

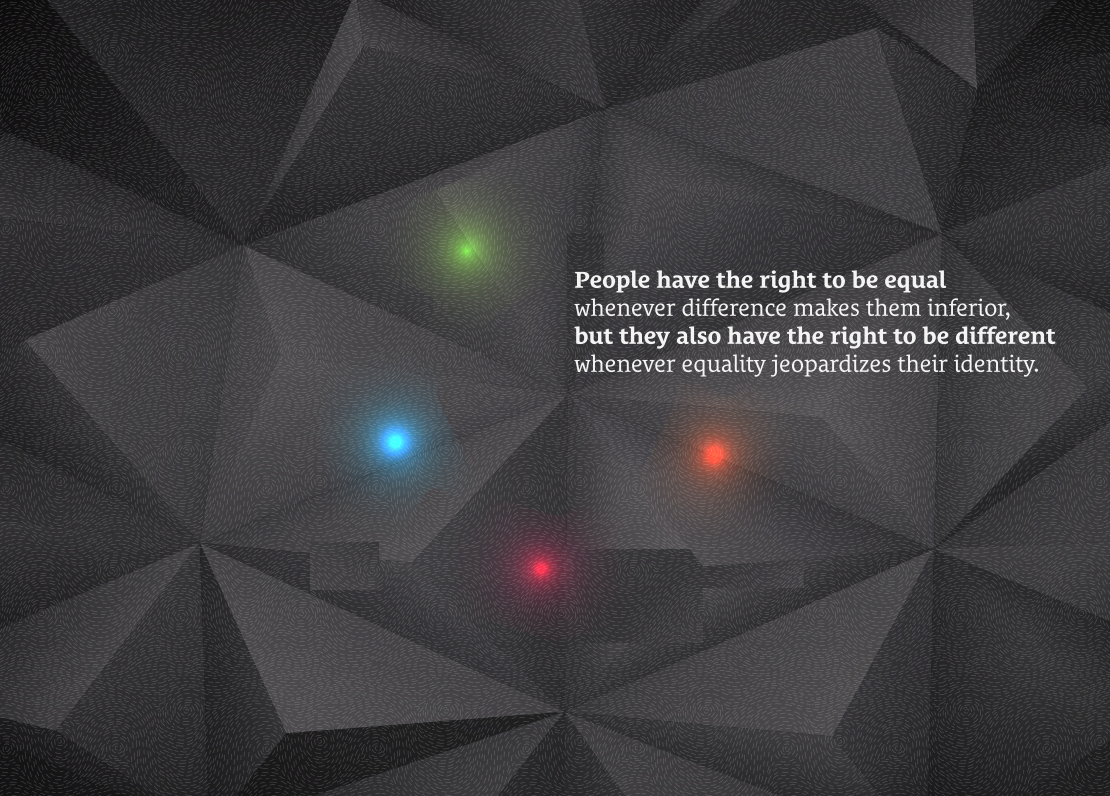


alice®

STRANGE MIRRORS  
UNSUSPECTED LESSONS



Centro de Estudos Sociais  
Laboratório Associado  
Universidade de Coimbra

The background is a dark, textured surface composed of numerous overlapping triangles of varying shades of gray. The texture is a fine, repeating pattern of small, concentric circles. Four small, glowing dots are scattered across the image: a green dot in the upper left, a blue dot in the lower left, a red dot in the lower center, and a red dot in the lower right.

**People have the right to be equal**  
whenever difference makes them inferior,  
**but they also have the right to be different**  
whenever equality jeopardizes their identity.



## What are the objectives of the project?

**ALICE is a research project coordinated by Boaventura de Sousa Santos and financed by the European Research Council (ERC), one of the most prestigious and highly competitive international financial institutes for scientific excellence in Europe.**

The project ALICE seeks to re-think and renovate socio-scientific knowledge in light of the epistemologies of the South, proposed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos. The objective is to develop new theoretical and political paradigms of social transformation.

Haunting Europe and the Global North as a whole, there is a sentiment of intellectual and political exhaustion which translates as incapacity to confront innovatively the various challenges of justice that interpellate the world in the first decades of the twenty-first century: social, environmental, inter-generational, cultural, historical and cognitive justice. In contrast, the Global South, in its immense diversity, presents itself today as a wide field of economic, social, cultural, and political innovation.

ALICE is grounded on a wager, i.e. that social, political and institutional change may largely benefit from the innovations occurring in countries and regions of the Global South. A demanding wager, to be sure, for it presupposes availability for mutual recognition, intercultural understanding, political and ideological convergence, respect for identity, and celebration of diversity.

The project began in July 2011 and will continue for five years. It will operate under the auspices of the Centre for Social Studies (CES) - an Associate Laboratory of the University of Coimbra, Portugal ([www.ces.uc.pt](http://www.ces.uc.pt)).



What is diverse is not necessarily disunited;  
what is united is not necessarily uniform.



## The research team

The research team is international and multidisciplinary, including 14 researchers from several continents. The project will also benefit from the collaboration of many researchers of CES, as well as a vast group of social scientists, political decision-makers, activists, and journalists.

## The major premises

- The understanding of the world by far exceeds the European understanding of the world.
- Alternatives are not lacking in the world. What is indeed missing is an alternative thinking of alternatives.
- The diversity of the world is infinite and no general theory can grasp it.
- The alternative to a general theory consists in promoting an ecology of knowledges combined with intercultural translation.

## Thematic areas

**Democratizing democracy:** New experiences of “high intensity democracy”, including different forms of deliberative democracy, to enhance democracy.

**Transformative constitutionalism, interculturality, and State reform:** Experimental, post-colonial constitutionalism, based on popular struggles, which parts with the modern State’s presuppositions of unity, uniformity, and monoculturalism.

**Other economies:** Diverse forms of non-capitalist economic organization, with a view to constructing a new economic common sense and a plural economy.

**Human rights and other grammars of human dignity:** Human rights, with special emphasis on the right to health, combined with other grammars of human dignity, on the basis of an inter-cultural perspective.



## Where to find ALICE

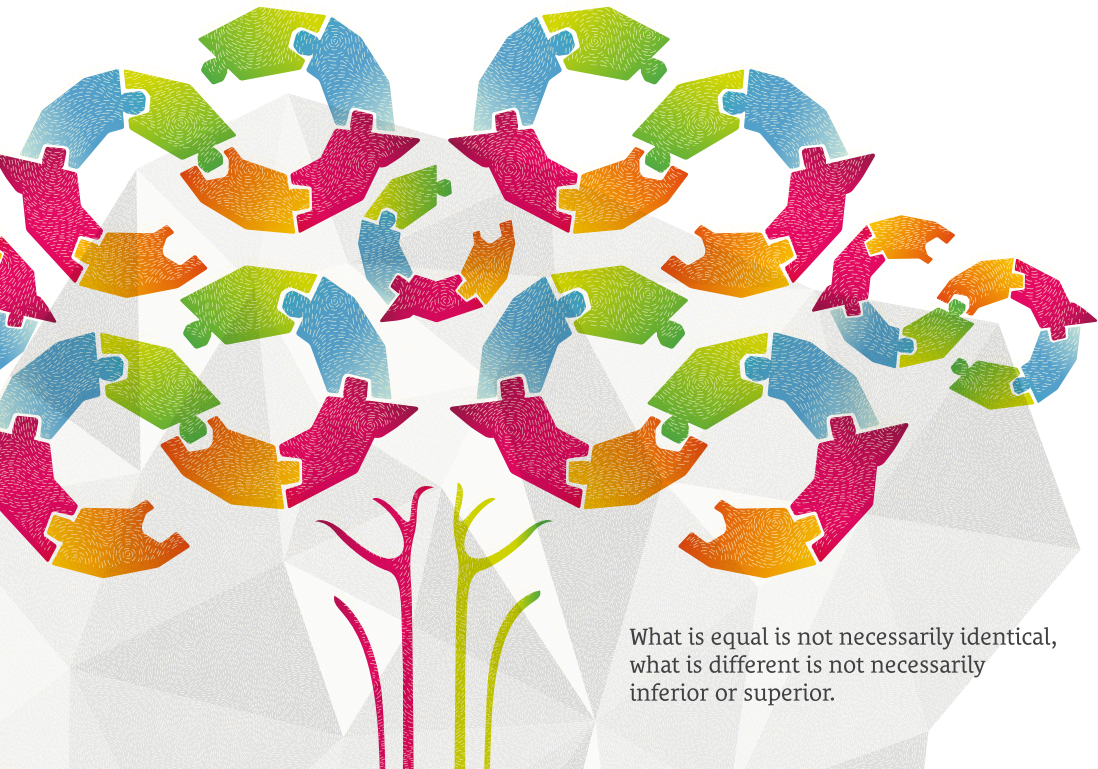
The research will be conducted on the basis of case studies developed in countries with relevant experience in the four thematic areas highlighted above: South Africa, Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador and India.

The project does not discard the possibility of including other countries that may contribute to the concretization of its objectives. The results of the research will be compared with current debates and proposals recently advanced in France, Italy, United Kingdom, Portugal, and other European countries, regarding the four thematic areas of the project.



**ALICE - STRANGE MIRRORS, UNSUSPECTED LESSONS:**  
LEADING EUROPE TO A NEW WAY  
OF SHARING THE WORLD EXPERIENCES

---



What is equal is not necessarily identical,  
what is different is not necessarily  
inferior or superior.





Centro de Estudos Sociais  
Laboratório Associado  
Universidade de Coimbra



UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA



alice.ces.uc.pt  
alice@ces.uc.pt

www.ces.uc.pt  
Colégio de S. Jerónimo  
Apartado 3087  
3000-995 Coimbra, Portugal  
Tel. +351 239 855 570  
Fax +351 239 855 589