

EDITORIAL

Diversity and Multiculturalism

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Abstract

This monographic issue of *Ánfora* brings together socially relevant research and directs the focus of analysis toward subjects historically positioned at the margins. Its central premise is that inclusion, justice, and recognition cannot be understood solely in terms of material access, but also as matters of epistemic legitimacy, memory, territory, and dignity. Drawing on debates surrounding inclusive and multicultural education, gender perspectives, coloniality of knowledge, the rights of Afro-descendant communities, aging, youth, and historical memory, the text argues that Latin American democracies will be evaluated according to their capacity to expand the field of recognition within increasingly diverse societies. This editorial maintains that the margins are not external to the system, but rather spaces from which the system reveals both its limits and its possibilities for transformation. In this

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sense, listening to marginalized voices constitutes a demand for truth, intellectual justice, and democratic renewal.

Keywords: inclusion; recognition; justice; memory; territory; multiculturalism.

Resumen

El presente monográfico de *Ánfora* reúne investigaciones socialmente relevantes y orienta el foco de análisis hacia los sujetos históricamente ubicados en los márgenes. Su eje central es que la inclusión, la justicia y el reconocimiento no pueden pensarse únicamente en términos de acceso material, sino también como problemas de legitimidad epistémica, memoria, territorio y dignidad. A partir de debates sobre educación inclusiva y multicultural, perspectiva de género, colonialidad del saber, derechos de comunidades afrodescendientes, envejecimiento, juventudes y memoria histórica, en el texto se sostiene que las democracias latinoamericanas serán evaluadas por su capacidad de ampliar el campo del reconocimiento en sociedades crecientemente diversas. En esta editorial se defiende que los márgenes no son exteriores al sistema, sino lugares desde donde este revela sus límites y sus posibilidades de transformación. En esa medida, escuchar las voces relegadas constituye una exigencia de verdad, justicia intelectual y renovación democrática.

Palabras clave: inclusión; reconocimiento; justicia; memoria; territorio; multiculturalidad.

Resumo

Este número monográfico da *Ánfora* reúne pesquisas socialmente relevantes e direciona o foco de análise para sujeitos historicamente situados às margens. Seu eixo central é que a inclusão, a justiça e o reconhecimento não podem ser pensados apenas em termos de acesso material, mas também como questões de legitimidade epistêmica, memória, território e dignidade. A partir de debates sobre educação inclusiva e multicultural, perspectiva de gênero, colonialidade do saber, direitos das comunidades afrodescendentes, envelhecimento, juventudes e memória histórica, o texto sustenta que as democracias latino-americanas serão avaliadas por sua capacidade de ampliar o campo do reconhecimento em sociedades cada vez mais diversas. Neste editorial, defende-se que as margens não são exteriores ao sistema, mas lugares a partir dos quais ele revela seus limites e suas possibilidades de transformação. Nesse sentido, ouvir as vozes relegadas constitui uma exigência de verdade, justiça intelectual e renovação democrática.

Palavras-chave: inclusão; reconhecimento; justiça; memória; território; multiculturalidade.

There are special issues that organize a conversation; others, moreover, force it to shift direction. This volume belongs to the latter category. Its merit lies not only in bringing together research on socially relevant issues, but also in proposing, serenely yet firmly, a reorientation of perspective. Where much of the modern academic tradition has viewed certain subjects through the prism of lack, deviance, or marginality, this special issue invites readers to think of them, and to rethink them, as producers of meaning, bearers of rights, agents of memory, and epistemic interlocutors. In other words, this is not merely a collection of studies on vulnerable populations, but a collective reflection on what a society reveals about itself when it decides whom to listen to, whom to teach, whom to remember, and whom to recognize.

The strength of the collection lies precisely in this double movement: on the one hand, it brings into view pressing issues in contemporary Latin America—educational exclusion, epistemic injustice, territorial inequality, the silencing of sexuality in old age, the criminalization of youth, and the memories of state terrorism; on the other, it reorders the hierarchy of questions. It is no longer enough simply to ask what certain subjects lack to enter a preexisting order; rather, that order itself must now be subjected to critical scrutiny, that is, its canons, pedagogies, bureaucracies, languages of merit, grammars of normality, and ways of administering difference. Underlying this shift is a key intuition: it is not enough to speak of inclusion if the center remains intact; it is not enough to add historically marginalized voices if the very criteria that rendered them subaltern are left unexamined.

For decades, debates on social justice have insisted that contemporary inequalities cannot be understood in one-dimensional terms. The American philosopher, critical theorist, and feminist Nancy Fraser argued that struggles for justice require redistribution, recognition, and participation to be considered together, since a society may expand resources without dismantling cultural devaluation, or celebrate identities without altering the material structures of subordination (Fraser, 1998). That thesis remains highly relevant for understanding the present. Inequality is not only a matter of income, access, or coverage; it is also a matter of intelligibility, symbolic prestige, authority to speak, and the right to be regarded as fully human in the public sphere. Thus, when this special issue addresses students with disabilities, Deaf communities, women, peasant communities, Black communities, older persons, youth living in precarious conditions, or memories marked by forced disappearance, it is not merely expanding the journal's thematic

repertoire; it is also debating what counts as legitimate knowledge and which lives are treated as deserving of institutional attention and narrative depth.

This problem can also be framed in terms of epistemic injustice. The contemporary British philosopher Miranda Fricker introduced this category to describe the harms suffered by certain people not only in their access to goods or rights, but in their very condition as subjects of knowledge. When their testimony is granted less credibility because of prejudice, or when their experiences find no shared interpretive frameworks through which to be understood, a distinct form of epistemic harm occurs (Fricker, 2007). This idea is especially useful for understanding the questions that run through this special issue: What happens when schools assess profoundly diverse realities according to homogeneous criteria? What happens when sign language is tolerated as a compensatory resource, but not celebrated as a full aesthetic and cultural form? What is reproduced when philosophy is taught as if women had barely figured in its history? What is denied when peasant communities are treated as an object of intervention rather than as a producer of knowledge? At their core, each of these scenes points to disputes over credibility, interpretation, and presence. Epistemic injustice is not a philosophical abstraction, but an everyday structure of silencing.

In the field of education, this discussion takes on particular significance. For far too long, inclusion was understood as a policy of incorporation, whereby those who had been left outside were brought into the system without seriously interrogating the structures that produced exclusion. However, the main international developments in this area have pointed in a different direction. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) Global Education Monitoring Report 2020, for example, underscores that inclusion is not a complementary program, but an organizing principle that requires the transformation of educational cultures, policies, and practices in order to respond to student diversity. Along similar lines, General Comment No. 4 of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that the right to inclusive education entails a systemic transformation of institutions, their pedagogies, and their environments, rather than a mere accumulation of peripheral adjustments (Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2016). This clarification is crucial: inclusion is not simply a gesture of accommodation toward those considered different; it is a critical review of the assumptions on which the system has been built.

Viewed from this perspective, the special issue shows that inclusive education cannot be reduced to material accessibility or the physical presence of diverse learners in the same classroom. It also involves languages, affective dimensions, technological mediations, learning rhythms, modes of assessment, and, above all, the institutional willingness to recognize that difference is not a failure in

relation to an ideal model. When this volume addresses language teaching for students with autism, ICT-mediated assessment practices, or bilingual-bicultural education for Deaf students, it shows that any pedagogical innovation worthy of the name must be measured by its capacity to broaden recognition, not by its mere technical sophistication.

There is, moreover, a central strand of this special issue that engages with feminist debates and intersectionality theory. The American legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1991) showed that relations of power do not operate in isolated categories, and that many people experience forms of subordination produced precisely at the intersection of gender, race, class, sexuality, age, or disability. This insight remains fully relevant for understanding contemporary Latin America. The exclusions that affect a rural woman, an older woman, a Black woman, or a Deaf woman cannot be understood through a single axis of analysis. These are experiences shaped by overlapping layers of dispossession and by multiple regimes of invisibility. For this reason, it is especially significant that the special issue brings together works on philosophy from a gender perspective, territory, and women's emotions, economic empowerment, sexual rights in old age, and political memory embodied in maternal figures. Without reducing women's experience to a single essence, the volume shows that gender remains a structuring dimension of the social distribution of suffering, authority, and voice.

At this point, the critique of the canon takes on particular significance. Every academic tradition produces legacies and omissions. The problem is not that canons exist; the problem arises when they become so naturalized that they are mistaken for the full horizon of what can be thought. In Latin American humanities and social sciences, this naturalization has been especially persistent in philosophy, where male and Eurocentric dominance has operated for centuries as if it were a form of universal neutrality. In response, a feminist perspective does not call for a minor reparative gesture or token inclusion; it demands a review of the very architecture of philosophical and pedagogical narratives. This connects with a broader discussion on the colonality of knowledge. Aníbal Quijano (2000) argued that Latin American modernity was structured through a matrix of power that articulated racial classification, economic domination, and epistemic hierarchy, passing off a historically situated point of view as universal. In this sense, revising the philosophical and educational canon is not a matter of political correctness, but a task of decolonizing knowledge.

That same critique extends to the place of peasant communities, territory, and local forms of knowledge. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas recognizes that those who live and work in rural areas possess specific rights linked to land, seeds, participation, culture, and dignity. Yet beyond legal recognition, the declaration has a deeper

implication: it challenges the old representation of peasant communities as a backward remnant of history and opens the way to understanding peasants as political and epistemic subjects (United Nations, 2018). This opening is crucial in Latin America, where struggles over land, food sovereignty, and the defense of the commons cannot be separated from disputes over the value of certain forms of knowledge. Land is not merely a resource; it is a form of memory, a basis for material reproduction, and a cultural web of meaning. Likewise, territory cannot be reduced to administrative coordinates or exploitable surfaces, since it is also a bodily, affective, linguistic, and communal experience. In this vein, peasant struggles show that it is not enough to incorporate them into the language of public policy if the epistemic center that has treated them as backward remnants remains intact.

This understanding becomes especially important when considered in relation to Afro-descendant communities and the historical inequalities that persist in Latin America. Various reports by the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR, 2021) and by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) together with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA, 2020) have shown that Afro-descendant people in the region face structural forms of discrimination that affect the effective enjoyment of their economic, social, cultural, and environmental rights, as well as their access to land, participation, security, and recognition. This is not merely a matter of poverty or exclusion in a statistical sense; it is the historical sedimentation of dispossession, racism, and institutional precariousness. In regions such as the Colombian Pacific, the defense of ethnic-territorial rights cannot be understood apart from these genealogies. Afro-descendant territoriality is not a sectoral demand, but a form of collective existence that involves memory, ancestry, self-government, and a relationship to space. Addressing this issue requires legal, historical, and political sensitivity capable of recognizing that conflicts over territory are also conflicts over the very meaning of citizenship and nationhood.

Another virtue of the special issue lies in treating age as a critical category. In recent decades, public debate has advanced in recognizing discrimination based on gender, race, or disability, yet it still tends to treat age as a residual category. Old age, in particular, continues to be read through the lenses of deficit, dependence, or unproductiveness. The Inter-American system has taken important steps to challenge that logic: the Inter-American Convention on the Protection of the Human Rights of Older Persons specifically recognizes the rights of this group and affirms States' obligation to promote their full inclusion, integration, and participation in society (OAS, 2015). The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO, 2021), for its part, has insisted that a human-rights perspective on older persons must encompass not only health and care, but also autonomy, equality,

and protection against multiple forms of discrimination. From this perspective, addressing the sexual rights of older persons no longer appears as a marginal issue, but rather as a central question for measuring the extent to which a society is willing to recognize desires, emotional lives, and embodied subjectivities beyond the dominant norm of youth.

Young people also occupy a central place in this special issue, and they do so not through the celebratory rhetoric of “generational innovation,” but through their confrontation with contemporary regimes of exclusion, criminalization, and death. Latin America has long been a region in which large segments of young people live at the intersection of educational precarity, social violence, unemployment, racism, and institutional neglect. Although youth inclusion is multidimensional and depends on effective access to rights, participation, education, health, infrastructure, and material living conditions, there are still situations in which the language of inclusion is insufficient to describe what is happening. Achille Mbembe (2019) proposed the notion of necropolitics to think through contexts in which sovereignty is exercised through the differential exposure of certain populations to death, harm, and disposability. Applied to Latin American youth, this category helps us understand why some young lives are systematically treated as expendable. To speak of youth at the margins, then, is to speak of structures that administer not only deprivation, but also extreme vulnerability. The way a society manages the life and death of its youth reveals the extent to which it is willing to critically reconsider the center from which vulnerability and protection are distributed.

Along similar lines, the discussion of child labour and adolescent work requires particular analytical caution. Reports by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) show that child labour remains a global problem of enormous magnitude and that it seriously compromises access to education, health, and overall development. In 2020, according to those estimates, 160 million children were engaged in child labour, representing almost one in ten children worldwide. Yet alongside this general evidence, critical Latin American reflection has reminded us that not all contexts of child labour are identical and that informality, family survival, local economies, and specific forms of social relations often intersect. This does not mean relativizing exploitation, but rather avoiding categories that are overly smooth when confronted with historically rough realities. The challenge is to defend, without ambiguity, the rights of children and adolescents without thereby impoverishing the sociological analysis of the contexts in which those rights are systematically violated (ILO & UNICEF, 2021).

If age runs through the special issue by way of youth and old age, memory does so through struggles against forgetting and denial. In Latin America, few

experiences embody that dimension as powerfully as those of the Mothers and Grandmothers of Plaza de Mayo. The Inter-American Commission has repeatedly emphasized that States have an obligation to preserve historical memory, seek truth, ensure justice, and guarantee non-repetition in response to serious human rights violations. Indeed, in 2026, the Commission once again underscored the binding nature of such memory policies in the context of tributes to the victims of dictatorships in the Americas. This insistence is fundamental because it makes clear that memory is neither a rhetorical inheritance nor a commemorative gesture without consequences: it is a democratic practice that protects societies against the return of impunity. When memory is weakened, so too is the moral boundary that separates a political community from acquiescence to horror.

The significance of this issue becomes even clearer when one considers that memory, truth, and justice processes in Argentina have come to be recognized internationally as benchmarks for public human rights policies. The designation of former clandestine detention and torture centers as sites of memory expresses, beyond its heritage value, the principle that spaces of terror can be transformed into sites of democratic pedagogy. This transition offers a crucial lesson: memory not only repairs retrospectively; it also educates for the future. And that education is neither cold nor exclusively institutional. It is made up of stories, names, marching bodies, photographs that interrupt the present, unceasing rounds, and mothers who transform private pain into public language. Waiting, in this sense, is not passivity: it is the endurance of political commitment through time.

What this special issue ultimately brings into view is a powerful thesis about contemporary Latin America, where the democracies of the region will be judged not only by their normative designs, but by their real capacity to broaden the field of recognition. Such broadening requires resources, but it also demands institutional imagination, curricular revision, historical listening, linguistic pluralization, and epistemic humility. It requires accepting that many of the categories through which we have organized academic and political life are too narrow to accommodate the complexity of contemporary experience. And it further requires understanding that the margins are not outside the system, but rather the place from which the system reveals its limits.

Perhaps this is the most fruitful lesson of the issue. Where we are accustomed to seeing peripheries, this special issue discovers alternative centers of intelligibility. Where the institutional gaze registers deficits, these works recognize capacities, memories, affective repertoires, and critical potentials. Where bureaucratic language speaks of beneficiaries, users, or coverage, this edition restores more exacting names: subjects, communities, languages, territories, rights, and forms of waiting. This is no minor gesture. To name differently is to

begin to think differently, and to think differently is an indispensable condition for transforming practices.

In times marked by information saturation, the simplification of public debate, and the temptation to reduce social reality to decontextualized indicators, a journal like *Ánfora* plays an indispensable role: reminding readers that academic research can still be a form of hospitality toward the world. Hospitality for difficult questions. Hospitality for voices that do not fit comfortably within inherited taxonomies. Hospitality for memories that resist closure. Hospitality, finally, for that uncomfortable yet necessary truth through which a society reveals itself most clearly in the way it treats those it has long regarded as secondary.

If this special issue succeeds in awakening this concern in its readers, it will have fulfilled one of the highest tasks of academic writing: not only to inform or interpret, but to deepen critical awareness. For listening to those at the margins is not an act of charity; it is a condition of truth. And reordering the center through such listening is not a symbolic concession; it is a demand for intellectual, educational, and political justice.

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