

URBAN HISTORY AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH: INTERVIEW WITH RAQUEL GLEZER

Interview by ASSIS DANIEL GOMES¹



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Professor in the Department of History / FFLCH / USP since 2017. Emeritus Professor of FFLCH / USP in 2018. Linked to the Postgraduate Programs in Social History and Economic History at USP. Has experience in History, focusing on History Theory and Philosophy, acting on the following subjects: Brazilian historiography, history teaching, São Paulo city history, Brazilian history and urbanization.

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the email*

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ASSIS DANIEL GOMES (ADG): Dear Raquel Glezer, the Research and Extension Center for History, Philosophy and Heritage (NATIMA) is delighted to invite you to participate in an email interview to be published on issue 2 (Dossier: City and Daily Life) of ZUMÉ - NATIMA Electronic Bulletin. This interview will be about your academic production.

RAQUEL GLEZER (RG): Yes.

ADG: Professor Raquel Glezer Her academic research goes through the area of theory and methodology of history, as well as urban history. For example, his specialization work in Methodology of History on the urbanization of São Paulo in the nineteenth century. What were the reasons that led you to conduct this research in the 1960s?

RG: After my graduation in History in 1966 - Bachelor and Degree - at the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of the

University of São Paulo, in 1967 I started a postgraduate course in what we call the “Old Regime”, which existed in the college since the 1930s. Students enrolled with a supervising professor, usually a professor, who followed the research and who, when considering work at the appropriate level, referred the Doctorate to defense. There were no set deadlines. As there were no scholarships, each researcher carried out his research with his own resources.

And I started to graduate with Profa. Dr. Emília Viotti da Costa, in an international project coordinated by Prof. Dr. Frédéric Mauro, about the urbanization process in Latin America, and Profa. it was centered in the coffee zone of São Paulo. The research group had regular meetings, required readings, and the projects were individual. My project was about the city of Ribeirão Preto. In 1968, she started another research group, this one about slavery in São Paulo. When Prof. Emilia was revoked in 1969 by the AI-5, the groups broke up and each of the participants went their own way.

In 1969, Prof. Yves Bruand, who was a professor of History Methodology and who worked with Professor Prof., stated that her students in the research groups had specialized in Methodology of History, from the readings and researches started. I think it was an attempt to keep students interested in research motivated.

In 1968, USP undertook a constitution reform, dismembering the FFCL: Faculty of Education; Institute of Physics; Institute of Chemistry; Institute of Biosciences; Institute of Psychology; Institute of Geosciences; Institute of Mathematics and Statistics; Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Humanities. In the reform were created the departments, which should concentrate the specialists of each more general field. The chairs have been extinguished. The administration of undergraduate courses has become the responsibility of departments.

In 1971 the Federal University Reform was carried out, creating the national system of postgraduate courses, coordinated by CAPES - Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education

Personnel. The FFLCH / USP History Department has created 2 postgraduate courses: Social History and Economic History.

ADG: Professor Emilia Viotti da Costa seems to have marked her formation and the paths she followed in the investigations of urban history in the 1960s. However, the research that was being carried out by the groups coordinated by that teacher had been interrupted with her revocation and his departure from the country with the hardening of the military dictatorship and the persecution of those who opposed the regime. Do you remember which research on urban history was this? Has anyone continued these researches later? How does this impact your training?

RG: From the participants of the research groups coordinated by Profa. Emília, only Dióres Santos Abreu, who was a professor at Presidente Prudente, defended the Doctorate in the Old Regime, which was extended to defenses until 1972:

OPEN, Diores Santos. Historical formation of a pioneer city of São Paulo: Presidente Prudente. Doctorate degree. 339 p. Presidente Prudente, 1972. Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Letters of Presidente Prudente. (It was one of the isolated institutes, currently one of the UNESP institutes).

All other participants in the research groups who did academic work did so under the new regime, with other mentoring teachers.

They kept the old research project:

MAKINO, Miyoko. Jundiaí: settlement and development, 1665-1854. Master in Social History. 146 p. São Paulo, 1981. Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences / USP. Prof. Advisor: Eduardo d'Oliveira France.

BASSETTO, Sylvia. Labor policy in the coffee economy of the west of São Paulo: a transition period. Doctoral Thesis in Social History. 233 p. São Paulo, 1982. Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences / USP. Prof. Advisor: Maria Beatriz Marques Nizza da Silva.

With new projects:

CAMARGO, Ana Maria de Almeida. The periodical press as object of work instrument: catalog of the hemeroteca Julio de Mesquita of the Historical and Geographic Institute of São Paulo. Doctorate in Social History. 10 v. São Paulo, 1976. Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences / USP. Prof. Advisor: Maria Beatriz Marques Nizza da Silva.

GLEZER, Raquel. Doing and knowing in José Honório Rodrigues' work: a model of historiographical analysis. Doctorate in Social History. 2 v. São Paulo, 1977. Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences / USP. Prof. Advisor: Maria Beatriz Marques Nizza da Silva.

ABUD, Katia Maria. Authority and wealth: contribution to the study of São Paulo society in the second half of the eighteenth century. Master of Social History. 147 p. São Paulo, 1978. Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences / USP. Prof. Advisor: Laima Mesgravis.

ABUD, Katia Maria. “The intimate blood and the noble traditions”: the construction of a São Paulo symbol: the bandeirante. Doctorate in Social History. 342 p. São Paulo, 1985. Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences / USP. Prof. Advisor: Laima Mesgravis.

BITTENCOURT, Circe Maria Fernandes. Homeland, civilization and work: the teaching of history in São Paulo schools (1917-1939). Master in Social History. 256 p. São Paulo, 1988. Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences / USP. Prof. Advisor: Rachel Glezer.

BITTENCOURT, Circe Maria Fernandes. Textbook and historical knowledge: a history of school knowledge. Doctorate in Social History. 383 p. São Paulo, 1993. Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences / USP. Prof. Advisor: Rachel Glezer.

MAKINO, Miyoko. The construction of national identity: Afonso d`E. Taunay and the decoration of the Paulista Museum (1917-1937). Doctorate in Social History. 252 p. São Paulo, 2003.

Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences / USP
Advisor: José Sebastião Witter.

I described the process of formation and professional practice, since 1971, in the text of the Speech of Granting of the Title of Professor Emeritus of the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences of the University of São Paulo, published in 2019.

ADG: After your doctorate, you decided to go back to researching Urban History, going back to the city of São Paulo as an object of study. What is the focus of thinking about the city right now? What is the chosen theoretical-methodological path? What motivated this choice?

RG: On the subject of doctorate and the transformations of historical research in the country I published the chapter ‘From the whole to the fragment: a brief look on historical research in Brazil’. IN: Writing History: historians and Brazilian

historiography in the 19th and 20th centuries, org. Júlio BENTIVOGLIO and Bruno César Nascimento. Vitoria / ES: Ed. Milfontes, 2017, pp. 123-136.

When I did the Memorial for the Free Teaching Contest in 1992 and the Memorial for the Holder Contest in 1997 I explained my research trajectory and the reasons for the change of subject.

The research material proposed for the Master's degree in 1967 was archived in 1969 and was stored until the 1980s, when the university charged a new research project for the application of the Full-Time Dedicated Teaching and Research Scheme - RDIDP - 40 hours per week.

The new project had as object of research the urbanization of the city of São Paulo. On the broader topic, I have published several articles, the 1992 Thesis for Free Teaching, Ground Floor, and the Ground Floor book and other essays. Sao Paulo: Alameda, 2007.

As you can see in my CV Lattes, I am a slow production historian, with more teaching and mentoring activities, and research in two

different areas: history of Brazilian historiography and urban history of the city of São Paulo. As both are slow and laborious areas of research, I periodically change the subject. When I graduated and started researching, there was no requirement for quantitative production, but for qualitative production.

In 2010, he began a research on São Paulo, thinking about the twentieth and twenty-first century. Also checking the construction of cultural hybridism and its image as a cosmopolitan element that favored identity aspects of the city. We consider this research important because it can help us understand the constitution of these relations between the urban and the sense of belonging of the local population, and how some characteristics have become and become aspects that singularize and particularize a particular locality. So, what are the various cities in São Paulo? What is the opposite and the reactions of this cosmopolitan discourse built upon it?

ADG: I'm glad to have this conversation and learn more about your career as a researcher in Brazil. You have touched on the answers given in the first block of questions in an important and worrying factor, particularly for researchers from the various fields of knowledge in Brazil. But I think this is happening in other countries too, but I will focus on our reality. I am referring to the defense and the construction of official policies or not in favor of a productive and marketing practice in science. The incorporation of language and management measurement parameters in the field of education and research is hindering us in the making of Brazilian methodologies and concepts of impact - I still realize a theoretical-methodological colonization in some intellectuals in Brazil, for example, some do not value national researchers and extol those from other countries, especially Europeans and Americans. I am not advocating an isolation of Brazilians from French theorists, for example. However, I consider valid the suggestions given by Professor Emilia Viotti da

Costa². She proposed that we could build a Brazilian intellectual autonomy, a dialogue, dialectic and synthetic, with what comes from outside, as well as consider the particularities arising from our cultural, economic and social condition. When I started my Philosophy course at the Catholic College of Cariri, at the age of 17, I was moved by the acceleration of the capitalist world that was entering my daily life. This acceleration felt in the city and in my body made it impossible to cast a different look at mine around, it became complicated to be a Flâneur³ in Crato⁴. At this point, the professor of logic, José Norbayro Londoño Buitrago⁵, called our attention and invited us to walk against this

² COSTA, E.V. da. **A dialética invertida e outros ensaios**. São Paulo: Editora UNESP, 2014.

³ BENJAMIN, Walter. **Charles Baudelaire: Um Lírico no auge do Capitalismo**. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1989.

⁴ At that time he lived in the city of Crato, as he was an intern at the São José do Crato Seminary - linked at that time to the network of Saint-Sulpice Seminars.

⁵ Priest of the French Company of Saint-Sulpice. PhD in Philosophy from the Pontifical Gregorian University of Rome. In some extra-classroom conversations his speech was carried by the positions of Michel de Certeau (Jesuit theologian, philosopher, and historian). De Certeau had been a former student at the Saint-Sulpice Seminary in Paris, and Sulpician pedagogy helped in its formation, for example in the way it looked at Christian mystique.

productivity that produced poorly formulated repetitions, thus defending the quality in our academic works. Finally, in your view what risks do we face entering this productivity routine, especially in postgraduate programs in Brazil? How to build strategies to survive this imposition of the market and society that drives us on this path?

RG: Regarding the issue of metric parameters for production evaluation, we must remember that production evaluation is a phenomenon resulting from the massification process of higher education in the 1950s, after the Second World War, with the increase in the volume of funding. of research in the Exact Sciences, Technology and Health Sciences, which now have larger teams scattered across various institutions. When I did my doctorate in the mid-1970s, the implementation of bibliometric criteria for production evaluation had already taken place in various scientific fields, and Scientometrics was questioning the limitations of such evaluation, as it argues to this day.

The Humanities and Humanities were outside the bibliometric system of evaluation, since the production considered to be of the best quality is represented by books, products of slow maturation and long reception and repercussion, over the years.

In the US case, one of the pioneers in the massive use of bibliometrics, funding agencies are different, with different criteria. In the French case, bibliometric criteria were slow to apply.

The national funding agencies began to use the various impact factors on scientific production focused on technological articles and products, from the twentieth to the twenty-first century, in the process of growth and internationalization of the science developed in the country.

CAPES - Coordination Foundation for the Improvement of Higher Education Personnel, responsible for the accreditation and evaluation of postgraduate courses in the country, among other attributions, has existed since the 1950s. In the 1970s it became responsible for the graduate and making investments in

the process of training of university teachers. With the expansion of public and private universities and the growth of the federal postgraduate system, the hallmark of the first decades of the 21st century, the agency became more complex, receiving other assignments, such as the UAB-Open University of Brazil, for teaching in the distance.

The introduction of impact factors in the so-called hard science areas in funding agencies has led to pressure to apply the same factors in so-called soft science. In the evaluation of postgraduate courses in the period 2008-2010, books began to be computed, according to the parameters established by CAPES, meeting the demands of the areas, which questioned the wide use of impact factors based on published articles.

The risks inherent in the evaluation system exclusively by bibliometric indicators and impact factors have been known for many years and several years: on the one hand, the possibility of exponential growth of scientific production without relevance to

meet numerical parameters⁶, leading to an accumulation of repetitive studies and of self-citation to raise impact factors in the larger research groups, which deforms impact factors. And on the other, the loss of follow-up of concrete innovation, which takes a few years to be fully accepted and recognized, therefore, cited.

In the national case, the use of impact factors helped the internationalization process of several scientific areas, allowing the recognition of the quality of research and technology developed, specific cases in some fields of Exact Sciences, Health Sciences and Tropical Agriculture. There are still mishaps and bottlenecks in the process of technological development, which should undergo changes in the coming years.

The risk to the Humanities and Humanities is the acceptance of impact factor criteria without understanding the significance of

⁶ Para acompanhar o estado da arte, ver: MATTEDI, Marcos Antônio e SPIESS, Maiko Rafael. A avaliação da produtividade científica. In: **Hist. cienc. saúde-Manguinhos**, vol.24, no.3, Rio de Janeiro, July/Sept. 2017. Site: http://www.scielo.br/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext&pid=S0104-59702017000300623. Acesso em 04/11/2019.

constructing such factors and the objectives that are embedded in such items.

In the case of history, the complexity of the situation is greater, either because of the growth and rapidity of the transformations in the various fields of interest of researchers, resulting from the expansion of the concepts of sources, research objects and themes, or the competition of 'frontier works'⁷. historical novels, journalistic works, media series with pseudo-historical themes and common sense opinions, as well as the dispute with individual and social memory.

History, as scientific knowledge, with procedures and methods known and applied since the nineteenth century, with established scientific community, always suffers from the eventual political and economic circumstances of the country in which it is being studied.

⁷ GLEZER, R. e ALBIERI, S. O campo da história e as 'obras fronteiriças': algumas observações sobre a produção historiográfica brasileira e uma proposta de conciliação. In: **Revista do Instituto de Estudos Brasileiros** - RIEB/USP, v. 48, 2009, pp. 13-30.

The questioning of scientific knowledge, developed by experts through hypotheses, questions, new tests and hypotheses, submitted in pairs, which is becoming usual in our day, is an obstacle to the development of the scientific field as a whole.

When individual opinion becomes the standard of authoritative knowledge that is defined as correct, rationality risks disappearing. And without the use of reason and abstract thought, knowledge of the world becomes a magical act.

ADG: When I entered the History course in 2009 at Cariri Regional University, I noticed that some students had difficulties with the theory and methodology of history. I was a little scared, but I found today, as a professor of History Theory and Methodology, that my students have more difficulties than my undergraduates. As you put it well, this area and that of historiography requires more time for reading and maturing, discussion and reflection on the authors, their concepts and their methodologies. These, for example, bind us to a tradition of

knowledge and enable us to produce something original from a grounded and constructive critique. Does this difficulty come from the liquidity⁸ of the society we live in? What are your experiences in this regard as a researcher and professor at the University of São Paulo?

RG: The fields of History Methodology, History Theory, and Historiography are specialties that many historians do not even recognize as such, as they are independent of geographical space, national boundary, dominant language. These are slow-training fields that require a large volume of reading in several languages and deep analysis to escape being what Durval Muniz de Albuquerque Junior calls a 'naive historian'⁹ who uses anachronism instead of analysis.

⁸ BAUMAN, Zygmunt. **Modernidade Líquida**. Rio de Janeiro: Jorge Zahar, 2000.

⁹ ALBUQUERQUE JUNIOR, Durval Muniz de. O historiador naif ou análise historiográfica como prática de excomunhão. Consultado em <https://www.scribd.com/document/62190929/Durval-Muniz-o-Historiador-Naif>. Acesso em 04/11/2019.

The Brazilian educational system, tied to archaic practices, with hints of modernity, which sees the use of equipment as a solution (once were cinema, audiovisual resources, television and today are computer equipment), but does not allow the development of students, does not favor the intellectual maturation process necessary to take advantage of learning opportunities and the development of abstract reasoning.

Abstract reasoning and the ability to empathize with one another, the diverse, the strange are elements for the development of historical thinking¹⁰. Recognizing the difference between populations, societies and times, without value judgments and applying qualification measures, is part of the process of learning to be a historian and analyzing the other.

Curiosity for the exotic, for the different, may be one of the starting points for historian training, but not of arrival. Interest in everything that is the product and result of human acts is a

¹⁰ Ver LOWENTHAL, David. **The past is a foreign country – revisited**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015.

mark of the professional in history, and we need not reproduce several historians saying the same thing, from Rome to our day.

Training historians, professionals of history, which today has several fields of activity, accompanying the professional diversification of Brazilian society, is the function of teachers of history courses, since the beginning of graduation. Perhaps some students will become professional historians, other teachers at various levels of education, others will not even think about performing the above activities.

But all students of a history degree must learn what distinguishes the historian from the 'history book lover' - rigor in reading, text analysis, mastery of concepts, use of sources and bibliography, interpretation the obtained results, the insertion in the historical context of the production and the coeval debates.

ADG: Thank you for agreeing to talk about Urban History and Historical Research via email. Thank you very much for your availability for this activity. Hugs.

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Tradução: Assis Daniel Gomes