Underground Artistic-Creative Scenes Between Utopias and Artivisms

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on two countries usually represented as (semi-)peripheric: Portugal and Brazil. At stake is a metaphorical perspective of the Global South as equivalent to most (although not all) low-income and often politically or culturally marginalised territories. The use of this concept marks a shift from a central focus on development or cultural difference towards an emphasis on geopolitical power relations. Using the examples of Brazil's PWR Records and padê editorial, and Portugal's Príncipe Discos, the article highlights a series of manifestations of a radical *habitus* that has materialised in underground musical-creative creations, which increasingly have emerged as a stage for contemporary resistance. These examples demonstrate the spurious nature of the division between the concepts of the *art of resistance* and the *art of existence*: they are artivist resistances that enact working utopias. In many such projects, we find artivists with a (sub)cultural do-it-yourself background, who are not afraid to combine art and politics, and who reject the old idea of 'art for art's sake'. An *art of resistance* emerges that, in the cases analysed, is linked to the adherence to new social movements, such as feminism, LGBTQIA+ rights, the right to the city and anti-racism. Using a qualitative methodology, with a strong multi-sited ethnographic slant based on interviews and documentary analysis, we demonstrate how the artistic imagination of contemporary youth is materialised in combined resistance and existence for a place in the world.

Keywords: *arts of existence*, *arts of resistance*, artivisms, radical *habitus*, underground artistic-creative scenes, utopian *praxis*

FROM RESISTANCE TO EXISTENCE; FROM DECOLONIZATION TO ARTIVISMS

We begin with the problem, then examine the context. In the early 1990s, the fields of sociology and cultural studies were confronted with a 'cultural turn' characterised by greater attention to social actors' reflexivity and everyday actions at the expense of a more structuralist view (Bennett, 2018; Chaney, 1994). In the twenty-first century, particularly over the last decade, we have witnessed a new phase of this cultural turn, linked to the (dis)concealment of issues ranging from structural or systemic racism, passing through LGBTQIA+ complexities, and moving to decolonialism. This highlights an important feature: the importance of everyday engagement between the arts, civic intervention, and activism, that is even more evident in peripheral areas of large cities and urban centres. A growing number of young artivists are unafraid to combine art and politics and reject the *old ideas* of *art for art's sake*. They seek resistance and they manifest themselves, above all, on the margins, as part of the underground. In addition to creating forms of resistance, they also create strategies for existence (or survival). By forms of resistance, we refer to (sub)cultural modalities of production carried out through a do-it-yourself (DIY) process in which consumer goods are stripped of their original meanings and turned into subversive parodies of the dominant society. According to Hebdige et al. (2019), in this approach there is no change in power relations

and structural problems remain untouched (Guerra et al., 2020). The responses carried out by the subcultures would be situated only in a symbolic and imaginary realm (Guerra, 2024).

Ferreira (2016) hypothesises that it is difficult to find traces of a politics of resistance in the aesthetics of contemporary youth scenes, due to the lack of a clear 'enemy' against which to fight. Nevertheless, the same author argues that while aesthetics and politics remain intertwined in the most recent youth scenes, it will be more productive and innovative to shift the focus of the analysis to a perspective closer to the experience of young people in the artistic-cultural-creative scenes; he proposes approaching their aesthetic resources as expressions of an *art of existence*. In the framework of this article, this concept, expanded and relocated, has a use that associates it with the arts of earning a living – of transition to work (Bennett, 2018). Therefore, these social actors are reformulating the concept of artivism – or artistic activism – into a way of life that encompasses different spheres of life. Through the case studies presented in this article, we intend to understand how the contemporary (post-)juvenile scenes in Brazil and Portugal presuppose these *arts of existence* and can be seen as dynamics of productive existence, ineluctably marking the passage to adulthood.

We cannot help but notice, based on previous investigations, that many of today's artivists have a subcultural background (Guerra, 2018, 2020a, 2021). Indeed, do-it-yourself cultures have asserted themselves as a platform for multiple cultural, political, and economic youth imaginaries. In a world where the threats to young people's futures have increased significantly – accentuated by the post-pandemic context – underground creative-artistic-music scenes have emerged as an opportunity to obtain a place in an increasingly precarious and impoverished framework of life. Our goal is to situate underground creative-artistic-music scenes and DIY cultures within a wide range of contemporary contexts of *arts of existence* and artivisms (Haenfler, 2018; Veal and Tammy, 2016).

In recent decades, a growing body of theory has emerged in youth studies addressing qualitative changes in the way agents engage with politics – that is, whether the concept of resistance should still be applied to the practices of emerging (sub)cultures (Guerra et al., 2020; Hebdige et al., 2019). These recent studies argue that young people are abandoning traditional political interest and contesting political actions to express their interest in other types of struggles through art that encompasses all spheres of social life, expressions of positions and tastes (Guerra, 2020b, 2020c). Several studies have examined DIY careers/trajectories as strategies that, according to authors such as Threadgold (2018), demonstrate conscious acts of 'choosing poverty'. This notion applies to the cases presented here and, in terms of the basic geographical and social contexts, leads us to demonstrate that reflexive choices are made to engage in forms of work – often self-employment – that try to counteract situations of precariousness and intermittent income. Of course, this conceptualization converges – differently – with the referenced *arts of resistance* and *arts of existence*. Moreover, we can affirm that in the Brazilian and Portuguese contexts, the concept of resistance is an antecedent to the *arts existence*. It was through resistance in the face of political ideologies, and segregation and social exclusion, that these social actors created new aesthetics, new typologies of consumption and new modalities of artistic production, cementing the importance of a DIY ethos and *praxis*.

This does not amount to a position of denial of the *arts of resistance*, but rather to the assumption of a diachrony of life that leads social actors from resistance to existence. By not opting for a sterile essentialism, we can point out deviations and/or setbacks, depending on the actor-territories under analysis. Two of the cases are in Brazil, and one is in Portugal.[1]

Ferreira (2016) and Bennett (2018) argue that the concept of resistance is no longer adequate to perceive the practices of youth cultures, while the concept of existence is concerned more with social and personal recognition than with a self-fulfilled and self-defined professional identity. The latter concept is intrinsically related to an ethos and a DIY practice, and in this way aims to contest the socially and structurally imposed process of transition to adult life. The *art of existence* is particularly relevant to the Global South, where these practices can be interpreted as a form of 'love for the necessary': living for the moment, overcoming barriers and limits in a constant search for freedom, survival, independence, and economic and artistic sustainability (Guerra, 2021).

Both the *arts of resistance* and the *arts of existence* are guided by the enunciation of complex and polyhedral identity-affirmation processes. In Brazil, there is a focus on issues of gender, ethnicity and the dynamics of artistic production and consumption (musical and literary) – that is, these 'arts' describe a logic of action that is focused primarily on the digital field because PWR and padê editorial are still fighting for a physical and political space that is open to these discussions. We therefore face a dimension of digital artivism: the internet becomes the field of action, but it can also be understood as the 'margin' of the physical and urban centres. In the case of Portugal, at Príncipe Discos the focus is now on racial relations in an increasingly gentrified and segregated Lisbon. Once again, the *arts of resistance* and the *arts of existence* – intertwined in Príncipe Discos – asserted themselves as weapons of struggle and contestation, opening doors for the creation of a space for the consumption of African music. They represented the struggle for a physical space and a place in Portuguese society, showing that the African and Afro-

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[1] Only one case was selected in Portugal because, due to the geographical dimension and social reality of the country, few cases fit the dimensions of analysis systematized in that country. Compared with Brazil, this idea of *the art of existence* has a far less significant expression.

descendant population is no longer invisible. Through our case studies, we thus show that DIY trajectories – associated with an *art of existence* – are a possible way to repair labour, social or school trajectories marked by ruptures and precariousness (Guerra, 2021).

These *arts of existence* can also be explained and understood through concepts such as *illusio*, which highlights the conviction that the 'game is worth playing' (if we think of a Bourdieusian translation) and that the financial difficulties – among others – are worthwhile, even if the benefits are only symbolic (Bourdieu, 1996; Threadgold, 2020, 2023). The concept of *illusio* in relation to the *arts of existence* also shows strategies to explore and counteract the unpredictabilities of everyday life (Guerra, 2022). In relation to our case studies, this *art of existence* is also linked to a participation in new social movements, such as feminism, LGBTQIA+ rights, the right to the city and anti-racism. This is because the *art of existence* is also characterized by affinity networks, which are expressed in the defence of ideologies such as those mentioned above and are in a context of strong sociabilities and identity-sharing (Guerra, 2024). This leads social actors to engage in labour trajectories of great political and social tension.

Countries such as Brazil and Portugal have assumed themselves to be paradigmatic from many perspectives: political, economic, social, cultural and artistic (Guerra, 2021). In this article, we focus on cases from Brazil and Portugal; however, the term 'Global South' refers broadly to the regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa and Oceania, which were impacted by (de)colonial processes (Quijano and Wallerstein, 1992). It also includes Southern European countries such as Portugal, which are considered 'semi-peripheral' in world-system theory (Wallerstein, 2004). At stake here is a metaphorical perspective of the Global South as equivalent to mostly (though not all) low-income and often politically or culturally marginalised territories (Mahler, 2017). This use of the term marks a shift from a central focus on development or cultural difference to an emphasis on geopolitical power relations and sociocultural aspects connected to artistic/cultural production.

Adopting a qualitative methodology, with a multi-situated ethnographic orientation based on interviews and documentary analysis, we demonstrate how the artistic imagination of contemporary youth materialises in forms of resistance (Guerra, 2020d; Weij and Berkers, 2017) for a place in the world, particularly in contexts of oppression and social inequalities. These processes of artistic imagination are analysed with a focus on communities and minorities, thus revealing the other side of the dimensions of crisis and structural inequality of Portuguese and Brazilian societies (sexism, social inequalities, special segregation, racism, discrimination).[2] These (young) people use arts, and music in particular, to convey practices of active citizenship, to manifest themselves and to affirm themselves socially and culturally, bringing into play the concept of imagined communities (Anderson, 1983), which is closely articulated with contemporary modalities of artivism, and inclusive and sustainable living ecosystems.

In terms of structure, the article begins by examining the epistemological framework of the Global South using a broad conceptual perspective. We then look at the state of the art through concepts and paradigms related to DIY, and the links with Bourdieu's theories (1977). The cases analysed are then presented: PWR Records and padê editorial in Brazil; and Príncipe Discos and *kuduro* in Portugal. We analyse how these projects, and their protagonists, have specific strategies that explain why we consider the division between *art of resistance* and *art of existence*. The article ends with some unfinished conclusions regarding the need to explore the realities of these countries through analysing them to gain a better insight into concepts such as artivism, DIY, resistance and existence, and utopias related to artistic work and careers: the so-called 'arts of breadwinning' (Guerra, 2021, p. 131).

CAN EPISTEMOLOGIES OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH JOIN THE ARTS TO *SAVE US* FROM COLLAPSE?

A growing body of theory deals with issues of DIY ethos and *praxis*, and the underground (Duncombe, 2002; Goris and Hollander, 2017; Xiao and Donaghey, 2022), especially as a tool to think new worlds and new practices, and as a form of political expression around social struggles such as urban gentrification, artistic work, racism and sexism (Belfiore and Bennett, 2007; de Cautier et al., 2011; Dufor, 2002). With some exceptions, academic studies are still located mostly in Western countries in the so-called Global North (Salzbrunn, 2020). There is also a tendency to analyse the societies of peripheral or semi-peripheral countries from a Eurocentric and Anglo-Saxon perspective, discarding the experiential reality of all geopolitical and socio-historical contexts that do not fit this frame of reference (Quijano, 2000).

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[2] This article is based on interviews with the protagonist of the cases in Recife, Brazil in August, and September 2018. For documentary collection and processing between April and September 2022, I would like to thank Ana Oliveira and João Lima. The interviews were conducted in accordance with the ethical procedures of the American Sociological Association and all interview excerpts used in this article received informed consent.

When discussing a decolonial Global South, it is important to first address the intellectual decolonisation required to understand the alternative narratives and works coming from these contexts and territories, and their particular intellectual journey towards a 'decolonial turn' developed over several decades (Behari-Leak, 2019; Maldonado-Torres, 2011; Mignolo, 2014) in order to decolonise their own histories and methodologies. This is relevant to the field of social sciences if we are to include minority groups and perspectives in academia, as the entrenched exclusion of views from the Global North does not just harm minorities (Moosavi, 2020). Decolonisation and postcolonial studies have tried to deconstruct the imposed ideas and systems of colonial oppression that have shaped the system of thought, and consequently academic studies, to this day. In our case, counter-storytelling has been a good path of methodological deconstruction, as it has been 'a powerful mode of recentering knowledges from the margins – a decolonial alternative to neoliberal epistemes that maintain institutions/universities as centres of knowledge production' (Dutta et al., 2022, p. 67).

Based on these contributions, we elaborate a model of interpretation of these realities based on the crossing of four key ideas from post-subcultural theories and youth studies, which were transferred to the cultural and artistic reality we intend to analyse. The first idea is based on a void of diversity in cultural and artistic practices, which leads to the introduction of artistic-cultural studies of experiences that have been undervalued by Anglo-centric ways of thinking. This approach may also be applied to analyse underground and/or marginal cultures in semi-peripheral realities such as that of Portugal. The second idea is anchored in the defence of new sounds, arts, places and actors, which implies analysing and reflecting upon the innovative cultural experiences that arise in countries such as Brazil – not as exotic, but rather as new aesthetic and creative experiences. The third idea involves a commitment to multicultural knowledge – which, in the words of Wallerstein (2004), is based on Africanity, Indigenous peoples, religions and cultures; this comes from the multicultural reality of societies in the decolonial Global South, breaking with a hierarchical, monocultural way of thinking. Finally, an analysis is advocated involving a fine-tuned study of the excluding differentials – gender, ethnicity, precariousness, poverty – of social groups that are usually omitted (women, immigrants, Indigenous populations).

FROM WORKING UTOPIAS TO A *RADICAL HABITUS* IN CREATING *ARTS OF EXISTENCE*

Social movements have been an essential source of innovation in modern societies, generating new ways of thinking departing from the prevailing *status quo*. However, it was only from the 1960s onwards, with the emergence of the 'new' social movements, that a qualitative change took place. This was a consequence of a lack of confidence in the political system and scepticism about achieving change without the use of revolutionary means. The aim of these new social movements was to change society from within, turning them into 'laboratories of experience' (Melucci, 1996). These new social movements, associated with the concept of *illusio*, presuppose the mobilization of organized actions that are assimilated by a group of individuals who share the same *habitus* (Bourdieu, 1996). The new social movements can also be related to the concept of working utopias (Crossley, 1999), which aim to achieve a degree of materiality of a given action and serve as an example for other members of this social movement in the sense that they presuppose concrete actions directed towards change – in this case, political, social and cultural change (Crossley, 2003).

At the same time, these new social movements invite pedagogical action (Santos and Guerra, 2017), enabling people to learn how to act and think differently. Such learning also focuses on how an action is possible, making it a *praxis* in terms of the know-how that is learned and incorporated, such as DIY or do-it-ourselves (DIO) approaches (Pickard, 2022). Thus, awareness-raising is a *praxis* (rather than a practice), both individual and collective. At the same time, there are differences between a creative practice and a repetitive practice, with the latter being mechanical, rather than based on conscious, aprioristically thought-out action. The former, in contrast, is a practice that seeks the transformation of reality – a revolutionary and transformative *praxis* (Vásquez, 2007). This *praxis* must occur regularly, creating multidimensional spaces of struggle and pedagogy, thus creating the context for the continuation of the *arts of existence*. The cases analysed in this article come close to this, in different forms and intensities (Smith, 2020).

We think it is fruitful, when discussing social movements, to use the approaches of Bourdieu (1977) to explain and understand the modalities of contemporary artivist resistance/existence found in the cases analysed in this article. Bourdieu's (1984) theory of practice is used to explain how the circumstances and norms of each social actor shape their actions. The advantages of using a Bourdieusian approach are inescapable, enabling an examination of the concept of radical *habitus,* as postulated by Crossley (2003). Rarely are new social movements, such as anti-racism or feminism, the result of circumstantial eruptions; rather, they are the outcomes of long-lasting underground processes – hence the power of *habitus* dispositions. The big difference is the recognition that social actors can change as their *habitus* is mouldable. Therefore, it is important to reflect upon the concept of radical

habitus, which arises when agents deal with new experiences that break with their previous expectations or norms, causing them to alter their worldview, thus creating new types of *arts of existence* and *resistance*.

Alexander et al. (2022) state that many young activists began their activism by worrying about environmental causes; however, after seeing the different impacts of their activism, they went on to engage in other activisms related to racial and economic inequalities. This idea can be applied to our cases in the sense that music and music production have given rise to an involvement, from an activist point of view, with other causes, such as feminism, precariousness and Indigenous people. Therefore, we can see Crossley's (2003) assertions in play, given that the radical *habitus* also influences other dimensions of agents' lives: their choice of job, lifestyle and consumption practices. This concept can be interconnected with Threadgold's (2018) views on the 'choice of poverty' and the questioning of the processes of transition to adulthood. Specifically on the *art of existence* as an ethos, authors such as Ibrahim (2011) speak of an anti-capitalist *habitus* that demonstrates the internalisation of the *habitus* beyond the sphere of activism, being visible in the way people produce and consume cultural and commercial goods; it is a way of interconnecting the personal with the political, influencing the behaviour of agents in the various fields in which they engage.

DIY PUBLICATIONS: THE CASE OF PWR RECORDS AND PADÊ EDITORIAL

Our first case study is the PWR Records label (Sobre Nós, 2021).[3] This is a DIY project in which we can see the intersection between gender struggles and feminism. Label founders Hannah Carvalho and Letícia Tomás were a regular presence in the underground music scenes of Recife in Brazil and became more interested in the production and organisation of musical events. In 2016, when they founded the label, the scene was mostly male. They had the same surprise McRobbie had when analysing subcultures: they had trouble finding any women (McRobbie and Garbert, 1997). In an almost academic logic, they mapped all the indie bands in Brazil and measured the percentage containing at least one woman – very few bands had any female members. This observation was the basis for PWR Records' choice to only release bands formed by women and with a focus on the Northeast – a peripheral and generally forgotten area of Brazil.

The strategies of PWR Records are not only about releasing records: Letícia Tomás told us in an interview that women do not participate so much in the world of music and 'many girls do not have a band because they were not encouraged to learn how to play a musical instrument'. To overcome this limitation, PWR Records promotes monthly workshops for girls, teaching them to play musical instruments; they also promote, in several areas of Brazil, the Jam das Minas [Girl Jam], where all participants are encouraged to try a new instrument and join in the presentation of songs in an improvised collective performance – for example, the Jam das Minas held in Recife in 2017 and nicknamed 'Women Doing Stuff'. The event begins with two workshops, on fanzines and free embroidery, and only at the end of the afternoon is the Jam das Minas truly held, with the following call: 'call your friends, here we have synth, drums and guitar for everyone to play ♥' (Sympla, 2017). The purpose of these initiatives is embodied in the PWR Records editorial: "It's not about talking about being a woman anymore. It's just being her. It's about occupying that space" (PWR, 2019, n/p).

PWR Records has been deepening its activities, remaining faithful to the initial cause: it engages in music distribution, music publishing, music licensing and merchandising, agency, press office, launch strategy, branded content, mentoring, production of edicts and classes/lectures (PWR, 2019). Everything is based in a DIY ethos and *praxis*. In seven years, PWR Records has worked with over 50 bands and female artists, and has taken artists to national and international festivals, such as Bananada Festival (Brazil), SXSW (USA), Rec-Beat Presents (Peru), SIM São Paulo (Brazil) and Luz Del Fuego (Spain). The logics of struggle, contestation and social criticism implemented by PWR Records are in line with the conclusions about the new social movements in the previous section. Thus, music, the use of DIY and the insertion of these young women in the Brazilian underground scene gave rise to an activist involvement in other social causes, and here feminism and the contestation of the precariousness of artistic careers should be highlighted, particularly in the case of women.

Another case is padê editorial,[4] an independent book publisher that narrows down the social group it sets out to promote, as it only publishes books by black, lesbian, transvestite, transgender and bisexual authors. Founded in October 2015 by Tatiana Nascimento and Barbara Esmenia, it was influenced by Eloisa Cartonera, who produced books with cardboard covers. Its name *padê* refers to a recovery of the importance of religions of African origin and resistance strategies: *padê* means a ceremony of the *candomblé* religion, in which Exu – the messenger between the spiritual world and the material world – is offered food, drinks and animal sacrifices. The same approach can be observed in the option for the constant use of lowercase, both in the name of the publisher and the name of the authors published – a practice made famous by feminist philosopher bell hooks (2022). Pereira

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[3] Label PWR RECORDS, *mulheres na musica* [*women in music*], https://www.pwrrecords.org
[4] padê editorial, https://www.facebook.com/pade.editorial/?locale=pt_BR

and Coutinho (2021) discuss this strategy as a way of deconstructing a literary canon that pays little attention to diversity and the need to give a voice to silenced social groups. The use of lowercase in the name is a way of emphasising the writing and its substance to the detriment of the notion of authorship – an issue related to the concern that a publisher should not be associated with narratives of pain and oppression.

Padê editorial is a publishing house based on a DIY logic, in which the founders handcraft all the books. *The Cartonera* and *cartoneras* influence is visible in the use of cardboard on the covers, which keeps production costs down and allows customisation of the covers, making them true works of art. The choice to control the entire production, editing and sales line is a clear political statement, creating a proximity with the author and moving away from the mainstream Brazilian book industry. padê editorial is concerned with the autonomy of the authors it publishes, seeking to ensure that they learn and internalise certain DIY know-how: at the time of the call to publish DIY books by LGBTQIA+ authors, distribution was the responsibility of the authors, since one of the project's objectives was to establish a collaborative relationship between partners and develop skills and strategies related to self-publishing, dissemination and sales so, in addition to having their book published, authors would be left with basic entrepreneurship skills that could provide financial autonomy (Lima, 2018).

The political option is even more visible if we take into consideration that padê editorial only publishes works by social and sexual minorities – that is, groups with no space in the traditional Brazilian literary industry and very little in the independent industry. The two founders talk about their experience of visiting book fairs that are practically monochromatic and cis-gendered, which is not so different from Dalcastagnè's (2012) description of the Brazilian publishing world or Muniz Júnior's (2016) analysis of the Brazilian independent publishing world. From these experiences, we understand the aim of the publishing house: to give voice to a set of silenced narratives, implying the need to change the Brazilian publishing market – which Carvalho and Tomás call 'colonial'. The only way to do this is by giving prominence to other voices: a 'black-affirmed narrative', as Tatiana Nascimento called it in an interview (Lima, 2018).

Padê editorial became known when it decided to make a call for proposals to publish 60 handmade books by lesbian, transvestite, transsexual and bisexual authors. It was eventually supported by the Elas Social Investment Fund [Her Social Investment Fund] and received over 300 applications. Many of the entries involved protest and denunciation – a dimension that the founders decided to abandon because they considered it limiting in term of LGBTQIA+ narratives, opting instead for dissident writings within a dissent that moves away from narratives about pain:

> We want to publish these voices/words/images that contain other narratives about us that are not only about pain, about racism, about hetero-cis-normativity, LGBTQI phobias (...) To take back through written narratives this complexity is also to resist – in this case, to the stereotype that we are beings whose only experience that legitimates or justifies our expressiveness is pain (narrate it, narrate resistance to it). (Tatiana Nascimento, interview in Lima, 2018)

It was a brave decision, as it had the potential to create a stir in the LGBTQIA+ movement itself, with accusations of escapism, but what we saw was a choice that further complexified the option for dissidence and diversity, refusing to accept that marginalised bodies are defined only by marginality and the violence by which they are targeted. padê editorial is inscribed in the triple transgression and/or liberation of triple burden of Kilomba (2022): the first burden is the (silenced) voice of women; the second burden relates to the fact that only lesbian women are published; the third burden concerns the focus on black women, who carry in their bodies a triple burden that is not felt by white women. The books of this publisher are therefore deviant geographies that break with the established pattern of the representation of who writes books in Brazil and the stereotypical representation of Brazilian women (Pereira and Coutinho, 2021). The publication of the books is concerned with the place of speech, with silenced voices given a hearing, which appeals to the majority of the publisher's readers, who are members of the LGBTQIA+ and/or black communities.

Like PWR Records (and other Brazilian publishers such as Nega Lilu Editora, Editora Brejeira Malagueta, Malê and Coletivo Narrativas Negras), padê editorial is more than a DIY publishing house: it is an artivist DIY publishing house that is concerned with human rights and is interested in publishing a range of diverse voices, even if this means lower profits. There remains a political stamp of wanting to read non-hegemonic narratives in publishing circuits, whether literary or musical. In Threadgold's (2018) perspective, agents who have reflexively chosen this path strategically make a decision that allows them more time and space for their creative passions and socio-political interests at the expense of greater financial security (France and Threadgold, 2016; Threadgold, 2023).

When we examine this Brazilian reality, we must question Ferreira's (2016) approach, which considers that youth and underground scenes have undergone a significant shift from the *art of resistance* to an *art of existence*. In fact, in the work and activities of PWR and padê editorial, we can identify a strong political dimension, especially from the point of view of creating stages of expression for the population and social strata that tend to be culturally,

artistically and socially invisible. In fact, the transition from an *art of resistance* to an *art of existence* constitutes added value for the advancement of post-subcultural studies and theories that, to date, have been guided by a devaluation of the political dimension of the underground and DIY scenes. It is undeniable that in the Brazilian reality, and with artists and individuals involved in new social movements, DIY careers are an essential strategy to escape poverty and ensure an income (Guerra, 2021), but also to create emerging typologies of arts of existence.

So far, we have argued for the importance of 'choosing poverty' (Threadgold, 2018). Although we consider that this classification still has the capacity to portray the reality of many artists and individuals with artistic careers, especially in peripheral and semi-peripheral countries such as Brazil and Portugal, we cannot help but wonder about the changes it might undergo in its conceptualization. From the outset, by understanding the use of a DIY *praxis* and ethos as a strategy for the pursuit of a typology of action of 'art of existence', we are creating change. It is important to note that the choice of poverty often comes from a privileged individual context. Only a few people can opt for an art of existence over an art of resistance, not least because they possess sufficient economic, social and cultural power to insert themselves into a certain 'place of speech' (Ribeiro, 2017).

As Leal (2011) notes, the existence of these publishers is crucial to create and develop the presence of racialised, LGBTQIA+ and feminist themes in the musical and literary field and, consequently, to legitimise in this same field the bands and authors who choose to publish. A particularity of the DIY projects we analysed was the need to establish close relationships with other publishers or key people in the respective fields. We are talking about publishers comprising only the founders, who take on various tasks, from planning to production and dissemination; this makes it essential to have social actors who, despite not being officially linked to the publishers, share the interests and causes they advocate. These mutual aid strategies, despite originating from a need or a 'love for what is necessary', are also the basis of a different way of doing business, a position refuting the neoliberal capitalist values of competition above all else.

When we talk about utopias working backwards, we refer primarily to the causes that both projects defend. Above all, we cannot forget that this utopian quest is a utopian *praxis*: a utopia constituted by actions and practices that aim to change the world. The manifestations and *modus operandi* of this utopian *praxis* congregate a composite of techniques of slow editions in which each book/disc is a *true handmade labour of love* – of the control of all the steps of artistic-creative production, of the realisation of workshops/festival in partnership with publishers and relevant institutions in the LGBTQIA+, anti-racist and feminist milieu, of the mutual help and social responsibility inherent to each process and activity. This *modus operandi* is a (powerful) way of politicising the work and creating alternatives to the hegemonic market.

As well as being spaces of practical utopia, of a radical embodied *habitus*, these projects are also proof that a different reality is possible. As we have seen, none of the publishing houses confines itself to the publication of books/discs; they are also responsible for workshops, debates and conferences, becoming places for discussions, where new ideas are debated and disseminated – an essential dimension for the creation of social capital and networks (Crossley, 2020) and a vital way of disseminating the ethos of the movements (McKay, 1998). However, they are more than this: since these discussion spaces are spaces of representation, they are spaces in which social groups that have not always had a voice can address their concerns freely. They thus enable new experiences that break with the previous ones and expand into all areas of social life: they enhance a radical *habitus* thirsty for activism in various complementary dimensions, which is why it is unsurprising that several of the founders of these publishing houses are simultaneously involved in anti-racist, feminist, LGBTQIA+ and environmentalist causes. We know there is a debate about the need to recover the concept of resistance to youth studies or to focus on a line that addresses the new forms of politicisation of agents based on a celebratory and carnival logic (Pàmpols and Porzio, 2005). However, what we see in the publishers we have analysed is a conjugation of the two dimensions that, if we apply the concept of radical *habitus*, cannot be dissociated, as dispositions towards resistance or anti-capitalist *praxis* will impinge on various dimensions of social life – notably the choice of employment (Guerra, 2018). Hence, we see the founders of padê editorial in constant tension to keep the doors open, but this is a consequence they were already expecting given the state of the Brazilian cultural market and their bet on a very specific market niche.

'I KNOW WHO I AM': FROM LISBON TO THE WORLD – PRÍNCIPE DISCOS

In 2011, Mário Matos, José Moura, Nelson Gomes and Pedro Gomes founded the label Príncipe Discos[5] and in that same year it released its first project, *Eu sei quem sou* [I know who I am], by Marfox.[6] This project is rooted

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[5] Príncipe Discos, https://principediscos.wordpress.com/
[6] DJ Marfox is the main figure of a group of musicians from the so-called second generation of immigrants from the former African colonies, born and raised in Portugal, often in social housing estates on the outskirts of the country's capital; inspired

in a dense social network of alternative music that cements a Lisbon scene: Nelson Gomes and Pedro Gomes had great experience in organising live concerts through the association Filho Único[7] and each already had a solo music career in alternative rock projects; José Moura, besides being the owner of Flur Discos,[8] has a career as a DJ and is part of the Zonk collective, which organises concerts; Mário Matos works at Flur Discos and is a musician. It is no coincidence that, in an interview, José Moura declared that the label worked as a cooperative and was based on values such as local and traditional, and a vision of the future away from the dictates of the market. In fact, playing with the name 'prince', José Moura reveals that the use of this word was intentional as the publishing house seeks to discover a hidden nobility. Very close to a utopian *praxis*, these social actors created this structure to allow the music from the peripheries to be heard in the city centre (Elliot, 2022). Marcon (2013) stated that there were no great paths for underground music, and all the *kuduro* and beat artists from the periphery, to be released and have an artistic career. Buraka Som Sistema[9] proved that it was possible, but it was Príncipe Discos that systematically sought to invest in and explore musical genres effectively confined to the peripheries, such as *kuduro* and *funaná*, and certainly the legitimacy and subcultural capital that the founders had in the Lisbon underground scene allowed doors to open.

As Marfox sums up: "The label gave a stamp and an identity to many lives in the periphery" (quoted in Gomes, 2022). However, perhaps the most relevant impact was to allow the crossing of audiences that had not come together before but could do so because of the music. The meeting point was MusicBox,[10] where Príncipe held its Noites da Príncipe [Prince Nights], in which artists and agencies, but also young people from the peripheral neighbourhoods, would listen to the same music they played in their homes at a space central to Lisbon's nightlife. A lot had changed since the 1990s and early twenty-first century, when the only possibilities for playing music were the parties and balls organised by residents' or immigrants' associations, or the clubs that bet on the success of 'African nights'. The scene spread beyond the neighbourhoods and allowed central Lisbon to get to know figures who were better known abroad than in Portugal (except for the peripheral neighbourhoods, where they were a reference), such as DJ Marfox, Nigga Fox, DJ Firmeza and Nídia. The importance of Príncipe's Nights was not only commercial; they also had an ethical dimension: to expose the music made in the peripheries and to show another face of territories that are still very stigmatised. The political reach of the label, visible in the words of Pedro Gomes, another founder of Príncipe, is undeniable: "White Lisbon is finally getting closer to black Lisbon and vice-versa."

Noites da Príncipe, as well as the influence of Príncipe Discos all over the city, can be seen as utopian spaces in a segregated, gentrified and touristified context. It is no coincidence that Brown (2021) states that *kuduro* is one of the musical genres that most enables utopian spaces. We can also involve Príncipe here, not only because it is a musical genre highly influenced by technology – which allows it to circulate relatively independently of the dictates of the market and mixing styles and genres from both the Global South and North – but also because it breaks away from the unequal relationship with the West.

The creations of Príncipe Discos also oppose a vision tributary to Hebdige's symbolic resistance (Guerra, 2020c), which understood consumption and dancing to the sound of *kuduro a*nd the beat as a way for people to forget their social context while in the present on the dance floor. However, this is a reductive reading of the empowering capacity of music – which, as Jameson (2005) puts it, proposes a utopian 'energy' that motivates collective and communal artistic creation, an impulse that energises social and artistic movements. According to Brown (2010), we are facing 'bodily utopias' in which the body is rehabilitated as a space of joy and jubilation, and there is nothing better than electronic and dance music to demonstrate the Promethean possibilities of human connection through music (Mbembe, 2005).

Brown's (2021) utopian vision argues that a *praxis* of fun and pleasure is necessary for social transformation, and it is possible to find this utopian impulse in discos and bars – spaces marked by dance and music in which cooperative relationships are chiselled despite wider contexts of inequality. Belanciano (2020) questions whether all the narratives about the 'new Lisbon' or the 'African Lisbon' are narratives of love or rather ways of neutralising the relations of racial inequality that are still the norm in Portuguese society (Contador, 2001). Príncipe Discos itself is not without some of these tensions at its core since four white men founded and operate a label that edits

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by the music of their family origins (especially Angolan *kuduro* and Cape Verdean *funaná*), they created a beat that has left its mark on the world electronic scene.

[7] Filho Único is a concert promoter and agency founded in 2007.

[8] Flur Discos is an independent record shop that has existed in Lisbon since 2021. In addition to selling records, Flur also has a very intense editorial program of Portuguese and international independent music.

[9] Buraka Som Sistema was a Portuguese band, with Portuguese and Angolan members, whose sound is associated with *kuduro*. Their first major success was the song 'Yah!' in 2006, featuring Petty, followed by another success with 'Wawaba'. They were among the Portuguese musical projects with the most international projection in the 2000s and 2010s and are linked to the Enchufada label.

[10] MusicBox opened in 2006. It is a bar, nightclub and concert hall with its own programme, located in Cais do Sodré.

and deals mainly with black artists. Mário Matos, one of the founders, admits that, 'In the beginning, artists were like, "We've never seen these motherfuckers, and they are coming here to take our music". So, I had to show them that I work for them only' (in Bloom, 2020). If we follow Brown's (2010) concept of corporal utopia, such a tense relationship can only be overcome on the dance floor and in the moving of the bodies to potentiate the utopian 'energy' opened by the possibilities of human connection. It is not only researchers and cultural interlocutors who admit this utopian possibility, but also the musicians themselves – despite admitting the tensions and contradictions around *kuduro* and other African music, racism and prejudice.

RESIST TO EXIST OR EXIST TO RESIST? DESIRES FOR CHANGE, UTOPIAS AND ARTISTIC FIELDS

The dichotomies resistance/celebration or *art of existence/art of resistance* have less and less conceptual value when we analyse new artistic practices, especially in countries of the Global South. If we apply a Bourdieusian perspective we see that it is impossible to clearly separate the *art of existence* from the *art of resistance*, not least because one is the stage for the other's performance.

Activism – or the disposition towards activism based on the concept of *habitus* (Santos and Guerra, 2017) – spreads across various dimensions of social life and influences a set of social practices, such as lifestyle, modes of consumption and even the job/profession chosen. This translates the *arts of existence*. It is only possible to understand the financial difficulties experienced by these social actors, by understanding the *illusio* (or, in the language of social movements, the symbolic rewards) that underlies these choices. It is the *illusio*, the confidence that 'the game is worth playing', that justifies 'choosing poverty', which explains why some of the founders of these projects already have in their trajectory some (failed) attempts to create publishing houses directed to the LGBTQIA+ movement or *kuduro*. However, although there is a choice of poverty, there is also a 'place of speech' (Ribeiro, 2017) that must be recognized. Remember that these social actors have a privileged place of action in relation to others.

There is a desire to change the world, to achieve a form of utopia. Still, it is a utopia that has a place, to paraphrase Thomas Moore, and to serve as an example and pedagogical agent for all those who share the same values and dispositions. This is why PWR Records, apart from its recordings, offers a series of workshops to teach girls to play musical instruments, or the *Jam das Minas*, with seminars on how to make fanzines and other underground cultural practices. It is also worth mentioning that padê editorial has workshops to help its authors become independent through self-publishing practices and dissemination of their work. Moreover, it is justifiable that Príncipe Discos wants to put *kuduro* and *batida* on a global pop music ballast, placing these sounds at the centre – outside the periphery – of the city and the world, and celebrating them at Noites da Príncipe. A practical utopia can only exist through a constant and embedded utopian *praxis*, a *radical habitus*, which applies itself in all dimensions of life and is enduring. And when we look at the strategies of the publishers as a form of utopian working, as a utopian *praxis* that encompasses all dimensions of the lives of the social actors involved, we can understand how spurious the long discussions between the subcultural and the post-subcultural schools are, and how inconclusive the analyses of whether the concept of resistance should be maintained or abandoned might be.

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