

# *International South American Conference: Territorialities and Humanities*

## **Panel Summary**

# Panel 1

## Borders and migration

Mediator: Maria Zilda Cury (UFMG)

### Participants:

- Francisco Eduardo Andrade (UFOP, Brazil)
- Maria Luisa Soux (Universidad Mayor de San Andrés, Bolivia)
- Maria Medianeira Padoin (UFESM, Brazil)
- Elérson Silva (Cáritas, Brazil)

## Panel 1: **Borders and migration**

The panel members pointed out the following issues as specific recommendations:

1. Two participants focused their presentations on the forced displacement of population groups: Bolivian indigenous migrants - driven by unemployment and hunger - and refugees in the strict sense of the term, hosted by an international organization. An emphasis on the precariousness of contemporary transits and the perverse consequences of globalization for marginalized populations.
2. Regional education integration network involving several institutions from Mercosur member countries, fostering especially the dialogical construction of knowledge in the border areas. Thus, the emphasis on the regional space of frontiers, by its comprehensiveness of scope, indicates a movement of integration and transnational dialogue, under three thematic main strands of reflection: state and nation; history of indigenous peoples and African descendants; and the working world and social movements.
3. The human condition of black people and mestizos in the area in the border region of the mines in the second half of the eighteenth century and beginning of the nineteenth century. Legal status of this population contingent and the organizational strategies to guarantee and expand their legal rights.

Other comments: The frontier, as the central theme of this panel, may very well be an operative concept for the understanding of the different transits focused on the interventions of the three speakers, with the proposal of a new, differentiated view on the human groups prioritized in the three presentations. This view, which proposes to build a knowledge that is also "frontier", an injunction for the human groups in question, reveals the contribution of the so-called Humanities to intervention policies in the contemporary world.

## Panel 2

# Identities and languages

Mediator: Heliana Mello (UFMG)

### Participants:

- Michel DeGraff (MIT, USA)
- Gilvan Müller de Oliveira (UFSC, Brazil)
- Bruna Franchetto (UFRJ, National Museum, Brazil)
- Alberto Guarani Mbyá (UFF, Brazil)

## Panel 2: **Identities and languages**

The panel members indicated three points as specific recommendations:

1. The urgent need for public policies to maintain and revitalize the mother tongues of Brazilian indigenous populations and in the entire American continent. In this same line of demands, the recognition of the languages of immigration in Brazil and their real insertion in the school system is also necessary .
2. The need for official recognition of vernacular languages spoken as mother tongues in countries in which post-colonial heritage left entire populations socially excluded because they did not speak the Eurocentric languages associated with power. This circumstance was vividly reported in relation to Haiti, a country in which the *kreyòl* is the mother tongue of 100% of the population. Despite this fact, the official language of the country, practiced even in the school context, is French. Such practice seriously violates the human rights of the population and perpetuates the social, cultural and economic exclusion of the entire non-French speaking population, which accounts for about 95% of the entire population of Haiti.
3. Need to recognize the contribution of ancestral knowledge of minority populations and their cultural practices to the majority cultures and to the whole body of society. The recognition of non-encyclopedic, non-academic knowledge is an important step towards strengthening the principles of the humanities, which must always contemplate contributions from society in the search of solutions to human problems.

## Panel 3

# Gender and cultural diversity

Mediator: Cláudia Mayorga (UFMG)

### Participants:

- Rosalind Hackett (CIPSH, University of Tennessee, USA)
- Nilma Lino Gomes (UFMG, Brazil)
- Ochy Curiel (Universidad Nacional de Colombia)
- Verônica Santana (Movement of Rural Working Women in the Brazilian Northeast – Marcha das Margaridas, Brazil)

## Panel 3: **Gender and cultural diversity**

Some challenges are posed for the Humanities in the face of the neoliberal perspectives, which are intensified in the Latin American and Caribbean context, and the most diverse and continuous forms of violence that focus on women in their diversity and that articulate different systems of power and inequality. On the one hand, we have societies that, through different devices, produce places and conceptions about women that distance them from the possibility of being recognized as subjects of rights, culture, science, politics, etc. Historically, the humanities have been a field of critical view of society and should contribute to deconstructing such conceptions and strengthening democratic and emancipatory values, aiming at strengthening relations of equality, social justice, cooperation, solidarity and articulation between different actors in contemporary societies. A movement that proposes to re-found the Humanities cannot fail to consider the structural dimension of inequalities of gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, sexuality, etc., as well as the innovations and strategies of resistance and democratization that women have proposed in various contexts such as labor, education, health, social and political participation, etc.

Thus, some proposals:

It is fundamental that Latin American and Caribbean universities strengthen spaces, processes and dynamics of knowledge production that take the social subjects, in their cultural diversity, as central interlocutors to the understanding of the realities of inequality, but also to face these inequalities (class, gender, race, sexual orientation), incorporating flags of the different movements against them, feminists, anti-racists, black feminists, LGBTs, etc.;

It is central that the humanities dedicate themselves to producing knowledge that, while attentive to the universal and global dimension, cannot fail to consider the local specificities and concrete experience of Latin American and Caribbean women;

In view of the common histories of colonialism and imperialism that mark the contexts of women on the planet's southern axis, it is vital that the humanities dedicate themselves to giving visibility and strengthening the articulations in the South-South axis, focusing on the denaturalization of conceptions that subalternize the women of these latitudes. Such a perspective requires a thorough epistemological and continuous self-criticism of academic production, institutional logics and power-knowledge axes that organize and mark the production of knowledge in contemporary societies.

## Panel 4

### Law and education

Mediator: Vera Lúcia Menezes (UFMG)

#### Participants:

- Antônio Gomes Batista (CENPEC, Brazil)
- Luciano Mendes Faria Filho (UFMG, Brazil)
- Vanessa Beco (Canal Futura, Brazil)



## Panel 4: **Law and education**

The panel members took as their starting point the understanding according to which the humanities offer us a very important set of theoretical and methodological "tools" for understanding and, thus, the transformation of contemporaneity. No sustainable project of building more just and less unequal worlds will succeed without a decisive and incisive contribution from the humanities, and their diverse traditions of thought and knowledge. They pointed out as specific recommendations three issues:

1. It is necessary to rethink the funding agencies to take into account the issues of gender and human diversity.
2. Educational policies must be articulated to the policies of rights, the public school comprising, on the one hand, an institution whose emergence occurred parallel to the processes of nation-state building, development of capitalism, hierarchization of knowledge and modernization, and on the other, as a demand of organized civil society, in its struggle for the affirmation of rights. Therefore, at the crossroads of these processes carried out by states and civil society, and in order to make a critical contribution to power relations and inequalities, the school needs inter-sectorial policies to meet the demands and needs of the populations deprived of rights, especially those living in the vulnerable territories of large cities, victims of segregation of a socio-spatial nature.
3. School curricula need to deal with regional differences and human diversity, opening up to understanding the world and building a more generous, perhaps utopian, order. The more generous claims of the social movements of the South indicate that the formation of the subjects takes place in much broader landmarks than the school context and that they should be considered accordingly. The reduction of education to schooling does not recognize the plurality of manners, spaces and times of human formation, besides creating the conditions for an understanding for an overly rationalized understanding of the world.

## Panel 5

# Ecology and environment

Mediator: Raoni Rajão (UFMG)

### Participants:

- José Augusto Pádua (UFRJ, Brazil)
- Lúcia da Costa Ferreira (Unicamp, Brazil)
- Maurício Andrés Ribeiro (Ecologizar, Brazil)
- Joceli Andrioli (Movement of Populations Affected by Dams – MAB, Brazil)

## Panel 5: **Ecology and environment**

The panel members indicated as specific recommendations three points:

1. Ecologizing the humanities: importance of spreading knowledge and sensibilities from an ecological view of reality, which considers our place on the planet and re-places humanity as part (and not user) of nature.
2. Humanizing the ecology: importance of considering the human dimension of environmental management. This means the questioning of the existence of an "untouched" nature which has no history, represented by the void of political and environmental maps. It also involves the integration of social demands in the licensing and disaster prevention process, such as that of Mariana.
3. The dialectic of socio-environmental transformations: environmental issues are often presented as technical problems that can be solved through technological interventions in which all actors win (win-win situations). On the other hand, the examples brought by the speakers show the need to embrace the contradictory, the clash and the dialectical ways of thinking and acting that come from the humanities, in order to advance the integration between society and the environment.

## Panel 6

### Social control and habitability

Mediator: Alexandre Cunha (UFMG)

#### Participants:

- João Antônio de Paula (UFMG, Brazil)
- André Luís Ramos Soares (UFSM, Brazil)
- Maria Alejandra Saleme Daza (Agency for Cooperation and Investment in the Medellin metropolitan area, Colombia)
- Cristina Almeida Cunha Filgueiras (PUC Minas, Brazil)
- Leonardo Péricles (Movement for Social Struggle in Districts and Slums, Brazil)

## Panel 6: **Social control and habitability**

The question of social control and habitability was debated in several records, experiences and perspectives, from the presentations of Maria Alejandra Saleme Daza, Leonardo Péricles, André Luís Ramos Soares, Cristina Almeida Cunha Filgueiras and João Antônio de Paula.

Although addressing different dimensions of this broad theme, the convergences in the reflections were striking. The problem of urban reform, understood as a structural reform with a view to re-adapting the city to the effective interest of the majority, was clearly stated by several of the presenters, specifying several of the challenges associated with this greater goal. One of the central challenges mentioned was the housing deficit (or housing needs in broader terms).

The very successful example of Medellín was presented showing how, sustained through a number of governments in recent years, the city has been promoting a type of "social urbanism" dedicated to successfully face the three deep problems that have well-marked the city: crime, corruption and inequality. Nevertheless, even in a case in which the housing issue was concretely promoted and expanded, such as that of Medellín, the problem of housing deficit is still significant and persistent.

In this sense, a first conclusion to be highlighted from the panel is how this is a central problem and that cannot be considered from the single record of the need to build new housing, but also, and especially, from a confrontation and a search for solutions in relation to the issue of idle urban property, which in many of our cities outweighs even the housing deficit itself.

## Panel 6: **Social control and habitability**

There has also been convergence in pointing out how many of the problems that arise for our urban reality are an effective function of a broader and deeper context that is largely associated with the very functioning of capitalism. A second order of conclusions thus concerns how the confrontation with the logic of capital seems to be an inescapable way to think of more durable solutions in terms of habitability and the solution of social problems in our cities. The contribution of archeology, in direct dialogue with the panel that preceded ours, also offered an important background to think about how many examples of advanced societies have collapsed and died, and how our predatory model has invariably been generating pressures to the planet, which are unambiguously dramatized in urban problems. In this sense, although the overcoming of the capitalist model is far from being a problem of simple confrontation, the understanding that there is in fact a conflict between the logic of capital and the promotion of habitability, which in turn defines a framework of confrontation of different logics, is an essential starting point.

Finally, and in connection with the two points presented above, a third conclusion is that the theme of social control is undoubtedly a central dimension for a renewed reflection on the space of the city. The inspiration of Henri Lefebvre's ideas served as a guide to important panel discussions on the horizon we should pursue in this regard, and which includes questions such as the importance of overlapping a logic of custom with regard to the logic of contract in the "right to the city", the importance of the effective appropriation of the city space, for example, the appropriation of "time" (which is related to the issue of mobility, conditions and working hours, among many other points), and finally, the very issue of self-management of territorial units on different scales, and the question of social control is a decisive step towards that horizon.

## Panel 8

### Urban space and violence

Mediator: Priscila Carlos Brandão (UFMG)

#### Participants:

- Sérgio Adorno (USP, Brazil)
- Bráulio Figueiredo Alves da Silva (UFMG, CRISP, Brazil)
- Marcelo Sain (Universidad Nacional de Quilmes, Argentina)
- Hamilton Borges (React or you will be dead, Brazil)

## Panel 8: **Urban space and violence**

The panel members pointed out three issues as specific recommendations :

1. In the first place, the political interest in dealing with the problem of violence must be discussed, in addition to those crimes considered to be "scandalous", that is, the ones which produce great public repercussions, which are mainly those committed against the life and property of people of middle and high class. Lives of black people and the poor have been considered of less value. This situation, according to Hamilton Borges, of the movement React or You will be Dead (Reaja ou será morto, Reaja ou será morta), should be considered a "genocide" of the blacks.
2. Second, there is a need to produce reliable records and data, both on crime and victimization. The lack of existence and systematization of these data makes it impossible to implement efficient public policy.
3. Thirdly, there is a need to reflect on the role of the police and on the possibility of decriminalization of drugs. In this respect, the examples of Germany and the Netherlands, which have been viewed respectively negatively and positively, have been cited. What policies should guide the police in a process of "pacifying" society so that it is seen as a state resource for citizen security? This is a central issue as the police are often seen as producers of violence as they are responsible for maintaining an order that ensures the political and economic development of a certain portion of society, the high levels of social hierarchy. To what extent could the decriminalization of drugs, in turn, contribute to reducing violence, including that practiced by the police apparatus? What implications would decriminalization bring to the health of citizens and, in a society in which access to treatment is highly differentiated between classes, would it not repeat inequalities and exclusions?



## Panel 9

# Materialities and representations

Mediator: Luiz Carlos Villalta (UFMG)

### Participants:

- Aldrin Moura Figueiredo (UFPA, Brazil)
- Leonel Cabrera (Udelar, Uruguay)
- César Lorenzano (FISP, Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, Argentina)
- Maria Rita Casagrande (Black Women Bloggers, Brazil)

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## Panel 9: **Materialities and representations**

In the panel, the theoretical aspects (philosophical, cognitive, technical, aesthetic) of the representations, mainly the artistic ones, were initially discussed. The roles of subjects and objects in the constitution of representations were focused. Their importance was reiterated in human existence, in the construction of narratives, involving subjects, territories and times, conflicts and/or coexistence of different traditions and perspectives. Representations, therefore, are understood as decisive in the configuration, erasure and/or exclusion of identities. Maria Rita Casagrande, of the Black Women Bloggers (Blogueiras Negras) movement, denounced the epistemicide underlying representations that target black people, especially women and LGBTs in Brazil.

From this perspective, it was considered that the representations are important:

1. To apprehend the ways in which certain subjects invented stories, convenient to their strategies of social, cultural, and political affirmation, often to the detriment of other subjects;
2. In order to identify, in their overlaps, evidence of deletions and coexistences, the mechanisms by which certain subjects sought and seek to exclude others, processes often marked by violence that went beyond the field of the symbolic. Therefore, it is necessary to decode, revolve, unveil senses and strategies, in various types of representations (blots, successive marks, etc.), strata and erasure efforts;
3. To demonstrate the violence that victimizes different historical subjects, in the present and in the past, in various spaces.

## Panel 10

# Social development and innovation

Mediator: Estevam Barbosa de Las Casas (UFMG)

### Participants:

- Inguelore Scheunemann (UFPel, IBIO, Brazil)
- Fernando Ortega (Millenium Project, APROEF, Peru)
- Luiz Oosterbeek (CIPSH, IPT, Portugal)

## Panel 10: **Social development and innovation**

The panel members pointed out three issues as specific recommendations :

1. Technological innovations must be analyzed in their historicity, in what they bring back and in what they call permanencies, particularly with respect to the responsibility that the subjects have before them and to the possibilities that they open (or enclose) in relation to these same subjects. Innovations, therefore, may involve dichotomies, limits and possibilities. To cite a timely example, social media and search engines filter the information more easily accessible using algorithms that provide users with data adjusted to the profile found for each one. In this way, the set of information is presented in a circular way, reinforcing individual tendencies and preconceptions, with which the new media, far from providing substantial innovations and development, risk the narrowing of the world and also the decrease of effective access to information. Technology, in this context, must be thought of as a tool at the service of humanity. One cannot look at it only from the perspective of ensuring accessibility for more people, and it is necessary to think of it as being linked to a bold understanding of education.
2. The importance of preparing, from the perspective of the Humanities, information about the world population in relation to the risks of technological changes, especially automation and robotization.
3. The inclusion of ethics in the discussion of technology, its use and its outcomes, is progressively necessary given the rapid technological development. Brazil, specifically Minas Gerais, has already undergone a "gold cycle" and lately the "iron ore cycle" . Even with the value of iron ore being increased by an order of magnitude, the inheritance that foreshadowed its exploration does not point to any positive social transformation in the long run, with most of the resources being appropriated in the form of profits to external actors.