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Video transcript of the conference “Another Marxist Feminism”

Vídeo 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4xzt7vqdhwM> (acessível online desde o dia 19 de abril de 2021)

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[Presenting: Izabel Solyszko Gomes](#)

[Presenting: Elaine Santos](#)

[Discussion](#)

Presenting: Izabel Solyszko Gomes

Izabel: Good afternoon! I'd like to thank the responsible for this event for the opportunity to embark on this journey to think about “feminisms” and the critical Marxist social theory. I appreciate Annelise's invitation and all the support from the Center for Gender Studies of the University of Lausanne to make this academic event possible.

There are two necessary points I need to make when introducing my speech: First, we have to acknowledge the international mourning we're living for the victims of coronavirus as well as the deep repudiation for the necropolitics practiced by the Bolsonaro administration in Brazil. I hope our anger and resistance against this “government of death” to be heard and find echo internationally. Secondly, I need to acknowledge my standpoint: I'm a social worker, Latin-American, professor and I've been, for some years now, researching gender violence and violence practiced against women, strongly connecting the realities in Brazil, Mexico and Colombia. I make an academic and political effort to place my analyses in the Marxist Feminist field, which is from where I believe we can foresee possibilities to understand and change this reality. I think Angélica's invitation is polemic, I still speak of a Marxist feminism and I believe it to be a difficult theoretical-political exercise, because it's much easier for us to find resonance with other theories and rely on explanations that are rather descriptive than analytical, arguing from the totality. This is why I believe it to be an exercise, because it is an effort to deepen your theoretical-critical approach. I made the decision to prepare some slides and translate them into French, it was last night, so it's a bit

precarious, but, they can help me summarize what I will present here today. The title of my presentation is: “Women and war: an analysis of the armed conflict and violence against women” – I will try to speak about the critique of the common comprehension of violence against women, looking at what I live and research on here in Colombia. There is a necessity to read the Colombian conflict critically and to avoid any superficial reading that does not explain the causes of the conflict, and thus, how women will have their lives determined by the conflict with even more violence. This is the main idea I would like to discuss, and I will try to respect the time reserved to this presentation today.

In the short time we have, I would like to touch on three fundamental points: 1. The recognition of how gender violence and violence against women as a structural problem is exacerbated by the colonial racist patriarchal capitalism. 2. The importance of analyzing the armed conflict in Colombia as a severe problem caused by the deep social inequalities marking this country, as well as many other Latin American countries. 3. The need to build an emancipatory feminism, relying on the voices of so many women who taught me to think as a feminist.

On the *recognition of gender-based violence against women as a structural problem exacerbated by colonial racist patriarchal capitalism*: This is a topic much discussed throughout Latin America and the world – it’s much easier to find “literature on violence against women” – to read research from different fields, from public policy perspectives, or health, epidemiology, much has been written on this problem. This is a wide-ranging bibliography, very consolidated worldwide, in Latin America, Brazil and also Colombia. We can take a brief look at this literature, results and analyses. By doing so, we can identify at least trends of approaching the problem, out of which the first two are flawed due to their very conceptual limitations. A first group of studies and analyses on violence against women tend to pathologize violence by recognizing a profile of victim and aggressor, recognizing a certain type of social illness with which the perpetrator of violence can be associated. This perspective that qualifies the aggressor as a sick man, a crazy man, an ill man dramatically reduces the phenomenon to an individual problem. I believe the professors who spoke before me talked about the ills of individualizing the social question. In this pathologizing interpretation, the problem with violence is rather the result of the aggressor’s willingness of being violent and of the victim’s willingness in accepting the situation. In this perspective, the

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responses to the problem might, on the one hand, medicalize the victim, so it is much common to start by approaching the problem from what the victim feels - insomnia, recurrent body aches, extreme tiredness, nervousness. And these symptoms are nothing but the expression of the chronic violence experienced daily. On the other hand, the emphasis on aggressors, including in the theoretical-methodological field of intervening against them, often excuses the perpetrator because he suddenly turns into a man “without capacities to be responsible for his practices and actions.” It is for instance a very common strategy used by the defense lawyers of femicide perpetrators. An exam to prove his mental sanity is required, and it accelerates the court process, as well as it anchors this imagery of a phenomenon going back to an unpremeditated, sick moment. So, this is an interpretation that has negative consequences at the level of intervening in matters of violence against women.

In this same direction, there are studies that single out the problem, placing the situations experienced in the field of interpersonal relationships. Here it is common to use concepts such as “situation” or “scenario” of violence, framing the problem as an isolated photograph from other dimensions of the social complexity. The explanations that singularize the subject are often based on a theory of systems that speaks of a micro and macro social systems, which ends up explaining the whole phenomenon at the micro and local dimensions. It’s when we hear explanations around the issue of alcoholism, stress, unemployment and poverty as possible causes or contributive factors of violence, which serve to ultimately justify the act. I follow many studies that insist on concluding on the resilience of women who by their own efforts overcome the situation of violence, completely fragmenting a broader reading of this social phenomenon.

Finally, I present the analytical framework in which I try to situate myself every day, one to which thinkers like Helleieth Saffioti, Suely Almeida and Lilia Pougy have contributed, women who have insisted on a critical feminist thought, in which gender violence and violence against women is a social, historical phenomenon that is contradictorily also contemporary, a problem that is at the heart of capitalist, racist, colonial and patriarchal society. I reiterate: it is contradictorily contemporary. Social transformations in the level of gender inequality have taken place in the last decades. This is undeniable: the situation of women today is not that of preceding generations. There is a matter of access, discussion on inequalities, but notwithstanding these developments that enable us to say that we are not in

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the same position as our grandmothers, these developments are insufficient and did not transform everything that the previous speakers have mentioned – the roots of oppression. These structures of oppression and domination need violence against women to exist. They feed off each other and reproduce from the control over women's lives and bodies – including when it comes to capital reproduction.

With these authors, and especially with Heleieth Saffioti, we learned that the excuse of a “violent emotion” should not be a mitigate circumstance in cases of femicide, nor the use of the notion of “passionate crime” because the male aggressor does not react under a state of irrational emotion but based on an unequal social structure, which legitimizes the use of force and violence against women. They do not act desperately in the name of love, but they commit femicides in a conscious, premeditated manner and with the cruelty learned in the reproduction of this violent social system. The apparent causes of the phenomenon (jealousy, despair, poverty, alcoholism and drug use) are nothing more than smokescreens (in the words of Karel Kosik), which contribute but not explain the action, because these are not elements that give account of the roots of oppression and exploration.

In her text “Domestic violence or the hen house logic,” Helleieth Saffioti (1997) taught us that gender relations are structured by power relations, because they are part of social relations – gendered social relations is where power circulates and operates via social structure in both concrete and symbolic actions. In this caricatural and emblematic text, she explains the hen house logic, namely that the rooster starts pecking hens and the hen that feels most protected by the rooster will also peck other chickens in a circularity of micro-powers. The author recalls that human beings organize their society (at least the modern western urban society) in a hierarchical and, therefore, violent manner. In the words of the author: “The structure of society, formed by hierarchies, makes each and every man potentially violent. The conversion of aggressive potential into aggression can trigger the most trivial and commonplace events. The feeling of ownership that society nurtures in men, in relation to his wife and family and the impunity of the overwhelming majority of these criminals largely explains the widespread male violence against women.”

In the context of social power relations, the personal is political. To continue with Helleieth Saffioti (1999): “There are no two spheres: one of interpersonal relations (relations sociales) and another of structural relations (rapports sociaux) [...] All human relations are interpersonal, in so far as they are managed by people, each one with his/her unique history of

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social contacts [...]. To affirm that gender relations are interpersonal relationships means to single out families, couples, men and women, losing sight of the social structure.”

“Gender violence,” to Saffioti, “is inherent to the pattern of known gendered social organizations, which in turn is as structural as the division of society into social classes” (This is very evident in her writings from 1997, 1999.) “[...] the differences between men and women have been systematically converted into inequalities to the detriment of the female gender, [...] gender-based violence is not of private nature, it is rather of public nature. The fact that it occurs, as a rule, inside the home does not negate its public nature. This does not mean equating public and private. What we cannot conceive is to think of these phenomena as constituting different spheres. There are public activities and private activities happening simultaneously in all social spaces.”

To conclude this understanding of the structural dimension of violence against women, Saffioti always referred to the film “Red Lanterns” (Zhang Yimou, 1991) to show how the figure of the male patriarch does not need to be present for a system of domination and oppression to be reproduced. I like to use the film “The Western Girl” (Stephan Streker, 2017) as an expression of the colonial capitalist patriarchy. In the latter, based on a true story, a young Pakistani woman, who lives in Belgium, wants to live freely, experiencing strong conflicts with her father (I will tell the end of the movie). She finds a source of understanding and affection in her older brother. The plot shows the deepening tensions between the traditional father and the daughter in search of her freedom, but culminates in the murder of the young woman, perpetrated not by her father, but by her brother, revealing that honor and family tradition are worth more than a woman's life.

Despite the limits of this reflection - I know it's centering on a religious Muslim family, on a specific tension between the so-called Occident and Orient, but the notion of patriarchy here is evident. Personal and affective relationships do not guide social practice (the affective relationship between these siblings did not prevent him from killing her), but the deep-rooted social structures that turn women's bodies a matter of domesticity and render violence against them a norm. And this is where we can think of Engels' text on the need for monogamy to reproduce capitalism.

How does this first point relate to the Colombian armed conflict and violence against women? There are several relations that can be highlighted:

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1. The first refers to the Colombian armed conflict and the problem of social inequality in land distribution: for short, the agrarian conflict. Understanding the context in this country implies recognizing the violent combination between policies of economic development and blood (Dario Fajardo). This means that war is not a limiting factor for development, but it is also a factor for its expansion. We would have to focus on the issue of land, drug trafficking and forced displacement pushed forward by the large multinational oil and ore companies, whose headquarters are in European and North American countries (United States and Canada). Yet, it is sufficient to state that the social and political conflict in Colombia is a structural problem and a problem pertaining to the polarization of ideas or a problem emerging once guerrillas emerged, as terrorists took up arms - which is also a widespread interpretation in Colombia.

2. The second fundamental relation that needs to be recognized is that women were disproportionately victims of violence in the armed conflict (Auto 092 of 2008). Yet, the violence suffered during the war had not necessarily been the first and only one, but violence often started in childhood, in the family of origin, had continuity in the affective or marital relationship and culminated in them suffering as victims of an armed conflict. This, by no means, intends to propagate a certain kind of linearity about women's lives ("all women suffered in their families, in affective relationships, all women suffer with the armed conflict"), but rather to state that, yes there is a perverse modality of multiple wars in this territory in which I reside today, and these are wars fought against their livelihoods and bodies throughout their lives.

This means that the violence against women who are victims of the armed conflict in Colombia must be analyzed based on:

- A patriarchal society that has been using women's bodies since childhood to develop the strictest gender stereotypes that subordinate, discriminate and render their lives vulnerable. In addition, this patriarchal society plays women against each other so that they do not build alliances, but rather, that they reaffirm themselves in competition, separating them from any possibility of collective and solidary organization.

- A capitalist society that reaches territories and sites of women's existence to invade, loot and destroy, a capitalist society that forces their bodies to perform slave labor, domestic labor, jobs paid in a precarious and exploited manner.

- We can also think on an overlap – in the words of Jules Falquet who identifies herself as a materialist feminist - between the capitalist patriarchy that will find in women's bodies a weapon of war for the control of territories, a way in which to send a message to the whole group, which in turn compels women to remain disciplined and abide by the rules of socially expected behavior. The cost of disobedience is thus violence, commonly rape as brutal violence to access a woman's body or femicide where the woman's own life is taken away as if it were a disposable life, a life that does not matter.

In a research carried out with women forcibly displaced by the war, we found that several women had moved for the first time fleeing marital violence and not armed conflict. In the various surveys that I carried out with women victims of the armed conflict here in Colombia, I found that the forms of domestic violence are cruel and destructive of their lives and their bodies, and these expressions of violence similarly happen in places where there is no armed conflict. In those same surveys, I found that the State is negligent, silent and also responsible for the violation of women's human rights. And, on the other hand, many women who are victims of gender-based violence throughout their lives and who have also been victims of violence in a context of armed conflict, find the strength of struggle, indignation and resistance once they unite to fight for their rights.

Finally, “neither war that kills us nor peace that oppresses us” is the motto and the struggle of women victims of the armed conflict in Colombia. It is a claim for the recognition of the fact that the country's political peace is a necessary condition, but insufficient to guarantee peace for women. A peace with social justice, with the elimination of social inequalities, a peace that is built on full land and crops reparations, especially to the plundered rural population, built on the return of the ancestral territories of enslaved peoples, built on reparation for those women who were exiled, who they were forcibly displaced and now live in the city, between borders, neither rural nor urban, but who need to survive each day in a dignified manner.

For the third and last point of my speech, I would like to consider the importance of not abandoning women in their struggles and of rejecting prejudices that measure women on our terms, especially when it comes to deciding who is a feminist and who is not. I met women who reproduce the traditional discourse of the family, of gender roles, but who daily seek - in the encounter with other women – to create a collective force that truly emanates

from their awareness-building process. Women who did not find the answer to their needs in the concept of feminism, but who day after day seek autonomy, freedom and a life without violence for themselves and for the women with whom they live.

According to Francesca Gargallo (2006), women, who had started from scientific, historical and philosophical knowledge and then excluded from it, managed to slowly recover their knowledges and to take their experiences as references. In this new epistemology, the subject is central, she knows the world and she is situated.

I want to consider the importance of not abandoning Marxism as a social theory that has the potential to make a radical critique of capitalism, a system that defeats us every day. And this, even more if we are women, and even more if we are women of the working-classes, women migrants, women of African descent, women whose ancestors were enslaved and whose bodies are still seen as a territory of conquest and pleasure.

In the words of Atilio Borón (2008), the word capitalism was “carefully retrieved with the obvious purpose of reinforcing the naturalization of this mode of production [...] the process of capitalist development and its struggles, spoils and plundering, all of which make capitalist development reach the world oozing blood and clay through all of its pores, are then sublimated and decontextualized until capitalist development reaches each of the social formations of the planet.”

Conceição Evaristo, an important voice in Afro-Brazilian literature, announced in her poem *Vozes de Mulheres*:

My great-grandmother's voice echoed as a child in the hold of the ship.
echoed wails of a lost childhood.
My grandmother's voice echoed obedience to the white people who owned everything.
My mother's voice echoed softly revolt in the depths of other people's kitchens
under the bundles of dirty white clothes on the dusty road to the favela
My voice still echoes perplexed verses with rhymes of blood and hunger
My daughter's voice picks up all of our voices
it collects in itself the silent silent voices choked in the throats
My daughter's voice takes in speech and action. Yesterday - today - now.
In my daughter's voice, the resonance will be heard. The echo of life-freedom.

This is the feminism I believe in. A Marxist feminism that carries out the radical critique of this system of domination and exploitation in which we live. A feminism that recognizes that more than themes of identity, we are faced with concrete facts that oppress us and violate our human rights, which extinguish our possibility to live. But without a doubt, a feminism that uses all the voices, trajectories and experiences of violence, which are felt in a unique way in each body, and elaborated in each thought in the way that is possible.

I share my point of view as a teacher and researcher of femicides, of the current nature of patriarchy, of the permanence of conjugal violence who does not want to lose the dimension of a system that oppresses and kills, nor to lose the utopia of the voice that will echo life and freedom.

Annelise: (pause, technical problem). Many thanks, Izabel, for your presentation and I would like to suggest that we pass on to Elaine's presentation and then we finalize this block with another discussion, as we had done it the first time. Elaine, are you there?

Presenting: Elaine Santos

Elaine: Hello, can everyone hear me? I want to apologize first of all for the delay, I had an unforeseen event and couldn't make it on time. But I followed the end of the discussions and thank Annelise and the University of Lausanne very much for the invitation. I think everyone is a little tired, but I have a debate that is not necessarily focused on feminism, it is rather part of a thesis that I wrote and defended last year. I will also talk a little bit about how I used the Marxist Theory of Dependence, not only Vânia Bambirra who is finally honored in this great event, but how I used other authors of MDT to understand Latin America and the role of classes in Latin America. I called this presentation "Insidious colonialism and oil extractivism" in Ecuador. In this case, it is also a provocation to talk about colonialism and the colonial question in a manner that moves me a little away from postcolonial theories and decoloniality. I will explain why. In my thesis, and here I am going to summarize a lot, because it is more than 500 pages, I have 20 minutes here, but the central idea is an interdisciplinary reading of extractivism in Latin America which is a very founding element if we think of the extraction of everything in Latin America, even ideas, culture and everything else. So, I try to maintain this theoretical clarity to think about the exploitation of the territory

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and the very erosion of the social fabric. Then, I get into the thesis, the idea of violence, of pollution, of the extraction of tourism, and all of this as a commodity as well. In this case, I analyzed Ecuador, but the basic theory is also Brazilian, so I tried to extend and see if what I had as a basis in Brazil could be used in other Latin American countries, thus, if we had, in fact, a theoretical similarity. So, it is a research that started in 2007 in reality, and it appears as an umbrella of a great theory that is the Marxist Theory of Dependence, until it enters the discussions about progressivism in the case of Ecuador. This country, in my opinion at that moment, seemed the most radical country of political change, but then I understood that in fact, it was not quite like what I thought.

So, to understand the particularities of Latin America is not a simple task, it demands a very deep research work, and to rescue this history is also to rescue a constantly erased memory. So, what I tried to do was also to recompose a humanity that is taken away from us until today. It is a socially referenced research, but it is also an individual research, because being a black and peripheral woman, I wanted to understand what was the role of Brazil and of my condition in Brazil and in Latin America. Thinking here a little about what the Argentinian Fernando Mires (1988) said, colonial society is cataclysmic since the colonial period, so it promotes collusions all the time. And this appears in my work and it appeared in the Ecuadorian reality as well. And then, this allows us to move away from the ideas that the peoples and the ethnic groups all lived harmoniously until the colonizers arrived, so I am going away from that. I started to understand our struggles as an intertwined composition. With the topics of gender, colonization, looking at how the Marxist historiography produced in Latin America understood these issues. And then, I avoided, for an obvious reason, because we can't romanticize struggles, as professor Angélica herself has already commented, I think that when we think about a feminist fight, Vania Bambirra herself said that she did not want to be a feminist. This is the same for a black woman, we don't want only to be recognized as a black person. We want to be recognized in our complexity. So, it is not a denial of the feminist and racial fight - because I couldn't even do that since I am a woman and I am also black - but it is to understand the complexity. And this, said in Brazil, might sound a little repetitive, because the majority of the Brazilian population is black. So, it seems that when we talk about class, we have to talk about race, and it is obvious that we have to talk about it because we are the majority of the population. Class in Brazil is not the same as class in Ecuador, this was very clear. The conflicts are different, the cataclysmic form I mentioned

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shapes this colonial society until today, yet, it is very different from one country to another. At the same time, it has issues that need to be highlighted as well. So, when we get into this fighting for crumbs and start dividing indivisible issues, especially in Latin American countries, we tend to diminish ourselves and what is our central issue. And first of all, we have to look at Latin America understanding that we are not a consequence of European capitalism. That even in the so-called underdevelopment, we continued to develop. So, we have to understand this question as well. I have analyzed, it is important to say that, when I started this research, which is socially referenced and which does not deal primarily with the issue of feminism, although it is there, I could only remember Hebe de Bonafini, who is an Argentinean, who says that "Marxism cannot only be theorized, it needs to be lived." And there, too, I am starting from the reality that I know, Brazilian, peripheral, in which I am the black woman who lives in the periphery. So, I live Marxism from there and it is from there that I position myself, not necessarily from my identity, but from my real condition that determined my standing.

Why did I use MDT in this analysis? If I am speaking too fast, let me know (laughs). Because MDT allowed me to analyze what the role of Latin America has always been. Thus, entering the question of oil, which in Ecuador is a central question, I came to realize that the economy of Ecuador is all based on oil, and you can't analyze a country without analyzing what is central in its economy and how this unfolds, how it shapes social relations. This is why I said that I distanced myself a little from decolonial and post-colonial theories, because these theories by themselves do not answer structural questions. So much so that, when I analyzed Ecuadorian development, a series of names kept appearing as an alternative to change the reality of the country, like the "human", "sustainable", "local", "ecological", "communitarian", "ethno-development", and even the "buen vivir," this last development model keeps appearing, it is very well known and very applied today. And then, I began to understand that all these analyses of development in Latin America were always based on economic development and financial growth within capitalism. So, in fact, I realized that they were just adjectives, they didn't give me the depth to understand all the complexity that Latin America asks for. And then, I used MDT, which is a great contribution to the debate on dependency. I came to configure what Latin America is in the international division of labor, determining what its development means, because we always talk about colonialism, but we have to understand how it has been reconfigured today. That's why I call it *insidious*

colonialism. So, when we think about the relations established in Latin America, we have to think about how they are inside, thus, in terms of accumulation and in a similar sense, how they are also coopted, as for instance when we talked about feminism here in the debate, which I was listening to, or stretching this reflection to the anti-racist struggle itself... Because it is always about inside-accumulation and cooptation as well.

Annelise: Elaine, can you slow down a bit?

Elaine: Oh, okay, sorry. So, then I used the MDT and not another one, exactly because it gave me this support of a complete, holistic view and because I understood that it dealt with Latin America in its structure. Besides that, it also allowed me to look at what was produced in Latin America, so I also moved a little away from the so-called heretical Marxism, which is primarily European, but which arrives in Latin America and tries to adapt what was produced in Europe to our continent. I also started from there. And then, again, to conclude: Latin America has never stopped developing, even within what is called underdeveloped, it has always developed, as much as its contradictions. So, there are no special laws that govern peripheral peoples, we are in constant change, and understanding these complexities is what matters to grasp the condition of underdevelopment.

I chose to study the issue of oil, because it is fundamental, especially since all economic analyses and all development projects in Ecuador have oil as a driving force. This is the analysis that I did, besides the fact that the exportation of primary goods in all of Latin America is also central. Among the conclusions that I could draw, I always emphasize the importance of resuming the critical tradition of the people, of the social classes in these countries. As they say, the Amazonian, peripheral, riverside communities, from what I could perceive, these are groups that are often fantasized, mystified. And this has a purpose, which is not to touch on the central problem, namely dependency and underdevelopment. And these new forms of colonialism, which I called insidious, occur in the realm of social relations as well, which is why I talked about ideologies. So, even within the struggles, which we call anti-racism, human rights, equality, even within the feminist struggle, there is an insidious colonialism that remains and is very visible even in the way that, instead of looking at our reality, we import theories that will explain what we live. It is a mechanical importation even, which many times has no direct relation with our reality. And so, the motivation of this

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research was always to understand what the Latin American sui generis capitalism is and how it works. In this case, I analyzed Ecuador as I said, but in my opinion, it is a theory that can be expanded to other countries and that explains the movement of capital in each country, even in the relations between countries as well. It is not possible to analyze only the relations, only one group, only black people, only indigenous peoples. We need to think further. And, finally, when I was doing this analysis, I've always remembered - since we are talking about Vania Bambirra - a lecture that I attended in which she said that being a social scientist is a very serious thing and that we are always dealing with livelihoods. If we don't make a theoretical effort to reveal what is the essence of a social grievance, we contribute to that same situation, to either remain as it is, or to make peoples' lives worse. I think that's it.

Annelise: Thank you very much, Elaine. I think we would now go, in these last 15, 20 minutes, depending on us, to this general discussion which may also include general remarks, reflections, comments. If not, I would have my own questions as well.

Discussion

Angélica: I have a question.

Annelise: Angelica.

Angélica: No one signed up for the chat, otherwise I can ask them later. I wanted to ask Elaine Santos, who we have the pleasure to see here, how the adoption of MDT was received in her defense panel. Because here in Brazil, for those who do not know, who do not have so much contact with our historiography, we have another hegemonic school that is less Marxist and rather what we call a liberal left, a school that I have been trying to criticize as well, it's what we call the "Paulista School of Sociology." And they, in fact, categorically reject Ruy Mauro Marini, Theotônio dos Santos of this phase, the later Theotônio, the one that argues with World System Theorists, he remained brilliant of course, and Vania herself who remained rather unknown. So, I'm just curious, Elaine, if you can tell me, if someone has criticized you. I am co-supervisor of a research project in the area of Education in Santa Maria, Rio Grande do Sul here in Brazil. And my co-supervisee has been doing research

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based on MDT and it was difficult for him presenting it to his jury. I wanted to ask you this question and congratulate you for being in this challenge to discuss it, because not everything that is buried, declared old-fashioned in a given historiography needs to stay forgotten - be it Brazilian, Latin American or worldly. If it is good, we have to go there and dig it up. I wanted to congratulate you. And to Izabel, I liked very much that you referred to Engels' book because it has to be read, just as we have to read Weber, without being Weberian, and read Engels and Marx, without being Marxists. I think that this is the position of every researcher, which is to know the thought of the one that eventually might become our class adversary or class enemy, as per Vania's reasoning, as I was telling you before. So, I wanted to ask you if, within this theme that you were talking about, you felt at some point, maybe not, maybe that didn't even come up, but I would ask you anyway. Is there any kind of concern in the FARC for women, besides training for the armed struggle, is there a concern for training in terms of theory, in the sense of the formation that a revolutionary ought to have? I know the problems with the FARC, I know that it is not about that, but I thought "since she is here, let me ask her, right?" I think it is important and we know that, in the revolutionary moments of the 60s, this was basic. But I think that even in armed struggles, this was lost, it's just an intuition and from what I can follow from this other sphere. I know all of this opens up another field, a military one, and since you are somewhat involved in this, I thought you could say some words on this. That would be it.

Annelise: Do you prefer to answer now? If not, we could collect just a few more questions and then, we move on to the general answers. Questions, comments to Elaine and to Izabel?

Joana: Can I ask one, Annelise? It is more for Elaine. Of course, you presented a summary of your thesis which is extensive. You said, and I found this to be very interesting, Angélica has already pondered, you said that you worked with MDT and this is not even a consensus among Marxists, I mean, there is a lot of Marxist criticism, questioning if we can even think of a MDT as an independent strand... but this is not my central question to you. I think that we have here in Latin America, Brazil, and in particular, a lot of Marxist training that also originates in this Marxism that you called heretical, which is more commonly referred to as Western Marxism. I think there, there is a whole range of Marxist, Latin American thinkers who also think the development of capitalism a little through this prism. We have indeed

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developed here a capacity to read and to take into consideration, to place the Latin American reality into the center. I think Mariategui was one of those who did this very brilliantly; you can't think about emancipation without thinking about the indigenous issue as well. But then, what I wanted to dialogue with you – and I see this more as a dialogue, because what you briefly presented is a complex work... You say, of course, we created ourselves here, but the MDT itself shows how much our capitalism developed is a dependent capitalism and it is a capitalism dependent on the central capitalism. We are in the periphery and this is how relationship happens. There are many other authors that help us think about this, even if in our societies we may have non-capitalist experiences... we can't separate them from the totality. I don't know if it was clear, I mean, even in societies, in communities where the way of production is not capitalist, it is still inserted in a mode of production that is capitalist.

Annelise: Monise has one more question and then I would also have a question too.

Monise: I had a question for Izabel, it's actually a comment and a question. I loved getting to know your work. Thank you for sharing. I was very curious about the part that you specifically talked about there being collectivities of these groups of women that are affected in this context of violence in which they don't really identify with feminisms as these are presented. Instead, that they develop their actions on behalf of this social group of women, of their communities, in the places where they are. I wanted to know more about this, I really liked this topic because I see a lot of convergence with what I was saying about the churches. I think it is a very big debate, of these communities developing in this way, and of having women who claim and fight for themselves in these places. In my case, that generates many contradictions with biblical readings, but anyway, I think it is always interesting to discuss it through this prism. For us to challenge our gaze, so if you could talk more about this. Thank you.

Annelise: I'm going to take this moment to ask my own question here. I was very reflective about a comment that Monise made, about feminists getting beaten up by everyone, which I agree, I think this is happening. And Izabel brings this scenario from Colombia, a country that in some groups of the Brazilian left serves as a bogeyman of the future. We see Bolsonaro, conservatism, neo-Pentecostalism, more foreign intervention and military cooperation with

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the United States, generalized fragmentation. We will soon become Colombia. I wanted to know, of course beyond the stereotype, but since you have worked with the issue of violence against women in both countries, Brazil and Colombia, I wanted to ask you: first if you think that the analogy is completely stupid, this “becoming Colombia” as the fear of the future is part of a Brazilian ignorance about Latin America, about what happens there, and I also wanted to know, going back to this comment by Monise, I also wanted to know if in this general scenario of weakening of communist circles as well as of feminists themselves: If we turn to Colombia, is there feminist resistance to what might happen? It is a completely hypothetical question, but I thought it would be nice if you talked about your own experiences researching the two countries. And I also wanted to ask Elaine something quick: I remember that Elaine has already talked at other times about the specific politicization and degree of politicization of indigenous movements that she could observe in Ecuador. It's not necessarily to make a comparison, but I remember that Elaine once said: "There is something we could learn, Brazilian indigenous movements could also learn by looking at what happens in the indigenous politicization in Ecuador." If you could talk a little about this question. Any other questions? If not, we'll go on to the answers and close. Izabel, Elaine, whomever prefers to start.

Izabel: Do you want to start, Elaine?

Elaine: I can start, no problem. Thanks for the comments and the questions. Professor Angélica asked how the thesis was received. I have to say that I did my thesis at the University of Coimbra in Portugal and my supervisor was Professor Boaventura de Souza Santos. So, you see the dilemma, right? Because Boaventura de Sousa Santos is completely detached from this critical analysis. However, I did something very hermetically closed off. So, it was very difficult for the panel to criticize the work in a very severe way.

Because besides bringing MDT, I also brought enough empirical data on the reality and the life of workers, one that I happen to know well, not only that of Brazil but also that of Ecuador. So, it is very complicated if you, for example, only look - as professor Boaventura does - at the epistemologies of the South, only the post-colonial questions will emerge, detached from the political-economic question. But as I tied everything together, it was very complicated, even for those who had a series of criticisms, we had to deepen the debate.

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Because they only look at one part, and I tried to look at the whole. I had a lot of criticism, but I was very happy because for me this was a huge challenge. I tried to avoid any theoretical eclecticism, but at the same time to do an analysis that had depth to explain our reality, which I think is what we have to do. That was it. Professor Joana, I don't know if I understood correctly, but I agree that we are in a dependent capitalism, and that MDT is not a consensus among Marxist authors and it is obvious, but MDT tries to get out of this vision that we are dependent in the deterministic sense, right? That we are only dependent on European capitalism, showing that we do have an internal dynamic. In my view, this is what we need to deeply understand. What is this internal dynamic and how does this external... how this dependence occurs, right? I think that is the question, to avoid thinking that we are only dependent, that we only have this capitalism, that we need to get out of it with the help of someone else, that some country pulls us out of this... Annelise asked about the degree of politicization of the indigenous movements. This is something that impressed me a lot because a good share of the indigenous movements in Ecuador, although sometimes they appear as an NGO with an environmentalist vision, in the several internal meetings that I participated, they are much more politicized, often trying to get out of this vision. So, the *buen vivir*, which is very acclaimed in Latin America, in Europe, as the idea of rightful development for the Andean indigenous peoples, many of the indigenous people that I met refused this pachamamical, religious vision. They are thinking much more about the reality, the dynamics of the country, the majorities, much more than about their individual, cultural questions, which are their own as well. When they speak, as a movement, they speak for all, as and to the majority. And one thing that I think the Brazilian indigenous movements, not only them, but also the anti-racist movement, these movements should learn from Ecuadorian indigenous movements, because they are deeply rooted in critical theories, much more than many Brazilian academic theoreticians would be, for example. So, it was something that impressed me a lot. I think that is it.

Izabel: I'll try to answer quickly, without speaking quickly. I want to mention Engels' book on the family and private property, because if there is one thing, there are many explanations for the origin of patriarchy and still no answer where we can say, at what moment, where, why for so many centuries, women have been oppressed. And this is an exercise that Engels does that seems brilliant to me, namely to highlight monogamy which is a value, a custom, a social

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practice of material base which is private property. This seems brilliant to me, it is not necessarily an answer about the control and domination over women, but the methodological, dialectical path that he takes to explain the reproduction of life from the social production seems brilliant to me, so I had to comment on it. In relation to the FARC: the women have a level of political training, the FARC functioned like an army with a very tight hierarchy, but soldiers, guerrillas of the lowest ranks also had some political training. What was the question with women? They were not in the higher ranks. So, for example, there was a lot of discussion about exiting the FARC in a process called “from the rifle into the home,” or referred to as the baby boom, there had already been other experiences, such as in Peru and Central America of women who demobilized and became housewives and got pregnant. But in the conversations and interviews that I read with those who are called Ex-Farianas, they say: “We want access to political participation in this country, we want to have the option of peace and democracy in this country. And not to be at home, going from the rifle to the home.” But then, the FARC had an important contingent of women, less significant than the male one... and the women and men of the FARC have an important claim, they say, “we have not demobilized, we have reincorporated. But we continue to mobilize for peace, for democracy, for social justice.” And then, this level of political discussion of the FARC women is different from the level of the women I talked to, those who are victims of the armed conflict. That is another discussion: why did I consider them to be resistance? Because they met in the middle of the war to talk about peace, because they had more cooperative practices - despite a reigning logic of competition - to look for a job and fight against unemployment. Because they met as women who didn't know each other and only through pain, they were able to make resistance. But the resistance of women victims of armed conflict is not an anti-capitalist, anti-patriarchal resistance. And it is a dilemma because, as a researcher or militant, we start to put it on a scale. “This one is not a feminist, she is not a Marxist, she is not fighting against capitalism, she is looking for a job, she is opening an entrepreneurial project with other women.” I think this to be a sign of a strong tension, because you recognize that there are forms of resistance that are not anti-systemic, which is what Joana was talking about. Yet, they are legitimate and are dependent on structural struggles. Now, there are feminist forces? There is feminist resistance, of course Anne, we could talk about the experience of the Patriotic March of the Congress of Los Pueblos, of many organizations where women are protagonists, there are other models. Will Brazil

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become Colombia? I think it is very difficult. It has, it is first not the present time, the time of the emergence of the guerrillas, we are already in the time of the Peace agreement. Colombia has also a very different geopolitical situation, look at the map of where Colombia is. It is a country that connects Central America with South America, it is a mountainous country, crossed by a mountain range. In the 1960s when the FARC emerged, the isolation of the peasant population, the impoverishment of the peasant population was very important, we did not have roads to access them, which made it possible for the guerrillas to form in the first place. And again, this is not the present time either. I think that the big question, the one that haunts me most, is: What is the historical crossroads that we are living through? Because if we had a left that took up arms, yet it is, in several experiences, in the midst of a process of incorporation...and you also have several other Latin American countries where leftist governments arrived democratically to power, but have ever since lost to the extreme right... How are we going to organize the revolution? And to recall what Angélica was saying: The revolution can be organized. We are simply at a challenging historical crossroads. At the moment where you have neither the successful experience of the guerrillas, taking up arms, nor the successful experience of the governments that arrived democratically in the last twenty years. I think that this is the question that worries me the most.

Annelise: You certainly replied to each question now, so, thank you very much, we have come to the end of this long or short four hours, but it was wonderful, thank you very much. All of this will go to the website, but we will keep in touch as well, and if you have any questions, you can also write to this e-mail address (annelise.erismann@unil.ch) for the people that are here. I can't believe that we are finishing with 27 people, great, thank you Angélica, Joana, Izabel, Elaine, Monise, for your time and availability. That's it, do you want to say anything at the end?

Monise: I would like to thank everyone, it was a great discussion, I learned a lot. I am very happy.

Elaine: Thank you.



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Angélica: I would also like to thank you very much. I hope this will be the first of our meetings to discuss this subject and others.

Joana: Me too, I learned a lot, thank you, and I hope we meet again.

Izabel: Thank you.

Annelise: Bye, everyone.