

Title: The Double-Sided Perspective of Discourses' Impact on Social Inclusion

Thematic: Social innovation for sustainable development with social inclusion;

Authors: Kênia Vieira Schmitt

Maria Letícia Barbosa Xavier

Abstract:

This paper aims to deliberate on the key-role of narratives in relation to social inequality and cultural struggles, particularly focusing on the dichotomy of dominant and subordinate discourses, how to overcome them and in this way, promoting social inclusion. Narratives influence the perceptions one has of a given reality; therefore, they can take upon a segregating role, oppressing minorities; or be used as reconciliatory effort leading to the reintegration of the outcast portions of society. Both of these characteristics of discourse will be addressed in this work and illustrated by case studies.

At first, the correlation of power and language will be examined. The practice of storytelling and the notion of how power distorts the perception of what is real through the usage of dominant narratives will be addressed. These considerations support the analyses of the following sections of the paper in which inequality and social inclusion are more comprehensively contemplated.

The colonization discourse will be presented as the first example of the segregating power that one dominant narrative possesses. The absence of dialogue in-between distinct cultures during the Americas' colonial period demonstrates how language can be use to reinforce the existing differences, which in this example lead to social exclusion of the natives, who the colonisers considered backwards and underdeveloped, subordinated to their own society (Bitterly, 1989: 75-77; Cox, 2000: 218; Todorov: 1984: 75-76).

Thirdly, we present the analysis of a Brazilian case study in which the cultural-social struggle between residents from the rural areas of Brazil, the '*colonos*'¹ and people from the costal areas, the '*city people*', was overturned by Acolhida na Colônia². This Non Government Organization (NGO) utilized dialogue and social innovation to construct a new image of the subsistence farmers' minority, which involved numerous practices including *agrotourism*, the main goal of the organization. Though, dialogue played an important role in reverting the imagery of *colonos*, seen as coy and belated when compared to *city people*; the social innovation the Brazilian NGO employed was the reconstruction of the narrative through emphasising the sustainability embedded in subsistence farmers' way of life (Guzzatti, 2010: 149-151). This academic piece focuses on Acolhida's Waterwheel Project that supports revitalization of antique energy sources and the adoption of energy efficiency strategies decreasing energy consumption towards a more sustainable co-existence of men and the environment (Schmitt, 2010: 43-59). Acolhida showed there is much to be learned about sustainable development in the countryside of Santa Catarina (Brazil). In this way, challenging the concept of modernization in which the city prevails over rural areas, for the first is more developed and modern than the latter.

¹ Tems commonly use to designate people who live in the country areas of Brazil, a clear reference to the European Migrants that settled in those areas.

² Or simply Acolhida.

Social inclusion is analysed within this piece through the visitation of the concept of power applied within discourses, as defended by Foucault (1979: 41). For this author, one of the many forms to exercise dominance is through language. Additionally, the idea of prejudices deriving from dominant narratives (Adichie, 2009; Cohn, 1996: 335), which are exemplified with the aforementioned cases of socio-cultural encounter and subsequent marginalization of a portion of society, sheds some light on the matter. The main argument is that through the adoption of a post-structuralist approach and the deconstruction of the prevailing narrative, one may overcome inequality and promote social inclusion. This occurs because challenging a prevailing view of the society allows alternative perceptions of minorities to rise, narratives that inform of these groups strengths', share their accomplishments thereby socially empowering them to change their own realities.

Resumem:

Este paper tiene por objetivo deliberar sobre la función de las narraciones y su relación con la desigualdad y las luchas sociales y culturales, en particular en la dicotomía de los discursos dominantes y de los dominados, cómo superarlos y de esta manera, promover la inclusión social. Narrativas influyen en las percepciones que se tienen de una realidad, por lo tanto, pueden asumir un papel segregador, oprimir a las minorías, o ser utilizado como un esfuerzo de reconciliación que conduce a la reintegración de los grupos de la sociedad. Ambas características del discurso se abordarán en este trabajo y se ilustran con estudios de casos.

En un primero momento, se examinará la correlación de fuerzas y lenguaje. La práctica de la narración y la noción de cómo el poder distorsiona la percepción de lo real a través del uso de las narrativas dominantes. Lo que apoyan los análisis de las siguientes secciones del paper en el que las temáticas de la desigualdad y la inclusión social se contemplaran más exhaustivamente.

El discurso colonización será presentado como el primer ejemplo de la potencia de la segregación que una narrativa dominante posee. La ausencia de un diálogo entre las distintas culturas durante el periodo colonial de las Américas demuestra cómo el lenguaje se puede utilizar para reforzar las diferencias existentes, en ejemplo la exclusión social de los nativos, que los colonizadores consideraron retrasados y subdesarrollados, subordinados a su propia sociedad (Bitterly, 1989: 75-77; Cox, 2000: 218; Todorov: 1984: 75-76).

En tercer lugar, se presenta el análisis de un estudio de caso de Brasil en que la lucha cultural-social entre los residentes de las zonas rurales de Brasil, los 'colonos' y la gente de las zonas costeras, la "gente de la ciudad", fue revocada por Acolhida na Colônia. Esta Organización no Gubernamental (ONG) utiliza el diálogo y la innovación social para la construcción de una nueva imagen de los pequeños agricultores, de subsistencia, que implicó en numerosas prácticas que incluyen el *agroturismo*, el objetivo principal de la organización. Aunque, el diálogo tuvo un papel importante en revertir la imagen de colonos, visto como tímida y tardía en comparación con gente de la ciudad; la innovación social de la ONG brasileña empleada fue la reconstrucción de la narrativa por medio de énfasis en la manera de sostenibilidad existente en la vida de los pequeños agricultores (Guzzatti, 2010: 149-151). Este estudio académico se centra en Proyecto "Roda D'Água" que apoya la

revitalización de las fuentes de energía de los antiguos y la adopción de estrategias de eficiencia energética que disminuyen el consumo de energía hacia una convivencia más sostenible de los hombres y el medio ambiente (Schmitt, 2010: 43-59). Acolhida mostró que hay mucho que aprender sobre el desarrollo sostenible en el campo de Santa Catarina (Brasil). De esta manera, desafiando el concepto de modernización en el que la ciudad prevalece sobre las zonas rurales, para el primero es más desarrollada y moderna que el segundo.

La inclusión social se analiza dentro de este paper, desde de la observación del concepto de poder aplicado en los discursos, defendido por Foucault (1979: 41). Para este autor, una de las muchas formas de ejercer la dominación es a través del lenguaje. Además, la idea de los prejuicios que se derivan de las narrativas dominantes (Adichie, 2009; Cohn, 1996: 335), que se ejemplifica con los casos antes mencionados de encuentro socio-cultural y la posterior marginalización de una parte de la sociedad, clarea el asunto. El principal argumento es que a través de la opción de un enfoque postestructuralista y la deconstrucción de la narrativa dominante, uno puede superar la desigualdad y promover la inclusión social. Esto se debe a que impugna una opinión predominante de la sociedad permite percepciones alternativas de las minorías a elevarse, narraciones que informan de estos grupos de fortalezas, compartir sus logros con ello socialmente dándoles el poder de cambiar sus propias realidades.

Introduction

Storytelling dates further back than the first civilizations as it can be traced to cave painting, and men back then were not considered part of a civilization. Although this ancient practise changed through the years and aggregated different socio-cultural elements according to the place, the public its directed to, and the purpose of the communication; the essence of this action: reporting one's view of a given episode to someone else, remains the same. The following aims to deliberate on the key-role of narratives in relation to cultural struggles and, as a consequence, the relevance they have on social inclusion, focusing particularly on the dichotomy of dominant and subordinate discourses. Consequently, the effect narratives have on interaction and perceptions of a given reality by culturally distinct groups, what may lead either to conflict or to reconciliation, will also be discussed.

The presented argument originated in Foucault's idea of power applied to discourses (Foucault, 1979: 41), in this light opposing case studies will be compared. Firstly, we will discuss the connection between knowledge, power and language elucidating the main approaches on these subjects. Secondly, we will investigate the absence of dialogue in-between distinct cultures during the colonial period, in which language was a barrier used to reinforce the existing differences essentially leading to cultural struggle (Cox, 2000: 218; Todorov: 76). Thirdly, we will present the case study of Acolhida na Colônia, whereupon the deconstruction of the authoritarian discourse created a space of conjoint development for communities: the city and countryside of Santa Catarina (Brazil) (Guzzatti, 2010: 123-127; Schmitt, 2010: 42-45), Furthermore, Postcolonial Theory, Post-Modernism and Post-Structuralism will be examined as possible alternatives for conflict reconciliation and social inclusion.

Language and Power:

People are exposed to a variety of narratives every single day. Their subjects are diverse: from the natural disaster that devastated that faraway place you have never even heard about before; the newest conflict area in another continent; someone's inspirational life – who you have never personally met, and possibly never will – that helped others to overcome poverty, hunger or any other chronic crisis; to the curious and sometimes bizarre cultural habits such as rituals of passage, milestone of coming

of age in certain countries. These stories share at least one common element: they all are delivered to spectators, readers and listeners as the truth – not one component of the truth, but the only, single truth about a given occurrence.

The lack of counter-proposals or complementary reports of a specific event, leads to the construction of fragile ideas around each and any subject – the ‘poor’ people in Africa and the ‘savages’ in the heart of Amazon Rainforest could be mentioned to name a few of these misguided assumptions. At times, these constructed views of the world are so dominant, that there is virtually no discussion space available to consider alternative explanations for the occurrence (Adichie, 2009). Adichie warns about the threat of dominant discourses – or as she labels it: the ‘single story’ – they may create or accentuate cultural, social and information gaps in-between culturally diverse groups (nationalities, ethnicities, civilizations). The imposition of authority through the subduing of the ‘others’ – by silencing their voice – as observed in colonial times, she says, is still a current hazard as some societies, countries and civilizations adopt the modernisation discourse. In this scenario, the dominant group, perceived as ‘modern’ and ‘advanced’ takes upon the role of ‘educating’ the different to their superior customs and values (Cox, 2000: 218), which serves to social marginalise the subordinate fractions of society.

Consequently, this ‘single truth’, serves to reinforce a minimalistic picture of reality that prevents people to see the broader horizon: historical or political reasons, cultural beliefs, baggage and traditions that lead to a particular scenario. This version of supreme ‘truth’ disregards Hegel’s idea of subjectivity and instigates prejudice, because as Gaarder promptly explains: “All knowledge is human knowledge” (1996: 300). Which means, any transference of information among people is embedded with the interlocutor’s cultural interpretations of the world, as well as his or her past experiences.

The Hegelian notion of truth is also shared by Foucault, in his work the author supports that “If there is a geography of truth, it is that of sites where it resides (not only places where one stands the better to observe it)” (Flynn, 2005: 79). In fact, the French philosopher’s main works focus on the interrelations among power, knowledge and truth (or language). For him, the acceptance that power that lies

beyond its enforcement, it permeates human interactions, leading to the production of things, knowledge and narratives is the bond which links these three topics (Foucault, 1979: 8). As a result, power itself cannot be thought of if not in a context of circuit – it belongs to no-one – nonetheless, it can be exercised through power relations, in many forms, one of them being discourse. The act of empowering someone or some group, therefore, essentially lies in the search for balance within a power circuit. Neutralizing the dominant narrative would, in this sense, open room for social inclusion of the empowered subjects.

Foucault's deliberations resulted in many labels attributed to him, but mostly scholars consider him a post-modernist and post-structuralist, using those terms almost interchangeably (Bhabha, 2005: 60; Flynn, 1994: 28-46; Santos Junior and Elias: 2011: 1-13). These denominations are not mutually-exclusive: Post-structuralism's main focus is language and how it influences the marginalization of certain groups (Cohn, 1996: 335; Flynn, 2005: X), Post-modernism, on the other hand, concentrates on condemnation of traditional social approaches for instigating exclusion. Rather than focusing on their differentiation we will elaborate briefly on the important feature they share: both these theories as well as Post-colonialism – whose main concern is understanding of other cultures and giving voice to the excluded (Said, 2000: 380) – are primarily concerned with social segregation (Linklater, 1998: 110). Therefore, when addressing exclusion, scholars will find themselves split amidst these terms.

With these notions of relative truth and socio-culturally constructed knowledge in mind; along with the understanding surrounding the influence that narratives can have on reinforcing a particular view of the world; the discussion of how discourse can affect a cultural struggle may now be examined. In what follows, the distinct usages of language will be associated to International Relations theory, elucidating how they impact on the practice of storytelling. Subsequently, they will be linked to the case studies, initially the Colonial Period will be looked upon to illustrate the negative usage of narratives, where power of the dominant narrative ultimately leads to conflict; by contrast, the Brazilian example of the local branch of *Accueil Paysan* – a Non Government Organisation in the agricultural area – will demonstrate an alternative to deal with the 'single truth': empowering the oppressed voices.

The Absence of Discourse

Narratives can have, as suggested by Cohn (1996: 335) and Manguel (2010: 49), a dividing role in society. Commonly, they influence people towards accommodation to realities imposed to them, instead of urging for the construction of bridges in-between cultures, and in this way spiking exclusion. This notion of conformism suggests there is more to the issue of social segregation than merely the existence of a dominating narrative, as pointed by Foucault, Hegel and Adichie. It is in the same measure related to the 'politics of denial' – defined as “the complex bad faith of people trying to look innocent by not noticing” (Cohen, 2001: XII). We are in no way rejecting the existence of dominant discourse, or disregarding the onus it causes while instigating socio-cultural struggles, but simply stating that the authority of a prevailing narrative is reinforced by people's conduct in denying the occurrence of marginalization.

It is important to note that this phenomenon is not limited to one period or society, “all social systems are constructed from the complex webs of inclusion and exclusion” (Linklater, 1998: 114), the practice of power relations described earlier, dates back to the first encounters among distinct civilizations. This piece will focus on the works of academics that commit themselves to the understanding of colonial conflicts among Europeans and the colonies, the American continent in particular.

The discovery of the Americas is a classical example of cultural interaction with devastating consequences. Evidently, tension is to be expected when different cultures interact, for as Cox explains, “as civilizations encounter one another and as peoples migrate, meanings mingle and are discordant” (2000: 220). Adjustment to distinct values does not come without some kind of confrontation. The case of America is, nonetheless, somewhat peculiar. At first, the natives were mesmerized by the Spaniards, who they thought were the personifications of Gods, therefore, aiming to please them. Nevertheless, when the colonizers' postures revealed recurrent greed, and suspicion surfaced in their relations, resulting in conflict (Bitterly, 1989: 72-75).

At this point the values of the natives, or '*indians*' as they are popularly known in Latin America, became an issue. Not only they did not recognize the European

economic significance of gold and for that reason were not concerned about its whereabouts and extraction – which clashed with the importance attributed to the metal by the Europeans; the *indians* also had distinct living habits – which impacted on not being used or willing to endure long journeys to serve the Spanish’ purposes and for that reason being labelled slothful (Todorov, 1984: 63-123). Their differences grew deeper, as the subduing of native communities and violent attitudes towards them, such as the destruction of temples and killing of ‘rebels’, increased. From then on, the civilizational and modernisation speech – in which alleged superiority of a culture over others aligns with the presumptuous responsibility of imposing superior values to the different (Senghass, 2002:80) – largely used by Europeans as an excuse for the conquest, became more severe. Ultimately leading to decimation of an entire civilization: culture, people and most evidence relating to its existence.

The consequences of Spaniards’ actions are not merely a product of a historical context such as the progressive liberal thought or enriching thy nation. Above that, they are also a result of the absence of dialogue among two distinct societies: Americans and Europeans. Two key lessons can be subtracted from this episode: when the only objective of a culture is submitted others to one’s way of life and world perspective, conflict is expected to be a likely outcome. Likewise, when there is fundamentally no effort of understanding ‘the other’, including his values, traditions and history a similar scenario is anticipated. The next topic will address the importance of the creation of a space where cultural interaction can occur, exploring the constructive side of narratives, an alternative to avoid cultural conflicts, enabling social inclusion.

The Positive Use of Discourse

From the perspective of the traditional conservative International Relations’ theories – Classical Realism, Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberalism – discourse tends to take the shape of the dominant (culture, nation, civilization). All of these theoretical streams are concern with gain and domination. Social inclusion does not fit in their scope. It can only be thought of in a theoretical framework that acknowledges the existence of marginalization systems, allows and aims for the issue of belonging to be studied and put in practice.

These ideals are not limited to a single theory; they consider everything that emanates from the social sciences, whose main concern is how to solve power-derived discrepancies (Linklater, 1998: 115). Notions surrounding the necessity of a significant change of social paradigms are permeable, although, some key elements are differentiators among them, as previously shown. Reiterating the main ideas of these social inclusive theories: Postmodernism reflects and criticizes the modes of social exclusion – which extends from Marxism to the critical theories; Post-colonialism is about voicing the histories of the oppressed – Feminism and Orientalism are some of its streams; finally, Post-structuralism analyses the usage of discourse's as a mean have of exclusion.

The dichotomy of inclusion/exclusion might be explored in different ways when looked upon from these perspectives. Although slightly differentiating from one another, all of them believe on the positive use of discourse and the creation of spaces of cultural interaction as an answer to the challenge posed by the single-story. This reasoning is rooted in Foucault's aforementioned correlation of power, knowledge and narratives, is restated by Linklater, which argues "expanding the realm of dialogic commitments is regarded as necessitating measures to reduce or eradicate the asymmetries of power and wealth which exist within sovereign states and in the global economic and political system" (1998: 109).

After considering the connection between language and power; investigating the negative use of discourse – in the form of absence of cultural dialogues; and acknowledging the importance of communication to reverse the paradigm of marginalization, the example of Acolhida na Colônia will recapitulate the main thoughts presented and reinforce the primordial role of narratives on preventing conflicts and generating inclusion.

Case Study: Acolhida na Colônia (Accueil Paysan – Brazil)

To illustrate the positive use of discourse, and its impact on reverting a system of exclusion, we focus on the work on a Brazilian Environmental NGO – Acolhida na Colônia. The key-goal of the organization, which consists in the practice of

agrotourism in the countryside of Santa Catarina's state, will not be comprehensively explored in this piece. The case study presented here will concentrate on a specific project developed by Acolhida – the Waterwheel Project³ – and how it socially and culturally affected the city/country relationship and ultimately empowered the marginalized group of small family-agriculturalists⁴.

Elucidating the term 'culture', as applied in this essay, is an essential first step in understanding this case study. Culture, as employed in this paper is not an interchangeable term with civilization, for it refers to values shared within a narrower group. As Cox argues: "Culture is a composite of practices and norms that are mutually coherent" (2000: 223). His insight allows the conception of adjustment and cultural changes towards balance, a decisive idea to speak of social inclusion.

The city/countryside relation in Santa Catarina (Brazil) aggregates the two modes of exclusion delineated by Marx's: horizontal exclusion – that takes place within members of the same society; and vertical exclusion – referent to how that society interact (or not) with outsiders (Linklater, 1998: 115). The dual system of segregation in this instance, firstly refers to the supremacy of the city over the countryside of Brazil – the ruling of its people, prosperity of its economy and concentration of the means of production, what Marx would call horizontal exclusion. Secondly, the matter of closed societies – or vertical exclusion – nonetheless, can also be applied, particularly for this region of Brazil, due to the format of colonization seen in that region.

In a brief summary, the Portuguese strategy behind the colonization of Brazil was to protect the coastal areas; mainly by assuring they were densely populated. As they were trying to discourage settlements from other European countries that were likely to have taken portions of the colonial territory for their own use, Portugal even created bureaucratic barriers such as laws and authorizations to diminish in-land migration (Holanda, 2007: 100 -101). It was not against the law to live in remote areas of Brazil back then, but establishments were to be far apart from each other.

³ In short, Waterwheel.

⁴ Small farmers, whose subsistence resides on the family business of agriculture – '*Agricultores familiares*'.

Despite the Portuguese efforts to protect their domains, several countries were known to have settled in Brazilian regions during colonial and imperial periods - the Dutch (established in Recife, Northeast of Brazil, from 1630 until 1654) and the French (in at least two separate episodes: 1504 in the region that is now known as the coast of Santa Catarina; and in 1548 in the present Rio de Janeiro state a resistance that extended 1567), to name a few. All of these foreign explorers were, invariably expelled by the Portuguese⁵ (Bueno, 2004: 72-99; Vicentino and Dorigo, 2006: 143-165).

Contrastingly, by the end of the XIX century and beginning of the XX, the Monarchy⁶ financially encouraged European migration to the Brazilian soil. Italians, Germans, Polish, among others nationalities and ethnicities were required as labour force as a result of the slavery related laws approved throughout the second half of the XIX century which culminated in abolition in 1888. These immigrants were mainly located in the South and Southeast regions of the nation, particularly in rural areas to work in coffee farms owned by the Brazilian/Portuguese elite. Besides the need for cheap labour force to assure economic growth; the government sought to guarantee the internalization of the population, protecting its land from possible invasions – such as the rivalry of Spanish people in surrounding countries – and rebellious natives, who tended to vandalise and ravage Portuguese development projects in those areas. Accordingly, the countryside of Brazil was associated to physical labour, while ‘the city’, was where ‘intellectual work’ destined for elites was developed. These historical roots contribute to the idea of the inner parts of the nation as out-dated and underdeveloped (Abramovay apud Xavier, 2013: 81; Bueno, 2004: 264- 272; Guzzatti, 2010: 100; Holanda, 2007: 81-82; Jochem, 1992: 19-21; Seyferth, 2002: 118-119).

Cultural discrepancies among the Portuguese and the immigrants, not only focus the ethnicities, but also their socio-economical conditions (Seyferth, 2002: 144-145; Schmitt, 2010: 44). Alike what happened between the Spaniards and the Indians the

⁵ Which in some cases, as in the Dutch settlement came at dear cost to the local population, not only in terms of lives lost battling the Portuguese, but also the chance of development (Bueno, 2004: 98-99).

⁶ Which since 1822 was ‘Brazilian’, for the country gained independence from Portugal, nonetheless, it became a Monarchy ruled by the offspring of the Portuguese king that lasted until 1889 (Bueno, 2004: 168-169).

Portuguese diminished the foreigners for their lack of fluency for their language and mocked their daily habits. Furthermore, the Portuguese/Brazilian elite recognized their own superiority over migrants, submitting the newcomers to their so-called ‘*advances*’, imposing Portuguese culture and way of life. Even though these were fellow Europeans, competitiveness among nations, together with disdain for divergent values assured a continuation of the civilizational discourse.

The constant disregard for the “others” – both natives and immigrants – lead to several rebellions in the south of Brazil – Farroupiha Revolution (1835-1845), Federalist Revolution (1893-1895) Contestado War (1912-1916) to name a few – which are beyond the scope of this essay, but no less illustrate cultural struggles that caused by social marginalisation. This tension among clashing cultures, justifies Marx’s vertical exclusion: as a general rule, no outsiders were permitted in society – the immigrants where sent further into the countryside while the Brazilian/Portuguese remained on the shoreline, those few who venture to stay on the main settlements were marginalized and mistreated.

Marx’s segregation types in this case can be summarized by: horizontal referring to different roles played by the city and the country regardless if the internal settlement was founded by Portuguese or the immigrants; and vertical designating the excluding paradigm caused by immigration. Acolhida na Colonia’s the Brazilian branch of the French association Accueil Paysan was founded in 1999, to address both of these issues. The franchise proposes the development of *agrotourism* in rural region of Santa Catarina state (one of the three Brazilian states that composes the South Region) as a manner to deconstruct the historical perception of the countryside as belated (Acolhida na Colônia, 2013).

Agrotourism is an innovative, ethical, communitarian form of tourism that aims to empower the rural population. Firstly, by stimulating the interaction between country and city people – since this niche of tourism offers the chance of cultural exchange once the city tourist is placed on the family-agriculture’s property. Furthermore, it includes the local population on the economic gains generated by tourism, not limited to a single entrepreneur. And finally, this type of tourism involves tourists in the activities developed on the territory they are visiting, creating or intensifying

connections with the land and flowering in the locals a sense of pride and identity with the place they inhabit. The projects and actions related to this approach are carried in observance of the sustainable principles, addressing environmental, socio-economical, and cultural questions as a way to promote equality (Guzzatti, 2010: 69; Martin, 2002: 18; Schmitt, 2010: 42-43).

If cultural struggle is a result of both political awareness and political mobilization as proposed by Senghass (2002: 87-88) and seen on the analysis of America's colonization mentioned in an earlier section of this paper, then the construction of a shared political conscience – among the opposite sides – is the first step to overcome both the conflict and the social marginalisation deriving from it. Acolhida took upon the inclusive role of stimulating the rise of this shared conscience. It concentrated its efforts on solidifying a liable and positive bound between the city and the country, transposing the barriers of culture and prejudice historically constructed.

The NGO's focus on the positive characteristics of the rural environment – the close connection with nature, quietude, distinct culinary practices, good-nature of its people; the organisation presented an alternative view of the oppressed countryside of Santa Catarina while assuring not to reinforce the victimised role commonly associated to oppressed layers of society. Instead, Acolhida focussed on strengthening a constructive relation between city and country based upon cultural exchange among these groups, through dialogue and interaction. In this sense, the NGO shares Bleiker's (1997: 57-85) Cohn's, (1996: 327-339) and Linkater's (1998: 117-118) concerns' regarding the depth of a socio-cultural change. In order for this change to be considered as a long-term solution, the transformations need to go beyond socio-economical features and reach the moral system, deconstructing old beliefs to accommodate new patterns of cultural discourse.

Apart from its noble goal of empowering sustainable-small-farmers and, in this way, taking action to end social exclusion, one of Acolhida's projects deserves special attention for its interesting way of confronting the modernization discourse. The Water-Wheel Project proposes a pioneer solution for the Energy Crisis at the same time that deconstructs the dominant notion of cities' technologies being better than the ones employed on rural areas.

Energy is a major indicator of marginalization; still, despite the significant impact it has on development “two billion people currently go without, condemning them to remain in the poverty trap. We need to make clean energy supplies accessible and affordable. We need to increase the use of renewable energy sources and improve energy efficiency” (WEC, 2007: V). The deliberation and warning given by former Secretary-General of United Nations, Kofi Annan, represents the weight of the matter. When compared to other states of the world Brazil shows great usage of renewable resources (Schmitt, 2010: 32-34), nevertheless, the country has witnessed recent struggles on energy distribution.

Aligning environmental concerns to the opportunity of changing the socio-economic paradigm of modernization that still prevails on the relation amid the coastline and the rural areas of Santa Catarina, the Waterwheel Project encourages the implementation of antique energy mechanisms and the adoption of energy efficiency strategies to reduce energy consumption and environmental impacts of its associates – the sustainable-small-farmers of Acolhida na Colonia (Schmitt, 2010: 43-59). The new perspective the association adopted in addressing the energy crisis by proposing the re-installation of what was seen as out-dated energy devices constitutes in a socio-cultural innovation that defies the modernisation paradigm.

During colonization of the interior of Brazil, the use of cisterns to store rainwater, *serpentin*⁷ to heat water, wooden stoves, animal traction and waterwheels to generate energy, were common practices on those areas. Notwithstanding, these environmental-friendly patterns nearly vanished once the ‘civilizing speech’ convinced the immigrants that technologies from the city were better than the traditional country way. These new technologies implicate in less effort and employed less time from the users in order to get the work done (Schmitt, 2010: 44).

The Waterwheel Project is, then, an invitation for deliberation: first for it prevents cultural loss, it embraces values and perpetuates traditional practices from the rural areas of Santa Catarina; but most importantly, it challenges the contemporary notion

⁷ Twisted metal pipes connected to the wooden stoves that allowed water heating.

of progress. In the age of environmental concerns, what was considered obsolete now appears as a viable and desirable solution to a global energy/sustainability crises. In this sense, the Project can be named the power relation change as pursued by Foucault: it is not telling a ‘new story’ – or developing a new dominant narrative – or even revisiting an ‘old story’ from a new perspective; the power balance is achieved through the construction of dialogues that challenge social, cultural and economic hegemonies; In this way, narratives can solve and prevent conflict and social exclusion.

Conclusion:

We have argued narratives critically influence the shaping of cultural conflicts and social exclusion. Firstly and more commonly, they may accentuate imminent cultural encounters or even collaborate for their insurgency, on the condition that they assume the form of one supreme truth and attempt to overpower distinct social groups. Foremost, discourse may also serve as a facilitator in ending these struggles, when looked upon in an inclusive perspective, allowing cultural diversity to manifest and defying the paradigm of the single-truth.

The former was illustrated by the examples of the conquest of America and the brief analysis of the colonization of Santa Catarina state in Brazil, whereupon dominant narratives operated as mechanisms of exclusion, deepening cultural gaps and marginalization of weaker ethnic groups. The latter was clarified by the Case Study of the Brazilian NGO, Acolhida na Colônia and specifically its Waterwheel Project; both validated the positive use of discourse, as a means to reach the cultural balance mentioned by Cox, impacting conflict prevention and reconciliation through the establishment of dialogue among distinct cultures as proposed by Linklater.

In short, the importance of narratives while analysing conflict is justified because they are both a problem and solution: the issue caused by language constraints, may be solved when voicing the other side of a story becomes a priority and cultural interaction a reality. That, however, can only be done when people accept the existence of exclusion systems in contemporary societies and challenge the politics of denial.

Bibliography:

- Acolhida na Colônia. 2013. *Sobre Nós*. Accessed: 19 May 2013. Available at: <http://www.acolhida.com.br>.
- Adichie, Chimamanda. 2009. *The Danger of a Single Story*. Accessed: 13 May 2013. Available at: http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story.
- Bhabha, Homi K. 2005. *O Local da Cultura*. Belo Horizonte: EDUFMG
- Bitterly, Urs. 1989. 'Cultural Collision: the Spaniards in Hispaniola'. In *Cultures in Conflict: Encounters Between European and Non-European Cultures*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bleiker, Roland. 1997. 'Forget IR Theory'. *Alternatives* 22(1): 57-85.
- Bueno, Eduardo. 2004. *Brasil: Uma História, a Incrível Saga de um País*. São Paulo: Editora Ática.
- Cohen, Stanley. 2001. 'Preface'. In *States of Denial: Knowing about atrocities and Suffering*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Cohn, Carol. 1996. 'Sex and Death in the Rational World of Defense Intellectuals'. In *Classics of International Relations*. ed. J. Vasquez. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Cox, Robert. 2000. Thinking about civilisations. In *Review of International Studies*. 26(5): 217–234.
- Flynn, Thomas. 1994. Foucault's Mapping of History. In *The Cambridge Companion To Foucault*. Ed: G. Gutting. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Flynn, Thomas. 2005. The Career of the Historical Event. In *Sartre, Foucault and The Historical Reason*. V.2. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Foucault, Michel. 1979. 'Verdade e Poder' and 'Os Intelectuais e o Poder'. In *A Microfísica do Poder*. Ed: R. Machado. Rio de Janeiro: Edições Graal.
- Gaarder, Jostein. 1996. *Sophie's World: A Novel About the History of Philosophy*. New York: Berkley.
- Guzzatti, Thaise Costa. 2010. 'O Agroturismo Como Elemento Dinamizador Na Construção De Territórios Rurais: O Caso Da Associação De Agroturismo Acolhida Na Colônia Em Santa Rosa De Lima (SC)'. *PhD thesis*. Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina.
- Holanda, Sérgio Buarque de. 2007. *Raízes do Brasil*. 26th ed. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.

- Jochem, Toni Vidal. 1992. *Pouso dos Imigrantes*. Florianópolis: Papa- Livro.
- Linklater, A. 1998. 'The Modes of Exclusion and the Boundaries of Community'. In *The Transformation of Political Community*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Manguel, Alberto. 2009. How Pinocchio Learn to Read. In *À mesa com o Chapeleiro Maluco: ensaios sobre corvos e escrivainhas*. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras.
- Martin, Boris (Coord.). 2002. *Voyage Autrement: vers un tourisme responsable et solidaire*. Paris: Charles Léopold Mayer.
- Said, E. 2001. 'The Politics of Knowledge'. In *Reflections on Exile*. London: Granta.
- Santos Junior, Roberto Lopes dos; and Elias, Aluf Alba. 'A Filosofia de Michel Foucault e Sua Apropriação Pela Disciplina Arquivística Contemporânea'. Paper presented at the *II Reunião Brasileira de Ensino e Pesquisa em Arqueologia*, Rio de Janeiro.
- Schmitt, Kenia Vieira. 2010. 'Projeto Roda D'água: Uma Alternative Sustentável'. *Internship Report*. Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina.
- Senghaas, D. 2002. 'The Realities of Cultural Struggles'. In: *Clash withing Civilizations: Coming to terms with cultural conflict*. London: Routledge.
- Seyferth, Giralda. 2002. 'Colonização, Imigração e a Questão Racial no Brasil'. *Revista USP* 53: 117-149.
- Todorov, Z. 1984. 'Montezuma & Signs' and 'Cortés and Signs.' In *The Conquest of America*. New York: Harper Row.
- Vicentino, Cláudio; Dorigo, Gianpaolo. 2006. *História Para o Ensino Médio: História Geral e do Brasil*. São Paulo: Scipione.
- Xavier, Maria Leticia B. 2013. 'Avaliação do resultado do Programa de Aquisição de Alimento junto às cooperativas de agricultores familiares de Santa Catarina'. *Mastersin Administration Dissertation*. Universidade do Estado de Santa Catarina
- World Energy Council - WEC. 2007. *Survey of Energy Resources*. London: World Energy Council.