ADLAF Conference on Knowledge, Power and Digital Transformation in Latin America

by Igor Lopes Maciel

From 23rd of June to 2nd of July of 2021, the first completely virtual conference of the *Arbeitsgemeinschaft Deutsche Lateinamerikaforschung* (ADLAF) took place, in which a space was provided for discussions focusing on "Knowledge, Power and Digital Transformation in Latin America". The conference was organised and moderated both by the *Ibero-Amerikanisches Institut* (Berlin) and the *Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung* (München), in cooperation with the *Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung*, the *Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung* and the *Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung*, to coordinate this first virtual exchange of ideas and projects.

OPENING DISCUSSION

The conference's opening event, organised by the four above mentioned political foundations and hosted by the *Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung*, left a first impression of what the conference was still to bring. Moderated by Romy Köhler (Bonn), it introduced important general discussions on the relationship between media, digitalisation, and the current political and social processes in Latin America. The diverse backgrounds of the participants made sure that many different aspects of digitalisation in Latin America were part of the debate. Starting with the difficulties involved in the propagation of information – or disinformation –, the participants discussed the state of the press in Latin America and in which ways digitalisation has affected the informational processes in different societies. The broad perspective delivered by the discussion suited well as an introduction which ranged from a discussion which focused on the positive aspects of digitalisation, such as the uncovering of scandals, the democratisation of communication and the acceleration of communication, as well as on the negative sides of mass data collection and the precarious state of legislation on data and information collection. This first discussion sucefully managed to create clear links between the Global North and South as far digitalisation and data collection are concerned.

Mónica Gonzáles made references to the Brazilian and Chilean journalisms and their current states to further specify her points. She argued that the political crisis under Dilma Rousseff in Brazil and the mistrust of Chileans regarding their own government under Sebastián Piñera are directly linked to the use of social media and further digital means. Both cases show positive and negative uses of these technologies. She demonstrated how digital media was able to reinforce the Brazilian crisis and how Chilean's mistrust was further propagated on social media. In Chile's specific case the effects of the new means of communication can be seen, according to Gonzáles, in the culminating constitutional reform, which she sees as a positive effect full of new possibilities. **Jorge Jaraquemada** also focused on the Chilean phenomenon, demonstrating some of the problems that led to the reform as well as their link to digital means of communication. By referencing studies on the trust population have in the political and constitutional structures, which mostly attest the general discontent of the population with their government, Jaraquemada made an argument for a more transparent relationship between political organs and the citizens of Chile, underscoring that complete transparency in the constituent body of the new constitutional is an essential component to make sure that the new structure represents and satisfies the citizens of Chile.

The presentations of **Eduardo Magrani** and **Joana Varon Ferraz** delivered a very different perspective which put into focus the legal and technological aspects involved in digital communication and its role in society. Magrani focused on the legal framework and data rights that constitute the essential components that guide the usage of digital media and the data produced through it. He demonstrated how the topic and romanticised views of the early stages of digitalisation made way for the new main-stream pessimistic positions, arising from the negative experiences of the last 10 years. According to Magrani, the hyper-connectivity that was paved by digital media received little to no regulation, making it possible for the internet to be unboundedly used for personal or political goals. The result is the current form of data-based communication businesses, which earn large sums of money by extracting unprotected information and data on its users. This allows large tech or information companies to influence the social and political structures of a society. Individuals and companies can, therefore, manipulate the politics and economics of whole democracies with no judicial boundaries. Joana Varon Ferraz's contribution served as a perfect complement to this position, by demonstrating techniques which undermine the current structures of profit-oriented data extraction. By analysing feminist techniques of subversion against oppressive structures, Ferraz demonstrated that the individualist foundations of data and information rights fails to address and regulate a problem of a collective nature. She argued that the democratisation or pluralisation of means of digital communication, starting from their production all the way to their usage and control, is an effective means to make sure that the collective problem receives a collective answer, namely pluralising and diversifying digitalisation.

Departing from current political debates in the field, the conference first day offered perspectives reaching far beyond academic discussions and highlighted the opening event by including art as a highly promising perspective on the topic of knowledge and digitalization. Thus, Thea Pittman (Leeds), international curator and professor for Latin American Studies, presented the exposition "Arte Eletrônica Indígena (AEI)", which widened the panorama on how to look on this important field in focus.

SECTION 1: CONOCIMIENTO, MEDIOS Y PODER

The **first section** of the conference, **"Conocimiento, Medios y Poder"**, emphasised the focus on the power and its ever-growing connection to digital communications in modern societies. The section's opening keynote, given by **Beatriz Busaniche** (Buenos Aires), put into perspective the peripheral role played by Latin America in the global business of information and communication, demonstrating how static structures held by companies from the Global North create and reinforce a form of informational feudalism. This reinforces former structures of inequality between the Global North and South, doing for that matter the exact contrary of that which was expected at the beginning of the digital transformations. Against the positive expectation of levelling out differences through universal access and chances, digitalisation contributed to the further growth of tech companies in the Global North, that extract data and revenue from the Global South at the expense of local, regional economies and national businesses. Busaniche suggests an improvement of the conditions of accessibility e availability to the benefit of disadvantaged countries, creating better conditions that contribute to overcoming the calamities of immense inequality.

Panel I – Transfomación digital y cambio en las relaciones de poder

Chair: Peter Birle (Berlin)

With his presentation in the **first panel** called "Transformación digital y cambio en las relaciones de poder", **Joachim Michael** (Bielefeld) shifted the focus to the transitions of power and media forms. He depicted the importance of television for Latin American culture and society, referencing some of the popular genres and their role components of process of national communication and further unification. The founding of large Latin American telecommunication companies and new television genres through extensive cooperation with North American companies, led to the establishment of an own regional television culture. Depicted by the special case of the largest Brazilian broadcaster and its telenovelas, Joachim Michael, depicted the hegemonic status of television until the end of the 21st century's first decade, after which a new age of streaming commenced, and a new medium was able to compete with the almighty television. The age of the internet, cable-TV and streaming services dawned upon Latin America and the world. Slowly but steadily, streaming services such as Netflix grew into the second largest medium in Brazil. The once hegemonic Rede Globo now felt that its grip on cultural and social life, through the wide reach of its broadcasting, was starting to loosen.

Joachim Michael demonstrates with the description of this shift, that the age of internet and streaming services had a deep impact on Brazilian society as a group of consumers.

Changing the topic to some of the challenges emerging from the use of digital technologies in our age, **Nikolás Dvoskin** (Buenos Aires) and **Mayra Bevegni** (Montevideo) poise a philosophical question on the interpretation of the political phenomena and the political use of internet. The speakers sought to recognise patterns which allow for an interpretation of the caesuras in the political history of the last decades. The question is whether a long neoliberal period was interrupted by a short post neoliberal, or whether a post-post-neoliberal period can be recognised. For this purpose, they attempt to outline the main characteristics of the period that could be seen as commonalities or differences. Fake news, social media, hate speech, conspiracy theories, opposition to heterogeneity, emphasis on the individual, explicitly ideological right-wing groupings: all of these elements are seen as characteristics of a possible "post-post-neoliberal" era. Closing up the speakers stated that several challenges much be overcome, and online the main challenges seen.

Liriam Sponholz (Berlin) followed up with a presentation on the Brazilian far-right and its use of social media as a political tool. Sponholz argued that political and medial factors have a mutual influence on each other in the Brazilian context. She showed how social media played an essential role in the rise of the Brazilian far-right by enabling new forms of political communication in which the coherence of a political program or of a concise political ideology are not essentially necessary. Social networks enable an amplification of actors involved in the communication. Through the page-like-network structure, with various links and suggestions of related pages and the various tools for direct communication, a single central political actor is no longer the driving force behind political campaigns. The various associations of (web)pages – or social network profiles – to a political actor make it possible for political content involved in a campaign to be shared, without having to be necessary shared by a political candidate or a party themselves. Sponholz argues that in Jair Bolsonaro's case, social networks made it possible for the candidate to like and share individual content and to implicitly demonstrate affiliation to political stances and ideas by giving pages a like, all of this without having to completely subscribe to an entire political ideology or a permanent indivisible set of political ideas. The suggestion and page-like networks are central components of the social media structures used by Bolsonaro's far-right, to delegate the campaigning from the top to the bottom, making the supporters themselves the driving force behind the campaign.

Cordula Tibi Weber (Hamburg) followed up with a presentation on the use of digital means by Latin American courts, namely their use of the platform Twitter. She argues that Latin American courts were the pioneers in the use of social media for the means of propagating information about their work and to shape their image in the public eye. She researches the activity of the courts and asks two central questions: What or how do they tweet? Why do they tweet? She assumes that courts, unlike elected democratic institutions, have greater difficulties in acquiring a stable level of institutional legitimacy. Weber assumes, therefore, that Tweeter may be a means of increasing the legitimacy of the institution by increasing its publicity and transparency to the public. She describes three main motivations for the use of twitter: informational purpose, educational purpose, and a self-promotion purpose. All these purposes can be fulfilled by using Twitter, a cheap and effective way to reach millions of individuals across a number of boundaries. Using these premises and criteria Weber postulates hypotheses which she proofs by analysing a range of Tweets from three different Latin-American courts. She assumes that courts facing problems regarding their institutional legitimacy are more inclined to make of use of Twitter as a self-promotional tool. She concludes that the courts differ significantly in their behaviour and that no generalised conclusion can be made for the use of social media by Latin American high courts.

Panel II – Conocimiento indígena - conocimiento del norte global

Chair: Sabine Kurtenbach (Hamburg)

The **second panel** on indigenous knowledge and its opposition to knowledge of the Global North contained important critical inputs and clarifying historic and philosophic approaches that can make a great contribution to the dialogue between the two epistemological worlds here thematised.

Wolfgang Gabbert (Hannover) centred the focus of his presentation on a central question concerning the identity and the understanding of indigenous communities in Latin America, which are of grave importance for the status of indigenous groups and their knowledge in the context of the dominantly European influenced societies of which the groups are a part. Gabbert depicted the importance of the debate concerning the definition of the adjective 'indigenous' and demonstrated that the current understandings of it and many of the

current forms of state recognition of indigenous groups are, to a great extent, influenced by European concepts and modes of understanding, whose origins are tied to the European experiences of the rise of nation states. Seeking to deconstruct these understandings and demonstrate how they influence the interactions between indigenous populations and the modern Latin American nation states as well as their populations, Gabbert outlines the origins of central European conceptions to clarify the similarities and differences of the European understating of 'people' and the modern 'indigenous people'. Gabbert's effort in uncovering the prejudice contained in the concept of 'indigenous people' can be seen as a part of important criticism on the form, in which indigenous groups are perceived according to European constructs that attempt to find unity where none is given.

Linking Gabbert's introductory remarks to the main topic of the panel, **Werther Gonzales León** (Jena) delivered a presentation on Andean indigenous knowledge and its possible contribution to environmental ethics and to a solution to the current environmental challenges. Gonzales argued that pondering on the aesthetics of nature, through the moral ethics of environment, can reveal new forms of perception of and interaction with nature, in a manner that allows us to surmount our current self-centred and exploit-oriented approaches to nature. Gonzales' presentation brought into question the traditional ethical views that constitute the basis of our interaction with nature. He depicts two main approaches to nature: an anthropocentric, centred on its usefulness to humankind, and a physiocentric, based on nature's own inherent value. Both approaches lead to the inference that nature, being it an essential component of a eudemonic, well-lived life, must be protected by those who profit from contemplation of sensations which nature provides. Gonzales concluded by stating that observing the aesthetic ethics of the rituals involved in Pachamama Raymi, an Andean celebration of nature, can contribute to new understanding of aesthetics, ethics of nature and interactions with nature which contain a much more intimate relation, in which the protection of our natural surroundings is a central ethical pillar.

A further analysis of indigenous forms of knowledge was presented by **Itxaso García Chapinal** (Bielefeld), focusing on the relationship between local knowledge, primary education, and the environment by observing the singular case of the Comunidad Wixárika in Mexico. The study of indigenous forms of knowledge strives to show deficits in the schooling structures which are primarily dominated by western forms of epistemology, leaving little to no space for the local or indigenous knowledge. This hierarchisation of knowledge, imposing western knowledge over the Wixárika epistemology is, according to García Chapinal, characteristic of the western epistemology, which claims universal validity for its own experiences and knowledge. Much of the knowledge contained in the Wixárika epistemology is therefore, among European influenced segments of society, categorised as inferior to the western form which the traditional western hierarchy. This leads to the loss of local knowledge. Due to the hierarchical principle of western epistemology, a competition between the two forms of knowledge arises, leading to the deterioration of local or indigenous knowledge. Schools structured according to western models, and which transmit western epistemology deprive the students of the possibility of learning local knowledge by taking up time and imposing a hierarchical epistemology.

A further type of knowledge not included in the cannon of western epistemology was discusses in the presentation of **Catherine Whittaker** (Frankfurt a. M.) and **Eveline Dürr** (Munich). The presentation on the links between knowledge and vigilance was primarily occupied with the production of subversive knowledge that can contribute to the protection and safety of communities, who in many cases suffer abuses from state institutions and its power. Vigilance is interpreted by the authors as a concept that can also have its benefits for communities and not only the vigilant state. As a form of contact awareness and attention towards the potentially negative aspects that could cause harm, vigilance can promote the creation of useful knowledge that helps communities to recognise, prevent, and repel discriminatory violence. These forms of knowledge are characterised by the authors as a mode of intuitive knowledge that differs from the traditionally western modes of knowing. The presentation uses the Mexican community of the southwestern USA, as an example of a community who depends on these forms of knowledge to assure their own survival. Only through and own vigilance does it learn where violence against it takes place, under what conditions, with what motives and how to avoid it. The constitution of these knowledges is essential for the communities to resist complete assimilation, the imposing of colonial structures and knowledge as well as the eradication of their own identity. Only through these epistemologies is it possible to recognise the structures of colonial knowledge. The capacities and faculties of recognition, sensibility, and self-defence are developed through the practical knowledge.

Chair: Thomas Fischer (Eichstätt)

Starting the **third panel** on the production and appropriation of cyber spaces on social networks, **Hans Bouchard** (Siegen) delivered an important contribution which brought up the structural aspects of social platforms and their implications for the user's experience on social networks. Bouchard aims at understanding the actions and interactions on the web as contextual and influenced by specific sociocultural structures that shape and limit the modes of interaction. This implies that the sociocultural factors that shape the modes of interaction also influence the communication – actions and reactions – on the web. Analysing these factors is, therefore, according to Bouchard, an essential insight in order to understand the communication on the web. Bouchard's analysis is based on the categories and dimension that compose platforms, in his case study YouTube: spatial, functional, and discursive categories. By using the example of a song uploaded by the EZLN for the purpose of demonstrating solidarity, the speaker demonstrated that the intention of the upload was in a conflicting position to the principles of the platform. Bouchard concludes his analysis by underlining the importance of analysing the structural dimensions of platforms. This way may of the limitation imposed by hegemonic and exclusive understandings of communication can be uncovered, red and criticised, while reinforcing diversity in modes of existence and communication.

Following up, **Katharina F. Gallant**'s (Bonn) presentation focused on the relation between the indigenous peoples of Bolivia and the use of virtual spaces and digital technologies. By asking what the potential of virtual spaces for altering the physical space is, Gallant shifts the focus on to the possible benefits that indigenous groups may gain by using virtual spaces in their struggle against poverty and inequality. With Chaves' election, the indigenous population of Bolivia gained a fair deal of integration and participation in the political system and processes of the Bolivian state, leading to an amelioration of their overall position in society. Gallant notes, however, that there are still disparities, and that the Covid-19 crisis led to a worsening of their situation. The new Vice-President of the Bolivian state, who is also of Indigenous descent, gave important impulses towards the re-inclusion of indigenous groups into the political priorities of the government. Most important of all for Gallant's study, are the impulses given by Vice-President Choquehuanca regarding the digitalisation of the country and the inclusion of the indigenous into the process. Gallant's analysis supposes that the use of digital technologies and communication can have a positive effect in helping to overcome the marginalisation of and disproportional disparities among the indigenous communities of Bolivia. By analysing three dimensions of cultural, social, and financial capital – relying on Bourdieu's concepts – Gallant concludes that there are defects or shortcomings in all the relevant aspects relating to the potential of digitalisation for the indigenous communities.

The third presentation of the panel provided an interesting perspective on the power and untapped potential of arts and diverse modes of communication to transmit new perspectives on topics of social relevance. **Jasmin Wrobel** (Berlin) gave the spectators an insight into the work of feminist comic artist, relying on comics made by the Chilean artist Panchulei. Comics have traditionally been a male-dominated space, in which a predominantly male-oriented perspective has been propagated. Panchulei was introduced by Wrobel as a member of a new community of comic artists that uses its art to criticise social norms and structures, thus symbolically and explicitly challenging established hegemonial perspectives on various social phenomena. These new comics also harbour the potential to create innovative spaces of dialogue and to strengthen new perspectives on social hierarchies and stigmata, such as those of feminist and de-colonial discourses, achieved by graphically bringing into the focus of their artistic production marginalised themes such as discrimination, sexualised violence, violation, sexual self-determination, body image and various political debates. In an interesting display of one of Panchulei's comics, Wrobel analyses the successful extraction and transferring of semiotic elements deriving from Romanic Christian art into politically motivated pro-protest comics. She concluded by reinstating that the transmedial, transtemporal character and the volatile or flexible mode of propagation makes the comic, in its digital as well as physical formats, an extremely effective medium of subversive discourses.

Mirjana Mitrovic (Berlin) concluded the panel by presenting a very concrete example of an intertwining of the physical and virtual spaces in a practical manner. Focusing on the feminist movements of Mexico City, Mitrovic addressed different relevant topics. She gave an insight into different groups of the feminist movement in Mexico City who are part of a new wave of "cyberfeminism" as well as into their communication strategies on the web and their impact on the physical space. Characterised by its distinguished use of the cyberspace and new modes of virtual communication, cyberfeminism relies strongly on the features

of visual, symbolic, iconographic communication enabled by the web. "Feminismo pop" is the term used to describe this strongly visual new variant of feminism that uses attention-grabbing graphics, colours, memes, and icons in other to amplify the range of their public reach. The group's strategies include an unprecedented type of depiction of women and the thematization of women's grievances. Made up by, among others, the depiction of women as strong, self-confident, and as courageous fighters, interviews with women considered role models and pieces which focus on femicides, and further maladies and violence suffered by women, the content is used to fight inequalities. These mechanisms are reinforced using digital means as a propagation strategy for the content, while maximising the success of their communication. Mitrovic's outlines three main strategies that were reinforced using social networks: socialisation, exchange and cooperation, facilitation and access to digital technologies and their advantages and increasing visibility. This intertwining of the physical and digital space leads Mitrovic to the conclusion that both the feminist movements and the digital space contribute to the development of one another by increasing the pool of experiences which they access.

SECTION 2: DINÁMICAS DEL CONOCIMIENTO

The **second section**, **"Dinámicas del Conocimiento"**, took off with **Susanne Klengel**'s (Berlin) keynote on the current relationship between research and the web. This presentation left a strong impression due to its thought-stimulating effect. Klengel's focus on a currently extremely relevant topic, seen through the perspective of the theory of literature, delivered an intriguing new view on the structures of web research. The speaker asked, first of all, about the differing elements of research with and without the algorithmic structures of the internet. The fake information and targeted disinformation delivered by alternative means of information on the internet took up an important place in her inquiry, being that Klengel observed the American presidential election of 2016 with concern. How is the research done by those who use the internet and alternative channels different from serious, credible, or academic research? Followers of the Q-Anon conspiracy or other forms of conspiracy theories who insist that they are executing independent research, free from external biases, are merely subjective, but so are those done by scientists? In order to answer her question, Klengel looks to literatury sciences for help in her investigation into adequate methods and their peculiarities. Besides the scientific method and its canon of established valid methods and approaches, the self-referentiality of web research is responsible for the discrepancy between the two modes of investigation. The algorithmic structures of the internet lead to a dangerous self-referentiality that tends to simply confirm our thoughts and hypotheses by retrieving and delivering exactly the information we wish to see. The so-called rabbit hole – and here Klengel references the creation of the term and its frequent use in the English language – traps the researcher, creating a fictional world based on a selection of information, which confirms the views of a subject. This hole tends to grasp and persistently captivate the users, to shut them off from other realities. Susanne Klengel poses an extremely important question at the end of her presentation, which defines one of the central dilemmas of information in our age: how does one escape the rabbit hole?

Panel IV – Política de memoria y patrimonio social

Chair: Sarah Albiez-Wieck (Köln)

Irina Troconis' (Ithaca) input brought into question some of the more socially disturbing topics that are usually ignored or suppressed in discussions involving the effects of digital means in communication. Her contribution, however, raised important questions, many of which go hand in hand with Susanne Klengel's questioning of purely 'beneficial', or positive, interpretations of digitality. Troconis' analysis of a game based on a book, attempts to demonstrate how the internet's negative aspects represent, or to be more specific, reflect conditions and processes which are already existent in analogous reality. Mónica Ojeda's *Nefando* is a book which tells a rather disturbing story of abuse, incest, pederasty, and trauma. A game based on the book displays new categories, dimensions of narrative and observation that transform the roles and discourses of victims and oppressors into relative categories. The so-called implied reader or player provides this new perspective which calls into question the traditional views on accountability. Both the game without instructions or rules as the book with blurred roles and perspectives demonstrate the importance, according to Troconis, or bringing up suppressed and socially unacceptable topics. Troconis argues that the narratives in the game and book underline the fact that events, conditions, and many unwanted, suppressed, and unacceptable forms of existence are still part of society and of reality. They are realities just as any other, making the discussion of these realities just as valid as any other which do not involve disturbing or shocking events.

Referencing on the topic of digitalisation, **Miriam Lay Brander** (Eichstätt) presented a conjoint digitalisation project of a Cuban News Archive that has had a peculiar effect on the interpretation of the past and, therefore, the present. She highlights the value of digitalisation projects that retrieve and update a very important source of collective memory, not only for Cuba, which was the focus of her example, but for the entire world. The restoration and digitalisation of such important journalistic media production also calls into question the previous interpretations of the events displayed in the news as well as the overall censure imposed on it. While the cooperation focuses mostly on the material aspects of the digitalisation, leaving little space for the discussion of politically motivated interpretations and the recent opportunities for reinterpretation, the display of the digitalised material on internet platforms and the interaction of the users with said material gives us an insight into the potential for reinterpretation of events and history as well as their relation to the present. The diverging comments and posts related to the videos reveal that there seems to be two different communities of users or mnemonic groups. Lay Brander concludes therefore, that new interpretational possibilities are given by digitalisation. These have the potential to call into question the veracity of the news coverages.

Changing the topic toward an analytical direction, involving the potentials of highly technological reconstructions, **Christiane Clados** (Marburg) gave an insight into an anthropological perspective of the benefits of modern technologies for research and transmission purposes. Due to the long tradition of depiction in form of genealogical panels, the visualisation through digital reconstruction takes an important place in building collective Peruvian identity and in avoiding an expropriation of the past in the name of a singular homogenous and vertically imposed narrative of national heritage. The reconstruction is based on forensic methods originally used for crime solving and their effectiveness of the method is based on its claim to authenticity, creating the sensation of an extraordinarily close experience of the past. Clados notes that the high level of technical knowledge and skill involved in the processes tend to also reinforce an exclusion of those closest to the heritage of these indigenous heritage. Indigenous Peruvians are excluded from the reconstruction process and, therefore, from the determination of the narrative that evolves the mummies.

As a conclusion to the panel on political memory and cultural heritage three participants presented an international research project which seeks to revive the memory of capuchin missions in southern Chile and their interactions with the Mapuche people of the regions. The project counts with the access to a rare source of documents that has not been thoroughly analysed by other historians, harbouring therefore a large potential for research. Focusing on the ideals of exploration and development **Ignacio Helmke Miquel, Margarita Alvarado Pérez** (Santiago de Chile) and **Christiane Hoth de Olano** (Eichstätt) intend to analyse these documents which can be found in four different archives on two different continents. The extensive source of documents includes books, films, journal articles, postcards, photographs and various other forms of documentation, which could deliver vast contextual information on the missions in Araucania and the exploration and development processes in southern Chile. The three researchers gave a practical example of how they proceed in their methods and on what results can be expected. Studies on this fragmented memory are essential to understand the complex context of this frontier region. Another very important aspect is the intention to digitalise the documents found, making them available for future research and therefore elevating the chances of gaining new knowledge on this frontier society, about which there is still so much to learn.

Panel V – Literatura, cine y cultura popular – Literature, cinema and popular culture

Chair: Yasmin Temelli (Siegen)

Presenting a first and more general approach to the topic, **Tanius Karam Cárdenas** (Ciudad de México) expounded the advantages proportioned by digital technologies regarding public policies or civility. While the use of digital technologies possesses huge potential for the development of social interaction and civility, the current use of digital means is strongly focused on entertainment. Inspired by the concept of the "right to the city" or "Le Droit à la Ville", Cárdenas argues for a similarly democratic right to the digital space and to its use, to the benefit of the collective as a unit, starting with the propagation of digital literacy and interaction. This way, the conventional hegemonic forms of use, which are focused on individuality, entertainment, and profit, are replaced by socially beneficial ones that strengthen social values and principles of governmentality such as democracy, transparency, participation, dialogue, and subsidiarity. Cárdenas' presentation serves as a directional first step posing important questions on how to use the digital means to collectively beneficial purposes.

Shifting the main point towards cinematic production, **Javier Ferrer Calle** (Siegen) centred his presentation on the depiction of corruption in Latin American cinema and to the consequences of these

framings. As an omnipresent topic in Latin American societies, corruption has become the focus of a large portion of medial production. Cinematic production is no exception in this case. Ferrer Calle argues that this topic traditionally analysed or discussed from an economic or political perspective, can also be analysed from a historical one, bringing the benefit of an interpretation of the symbolic and discursive elements bound to corruption. A historiographic analysis of the cinematographic processing of the realities of corruption can reveal the dynamics, mechanisms, and discourses of corruption. By analysing two Mexican films which depict corruption cases, Ferrer Calle concluding observation on the way the topic handled in cinematic production. He arques that the cinematic production's depiction reinforces the "banality of corruption" by interpreting it as an organisational phenomenon, which is symbiotic with political process. The films also trivialise corruption by demonstrating the realities in the form of melodramatic genres, or even comedies, that propagate a narrative of impunity, discrediting the denigration of corruption.

This important analysis of the power that mediums must propagate content or even specific interpretations was continued in the presentation given by **Wonjung Min** (Santiago de Chile). Her Research on the spread of Asian pop-culture and digitality reveal the dimension of the repercussions that digital communication can have. In a nation such as Chile in which most individuals see themselves as part of a western community, they are therefore part of an "imagined eurocentric" community. She defends that non-European or "white" cultures are usually not accepted by Chilean society into the canon of its culture. In digital spaces of communication, however, Chileans who are enthusiastic about cultural production hailing from Asian countries can exchange their experiences and form a new social group based on their affinity to Asian pop-culture. These groups of so called "chinos" – due to their affinity to Asian culture – who would otherwise find little to no space in regular Chilean society, are able to connect though the digital means and cultivate their affinities and to nurture their imagined intimacy to Asian culture. "K-pop" is a special example of these developments due to its rise during the the digital era. While Japanese Mangas or Anime experienced a rise in popularity during the analogue era of the 1980s and 1990s, K-pop's sudden rise to attention can be traced back to its internet presence and the quickness of digital content propagation. This demonstrates the formative power that digital communication can have, even being able to influence personal and group identities through its interconnection.

Panel VI – Meio Ambiente e transformação digital

Chair: Sören Weißermel (Kiel)

Commencing the round of presentations in **panel six**, **Mariana Simoni**'s (Berlin) contribution focused on the aesthetics of literature and environmental ethics in Brazilian literature, explaining the effects of eco-criticism and the new implications for the relations between humans and the inanimate world in Literature. This newly established genre in Brazil gives traditionally marginalised characters or groups a voice by placing them in the centre as the protagonists: indigenous Brazilians, Afro-Brazilians, Women as well as the inanimate world itself. This change in perspective opens space for criticism of various phenomena and processes such as Neocolonialism, Stractivism, mistreatment and marginalisation of the indigenous and of Afro-Brazilians as well as "epistemicide". Eco-criticism is part of this new palette of critical positions. It does away with the traditional views on the forest as an endless space, and establishes a new view, the starting point of which is the finitude of natural resources in the face of the current mass exploration of our natural environment. This new protagonist positions enables an important new approach – Simoni presents it by using an exhibition of dead Plants from Bosnia-Herzegovina –that considers our planet "from the bottom" or from the perspective of the inanimate world. By attemptin to grasp the planet from the perspective of plants and further inanimate components of nature, one understands the finitude of human life as being dependant on nature and the conditions which we create for it. The understanding of nature's resilience and our fragility shows that this new literary perspective holds an important potential to change perspectives.

Continuing with a different sort of criticism of long-standing structures of exploitation, the next presentation focused on a new "form of colonialism", dependency and exploitation represented by the extraction of data by the modern global players of digital communication such as Facebook, Google, and Amazon. The speaker, **Sergio Amadeu da Silveira** (Santo André), sees these new flows of data as a new form of oppression. The new model of business which is based on the extraction of data and the increasing of the users' consumption, by understanding their behaviour, creating predictive models, and modulating their intentions and attentions. This creates a never-ending circle which only fortifies the model with every single piece of data that is added to the equation. Da Silveira, however, appended his own finding to their theory by

stating that this flow of data, and therefore of capital, has always took place in one single direction: from the north to the south and reinforcing the pre-existent colonial structures implemented hundreds of years ago. The imperialist aspect includes the exclusion of these societies, from which the data is extracted, from the process of technology or knowledge creation. Latin America is in this sense a huge consumer's market and a field of extraction in which data is mined to create profit in regions of the north.

Closing the round of presentations, **Frederik Schulze** (Münster) spoke about an example of relations between nature and digitisation that not only showed how the advances in technology can prove to be useless, if not used adequately, but which also contradicted da Silveira's statement that data proves to be pure power. Schulze's study of the use of computerised technology in Brazilian dams delivered a new perspective on the collection of digitalised data. His observations on the use of data collection for the operation of the Tucuruí-dam in the 1960s and 1970s, led to the conclusion that a fetishization of data collection and processing took place, while having little benefit to offer in the context of political or environmental debates of later time periods. With the construction of the dams and the ideals of technological advancement, IBM computers were installed in the centres of administration in São Paulo to collect data from the dams. Although massive amounts of data were collected, it had little practical use. When the debates on environmental damages and human rights violations were brought into focus in the 1980s the rigid data collection and inflexible use of digital technologies proved to be of no use in finding a solution to the problems and questions poised. The speaker agrees that digitisation is a powerful means for the amplification of transmission. However, knowledge must be analysed beyond their means of expression and according to their relevance within a discourse or debate.

SECTION 3: TRANSFERENCIA DE CONOCIMIENTO

The **third section**, **"Transferencia de Conocimiento"**, was opened by a historic insight into the development of the first museums of Bolivia and into the interpretation of the indigenous past. In his keynote **Juan Villanueva Criales** demonstrated how the museology and the archaeological knowledge in Bolivia was influenced by the colonialist structures of its Bolivian past and the internal colonialist dynamics which withstood the changes in time. The internalised differentiations, discriminations, and exclusions by criteria of class, ethnicity and "nationality" are the base of these colonial structures and were passed on to the epistemological processes and structures internalised by archaeology and museums in Bolivia. Distinguishing between valid knowledge produced by western science and invalid knowledge, tradition of superstition created by local indigenous systems, the colonialist epistemological system. This led to an imposition of a "right" or veracious interpretation of the past and of archaeological findings over a "wrong" one: western scientifically interpretations were superior and true in contrast to those given by indigenous traditions, which were labelled as false and as a production of faith or simply superstition. Villanueva explanations demonstrated a continuity between the state endorsed practices of the 19th century and the first museums and archaeological processes led by them. The members of these first institutions created a discourse which reproduced the discrimination and oppression of indigenous groups, excluding them from the epistemological knowledge production processes by depicting the indigenous as degenerated, as a people doomed by fate to disappear from the face of the earth in the course of developmental processes. In this way the Eurocentric knowledge production of the elites which dominated museums and archaeology excluded local epistemology and created a vertical knowledge process that expropriated indigenous groups of their own interpretations of their own image and representation of the past. The urban and colonialist elites produced, therefore, their own interpretation of the indigenous past, present, and future, appropriating themselves of the positive aspects in order to construct a national identity which benefited the new elites of the country. Villanueva's last point is that these structures still linger on in the present museums and archaeological activities. Efforts are being made to integrate the indigenous by considering the lack of mobility, access to digital technologies and education.

Panel VII – Musealización

Chair: Astrid Windus (Siegen)

A further critical perspective on museums was set forth in a more practical manner by **Diego Ballestero** and **Naomi Rattunde** (both Bonn) in the following **seventh panel**. Ballestero gave a quick introduction into the origins and implications of critical museological perspectives which question the private use of objects and artefacts that leading to the exclusion of those who do not have access due to various reasons. The exclusive use and interpretation of the objects can be traced back to the matrix of anthropological perspectives, the basic

assumptions of which lie in colonial structures and world views. The uncovering of these epistemological connections point to the power of museums as an instrument of epistemological hierarchy, through which the construction of epistemological systems and orders through the interpretation of objects and scientific systems is possible. Rattunde's contribution gave a practical insight into the implementation of critical museology in the processes of digitisation. As the central example she demonstrated how problematic classification questions can be solved, as to avoid the exclusion of local knowledges and cultural factors while retaining, nevertheless, an efficient hierarchical classification that facilitates the search function for researchers. Using a collection of necklaces from Latin American groups stored in the BASA Museum in Bonn, Rattunde demonstrates the complications of an inclusive classification and possible solutions. A simple digitisation of the documentation cards of the objects would be insufficient. Therefore, a new thesaurus was created – using the help of the Getty Institute – which included both a classification under the normal material and visual criteria as well as the indigenous terminology used for the objects presented.

An interesting contribution given by **Lisa Ludwig** (Göttingen) shed light on the connection between museum exhibitions and the foreign policy of the former German Democratic Republic. She presented an exhibition which was the product of surprisingly unexpected cooperation between Brazil and the GDR that brought various artefacts collected from native Brazilian groups to the spectators of Dresden. The exhibition "Indianer Brasiliens" was comprised of objects collected mainly by Curt Nimuendajú, a German ethnologist and anthropologist who was well acquainted with many indigenous Brazilian groups. Ludwig focuses on the concept of knowledge, seeking to analyse its use ad its transfer within the context of the exhibition and the interactions that led to its organisation and realisation. An analysis of the exhibits, brochures and various other documents related to the exhibition, Ludwig reconstructs the steps taken to realise the event. Ludwig's conclusion is that an exhibition is a time capsule that not only enables access to the time in which the content was created, but to the time of the connection and realisation of the exhibition itself.

Christine Pflüger (Kassel) presented fruitful reflections on museums as central places of knowledge production and social learning. Focusing on Córdoba, in Argentina, she offered new perspectives on the debates regarding indigenous knowledge and specific methods of knowledge acquisition in this field. Pflüger provided an overview on new concepts of anthropological and ethnological expositions, challenging to find connections between the scientific knowledge between disciplines such as archaeology, on the one hand, and indigenous knowledge on the other. She also gave an thought impulses on how to conceptualise the dichotomy between material and immaterial cultural heritage and on how to close up the conflictive gap that exists between them.

The closing presentation by **Ursula Prutsch** and **Clemens van Loyen** (both Munich) delivered an important contribution to the panel and to the topics discussed, by extending the critical view on museology to the principals of space management in and organisation of a museum. The presentation was focused on Rio de Janeiro's Museum of Tomorrow (Museu do Amanhã). The Museum which claims to hold up its appraised principles of social responsibility in its demonstration of a possible future for Brazil, is criticised by the researchers. What at first theoretical glance seems to be a project focused on creating equality, reveals to be a superficial implementation, of which the real contradictory effects can be seen and/or felt. Starting with its location – in a working-class neighbourhood – many of the museum's integrations goals are barely even tanged. According to the researchers, in an area in which poverty is omnipresent, pollution cannot be unseen, and discrimination is a part of everyday life. The few seminars and events proportioned by the museum do not even begin to solve part of the social problems faced in Rio de Janeiro. After analysing these shortcomings, Prutsch and van Loyen do present a first step towards a positive and constructive dialogue: In a country such as Brazil, in which inequalities are so notoriously strong, the only possible manner to begin fighting against it is the direct integration and participation of the poor and discriminated into the processes of planning, construction and realisation of such centres of culture. Only then can the reproduction of hereditary colonial inequalities be adequately and "historically" addressed, so that a solution to them may be found.

Panel VIII – Bibliotecas y archivos en movimiento

Chair: Romy Köhler (Bonn)

The beginning of **panel eight** stared with a presentation by two participants on the advantages of digital storage possibilities and the responsibilities that come with their implementation. The focus of the presentation given by **Ulrike Mühlschlegel** and **Christoph Müller** (both Berlin) was made up of the possibilities that arise with the use of digital means for not only preservation of information (books, manuscripts and a number of other

documents in physical form), but also the enablement of cooperation between researchers and those responsible for the storage and management of documents. New forms of storage and presentation enable better contextualisation, exchange of data and new research possibilities. In other to enable the use of the still dorment potentials of digitisation, a few obstacles must be surmounted. The speakers presented the most important difficulties which include the legal aspects on the user's rights for documents and the standardisation of the infrastructure and preservation processes – principles, interdisciplinary forms, international, intercultural, multilingual processes. Most importantly, the speakers underscore the necessity to ponder on the further development of such a project, when aiming avoid a further exclusion of social groups from the processes, instead of achieving the necessary democratisation.

Moving away from the advantages of digitisation to a historical perspective on the development of digitalised platforms and content sharing, **Roberta Cerqueira**'s (Rio de Janeiro) contribution to the panel offered an insight into the establishment of open-source platforms in Latin America. According to Cerqueira, Latin America's role in the story of open-source platforms is one of a protagonist of democratisation in scientific knowledge due to the continent's important contribution to strengthening open-source scientific magazines with free access and submissions. Specially in the field of medicinal sciences, open-source publications were of staggering importance in Latin America due to the lack of a tradition of private financing in the academic setting; the public financing of publishing projects and academic projects overall contributed to the growing popularity of open-source publications. As an example of this development, Cerqueira portrayed the development of the open-source platform SCIELO, which envisioned the implementation and expansion of public publishing projects in Brazil and quickly expanded to the rest of Latin America and, later, into other parts of the world. Cerqueira closed up by outlining the lack of public policies which support and regulate open-source publishing as well as the disadvantages of open source in comparison to private publishing in the international academic context. According to the speaker, there is still much to do in order to improve the means of publishing.

The short panel was concluded with a presentation on a digitisation project which envisions the conversion of physical recordings of native Meso-American languages into a digital format in other to store the knowledge and allow researchers to access it. With a total recording length of over 300 hours, the recordings encompass recording projects realised from the 1970s until 2000 by 11 different researchers of German origin. **Harry Thomaß** and **Barbara Pfeiler** (both Mérida) are the coordinators of the project who have brought forth the efforts to rescue, restore and digitalise the information on the recording tapes that include diverse languages such as Lacandón, Mixteco and Náhuatl. The extensive project includes much more than just the digitalisation of the recordings that are done by an external firm with the necessary technical knowledge. Two articles written by members of two repositories in the Netherlands and Mexico, translations of the transcriptions from German into Spanish and the local languages, workshops with speakers and contact to local institutions in Mexico are further steps of the project that ultimately seeks to contextualise the information by embedding it in cultural context and giving the speakers and members of cultural groups a role within it.

Panel IX – Historia y genealogía del conocimiento

Chair: Sandra Carreras (Berlin)

The closing **panel nine** focused on one of the most interesting aspects of knowledge: The history and the genealogy of knowledge are two fields of the studies of science which give singular insights into the development and establishment of scientific cognition and its systems.

The first presentation introduced a well-established historical perspective on science that has become one of the pillars of science history. **Carlos Sanhueza Cerda** (Santiago de Chile) analysed in a classic scientific historical perspective the instalment of new European astronomic precision instruments in an observatory in Chile. The analysis of scientific instruments as a part of the scientific processes of knowledge production have become an important part of the history of science, giving insights into the material and epistemological conditions that contribute to the production of knowledge. Sanhueza's case was even more interesting due to the analysis of an intercontinental application of European technology and its specific instalment conditions abroad. His case was centred around a meridian circle, from a German firm, which was installed in a Chilean Observatory by Friedrich Ristenpart in the beginning of the 20th century. One of the goals of the instalment of the instrument was to achieve objectivity and the production of precise data of universal validation. The importance of this case is given by the observation that the use of a European

technology in Chile did not simply mean a transfer of knowledge from one place to the other, but an adaptation and the creation of new knowledge in order to make the instrument function. To use the instrument, the instalments condition had to be rearranged so that precise data could be produced. Measurements of the place of instalment, altitude, light pollution, mobility, positioning, and further aspects were crucial for the functioning of the instrument. This brings attention to the ambiguity of instruments. They also depend on the operation and the conditions of instalment and production in order to generate 'precise' data. This, according to Sanhueza, shows that the idea of scientific instruments as a simple extension of human bodies and faculties can no longer be sustained. It is much more plausible to say that the instruments are also a product of previous knowledge with a particular context and embedding.

Following up on the presentation **Karina Kriegesmann** (Berlin) delivered her presentation on a special case which illustrated the circulation of knowledge and information. Her presentation even presented the peculiarity of working with the concept of false information and the intentional propagation of false knowledge. Her uncovering of these dynamics is especially relevant in our age of the Fake-News debates. The analysis of knowledge circulation focusses on the role of the means of propagation themselves as well as on the dynamics brought forth by the lack of knowledge by the readers on a topic depicted in the news. Kriegesmann stated that the lack of knowledge on a topic boosts unequal distribution, false information, superficial knowledge, and the manipulation of knowledge. The lack of knowledge enables the creation of news through the compression of information, a reduction to a minimum that allows rumours and fears to be made into headlines. As an illustrative example, Kriegesmann described the scandal connected to the news projections on the Asian immigration to Brazil in the beginning of the 20th century. Kriegesmann's explanations reveal just how much the means of communication can affect the production of information: a valuable lesson for the current challenges of the digitised age.

Jobst Welge (Leipzig) introduced an intriguing example of genealogy of knowledge based on a study of the perceptions of the Amazon in Brazilian cultural production, demonstrating the developments of the perception within the context of the incorporation projects of the Brazilian Republic. Many of the perspectives of the modern period analysed are, according to Welge, closely tied to the ideals of progress, technology, and science as a means of incorporating the Amazon region into the national territory and to impose order onto nature. The genealogy starts with Henry Walter Bates' essays on the Amazon, expounding the idea of obtaining a total image of the forest. Euclides da Cunha continues by creating a discourse in which the researcher depicted the vast forest as an immense and unsurmountable instance which could only be experienced in small pieces with the help of instruments. Welge also underscored the importance of paintings and photography in the staging of modern progress and the advancement into the Amazon region in the 20th century. He closes by depicting the views of a famous Brazilian writer and musician on the Amazon: Mario de Andrade. Welge's presentation gives an insight into the transformations of knowledge and depiction through time, binding the changes to the means used for depiction and according to each individual current of thought.

The very last presentation, of both the panel as well as of the conference, was given by **Patricia Aranha** (Berlin) on a research project focusing on the mapping of the Brazilian territory, especially the regions of the Rio Branco and Rio Negro. In the institute for historical cartographic studies, the mappings made by Brazilian and foreign researchers will be compared so that more about their intentions, methods for and approaches to mapping the regions can be discovered. By using a system that allows one to see the overlapping maps and other references from further texts and documents related to the historical context of the mapping expeditions and the regions history, a great deal can be learned from a comparative study about the underlying premises, and processes involved in geographical mapping expeditions. The project can then serve as a useful tool for research, assisting in the researching of primary sources which can be incremented by the users, gradually enlarging the scope of the maps, and building interdisciplinary and multimedia links useful for many areas of knowledge. Aranha's project is a wonderful example of a fruitful use of the possibilities created by digital technologies that help the scientific world to gradually advance using the connectivity of the digital.

CLOSING DISCUSSION

The aim of the conference was to reflect upon the current stage of research on knowledge, power and digital transformations in Latin America, both in history and the present, as well as to raise new research questions. In the final discussion, moderated by Romy Köhler (Bonn), Astrid Windus (ADLAF), Barbara Göbel (IAI) and Esther J. Stark (*Hanns-Seidel-Stiftung*) invited the keynotes Beatriz Busaniche, Susanne Klengel and Juan Villanueva Criales, as well as Thea Pittman, international curator for the "AEI - Arte Eletrônica Indígena"

project, that had been presented to the audience on the first conference day, to debate on "Knowledge Production in Times of Pandemic".
The participants ended the conference with concluding remarks and an extensive closing discussion. The conference promoted productive debates about several aspects of knowledge issues and digitalization. The final debate carved out new research perspectives and future networking.

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