Sahara and only spreads into the southern parts of Senegal. These are represented in Guinea-Bissau by the Mandinga, the Nalú and the numerous Fulas, which prevail in the Bafatá region.

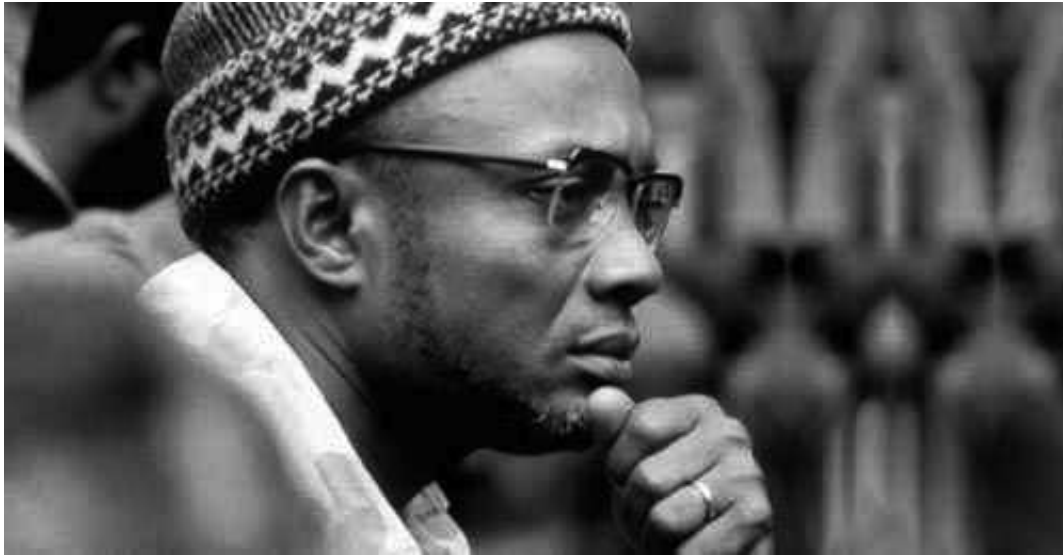
AMÍLCAR CABRAL'S ETHICAL LEGACY

Figure3. *Amílcar Cabral (1924-1973).*

In 1466, the Portuguese Crown ceded the rights to the coast of “Cape Verde’s Guinea” to the inhabitants of Cape Verde, the Atlantic archipelago that the Portuguese had discovered uninhabited in 1460 and which they proceeded to colonize soon after. This started a long history of commitment between both of these countries, and a second-level of multiculturalism.

By royal decree of March the 15th 1692, the captaincy-major of Bissau was established and the construction of a fortress on the River Geba begun. Until then, the area of Bissau had been settled with a hut ensemble where people from the Isle of Santiago (Cape Verde) would come to collect slaves. A new fortress was built between 1753 and 1766, replacing the previous one, and the site renamed “Praça de São José de Bissau”. The Portuguese established trading posts along the coast of Eastern Africa, which present-day toponyms still come to testify – as in Sierra Leone/“Serra Leoa” the lioness mountain chain, named by Pedro de Sintra (Garcia 1994, p. 994); the city of Porto Novo (meaning New Port), in Benim; the city of Lagos, in Nigeria (meaning lakes in Portuguese); or the nation of Cameroon (Cameroun in French and Kameroun in German), which takes its name from the Portuguese word camarões (shrimps) given by Fernando do Pó at the end of the 15th Century (AAVV 1966, p. 598) to the river (presently called Wouri) that drains into the ocean at Douala. Most of these were used in the slave and gold trade.

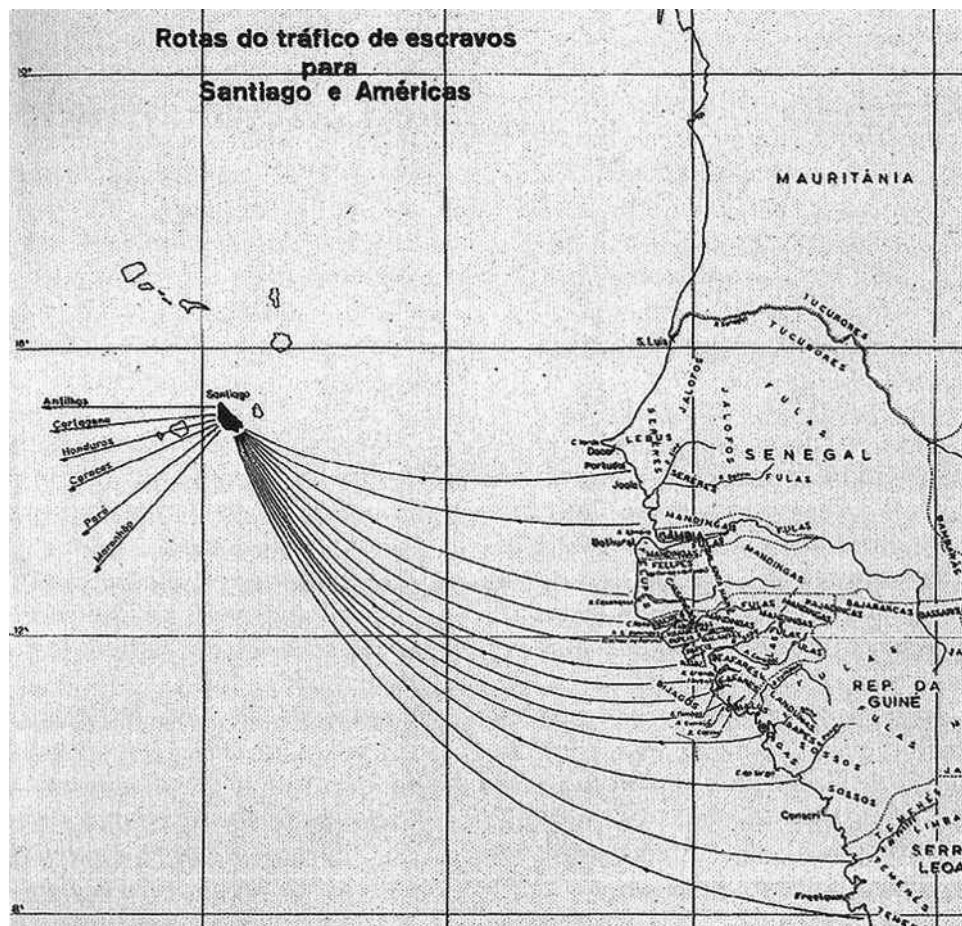


Figure 4. Route of the slave trade to Santiago and América (Source: Carreira, Cabo Verde. *Formação e Extinção de uma Sociedade Escravocrata (1460-1878)*).

Ship routes would usually lead the slave trade from these posts to the Island of Santiago (as illustrated in adjoining figure), from which they were shipped to the Antilles, Cartagena, Honduras, Caracas or Pará and Maranhão (the latter both in Brazil). Therefore, commercial and racial bonds accompanied the geographical proximity of Guinéa-Bissau and Cape Verde. Santiago, in the leeward group of the Cape-Verdean Islands, still has a higher rate of darker-skinned inhabitants than the rest of this Republic.

The Cape-Verde Archipelago was uninhabited when the Portuguese crown claimed ownership of these Isles. Its' population is therefore an original blend of people from various sources. Cape-Verdeans would be widely used by the Portuguese to fill middle-ranking positions in the colonial bureaucracy in Guinea-Bissau until 1879, when both territories under Portuguese control were administratively separated (Banha de Andrade 1969, pp. 1364-1368), and the Cape-Verdean mulatto community living in Guinea-Bissau would play a decisive role in the fight for independence of the country from Portugal in the following century.

Amílcar Cabral positioned himself at the limits of issues in his time and also in his territory. He was born in Bafatá, son of a Cape Verdean father and a Guinean mother (Juvenal Lopes Cabral and Iva Pinhel Évora), which allowed him to see himself as a result of a multicultural and global process. His intercourse with Portugal can be traced through his parents' family names: Évora is a town in Portugal, while Cabral was the surname of the Portuguese navigator who first landed on Brazilian shores.

Cabral observed Africa and Guinea from the exterior, conceptualizing an ideological process of refunding the African territory. The union of Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau was the ambition of the PAIGC (African Party for the Guinea and Cape Verde Independency), the clandestine party formed in 1959 by Cabral - along with his brother Luís Cabral and Aristides Pereira, Fernando Fortes, Julio de Almeida and Elisée Turpin.

The ideology of the PAIGC party, in a way, resumed the ancient foundation of both countries, redefining their history, not rejecting however their shared colonial past and the importance of the Portuguese language as main argument for a new multicultural democratic approach.

Amílcar Cabral was one of the most relevant independent movement leaders in the period after the Second World War. Cabral obtained higher training in Lisbon, getting his degree in Agronomic Engineering in 1950. During the last years of the 40's, which he spent in Lisbon studying and sharing lodgings in the House of the Empire Students with other individuals from several places in Africa and in Asia, he reinforced his understanding about the value of cultural diversity. Cabral's thoughts matured, not only through contact in Lisbon with personalities who later would have political responsibilities in the independence period of African countries, such as José Eduardo dos Santos e Agostinho Neto (founders of the Popular Movement for Liberation of Angola -MPLA) or Marcelino dos Santos (Mozambique Liberation Front -FRELIMO), but also through the acquaintanceship with people from the field of literature, poets and writers, such as Francisco José Tenreiro (1921-1963), Mário Coelho Pinto de Andrade (1928-1990), Alda Espírito Santo (1926-2010) or Noémia de Sousa (1926-2002).

Cabral set out a new multicultural order in world ethnic diversity. African people, not rejecting certain values of the colonial period, should be able to assume their specificity on the international scene. Although he did not reject the need of a preventive war, Cabral challenged Marxism, as he formulated that "the colonized is fated to destroy the colonizer, emancipating himself while emancipating him at the same time" (Lopes 2004). According to him, Marxism was an instrument to understand history, thus refusing to go along with common theories in the 60's about auto-determination in Africa.

Just like an architect, Amílcar Cabral could understand the possibility of recognizing the territory of Guinea and Cape Verde as a palimpsest, as André Corboz wrote (Corboz 2001). Cabral's intention was to reconstruct the history of both countries, inscribing in the same wrinkles of old territorial parchment, the possibility of a new map.

The idea of introducing the study of a personality as Amílcar Cabral in the field of architecture aspires to emphasize the importance of ethical training in the university nowadays. The creation of space and shape in architecture should be seen as an ideological act and a civic position. As Cabral, architects also observe the reality from the outside, taking part in it, while at the same time reinventing opportunities for change.

SYNTHESIS OF 10 PROJECTS BY STUDENTS FOR THE AMÍLCAR CABRAL INTERPRETATIVE CENTRE



Figure 6. Synthesis of the student's projects to the Amílcar Cabral Interpretative Centre.

Connecting the personality of Amílcar Cabral with an architectonic exercise to debate the distant territory of Bafatá, at the heart of Guinea-Bissau, was very important in generating students' conscience in reading the sediments of that territory.

These were guided to perceive how the human marks had transformed through time the patterns of urban geography. The challenge of contemporary architecture is mainly placed in this kind of articulation between different layers in time. Architectonic opportunities are now more than ever, connected with the process of establishing meaning among the legacy of urban fragments.

Students were asked to design an Interpretative Centre planned as an ephemeral structure to be built in Bafatá, with the aim of divulging the personality of Amílcar Cabral, his work, and thought. The structure should be constructed during the commemorations of the ninetieth anniversary of Cabral's birth, in 2014. This workshop held in November 2013 lasted three weeks. Students were free to reinterpret the exercise, finding the best place for the structure and looking for adequate materials and technical means to deploy. Ten groups of five students were organized to respond to the challenge.

The subject of the workshop connected the internal debate with contemporary issues. Students found that the city of Bafatá is a worthy subject in understanding, in a faraway geography, a number of issues that frame today's urban dynamics. The shrinking of the former city core, the periphery enlargement, and the sharing of urban territory between different social groups raises questions about society and territory that are fundamental in architectural issues in Africa today. This is why the relationship of this workshop with Cabral's thinking was useful in connecting ideology and architecture, both in the debates about students' proposals, and also their understanding of the city's mutations.

Only the teachers coordinating the workshop had been in Bafatá, while the students did not have the chance to do so. Therefore, an external reading of the city was considered when preparing the exercise. Maps, plans, photos and videos were the tools used in the students' research about Bafatá.

Outputs generated by students can be organized in three areas: (i.) Territorial proposals, (ii.) Local proposals, and (iii.) Prototype proposals:

Territorial proposals

Three groups of students tested territorial proposals through the design of pedestrian infrastructures, creating in this way new urban flows that should connect Bafatá's city core with its environment.

Two projects planned the reconstruction of a former bridge that connected the city centre of Bafatá with the west side of Cambossa river (a tributary of the Geba). In one of these, a sequence of flat structures should integrate the programme of the Interpretative Centre, expanding the city centre beyond the river, through the bridge. On the west side of the riverbank, a high-rising wood construction was also planned, creating a reference in the landscape. The structure should provide a special panoramic view of the city of Bafatá and its surroundings. The other project, reconnecting both riverbanks of the Cambossa, explored building with bamboo. Guinea Bissau, due to its geography, has much bamboo, but its industry, still locally unavailable, might take part in the advancement of the building sector in the country. This architectural proposal consists of a bridge built in a truss bamboo structure that should further include a small open auditorium. A set of units placed in front of the riverside; were also proposed, reviving at the same time—the stretch of the former Governor João de Oliveira Muzanty Garden.

Another group proposed the recycling of wood pallets to construct a 'living bridge' set on a floodplain. This structure would contain in its interior structure the Interpretive Centre programme. This linear element was planned to connect the city centre to its periphery, providing a passage over a water line in a floodable land.

Local proposals

Projects more directly related with urban moments in Bafatá were developed by three groups of students. Two of these worked around the former garden close to the river Geba, where the statue of Governor João de Oliveira Muzanty stood in the past, together with a playground. Nowadays this place is quite desolate, since the statue was removed and natural vegetation took over the site. One of the projects for the place consisted of a set of autonomous boxes, each embodying parts of the programme. This group of boxes was planned to be set on a platform, articulating other single elements. The ensemble should be covered with traditional fabrics, creating shade and controlling sun rays. The other intervention for the former garden proposed a new configuration of the site through a topographical change providing a flat site opening onto the river. The Interpretative Centre would be located just below this new plot, making use of a light wood structure.

The third project included in the group of local proposals was planned in dialogue with the hospital of Bafatá, designed in the early 40s by João Simões, one of the most respected Portuguese architects of the period. The hospital illustrates the colonial architectural policy developed by the government for Portuguese overseas territories, re-interpreting the characteristics of the flat constructions that can be found in the South of Portugal. Bafatá's hospital was never fully completed according to plan - nevertheless it is still a very important health centre in the region, and a reference at the entrance of the city. The students proposed an Interpretative Centre anchored on the hospital building. A ring structure in wooden beams axially placed should receive the programme, framing existing paths leading to the hospital.

Prototype proposals

Four projects were planned as prototypes. The relationship between these and the city of Bafatá was achieved through the choice of the place for its implantation.

One of the proposals dealt with the expression of the periphery, by working in an informal urban sector. The Interpretative Centre is partitioned into small units of wood and zinc, seeking to establish architectural analogy and dialogue with its' surrounding informal constructions. The positioning of the units on site should allow for the distribution of the programme, creating an enclosure dedicated to Cabral.

Another proposal reflects vernacular constructions, working on the tabanca typology (Guinean creole for village). A band of simple units receive the programme for the Interpretative Centre. These units, to be done in light materials and introducing ventilation devices, were planned to be set on platforms, creating patios in between them. This proposal should be located close to the Geba and the house where Cabral was born.

Another proposal, deployed close to the city centre, builds on a relation between the ephemeral and the permanent. A set of concrete bases should define the ensemble. During the period when the Interpretative Centre is active, these concrete bases receive wooden structures allowing for the implementation of its programme areas. After Amílcar Cabral's birth commemoration, these wood shells should be disassembled, with the concrete bases remaining as a memory of the moment.

An Interpretative Centre relying on a number of wooden units raised from the soil, linked by a suspended path, also integrates this series. The enclosure created by this project, located on a terrain close to the Bafatá's hospital, should be covered for shade and ventilation, correlating its existence with the local trees.

CONCLUSION

The aim of the exercise was largely achieved. Students acknowledged the architectural identity of the Guinean territory of Bafatá, its multicultural characteristics and the personality of Amílcar Cabral. The transformations of the territory, its physical and human geography changes, were also tackled in the students' work.

Diversity and multiculturalism are natural to Guinea-Bissau, and are manifest on different levels. On a narrower scale, we have noted the remarkable number of ethnic groups which inhabit the country, particularly with regard to the reduced size of Guinea-Bissau and its present population of only 1.5 million people. Country and people are a threshold between the western coast and the inner depths of Africa, but also a gateway between sub-Saharan lands of the continent and the barren territories of Earths' greatest desert.

On a second level, we find diversity and multiculturalism in the deep relations between Guinea and Cape Verde. This archipelago nation is split between the southward group, and the leeward group, which lies closer to Guinea-Bissau. Together, the Republic of Cape Verde is composed of 10 isles, each of which speaks its' own Portuguese originated creole. Leeward and southward groups have particular difficulty in understanding each other. Thus, the nation's official and vehicular language is Portuguese, as it gives the possibility for communication between the two nations which, as we have seen, share a historical common background. This complicity led the two countries in the colonial war with Portugal, and through the PAIGC to dream of the utopia of thriving independence.

On a third level, these two countries are not only set into the wider world of Portuguese speaking nations around the world, but also shared the same colonizer. Both of them, along with Portugal and other sovereign nations, make part of the Portuguese Official Language Countries' organization.

In Amílcar Cabral, we find a freedom fighter who represented all these levels of diversity and multiculturalism. Son of a Cape Verdean and a Guinean, he studied in Portugal and worked for the Portuguese State before embarking on active military activities, which eventually would lead Guinea-Bissau to independence.

Through this experience, it was possible to deal with three fundamental subjects in architectural training: idealism, historiography and territory (Pinto 2011). The personality of Cabral seduced the students through his thoughts and his dreams; historiography related to the Guinea-Bissau was seen as an instrument for redefining the possibility of a new geography; the territory as palimpsest was seen as a deposit of sediments connected through time-layers, demanding new meaning and order.

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