

RACE AND CITIZENSHIP IN THE AMERICAS

BY PEDRO MEIRA MONTEIRO

In 2013, PLAS launched the Global Collaborative Network “Race and Citizenship in the Americas” (RACA), part of a larger internationalization initiative led by Princeton University and the University of São Paulo (USP). This new research network examines the social significance of Brazilian critical race debates and their portability between Brazil, the Caribbean, and the United States—including how ideas of race, citizenship, and progress have historically migrated to Brazil; which notions of human rights and social justice inform contemporary race-based activism and jurisprudence; and how minor race theories (or everyday racial theorizing) relate to social and economic mobility today.

At the opening colloquium entitled *Race and Citizenship, Then and Now* on February 22–23, 2013, Professors Pedro Meira Monteiro (Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Cultures) and João Biehl (Anthropology) brought colleagues from various Brazilian academic institutions together with faculty members from Princeton who have worked on race and citizenship. The opening session, “Reflections on *Mestiçagem/Mestizaje* and Race in Critical Theory,” featured talks by Arcadio Díaz Quiñones (emeritus, Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Cultures), Serge Gruzinski (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales and visiting professor with Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Cultures), and Deborah Thomas (University of Pennsylvania). Serving as discussants were RACA network’s principal investigators from the University of São Paulo, Lilia Moritz Schwarcz (also a Princeton Global Scholar with the History Department and PLAS) and Antonio Sérgio Guimarães (a sociologist and former PLAS fellow). Additional round tables examined topics such as post-abolition Brazil, post-Lula era debates on race and inequality in the country, representations of race in the arts, and historical perspectives on race and gender, using Cuba and South Africa as comparative references. The weekend’s closing panel brought together the principal investigators Meira Monteiro, Biehl, Schwarcz, and Guimarães, as well as Princeton’s Edward Telles (Sociology) and USP’s Nadya Guimarães (a sociologist and former PLAS fellow), for a concluding discussion about possibilities and future challenges regarding the debate on race and citizenship in Brazil and beyond.

With a strong comparative component, broad geographic reference, and a clear interdisciplinary perspective, the RACA network includes undergraduate and graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and professors from various institutions. Several students and scholars from Brazil, sponsored in part by RACA, spent the spring semester of 2013 at Princeton. Also as part of the RACA network activities, Pedro Meira Monteiro, Bruno Carvalho (Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Cultures) and Edward Telles (Sociology) jointly organized the spring “Brazil Seminar” lunch series, which brought a specialist on Brazil to campus every Monday to present work related to race and citizenship, featuring Princeton professors as discussants. Lecture topics ranged from music to economy, photography to literature, and urbanization to intellectual history.

RACA also co-sponsored lectures with the departments of Sociology and Anthropology, including a lecture by Anthropologist Federico Neiburg from the Museu Nacional. It additionally partnered with the Woodrow Wilson School, PLAS, and the Program in Law and Public Affairs to bring the President of the Brazilian Supreme Court Joaquim Barbosa to Princeton for a lecture entitled “Facing Constitutional Justice in Brazil,” featuring incoming Princeton President Christopher Eisgruber as a discussant.

Additionally, RACA partially funded several graduate students from USP who came to Princeton as Visiting Student Research Collaborators, hosted by the departments of Sociology and Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Cultures, and PLAS. At the University of São Paulo, RACA collaborated with the departments of sociology and anthropology, as well as with USP’s own Institute for Advanced Study, and offered workshops by Princeton’s Edward Telles, Rachel Price (Spanish and Portuguese Languages and Cultures) and Nick Nesbitt (French and Italian), who each spent one week in São Paulo, in close dialogue with students and professors from USP.

Funded by the Council for International Teaching and Research at Princeton University and by the University of São Paulo, the RACA network will continue until 2015. Next year, a colloquium on health and the history of cities will take place at Princeton in February. There will be further workshops and seminar series in both the United States and Brazil, as well as a final symposium in São Paulo in 2015. To learn more, visit the RACA network’s new website (www.raceandcitizenship.com), which contains video footage and materials from this year’s conferences and workshops. In the future, the site will also include unpublished essays, links to additional research resources, a public discussion forum, and full details about RACA’s upcoming events.



Professor Bruno Carvalho



Professor Arcadio Díaz Quiñones



Professors Pedro Meira Monteiro (l) and Edward Telles (r)



Professor Maria Helena Machado



Professors João Biehl (l) and James Green (r)

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