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Decentring the Lettered City: Exile, Transnational Networks, and Josué de Castro's *Centre International pour le Développement* (1964–1973)

Federico Ferretti

Dipartimento di Scienze dell'Educazione "G.M. Bertin", Università di Bologna, Bologna, Italy, federico.ferretti6@unibo.it

Abstract: This paper discusses the relevance of radical scholarship by exploring the case of the Centre International pour le Développement (CID), founded by Brazilian geographer Josué de Castro during his exile in Paris. Drawing upon Latin American works on the "Lettered City" and the evolving role of intellectuals in constructing critical knowledge, I explore new archives revealing the CID's daily (net)working. My argument is that this case suggests new interpretations of the notion of Lettered City, exposing slipperiness and potentialities of radical intellectuals' roles in influencing politics and proposing solutions for global problems. On the one hand, despite Castro's international renown, the CID failed in its mission of involving politicians and "enlightened" businessmen during the Cold War because its purposes clashed with the interests of most of its interlocutors. On the other, the CID's archives show that Castro performed a powerful global networking to circulate ideas that still inspire radical geographers.

Resumo: Esse artigo discute a relevância da pesquisa radical explorando o caso do Centre International pour le Développement (CID) fundado pelo geógrafo brasileiro Josué de Castro durante seu exílio em Paris. Inspirado por trabalhos latino-americanos sobre a "Cidade das Letras" e a evolução do papel dos intelectuais na construção de saberes críticos, exploro novos arquivos que revelam as redes e o funcionamento quotidiano do CID. Defendo que esse caso sugere novas interpretações do conceito de Cidade das Letras, demonstrando as ambiguidades e potencialidades do papel dos intelectuais radicais para influenciar a política e propor soluções para problemas globais. Apesar da fama internacional de Josué, o CID falhou na sua missão de implicar políticos e empresários "iluminados" durante a Guerra Fria, porque os propósitos dele contrastavam com os de seus interlocutores. Do outro lado, os arquivos do CID mostram como Josué organizou uma poderosa rede global de comunicação para difundir ideias que ainda inspiram as geografias radicais.

Keywords: radical geographies, solidarity networks, Lettered City, other geographical traditions, exile

This paper discusses early critical and radical geographies, and the role of engaged scholarship in transforming society, by analysing the little-known case of the CID (*Centre International pour le Développement*), founded in Paris in 1964 by Josué de Castro (1908–1973). Designed as an independent think tank to provide advice for the newly-decolonised "Third World" nations in matters of development, the CID was directly animated by Castro. Until his death in 1973, the

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Brazilian geographer performed there a powerful work of transnational networking to gain people to his cause, circulating ideas to rethink the very notion of development and promoting to this end international meetings, schools and advisory services. A political opponent of the Brazilian military dictatorship and author of successful books on geographies of hunger that were translated in dozens of languages, Castro is a famous name in Brazil, but international scholarly work on his contribution is just beginning (Carter 2018; Davies 2019a, 2019b; Ferretti 2020a, 2021b). A member of the Brazilian parliament, Castro was the Chair of the FAO and Brazil's ambassador at the United Nations site in Geneva in 1963–1964. Recent scholarship has highlighted the originality of Castro's contributions to explore nature–society relations (Davies 2019a) and subaltern geopolitics (Ferretti 2021b), calling for a discovery of Brazilian and Latin American critical geographies (Melgaço 2017).

This paper extends these works in connection with literature addressing histories of radical geographies inside and outside the Anglosphere (Barnes and Sheppard 2019; Clayton 2020; Craggs and Neate 2019; Ferretti and Pedrosa 2018), as well as works addressing anti-racist and anti-colonial networks (Davies 2020; Featherstone 2012) and geographies of internationalism and mobilities of knowledge (Hodder 2016; Hodder et al. 2015; Jöns et al. 2017). Recent geographical scholarship discusses examples of Latin American activism applying horizontal methods that these activists learnt more from daily socio-spatial practices and from indigenous cultures than from ideologies of European origin (Halvorsen 2019; Halvorsen et al. 2019; Radcliffe 2019; Souza 2016). This confirms ideas of political and epistemological pluralism recently highlighted by the Antipode Editorial Collective (2020), as well as the need for intersecting different axes of social critique (Asher 2017; Hopkins 2018). In this paper, I draw upon the conceptual framework of the Lettered City, first elaborated by Latin American authors, providing a model to analyse historically the social relevance of intellectuals, acknowledging the intrinsic contradictions of their roles as figures who first served to reproduce political power. Yet, their functions became increasingly plural and complicated, thanks also to a generation of Latin-American transnational authors of which Castro was part.

In his classical work *The Lettered City*, Angel Rama (1926–1983) provides a spatial history of the "Republic of Letters" in Latin America from colonial times to the rising of "revolutionary" intellectuals. When literacy was a monopoly of the elites, intellectual activities were concentrated in urban centres that were considered as posts of "civilisation", opposed to a "rough" and "barbarous" hinterland where Amerindians, Blacks, caboclos and declassed Europeans were denied both literacy and citizenship. While Rama noted the "highly variable relationship between the larger urban society and the elite city of letters" (Rama 1996:27), it was in urban milieus that, in the 20th century, "the press was the direct beneficiary" (Rama 1996:56) of increasing mass alphabetisation. The circulation of free journals, books and secular forms of knowledge produced in the newly established universities disrupted the former hierarchical and bureaucratic order of the Lettered City, accounting for "the presence of an emergent middle class" (Rama 1996:93) in which the *letrados* were no longer recruited among aristocrats. New literary

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expressions were appropriated by the emerging socialist movements arguing for the use of literacy to perform a "profound social change" (Rama 1996:98). For Rama (1996:177), it was first the case with anarchism: "Of all the ideologies that influenced the city of letters in the 20th century, none was more fertile than the early introduction of anarchist thought", with its free schools and ceaseless publishing activities. Later, a heterogeneous range of political parties and ideologies attracted growing cohorts of intellectuals of proletarian origin who contributed to 20th century insurgencies in Latin America, starting to decentre and to complicate the idea of the Lettered City.

Jean Franco develops further this theme in relation to left-wing cultural policies in Latin America during the Cold War, that is, the period in which Castro performed most of his political and literary activities. Franco argues that, at that time, among Latin American radicals, "writers were more important arbiters of taste, especially among the younger generation, than critics or academics, and more important monitors of political correctness than politicians" (Franco 2002:4–5). Their works attracted students from the countryside, or from urban lower classes, who massively enrolled in the guerrillas. For Franco (2002:88), "64 percent of those who died as a result of counterinsurgency repression were intellectual workers". The Lettered City was then decentred from the urban colonial neighbourhoods to the armed struggle in the *Monte*.

While Castro is not mentioned in Franco's work, it is worth noting that some of his most famous contributions denouncing hunger and social injustices in Brazil were written under the form of novels or short tales (Ferretti 2020b). Some of the writers whose work is discussed by Franco were his acquaintances, namely Chilean poet Pablo Neruda and Brazilian writer Mário de Andrade. Some of them were also among his literary inspirations in the field of socially committed novels denouncing the social conditions of north-eastern Brazil, namely Jorge Amado and Graciliano Ramos. According to Franco, popular culture, including cinema, in which also Castro was interested (Cassarini 2017), succeeded "[i]n breaching the walls of … the lettered city; through this breach, indigenous languages and cultures entered into productive contact with lettered culture" (Franco 2002:10). Significantly, Franco notes that an anti-colonial interest in indigenous cultures is not something that only emerged recently in Latin America: numerous 20th century intellectuals, including "Miguel Angel Ásturias, Alejo Carpentier, Darcy Ribeiro, José María Arguedas, Roa Bastos, Mário de Andrade … were engaged in ethnographic studies in their own backlands [and] based their claims of Latin American originality on the fragments and survivals of non-Western cultures" (Franco 2002:161).

Marilena Chauí provides a Brazilian interpretation of the Lettered City by considering the *letrado* as "an intellectual figure linked to the legal and juridical, and the political, foundations of state formation" (Conde 2011:xix) and playing a key role in establishing the foundational myths of the Brazilian nation. The figure of the intellectual corresponded with that of the lawyer/bureaucrat whose social position was rather due to nobility of birth than to study, guaranteeing the continuity of state power between colonial and postcolonial times. For Chauí (2000:89), such feudal mentality persists today, as "popular classes perceive the

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state as the power of the others". According to Chauí, Brazilian intellectuals contributed to the naturalisation of social differences, which rendered unthinkable any idea of swift social mobility. Yet, like Rama and Franco, Chauí (2006:1) also discusses the roles of socially engaged intellectuals who criticise "social relations and values, like the utopian socialists, the anarchists and the Marxists did". Chauí remains pessimistic about intellectuals in Brazil, observing how the "committed" scholars of the traditional Left mostly worked for the hegemony of the respective parties, erasing the syndicalist and anarchist traditions of early Brazilian workers' movements and fostering the conservation of social privileges. Some originality can be claimed about Castro's career, that can be considered as departing from this cliché of the "embedded intellectual", as he genuinely wanted to use his knowledge to transform society.

Decolonial scholarship discusses the commitment of Latin American intellectuals to decoloniality and indigeneity as a departure from the Lettered City, building "worlds and knowledges otherwise" (Aparicio and Blaser 2008:59) as alternatives to the very ideas of modernity, development and the related regimes of "power/knowledge". Yet, historical works have recently confirmed the complexity of the notion of the Lettered City and the need to avoid generalisations. These works "have complicated traditional ways of understanding intellectuals and the general transmission of knowledge in colonial and modern Latin America" (Dyck 2015:266) showing that "the world of letters in colonial Spanish America was a terrain of cultural interaction and contention" (Dueñas 2010:1), more populated by people of indigenous or African origin than what was assumed. This included "political or cultural resistance to colonial rule in the Andes" (Dueñas 2010:1) since the 17th and 18th centuries, when early lettered indigenous people subverted cultural impositions (Rappaport and Cummins 2012).

Aparicio and Blaser do not rule out the possibility that "intellectuals trained in the 'lettered city' participate as active members and collaborators" (Aparicio and Blaser 2008:83) in rediscovering indigenous knowledges. They mention examples of alternative universities such as the *Universidad de la Resistencia* in Colombia, to which one may add some universities dedicated to Latin American integration and indigenous knowledges which were later opened in Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries (Cupples and Glynn 2014; Hamel et al. 2016). These experiences show that the "'lettered city' can allow within itself [different worldviews] in partnership with other sites of practices" (Aparicio and Blaser 2008:87), recalling Castro's projected International University of Development, a transnational institute challenging neo-colonial ideas of development as I discuss below. In recent years, the definition of Lettered City has also been used to identify the "underground" flourishing of books expressing radical social mobilisations in Latin American urban societies (Rabasa 2019).

Similar difficulties in defining univocally the intellectuals are highlighted by definitions like that of "proletaroid intellectual" by Max Weber, identifying scholars of modest social origin living off their published works or university jobs. I especially draw upon the notion of "intellectual proletarians" by anarchist and feminist activist Emma Goldman (1869–1940), who compared the activities of artists and writers to those of manual workers. For Goldman, they all had to sell their skills

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on the capitalist market, therefore they were never completely free, and must accept substantial compromises to "arrive" within an unjust society: "The uncompromising and daring spirits never 'arrive'. Their life represents an endless battle with the stupidity and the dullness of their time … And if, as in the case of Zola, Ibsen and Tolstoy, they compelled their time to accept them, it was due to their extraordinary genius" (Goldman 1914). Goldman was overall pessimistic about the intellectuals' contribution to the social cause due to the opportunistic tendencies of most of them. Yet, she admitted that intellectual proletarians "[c]ould … be of tremendous importance to the workers", citing as examples the "Kropotkins … and hosts of others [who] repudiated wealth and … went among the people" (Goldman 1914).

As for Castro, it can be argued that he "arrived", but was then pushed back by political repression and exile, as a punishment for remaining faithful to his ideas. Despite the remarkable political and professional success that Castro experienced in the 1940s and 1950s, he lost all his positions after the 1964 coup d'état. While he did not go spontaneously "among the people", being forced to that by the circumstances, it was in his Paris years that he intensified his collaboration with radicals although without making a definitive choice about being a diplomat committed to humanitarian networking or a radical intellectual. This in-betweenness also characterised key figures in decolonisation. Heterogeneous international scholars went to Tanzania to support Nyerere's experiment of decolonial university (Sharp 2019), including Castro's friend and self-declared disciple Milton Santos (Ferretti 2020a). Furthermore, Ruth Craggs (2018:46) analyses the original "geopolitical cultures" that the networks of the early Commonwealth fostered, thanks to intellectuals from former colonised countries, like Sonny Ramphal. Their "increasingly radical agenda … ran counter to some of the priorities of its largest funders (including the UK), and aligned itself with the needs of post-colonial countries" (Craggs 2018:54), although remaining in the context of institutional diplomacy. The sympathy of these figures for the Non-Aligned Movement recalled Castro's stance with a non-aligned option during his experience as a politician and diplomat in Brazil.

My main argument is that the CID case allows for building new cosmopolitan and multilingual ideas of the "Lettered City" by decentring this notion over different levels. First, the work of Castro as a Latin American intellectual did no longer take place in his continent, but in exile, in the transnational radical hub of 1968 Paris. Second, the CID worked like an almost-virtual network, whose materiality can be found in the letters sent and received by Castro, which represent a consistent body of literary work and an original case of lettered contribution to global solidarity networks (Featherstone 2012). Third, the CID's material failure in acting like a group of pressure in worldwide politics exposes the slipperiness of the intellectual's work, and the impossibility of the "organic intellectual" as conceived by Gramscian and subaltern studies (Jazeel 2019; Spivak 2010), but also suggests that intellectual work is indispensable for social change, at the condition that it is linked to activism. While the CID was a bulk of innovative ideas on environment, development and alternative geopolitics beyond Cold War logics, anticipating some themes of critical development geographies (Brooks 2017; Power 2019;

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Sidaway 2012), the analysis of its material practices shows its inherent contradictions. That is, the clash between Castro's voluntarist inspiration and the world of politics, diplomacy and business where he sought support for his cause. While this story shows that capitalism and state politics cannot be "ethical", it exposes anyway the performance of transnational networks in circulating ideas that can go beyond the eventual outcomes of one project.

In this paper, I rely on two sets of unpublished sources, that is the police reports on Castro's life in Paris as an exile since 1964, surviving at the *Archives de la Préfecture de Police*, the CID archives, surviving at the centre *La Contemporaine* in Nanterre, and occasionally Castro's personal archives held at the *Coordenação-Geral de Estudos da História Brasileira* (CEHIBRA) of the Joaquim Nabuco Foundation in Recife. These collections account for Castro's huge multilingual correspondence with political leaders, intellectuals and activists all over the world. Methodologically, I take inspiration from recent literature on the role of archives for historical geographies of internationalism. These archives are "more complex and widely dispersed than the public, state-controlled archives that have dominated national and regional histories", given that the "international archive is a scattered archipelago, which includes better known and surveyed archival 'islands' alongside many smaller, previously unexplored collections" (Hodder et al. 2021:1). The CID is an example of these islands, one that I explore, following the authors' metaphor, considering it as an experience in networked internationalism that was not performed by an institution, being instead a voluntaristic and subaltern endeavour.

While Brazilian scholarship has investigated the formation of the CEHIBRA collection (Amorim 2017), no substantial work discusses the construction of the CID archive, whose incompleteness strikes the researcher for the dissymmetry between the large number of the surviving minutes of letters that were sent by Castro and the significantly smaller number of letters that he received. While the presence of CID-related materials in Recife suggests that part of the CID archives had remained with Castro's family, a short paper by an archivist explains how this collection was moved to the *Contemporaine*, then named *Bibliothèque de documentation internationale contemporaine* (BDIC). Founded in the aftermath of the First World War as a research institute on contemporary matters with a special emphasis on International Relations, the BDIC was attached to the University of Paris 8 in Vincennes, exactly where Castro took office after the split-up of the former Sorbonne in 1968, and definitively moved to the University of Nanterre in 1970. In 1984, it "was chosen as the recipient of all documentary funds and the archives of the Centre" (Palma Murga 1991:26), when the CID definitively broke up.

The *Contemporaine* is one of the main archives treating materials produced by political groups in the 20th century, therefore the choice of allocating the CID materials there seems consistent with the idea of preserving "other" memories exposed by Hodder et al. (2021). As for Castro's intentionality in building this collection, it can arguably be explained by the practical need of keeping a record of the correspondence that he sent. Thus, the survival of thousands of letters that he wrote during a decade allows the construction of a precise narrative to be followed by the Brazilian geographer. In the first part, I address Castro's exile trajectory in Paris, and the CID's foundation. In the second part, I reconstruct the

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attempts of Castro and his collaborators for "selling" the CID project to politicians, diplomats and entrepreneurs who were mostly deaf to their appeals. In the third part, I analyse the final radicalisation of Castro's thinking and his main endeavours during the CID years.

Castro in the International Lettered City: Starting Networking

When Castro was denied his political rights by the new Brazilian government established after the military coup of 1 April 1964, the geographer was in Geneva, where he served as Brazil's ambassador at the UN. As the French police noted in its records, Castro's diplomatic passport helped him in moving from Geneva to Paris,[1] where he declared to the press that he was "[i]nvited to lead the International Centre for Development" (Le Monde 1964a). As the archives show, rather than an institution to which someone invited him, the CID was an actual invention of Castro, who remained its sole leader and sometimes its factotum until his death. The choice of locating this organisation in Paris was evidently due to Castro's strong French connection, including scholars and activists with whom he collaborated since the 1930s (Ferretti 2021b).

Paris was the prototype of the city of letters, a key example for works showing how places matter for cultural production (Benjamin 1989). Franco notes the political and intellectual attraction that the French capital exerted to progressive Latin American intellectuals: "Neruda and Jorge Amado, both of whom attended the huge peace rally organised in Paris in 1949, found themselves sharing the platform with the cream of the Left's intelligentsia" (Franco 2002:66). Publishing in French was an indicator of prestige: "Jorge Amado's novels were serialised in *L'Humanité*, providing him with the French readership that Latin American writers had always dreamed of" (Franco 2002:66). This urban milieu remained Castro's environment: Chauí identifies an opposition between "a littoral Brazil, that is a lettered and bourgeois caricature of liberal Europe, and the hinterland of Brazil, real, poor, and unlettered" (2000:69), which helps understanding books such as *Of Men and Crabs* (Castro 1970) and *Death in the Northeast* (Castro 1969) that Castro published during his CID years. These works deal with the social and political problems of north-eastern Brazil, namely hunger and migrations from the rural hinterland to coastal cities such as Recife (Ferretti 2020b), phenomena that marked "the social and political landscape of the north-east" (Davies 2021:15). Castro tried to bridge this urban/rural divide from the position of a "privileged" observer within the international Lettered City, populated with radical scholarly networks, from which he reflected on how to build "an alliance between peasants and the urban working class" (Davies 2021:15) in his country.

Exile also meant political control and annoyances. Castro was already known by the French police in the 1950s, when his frequent trips to Paris were recorded in his personal folder at the police archives.[2] Although it is much less voluminous than the huge CID archives, this police dossier significantly accounts for the interest of French authorities in the activities of a foreign critical scholar. When Castro became an exile, this control became stricter and involved some cooperation

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between France and the Brazilian dictatorship, as also demonstrated by Brazilian diplomatic archives analysed by Paulo Cesar Gomes (2016) and Helder Remigio de Amorim (2016). Arguably, Castro's activities raised some concerns in the years of social turmoil around 1968, which implicitly confirms the prickliness of his projects for global "development".

Paris was also a central place for leftist groups and Francophone decolonial movements such as *Négritude*, one of whose exponents, Senegalese President Léopold Sédar Senghor, was among the CID's earliest supporters.[3] At the end of 1968, the French policemen noted that Castro was appointed to the new University of Vincennes, considered as a sort of radicals' hideout (Zanoni 2010), where he directed the new Department of Geography and was "the sole foreign professor".[4] Castro's unwanted biographers even came to draft several versions of his CV and to try an assessment of his political activities. In a report of February 1973, it is said that, "[a]lthough his opinions allow classifying him among the international personalities of the Left, Mr. Castro was never noticed for his political activities in our country".[5]

Indeed, Castro never meddled directly with French internal politics, and despite being a friend of radical figures such as anti-colonialist geographers Jean Dresch and Jean Suret-Canale,[6] he tried to keep cordial relations with everybody. This included writing personal letters to General Charles de Gaulle for obtaining support to the CID by the French conservative government—in vain.[7] Castro was very active in the French press thanks to his acquaintance with journalists such as Marcel Niedergang,[8] a specialist of Latin America. From 1964 to 1973, *Le Monde* published several articles authored by Castro or dedicated to his CID work demonstrating how he was a popular figure for the French public. Castro had all the characteristics for exerting this appeal: he published books that were engaged but accessible to the wide public; he was an activist against hunger without carrying any narrow political labels which might have alienated wider sympathies, and he was the victim of unjust political persecutions in Brazil.

As the CID's activation was well covered by the French press (Le Monde 1964b), Castro's figure became one of the symbols of the struggle against world hunger and of the Latin American social and political drama. In a long article for *Le Monde*, he drafted a history of the 1964 year for Latin America. Despite the tragic events that had seen him as one of the targets of political repression, the Brazilian geographer expressed his trust in what he called the "great revolution advancing" (Castro 1964) there, which was made by a series of small but unstoppable events such as guerrillas, land occupations, protests and democratic renewals. As for the Brazilian military dictatorship, Castro refused to see it as something more than an episode, somehow underplaying the strength of this regime, which lasted until the 1980s and remains a matter that is evoked in Brazilian political debates. This was probably one of his main mistakes: the available sources and recollections show that Castro remained confident in some forthcoming change to the regime, maintaining the hope of being soon allowed to come back to Brazil. According to his relatives and collaborators, his deception for not seeing this happening also had negative effects on his health (Magno 2012).

The editorial history of *Death in the Northeast* exposes how keeping links with Brazil was key to Castro's political strategy. Castro wrote that book to counter the

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propaganda pretending that there was a Soviet plot behind the peasants' leagues of north-eastern Brazil, which was one of the pretexts for the incoming military coup (Franco 2002). From Paris, Castro wrote to Brazilian publisher Caio Prado Júnior, a co-founder of the Association of Brazilian Geographers in 1934, who was likewise politically persecuted (Heidemann et al. 2008), explaining that he had written the book "for a North American publisher and [finished it] few days before the coup".[9] Therefore, the unforeseen rush of the events implied the need for "publishing urgently the book" in Portuguese, also to foster "radical reforms in the north-east and in Brazil".[10] The fact that Castro still believed in the possibility of these reforms under a regime that was harshly repressing the peasant's leagues (Coutinho 1984), confirms his underestimation of the dictatorship.

In the same year, *Le Monde* published a sort of manifesto for the Third World by the CID, co-authored by Castro and Maurice Guernier, a former Inspector of the Ministry of Economy then "on leave" according to the police reports,[11] who served as the General Secretary of the CID from 1964 to 1969.[12] In this paper, the CID staff argued that pursuing mere economic growth in a world ridden by social inequalities was a "short-sighted objective" (Castro and Guernier 1967). They criticised the international help for Third World countries deeming it as an activity that was not functional to "real development" but to Cold War political logics. Among the possible examples: "If the Americans help Guinea today, this is to get rid of the Chinese, who have thrown out the French after getting rid of the Russians. Is it this way that Guinea will progress seriously? … We need to depoliticise aid" (Castro and Guernier 1967). This oft-repeated slogan of "depoliticising" aid and development contained one of the key contradictions of the CID. On the one hand, these scholars criticised the neo-colonial politics of Northern countries, the inadequacies of international organisations and even the policies of those newly-decolonised states that had: "Often servilely copied the colonisers' methods … assumed and jealously conserved the coloniser's frontiers" (Castro and Guernier 1967). On the other, they relied on the assumption that international politics could be inspired by goodwill and common sense, and that ethical reasons could push governments to acknowledge the common interests of humankind. This was a very optimistic starting point, to say the least.

Despite these contradictions, Castro's attempts were courageous in raising the problems of the global poor to Northern audiences. Furthermore, recent studies have shown the relevance of his pioneering engagement with political ecology (Davies 2019a). However, Castro's project did not materialise, also because, in continuity with his former experiences, his activities remained suspended between voluntarist grassroots activism and institutional diplomatic networking, failing to take a stronger position on either side.

The CID between Radical Ideas and Unlikely Stakeholders

An analysis of the CID's archives show that Castro's appeals were hardly listened to by his key interlocutors, resulting in them often being unsuccessful. Yet, this adventure had started by showing great potentialities. Since the first weeks of

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Castro's exile, in April 1964, the geographer was already sending numerous letters to his international contacts from Neuilly-sur-Seine, where the CID's executive offices were established.[13] In the immediate periphery of Paris, this place was arguably chosen for the good balance that it offered between costs and proximity with the affluent western neighbourhoods of the French capital, where several embassies and institutions were located. Among the first correspondents whom Castro informed about his move to Paris, one finds his fellows of the initiative for a "World Federal District", including John Boyd Orr[14] and Bertrand Russell, to whom Castro described this proposal as the accomplishment of "the city of peace", emanating from "the worldist spirit, that is the universal act of consciousness".[15] In the following years, Castro and Russell remained in touch to discuss the respective pacifist and internationalist endeavours.[16] Concurrently, Castro wrote to several personalities for inviting them to sit on the CID's Founding Committee. Their list included, among others, the animators of social catholic networks in France Abbé Pierre and Louis-Joseph Lebret, dependentist economists François Perroux and Raúl Prebitsch, personalities of international cooperation such as Gunnar Myrdal and Michel Cépède, and geographer Pierre Monbeig, the French specialist on Brazilian matters.[17] It is worth clarifying that most of these respected international figures, mostly Castro's old friends and correspondents, had honorary and representative functions and did not play executive roles in carrying out CID business.

The archives surviving in Nanterre reveal Castro's communication strategies of those years. They contain several thousand carbon copies of typewritten CID documents and business letters, which Castro often wrote as circulars, although addressing all his correspondents with their names and generally adding some personalised notes or changes to the common text. In the pre-internet lettered era this was time-consuming work, which shows the importance of this kind of epistolary writing for Castro. Given his scholarly networks and personal prestige, it was not difficult for Castro to receive the endorsement of socially committed intellectuals, but his endeavours had less success with those who were supposed to be the material supporters of the CID, that is businessmen, diplomats and politicians.

The CID should have been funded by the contributions of the associated states, consortia and companies. As for states, membership was initially fixed to USD 20,000 "for the developed countries", while the "less developed countries will decide themselves the amount of their annual contribution".[18] As Castro wrote to numerous heads of state, ministers and ambassadors, the CID was a "pressure group, a true lobby of all the Third World states in favour of the intensification of the worldwide struggle against underdevelopment … The CID is committed to press campaigns, TV broadcasts, congresses, conferences, etc.".[19] In "selling" his project, Castro highlighted how respected the CID's advisory services would have been, "thanks to the 35 high personalities who are its founders, to provide [Third World states] with precious advice on how to choose the experts", acting "as a true information office for the states which are part of its Board of Trustees".[20] However, Castro's claims that the CID represented the entire Third World were quite overstated.

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While it is difficult to detail the CID's financial history given that little related documentation survives in the archives, and the police sources only contain estimations on some sums that the CID "should" have received from countries such as Chile and Senegal in 1965,[21] the correspondence gives some substantial insights into understanding the problem. In December 1964, Castro estimated the full annual budget needed by the CID as located: "Between 250,000 and 500,000 USD"[22] from January 1966. As for 1965, the provisional need was estimated at USD 150,000 as the "minimum sum to cover all expenses … We have already obtained one third of this amount. We need therefore to find these indispensable 100,000 USD".[23] The available documents suggest that the number of public and private members that effectively paid was always too small to raise the funds that Castro wished to obtain.

Yet, Castro's proposals were at the same time radical, original and reasonable. He first consulted fiduciaries such as Monbeig, Cépède and Lebret on the programme to be sent to potential members, showing how the CID was different from the "diverse organisms that already deal with the problem of development in the world".[24] The CID aimed at addressing the "problem of development in its globality, which has not yet be done, [by being] concrete and efficient in following new ways that are inspired by [our] experience and contacts with heads of government and other leading personalities".[25] Thus, it was first on his prestige as a renowned "expert" that Castro based his proposal, although this was a far cry from official discourses on assistance, as he clarified writing to a French newspaper that had described the CID as something like a charity: "Charity … only gives relief to the conscience of the rich without doing the same with the poor's suffering".[26] Castro likewise criticised the "fearsome, expensive and inefficient techno-bureaucracies"[27] of international aid. In a letter to Venezuelan president Raúl Leoni, Castro exposed a concept that he often repeated in his correspondence, that is, the CID was the sole international association offering: "A function of assessment … A function of investigation … A function of action: acting constantly in all sectors, creating a body of Development Advisers".[28] Sending this kind of letter was his first step to contact a government.

Among the few heads of state who explicitly committed to support the CID, Senghor was probably the most responsive after Castro sent to him the CID brochure while praising his "deep reflection on development".[29] Senghor's letters expose his admiration and support for Castro, endorsing his "lucidity and courage" in endeavours such as the proposal for creating "an international university of development".[30] Yet, one of these reveals indirectly how Castro's efforts for recruiting new CID members were not so successful. In Autumn 1965, Senghor still saluted the fact that (only) "[s]ix countries have already joined the CID Board of Trustees".[31] In the following years, the supporting governments remained roughly the same, that is, in addition to Senegal: "Peru, Chile, Argentina … Israel, Poland and Iran".[32]

Although very limited, this sample was representative of Castro's intention to create synergies beyond Cold War logics, putting in relation realities from both the Third World and the Eastern and Western blocs. While this was an original endeavour to be carried out at that time, Castro's courage was not always

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appreciated or understood. In the same letter to Senghor, Castro evoked negotiations ongoing with "Switzerland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Mexico and Venezuela" and "promising contacts" with "Hungary, Union of South-Africa [sic], Denmark, Sweden, Morocco, Spain, Madagascar, England [sic], Italy and Yugoslavia",[33] hoping to gain 20 member states by the end of that year. Unluckily, this would not materialise. While some countries justified their denial through bureaucratic reasons, such as the German Federal Republic arguing that it was impossible for them to join "a private institution",[34] the archive is packed with responses from representatives of Third World governments, especially from Africa, expressing some interest in the CID but declaring that they were too poor to contribute to it. Given that the membership could be paid through a free offer by "poor countries", it is clear that the main problems were not economic, but political.

Castro's own strategy was not devoid of contradictions. For instance, in some of his letters, he evoked Portugal as a country susceptible to joining the CID.[35] Like his dialogue with the South African government mentioned above, this clashed with Castro's well-known antiracist and anticolonialist commitment (Davies and Ferretti 2021; Ferretti 2020a), given that Portugal was then ruled by Salazar's dictatorship and had just started a ferocious war against the movements of national liberation in lusophone Africa. This war included collaboration with the racist South African government in repressing the anti-colonialists in Angola and Mozambique (Cabral 2016). In late 1965, Portugal disappeared from the CID lists of potentially interested countries, and Castro started to describe some more selective criteria to appoint the states that could join the CID, which excluded all "countries involved in colonialism".[36] Given the number of governments explicitly or implicitly declining Castro's invitations, and those that were still solicited to pay their membership after years, one might wonder whether a political radicalisation occurred in the Centre or was this a matter of necessity. It is possible to hypothesise that both things somehow happened, and that they were connected.

Similar contradictions can also be found in Castro's correspondence of the following years. In 1967, he announced to the Senegalese Minister of Foreign Affairs that he was "hoping to obtain Brazil's adhesion"[37] for the CID. This is surprising if we consider the political persecutions that Castro and his friends were suffering from the same government that he wanted to imply in this project. Equally puzzling was a letter that Castro sent in 1970 to Nicaraguan dictator Anastasio Somoza, likewise inviting his government to join the CID,[38] which clashed with the radicality of the positions that Castro expressed in other works and statements. While neither Somoza nor the Brazilian leaders seem to have responded, it is worth noting that, in 1967, Castro travelled to Brazil remaining unhindered in his Rio de Janeiro house for some days.[39] Paradoxically, he was denied his political rights but could enter the country under diplomatic passport. This is another example of the naturalisation of social differences as discussed by Chauí: although banished, Castro was still a *letrado* and therefore deserved some respect, even in his unthankful country. Yet, in those years, Castro's attitudes of radical intellectuals emerged in Paris beyond his roles of *letrado* and diplomat.

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Challenges and Radical Opportunities in the Transnational Lettered City

The Main CID Projects

Castro had several contacts among Latin-American and worldwide radicals. In Chile, he had good relations with moderate president Eduardo Frei, whom he defended as a "progressive" in his stormy editorial correspondences on the book *Latin American Radicalism* that he co-edited with Irving Horowitz and John Gerassi (Horowitz et al. 1969).[40] Concurrently, the Brazilian geographer corresponded in very friendly tones with socialist leader Salvador Allende since he was a senator in 1965, when Castro asked the Chilean politician to "forward to your companions of struggle … my best wishes for the success of your action for the emancipation of the Chilean people", endorsing the "magnificent action that you endeavoured for peace and well-being of all the peoples of the world".[41] This correspondence continued when Allende was elected President in 1970.[42]

This link with the Chilean Left included Castro's correspondence on CID business with Pablo Neruda when the latter was Allende's ambassador in Paris.[43] For Franco, figures like Neruda expressed the contradiction of radical intellectuals and also exposed how literature was one of the Cold War battlefields, as shown by the "attack on Pablo Neruda for attending a PEN Club meeting in New York and the withdrawal by pro-Cuban writers from a meeting of the Community of Writers in Mexico in 1967 because writers on the Left 'could not belong to the same community as pro-imperialist writers'" (Franco 2002:46). Amazingly, Castro also had close relations with the PEN Club, although he criticised this "lettered" association as a political instrument of the Western Bloc, far from their pretentions of "independence", as he confided to Italian writer Ignazio Silone.[44] Castro's Chilean connection ended with the tragic coincidence of the premature death of its protagonists in September 1973: Allende on 11 September during the Pinochet's coup, Neruda on 23 September in a Chilean hospital (officially from illness), and Castro on 26 September in Paris.

Another radical reference for the CID was Cuban leader Fidel Castro, whom Josué de Castro had met on the occasion of his campaigns in solidarity with Cuba in the early 1960s and to whom he wrote quite regularly, although it does not seem that the Cuban government had ever joined the CID.[45] Josué de Castro significantly criticised the UN in his correspondence with Cuban diplomat Enrique Camejo-Argudin, arguing that development had to be a "much more inclusive, more humane and less orthodox [idea] than what is conceived in the—to our opinion, ethnocentric, spirit of the United Nations, which always saw the Third World as a field for experimentation, where one should introduce the model … of the society of consumption from the developed countries".[46] In these years, Castro was likewise acquainted with French radical intellectuals such as Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir.[47]

Meanwhile, through the CID, Castro carried out sustained anti-hunger propaganda in newspapers and magazines, working on original endeavours including the proposal for an International University of Development (IUD). In a 1965 interview for *Le Monde*, Castro optimistically advertised this project: "Already 16 universities have agreed to receive the people working on that … UNESCO is

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already interested in it … Ten rich countries and ten poor countries will collaborate directly with us … Several governments, both capitalist and communist, have expressed their interest" (Vichniac 1965). Yet, there is no archival evidence that this interest existed, and one has the impression that Castro was trying to "sell" something more than what he effectively had in his hands. Although this project never materialised, conversations about the IUD advanced for some years, especially with Senghor who expressed special interest in the inclusion of a Third World "International Institute for the Training of Intermediate Executives"[48] in this project.

This Institute was expected to stop the brain drain of doctors, engineers and similar specialised figures from the South to Northern countries, where they could find more occasions to access the highest grades of education, and better wages. Castro explained this problem with a sarcastic commentary: "There are more Dahomeyan doctors in Paris than in the entire Dahomey" (Vichniac 1965). The IUD was not intended to be a new institution with its own campus, but a transnational federation of different programmes located in existing universities of different countries. This implied some students' mobility during the curricula, allowing them to spend most of their studies in Third World institutions to avoid premature migration to the North. This project had to include a Latin-American branch,[49] likewise organised as a federation of existing institutes, to stop "the brain-drain towards the United States".[50] Yet, although very committed, the small CID group could not put into practice a so complex organisation, involving dozens of governments and universities.

The other main project to which Castro worked as the CID's Head was the organisation of the international conference "The Third World in 2000" that was held in Tehran, with the support of the Iranian government, in 1969. The surviving correspondence accounts for the multiple difficulties that Castro encountered in organising this relatively small event, given that it resulted in a roundtable involving 24 presenters, although they were renowned personalities such as "Herman Kahn, Fred Polack, Anthony Wiener … Pablo Casanova, Josué Castro, Celso Furtado, Gustavo Lagos, Alfredo Anzola, Iyengar, Besterger, Joseph Bognar, Michel Cépède, Georges Balandier, Jacques Berque, Maurice Guernier, E. Naraghi, Ika Paul-Pont" (IEDES 1971:671). In a letter to his friend Furtado, Castro expressed his disappointment for the "lack of coordination"[51] limiting the impact that this event finally had, despite his higher expectations. It should be added that, in his last seven/eight years of life, Castro suffered health problems of various kinds, which often paralysed the CID's activities, as it is shown by the correspondence dealt by his secretary, Jacqueline Zyserman, who seemed to be the only person presiding over the CID's offices during the periods when Castro was ill.[52] Socially committed to Jewish associationism in the Parisian region (Neuilly-Paris-Ouest 2017), Zyserman continued to look after the Centre after Castro's death, remaining in touch with his family.[53]

Since 1970, the CID progressively vanished as an organisation. According to a police report of February 1973, it was not carrying out "any activity" for two years, after that a 1971 meeting of the executive office had decided to put the organisation "*en sommeil*" (in sleeping mode),[54] an expression inspired by the

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lexicon of Freemasonry that, curiously, Castro also used in his letters to the French authorities.[55] Nevertheless, the Brazilian geographer tried until his last months to keep his networks alive, asking Senghor, in March 1973, if Senegal could resume the payments which had been stopped "in the last few years", given that "our association is in a difficult financial situation".[56] Arguably, it was also the failure of the diplomatic way to development that Castro had tried with the CID that inspired his radicalisation in the years from 1968 to 1973, when he served as an Associate Professor at the University of Paris 8—Vincennes, then a key place for leftist intellectuals in France (Bué 2009), trying to continue some of the CID's activities within this institution.

The CID and Vincennes

In Latin America, universities have been central places for the radicalisation of the Lettered City (Franco 2002; Rama 1996), and Castro was the Chair of Geography at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro before being denied the possibility of teaching in Brazil following his banishment. Yet, he always worked to include university teaching in his projects, first through the IUD proposal, and then by discussing potential courses with Perroux and Monbeig, respectively for the *Institut d'Études du Développement de la Sorbonne*[57] and for the *Institut des Hautes Etudes sur l'Amérique Latine*.[58] In 1968, Castro was approached to contribute to the Institute of Geography at the newly founded university of Paris 8, which counted on the collaboration of several "French theorists" including Michel Foucault and François Lyotard, and pioneers of French radical geographies such as Yves Lacoste (Davies 2019a).

The archive shows that Castro's mentor in joining Vincennes was anti-colonialist geographer Jean Dresch, confirming that a circuit of French radical geographers practising forms of mutual aid and sharing links with the South existed in France well before the rise of a "radical geography" labelled as such (Ferretti 2021a).[59] In October 1968, after acknowledging Dresch, Castro wrote to the Dean of the Sorbonne to confirm his interest in what he defined as a "new conception of higher education to make better known the big problems of our time".[60] In a press release, Castro announced his nomination, defining the new institution as an "[e]xperimental university centre [which] has to perform a new kind of teaching and scholarly research in the spirit of the university reform implemented in France after the events that shattered the old Sorbonne".[61] Therefore, Castro's appointment in Vincennes paralleled his adhesion to the spirit of May 1968, targeting a profound renovation in teaching and research methods. While other works have discussed the originality of Castro's endeavours to build radical ideas of development and non-Malthusian notions of ecology in his Vincennes years (Davies 2019a; Ferretti 2021b), it is worth noting that he considered this work as a continuation of the CID project, which again included networking with the Lettered City of publishers and journalists. In his letters to *Le Monde*'s editor-in-chief André Fontaine, Castro called public attention to the ecological problems of Amazonia and presented his endeavours as something informed by the CID aims: "We have constituted a research group on human ecology composed by university

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teachers, experts and representatives of governmental organisms to study the complex problems of environmental degradation".[62]

Yet, Castro was increasingly depressed by seeing his hopes of a political change in Brazil constantly frustrated. Some hypothesise that this condition of physical and psychological prostration was not extraneous to the heart attack that killed him in September 1973 (Magno 2012). In his *Le Monde* obituary, Niedergang (1973) used the metaphor of a voice "screaming in the desert" to define the mostly unheard social and environmental alarms that the Brazilian geographer had launched during his career. In the same journal, another of Castro's friends, Guy Marchand, bitterly noted that, at his funeral, there was "[n]ot even one delegate of the Third World governments to acknowledge the man who gave them their dignity" (Le Monde 1973). No words could describe more clearly the lack of support that Castro's attempts suffered from the people he tried to interest in the last decade of his life.

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated that experiences such as exile can create original situations that complicate traditional understandings of the Lettered City. In Castro's Paris experience, whose working is revealed by networks and connections testified by the transnational and subaltern archives discussed above, the Lettered City became a decentred, cosmopolitan, multilingual and anti-colonialist endeavour. Although Castro's position remained half-way between the traditional *letrado* and the radical figures of intellectual activists who populated social movements and guerrillas at that time, his thousands of multilingual letters and documents can nourish ideas on decolonising the Lettered City. While Castro could not be aware of current works on decoloniality, he circulated worldwide different social and political discourses, participating in early Southern efforts for theorising back (Slater 2004) against neo-colonial recipes for "development". Castro's powerful intellectual legacy was only partially acknowledged through the success of his books and his appointment in Vincennes, and is still being rediscovered today.

As his works show, Castro had underestimated the potential duration of the Brazilian dictatorship, that he considered as little more than a temporary superstructure, unable to counter the profound progressive changes that were underway in Brazilian society. Alas, he was wrong, at least over the short to medium term. His other illusion was that his think tank could condition the governments and the markets, fostering future social transformations. Among the examples, one can mention a note listing the potential sources of revenue for the CID, including strange fellows such as "Standard Oil", "British Petroleum", "Prince Karim Aga Khan", "Foundation Ford"[63] and similar. Why on earth should capitalists and governments have listened to Castro's calls? To use a fairy-tale metaphor, the CID pretended that the wolf did not eat the lamb only based on the moral advice of some wise and respected people.

Thus, the CID projects did not materialise because Castro fought this war with inadequate weapons, trying to build networks against hunger and poverty with actors who mostly represented the same states and corporations that were

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responsible for neo-colonialism, for using development as a Cold War weapon (Power 2019) and for the exploitation of the (Northern and Southern) workforce, including so-called socialist countries. This confirms Goldman's (1914) claims on intellectuals: "Alone they cannot accomplish much"; nevertheless, a radical breakthrough can come "through the cooperation of the intellectual proletarians … and the revolutionary proletarians who seek to remould life". The Lettered City matters to social change.

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Endnotes

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