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Civil society organizations and international cooperation agencies in the co-production of a national agenda for Afro-descendants in Argentina: Reflections on a SAICD project.¹

By Pablo Gustavo Rodriguez Javier Surasky and Marta M. Maffia

ABSTRACT

This article analyzes an International Cooperation Project, “Support to the Afro-Argentinian Population and its Community-based Organizations,” funded by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (Spanish acronym, AECID). It was implemented between 2008 and 2010 and was led by the Cape Verdean Association of Mutual Aid, located at Dock Sud, a town to the south of the city of Buenos Aires in Argentina.

The opportunity structure created by this project allowed the leaders of Argentine organizations to draw resources to benefit their own people, and thereby strengthen their respective leaderships. Afro-Argentine organizations adopted the international cooperation jargon and learned to frame their interests under the categories of strategic actions accepted by AECID. In supporting this project the Spanish agency, in turn, fulfilled its mission, justified its existence, and offered evidence to the donors of the correct use of its funds, according to the guidelines of its Strategic Plan.

KEYWORDS: Afro Latin Americans, Argentina, migration, social anthropology, social movements

RESUMEN

Se analiza un proyecto de cooperación internacional denominado “Apoyo a la población afro-argentina y sus organizaciones de base” financiado por la Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional al Desarrollo (AECID). Desarrollado entre los años 2008 y 2010 y liderado por la Sociedad de Socorros Mutuos Unión Caboverdeana de Dock Sud, localidad cercana a Buenos Aires, Argentina.

La estructura de oportunidades creada por este proyecto permitió a los líderes de las organizaciones argentinas canalizar recursos para beneficiar a su propia gente y fortalecer de ese modo sus respectivos liderazgos. Las organizaciones afroargentinas adoptaron la jerga de la cooperación internacional y aprendieron a enmarcar sus intereses bajo las categorías de acciones estratégicas aceptadas por la AECID. Al apoyar el proyecto esta última cumplió su misión, justificó su existencia y ofreció a sus donantes evidencia del correcto uso de sus fondos de acuerdo a las directivas establecidas en su Plan Estratégico.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Afrolatinoamericanos, antropología social, Argentina, migración, movimientos sociales

This work analyzes the birth of a project jointly funded by the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (Spanish acronym, AECID) with the Cape Verdean Mutual Aid Association of Dock Sud, called “Support to the Afro-Argentine population and its community-based organizations” (hereafter, the “AECID project”).

This constitutes the first time an international cooperation agency has recognized the existence of a population of African origin in Argentina, which has long thought of itself as exclusively white. This African origin population remained invisible in censuses, school texts, and media. The aim of this article is to show how a greater visibility of Afro populations in Argentina was created through the formation of a temporary union of several local Afro organizations that was designed to carry out specific actions. This kind of joint venture has seldom been undertaken in the fragmented local field of Afro activism. Moreover, in naming as its target “Afro-descendants”, the project provided a broad classificatory category that was adopted and used in subsequent political claims and ethnic struggles. Finally, the project contributed to the empowerment of Afro activists in general and of women and the younger generation in particular: it offered the chance for people from these groups to manage its operations, interact with international agencies, and to train others.

Thanks to the rapport achieved by anthropologist Marta Maffia after decades of working with Cape Verdean immigrants in Argentina, our team was given the opportunity, as trusted academics, to participate in the project. Therefore, we attended the prior consultation meetings and the ongoing project management meetings; we also had access to documents and participated in several activities. We attended festivals, debates, training offered by other academics, and also gave some lectures. During the planning and management meetings, note taking was done from a marginal/unobtrusive location, with a low level of involvement with respect to the role of the Afro organization representatives.

This research was based on participant observation,² interviews, and an analysis of the AECID documents pertaining to its policy concerning this population in the reference period. These documents included Master Plans, the Spanish cooperation strategy in Argentina, 2006–2008, and the Afro-descendants AECID Program for Latin America. Afro Project BLOG event programs and the Activity Report presented by the AECID project manager were also consulted. Audio and video recording was used for record making, as well as field

notes and photographs.

Spanish Cooperation in Argentina

Spanish cooperation with Latin America and the Caribbean region began soon after its accession to the European Union. From 2008 to 2010, Spain was the sixth largest development aid donor worldwide and the second largest Official Development Aid (ODA) donor in the Americas. It was surpassed only by the USA, which gives a huge amount of money to Colombia to fight against the production of illegal drugs.

Much of the funding Spain contributed to International Development Cooperation (IDC) during Zapatero's two terms in office was allocated to multilateral organizations (such as the United Nations and its funds and programs, including, for example, the UNDP and UNICEF). This contradicted the logic of traditional donors, which tend to channel contributions through bilateral routes, along which their actions are more visible, which gives them more effective political use of the aid. The reason for this becomes clearer when we take into account the fact that the increase in resources assigned to AECID was not matched by a corresponding increase in personnel or in institutional structures. This caused difficulties for effective resource management. The solution was to transfer money and delegate its management to international bodies. In this sense, between 2004 and 2009 Spanish cooperation widened its reach.

The main document guiding AECID actions is its Master Plan (DP).³ Since its creation in 1998, AECID has had three such plans. The first covered the period 2001–2004. The second and third plans were in force during the periods analyzed here: 2005–2008 and 2009–2012, respectively. They will be referred to here as Master Plan (DP) II and Master Plan (DP) III.

In Master Plan (DP) II Argentina was categorized as a “preferential country” in Latin America. In Master Plan (DP) III the categories changed, and Argentina was included in “Group C: Partnership with Middle-income Countries to Consolidate Development Gains”. In both cases, this meant building a relationship of “allies” in the IDC world, which was clearly established in Master Plan (DP) III.

The reclassification of Argentina was due to its macroeconomic profile as an Upper Middle Income Country (UMIC) and to the priority given to the fight against extreme poverty in the international cooperation agenda. Both factors led some countries cooperating with Argentina to stop cooperating with the country but Spain continued. In fact, in 2008 Spanish

overseas aid to Argentina reached a historic high of US\$62 million. Spain needed to find particularly vulnerable sectors within Argentine society towards which they could channel cooperation projects.

Master Plan (DP) II (2005–2008) was in force when the project “Support to the Afro-Argentine population and its community-based organizations” began; it included only one reference to Afro descendants calling to perform specific actions accompanying the development process of these groups.

In 2009 the Master Plan (DP) III (2009–2012) devoted a whole chapter to the “Policy for the development of childhood and youth, indigenous peoples and Afro-descendant population”. The general goal of this policy was:

To contribute to the recognition, enjoyment and full practice of the rights of the Afro-descendant population, concentrating efforts on support and strengthening activities, initiatives and processes of public institutions and social organizations allowing protection and full development of the Afro-descendant populations of Latin America and the Caribbean in conditions of equality and respect for ethnic difference and identity. (AECID, 2009:175).

In Master Plans (DP) II and III similar language appears—*race, ethnic group, identity, racism, discrimination, gender, and invisibility*.

The AECID document, “Spanish Cooperation Strategy in Argentina 2006–2008,” makes no reference to the African or Afro-descendant population, nor does it mention the topics of discrimination and racism in its objectives and priorities in the country. Argentina had never before participated in AECID programs in support of Afro-descendant populations; the project described here was the first instance of this—hence its importance.

Cape Verdean Mutual Aid Association of Dock Sud

The other actor in the project referred to here is the Cape-Verdean Association of Mutual Aid of Dock Sud (Spanish acronym SSM-UC),⁴ located in Avellaneda County. The two main Cape-Verdean associations in Argentina are the oldest in the world: the Cultural and Sport Cape Verdean Association of Ensenada, founded in 1927, and the SSM-UC, founded in 1932. Both are located in Buenos Aires Province.⁵ This work refers briefly to the latter, as it is the association that drives the cooperation project analyzed here.

Currently, SSM-UC of Dock Sud has about 300 members. It has its own building, which houses a library, a gym, and a small dining hall. It was built and is maintained by its

members with regular contributions and funds raised at various festivals for this purpose. It was created, as explained by Adriano Rocha, one of its former presidents, “as a result of the difficult moments the community was facing by that time ... for helping each other”. We should not forget that these kinds of institutions were founded in Argentina during periods of national or international economic crisis, when there were high rates of unemployment. Therefore, they mainly covered primary needs such as employment, accommodation, medical and funerary services, and, secondarily, entertainment and cultural activities. SSM-UC began operations in the home of one of its founders, Joaquin Frances, in Avellaneda City. It was later moved to temporary headquarters in the neighborhood of La Boca, before it was settled at its present location at Dock Sud, Avellaneda County.

In order to understand the aid project analyzed here, it is worth pointing out that in the 1990s some young people belonging to the second and third generations of Cape Verdean immigrants began to assume new identity positions. Unlike many of the original immigrants, they define themselves as *black Cape Verdeans born in Argentina*, and they define their culture as *Cape Verdean with African influence* (Correa 2000).⁶ They adopted strategies aimed at “visibilizing”, differentiating, and appraising their identity and African heritage. They consider themselves to be successors of the struggle of a minority who in the 1960s and 1970s participated in the liberation process that led to Cape Verde’s independence in 1975. This experience became the base for the younger generations’ current forms of activism.

The main Afro-descendant activists of the 1990s were women. Some developed their “activist capital”⁷ thanks to their “school education”. The most outstanding member of the group is Miriam Gomes, from the second generation, who is a literature professor and has also been president of the SSM-UC, Dock Sud, for the periods 1993–1995, 2007–2009, 2009–2011, and 2011–2013.

In terms of her public activism, Gomes stands out because of her exposure to the public, for example, through her university post, and appearances on radio, press and television, as well as through her participation in national and international events. At the beginning of her leadership as head of the SSM-UC she represented the interests of a minority; after serving three terms as president of the association, however, she gained wide recognition from the community as a result of the activities she had undertaken towards the valorization of things Cape Verdean in particular and of things African in general. This acknowledgement awarded a greater legitimacy both to her discourse and to her political practices.

Other institutions and organizations that were part of the AECID Project are the

Cultural and Sports Cape Verdean Association of Ensenada, Cape Verdean Descendants Circle of Mar del Plata, Africa Lives, the Argentine-Brazilian Cultural Association “A Turma da Bahiana”, African Union in the Southern Cone, and the Association of Senegalese Residents and their Progeny.⁸

The First Project for Afro-descendant Populations in Argentina

In January 2008, as president of the SSM/UC, Professor Gomes began to design a project for offering help to Afro-descendant organizations in Argentina, intending to apply to AECID for funding.⁹ This was the first time that this organization had run a development cooperation project.

In March 2008, AECID and the SSM/UC invited several members of the Afro organizations to participate in a workshop at the SSM/UC head office in Dock Sud (Avellaneda), in order to work on the project design. Miriam Gomes, Javier Calviño, the Director of AECID’s technical office of cooperation and two women consultants acted as organizers. Other participants were: the South Africa Embassy Political Advisor, a member of the Cape Verdean Association of Ensenada, two Afro-Brazilians, two members of the SSM-UC, two people from the organization “Africa Vive”, Dr Dina Picotti (an academic), and Ana Ottenheimer, an anthropologist from our research team. A number of other groups attended subsequent meetings, including the Cape-Verdeans Descendants Circle from Mar del Plata, the Argentine-Brazilian Cultural Association “A Turma da Bahiana”, the African Union in the Southern Cone and the Association of Senegalese residents and their descendants,¹⁰ some recent African immigrants, Afro-Americans, and academics.

The Afro field is highly fragmented as a result of ideological and political differences, as well as issues to do with resource management, leadership, and representation. Other problems include the question of who should be considered Afro-descendant, Afro-Argentine, or African; there are also divisions among natives and foreigners, activists, academics, and practitioners of Afro traditions. These differences often lead to tensions, conflicts, and ephemeral alliances between the social actors, which creates a level of dynamism in the field. The implementation of the AECID project was not exempt from disagreements between the different participant organizations, and questions were asked about Miriam Gomes’s leadership. Some of the organizations that were convened early on, such as the House of Indo-Afroamerican Culture of Santa Fe, the Cultural and Sport Cape Verdean Association of Ensenada, and the Afrocultural Movement, did not, in the end, participate in the project

planning process, although they did carry out some of the activities.¹¹

The project submission deadline was March 25. The workshop participants raised the issue of a need for statistics on Afro-descendant populations in Argentina. In addition, a proposal was made to train members of the Afro organizations in several areas: in the promotion of women and young people, in reproductive health, addictions, human rights, early motherhood, and in Afro culture and identity. It was also proposed that it would be useful to create a website for the Afro world.

The project was finally approved by AECID, and the Agreement Act between SSM-UC and AECID was signed on October 24, 2008. Javier Calviño, Adalberto Dias, the Cape Verde Republic Honorary Consul in Argentina, and Luis Sagol (former Avellaneda mayor), as well as representatives of AECID, SSM-UC, Afro-descendant organizations, and academics also attended the meeting.

Attendees were informed that the project would last for one year and that it had several components: the first was to strengthen participating organizations through training workshops on requested topics. The second was to create job training for young people. A third component referred to the “quantification” of the Afro population in Argentina. A fourth consisted of an awareness campaign to be achieved through creation of a website. Finally, the fifth component aimed to modify old and add new primary and secondary school books, in which the content would refer to Afro groups in Argentina.

According to the AECID project document, the beneficiaries were the Argentine populations who were descendants of enslaved Africans, more recent immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa, and Afro-descendant populations who had arrived in Argentina from Brazil, Uruguay, Peru, and Caribbean countries.. The document extrapolates to Argentina the situation of Afro peoples in other Latin-American countries, since there are no national statistics to characterize the local situation:

The socio-economic context of the project is characterized by high poverty and exclusion levels. In this regard Argentina is not different from Latin-American countries since indigenous and Afro peoples are the poorest of the region, they present the worst socio economic indicators, have low cultural recognition and access to decision-making instances, and they suffer racial and gender discrimination. The legal context of the project has as a reference the Argentine Constitution and the National Plan against Discrimination. The organizational context of the project is that of the Afro community organizations. The organization level of their groups in Argentina is very diverse and

they are heterogeneous. Unfortunately, there is little information available ... The statistical context of the Project is that of mere invisibility and in this regard Argentina is not original either. Afro-Argentines' living conditions and place of residence are unknown. It is a population that has been invisibilized as it has not been registered as such in the population census through the appropriate questions. Afro-Argentine community is one of the most hidden and denied social groups. The project will be implemented in a context of discrimination. In addition to the personal accounts where episodes of discrimination are related, the Afro-Argentine community has allegations made in court. (AECID Project Document, p. 3)

Among the proposed actions and the supplies required, the following are mentioned: equipment for the SSM/UC, workshops for women's networks, internships for young people, statistical information on Afro-Argentinian populations, the design and launch of an awareness-raising website, and training for primary and secondary school teachers on subjects that pertain to Afro-descendant people. A follow-up joint committee coordinated the planned activities. It was composed of one representative from each of the organizations participating in the project.

Some of the Afro organization representatives held meetings with the National Institute against Discrimination, Xenophobia and Racism (INADI), and the Statistics and Census National Institute (INDEC).¹² The aim was to add a question to the National Census of Population and Housing 2010, allowing the identification of people of African descent.¹³ The question was placed on the census and the project helped to raise awareness of the issue.

Another objective was to prepare the Afro-descendant population, especially young people, for the world of work. Courses on carpentry, information technology, English, professional cooking, and soccer arbitration were offered. Some were made in connection with ADESO (Association for Social Development)—an Argentinean NGO. This organization also received economic support from AECID for developing a further project, "Work opportunities for young Cape Verdeans in situations of unemployment and poverty".

For the media, the most noteworthy activities were three festivals. We contributed to the organization of the first two. The first was "Black Argentina" and was held in May 2009 at Bauen Hotel in the Autonomous City of Buenos Aires. Its name was a matter of some discussion, but all the proposals focused on relating Argentina with blackness—this association being denied or resisted by the national imaginary. The slogan that accompanied the name was also agreed at a meeting among project members: "Presence, Conscience, Pride

and Culture”. Its purpose was to contribute “to the visibilization process of the African descent presence in Argentina. Expressing its contribution to society and culture and highlighting its identity and worldview” (Afro Project Blog).

Around eight hundred people attended this festival, where the project was presented to the general public. Hotels were fully booked and many people failed to sign up for the show. However, for those who did attend, the festival offered exponents of African and Afro-American art, such as Afro-Argentine *candombe* music and dance group “La familia” (The Family). The “Afro-cultural Movement” staged a show of Angolan capoeira, Afro-Brazilian songs, and Afro-Uruguayan *candombe*. “Africa Sembé” presented some of the traditional music and dance of Guinea and “Los negros de miércoles” (The Wednesday Blacks) performed Afro-Peruvian music. The event had significant coverage in some national newspapers, such as *La Nación*, *Clarín* and *Página/12*. An interview with Miriam Gomes, the main organizer of the festival, was broadcast on radio and television.

An evaluation meeting was held—in which we participated. Criticism focused on a lack of coordination in the allocation of tasks, the insufficient room available to accommodate all of the attendants, and the fact that they were not allowed by hotel owners to offer food and drink to the audience. Nevertheless, the overall impression was that the events had been very positive and it was concluded that the objectives were achieved.

The second Black Argentina Festival was held on September 26 and 27, 2009 in the Espacio Cultural Nuestros Hijos (ECuNHi) cultural center;¹⁴ admission was free. The center comprises 17 hectares on which stand several buildings that belonged to the Argentine Navy School of Mechanics (Spanish acronym ESMA) until 1998. During the last military dictatorship (1976–1983), this was the location of the largest and most active “clandestine center of arrest.”¹⁵ It housed about 5,000 missing detainees of both sexes, many of whom were tortured and killed there. In 2004, the government created from the property a “space for memory and for the promotion and defense of human rights”;¹⁶ on January 31, 2008, it was handed over to the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo Association,¹⁷ to be administered as a cultural center and art school. Seven months later, the site was declared a National Historic Landmark by a decree¹⁸ of the National Executive Power; UNESCO member states approved it as an International Center for the Promotion of Human Rights.

Afro activists associate their “invisibility” in Argentine society with the “disappearance” of people that occurred during the military dictatorship. The ECuNHI was selected to host the second Argentina Negra Festival because its history made it a symbolic place, appropriate for addressing the “visibilization” of Afro populations long ignored in

Argentina. Moreover, on a practical level, it also had more space than the hotel rented for the first festival: this time, nobody was unable to enter. Organizers estimated that 5,000 people attended over the course of the two-day event.

Afro-Brazilian dances and Argentine *candombe* were performed. There were debate panels with activists, artists, and intellectuals on issues such as “Afro art and culture in the Río de la Plata: present time and future challenges” (moderated by one of our team us) and “Politics and social organization: struggles, resistances and occupation of places”. Films were shown and there were photography and plastic art exhibitions. Again, there were African, Afro-Latin American, and Afro-Argentinian music groups. Many of these activities were held simultaneously at different venues within the property, so the organizing team was distributed in order to observe the various events. The Afro activists were protagonists throughout, while academics and others occupied a secondary place, supporting the organization.

The third and final festival, “Black Argentina III is Woman!” was again held at the ECuNH on November 6 and 7, 2010. The aim here was to highlight the actions of women in various contexts: one of the objectives of the project was to empower Afro-Argentine women. There were speeches by leaders of some organizations—Pocha Lamadrid from Africa Lives, Lucia Molina from the Indo-Afroamerican Culture House of Santa Fe; as well as by Isa Soares, Carmen Platero, Miriam Gomes, and young women from the SSM-UC of Dock Sud, among others. Audiovisual presentations were shown and there were open Afro dance classes. There were two debate panels: “Woman, politics and society” and “Woman, art and culture”, and several Afro music groups performed on stage.

During the project, seminars on African and Afro-American culture were given by renowned Argentine scholars. One member of our team also was in charge of a seminar. The topics included race relations in America, Afro-American religions, stereotypes and images of black people, and the history of slavery in Argentina; the talks also covered key features of African, Afro-American and indigenous thinking, and African immigration to Argentina, among other topics. Between 15 and 20 Afro people attended every seminar, some of whom were granted scholarships for this purpose.

Other activities included: a) an art exhibition, b) a conference on Afro-Argentinian culture held in La Matanza—a county in Buenos Aires province with a great participation of Afro-Argentines; and c) the recording of the CD “Black Sounds in Argentina”, which was presented at the General San Martín Cultural Center in Buenos Aires; it was distributed without charge among community institutions.

It is important to highlight the workshop, “Leadership, post-Durban process and

Millennium Goals,” which was taught by Celeo Alvarez Casildo¹⁹ at the National Technological University (UTN)²⁰ in Avellaneda in November 2009. Attendees included members of the Cape Verdean community, the organization Africa Lives, and the Association of Senegalese Residents in Argentina, as well as the director of *Quilombo* magazine, Dinah Schonhaut, and anthropologist Marta Maffia. Alvarez Casildo explained in detail the Durban and post-Durban process. The participants were later divided into small groups in which the Millennium Development Goals were discussed. The conclusions of each group were shared with the others, which allowed a fruitful exchange of ideas and the chance to consider actions that could be taken within organizations in the future.

Two of the young Argentinian women who participated in this workshop benefited from a scholarship to attend for a few months the Leaders Training School of the Organization for Community and Ethnic Development (ODECO) at Ceibal, Honduras. Some of these activities were carried out with the participation of the Foundation of Brazilian Studies (FUNCEB), ADESO, Avellaneda Town Hall, the Ethnographic Museum of the University of Buenos Aires, and other institutions²¹ that sponsored the events or with whom agreements were signed. The project was granted a six months extension, finishing in 2009. Its results were published in an activity report approved by AECID. In 2010, the SSM/UC presented a second project to AECID—the “Support Program to Afro-descendant population for social inclusion”. It began in 2012 and was mainly focused on training people “for the world of work”.

Some Conclusions

In funding the project “Support to the Afro-Argentinian population and its community-based organizations”, AECID was the first international agency to recognize the existence of Afro-descendant populations in Argentina. The project was led by the representative of a Cape Verdean association, Miriam Gomes, —an organization that has people with seniority, experience, and organizational management skills. These skills enabled her to convene a group of other African organizations in a joint work experience project, which has seldom been seen in Argentina, given the fragmented nature of the local field of Afro activism.

The ‘collective’ formed around the project had a brief existence and was dissolved at its conclusion. However, it achieved very positive results in relation to its objectives, in terms of raising the visibility of the black population within Argentine society, increased recognition by at least some of the provincial and national government agencies, the

empowering of its members, and an experience of working together that could be recovered in the future. As a result, Afro activists have developed the language of development to improve their relations with the outside world (Gimeno 2007) by taking advantage of a structure of political opportunities²⁵ (Frigerio and Lamborghini 2011). A further result is the experience of coordination and mutual transactions, and AECID's support is now a resource that might be mobilized again (Mc Carthy and Zald Mayer 1977; Tilly 1978, 1995) by leaders of the Afro organizations in Argentina. This resource benefits their respective groups, reinforces their personal leadership skills, and increases their activist capital.

In return, the leaders of Afro-descendants have lent to the frame their interests in the strategic actions envisaged by AECID. The latter has fulfilled its mission and provided its donors with evidence of the proper use of funds in accordance with the guidelines established in the Strategic Plan.

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Notes

¹ This paper was published in *Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Anthropology*, 20.3 on 2015/10/26: <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/jlca.12168/full> 533-545. ISSN: 1935-4940:

² We thank Ana Ottenheimer for her fieldwork collaboration.

³ “The Spanish Cooperation Master Plan, of quadrennial nature, constitutes the basic planning element in which sectorial and geographical objectives and priorities are established for Spanish cooperation, as well as the intervention criteria to be observed in the execution of our development policy.” (AECID, Spanish Cooperation Master Plan. Available online at: http://www.aecid.es/es/servicios/publicaciones/Documentos/Plan_director/).

⁴ Its full name in Spanish is Sociedad de Socorros Mutuos Unión Caboverdeana.

⁵ For further details about Cape Verdean associations, see M. Maffia 2010.

⁶ N. Correa 2000. Masters dissertation. “Afroargentinos y caboverdeanos: Las luchas identitarias contra la invisibilidad de la negritud en la Argentina”. National University of Misiones. Pp. 90–91.

⁷ Term provisionally coined by Matonti and Poupeau (2004/5). It is defined as: “capital born from the authority recognized by the group and in that sense ‘unstable’: incorporated under the form of techniques, dispositions to act, intervene or simply obey, covers a set of knowledge and know how able to mobilize during collective, inter and intra party struggles, but also exportable, convertible in other universes, and thus, susceptible of facilitating certain

‘reconversions’ ... The acquired activist capital and the conquered position constitute an opportunity of recognition for individuals that live a loss of status as a result of a mismatch between the aspirations linked to a long school attendance and the reality of the occupied position (social and professional)”.Pp.8 and 9

⁸ For further information on these organizations, see Maffia (2011), Frigerio (2003), and Frigerio and Lamborghini (2011).

⁹ Gomes was assisted by an Argentinian consultant who had previously worked “on initiatives benefitting Afro-descendant communities in other Latin American countries, such as Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama”, according to Gomes’ own report when interviewed by Quilombo Magazine (March 2009, N45. Available online at: <http://www.revistaquilombo.com.ar/revistas/45/q45.htm>).

¹⁰ See Maffia (2011), Frigerio (2003), and Frigerio and Lamborghini (2011).

¹¹ It is beyond the brief of this article to give full account of these activities.

¹² INDEC is the Argentinian government agency responsible for official statistics.

¹³ This question was asked of a sample in the National Population and Housing Census in October 2010. Demographic information included population and economic censuses, life conditions, and labor market national surveys.

¹⁴ Translation: “Cultural Space Our Sons”. See <http://nuestroshijos.org.ar/>.

¹⁵ This is the name by which the concentration camps created by the last military dictatorship in Argentina are officially known.

¹⁶ By law 1412/08.

¹⁷ The Mothers of Plaza de Mayo Association is a human rights body composed mainly of women whose children were ‘disappeared’ by the Argentine armed forces during the “dirty war” carried out by the military dictatorship that ruled the country between 1976 and 1983.

¹⁸ Decree number 1333/2008, dated August 19, 2008.

¹⁹ Celeo Casildo Alvarez is president of the Organization for Ethnic and Community Development (ODECO) and a member of the Central American Black Organization (Spanish acronym ONECA).

²⁰ A course, “Training of young Afro-descendant leaders,” was offered at UTN in 2010 by Professor Miriam Gomes.

²¹ ECuNH*i*, the Quilombo Magazine; Project 34, ONIRA; ONECA, Bejuco and the Organization of Haitian Residents in Argentina also sponsored, and collaborated with, this.

25 Frigerio and Lamborghini, 2011: 26-27. An international structure of political

opportunities made up of networks of Latin-American black movements that have the support of multilateral financing and credit organisms such as the Bank of Interamerican Development (BID) and the World Bank (BM), thus forming part of a transnational movement of claims at continental level. Gradually, the activist could take advantage of a structure of local opportunities given by the development of a new multicultural narrative of the City of Buenos Aires which favours the vindication of ethnical identities and the promotion of their cultures, creating expression fields for the symbolic presence of local and migrant ethnic minorities.