

Boaventura de Sousa Santos

Why I resigned from CES

Part 2

I was one of the last people to be heard by the Independent Commission in this process, on December 4, 2023. I do not know if any specific accusations against me were communicated to the IC, however, in the questions I was asked by the commission members, no specific allegations were presented to me. I was only asked general questions, so I was only aware of two accusations made against me in the press based on the defamatory chapter, which in the meantime (in September) the publisher Routledge had withdrawn from circulation and ordered all unsold books to be returned to the warehouse.

The IC was scheduled to submit its report on December 31, 2023, but on December 18, it was announced that the IC would need two more months to complete its report. The Independent Commission's report was published on March 13 and was understood by me as the end of a long and painful process. The IC consisted of four women and one man. At the end of the investigation process, 14 people, nine of whom were women, had been reported. However, the IC did not accuse any of the reported individuals of criminal offenses or serious misconduct.

In its conclusions, the IC states the following: *“it was found that the versions presented by several denouncers and several denounced persons were in many situations incompatible with each other, making it impracticable in those situations to assess the evidence;”* that *“the documentation presented and the hearings conducted, both from denouncers and from those denounced, did not make it possible to clarify beyond doubt whether or not all the situations reported to the CI had occurred“;* and also that *”The documentation provided by some of denounced and by some denouncers reveals detailed information, including correspondence and other documents, located in space and time, which are consistent and coherent with their accounts.”*

It is also important to note that the CI never used the term “victims,” always using the terms “denouncers” and “denounced persons,” precisely to ensure that the fundamental right to the presumption of innocence was guaranteed, since the use of

the former term implies that the persons denouncing are, in fact, victims, and that the persons denounced are, in fact, perpetrators of crimes.

Contrary to this understanding, minutes before the release of the IC Report, the CES Board of Directors and the Presidency of the Scientific Council issued a letter apologizing to the victims:

The CES Board of Directors addresses those who consider themselves victims of harassment or abuse in the context of CES activities, whether or not they have testified before the Independent Commission, to offer a public apology for the experience they have gone through, for the personal suffering that may have resulted, and for the silence they have had to face within CES.

This apology is all the more heartfelt given that these people found themselves in this position of victimhood within an institution that has always sought to combat inequality and injustice and to raise awareness of the position of people in vulnerable situations, whether these are determined by global and historical structures of power, economic, social, and gender, or by private forms of interpersonal relationships.

(...)

We are therefore not certain about everything that happened, when and how, but we know that the testimonies have been validated by the IC.

While it is true that the situations reported were the result of individual actions, on which we will take action, they are also the result of institutional failures which, in the absence of adequate mechanisms for the prevention of harassment, allowed conditions for forms of abuse of power to arise.

(...)

We would like to thank those who testified before the Independent Commission and the members of the Commission for their hard work and for opening the door for CES to acknowledge its failures, apologize, and seek ways to renew itself to ensure that future situations of abuse and harassment are prevented.

Whatever the intention of the CES bodies in publishing a letter that directly contradicted the IC's conclusions, **the fact is that this letter was understood nationally**

and internationally as meaning that the IC Report confirmed the version of events presented by the alleged victims in relation to me.

In fact, because of that letter, the *Times Higher Education Supplement* of March 15, 2024, announced in a post on social media platform “X” that the allegations of harassment against me had been confirmed: “*Portugal's @UnivdeCoimbra has issued a public apology to “people who consider themselves victims of harassment or abuse” at the institution, after allegations of sexual misconduct were raised in a book that became the center of a publishing controversy.*” On March 27, I was dismissed from the *Universal Court of the Rights of Nature*, which I helped to found, with a document that will go down in the history of inquisitorial proceedings naturalized by #MeToo. This document is illustrative of how, **in today's democracy, it is possible to transform unproven allegations into convictions “based on clear evidence.”** This happens above all in international NGOs funded by the Global North (mostly the US). The text is in annex in its original version (Spanish).



Quito, 27 de marzo 2024

DECLARACIÓN PÚBLICA:

DESTITUCIÓN DE BOAVENTURA DE SOUSA SANTOS COMO JUEZ DEL TRIBUNAL ÉTICO DE DERECHOS DE LA NATURALEZA

En abril de 2023 se dio a conocer una denuncia sobre la conducta sexual inapropiada en la academia de Boaventura de Sousa Santos sobre exesistas que trabajaron con él en el CES, en la Universidad de Coimbra. Luego de ello, se fueron acumulando también otras denuncias por acoso sexual.

En el artículo “Las paredes hablaban cuando nadie más lo hacía” publicado en el libro “Conducta sexual inapropiada en la academia” de la Editorial Routledge, ahora censurado, se expone la conducta sexual inapropiada contra tres exesistas quienes denuncian al “profesor estrella” por hechos ocurridos entre 2011 y 2019, en el CES. Ellas son Lieselotte Viaenne, Catarina Larangeiro y Miye Nadja Tom, autores del artículo y de los relatos que cuentan como se solicitaba profundizar la relación como retribución al apoyo de este prestigioso académico.

Tras la publicación otras mujeres lo denunciaron; la diputada brasileña Bella GonCalves, quien sostuvo “soy una de las mujeres que sufrió acoso sexual por parte de este señor, quien fue mi asesor de investigación doctoral. Después de años de silencio y mucho dolor, es hora de sanar”.¹

Por último, la activista y referente mapuche, de la Argentina, Moira Millan, lo denunció también,² por haber vivido una situación de acoso y abuso en 2010³.

¹ <https://www.publico.es/mujer/mujeres-acusan-sociologo-portugues-boaventura-sousa-santos-acoso-sexual-decada.html>

² <https://www.elsaltodiario.com/violencia-machista/tengo-denunciar-bonaventura-sousa-santos-hombre-presumiblemente-izquierdas>

³ <https://www.infobae.com/cultura/2023/04/16/el-sociologo-portugues-boaventura-de-sousa-santos-separado-de-su-cargo-tras-denuncias-de-acoso-sexual/#:~:text=En%20redes%20sociales%2C%20la%20activista,justicia%20y%20para%20el%20mundo%E2%80%9D>

Entre tanto, 250 personalidades del mundo académico firmaron en apoyo a las tres autoras, arriba mencionada, en un escrito de mucha circulación titulada “Todas sabemos”.

Boaventura respondió a estas denuncias de que se trataba de una difamación y venganza personal e institucional. En razón de ello, un colectivo de mujeres que trabajaron en el CES con dicho profesor, respondieron que no se trataba de “difamación ni venganza; siempre fue acoso”. El colectivo relató a Pública dos casos de acoso sexual. Según ellos, en una conversación privada, Boaventura le dijo a una investigadora que podrían “tener una relación especial” y que “cuando le mira las piernas, siente deseo”. En otro caso, aseguran que el profesor mencionó el cuerpo y las piernas de la investigadora en una comunicación por correo electrónico. “La investigadora acosada por correo electrónico recibió ‘un fuerte acoso moral y su trabajo fue descalificado’ por no ceder a los ataques”, afirma el colectivo. Los investigadores informan de que las prácticas abusivas del profesor, y de personas con autoridad legitimadas por él, afectaban tanto a hombres como a mujeres; “pero las mujeres se veían desproporcionadamente afectadas por la sobrecarga de trabajo, las exigencias excesivas y la frecuencia con que se menospreciaba su trabajo. Las peticiones domésticas se dirigían a los investigadores, como pedir que le sirvieran café o que le aseguraran plátanos y agua mientras se desplazaba a alguna actividad”, dicen en otro fragmento de la carta.

También fue denunciado uno de los colaboradores más próximos a Boaventura, Bruno Sena Martins. Ambos fueron suspendidos en sus cargos, al menos en ese momento.

Queremos destacar que CLACSO suspendió todas las actividades programadas con el sociólogo. Numerosos centros académicos manifestaron una posición crítica contra Boaventura de Sousa Santos.

Cuatro cuestiones son la base de nuestra argumentación:

1) No se trata de una conducta casual o de hechos aislados, que puede darse en un encuentro íntimo entre dos personas. Se trata de situaciones de abuso y acoso sexual que se han dado en un contexto de trabajo (la Universidad), el que se inserta en una relación de desigualdad estructural entre tesis y su tutor de tesis (a excepción del caso de Millan, aunque ésta situación se dio en el marco de una invitación de al activista mapuche al CES). Claramente, este marco de asimetría amplía la vulnerabilidad de las estudiantes.

2) A esto se añade el temor de hacer la denuncia, dada las evidentes relaciones de poder entre tesis y tutor, y a quien iba dirigida, pues se trata de un profesor con una gran reconocimiento internacional, vocero de la epistemología del sur y de la izquierda académica, con gran proyección, muy especialmente en América Latina. Las denunciadas señalan tanto la indiferencia e incluso la complicidad de las instituciones académicas, que suelen definir a figuras muy reconocidas del mundo académico –esto extensible a otros campos de la cultura, la política, etc- como “intocables”, con lo cual directa o indirectamente avalan la impunidad de la situación.

3) Las denunciantes y numerosas declaraciones de solidaridad que éstas tuvieron destacan la “falta de protocolos” y la escasa atención que los centros académicos hacen para evitar este tipo de situaciones que durante mucho tiempo han sido consideradas como “normales”, en el marco de un modelo académico patriarcal, todavía hoy dominante. A esto agrega que la ausencia de protocolos favorece dichos abusos de poder hacia investigadoras que dependen de la aprobación de estas personas para construir una carrera académica.

4) Ciertamente, es en el marco del avance de las luchas feministas que esta situación, en relación a Boaventura, sale a la luz, en un contexto de desnaturalización de conductas aberrantes desde el punto de vista ético y académico. A esto se suma que las denuncias contra de Sousa Santos no se refieren a hechos sucedidos muchas décadas atrás, sino fechas cercanas; entre 2011 y 2019 (para el caso de las tres primeras denunciantes), de 2014 (para el caso de la investigadora brasileña), 2010, para el caso de la referente mapuche.

Sabemos que no es fácil, que es muy doloroso. Se trata de un intelectual que todos conocemos y reconocemos, que ha sido muy importante para nuestra formación, nuestros posicionamientos intelectuales y políticos. No estamos proponiendo arrojar sus categorías de pensamiento al vacío, pero si poner énfasis en la falta de integridad moral y ética, como ser humano y como académico de Boaventura.

El Tribunal Internacional de Derechos de la Naturaleza (TIDN) solicitó y designó a Boaventura de Sousa Santos como Presidente del Tribunal Local por el Yasuní en abril del 2014 ante la amenaza de explotación petrolera en este biodiverso Parque Nacional hogar de pueblos indígenas y pueblos en aislamiento. La selección de los jueces del Tribunal se basa en su trayectoria ética y moral. Evidentemente, la participación de Boaventura de Sousa Santos en el Tribunal se promovió dada su destacada carrera como sociólogo, escritor, profesor, conferencista, filósofo y abogado.

Quisieramos destacar que el Tribunal realizó una Asamblea de Jueces a fin de consensuar y adoptar una posición común frente a las numerosas denuncias existentes contra Boaventura de Sousa Santos. La presentación del caso, como miembro informante del Tribunal, estuvo a cargo de Maristella Svampa.

Basándonos en lo dicho y en el código de Ética del Tribunal y de la Alianza Global por los Derechos de la Naturaleza sobre el tema del acosos y relaciones de poder, especialmente considerando que éste es un Tribunal ético y ante estas graves denuncias el Tribunal de Internacional de Derechos de la Naturaleza ha decidido destituir a Boaventura de Sousa Santos como juez del tribunal y por tanto de la Asamblea de Jueces del TIDN.

I asked the CES Board of Directors to immediately distance itself from this misinterpretation of the results of the CI. The Board refused and, in doing so, denounced itself for acting in bad faith by publishing the letter of apology. In fact, several CES researchers wrote a letter to the Board, strongly criticizing it for acting in such a unilateral manner, remaining faithful to a narrative of the alleged victims, without concern for the

existence of other narratives, or for the harm this would cause to the people under investigation, namely myself, Maria Paula Meneses, who was already suffering from depression, and Bruno Sena Martins.

The bad faith and abuse of legality, due process, and the presumption of innocence did not stop there. **Shortly after the CI Report was made public, I informed the Board of my decision to end my self-suspension**, since my decision was intended to facilitate the work of the CI, which had already been completed. The communication was accepted, but contrary to what would be expected under the law, **my students were not informed that my self-suspension had ended** and that they could therefore return to my supervision.

On March 20, 2024, a sixth letter from a “victims' collective” was published, signed by 13 denouncers who thus abandoned their anonymity. It was a seriously insulting letter calling for disciplinary and legal proceedings to be brought against the above-mentioned researchers and for their expulsion.

Incidentally, it had long been circulating on #MeToo networks that the alleged victims would not accept any decision by the IC other than my conviction. That is why **journalists from various newspapers and magazines (e.g., *Sábado*) contacted my former students and even my housekeeper to ask if they had ever been victims of sexual harassment on my part**. Judging by the results, the answers were always negative, and when the interviewee offered to report her experience during the period she was studying under my guidance, the inevitable response was that “that is not relevant to the report.” For this reason, there was widespread mistrust of the CI among the denouncers and the idea that a parallel commission needed to be set up. The following Facebook message from December 23, 2023, is an expression of this. It states, literally, “Let’s see what the IC does, if it manages to work at all... Fortunately, there is a parallel group interviewing people affected...”



Isabel Maria Casimiro

Vamos ver o que faz a comissão criada, se é que consegue trabalhar
Felizmente há um grupo paralelo a entrevistar gente afectada ..

23 min Gosto Responder

In a Facebook message dated September 23, 2023, this person complained that “I can say that I was a victim of moral and power harassment... I know BSS well, he supervised my master's and doctoral degrees.” Despite the moral harassment and power abuse that, according to her, took place during her master's degree, she was not discouraged from asking for my guidance during her PhD, nor from launching one of my books in Mozambique after completing her PhD.

This letter created a wave of indignation among my former students and the students of Maria Paula Menezes and Bruno Sena Martins. One of the most eloquent responses came from Prof. Benjamin Xavier de Paula, who published the following message on March 26, 2024:

Now that things are clearer:

1) “A BLACK AFRICAN WOMAN ACCUSED OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND RACISM AGAINST WHITE EUROPEAN WOMEN”???”;

2) *Who is the real target: Boaventura de Souza Santos or Maria Paula Menezes???”;*

3) *At CES, would it be possible to bring down Maria Paula Menezes—a black African woman—without first bringing down Boaventura de Souza Santos, who would defend her with his own life???” I am familiar with the structure of CES and the people involved in this episode, and as a black researcher, I view the accusations against Maria Paula Menezes with great suspicion, to say the least. For those who do not know her, Maria Paula Menezes is a woman, black and African (Mozambican) - the only black person among hundreds of white researchers - and has always been the true director of*

the CES, responsible for consolidating this institution as one of the world's leading research centers. She has never exposed herself publicly, because this role has always fallen to Boaventura Souza Santos - a public figure at the CES. Those who know Maria Paula Menezes know that the position she has always held at CES stems from her academic and scientific competence and leadership, combined with the unconditional support she has always received from Boaventura de Souza Santos in running CES. While Boaventura was the external figurehead, Maria Paula has always been the internal figure who truly represented what CES was as an institution. It is also important to note that Bruno Senna Martins is a man who identifies as black, is also African (Cape Verdean), and has always been very close to Maria Paula Menezes and, consequently, also protected by Boaventura de Souza Santos. Given the above, I wonder whether it is Boaventura de Souza Santos or Maria Paula Menezes (a black African woman) and Bruno Senna Martins (a black African man) who are the real targets of the allegations of sexual harassment and racism at CES? Sexual harassment and racism are very serious matters, but when a black African woman is accused of sexual harassment and racism against white European [and Brazilian] women, isn't that the same as accusing a black person of racism against a white person?

Those who study racism, sexism, and race and gender relations know very well what the thesis of "reverse racism" represents, which is nothing more than racial violence in the service of whiteness. In the same vein, could there be "reverse sexism" where a black African woman among hundreds of white European women and men who enjoy the privileges of whiteness would then be guilty—as a woman and a black woman—of sexual harassment and racism against white European women? Could the fact of inserting an indigenous Latin American woman as a "scapegoat" for these allegations soften the evidence that is now clearer to the eyes of the world?

In summary: sexual harassment and racism are serious offenses that cannot be tolerated under any circumstances—but accusing a black African woman—who occupies a position of limited power within the racist European white establishment—is, at the very least, strange and should be cause for suspicion and investigation for all of us. It may reveal a plot by the "lower clergy" within the institution to remove the supposed power center—Maria Paula Menezes/Boaventura de Souza Santos—in the name of believing that they could occupy the place they "believe is rightfully theirs" [of the white establishment] and that in this specific situation is in the hands of a black African woman.

Such revelations become even more worrying when it comes to one of the most prestigious European institutions in the world: the CES, and it is not too late to remember what happened in recent times with the first black woman to become Dean at Harvard University, and to conclude with a Greek metaphor - history repeats itself as a new [black] tragedy???

Prof. Dr. Benjamin Xavier de Paula (Postdoctoral Fellow at CES/UC).

Among the signatories of the sixth letter were several CES researchers who had internal bodies to which they could report their complaints. Instead, they used a letter that was widely circulated in Portugal and abroad. This letter revealed, among many other things, two facts that confirmed all the suspicions I had been accumulating throughout the year about the bad faith of the CES management and of some researchers. On the one hand, no disciplinary proceedings were brought against the signatories, who were full members of the institution and therefore subject to the CES statutes. On the other hand, **it was demonstrated that neither the denouncers nor the governing bodies of CES were interested in knowing the truth**, as they were complicit in making accusations in contexts that violated the presumption of innocence and all the procedural guarantees of the rule of law.

In view of the letter from the thirteen signatories, I thought that I finally had that opportunity. **I asked the Board of Directors to give me access to the statements made to the CI by the denouncers who had broken their anonymity.** Once again, the Board refused to give me the means to defend myself. On May 7, 2024, I filed a lawsuit for the presentation of documents, requesting the court to compel the CES management to hand over to me the documents that, in my view, would allow me—finally! – to defend myself, and which (perhaps for this reason) the Board refused to hand over to me. On May 27, the Board, through its lawyers, contested the request. Since September 10, 2024, the date of the last trial session, I have been awaiting for the judge's decision.

In response to the sixth letter, the Board opened an investigation led by a group of lawyers hired by the Board. Why was this not done at the outset of the defamation campaign against CES, given that it took four months to set up the CI? **Although I had no guarantees of impartiality**, I had a meeting with the lawyers on July 29, 2024. It was my expectation that after 16 months of public lynching, the allegations would be communicated to me in writing so that I could defend myself effectively. I have always

emphasized that in this process, **I was the person most interested in knowing the truth and contributing to its prevalence.** The lawyers, certainly obeying terms of reference that no one at CES knows, refused to provide the allegations in writing.

Here is a record of what happened:

Minutes of the meeting of August 29

On August 29 2024, at 2:00 p.m., Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos and his distinguished representatives, Messrs ..., appeared at a meeting held at the offices of the investigators of the preliminary inquiry in progress. Refusing to give immediate oral testimony regarding the allegations to be conveyed by the investigators, he requested the following:

"Having been requested to appear to give a statement regarding allegations made against him by persons whose identity is unknown and whose content he is even less aware of, we requested the identification of the persons who reported infringements of any nature to the professor, as well as a description of the illegal acts attributed to him.

*To this end, **Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos is available to cooperate with the investigation as soon as he is provided with the aforementioned information: the identity of the denouncers and the allegations made against him.***

The scale and sensitivity of the allegations that have been made public are particularly serious, which requires Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos not only to respond effectively, clarify fully, defend himself as is his right, and inform the investigators of the whole truth about what may have happened and in relation to each allegation made against him and to each denouncer he encounters.

We now formally request that you provide us with the identity of each of the accusers and the facts they allege against him.

Without this information, Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos is unable to defend himself effectively and cooperate with the investigation.

The investigators clarified that the clarifications sought in this case would, of course, be preceded by a detailed description of the allegations against Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos, and that they had never prevented the verbal disclosure of such information.

On September 9, my lawyers sent the following message to the CES lawyers:

As we have already communicated to you, we reiterate the following:

1. Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos not only intends to give a statement, but also firmly wishes to do so.

2. However, in order to do so effectively, as is his right, he needs to gather essential information to assist the Inquiry itself.

3. This essential information can be obtained through prior written notification of the identity of the denouncers and the specific content of the denunciations and allegations.

4. In view of the above grounds, we once again request notification of the information referred to as essential.

On September 13, CES's lawyers closed the case:

Dear Colleague,

We acknowledge receipt of your email below, for which we are grateful.

We note that Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos reiterates that he does not intend to provide clarification in the manner defined by the investigators of the case, nor does he wish to be confronted in person with the facts specifically attributed to him or with the identity of the respective denouncers.

In this context, we maintain the position communicated in due course, and the case will now follow its respective and subsequent course.

Best regards

On the same day, my lawyers insisted again, without success:

Dear Colleague

Please do not insist on this point.

What is at issue, EXCLUSIVELY, is the prohibition of the defense, not the desire not to testify.

You can insist as many times as you like on the refusal to testify, but YOU KNOW IT IS FALSE.

Obviously, consequences will be drawn from this amputation of a fundamental right, coming from whom it comes.

Best regards

I was surprised by the insensitivity of the CES lawyers to the fact that this is not a normal investigation process. It would have been normal if it had been opened as soon as the chapter that caused so much damage to the CES scientific community was published, a community that had until then been envied for its scientific and human qualities and which, if it had problems, had mechanisms to resolve them in a calm and discreet manner that preserved the rights and good name of all those involved. **No, this investigation process took place seventeen months after I had been defamed without proof, always in the media and on social networks, subject to various illegalities, deeply affected in my reputation and my health.**

As these lawyers were hired by the current management of CES, it was to them that I attributed responsibility for what was happening. On September 24, I sent a message to my colleagues stating, “I regret to inform you that, after more than a year of media warfare against me, the current management of the institution I created 45 years ago is determined to prevent me from defending myself effectively, as required in a democratic society governed by the rule of law and the presumption of innocence.”

The fact that I was never formally charged in a context where I could defend myself was essential in bringing us to the point where I found myself twenty months after the defamation began: the “civil death” of a person who gave his life for the essential values that constitute the pillars of democracy. Why did they do this to the Director Emeritus of CES and one of the world's most cited social scientists in the field of social sciences?

The strategy that the current Board of Directors had followed from the outset to turn me into a scapegoat and provoke my expulsion would soon become apparent. On November 22, 2024, I received a message from the Board announcing that they would call a general assembly with the only objective to expel me from CES:

Proposta de instauração de processo com vista a exclusão de associado

Tiago Santos Pereira

22 de novembro de 2024 às 18:27

Para: Boaventura de Sousa Santos

Cc: Direção CES

Exmo. Senhor Prof. Doutor Boaventura de Sousa Santos,

Queremos começar por lamentar o teor desta mensagem que sentimos a obrigação de lhe enviar.

Estamos certos de que o Centro de Estudos Sociais, que nos cabe agora representar, não seria o que é sem o trabalho académico, a dinamização de uma cultura de investigação avançada de qualidade, uma estratégia de internacionalização, que durante muitos anos liderou enquanto Diretor do CES e que foi central na projeção que este centro hoje tem a nível nacional e internacional, no reconhecimento da qualidade da investigação desenvolvida por toda a equipa.

No entanto, as responsabilidades de Direção, ou o amplo reconhecimento académico, não inibem, antes acentuam, responsabilidades perante os princípios que estão na base da missão estatutária do CES que ajudou a desenvolver. Neste contexto, e em face da existência de denúncias públicas de práticas que lhe são atribuídas que poderiam indiciar um incumprimento dos deveres de associado, nomeadamente de cumprir, com zelo, dedicação, lealdade e ética, as obrigações estatutárias e os princípios e missão do CES, tínhamos a obrigação de as averiguar.

Foi isto mesmo que foi feito com o processo prévio de inquérito que iniciámos. O relatório agora entregue à Direção pelos instrutores conclui que "[e]m face de tudo quanto se expôs, e em resultado dos factos invocados e da prova indiciária quanto aos mesmos produzida, os instrutores consideram que existem indícios relevantes da prática de atos suscetíveis de configurar a prática de assédio sexual e moral às Denunciadas listadas em II.(iv) supra."

Assim, tendo os Estatutos e o Regulamento de Funcionamento dos Órgãos e Organização Científica do CES como única sanção prevista a exclusão de associado, vimos informar que, face às conclusões do inquérito prévio e aos indícios aí apontados, solicitámos ao Senhor Reitor da Universidade de Coimbra, enquanto Presidente da Mesa da Assembleia Geral do CES, a convocatória de uma Assembleia Geral Extraordinária do CES com vista à discussão e deliberação de proposta de instauração de um processo da sua exclusão de Associado do CES. Caso a Assembleia Geral aprove esta proposta, a instrução do processo garante o seu direito ao contraditório e defesa de acordo com os procedimentos enunciados nos Estatutos e no Regulamento de Funcionamento dos Órgãos e Organização Científica do CES. O eventual resultado desse processo será sempre deliberado em posterior Assembleia Geral. Iremos ainda propor que a equipa de instrutores deste processo seja a mesma sociedade de advogados que instruiu o processo prévio de inquérito com isenção e imparcialidade, pbb.r.a, Sociedade de Advogados, SP, RL.

A convocatória da Assembleia Geral será enviada na próxima terça-feira, 26 de novembro. Neste sentido estamos disponíveis para qualquer contacto até terça-feira de manhã.

Com os melhores cumprimentos,

Tiago Santos Pereira
Antonieta Reis Leite
Paula Abreu
Rita Pais

This means that my request for the documents supporting the “serious accusations” was sufficient grounds for the Board to request my expulsion. It should be remembered that, as I am not an employee of CES, I had no legal obligation to obey an arbitrary order from CES's lawyers.

Faced with such an accumulation of illegality, intrigue, mediocrity, and malevolence in power, and given the coordination between this internal coup and the media war aimed at destroying my reputation, I decided on November 26, 2024, to resign from CES, the institution I founded in 1978 and to which I have dedicated the best of my life. My reply to the above message was my own resignation from CES:

Exm.º Senhor Dr. Tiago Santos Pereira, Director do Centro de Estudos Sociais

Coimbra, 26 de novembro de 2024

Boaventura de Sousa Santos, sócio fundador e director emérito do Centro de Estudos Sociais, venho pelo presente solicitar a minha saída de associado, ao abrigo da alínea a) do n.º 1 do artigo 7.º dos Estatutos, bem como renunciar ao título de Director Emérito.

Atentamente,

Boaventura de Sousa Santos

The judicial system steps in

Having come to the conclusion that I would have no possibility of defending myself within CES, on July 12, 2024, I made two decisions public: to file a civil action for protection of personality against the thirteen denouncers (divided into two cases according to the nationality of the denouncers) and to request the Public Prosecutor's Office to constitute me as a defendant. The second act is unprecedented, but it was the only way I found to finally know what I am accused of so that I can defend myself. **As of the date of this writing (May 7, 2025), the Public Prosecutor's Office has found no grounds to name me as a defendant.**

The action for protection of personality (provided for in Articles 878 et seq. of the Code of Civil Procedure) is a special procedure aimed at quickly restoring the honor and good name of someone who has been falsely accused of a crime. Its sole purpose is to verify whether the allegations are true or false and, in the latter case, to require the defendants to retract them.

It is important to highlight the extent to which the inquisitorial mentality has penetrated the academic and political world, including the left, which throughout its history has gone through periods (in democracy) where it had no other defense than to appeal to the fundamental guarantees of the rule of law. Shortly after my decision to go to court to defend my good name became public, two colleagues whom I considered friends and for whom I have great esteem published these notes. João Teixeira Lopes takes for granted that the denunciations against me are all true (women never lie?!) and that my legitimate desire to defend my good name is nothing but sheer arrogance. José Manuel Viegas Neves is far more self-contained. He acknowledges both the right of women to denounce and the denounced to defend themselves. However, though he is not ready to cancel me as a scholar and intellectual, he is clearly sympathetic to the alleged victims.

facebook

Iniciar sessão



João Teixeira Lopes

18 de outubro de 2024 · 🌐

Boaventura Sousa Santos processou as mulheres que o acusaram e, entre outras coisas, exigilhes que se retratem e manifestem o seu "respeito" pelo "Senhor Professor".
É ridícula, pacóvia e profundamente arrogante a atitude do Boaventura. Só se enterra ainda mais. Sem um pingão de lucidez e autocrítica. Espero que este doloroso processo seja um ensinamento para todas e todos. Não se pode acreditar e venerar um auto proclamado Messias da emancipação sem distância e sentido crítico. Não se pode delegar nele a palavra e a representação. Tudo em Boaventura soava como contradição autoperformativa, encantatória, mas assente em pés de barro (acertado o texto crítico que Madureira Pinto escreveu) e, percebe-se-agora, em violência e opressão.

Jose Manuel Viegas Neves escreveu (sábado, 16/11/2024 à(s) 09:07):

**

Inicia-se hoje o julgamento de colegas do CES processadas por Boaventura Sousa Santos em função das denúncias que dele fizeram. Conheço Boaventura Sousa Santos e o seu trabalho, pelo qual tenho muita estima intelectual. As acusações de que é objeto não me fazem perder essa estima e continuo a discutir os seus textos nas aulas que ensino. E que ele se sinta injustiçado por esta ou aquela acusação, e por isso recorra aos tribunais, é um direito que lhe assiste, por certo. Mas recordo que foi o próprio quem, na sequência das primeiras denúncias de que foi objeto, veio publicamente admitir ter tido comportamentos criticáveis, que procurou contextualizar declarando ser um homem do seu tempo, tempo este que estaria agora em mudança. Essa declaração poderia ter sido o início de um processo de reflexão e reparação, mas, pelo contrário, chegamos agora a esta situação, com Boaventura a processar judicialmente colegas que sentem que foram por ele assediadas e que não recorreram ao anonimato para disso darem conta. Enfim, desde o início de todo este caso, há duas coisas que me suscitam igual perplexidade: a crueldade com que alguns colegas procuraram descredibilizar quem denuncia e a ligeireza com que outros tantos colegas cavalgaram as denúncias para sentenciar os denunciados. Para mim, independentemente do que este ou aquele tribunal vier a decidir nos processos relativos ao caso em questão, importa conhecermos e mudarmos as relações de poder desigual que existem no meio académico e as maneiras por que essa desigualdade pode facilmente tornar-se motivo de abusos e assédio. As colegas que hoje respondem em tribunal têm procurado contribuir para essa mudança e por isso devemos-lhes o nosso apoio.

José Neves was kind enough to tell me about his facebook note:

Good day,

I wrote this brief note on my facebook and wanted to let you know. Perhaps some day we will be able to talk about this in person.

To which I replied:

Dear Zé Neves:

Thanks for sharing. I'm more than willing to talk with you personally when you like. After 18 months of media fare and cancelation, without any chance of giving my view of the facts, doubts will of course be there. In any case, a careful reading of my self-critique will show that I admit errors but not serious faults, let alone crimes, and that's what I'm being accused now. We shall speak whenever you like.

In general, legal action to protect one's personality should not take more than three months because speed is an integral part of the justice sought, since a fundamental right (the right to a good name) is at stake. Two actions were brought against the denouncers: one against the residents in Portugal and the other against the residents abroad, because the aim was to obtain a swift decision, knowing that the fact that some of the denouncers reside abroad would be a factor in delaying the proceedings. The first action was brought on September 26, 2024, and the second on January 7, 2025. Shortly after the first action was filed, it was announced that the television channel NOW would broadcast special programs to give a voice (once again) to the alleged victims. Even before this program was announced, and anticipating that the alleged victims would continue to use the media for their campaign, on October 16, 2024, my lawyers requested the judge to issue a provisional decision ordering the alleged victims to refrain from making any value judgments about me in any public or publicity-seeking forum until the final decision was handed down. The judge rejected the request after the first program had already been broadcast, considering that there was no evidence of imminent damage to the moral character of the plaintiff... In other words, I asked the court to protect my good name, and the aggressors were allowed to continue their defamatory campaign, even after the case was filed.

On January 17, 2025, some of the witnesses I had indicated (António Sousa Ribeiro, Graça Capinha, João Arriscado Nunes, José Luis Exeni Rodríguez, Lassalet Simões, Maria Irene Ramalho, and Maria José Carvalho) were heard. By an unfortunate coincidence, in this case, only the recording of some of my witnesses had technical problems and was practically inaudible, probably making it impossible to transcribe the files. At the time of writing (May 7, 2025), it has not been possible to overcome this technical fault. As speed is key to the effectiveness of this process, this delay means that the useful effect of this action (to restore my good name) is null, even if the action is

upheld, as I am convinced it will be, based on all the documentary and testimonial evidence I have presented.

On January 6, 2025, a supervening application was filed with the aim of demonstrating to the judge the international repercussions of the aggressors' conduct, in an attempt to sensitize the judge to the importance of proceeding swiftly with this case and demonstrating that there is another version of the facts which, because it has not been reported in the media, as it is not sensationalist, nonetheless deserves attention. Because it is more objective and more credible. Because it is the truth! This request included a series of statements from prominent figures highlighting the serious damage being done to my good name. Among the statements, I transcribe the following:

Iris Lykourioti, Professor at the University of Thessaloniki, Greece:

“12/22/2024, 4:45 p.m.

Dear Boaventura,

I have just read your text in one breath. It helps to understand a lot. It is a valuable account of the disastrous moment Europe is going through. You have been predicting this for a long time.

Héctor and I are always by your side.

I continue to teach based on your work on Southern Epistemologies and I will not stop. There is no better theory to make sense of the world today. Young people deserve a better theory, like the one you think is possible.

This year in particular, I have given a detailed account of the case against you, explaining with all my strength to my students the ideological and cultural war that is trying to shape our institutions and censor emancipatory theories such as EdS.

The sensitive students at our university understand this violence very well if it is explained to them properly. They are affected by tangible experiences that your work addresses in a more appropriate way.

In addition to witnessing the escalation of international censorship regarding more distant crises such as Palestine, they are in close contact with other types of war against their lives. I will circulate your text in my circle and among my students.

Alejandro Sierra, my editor in Spain

Dear Boaventura:

I thought it was all over and that sanity and truth had prevailed. You can count on my friendship. I look forward to reading your wise and sensible reflections on this troubled world. It is a sign and a reason to remain hopeful.

I wish you, your family, and your loved ones all the best this Christmas and always.

With warm regards,

Alexandre"

Jorge Majfud, Professor at the University of Florida

"June 18, 2024 Professor at the University of Florida

For us, who have always defined ourselves, among other things, as feminists, this practice is a double disappointment, although it has nothing to do with feminism. It is a neo-inquisition and a rather miserable one at that. Adult women talking about trauma because someone kissed them too much on the face, in this way or that way, or gave them a hug that was too tight. Almost every month we receive more than tight hugs from women with whom we have no relationship, and we don't go crying in a corner. If we find someone annoying, we walk away. It's not that I support teachers standing behind their students, but these cases seem very childish to me. Especially since they had no obligation to work with you. All this without even mentioning the documents we have already read, which clearly show a double standard.

Juan Gimeno - Professor at the Autonomous University of Madrid

October 2, 2024, 10:38 a.m.

Dear Boaventura, we greatly appreciate your gesture in sharing this document with us and, above all, what it gives us: a glimpse into the depths of your heart.

In my view, your struggle, which is necessary and timely, is not only against injustice, but for the clean transmission of one of the most dignified and important legacies for future generations that has been given in the intellectual and academic field over the last fifty years. Many things impress me about you, one of the most impressive

being your awareness of building yourself as a responsible ancestor. For me, this is one of the best ways to live a dignified life, one that is not exhausted in any present time and will be present in any future time. Time will put things in their place; one of the greatest injustices of your annulment is that it has succeeded (at least partially) in depriving us, in depriving the world, of a voice that is more necessary than ever in the times we live in. But this voice, Boa, will never be silenced. It has found and will find in the times to come many voices that will multiply it and multiply it.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart, master-friend-brother, for contributing to the dignity of my existence and of the worlds in which, in our human form, we live and in which many others will live.

A very warm embrace

Leonardo Boff – great Brazilian theologian

"Tuesday, December 17, 9:07 p.m.

Dear friend Boaventura

I read your long justification in response to the anonymous accusations and the injustice done to you, denying you the right to explain yourself, especially since you have a law degree.

I am very sorry for the suffering this is causing you and also for the attempt to destroy a whole creative, critical, alternative, and anti-systemic way of thinking that you have developed with universal recognition. What is true always resists and will one day break through. But let it not be in eternity, but here and now in time. I believe that time will be on your side.

I am engaged here in Brazil in a controversy over the suspension of the academic activities of an eminent Marxist jurist and sociologist, Alysson Moscaro. This is based on anonymous accusations of harassment, as in your case. No one shows their face, no one formulates the accusation.

Never in law are people judged and punished on the basis of hearsay and anonymous accusations, not even in the Code of Hammurabi or the Code of Enuma Elis, the oldest codes we know.

For me, all this is due to intolerance of the truth that you express with critical categories that Marx taught us, unmasking the perverse logic of capital. Critics cannot digest the truth, just as Marx is still indigestible to all functionalist thinking within the prevailing system. In my view, they attack them because of the truth that blinds them and they cannot live with it.

But it is too high a price to pay. I think that in times of post-truth and widespread fake news, if Socrates were among us, he would commit suicide even without hemlock. How can the truth, which is always luminous as never before in our collective history, be mistreated? Socrates, in abysmal sadness, would abandon such an evil world, incapable of living in truth and justice.

Well, you can count on my solidarity and appreciation, always learning from what you write. Never abandon creative and anti-systemic writing, in solidarity with our Global South.

A strong and fraternal embrace

Leonardo Boff

Edwin Rubio Medina - Professor at the University of Colombia

*...Boaventura's entire career faithfully demonstrates his discomfort with injustice, inequality, and the order established by the capitalist-colonialist system from its macro and micro structures.... This decision naturally brought him detractors, but his distancing from the system also allowed him to find company and solidarity with other dissatisfied, courageous, and proactive people who decided to think about a more just economic, political, and educational model, thus showing us the extent to which guided nonconformity can lead to beautiful militancy in the party of humanity (Mark Thusnet) Boaventura does not renounce universality. His legacy in this regard encourages us to continue to have faith in the critical spirit and allows us to generate diagnoses and strategies to contribute to our role in denouncing injustice, but also in our capacity to generate new heterotopias in which new worlds are possible, as proclaimed by Zapatismo. The professor sums it up in one of his maxims: think globally, act locally. Thirdly, Professor de Sousa seems to me to embody the essential attributes of the committed social researcher, one who takes risks through his capacity for invention, that revealing Nietzschean *erfindung* that enabled him to combat the categories of*

Eurocentric knowledge. The capacity for invention is not the result of simple academic snobbery, but constitutes an instrument that challenges the authority to name and rename things: Upendra Baxi, for example, stated in one of his works that it is necessary to question who and where those who sit down to write about “human rights” come from. Through concepts such as the ecology of knowledge, abysmal thinking, subaltern legal cosmopolitanism, and many others, the Portuguese professor was able to understand his role in the struggle to construct a language for those who have been made invisible, silenced, and consequently relegated in the global social cartography. The audacity of invention is a powerful legacy that Boaventura has left us as academics and intellectuals who think from the South. And, in my case, it has led me to challenge the triptych of human rights. Instead of simple equality, let us talk about otherness. And if dignity is insufficient, why not fight for maturity? Fourthly, I would like to highlight one of the virtues that, in my personal experience, is the most difficult to achieve. A tragic optimist, Boaventura de Sousa built countless projects without calculating success, but focused on the responsibility of doing his part, individually and collectively. And perhaps even knowing that these projects would prove fruitless, temporary, or insufficient for the needs that reality demands.

**Marilena Chaui – Professor of philosophy at the University of São Paulo.
Important Brazilian intellectual**

"Sunday, December 15, 10:10 p.m.

Dear friend Boaventura,

I will share your message with my study group on democracy and send it to colleagues who have organized a working group on the risks of slander and defamation that are increasingly occurring on social media under the alibi of the term “harassment,” used rightly and wrongly, with the intention of demoralizing those with whom there may have been some disagreement—and even without it.

As for you, rest assured that I have never doubted your integrity and elegance in your dealings with people and, particularly, with me.

Warm regards

Marilena"

Bruna Muriel - former student

... I participated in a “sandwich” exchange program at the Center for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra, under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Boaventura de Sousa Santos, between March 2014 and March 2015. ... I am writing on my own initiative, motivated by the desire to contribute to the ongoing investigation, since, as you will see in the following pages, my experience at CES and with my professor differs radically from those linked to episodes of harassment, abuse, and oppression, exposed both in the book “Sexual Misconduct in Academia – Informing an Ethics of Care in the University” (2023) as in the reports and letters published by the media and social networks over the last year. I emphasize that I stand in solidarity with those who have suffered at CES and do not in any way intend to question the veracity of the memories or the legitimacy of the complainants' demands. However, as a professor and researcher critical of the Manichean and reductionist logic of explaining reality, which hinders understanding of its complexity and intrinsic contradictions, I feel it is my duty to inform those responsible for investigating cases of moral and sexual harassment at CES that I have other memories from the period I was there. The supervision meetings with Professor Boaventura and the meetings with members of his investigation team, among whom I highlight Professor Maria Paula Menezes and researcher Bruno Sena Martins, were full of respectful dialogue, intense learning, and deep reflection. During my stay, I attended all the lectures given that academic year, as well as workshops and talks at which the professor was a prominent figure. This was the case, for example, of the Alice Summer School held in the city of Curia between June 30 and July 8, and the workshop “Research Methods for Southern Epistemologies: What's New?”, held on June 22, 2014, at the professor's own residence, located in the charming Portuguese village of Quintela.... In addition to academic activities, I attended dinners at the Casarão restaurant, which were also attended by the professor. On no occasion, formal or informal, did I observe subtle or explicit signs of behavior that would lead me to believe that there was any physical or psychological abuse. This is also the impression of my doctoral advisor at PROLAM/USP, who, a year before my trip to Portugal, had completed her postdoctoral internship at the same institution under the supervision of the same professor. I share with her memories of a rich academic experience in an intellectually fruitful environment and of dialogue with a generous professor who was attentive in his corrections and

suggestions. I will conclude here, remaining at your disposal for any clarification regarding the content of this letter and the episodes reported...

Walden Bello - Great Filipino intellectual Presidential candidate in the last elections

Hello Boa...

I fully support your quest for justice and a fair trial, and it is regrettable that you have been deprived of them. I have read the documents you provided me and am fully convinced of your innocence. You are a man of integrity, both personal and intellectual. Amidst all these problems, remember that your colleagues hold you in high regard. You are one of the most important progressive intellectuals in the world, and that is something that those who defame you can never take away from you.

Please feel free to make my full support for you public in any document or forum.

Please take care of your health and always keep your head up high. Please keep writing. More than ever, we in the Global South need your voice.

In solidarity,

Raul Zaffaroni - Respected professor of criminal law in Argentina, former judge of the Supreme Court of Justice of Argentina, former judge of the Latin American Court of Human Rights

Hello Boa! Your decision is the right one. Take care of your health. The rest matters little. What are academic institutions but a refuge for intrigue? Peacock tails? Your works cannot be denied by anyone and will remain forever. Can the others compare?

When we meet, I will tell you personally an old story about these “manufactured immortals” and their intrinsic evil. Now you are free! Free! How wonderful!

With love. Raul

Raquel Siquiera and Marcio Fiorentino – Professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and Professor at the Federal University of Southern Bahia wrote a *cordel* (popular poetry typical of Northeast Brazil)

“Cordel do Boa

Here I express,

In prose and verse,

Half rhymes of courtship,

Northeastern Brazilian improvisation,

Sugary cordel of delights

Of rapadura,

Which is sweet, and at the same time,

Hard.

I speak of life, which chooses our wounds,

But these heal us,

For friends of fiber,

Strengthen and return beauty,

And the infinite brilliance of existence,

The taste sweetened by gratitude

And companionship.

In the certainty that we are steadfast,

In joy and in sadness.

Here, before and after,

Márcio Florentino and I,

The two of us are your children

In the lessons we have learned,

And with you we remain strong.

Your teachings have nourished us,

We will be forever grateful,

And we will perpetuate your blessed words.

Honey flows from our mouths

When we speak of you,

The Good, always Good idea,

Our icon.

Even during the hypocrisy and lies,

We were warriors in the village of freedom

And trust.

Far from mediocrity,

We are part of the same tribe.

Originating from libertarian epistemologies.

We have been, are, and will be by your side,

For whatever you need and want.

And I have yet another reason to thank you:

I have been hired at UFRJ,

Thanks also to you.

Márcio continues to work and I,

Bathed in your wisdom,

We are your children,

Making things happen, wherever we are,

What we have truly learned from you.

Infinite gratitude,

Loyalty,

Blessed trust.

GOOD, very GOOD company!!“

Vera Duarte – Former Minister of Justice of Cape Verde, Cape Verdean writer

My dear friend,

I did follow the slander they wanted to spread about you (and the son of my ex-brother-in-law) and wrote to you to express my solidarity and to make myself available to you for whatever you needed...

But my friend, your magnificent track record, while attracting hostile glances, is your best defense... That is why I am not telling you to throw away what is trash, because those who slander you deserve to be punished...

My friend, continue to brilliantly defend “your” Southern Epistemologies and enlighten us with the fluorescence of your irreverent and innovative thinking... and let nothing stop you!!!

Hugs and kisses from your friend

Vera

Mary N. Layoun, - Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Member of the External Monitoring Unit of CES

Dear Boa,

In the context of this sad world, I am writing to you for two reasons. The first is to express my deep concern about your own situation—the devastating impact on you, your name, and your exemplary international reputation caused by the events that began almost two years ago. I refer to the slanderous article that appeared in an anthology published by Routledge Press and was subsequently withdrawn from it. Subsequently, the

CES leadership embarked on a frenzy of ill-conceived and poorly communicated responses that made a mockery of due process, justice, and the intellectual community. They also made a mockery of the notion of principled and impartial leadership.

I am not saying this rhetorically or hyperbolically. As a member of the CES External Monitoring Unit for the past five years, I—along with my international colleagues—have had the task of conducting annual meetings with CES research groups and individual members and with CES leadership teams. We have read numerous reports and proposals generated by CES. And we have written reports on our observations. We have observed the enormous achievements of the Center you founded and directed until five or six years ago and its remarkable international esteem in various countries and peoples. It was therefore with great dismay that I observed how the CES leadership grossly mismanaged a situation that was admittedly difficult. Intentionally—or perhaps unintentionally, although I have deep doubts about the latter—they encouraged and participated in a frenzied rush to judgment by academic and political institutions and the media, based on rumors, insinuations, and unsubstantiated claims. The last two years have been a striking lesson—as if we needed one—in vindictive virtue signaling, bad faith, and dishonesty.

*It was not only in Portugal or at CES that veritable witch hunts took hold of public attention and had devastating consequences for those who were found guilty because they were accused—without evidence or opportunity for self-defense. (John Putnam Demos' work on witch trials in Europe and the US, *Entertaining Satan*, and other fierce, more contemporary parallel fury, *The Enemy Within*, are sobering reminders of how such frenzies work).*

And there is no small irony in the situation that has befallen you and your work. For you have always drawn attention to the ways in which patriarchy works in tandem with colonialism and capitalism. Yet in the wake of the growing storm of slanderous accusations, the damage done to your international standing by the furor of defamation is severe. Even people and institutions who know that the accusations are slanderous remain silent for fear of being accused themselves—as institutions or as individuals. (The media storm and public defamation that is taking place are, once again ironically, a kind of perverse testimony to the power of your ideas and your work. A great deal of time, money, and energy is being spent to bring accusations against you). And so invitations to

you are withdrawn; the publication of your work is delayed; prestigious awards are threatened.

Because things have been so slanderously distorted, so disproportionate, I can only hope that the pages of documentation you have gathered in your defense will be carefully read and considered. It is essential that accusations and judgments be based on a careful analysis of the evidence and documentation. If it would help, I will gladly invoke the Greek goddesses of Justice, Θέμις and her daughter Δίκη, when I return home to Greece. But please let me know if there is anything else I can do.

Finally, I come to the second reason for writing to you—which stems unequivocally from the first. I know that you recently resigned from your position as Director Emeritus of CES. And that Graça Capinha, João Arriscado Nunes, António Sousa Ribeiro, Adriana Bebiano, and Maria Irene Ramalho also resigned shortly thereafter. For my part, I cannot continue to work in good faith with what CES has become—yet another institutional instrument of repression and injustice, of “judgment” based on hysterical rumors and unfounded accusations. (I therefore wish to inform you that I am publicly resigning from the CES External Monitoring Unit. As soon as I return to Greece, I will write a letter to the current director, with copies to all those responsible for the CES. I no longer have any hope that my colleagues at the UEA and I will be able to persuade the CES leadership and the signatories of the letters that there are other, fairer and more balanced ways of acting.

Once again, I deeply regret having to say all this. And despite everything, I send you my best wishes for a better new year. In dark times, as Brecht says, we will still have poetry.

Mary

Two researchers from the University of Coimbra who gave their testimonies to the Independent Commission and have now requested anonymity:

Testimony 1

"This testimony refers mainly to the instrumentalization of the feminist cause in Coimbra by some members of the Coimbra Feminist Assembly (AFC), responsible for the graffiti that triggered the alleged complaints against Professor Sousa Santos. Founded

in late 2016, early 2017, the AFC was a pluralistic group made up of workers, independent activists, and others linked to political parties, academics, as well as activists from the black and gypsy movements. They naturally drifted away due to the dispute for political prominence among some of its new members, which ended up turning the AFC into an increasingly closed group, homogeneous and restricted to groups of friends. This structure transformed the supposed shelter for victims of gender-based violence into a space for “witch hunts” and a supposed feminist justice that involved “getting justice” for the female members' male enemies. They even compiled a list of people who had committed serious acts of gender-based violence against colleagues with whom they had had arguments, political enemies, or simply external rumors, as was the case with the alleged harassment of Professor BSS by then-CES doctoral student Isabella Gonçalves. None of the people involved in the graffiti that gave rise to the article “The walls spoke when no one else would” were close to or had any direct involvement in the case. (...) numerous reports of sexual violence, workplace violence, elitism, and endogamy among men and women within this University, practically none of these cases were pursued. The reasons are diverse and cannot be listed here, but what is relevant to say is that none of them received as much attention from the Coimbra Feminist Assembly as the unsubstantiated rumors involving BSS... The legitimate feminist struggle to be taken seriously must find within itself a commitment to the agenda of combating oppressive power structures and not the dangerous individual “justice” that, under the guise of punishing enemies, justifies itself in the same dangerous punitive structure. Best regards. (...)

Testimony 2

My testimony will focus mainly on the dinners and the alleged sexual harassment. As a PhD student at CES, I really enjoyed the interactions we had at the dinners, which were facilitated by Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos. As part of a decades-long tradition, the professor used to invite students and researchers to have dinner with him at the Casarão restaurant after his lectures. The restaurant was not the best in town, but it was very cheap—we paid around €8 per person, all included. It was chosen so that there would be no barrier to participation. These weekly dinners were an incredible tool for networking with academics and activists from all over the world, some of whom were just passing through; others were doing research stays, others were even studying at other faculties but attended the professor's lectures. They were also an essential tool for

getting to know the people at CES as an institution – which had grown so large that it was difficult to meet people from other research groups in other ways. It was also the best way to meet fellow PhD students from other research programs, as well as other “generations” of PhD colleagues from different years of entry. I consider the dinners organized by the professor to be one of the most intellectually interesting and stimulating aspects of my research period at CES over the past 10 years. I participated in these dinners for over 8 years. During all those years, I never observed anything that came close to sexual harassment or misconduct, either at these dinners or during any other activity at the Center for Social Studies. The professor's status as an internationally renowned academic and public intellectual certainly attracted a lot of attention—for better or worse—from people who wanted to talk or get noticed. In addition, the precarious and competitive nature of academia certainly contributed to a scramble for favors. Occasionally, this inspired some “fan behavior” on the part of visiting researchers who were “enchanted” to be in the presence of a “celebrity.” But I never observed the professor attempting to take advantage of this. I was therefore very shocked and saddened by the things that have been insinuated about those dinners in some media outlets and in the controversial chapter “The walls spoke when no one else would.” If there is an exception to this rule, it would be the episodes involving my former doctoral colleague, now a doctor and Brazilian congresswoman, Isabella Gonçalves—the person who has been at the center of the storm ever since. However, it is completely different from what has been portrayed through rumors spread by people who were never present. In my view, shared by several other colleagues—including Brazilians—at the time, it was Dr. Isabella who repeatedly and over a considerable period of several months used her charm to try to gain influence with Professor Boaventura. Although all those involved were adults, she behaved, including in public, in a way that seemed to exceed the professional behavior expected of a doctoral student. Over the course of several dinners, I remember her writing and reciting poems expressing her love for Professor Boaventura, as well as sitting on his lap. At the time, several colleagues were embarrassed by this unprofessional behavior, which we considered inappropriate and opportunistic. Although one could argue that the professor should or could have reprimanded this behavior instead of being charmed by it, it is important to emphasize that this situation was an absolute exception at CES and that the initiative came from Dr. Isabella Gonçalves herself. As such, rather than seeing Dr. Isabella as a victim, her colleagues at the time viewed her as someone who consciously used her age and attractiveness to gain

academic and political advantages. It was behavior that generated envy and tension among several of her colleagues. It also appears to be behavior that she did not only exhibit with Professor Boaventura. During the same period, it was common knowledge among her doctoral colleagues that Dr. Isabella was also in a relationship with another researcher. As we are all qualified adult citizens who interact with whomever we want, I do not think there is anything inherently wrong with that. In all other contexts it would be irrelevant, but given the context of the allegations and the centrality of Dr. Isabella's case, I think it is important to mention. Over the years, people may have changed their narratives and perspectives, but what I have written above was more or less a common perspective among a generation of PhD colleagues who attended dinners during the years Dr. Isabella was in Coimbra, as well as among her colleagues at the time on the ALICE research project. It was in this context that the first “rumors” surrounding the alleged sexual harassment attributed to Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos emerged—spread by some people from the “Assembleia Feminista de Coimbra” (Coimbra Feminist Assembly). Because of my knowledge of the context, I was very concerned about the “rumors”—expressed in the form of anonymous graffiti—accusing Professor Boaventura of being a harasser and rapist from the moment they emerged. These “rumors” all referred to the case of Dr. Isabella Gonçalves. But they were spread by people who were never directly present. As far as I know, Dr. Isabella was also never involved in spreading these rumors. They were inspired by personal and political frustrations directed at the research center that had nothing to do with this specific situation. I believe it is important to understand this context, as the case of Dr. Isabella Gonçalves concerns the most serious, and apparently most credible, accusation against the professor. I firmly believe that the translation of the rumors that would lead to the character assassination of Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos based on alleged sexual harassment was essentially based on two elements: The bad faith of researcher Lieselotte Viaene, who never really integrated into the CES and had a labor dispute with the institution—and the help of long-standing political enemies in the Portuguese media and jealous colleagues who were eager to destroy one of the most important left-wing intellectuals in Portugal. Sincerely, (...)

Pablo Davalos, well-known Ecuadorian intellectual, university professor

"I received these materials and circulated them among my circle of friends. We thought and reflected a lot about what happened to you. Our hypothesis is that when you began to weave threads between Latin American and African resistance movements, you created a political space to unite these resistances in an unprecedented but dangerous way. Imagine if the Sumak Kawsay of Ecuador and Bolivia joined the struggles against colonialism of the African peoples. That is why we believe that the campaign against you was really a political operation (I don't know if by the CIA or something similar) to prevent the Latin American and African resistance movements from coming together.

I think you should resume this line of work if you want our support. Of course, you can count on us.

Hugs

Pablo Dávalos".

Assistants (open letter)

A chapter of a book was recently published—The walls spoke when no one else would. Autoethnographic notes on sexual-power gatekeeping within avant-garde academia—accusing an anonymous institution and an anonymous professor of abuse of power, precariousness, academic extractivism, and gender violence. Despite the attempt at anonymity, it is clear that the accusations are directed at Boaventura de Sousa Santos and the Center for Social Studies (CES).

As the institution in question has expressed its intention to set up an independent commission to investigate such conduct, it is not our place to judge or make value judgments about the accusations of various forms of gender violence referred to in the article. What affects us and what we must denounce are the “whispers” about academic extractivism, abuse of power, or the precariousness of work carried out against us, men and women who, at different stages of our lives, were research assistants to Boaventura de Sousa Santos.

We must be emphatic and unequivocal in stating that there has never been any form of expropriation or extractivism, we have never been denied authorship when we were entitled to it, and we have never had to write any chapter or book for Prof. Santos to simply sign. Throughout the different years of collaboration, our work revolved around

the preparation of literature reviews with extensive textual citations, translations, or style corrections due to the different languages we mastered.

Never, throughout the various phases of our lives in which we were associated with Boaventura de Sousa Santos, did we encounter an autocrat who abused his international notoriety to undermine or belittle our scientific abilities. On the contrary, we found him to be someone who valued our opinion and our criteria, giving us the opportunity to disagree with his arguments, provided that our opinions were properly substantiated. It is clear, and we do not deny it, that the academic world is riddled with bad practices and abuses of power, where students are the weakest link in the chain, and the university benefits from this in different ways. Precariousness exists, but in the specific case of our work with Boaventura, we can affirm that this is not the typical case of a renowned professor who uses his students to steal their ideas and fill his curriculum vitae with thousands of published texts. All of his texts, in the different years we worked with him, without exception, were written by him.

In view of the allegations that exist on the subject, we, who are directly involved as alleged victims of academic extractivism, cannot ignore such statements. We are not, nor have we ever been, passive subjects in an academic relationship. We have always been remunerated for our work and our name and authorship have always been recognized when appropriate.

Sincerely,

Signatures:

Bryan Vargas Reyes – Colombia

Eduardo Xavier Lemos – Brazil

Maria José Canelo – Portugal

Antoni Aguiló – Spain

Patricia Branco – Portugal

Lino João de Oliveira Neves – Brazil

Margarida Gomes – Portugal

José Luis Exeni Rodríguez – Bolivia.

Graça Capinha, professor at the Faculty of Arts of the University of Coimbra, former researcher at CES (resigned in protest against the way CES management treated Professor Boaventura)

The crisis at CES, or irregularities that were not irregularities

Público, December 24, 2024

(<https://www.publico.pt/2024/12/24/opiniao/opiniao/crise-ces-irregulari...> 4 of 4
27/12/2024, 09:32)

Did the current management of the Center for Social Studies want to get rid of Boaventura de Sousa Santos and thus establish other systems of institutional power and scientific orientation? Just a few days ago, I severed ties with what had been my research center for almost 40 years (<https://www.publico.pt/2024/12/10/sociedade/noticia/cinco-investigadores-senioresdesvinculamse-centro-estudos-sociais-coimbra-2115192>). The reasons that led me to do so stemmed from my perplexity, over all these months, at the way the CES management handled the crisis caused by the publication of an article, which was hugely offensive to us, in a book published by Routledge. What I heard at the last plenary session I attended, which coincided with the day after the resignation of the founder of CES (<https://www.publico.pt/2024/11/26/sociedade/noticia/boaventura-sousa-santos-demitese-ces-coimbra-2113393>), left me no alternative and is echoed in the statement of December 11, 2024, a document that clearly reveals how the current CES management “resolved” the matter.

The statement says that the external investigations (commissioned by the management, the content of which we are unaware of) have been concluded and that no irregularities have been identified that would justify disciplinary proceedings, “either because no evidence of any relevant infringements has been found ...” or because “the CES bodies do not have statutory disciplinary power over persons who no longer have any connection with the institution.” Are these two circumstances cumulative or alternative? In other words, if Boaventura de Sousa Santos had not resigned, would the CES have proceeded with disciplinary proceedings? And the question is: on the basis of what “relevant infringements”? And how can a law firm and the CES management replace the Public Prosecutor's Office with regard to the remaining 13 researchers who

have been denounced? Even someone who had accused me in a previous plenary session of not being a feminist (for speaking about the right to the presumption of innocence and to a fair hearing, which are normal in any state governed by the rule of law!) ended up raising the same questions, now in a much more concerned tone. Let us recall how it all began: an article, supposedly scientific and supposedly anonymous, attributed to Boaventura de Sousa Santos, the Star Professor, responsibility for an environment of sexual, moral, and labor harassment, abuse of power, extractivism, etc. It also claimed that all this was happening with the collaboration of an Apprentice (Bruno Sena Martins) and a Watchwoman (Maria Paula Meneses). It also targeted other CES executives, whom it accused of “controlling” judges, and accused its feminists of defending feminism outside the doors but doing nothing inside them. This sparked a huge crisis at CES and was promoted on social media and in the national and international press as a real scandal involving Boaventura de Sousa Santos, whose scientific reputation was destroyed (I learned of canceled invitations, a ban on citing his work in university courses, suspended or canceled book contracts, etc.). However, in view of this latest statement from the current CES management, there are only two possible interpretations. Either the Apprentice and the Watchwoman were subjected to such coercion that they were unable to resist orders that violated the law and ethics—an absurd interpretation if we look at the scientific and professional curriculum of two researchers who even held management positions at CES, with a solid curriculum both nationally and internationally. Or, second interpretation, more plausible: neither the Apprentice learned of any irregularities, nor did the Watchwoman cover up any irregularities worthy of disciplinary proceedings. But if this is the only plausible interpretation, then many questions arise. Why did the current management never defend its director emeritus and, on the contrary, contribute to destroying his reputation? Why did it align itself with the allegations—never formally presented to date—of the alleged “victims,” to whom it even apologized after the Independent Commission's report (in which the word “victim” was never even used)? Why all this fury, which even went so far as to call for a general assembly to decide on the expulsion of its founder? Did the current leadership of the CES want to get rid of Boaventura de Sousa Santos and thus establish other systems of institutional power and scientific orientation? A coup d'état with a legal appearance? If so, it must be denounced and the consequences and responsibilities must be drawn.

Baltasar Garzon - Investigating judge between 1980 and 2012 in Spain, lawyer, and prominent human rights activist.

Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos, with all due respect and because I am familiar with your personal political and intellectual career and understand what your struggle has meant at the national and international level over decades, I am writing this email to you, not to defend you, but because I believe that you are the target of a media and professional campaign that causes me great discomfort if I remain silent at this time.

You will agree with me, Professor, that gender violence is one of the most painful issues in a democratic society, because it not only causes women to suffer for being women, but also proves that machismo and patriarchy are still alive and well.

On many occasions, these attacks are disguised in a wide range of activities, including academic, artistic, cultural, cinematographic, journalistic, and business activities, especially when there is a relationship of dependency between the aggressor and the woman being abused, and they have too often been silenced.

It is true that in recent years there have been many reports that have brought this reality to light, but it is also a fact that there have been excesses and abuses in the reports which, under the pretext of fighting for the inalienable rights of women, which both you and I defend, have managed to hide other interests or have been facilitated in such a way that it is impossible or very difficult to counteract or mitigate the effects they may have on the person or persons affected, who find themselves caught up in a vicious circle that adds to the ordeal suffered by the complainants themselves.

In today's world, where communication moves at breakneck speed, the negative effects of fake news or manipulation of information or simply bias in reporting, without giving the subject the opportunity to defend themselves, mean immediate public condemnation and, sometimes, the "civil death of individuals," as is in fact happening to you. In Portugal, there is a well-known complaint that took place within the activities of the Center for Social Studies at the University of Coimbra, against you, Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos, a renowned thinker, sociologist, communicator, activist, reference for progressivism and the intellectual left in the global south, defender of human rights and peoples' rights. You, Professor Boaventura de Sousa Santos, a prestigious thinker, sociologist, communicator, activist, a reference point for progressivism and the intellectual left in the global south, a defender of human rights,

indigenous peoples, the environment, and a consummate anti-imperialist, were the founder, and achieved international renown thanks to the great merit of your activities. Merits that, in the current situation, have been unjustly turned into poisoned arrows against you.

For me, you have always been and remain an example of what an intellectual, activist for democracy, and defender of human rights should be and how an intellectual should behave, with unquestionable consistency and social commitment.

As you know, just over a year ago, a scandalous publication appeared, accompanied by an orchestrated media campaign against you for alleged sexual abuse, harassment, and actions unbefitting of a person of your standing. This led, as quickly as it was inconsequential, to an allegation of guilt that smacked of outright condemnation.

First, in a veiled manner and then explicitly, these allegations were disseminated with the acquiescence or, at least, the passivity of the current leadership of the CES, which is ideologically opposed to you, Professor De Sousa Santos, and spread exponentially with the declared purpose of destroying the image I have described, through the accusation and imputation of extremely serious acts, contrary to ethics and human dignity and particularly harmful to those who suffer them.

This is neither the time nor the place to analyze in depth the unethical behavior of the CES leadership, nor the false and opportunistic private investigation commissioned by the CES following the opinion of the Independent Commission appointed, which found no fault in Mr. Boaventura's conduct.

What is certain and true is that you, personally and publicly, directly and through your legal representatives, have made yourself available to the courts and to CES itself to contribute to the investigation, offering all the documentary evidence and proceedings at your disposal that clearly and simply demonstrate that the allegations are inconsistent and false. In this vein, you have taken legal action to protect your personality, your rights, your image, and your honor against those who have accused you of improper and even apparently criminal acts. In this approach, it is essential that the Portuguese justice system take the situation very seriously and analyze all the actions presented together, because the purpose of their publication is one and only one: and that the judicial authority takes into account the principle of equality of arms and the presumption of innocence, because otherwise the legal action becomes an act of revenge and a kind of

public stoning with no possibility of subsequent redress. Justice must always preserve the rights and interests at stake, which do not include false and gratuitous publications that only seek to denigrate the person.

You will agree with me that it is necessary to defend the integrity of women, to defend their inalienable rights in the face of the violence to which they are subjected, but it is also extremely important that this fight be fought in freedom, respecting the sacred principles that govern the rule of law and that govern democracy, which include the guarantee of the presumption of innocence, the guarantees of due process, of the right to be heard, of equality of arms, transparency, impartiality, and judicial independence.

I have the feeling that it is becoming clear that the current leadership of the CES, in a move clearly designed to protect itself and eliminate its own responsibility (if it has any), has eliminated the few possibilities of defense for those who have been turned into “scapegoats” or “whipping boys” for being forced to prove negative facts in an inquisitorial system lacking guarantees, which makes it highly unlikely that this will be possible.

I do not intend to go into the reasons, the veracity, or the interpretations of each of the denouncers, because that is a matter for the judicial or even academic sphere, but I can assert and affirm that certain media outlets and social networks have behaved and acted with a clear bias that determines the stoning of a person's rights, reputation, and image without them having had the opportunity to defend themselves in the spaces where this confrontation was organized. This is the reality, respected professor, in which you find yourself.

In a democratic country like Portugal, which has so often proved to be exemplary, where the rule of law must be unquestionable, it is unacceptable to proceed with the “public condemnation” and intellectual elimination of someone who is trying to defend himself and who, like the denouncers, needs judicial protection. The increasingly common practice of this type of “unappealable sentences” handed down in parallel with legal proceedings takes us back to times that have fortunately been overcome and undermines the struggle for women's rights that we are all committed to.

Those who disseminate the news in an inquisitorial manner before the court's ruling assume a responsibility that must be demanded of them with a scope equivalent to the damage caused, which in the end may be to both parties. And this is where legal action

must be measured but forceful and exhaustive, analyzing in detail all the documentation provided by the plaintiff himself in the context of the media and intellectual war declared against him, which has already produced irreparable damage.

I am sure that the judge is aware of the scope of this case and the importance of its outcome. She will make the right decision, aware of the significance of her decision.

Dear Professor, please accept my best regards and continue to fight for human rights, without exception, as you have done until now. That's where we will meet again.

Aida Quinatoa, Lawyer, important leader of social movements, such as the defense of the homeless and support for Ecuadorian migrants.

I, AIDA QUINATO, domiciled in Madrid, migrant and resident for 24 years, wish to express my solidarity and inform you that I have known Dr. Boaventura de Sousa Santos for about 18 years. I met him at international meetings with social sectors from different organizations representing this continent, where I can assure you that he has always been very attentive, respectful, and kind in his behavior. His lectures were always brilliant and focused on social justice, leaving the audience motivated to learn more. After his speeches, he listened attentively to our questions.

Since I was President of CONADEE and then Spokesperson for PAH Madrid, I have been in contact with the sociologist and intellectual Boaventura de Sousa Santos, whose main characteristic is his critical thinking about injustices. By making social struggles visible, explaining and analyzing unequal knowledge and practices, particularly those produced in the global South, within the framework of a new scientific paradigm that includes the social and the political. It should be noted that he is a prestigious and internationally recognized intellectual, from Portugal to universities in Brazil and other Latin American countries.

I would also like to make it clear that the doctor in question has never expressed a sexist or disrespectful attitude and, therefore, the accusations that are being freely disseminated are unbelievable.

I responded to one of the emails as follows:

aida quinatoa

De: [REDACTED]

Para: [REDACTED]

Tuesday, November 19, 2024, at 9:11 p.m.

I do not know who gave you my email address to send me false information about DR: Boaventura. I will go to the police to prosecute you for misappropriation of my personal data. This is a transnational crime.

This document may be used in any way the interested party deems appropriate, as it is in honor of the truth.

With best regards,

Abga. Aída Quinatoa Arias.

These statements are joined by others, available at <https://www.supportboaventuradesousa.com/>, numerous statements from former students and others that were presented to the Independent Commission, giving their account of the facts and their opinions of my character. Despite the noise that the aggressors insist on making in some sections of the media, hundreds of figures from the academic world, despite the attempt to assassinate my good name and reputation, have wanted to show me their support and communicate their testimonies to me directly.

At the time of writing (five months after the request), the judge has not yet ruled on this request.

Conclusion

The illegal and arbitrary actions of the CES management forced me to give up my right to defend myself within the institution. As CES is a private, non-profit organization, even though it is registered with the University, I was unable to appeal to the university authorities to defend myself. I was forced to resort to the courts. **The experience, for now, is not auspicious, at least in the field of civil justice. Ultimately, I was forced to file a criminal complaint against those who defamed me.**

Over the last forty years, I have devoted a great deal of time to researching the judicial system. At the Permanent Observatory of Portuguese Justice, which I led for decades together with my colleague Conceição Gomes, we carried out dozens of projects on justice reform at the request of virtually every government in the country since 1984. We proposed dozens of reforms to improve the quality of Portuguese justice. I never imagined that one day I would be put in the position of suffering firsthand the consequences of our failure to achieve this goal. Our work has always been scientific, and it was up to the political powers to accept or reject our proposals. **I have fought all my life in solidarity with the struggle of those oppressed, exploited, and discriminated against by capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchy. I will now fight to defend my right to a good name. I will fight with the same conviction that has guided all the other struggles in which I have been involved.**

[1] Other cancellations followed. For example, from the newspaper *Público*, to which I was a frequent contributor, message dated April 15, 2024

Dear Prof. Boaventura

The publication of your latest article in Público almost simultaneously with the release of a report on the events that took place at the Center for Social Studies, even if inadvertent, conveyed the idea that, in some way, Público was endorsing your figure and position in opposition to the conclusions contained in the report.

We consider this to be highly undesirable, and it has been brought to our attention by several readers. For this reason, we think it is appropriate to allow more time before publishing a new article by you.

This exemplary (and hypocritical) concern for impartiality was again invoked by *Público* when, on March 4, 2025, it refused to publish an article by the well-known and respected feminist university professor Isabel Allegro de Magalhães, despite the fact that in previous months several of its contributors (Susana Peralta, Carmo Afonso, Joana Amaral Cardoso, Ana Sá Lopes, and João Miguel Tavares) had written insulting, and in some cases, vulgar articles against me. The refusal reads as follows:

We appreciate the proposal, but we have concluded that we are not interested in publishing the text. We believe that the sensitivity of the facts in question and the fact that legal proceedings are ongoing require special restraint in the content to be published, to prevent the newspaper from becoming a platform for a competition of testimonies in favor or against, with proclamations of innocence or accusations of crimes based solely on personal conviction and friendship for one of the parties. We have recently published opinion articles defending Boaventura de Sousa Santos, it is true, but these articles drew attention to specific situations, such as the alleged injustice of the judicial and media treatment he received, with concrete arguments.

In the hope that you will understand this position and return to this space soon, I remain, yours sincerely.

Isabel Allegro Magalhães' article was published in *Viagem dos Argonautas* (<https://aviagemdosargonautas.net/2025/03/05/ainda-o-ces-de-coimbra-por-isabel-allegro-de-magalhaes/>) on March 5 and, on March 25, in *Notícias de Coura*. It had also been rejected by *Expresso* and *Diário de Coimbra*.