

# Decolonial Cultural Practices Towards Pluriversal Cultural Institutions and Policies

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## **From documenta 15 to pluriversal horizons**

Rethinking cultural practices, institutions  
and policies

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# From documenta 15 to pluriversal horizons

## Rethinking cultural practices, institutions and policies

*Özlem Canyürek and Meike Lettau*

This publication aims to broaden perspectives on pluriversal horizons in cultural practices, institutions and policies based on the case study of documenta 15, a major art exhibition curated by the Indonesian artist collective ruangrupa in Kassel, Germany, in 2022. It examines various challenges and conflicts arising primarily from epistemological disparities in viewpoints and actions between colonialism and capitalism-critical cultural practices and Western art institutions. Through this knowledge lens, authors across various chapters illuminate different aspects of collective methods, practices and narratives aimed at nurturing pluriversal horizons in cultural institutions and policies. Based on extensive field research conducted during documenta 15, the publication bridges theory and practice, bringing together interdisciplinary and interconnected approaches of contributors from different corners of the globe. Drawing on perspectives from sociology, cultural studies, political science and art education, the authors explore under-discussed dimensions of the implications of epistemological disparities in knowledge production and dissemination in cultural institutions and cultural policies.

The publication takes the case study of documenta 15 as *one* illustrative example of pluriversal horizons. It posits that the introduction of ruangrupa's *lumbung* approach to the institution of documenta, along with its entangled Eurocentric cultural policies, can be seen as a proposal for an epistemological shift towards epistemic pluriversality, as theorized by scholars of decolonial thought. In accordance with this postulation, the authors exemplify alternative approaches and methodologies observed at documenta 15, focusing on specific aspects within cultural practices, institutions and policies. These explorations centre on assessing the potential of the guiding principles and methodologies presented at documenta 15 to serve as a blueprint for the development of coloniality- and discrimination-critical cultural policy frameworks that aim for pluralization processes. These frameworks recognize the coexistence of equally valuable different epistemes and aim to dismantle Eurocentric structures in the cultural sector.

The collective volume is divided into two parts. The first part discusses propositions for non-paternalistic, non-capitalistic/other-than-capitalistic and caring cultural practices and policies as well as cultural-political prospects toward pluriversal

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possibilities in knowledge production. Furthermore, it focuses on multiple conflicts and communication issues between the stakeholders of documenta 15. The second part introduces collective approaches in art institutions and the *lumbung* practice. The chapters discuss the implications for established norms and curatorial practices, as well as the possibilities of incorporating *lumbung* into contemporary art institutions. Additionally, this second part presents alternative methodologies of knowledge production with an emphasis on collectivism and art-based learning.

### **Documenta 15: ruangrupa's curatorial approach of *lumbung***

Documenta, first organized in 1955, stands as one of the most influential contemporary art exhibitions in the Western art world, taking place every five years. Since the early 2000s, the documenta institution has been in search of showcasing heterogeneous perspectives and aesthetics to alter the predominantly Eurocentric and colonial exhibition-making. This shift towards a participatory approach to the exhibition, rather than the usual focus on genius artists and their 'exceptional' artworks, was reinforced by the appointment of the artist collective ruangrupa as curators in 2019 by documenta's International Advisory Board for the fifteenth edition, which took place in 2022. On behalf of the international selection committee, consisting of eight experts, Elvira Dyangani Ose and Philippe Pirotte explained their choice of ruangrupa as follows:

We nominate ruangrupa because they have a proven ability to reach diverse audiences – including those beyond a pure art audience – and challenge local engagement and participation. Their curatorial approach is based on an international network of local community-based arts organisations. We are excited to see how ruangrupa will develop a concrete project for and from Kassel. At a time when innovative power emanates in particular from independent, collaborative organisations, it seems logical to offer this collective approach a platform with documenta.

(documenta fifteen 2019, translated by the authors)

This statement shows that the group was deliberately selected based on their collective curatorial approaches. It should also be noted that they are the first collective curating documenta and the first group from Asia.

ruangrupa, an Indonesian term loosely translated to 'space for art', was established in 2000 as a non-profit activist group in Jakarta by Ajeng Nurul Aini, Farid Rakun, Iswanto Hartono, Mirwan Andan, Indra Ameng, Ade Darmawan, Daniella Fitria Praptono, Julia Sarisetiati and Reza Afisina. ruangrupa has gained worldwide recognition for its collectivity, solidarity and decentralization-based projects that focus on community well-being in various biennials and renowned art exhibitions. Today, the group operates globally and is also funded by major international foundations. ruangrupa emerged out of the need to create spaces of expression in Indonesia that were rarely available during the time of the Suharto dictatorship from 1967 to 1998, after being a Dutch colony for almost 300 years (independence

was declared in 1945 and accepted in 1949). During the Suharto regime, when many of the *ruangrupa*'s founding members became involved in the arts, restricted freedom of expression, censorship and limited access to international art markets were major challenges (Sobat-Sobat 2022a):

Under these circumstances, collective gatherings were used as a means of fighting against the regime, as *ruangrupa* describes the emergence of the group in 2000, two years after the official end of the dictatorship. Artists went into local communities, made artistic drawings and sketches and brought together diverse knowledges and expertise. These artistic positions were meant to resist the regime, and the logic behind them was described as: we do not have the money, we do not have the resources, how to organise ourselves? The emergence of the artist collective *ruangrupa* came out of the need for missing spaces for artists to work, as they basically used the public space. The group began to question the individual genius way of artmaking, which naturally led them to develop more collective forms of artmaking (Sobat-Sobat 2022a) based on the idea of *lumbung*.

(Lettau and Canyürek 2024, 4)

The works of *ruangrupa* are rooted in the *lumbung* methodology that is part of their coloniality- and capitalism-critical epistemological approach, challenging European universalism (Lettau and Canyürek 2024). *Lumbung* is based on values such as humour, generosity, independence, transparency, sufficiency and regeneration, embodying the ideals of a collaborative, community-oriented model of sustainability, in which resource use is not limited to economic means but includes ideas, knowledge and programmes (documenta 2021). In the Indonesian language, '*lumbung*' literally signifies a rice barn "where a community's harvest is gathered, stored and distributed according to jointly determined criteria as a pooled resource for the future" (documenta 2021).

*ruangrupa* departed from the traditional theme-based curation of previous iterations of *documenta* and applied its *lumbung* practice to the fifteenth edition of the exhibition. The principles of collective thinking, equality-based resource building and sharing were incorporated into the curatorial work and the entire process of the exhibition practice (documenta 2021). *ruangrupa* deliberately rejected to be part of the exploitative mainstream art world as a collective, working towards the dissolution of ownership and authorship as expressed in the handbook of the exhibition:

There are different ways and practices of producing art (works). These practices are not (yet) visible, as they do not fit the existing model of the global art world(s). *documenta fifteen* is an attempt to clash these different realities against each other, showing that different ways are possible. Instead of fitting these various modes of production into what exists already, it should act as a series of exercises for reshaping and sow seeds for more changes in the future. Different ways of producing art will create different works, which, in turn, will ask for other ways of being read and understood: artworks that

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are functioning in real lives in their respective contexts, no longer pursuing mere individual expression, no longer needing to be exhibited as standalone objects or sold to individual collectors and hegemonic state-funded museums. Other ways are possible. In this way, we are resisting the domestication or taming of these different practices.

(documenta fifteen 2022, 17)

Decolonial thinker Catherine Walsh describes the sowing of seeds as “reexistence’s practical and actional intentions and inventions; that is, the ways that people are sowing and resowing life, cultivating the possibilities of an otherwise, of social, cultural, political, epistemic, ethical and existence-based affirmation” (2023, 10). *Lumbung* practice, its methodologies and related pedagogies, as well as the historically and geographically grounded social and political struggles of *lumbung* members, can be seen in this regard as sowing the seeds of what Walsh refers to as “decolonial cracks” (2023, 246). The term ‘cracks’ suggests moments of rupture or fissure that are actively produced through the agency and resistance of marginalized communities, representing instances in which the hegemony of coloniality is contested or destabilized (Walsh 2023). In alignment with this perspective, the *lumbung* methodology exemplifies an approach of ‘border thinking’ beyond established boundaries, drawing from diverse knowledge traditions and employing alternative modes of expression (Anzaldúa 1999; Mignolo 2000; Quijano 2000) to make cracks in the Eurocentric cultural production and reception. The authors analyze different facets of the metaphorical imagery of cracks used by *ruangrupa* and other *lumbung* members to disrupt dominant colonial narratives that have long shaped knowledge, education and cultural practices to create spaces and opportunities in a Western art organization where alternative, decolonial ways of thinking and being can emerge.

#### **Field research at documenta 15: summer school on the pluralization of knowledge systems to rethink cultural production and policy**

To investigate documenta 15 as a case study (Yin 2018) for the pluralization of knowledge systems, the editors of this book implemented the five-day summer school ‘New impulses for an equality conscious diversity framework in cultural policy’. The summer school, organized by Zeppelin University Friedrichshafen (Germany) in cooperation with CAMP notes on education – part of the educational department of documenta 15 – in Kassel from 30 August to 5 September 2022, critically examined pluralization and transformation processes in cultural and political education in the five thematic fields of (1) production, (2) art education, (3) structures, (4) conflicts and (5) cultural policy.<sup>1</sup> The summer school participants were a heterogeneous transcultural group of bachelor and master students of cultural studies from various universities and junior cultural practitioners from Egypt, Germany, Mexico, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Serbia and Turkey.

The summer school took the collectivity-centred *lumbung* practice of *ruangrupa* as a method for diversification of knowledge systems and a starting point to rethink cultural production and policy structures in Germany and beyond. To this end,

the participants discussed the implementation of the claims of collective thinking, equality-based resource building and sharing, along with their potentials, pitfalls and controversies. This approach stems from the absence of a diversity discourse, particularly in the German context, that concentrates on intersecting forms of epistemic inequality and various facets of conflicts in an attempt to transition from Eurocentric universalism to epistemic pluriversity (Lettau and Canyürek 2024).

The formats of the summer school were workshops, discussions, lectures, group works, exhibition visits and fieldwork. The participants developed individual perspectives, disputed and questioned them and took part in discussions with artists, art mediators and stakeholders from documenta. They worked in small collaborative groups to reflect on the complexities, opportunities and challenges of the entire structure of documenta 15 in terms of a plurality-oriented cultural production, representation and knowledge transfer. The following research questions were investigated during the field research:

- (1) FOCUS PRODUCTION: To what extent are new co-creation methods implemented in the artistic practice or the canon of knowledge at documenta 15?
- (2) FOCUS ARTS EDUCATION: What new formats for cultural and political education can emerge from the educational approach of documenta 15? Where do transfer effects exist?
- (3) FOCUS STRUCTURES: What role do existing power relations play in reproducing inequalities for access and participation opportunities? How can these be overcome? What parallels exist between cultural and political education?
- (4) FOCUS CONFLICTS: What conflicts and challenges of transcultural artistic work can be identified? How are the accusations of political negligence – anti-Semitism, racism, Islamophobia, othering, queer- and transphobia – within the institution and the broader cultural landscape reflected and responded to in the specific political and cultural education based on Germany’s history and contemporary backgrounds? What new questions for political exhibition-making arise from these learnings? What roles can individual and collective positioning play in conflict and social transformation?
- (5) FOCUS CULTURAL POLICY: Which cultural policy strategies (in terms of content, narratives, processes and structures) can be generated from the example of documenta 15, which are instrumental in the implementation of an equality-conscious diversity framework in cultural policy?

The collective volume contains various qualitative data sets, developed through a bottom-up approach by the participants that are described individually in each chapter. The data includes field records and notes, exhibition visits (self-exploring and loosely structured with a guided tour), as well as (formal/informal) conversations with art mediators and stakeholders of documenta 15. At the end of the summer school, all five groups made oral presentations of their field research.

The summer school was followed by the workshop ‘New approaches in cultural practices, institutions and policies for an equality-conscious diversity framework’ organized by the authors at Zeppelin University from 4–8 March 2023. The

workshop gathered some participants of the summer school and Zeppelin University students, who took part in other events related to the analysis of documenta 15. The workshop further deepened the analysis from different dimensions, focusing mainly on the implementation of ideas such as commoning, collectivity, decentralization of power and conflicts around documenta 15. The results of this workshop proved very valuable for proposing coloniality- and discrimination-critical cultural policy frameworks aimed at pluralizing knowledge production beyond the Western/European canon. In an effort to suggest a semantic shift in the diversity discourse towards the pluralization of knowledge production, the lecturers and workshop facilitators introduced practice- and theory-oriented prospects that drew attention to the cultural policy implications of pluralization processes. This involved examining various aspects of neo-liberal cultural-political perspectives and considering alternative approaches to co-creation practices that extend beyond Western/European imaginaries, aiming for more equitable cultural policy trajectories.

### **Part I: On the path to pluriversity in knowledge production and cultural policy**

The epistemic dimension of intersecting forms of inequality remains implicit in the cultural sector of Germany. Taking documenta 15 as an example, this publication seeks to address the missing link between the diversification efforts in cultural production and the knowledge dimension of structural discrimination and, consequently, power inequalities. In doing so, it attempts to bring to light the epistemic absences in Western cultural institutions, grounded in the belief that the intersections of coloniality, discrimination, racism and capitalism are closely tied to the multiple dimensions of epistemological inequality.

Exclusionary and discriminatory structures in publicly funded cultural institutions, particularly concerning staff composition, have been vigorously debated in Germany over the past decade. Consequently, strengthening diversity among cultural creators in the German cultural field has become a crucial objective of cultural policy. In pursuit of this goal, cultural policy actors have introduced measures, including funding schemes, to address structural barriers related to access to and participation in cultural production for marginalized and racialized artists and cultural practitioners. Despite the continuous engagement with ‘promoting diversity’, particularly publicly funded cultural institutions remain predominantly white entities. This situation is not exclusive to Germany; cultural policies in many post-migrant European societies employ various strategies and measures to diversify artistic perspectives, positions, aesthetics and narratives in the cultural field. However, such efforts often lack a comprehensive understanding of the epistemic dimension of overlapping forms of structural discrimination.

To address this void, the publication in this first part pays attention to pluriversal perspectives and their interconnectedness to collective cultural production, conflicts and cultural policy. Simultaneously, it aspires to explore a more nuanced understanding of the cultural ecosystem as a democratic realm, envisioned and redefined for the recognition and dissemination of different forms of knowledge, expertise

and aesthetics that remain outside the Western canon. To transcend Eurocentric universalism in the cultural field, the publication asserts that taking a decoloniality-informed perspective is fundamental for both cultural practice and cultural policy. Therefore, it takes ‘coloniality of knowledge’ as a basis of argumentation (Quijano 2000). Coloniality is distinct from colonialism; while colonialism refers to a political and economic dynamic in which the sovereignty of one nation is dependent on the power of another, coloniality encompasses enduring power structures that go beyond colonial administrations and shape culture, labour, intersubjective relations and knowledge production (Maldonado-Torres 2007, 243). To this end, ‘decolonial turn’ and decolonial thought (Bhambra 2007, 2022; De Sousa Santos 2006, 2007, 2016, 2018; De Sousa Santos and Martins 2021; Grosfoguel 2007, 2010; Maldonado-Torres 2011, 2017; Mignolo 2007, 2011; Mignolo and Walsh 2018; Quijano 2000; Walsh 2023) guide the exploration of alternative ways of knowing and doing for ‘epistemic pluriversality’ to flourish in the cultural field (Mignolo 2018) in post-migrant Europe and beyond. Pluriversal perspectives acknowledge the coexistence of multiple worldviews, ontologies and epistemologies (De Sousa Santos and Martins 2021; Maldonado-Torres 2011, 2017; Mignolo and Walsh 2018; Walsh 2023). The epistemic dimension of discriminatory institutional structures in the cultural field remains under-researched in the diversity discourse of German cultural policy studies. In this regard, the in-depth analysis of documenta 15 is a proposition for dynamic learning towards decolonial knowledge formation (Bhambra 2007, 154). The authors explore interconnected and multi-layered dimensions of a framework addressing the entanglements of coloniality, including post-capitalist and caring prepositions for cultural policies aimed at the cultivation and dissemination of coloniality-critical cultural practices. They further envision to decentre Eurocentric cultural policymaking.

Višnja Kisić and Goran Tomka theorize the field of post-capitalist cultural politics in their contribution “Enacting postcapitalist cultural politics: documenta 15 and beyond”. They discuss the redistributions of other-than-capitalist practices by taking the example of documenta 15. Their examples include the value of the process, practice of commoning, sharing of resources and distributing resources equally for instance through collective pots. Furthermore, they discuss collective approaches as well as networks of mutual care and interdependence. They argue for a ‘power-to’ rather than a power-over approach as well as emphasizing the complexity of cultural policy which is often overlooked in the practice of implementing it. Instead, they argue that post-capitalist cultural politics are ‘politics-of-becoming’.

The interdisciplinary investigation of documenta 15 in many of the chapters of this book illustrates that the decentralized model of collective curating is one of the main conflict areas embedded in an epistemological rupture contesting the dominance of Western perceptions of knowledge production, aesthetics and exhibition-making. The former methodology focuses more on process, whereas the latter is predominantly driven by success-oriented capitalist market rules. It also points to the lack of counter-hegemonic frameworks for conflict negotiation to re-regulate the terms of the conversation, where power-sharing between actors



might be possible. This absence also underscores the structural negligence on the part of the documenta institution in operating in transcultural networks and different historical, political and social contexts. Documenta 15 was particularly marked by conflicts and related discussions about the incidents of anti-Semitism, racism, Islamophobia, othering and queerphobia within the exhibition but also at its edges.

In the chapter “Tracing conflicts: unpacking antagonizations between politics and the political during documenta 15”, Friederike Landau-Donnelly analyses documenta 15 within the theoretical framework of a conflict-oriented approach using the political theories of antagonism and agonism by Chantal Mouffe and Oliver Marchart. The chapter applies the pre-, de- and re-antagonization of conflicts in the case of documenta 15, specifically the conflicts between the artistic direction of ruangrupa and the institution documenta gGmbH. By analysing specific moments of conflict, it argues for ‘cultures of conflict’ unravelled by different epistemologies and conflictual cultural policies, politics and the political. This involves emphasizing a procedural dimension instead of final resolutions of conflicts, enabling spaces – discursive and physical – to serve as agonistic arenas. The claim is that engaging with conflicts in pro-active agonistic ways can contribute to decolonizing the cultural sector.

The in-depth analysis of documenta 15 reveals that these conflicts are largely related to a lack of communication and transparency between stakeholders, as well as unclear responsibilities when working in collective structures. Even though the documenta administration sought to bring in multiple voices and perspectives from the so-called Global South to change the Eurocentric model of exhibition-making, the institutional structures of documenta and paternalistic approaches to cultural policy remain fundamental barriers to the recognition, validation and dissemination of pluriversal perspectives. These discrepancies to knowledge can be attributed as a form of epistemic power that perpetuates implicit colonialist tendencies. The existing scepticism in Germany towards the epistemes of the participating collectives underscores the relevance of working towards epistemic pluriversality through coloniality- and discrimination-critical cultural policy frameworks that aim for pluralization processes. As stated by Landau-Donnelly et al., “some conflicts remain ever-latent, hidden or implicit; but exactly these conflicts require analytical attention to shed light on how their effects spill into the formation of explicit policies, politics, and maybe even the political” (2022, 2024), particularly valuable for exposing their connection to epistemological inequalities. The contributors of this collective volume analyze some of these conflicts in their juxtaposition to capitalism and coloniality.

Adil Serhan Şahin and Dunja Karanović explore the “Ethics of care in cultural policy and practice” by analyzing documenta 15 under the framework of accessibility. The chapter examines some examples from documenta 15 (e.g. *Pagkhor Social Kitchen*, *Nongkrong* and ‘*rest as resistance*’) in relation to the notion of care and *lumbung* values. The latter is analyzed through the application of Joan Tronto’s framework of *care-giving* and *care-receiving*. They argue that the curation of documenta 15 is a crucial approach for the conceptualization of caring cultural policies emphasizing

interdependence and equality between diverse epistemologies as an evolving practice. The chapter concludes with findings about mainstreaming care in cultural policy with a proposed model of the ‘Care Triangle’ developed by the authors.

Charlotte Hüser, in her essay “Attempts to establish equality and diversity in the cultural sector: analyzing documenta 15”, offers insights regarding issues of diversity and equality in Germany’s cultural sector and beyond. She applies a sociological lens to analyze inequality, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu’s concepts of capital and *doxa*. Through this framework, she illuminates the implicit norms within art and cultural institutions that exclude individuals perceived to lack Western-defined knowledge and taste, thereby limiting their potential as visitors or audiences. Moreover, she scrutinizes the role of gatekeepers in defining the parameters of art and determining its audience as well as the disproportionate representation of artists within the cultural sector, attributing this phenomenon to the dominance of Western art paradigms and aesthetics. Finally, she examines the case of documenta 15, using ruangrupa’s methodology through compelling examples of diversity, equality and accessibility within a Western art institution.

## Part II: Collectivity in art institutions and *lumbung* practice

The second part of the publication focuses on current debates in the field of collectivity in art institutions and *lumbung* practice. Integral aspects of *lumbung* are community-building, decentralizing power in decision-making processes to foster collaborative network structures, connecting artistic practice with communal environments and creating conversational spaces both within and outside exhibition venues. That core approach is centred on the notion of care for the community (Tronto 1993) and aims to engage the visitors and audiences in the processes of knowledge formation. In line with this notion, ruangrupa invited fourteen community-oriented art collectives and organizations to participate in *lumbung*-building processes before and beyond documenta 15, referred to as *lumbung inter-lokal* members (documenta fifteen 2022, 16). In return, these initiatives invited more than fifty other artistic practices, known as *lumbung* artists, to sow seeds as a means of resisting the totalizing Eurocentric universalism in artmaking. The ideas of collectivity and commoning aligned with the decentralization of power and the equal distribution of resources among the *lumbung* members, serve as propositions for decentring Eurocentric universalism and operating outside the neoliberal capitalist logic – or at least trying to operate as far beyond it as this complex power system and its entanglements allow. These efforts have generated various conflicts before, during and in the aftermath of documenta 15 in pursuit of decolonial cracks.

By exploring ruangrupa’s curatorial approach of *lumbung*, the authors in this second part of the publication reflect on the necessity of recognizing and disseminating pluriversal perspectives that remain beyond the confines of the Western canon in the cultural sector. To this end, the authors discuss a range of themes including institutional change, curatorship, commoning and community-oriented indigenous cultural practices drawing on their analysis of documenta 15.

Miyase Çelen argues in “Rethinking art institutions: examining documenta 15 with a focus on the Istanbul art scene” for the potential transfer of *lumbung* practice and other documenta 15 approaches to the cultural sector in Istanbul. Her investigation includes how power dynamics are challenged in relation to art and politics, socio-political developments and democratic cultural spaces. In line with her claim about the neutrality of institutions and the questioning of authority and established norms, which accompanies institutional transformations and challenges, she analyzes the tension between hierarchical, centralized structures and collective, inclusive approaches. By giving an overview on the establishment of state and private art institutions in Istanbul and asserting that privately funded institutions are becoming arenas of power, she relates this both to diversification efforts that result in new inequalities and questions of autonomy and self-censorship. In conclusion, she identifies a lack of open discussion and freedom of artistic expression as the main obstacles to new frameworks of collectivity for cultural institutions’ organizational models in Istanbul.

In her chapter “The curator as an ally: curatorial shifts towards commons and artistic collectivity at documenta 15”, Lilli Kim Schreiber focuses on curatorial turns from representation to countercultural infrastructure. Whilst analyzing the history of curating in general and ruangrupa’s curatorial approach of documenta 15 in particular, the precise examples from the exhibition provide deep insights into curatorial commons, relations between authorship and autonomy, subjectivity and plurality in light of power dynamics. The theoretical references include Oliver Marchart, John Roberts and Chantal Mouffe, linking the concepts of biennialization, curators as producers and art as an agnostic intervention. By analyzing concrete transformative moments, the author concludes that there has been a paradigm shift towards artist-curators as caretakers and collaborative initiators between allies. This operational shift is defined as the emergence of countercultural infrastructures and commons as contact zones towards decolonial contemporary exhibition making.

In the essay “*Lumbung* as a culture of common intentionality: a post-theoretical approach to cultural production”, Julian Kraemer and Laetitia Lüke investigate the fragile commoning practices at documenta 15 in relation to Hannah Arendt’s notion of power and post-theoretical organization theory. They take these two very distinct positions and apply them to modes of cultural production questioning one-directional/singularity-based *heroic* leadership and investigating forms of collectivity-based multi-directional organizational processes, as practiced at documenta 15. The essay develops two different modes of cultural production, ‘exclamation’ and ‘vehicle’. The former is based on “rather providing a place than a reason to organize” (Kraemer and Lüke 2025, 148) and the latter on a single vision (exclamation). In conclusion, they argue that the vehicle mode – as a holistic approach in the contemporary cultural field – acknowledges the intrinsically valuable structures of institutions, collective approaches and decision-making – including those in cultural policy.

In her chapter “*Maaya* philosophies at documenta 15: curatorial practices from Mali challenging patterns of representation in the international art sphere”, Michèle Brand investigates the contribution of the *Maaya Bulon/Vestibule Maaya*, curated by the Fondation Festival sur le Niger from Mali at documenta 15. She views it as an

example of challenging hegemonic approaches in artistic production in Western art exhibitions through the implementation of the *Maaya* philosophy from West Africa, which follows community-oriented methodologies. These extend beyond artistic expressions and further include a comprehensive organizational concept of *Maaya* entrepreneurship which focuses decidedly on local communities. The examples, which include the practice of generosity, community spirit and sharing, like tea ceremonies as part of the exhibition, are interpreted as counter-narratives to capitalistic norms that result from the *Maaya* approach.

The chapter “Collective learning in expanding settings? Reflections on collectivizing methods at documenta 15” by Marteinn Sindri Jónsson, Sophie Mak-Schram and Ernesto Oroza focuses on knowledge production through collective practices outside the frame of formal (art) education. It takes the three artistic methods of texts as leaking formats, walking and operative factography as a starting point to emphasize lived experiences at documenta 15. In this view, it analyzes a decolonial form of knowledge production against dominant epistemes through collective learning processes. The authors investigate the expanded *ekosistem* of knowledge production with a focus on pedagogies reflecting on the potential decolonial approaches of *ruangrupa* and unlearning. Mak-Schram examines the examples of *lumbung.space* and the workshop “leaking formats and temporary sites” to question sites and forms of knowledge production. Jónsson explores the relationship of the *inter-lokal* group towards the political potential of documenta 15. Oroza investigates the pedagogical tool of operative factography as part of a collective working and publication method within the context of documenta 15. The authors conclude that alternative forms of learning can contribute towards collectivity over individuation (e.g. collective production), are part of unmaking and unlearning processes and thus can contribute to epistemic plurality and decolonial principles.

Finally, Zeynep Okyay’s contribution “A glossary attempt to harvest the summer school: a vocabulary for grounding, rooting and standing” proposes a glossary as a method for unlearning Eurocentric knowledge, inspired by the documenta 15 glossary and *lumbung* practice. Her attempt to create a collective vocabulary, driven by the concept of *nongkrong*, aims to describe the processes involved in community-building within the summer school organized by Zeppelin University, using three sets of vocabulary: grounding, rooting and standing. Grounding focuses on team-building, drawing inspiration from Sekolah Temujalar (Temujalar School) established by the Gudskul collective for co-learning. Using this tacit knowledge as a foundation, the author explores group activities that formed the basis of the summer school, such as cooking and eating together, walking, dancing, singing and sharing sleeping spaces. Rooting, the second element of the vocabulary, involves exploring ideas around (in)justice, diversity, epistemic inequalities and care by looking at some of the works presented at documenta 15. Finally, the third vocabulary set, standing, centres on transforming these ideas cultivated during the grounding and rooting phases into statements that address colonialist, capitalist and patriarchal structures in art practices and institutions and encourage vulnerability for co-learning.

In the spirit of *lumbung*, as editors and authors, we see this collective volume not only as the ‘harvest’ of our multifaceted analysis of documenta 15, but also as a way of ‘sowing seeds’ to open up a conversation beyond documenta 15 and Eurocentric cultural practices and cultural policies to broaden the discussion on decolonizing knowledge production and reception, encompassing diverse methodologies and geopolitical contexts to build epistemic pluriversality across different regions and cultural landscapes.

## Note

1 The summer school ‘New impulses for an equality conscious diversity framework in cultural policy’ and the workshop ‘New approaches in cultural practices, institutions and policies for an equality-conscious diversity framework’ were funded by the German Federal Agency for Civic Education (BpB) as part of the model project funding. The publication was not part of the funding and was produced independently.

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