

## **CV – (abbreviated) – Thaïs Machado-Borges**

**Language skills:** Portuguese (native); Swedish (fluent); English (fluent); French (fluent); Spanish (advanced oral and reading skills); Italian (good oral and reading skills); Basic knowledge of Japanese (introductory courses A and B, University level).

### **Degrees**

2012. Associate Professor in Social Anthropology (Swedish: Docent), Stockholm University, June 18.

2003. Ph.D. in Social Anthropology, Stockholm University, June 06.

1994. BA: Stockholm University. Major: Social Anthropology. Minors: Sociology, Linguistic, Japanese.

1988. BA (D.E.U.G.). Université de Franche-Comté, Besançon, France. Major : Sociology. Minors:

Psychology, Ethnology, Anthropology.

1984. Gymnasium. Colégio Padre Machado, Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

### **Education and previous employment**

**Current position:** Research Liaison Office, Stockholm University (since 2015).

#### **Previous Positions:**

Researcher (2009-2014): “Degraded Objects, Disposable People: On Garbage, Social Inequality, Consumption and Citizenship among Urban Women in Southeastern Brazil.” Project financed by Sida/Sarec and The Swedish Research Council. Institute of Latin American Studies, Stockholm University.

(2012-2014): Director of Studies in Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies, undergraduate and advanced levels, Dept. of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies / since August 2013 Dept. of Romance Studies and Classics (75% of full-time since January 2013).

Lecturer (Institute of Latin American Studies and Department of Social Anthropology, Stockholm University).

### **RESEARCH ACTIVITIES**

*1. Degraded Objects, Disposable People –On Garbage, Social Inequality, Consumption and Citizenship among Urban Women in Southeastern Brazil.* Supported by the Swedish Research Council, VR (2009-2014) and SIDA-Sarec (2008) during an initial year.

**Main Objectives:** This anthropological study examines the entanglement of consumption, citizenship and the production and management of garbage by asking the question: how do urban Brazilian women, coming from different socio-economic backgrounds deal with the garbage that inevitably permeate their lives? The project has two major aims: 1) to examine socio-cultural processes of production of garbage and of the abject as they take place within middle-class households in interactions between female employers and housekeepers, and 2) to look at the way female garbage-scavengers are organizing themselves in movements and associations. The geographical location for this research is the southeastern city of Belo Horizonte (capital of Minas Gerais).

### **Research Results**

**Organized Waste Pickers:** The creation of the movement of waste pickers coincides with the period of change to a democratic regime in Brazil and the writing of a new constitution (1988), redefining citizenship as “the rights to have rights.” Several women became leaders when new associations were established. Motherhood was often presented as the reason and motivation to work hard and to believe in change.

Waste pickers are aware of moments in everyday interactions when their moral status is questioned and poverty is merged with marginality. The body (through uniforms, senses and appearances) provides a basis for classism, as well as it can conform to a normative worker identity, disavowing suspicions of criminality and enhancing a sense of worker pride and morality.

As awareness about sustainability increases, waste becomes an economic resource. Frictions around reverse logistics, the closing down of open air dumps and the implementation of source segregation unveil the separate agendas of groups engaged in apparently common projects of urban sustainability. The forms and conditions through which waste pickers are to participate in the recycling business are yet to be anchored.

**Class, Consumption, and Waste:** Consumption works as a means to claim social visibility and reinforces a sense of belonging to an affluent group.

Women are generally in charge of the emotional and material work of caring and controlling household consumption. They either do it themselves or hire the work of lower-income women. Oral confrontations among women from different social classes unveil how power

and value are negotiated.

The link between consumption practices and the production of waste is generally ignored by my middle-class informants. Practices of waste disposal are not part of their everyday priorities and participation in source segregation is not seen as a moral obligation.

The discarding of personal objects involves procedures of classification and destination. Environmental aspects are generally not part of these deliberations. Anxieties of class are experienced in more concrete ways than anxieties about environmental problems. In a context of social inequality, behavior toward waste passes first through the lens of class.

The project resulted in eight publications (two published peer-reviewed articles, one edited anthology, one peer-reviewed contribution to said anthology, three article manuscripts under submission); sixteen conference contributions (ten international and 6 national conferences); and a series of popular scientific contributions (lectures, interviews, film screenings and discussions).

*2. "Beneath the Surface, We're All Alike" –Social Inequality, Bodies, and Physical Interventions among Lower-income and Middle-class Women in Brazil (2006-2009).*

Supported by the Swedish Research Council, VR.

**Main Objectives:** This anthropological study examined how women who daily experience the conflicts and insecurities of an unequal society related to their own bodies. The study compared conceptions and practices involving the body, physical appearance and interventions (such as diets, beauty treatments and surgeries) as they were discussed and enacted by lower-income and middle-class Brazilian women, aged between 18 and 55 years. It investigated the ways through which the body intercepted with social hierarchies of gender, class and race: are bodily interventions a way these women have to circumvent or, on the contrary, enhance social differences? Are lower-income women, because of the harsh conditions under which they live, less (or maybe more) concerned with the body and physical appearance than their middle-class counterparts? How do conceptions of the body mobilize anxieties over self-esteem and self-preservation?

## **Research Results**

I wrote seven articles where I presented and discussed different aspects of my research (see publications in Diva). I have also presented my research results at seven international conferences.

The articles and conference papers touch upon different but interconnected themes:

- Practices of bodily modification, vanity and visibility situated in a Brazilian context of social inequality
- The social “reading” of bodies
- Cosmetic surgery and risk perception in Brazil
- Brazilian media’s role in creating and spreading messages about ideal beauty and ideal femininity.
- The social production of bodies and the processes through which value (moral, economic and affective) is inscribed on them.
- The mechanisms through which hierarchies of gender and class are produced and reproduced by women who work within the beauty industry.
- Medicalization of the body, practices of diagnosing normal and abnormal bodies and the particular case of genital cosmetic surgery as it is discussed in Brazilian media.
- Gynecomastia and gender, class, bodies and compassion in southeastern Brazil.
- Spin-off project [supported by Helge Ax:son Johnsson] : Visual documentation of the field. Results: This collaborative effort resulted in more than 500 high quality pictures that are currently used as pedagogic material. The project also resulted in a short video film entitled “Beauty Factor” (2011). This video film is used in teaching and as a visual complement to certain theoretical discussions on body and class.

**3. *Hand-made: Brazilians and Cosmetic Surgeries*** (2 years of post-doctoral project 2003-2005, financed with an external grant, Anna Ahlström and Ellen Terserus)

During this two-year’s period (2003-2005) I had the opportunity of taking a closer look at the issue of cosmetic surgery: what brings certain persons to undergo a cosmetic procedure? How do these persons think about their own bodies and about the way they would like them to be? How has the phenomenon of cosmetic surgery been approached within the social sciences? This project set the ground for upcoming research questions on the body and consumption in Brazil.

**4. *Only for You! Brazilians and the Telenovela Flow*** (Ph.D. dissertation in Social Anthropology, (Stockholm University), 2003.

Only For You! Brazilians and the Telenovela Flow is an anthropological study of the reception of a popular and commercial mass-media product –Brazilian "soap-operas," or telenovelas.

Spin-offs: a series of articles in scientific journals and anthologies as well as interviews in the Swedish media and open lectures.

## **RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION**

2015 - Ongoing. Research administration at the Research Liaison Office. Main tasks: H2020 with a particular focus on research and funding possibilities for the Social Sciences and Humanities.

2010-2012 - Coordinator of the national research network RESELA (Red Sueca de Estudios Latino-Americanos) which aims at canalizing information on research and work done by Latin American researchers and practitioners established in Sweden. Stockholm University.

2007-2009 - Coordinator of the research environment project LAF –Latin American Futures. A Cross-Disciplinary Approach to the Liberal Production of Inequality, Space and Identity (Institute of Latin American Studies, Stockholm University, funded by SIDA/Sarec).

## **PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION OF CONFERENCES**

2013 – Main organizer of *Studentdagen* – information, inspiration, and networking for new students at the department of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies. March 6, 2013, Stockholm University. Invited guests: Susanna Kaukonen (student, BA program in Latin American Studies); Catarina Stichini (Portuguese teacher, SU), Micaela Wannefors (Uruguays embassy and alumnus ISPLA), Thomas Gustafsson (writer, journalist and alumnus ISPLA); Björn Wiman (Chief of the culture section of the daily newspaper DN, alumnus ISPLA)

2010- Main organizer (planning, developing the of workshop theme, requesting funds, preparing call for papers, managing coordination and logistics): “Independency and Dependencies in Latin America –200 Years Later” an International symposium to discuss the 200 years of independency struggles in several Latin-American countries. October 26-28. Stockholm University, (approx.80 participants). Invited guests: Professor Marta Casaús Arzú, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, Professor Sidney Chalhoub, Universidade Estadual de Campinas.

2010 – Co-organizer (planning, development of workshop theme and call for papers): “Bodies and Borders in Latin America” a workshop for the Nordic network for gender research on Latin-America (Haina), August 19-20. Stockholm University (approx. 30 participants). Invited speaker: Professor Susan Paulsson, holder of Hedda Andersson Chair in Human Ecology, Lund University.

2009. Main organizer (planning, writing of call for papers, organizing sessions, and contacting participants and keynote speakers, planning for accommodations, meals, venues, material, grant applications, on-line publication of abstracts and of paper presentations): “Living between Fear and Expectation. An International conference on the Production of In/security and In/equality in Latin America.” Stockholm, May 12-14, (approx. 70 participants). Invited guests:; Teresa Caldeira – Professor of City and Regional Planning, College of Environmental Design, UC Berkeley; John Gledhill – Max Gluckman Professor of Social Anthropology, University of Manchester, UK; Francisco Rojas – General Secretary of *Flacso* (Facultad Latinoamericana de Ciencias Sociales), San Jose, Costa Rica.

2007. Co-organizer of a workshop/conference (planning, contact with keynote speakers, practical arrangements around the workshop –meals, venues, material): “Recalling Cuba – Institutional Politics, Migration Movements and Memory,” April 4, 2007, (approx. 30 participants). Invited guests: Professor Brooke Larson, Stony Brook State University of New York; Professor Steve Ellner, Universidad de Oriente, Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela; Professor Elizabeth Dore, University of Southampton; Professor Susan Eckstein, Boston University.

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

I have been teaching, planning, and in charge of courses at undergraduate and advanced levels in Anthropology (Stockholm University-SU and Dalarna College), at the Institute of Latin American Studies (SU), at the department of Journalism, Media and Communication (SU), and at departments of Gender Studies (Södertörn College and SU).

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