

ANALES Nueva Época No. 13

"Brazil: Politics of Exclusion and Inclusion"

"Brasil: Políticas de exclusão e inclusão"

INTRODUCTION

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When someone with the authority of a teacher [...] describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.

The quote above is from Adrienne Rich's short 1984 essay "Invisibility in Academe" (Rich 1986:199). In the game of mirrors, as Rich puts it, strength of soul is required in order to resist the void, to demand to be seen and heard. Invisibility is an un *settling* experience, a denial of place.

The struggles of many social movements revolve around the inclusion of the voices of the excluded, the visibility of those made invisible. Such processes of inclusion, however, are complex, asymmetrical, and often contradictory. With this issue of *Anales*, on the politics of exclusion and inclusion in Brazil, we wish to emphasize the complexity of these processes. In the very act of excluding, the excluded is assigned a place within a specific order and thus also included in this order. The excluded should therefore not be understood as placed outside the order, but rather as in itself constituting an outside, holding the order together. In this sense, the relation between inside and outside is always unstable and precarious.

The ambiguities in the relation between inside and outside are highlighted in Don Kulick's and Charles Klein's article on the

escândalo as a performative act among *travestis*. Through the concept of a politics of shame, Kulick and Klein show how the political movements of *travestis* challenge every expectation that the excluded should desire to simply be included. Instead, they argue, through a politics of shame *travestis* expand the sphere of exclusion, letting it invade the “respectable” world. Thus the continuity between what is excluded and what is included is unveiled.

In struggles for inclusion, new exclusions are created. In her article on the NGO network ENONG, Maj-Lis Follér discusses the inclusion of people who are HIV infected and/or living with AIDS in civil society organizations. People who have been excluded and discriminated by the government have used civic activism, protests, and information campaigns to make themselves visible. However, the ENONG network itself gives priority to certain issues related to HIV/AIDS, such as sexual rights, prevention, treatment, and questioning the heterosexual norm. Questions related to drug abuse and the spread of HIV through injections and syringes, have over the years occupied a marginal place on the ENONG agenda. Is this an exclusion due to class, reflecting the different public spaces lived in by drug addicts and gay activists respectively?

Simone Monteiro’s and Fátima Cecchetto’s contribution highlights the dynamics of discrimination of lower income male and female youth in Rio de Janeiro. They discuss the impact of color/race, gender, and class on the experience of discrimination, showing how spaces of discrimination are highly gendered. While men experience discrimination in public spaces and the labor market, young women relate experiences of discrimination in the most intimate spheres: in the home and in family relations.

Questions of gender, public spaces, and the home are also strongly present in Thaís Machado-Borges’ article. Here we meet the narratives from one of the most marginalised and

despised groups in the Brazilian city: the garbage collectors. Machado-Borges' fieldwork among female garbage collectors and their organisations in Belo Horizonte reveal how in their struggles for organisation, dignity, and respect, a notion of citizenship is articulated with implications far beyond any reductions of citizenship to mere formal rights.

A case that can be said to be the including exclusion *par excellence* in Brazilian imaginary is that of the indigenous peoples. On the one hand, indigenous populations are part of a mythical origin, expressed in the idea of the Brazilian people born through the miscegenation of three races. But while the indigenous of the past is at the nation's heart, contemporary indigenous populations are often regarded and treated as anachronisms and as obstacles to development. In Esther Langdon's article, the ambiguities of the place of the *índio* are explored by studying the organising of minority health policies and the epistemological privileges within these policies. Cristhian Teófilo da Silva, for his part, discusses the interplay between anthropological knowledge and ethnicity building in processes of recognition. The paradox of these processes is that in order to receive legal protection for their land, indigenous peoples need to be included precisely through the act of exclusion that designates them as *others*.

The place of the *índio* as a space where inside and outside coincide, is further discussed in Patricia Lorenzoni's reading of two public monuments, one in the federal capital of Brasília, the other in Boa Vista, capital of Roraima in the northern Amazon. Departing from the representation of indigenous people in the urban space, Lorenzoni discusses the place of these populations in an imaginary of the Brazilian nation.

The last word in this issue is given to Terena spokesperson Lisio Lili, and a speech given at the First Brazilian Congress for Indigenous Scholars, Researchers and Professionals in Brasília 2009. The congress brought together scholars, politicians,

activists, teachers and, above all, students – many of whom where the first generation in their communities to have access to the formal education of the majority. For these students the empty mirror is still the face of a surrounding society that keeps fostering a self-ascribed civilizing mission.

References

Rich, A. (1986) *Blood, Bread, and Poetry: Selected Prose 1979-1985*. New York and London: W. W. Norton & Company.