

Executive Summary: Professional relationship between Élide Lauris and Boaventura de Sousa Santos

This document seeks to dismantle the public accusations made by **Élide Lauris (EL)** against **Boaventura de Sousa Santos (BSS)**, especially those expressed in the so-called **6th Letter of the Victims' Collective**, on **Agência Pública** and the **NOW channel**. The documentary evidence provided directly and verifiably contradicts these assertions.

Trajectory at CES and working conditions

Starting in 2005, EL worked on her PhD at the Centre for Social Studies (CES) under the supervision of BSS, also working at the Permanent Justice Observatory with Conceição Gomes. Both activities were remunerated and well valued.

She was a fellow of CAPES, and later of the FCT, in addition to receiving a salary for her work at ALICE, being one of the best paid people in the project.

Professional recognition and relationship with BSS

In the foreword to the book *For a Democratic Revolution of Justice* (2007), BSS expressly thanks to EL and other assistants for their collaboration (*Exhibit 2: Verbatim quote from the foreword with mention of EL for his "professionalism"*).

This edition would not have been possible without the unflagging enthusiasm and demanding professionalism of my colleague Conceição Gomes, executive director of the Permanent Observatory of Justice of the Centre for Social Studies of the University of Coimbra, and my collaborators Élide Lauris and Paula Fernando. They were joined, with equal enthusiasm and professionalism, by my colleague César Baldi, who verified and updated the data on Brazil.

In an email dated 5/9/2007, BSS expresses his desire for future collaborations with EL as co-author, praising her professionalism and dedication (*Exhibit 3: Email from BSS to EL dated 5 September 2007*).

Boaventura de Sousa Santos [REDACTED] >

My dear Elida

Mission accomplished!!!!!!

I am very grateful to you for such an immense work, done with so much dedication and professionalism. I hope this is the first of other collaborations between us but in which you have the status of co-author. I have come to trust you more than any of my other research assistants in recent times. Many thanks!

Now I want you to get on with the preparation of your thesis project.

A big kiss and much appreciated

Boaventura

In 2015, EL won the CES Prize for Young Social Scientists, in a jury chaired by BSS, which contradicts her claim to have been discriminated against because of her nationality or sexual orientation.

Voluntary withdrawal from the ALICE project

In November 2012, EL informed of her voluntary resignation from ALICE in order to finish her doctoral dissertation, citing pressure and lack of time (*Exhibit 4: Email from EL to BSS dated 17 November 2012*).

Élida Lauris elidalauris@gmail.com

17 November 2012

Hello, Professor:

I come to present to you my decision to withdraw from the ALICE project. It has been 4 months since the phone call that prompted me to join the coordination of the project. The truth is that it has been exactly 4 months since I have barely been able to make any progress on my doctoral thesis, despite waking up every day with the hope that it will be a different day and that I will be able to concentrate again. After 4 months of work, I think I have the necessary knowledge to make an honest assessment of the work I have done and the possibility of combining it with the completion of my doctoral thesis. There is only one predictability of the work to be done in coordination: it is a job of constant alertness, with no delimitation of working hours and which tends to increase more for those who are alert and act proactively. Any attitude other than this would not be the attitude of someone who wants to be a coordinator. In this context, it is unrealistic to think that it is possible to maintain a professional attitude of commitment to the project work and to maintain the hopes of finishing the doctoral thesis soon. At the moment, it does not seem possible to believe that, in this state of affairs, I will achieve the goal of becoming a doctoral researcher, nor does it seem realistic to think that I can expect to be able to play a serious role as a researcher in the project itself. I do not believe, for example, that I will be able to defend a research project in front of external evaluators, given the conditions under which I did it, under a lot of pressure and with millions of outstanding issues to be solved in order for the project to be submitted on time. At the end of the day, this tension between real life and the dreams we nurture and work for is a decision that requires correction and honesty from a person with themselves and the people around them. I am currently in a serious state of frustration with myself, which has only been aggravated by the fact that I came to nurture the dream of doing a PhD, which I came to Coimbra to fulfil, and to see it recede from my grasp. This requires of me an attitude of seriousness about my limits, my possibilities and expectations about my future. As privileged as it may be to share a place in the coordination of the ALICE project, if I cannot finish my doctoral thesis, the ALICE project itself ceases to be a career option and becomes an obstacle for me to aspire to an academic career. I ask you to understand my reasons and not to interpret my decision as a blackmailing or self-promoting position; on the contrary, it is a recognition of my limits. It breaks my heart to tell you this, but I cannot continue in the project.

Best regards,

Élida

She was never forced to leave ALICE, nor was she prevented from returning: in fact, she returned to the project as a postdoc, receiving €2,000/month plus €250 as financial coordinator. The employment contract required her to perform three tasks: financial coordination, writing a chapter and an introduction to the book "Decolonising Constitutionalism". During the more than two years she earned this salary, she only completed the first task. He undertook a three-month internship in the United States

(Madison-Wisconsin), funded by the ALICE Project, to complete the remaining two tasks. However, she did not complete them. She was not obliged to repay the money for breach of her contractual obligations.

What is certain is that EL made the decisions she felt were best for her career and was never harmed by BSS, nor did he cause her any difficulty. EL left Alice to pursue her PhD, but continued with other projects on the side. She did not ask for permission to do so, but communicated her unilateral decision to BSS. And after completing her PhD, she wanted to return and the door was open to her. If she was a victim of workplace harassment, as she claims, why return?

Alleged retaliation and "academic bondage"

Although in the NOW channel, EL accuses BSS of hindering her thesis with "academic servitude", EL completed it in 2013, but subsequently applied to return to ALICE and was accepted. She left the Alice project of her own free will and with the approval of BSS to join a ministry in the government of President Dilma Rousseff of Brazil, but with a commitment to carry out the two outstanding tasks. She never fulfilled this commitment.

In 2016 and 2017, EL continues to send cordial and collaborative messages to BSS, including acknowledgements and links to his current work. (*Exhibit 5: Emails exchanged. Example: Email from EL to BSS on 6 July 2017*).

In fact, on January 20, 2016, after leaving the Alice project, EL and BSS met in Porto Alegre, Brazil, during the Thematic Social Forum.

On that occasion, EL did not seem in the least bothered by BSS's presence (she hugged BSS several times):



On 06/07/2017 18:59, Élide Lauris wrote:
Dear Boaventura:

What a joy to receive your email. I always follow the news from Coimbra, missing you and everyone, and unfortunately I could not be at your lectures in Rio and Porto Alegre due to professional commitments. All is well here, although one has to separate the news of personal life from the news about the political situation in Brazil, with this illegitimate and cadaverous president. This is undoubtedly the moment when Brazil needs a sociology of justice, the best available. It is not possible to explain our reality without an analysis of the situation of justice. I have lived a practically itinerant life, given the current demand for conferences on this subject. For this reason, I have not yet been able to organise my writings and videos of my interventions, which, if all goes well, I will do this month. In any case, I am sending you a video that I recorded at the invitation of TV UNB and which I think gives an account of the main themes that I have been debating on this laboratory of sociology of the judiciary that Brazil has become. I hope it will be useful.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=vEd1tW4fnR4&feature=share>

*A hug,
P.S.: Kisses from Lassal. I miss you very much*

Harassment and discrimination allegations

EL alleges sexual harassment by BSS, including a phrase attributed to him about her body. During her time at CES, EL did not file complaints with any authority or institution (*Exhibit 7: Lack of internal or external records of formal complaints*).

Allegations of discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation are also contradicted by:

- The pluralistic composition of the ALICE team.
- BSS's historical involvement with organisations such as "Não Te Prives", dedicated to LGBTQ+ rights.

Cross-interests and external funding

The document highlights that EL has worked for NGOs funded by the Ford Foundation, which it also funds:

Agência Pública, the media outlet where EL makes her denunciations.

The #MeToo movement, in whose media orbit these allegations fall.

The documentary evidence (emails, internal communications, publications and acknowledgements) shows that:

- EL was not a victim of harassment or discrimination, but enjoyed privileges within CES and the ALICE project.

- She left ALICE of her own accord, returned voluntarily and was always treated with respect by BSS.

- Her subsequent public denunciations are in direct contradiction to her own past messages and actions.
