

Call for Papers: Fifth Biennial Conference of the International Association of Inter-American Studies (IAS/EIA)

REINVENTING THE SOCIAL: MOVEMENTS AND NARRATIVES OF RESISTANCE, DISSENSION, AND RECONCILIATION IN THE AMERICAS

University of Coimbra, Portugal, 22-24 March 2018

The struggle over social issues and the resistance to ruling elites have a long history in the colonies and nations of the Americas. They range from wars of independence and slave uprisings to conventions for women's rights, workers' and peasants' rebellions, indigenous movements, and protests against U.S.A. wars in Vietnam or in Iraq. Since World War II new forms of international and national inequalities and new dynamics in societies and in the media have increased our awareness of the many ways in which the social keeps being re-negotiated from Alaska to Tierra del Fuego.

Recent decades have been characterized by new approaches to time- and space-binding and mediational and relational webs of the social; the invention, invocation, and narration of tradition, history, and heritage serve as key elements in the creation of new social bonds with earlier generations; since the turn of the millennium formerly excluded social groups have been prominent in reshaping the scope and the normativity of the social; a diminishing civil society has opened space to the influence of extremisms; unemployed young people, deprived of prospects for the future, attempt new forms of expression and intervention; the disenfranchised take to the streets and to the Internet; social media open up new channels and formats for expression; literature raises consciousness for just causes; artists in every realm translate and give form to many of these thoughts and feelings; sociologists and political scientists bring up new interpretations of and theories on the social.

Whereas Justin Trudeau named the most diverse government in Canada's history, the Indigenous president Evo Morales in Bolivia and the African-American former president of the U.S.A., Barack Obama promoted multi- and pluricultural imaginaries and questioned social relations based on coloniality, while the ongoing discussion of Indigenous concepts such as "Buen vivir" revives and reveals more balanced relations between nature and society. Even if the hegemony of the U.S.A. in the Americas has been waning, the election of Donald Trump and his nostalgic vision of "Make America Great Again" will have global impacts, specifically on the Americas. In focus are also issues of immigration and the targeting of difference—be it racial, ethnic, religious, or gender—, the border wall with Mexico, immigration reform policies, the treatment of Muslim inhabitants, and the hosting of refugees, mostly from the Middle East, as well as feminist issues, environmental policies, and human rights in general.

The 2008 financial crisis in the U.S.A, followed by worldwide economic recession has reinforced the gap between North and South, caused a shrinking of the middle-class, deprived the working-class, brought the right wing back to power in many regions, and increased the tension between right- and left-wing parties. The neoliberal far right is also rising in many other countries in the Americas, such as Argentina and Brazil. Along with economic problems and negative effects of globalization on labor, political

ineffectiveness in solving them, pervasive corruption at the highest levels, and social intolerance against immigrants and refugees have inspired new Nationalisms and new Fascisms, and have severely shaken democracy.

Cultural producers often have a seismographic function in revealing social frictions and fissures, while social movements connect discontent in daily life with political expression, the media create and circulate ideas and imaginaries, and academia reflects upon and theorizes changes in the social. Bearing in mind conceptualizations of the community by theoreticians such as Jacques Derrida ("community under erasure"), Jean-Luc Nancy ("the inoperative community"), Giorgio Agamben ("the coming community"), Bruno Latour ("reassembling the social"), as well as the sociological imagination of Boaventura de Sousa Santos ("epistemologies of the south," "ecology of knowledges"), we would like to encourage a lively discussion of ideas of the social in its old and new configurations.

But the social is also created in the think tanks of social technology as well as by rumors, jokes, and whispers; a plurality of new social formations, always in transition and process, resist fixation and uniformity, whereas their heterogeneous, and perhaps contradictory, needs, aspirations, and motivations claim our attention. We intend to follow along these lines of inquiry, taking as case studies past or recent theories on the definition of the social and how they may apply to the context of the Americas, to past or recent social crises and struggles together with the different responses and narratives they have generated—be they creative and emancipatory, or conservative and reactionary.

Our purpose is therefore to explore past and present forms of intervention, relation, knowledge, translation, negotiation, solidarity, or alliance that promote the emancipation of those usually silenced by hegemonic formulae and hierarchies. Through the debate and exploration of new ground we aim at contributing to the designing of a new grammar and a new pedagogy of the social from epistemological and practical perspectives on the Americas.

We shall be addressing questions such as:

Which forms have resistance and dissent taken in the Americas over the centuries and which discourses and narratives have accompanied them?

How do narratives generate and interweave different voices, groups, and communities' aspirations about the future as well as the past?

Who are the new protagonists arising in social movements/in the media?

What kind of reactions and transformations have these protagonists been able to cause and promote?

What are the effects of a reinvention of the social in both the more traditional media and in artistic expression?

How have the new social formations and movements been acting in the Americas?

What are the new narratives in the social and who is responsible for them?

How do creative responses resist the growing culture of fear and terror bred by the new security state?

What forms of social and creative expression have emerged, and how are they being performed?

How do these recent expressions incorporate or retrieve previous colonized or imperial experiences and memories?

How do they relate to the state and to the street?

Which new alliances are in the making?

Which forms of conviviality, solidarity, and imagination do these alliances rely on?
Which realities are absent from the current discourses of the social, and how are the emerging forms of resistance taking shape?
Which roles can body politics, transnationality, economics, and cosmopolitanism play?
Which new social movements are emerging as part of a reinvented social?
If we consider all the forces at play in the reinvention of the social, how has integration, assimilation, and cultural appropriation been redefined?
Which space and roles are assigned to the so-called disposable communities/individuals?
How are communities and cultural producers dealing with an expanding politics of racial/ethnic/gender profiling?
How are communities and cultural producers dealing with the politics of criminalization, incarceration, violence, deportation, denial of asylum?
How are societies and cultural producers dealing with multiple sexual and gender identities and categorizations?
How are societies and cultural producers dealing with the effects of deforestation and ecological disruptions?

This cross-disciplinary forum of academic exchange invites contributions from all academic disciplines concerned with social formations, social movements, communities, social and cultural expressions, literature, art and performance in the Americas.

Please send proposals for individual papers (only one proposal per person) or for panels (with a chairperson and 3 or 4 presentations) to conference@interamericanstudies.net **by August 31, 2017**. Individual proposals should include a 300-400 words abstract; panel proposals should include a 250-word abstract for each constituent paper as well as an abstract of 300-400 words describing the panel session as a whole. Presentations can be given in English, Spanish or Portuguese, and should be about 15 minutes long.

The participation of doctoral candidates is strongly encouraged.

Please include your **name, affiliation, the title of your presentation and/or panel, an abstract, up to 5 keywords, and email address(es)**. You will be notified by the end of November whether your proposal has been accepted.

Host institution: University of Coimbra, Portugal (Faculty of Letters/FLUC and Center for Social Studies/CES)

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