ANTi-History in design research:
New applications and interpretations

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ABSTRACT: In the postcolonial era, contemporary poststructuralist paradigm shift has provided alternative views of the past as well, especially in terms of new interpretations of regional histories and understanding of cultural contexts. One fairly novel strategy in this respect is ANTi-History, which is an approach to the study of the past drawing on the actor-network theory (ANT). The objective is to offer diverse readings of the largely Euro-America centralized history writing by revealing accounts that have earlier been overlooked. Contrary to the negative connotation of 'anti', ANTi-History does not, however, negate the significance of history, but aims to pluralize historical narratives. The view is based on Foucauldian poststructuralism and comprehension of the present as it relates to the past. In other words, ANTi-History focuses on the present, while seeking alternate connotations and (de)constructions of past events, particularly in relation to sociopolitical actants and actions. This links ANTi-History to the concept of Applied History, according to which present-day problems can be solved by knowledge of the past. As to design research, substitute readings of history are particularly relevant in the postcolonial contexts, in which 'place making' as part of re-creating regional identities is the main concern and further related to Critical Regionalism. Hence, this paper examines the interrelationship between ANTi-History, Critical Regionalism, and decolonialization within the discourse on the design of built environment. To clarify ANTi-History as a theoretical framework in architectural research, a single-case study on the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre in New Caledonia is given as an example, in order to offer new interpretations of its architecture and design actions in one postcolonial context. Consequently, the paper argues that applications of this paradigm to precedent studies both in the education of architecture and in the practice-based research can be pertinent in the future praxis.

KEYWORDS: Actor-Network Theory, Applied History, Critical Regionalism, Transculturalism, Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre

INTRODUCTION

Within the poststructuralist paradigm shift in the 1980s appeared many alternative theoretical agendas, such as the Actor-Network Theory (ANT) focusing on new interpretations and analyses of actions in various networks. Simultaneously appeared alternative ways of interpreting the past as well, based on Foucauldian discourse on the references to the past in order to comprehend the present, accompanied by the call for non-Euro-America-centralized worldviews. Among the many new trends evolved ANTi-History which aims to provide more pluralistic readings of history, especially in terms of regional histories and understanding of cultural contexts from the perspective of power relationships within various sub-groups of these sociopolitical networks, which is particularly relevant in postcolonial settings. As that has recently been the focus of Critical Regionalism, or more broadly that of interpreting transcultural architecture, too, we examine the interrelationship of the latter to ANTi-History as it relates to Applied History.

In order to regard ANTi-History as a methodological framework, it is necessary to briefly look at the Actor-Network Theory from which it stems and, in turn, is closely related to the sociology of science and knowledge as well as Science and Technology Studies (STS). This alone is a challenging task, as ANT has been subjected to criticism, controversies, misinterpretations

and deviations over a few decades, ever since it was established as a term by Bruno Latour, Michel Callon, and John Law in the early 1980s. Indeed, Latour himself has later stated that there "are four difficulties of the actor-network theory, that is the words 'actor', 'network' and 'theory' – without forgetting the hyphen" (Latour 1999, 15). Some even argue that ANT is not a theory at all (e.g., Feenberg 2002). Nevertheless, this paper maintains that the approach of ANT has potential in design research due to its aptitude of interpreting simultaneous actions that take place in any process, in any network. To put it very short, ANT deals with complex relationships of and associations between both human and non-human actants, to use Latour's terminology, that are the source of an action. This is reminiscent of design processes which involve various sets of decisions within the complex parameters of a project brief and its actants, resulting in the ensuing design actions. It is important to note, however, that ANT as an analytical method is not an end itself, but instead a way to understand the workings of an *expanding* network. From the perspective of ANTi-History in design research, it is sufficient to say that it can thereby expand our comprehension of contemporary architecture by providing new interpretations of the past events and actions in analyzing architectural processes.

Another challenge is that ANT has rarely been applied to architectural research. In this respect, the work of Albena Yaneva is especially relevant because she has used ANT in analyzing design (e.g., Yaneva 2005, 2008, 2009a). Of particular interest is *The Making of a Building: a pragmatist approach to architecture*, which investigates the design of the extension for the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York City by the Office of Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) of Rem Koolhaas. Yaneva's analyses of this interactive network/s of human and non-human actants are based on extensive and intensive contact with the OMA team throughout the design development in 2001-4, including observations on the role of model making, concept sketching, collective discussions, personal connections, changes in design, and so forth, with the goal of understanding the dynamic process of generating the evolving design proposal (which was never built). Although space limitations of this paper do not allow delving into the many aspects of Yaneva's study, which resulted in a book of over two hundred pages, it serves as an inspiring precedent of ANT regarding the methodology of architectural research in the constructivist paradigm, even with its certain weaknesses in interpreting the consequences of the design solutions in architectural practice in general (see, e.g., Champy 2012).

As Yaneva puts it: "The ANT presumes that there is a basic uncertainty regarding the very nature of action, groups, objects and facts, to the extent that in order to produce an 'explanation of …' the researcher cannot rely on mobilizing pre-established definitions" (Yaneva 2009b, 14). This is exactly what Latour has emphasized in terms of a priori assumptions characterizing conventional scientific research, in addition to the limitations of the Cartesian division of object and subject, as opposing to the significance of a posteriori definitions in ANT (Latour 1999). There also are certain similarities to the phenomenological 'thick descriptions' defying the dualism of subject-object position and stressing the importance of subjective experiences in creating meanings. Accordingly, Yaneva goes on stating that the "term of 'mediator' points to the fact that a variety of non-humans take active part in design in the course of action that is overtaken by other agencies, this being the main postulate of ANT" and continues that in so doing a "mediator can transform, translate, distort, and modify meanings […and] constitute, recreate and modify the social relationships established by design" (Yaneva 2009b, 118), which is discussed in this paper from three perspectives: ANTi-History, Critical Regionalism, and decolonialization.

1.0 PAST VS. PRESENT

1.1. ANTi-History
ANTi-History is grounded in ANT, but it focuses on interpretations of historical events and records by extending from ANT, postructuralism, and the sociology of science and knowledge, in order to make sense of the past and its impact on the present. This applies especially to power relationships within a specific sociopolitical network, for instance, one identified by gender, ethnic, cultural, or other backgrounds, which are actants that have often been

underrepresented in Euro-America centralized history writing. Gabrielle Durepos and Albert J. Mills, who are considered the initiators of this fairly new approach to history studies, state that ANTi-History "developed out of an interest in how knowledge, particularly historical knowledge, comes into being and influences human action" (Durepos and Mills 2010, 27). They further elaborate that it "is rooted in the concerns of Foucauldian poststructuralism to understand the ways in which the present is constructed through reference to past events, that is, that *history can be seen as a study of the present rather than that of the past*" (Ibid., my emphasis). In other words, the aim of ANTi-History is to trace the sociopolitical actants and actions, the networks in which those cohere, and how that forms our contemporary knowledge. In doing so, the intention is certainly not to just 'objectively' represent the past, or to replace existing histories either, but to reveal, deconstruct, and/or reassemble factors that have earlier been marginalized, hidden, overlooked, denigrated, or suppressed within a context in question:

> In this process, histories are revealed as useful guides to human action at the same time that they are reassembled for current action rather than grounded in fact. Hence the term *ANTi-History*, which draws on the signifier of ANT to signal a link with actor-network theory and that suggest the tension between the simultaneous construction and destabilization of history projects (Ibid.).

Their point, then, leads to the concept of Applied History, according to which present-day problems can be solved by knowledge of the past. There are obvious similarities when comparing the principles of ANTi-History and Applied History, since the aim of the latter is to comprehend past events in order to 'solve' current problems. However, as those problems in most instances of a design process are the so-called wicked problems that have no definite or singular 'solutions', we do need additional analytical frameworks, such as ANT or ANTi-History, due to the ambiguity and multiplicity of the actants and actions in architectural research. In this respect, and relevant to Critical Regionalism and decolonialization, it is significant, according to Durepos and Mills, that "in this way, people can become aware of the sociopolitical role of history and its significance in the creation and privileging of identities" (Mills and Durepos 2010, 27). Furthermore, as case studies are an integral part of design research (see, e.g., Sarvimäki 2017), as well as that of ANT – and ANTi-History by extension – it, even in "its infancy", as described by Durepos and Mills, can offer additional means of interpretation in "pluralizing of historical accounts that recognizes and celebrates the problematic nature of history and its link to knowledge, power, and identity", which "involves the careful development of story-telling that serves to tell a tale without telling *the* tale" (Ibid., 28). For that reason, it is essential to discuss context-specific features of architectural design and research, before proceeding to the narrative and *a* tale of the case study on the Marie-Tjibaou Cultural Centre in the second section of this paper.

1.2. Critical regionalism

Given that Critical Regionalism as a term was established in the early 1980s, too, as part of the poststructuralist paradigm shift, it has certain connections to ANT, in addition to the wider postmodern discourse of the time. Well, if ANT is controversial, so is Critical Regionalism. Without going to the many assessments and disagreements regarding this contemporary view on regionalism, introduction of Critical Regionalism did plausibly expand architectural discourse beyond the confines of the purist ideology of modernist architecture, which by the mid-twentieth century had evolved into the International Style that largely disregarded concerns about the context of a building (though this is a generalization for which space does not allow discussion here). Also, it brought into light criticism on the Euro-America centered world views, specifically in terms of decolonial, feminist and other emancipatory interpretations of architecture (see especially Eggener 2002, and Waisman 1994).

Although the term Critical Regionalism was introduced by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre already in 1981 (Tzonis and Lefaivre 1981), was further popularized by Kenneth Frampton in several publications (e.g., Frampton 1983a, 1983b, 1987), and became considered somewhat obsolete during the following decades, recently it seems to have gained momentum, specifically in the context of the developing world and the former colonies (see, e.g., Tzonis and Lefaivre 2001, 2003, 2011). Thus, the concept of Critical Regionalism is still prevalent and perhaps even more prominent than before, due to the conflict between current globalization

and international interventions, including global practice of architecture, and the simultaneous search for local identity, which, in many cases, has led to the desire for ethnic insularity – the latter being particularly apparent in the design actions of the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre.

Keith L. Eggener was one of the first scholars who started to critique Critical Regionalism, especially Frampton's definition of it as a form of *resistance*, as well as the Euro-America centralized analyses which "on more than one occasion led to an interpretative flattening of diverse cultural materials, and a misunderstanding or devaluation of their founding intentions and most immediate meanings" (Eggener 2002, 233). By quoting Jane M. Jacobs, he goes even as far as describing critical regionalist rhetoric as "a revisionary form of imperialist nostalgia that defines the colonized as always engaged in conscious work against the 'core'" (Jacobs 1996, 14-15, quoted in Eggener 2002, 234). In this article 'Placing Resistance: A Critique of Critical Regionalism', he points out that:

> If so-called critical regionalist designs exemplified an "architecture of resistance," it is ironic that writers discussing the places where these designs appeared so often emphasized one architect's interpretation of the region over all others: Tadao Ando for Japan, Oscar Niemeyer for Brazil, Charles Correa for India, and Luis Barragán for Mexico. [Elsewhere in the article he also lists Jorn Utzon for Denmark, Mario Botta for Ticinese Switzerland, J. A. Coderch for Catalonia, Alvaro Siza for Portugal, Gino Valle for Italy, and Dimitris and Susana Antonakakis for Greece.] In other words, a single correct regional style was implied, or imposed, sometimes from inside, more often from outside "the region" (Eggener 2002, 229, 230).

From the perspective of decolonialization, this is a pertinent point, particularly in terms of the center-periphery thinking, which according to Eggener implies that "No matter how vital, the peripheral is other than, deviant from, and lesser than the center, the norm" (Ibid., 232). In making his point, Eggener refers to Latin America in order to elucidate the meaning of Critical Regionalism from the viewpoint of Argentine Marina Waisman, according to whom "the Latin American version is quite different from that proposed by Kenneth Frampton, or Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre" (Waisman 1994, 32-33). She goes on stating that the Latin American culture, as part of "the general movement of history", is a "unification of the spirit of times and the spirit of place" and, hence, Latin American contemporary architecture should be "understood as a movement of *divergence* rather than resistance (the term which Frampton prefers)" (Ibid.). Thus, this paper looks at regionalism specifically from transcultural perspective.

In rather recent *Transcultural Architecture: The Limits and Opportunities of Critical Regionalism*, Thorsten Botz-Bornstein continues the discourse and compatibly regards critical regionalism as a subcategory of transculturalism by analyzing various designs in some non-Western contexts: the Sief Palace Complex by Raili and Reima Pietilä in Kuwait City, Kuwait, the National Assembly Complex by Louis Kahn in Dhaka, Bangladesh, a few projects by Wang Shu in China, and those of H-Sang Seung in South Korea, in addition to the impact of the Wahhabism policy on architecture in Saudi Arabia. He also discusses Alvar Aalto's and Ludwig Wittgenstein's approaches to design as those relate to Tadao Ando's architecture in Japan. (There is a chapter on the Alabama Rural Studio in the United Sates as well, not directly relevant to this paper's perspective on decolonialization, though relevant to Critical Regionalism in architectural education overall.) Regarding the contexts of Kuwait, China, Korea, and Saudi Arabia, Botz-Bornstein states that "Eggener's (as well as Marina Waisman's) idea that regionalism is not always a response to the West but more often a consequence of local conditions can well be integrated into my defense of Critical Regionalism as a form of transculturalism" (Botz-Bornstein 2015, 3). He goes on arguing that "Transculturalism is more than the arbitrary combination of several cultures but transcends all particular cultures in order to invent a new common culture that is not meant to be new universalism" (Ibid., 37). In addition:

> Transculturalism is not *necessarily* critical while Critical Regionalism is. Vice versa, all Critical Regionalism is transcultural because it overcomes one culture by critically reflecting it against another culture. As a matter of fact, most of the time, Critical Regionalism has not been seen as a coming to terms with *two cultures* but rather as coming to terms with *the past and the present* [...] and it is important to specify differences

in order to distinguish transculturalism from multiculturalism and other strategies destined to synthesize different cultural elements (Ibid., 37-38).

Thus, questions remain: What are the actants of regional and/or national identities and how, if at all, should they be represented? What are the roles of local constituencies and international politics in this network? And to which extent interpretations of the past articulates architecture today? At least as partial answers to these questions, the following single-case study on the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre designed by Renzo Piano Workshop close to Nouméa, the capital of New Caledonia, aims to clarify the intricacies at hand by shedding light on the possibilities of applying the theoretical frameworks of both ANTi-History and Critical Regionalism to one decolonializing nation in the Asia-Pacific context. In contrast to the aforementioned study on the design *process* of an unbuilt project at OMA, which employed the principles of ANT, the goal of the below case study is, instead, to apply the principles of ANTi-History to an 'as built' analysis.

2.0 LOCAL VS. GLOBAL

2.1. Context of New Caledonia

Amongst the plethora of former colonies in the Asia-Pacific region, New Caledonia has somewhat different standing. To make a long story short, the islands have been inhabited at least since the 1600s BCE, were 'discovered' by James Cook in 1774 CE, became a French colony in 1853, served as a penitentiary from the 1860s until 1897, housed an important base of the Allied Forces during WW II, were declared an overseas territory of France in 1946, were considered for partial independence in the 1984 'Status Lemoine', and gained a special status (*statut particulier*) in 1999, which started the gradual transfer of power from the French state to New Caledonia as a 'unique collectivity' of France. Throughout these stages, there were numerous uprisings and movements against French colonialization, of which those in the 1970-80s were led by indigenous independence fighter, Jean-Marie Tjibaou, midst other separatists. The Matignon Accords in 1988, after the Ouvéa tragedy in April of the same year, stabilized the precautious political situation in New Caledonia for a decade, followed by the 1998 Nouméa Accord, consistent with which a referendum on independence was to be held in 15-20 years; the election took place in November 2018, with the result of 56 percent of voters rejecting independence (e.g., Shineberg and Foster 2018).

Like usually (if not always), financial interests were the primary drivers of colonialization of New Caledonia as well. In this occurrence, the discovery of nickel in 1864 started the prosperous mining business on the islands, after trade in sandalwood had declined. Hence, overseas migrant workers were actively recruited as labor for the mines, which partially contributed to the ethnic multiplicity. Still today the economy of New Caledonia relies heavily on nickel mining, in addition to subsidies from France, alongside service industry, agriculture and other less contributing fields (Ibid.). It is worth noting that "in the mid-1980s, New Caledonia ranked third in world nickel reserves and production, after Canada and the USSR" (Taylor 1997, 28). Since this also is when many New Caledonian independence movements were crashed, and considerable political compromises were made, it is not difficult to see the connections between financial and political goals.

The French politics in the 1980s were marked by societal, cultural and economic reforms, which were launched by President Francois Mitterrand during his exceptionally long presidential term from 1981 till 1995. Among these, the *Grand Travaux*, or 'Major Projects' program, was most significant architecturally speaking (also called *grands projets présidentiels*, 'presidential grand projects'). The cultural and ethnic dimensions of these policies were reflected by such building projects as the Institute of Arab World by Jean Nouvel in Paris, France (1981-87), and the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre by Renzo Piano close to Nouméa, New Caledonia (1991-98); the latter is discussed below from the perspective of the cultural, social, political and financial actants and actions of its design network. In 'Putting Architecture in its Social Place: A Cultural Political Economy of Architecture', for instance, Paul Jones argues that in certain circumstances external forces, such as political interests, can

condition architecture and its design outcomes, as architecture always is political and connected with social order, particularly in imagining a new world order. He points out, referring to Frampton, that architecture is the least autonomous of the cultural agents and illustrates the role of easily recognizable iconic buildings designed by high-profile "starchitects" as a strategy of "place-marketing" in "political-economic contexts" (Jones 2009). Regarding architecture of the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre, Kylie Message correspondingly contends that the project was directly linked with the Matignon Accords, in the attempt of the French government to appease social and ethnic tension and to ensure its economically important presence in New Caledonia (Message 2006), in which acknowledgement of local identity was a significant asset. Hence, we must ask: What constitutes New Caledonian identity?

Due to historic migration waves from/to the other Pacific islands, and further primarily from Asia and Europe, New Caledonia has become highly diverse ethnically, culturally and socially. Its population is comprised of various groups of peoples, of whom the Kanaks are regarded as the indigenous New Caledonians. Then again, this is only a partial story of the ethnic fabric of postcolonial New Caledonia. Even among the Melanesians (including the Kanaks), who constitute approximately two-fifths of the population, there are several Polynesian minorities. Besides one-third of New Caledonians with European ancestry, who dominate the trades, businesses and high-ranking governmental posts, the rest includes descendants of mainly Indonesian and Vietnamese migrant workers. It is interesting to note that 13.6 percent of the respondents identified themselves as 'other/undefined' in this 2014 census. Along with French and Kanak that have special legal recognition, roughly 30 Melanesian languages are spoken in New Caledonia. As to religions, 54 percent of New Caledonians are adherents of the Roman Catholic Church, but there are also other Christian groups that constitute more than 30 percent of the population, in addition to 2.7 percent of Muslims and approximately 10 percent of 'nonreligious' or 'other/undeclared' citizens. Also, the distribution of wealth and landownership is very unequal between the different ethnic groups: On average the income of Melanesian households is one-fourth of those with European ancestry, whereas two-thirds of the land is in the hands of the latter, even though few of them depend on agriculture and cattle raising like the Melanesians do, as described by Shineberg and Foster. The authors further point out that these "differing cultures have given rise to two distinct ways of life, known as *kanak* and *caldoche*; people of mixed descent tend to adhere to one or the other" (Shineberg and Foster 2018). While it is debatable whether people should be labeled according to their ethnicity and/or ancestry, the point here is that defining New Caledonian identity is challenging, to say the least, which also makes it difficult to analyze architecture meant to reflect its culture.

2.2. Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre

As the last of Mitterrand's *Grand Travaux* projects, an international architectural competition was organized in 1991 for a facility to endorse New Caledonian identity. Among the selected ten competitors, out of 170 who had expressed their interest, was Renzo Piano; possibly chosen to be one of the finalists because the French authorities were already familiar with him, owing to the competition-winning design for the Centre Georges Pompidou with Richard Rogers in 1977. Renzo Piano Building Workshop won the New Caledonian competition and the facility was named Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre (below TCC for short), although originally it was to be Centre Culturel Kanak – one of the many compromises made under the political, social and racial pressures. It was named so to honor the Kanak leader of the independence movement who was assassinated on 4th of May in 1989 by another separatist accusing Tjibaou for not having been radical enough in the negotiations for independence. In the Matignon Accords, Tjibaou had, however, proposed the establishment of an agency, which became known as the Agence de Développement de la Culture Kanak (ADCK), to promote research and representation of Kanak heritage, identity, linguistic, handicrafts and arts. In a letter to the French Prime Minister, Michel Rocard, soon after the accords were signed, Tjibaou refers to the past 134 years of French control over the destiny of New Caledonia and states that France "cannot hide behind the role of arbiter. It is not judge but actor" (Waddell 2009, 176), which is elucidating wording from the perspective of ANT. Eric Waddell, referring to Alban Bensa who was the anthropologist involved in the TCC project, emphasizes its complex dual objective which, on the one hand, was to increase French influence in the Pacific and, on the

ANTi-History in design research:

other, to restore "the flouted identity of a population that had been brutally colonized by the same France" (Bensa 2005, 34, quoted in Waddell 2009, 197).

For Piano, the politico-symbolic expectations of the project, developed in collaboration with ADCK after Tjibaou's death, were inevitable, which is manifested in the many references to the design principles of TCC (among many, in Findley 2005, and most importantly by Piano himself already in 1997). In addition to those, Piano's praised sustainable strategies, including natural ventilation achieved by orientation toward the direction of the prevailing trade winds and the use of louvers in the insulating double skin, are well documented in literature. Henceforth, TCC is here discussed solely from the perspective of ANTi-History. In this respect, it is worth noting that the guiding concept of the design is said to have been a Kanak hut with its tall, conical, thatched roof, which Piano, avoiding any literal and 'kitsch' interpretations, expressed in contemporary way by his signature 'material lightness' of the ten vertical, ribbed structures, called cases and made chiefly of laminated iroko wood and stainless steel. These display spaces, the tallest being over 200 meters high, added with the exterior gardens exhibiting native plants and a sunken amphitheater for communal gatherings, are positioned sideways along a covered *allee* on the leeward side, which relates to Kanak cosmology and creation mythology, according to Bensa. The layout with a winding trail leading to the entrance further reflects the local vernacular tradition and landscaping of indirect approach to a dwelling. Illuminating is Findley's description of the Centre's opening day when "non-Kanak visitors searched in confusion for the entrance, while Kanak visitors wandered calmly to it" (Findley 1998, 102).

Yet, there are divergent views on the architecture of TCC. From the ecological viewpoint, many critics have questioned the sustainability of choosing iroko wood as building material, since it was imported from Africa, even if there are local timbers available with rather similar qualities. In addition, the case structures are regarded as unsustainable because the members were prefabricated in France and transported to the other side of the world, leaving behind a considerable carbon footprint. Renzo Piano Building Workshop's decision to open the cases above for ventilation also has been criticized because it did not allow placement of a central pole, which in the Pacific cultures has been the symbol of a leader and in this case its absence represents the lack of understanding the role of Tjibaou not only as an indigenous independence fighter, but also that of a son of a Kanak chief. Further, creating an iconic monumental building for an indigenous culture that didn't traditionally adhere to the Western concept of 'architecture' is problematic (for more, see e.g., Thompson 2005 and its references), which corresponds to Jones' point above of "place-marketing"– instead of place-making – by iconic buildings designed by "starchitects", among whom Piano certainly belongs. Indeed, TCC has become the primary tourist attraction of New Caledonia, currently receiving more than 100,000 visitors annually according to the Centre's official website. Moreover, the very notion of expressing Kanak identity by architecture designed by an Italian architect and financed by the former French colonial regime, certainly calls for more ANTi-historical re-readings regarding the power relations in the context of New Caledonia. This is even more significant due to the less discussed and sensitive issue of the ethnic diversity on the islands, in which discourse the architecture of TCC has even been seen to help preserving the colonial legacy and commodifying the indigenous, as argued by Mike Austin (2007).

Corresponding to what was mentioned earlier in relation to Critical Regionalism, the challenge of a multicultural setting becomes apparent in this case study, too. Accordingly, Message points out that TCC's architecture has been a subject to debate in New Caledonia as well, where people think that it is "either too focused on Kanak culture" or "not Kanak enough" (Message 2006, 21). So, is TCC an example of transcultural and/or critical regionalist architecture? Based on the ethnic insularity described above, it clearly isn't sufficiently critical to be regarded as the latter, while it undoubtedly transcends world cultures in coming to terms with the past and the present in the dialectic synthesis "between modernity and tradition, global and local, individual and community, tolerance and resistance" (Thompson 2005, 250), in line with the characteristics of transculturalism. By doing so, TCC has fulfilled Tjibaou's vision of

not returning to a stagnant tradition, but to bring the Kanak culture to the contemporary discourse (Waddell 2008).

CONCLUSION

The aim of the above case study on the Jean-Marie Tjibaou Cultural Centre with ANTi-History as the theoretical framework is to show that, among the many possible actants of ANT, at least political, economic and socio-ethnic concerns were interconnected in this particular postcolonial context, which led to the design actions, later to various interpretations of its design, and so on, in this ever-expanding network of hybrid epistemological bases of architectural analyses. In terms of poststructural views of history as a study of the present, rather than that of the past, it also reveals the limitations of present-day oversimplifications of cultural and ethnic identity of a place, the much-discussed *genius loci* of the critical regionalist and phenomenological discourse. Among the many possible real-world applications, this methodical framework likewise appears as valuable means of 'as built' post-occupation evaluations (POE), which could be applied to practice-based research on the whole, within the wider umbrella of Applied History. Moreover, the lessons from *a* tale of TCC, without trying to tell *the* tale, therefore seem promising applications of ANTi-History to the education of architecture with precedent studies being an integral part of both design studios and history-theory subjects. This, in turn, would be pertinent in the future praxis when the upcoming architectural practitioners enter the profession with skills in critical thinking and design research.

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