

The Kraepelinian network: psychiatric knowledge in Brazil and Germany from the late 1800s to the beginning of Second World War

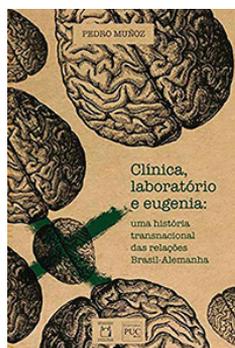
A rede kraepeliana: conhecimentos psiquiátricos no Brasil e na Alemanha, do final do século XIX ao início da Segunda Guerra Mundial

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MUÑOZ, Pedro. *Clínica, laboratório e eugenia: uma história transnacional das relações Brasil-Alemanha*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Fiocruz; Editora PUC-Rio, 2018. 395p.

Pedro Muñoz is a young historian and psychologist who is influenced by the philosophy of Michel Foucault. *Clínica, laboratório e eugenia: uma história transnacional das relações Brasil-Alemanha* (Clinic, laboratory and eugenics: a transnational history of Brazil-Germany relations) is a partially modified version of his PhD dissertation, part of which he conducted at Freie Universität Berlin with a scholarship from the Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (Capes) and Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (Daad). His youth belies a classical approach to historiography. He is not a Rankean historian looking for absolute truths, but a creative researcher with a genuine appreciation for old and yellowed paper. For his dissertation and book, Muñoz visited 11 German archives and perused different issues of 23 journals.

His text is a notable example of transnational history, including subliminal criticism of Eurocentrism. Its characters are “Atlantic,” because they circulated through Europe, the United States, and Latin America. The same goes for their ideas, which were developed and reappropriated on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. In fact, Muñoz himself makes a new contribution to the history of scientific relations between Brazil and Germany. In the introduction, he indicates his central hypothesis: that the psychiatric archetype of Emil Kraepelin (1856-1926), neurology, and eugenics served as the bedrock of Germany’s *Auswärtige Kulturpolitik*, or foreign cultural policy, in the interwar period. We learn that Kraepelin – one of the great physicians of his era – held that the “microscopic revolution” would not be enough to solve the puzzles of the world of psychiatry, urging a return to clinical practice and nosology.

Through Muñoz’s pen, we follow the trajectory of Kraepelin and his disciples: Alois Alzheimer (1864-1915), Franz Nissl (1860-1919), Ernst Rüdin (1874-1952), and others. Admittedly, the book does not explore all the tensions between them, which

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were heightened as they vied for space in the universities and laboratories, while also attempting to raise money with their work. This absence does not, however, detract from Muñoz's approach. Instead, he explores and explains the correspondence between Brazilian physicians and Emil Kraepelin. We are shown the German psychiatrist's interest in traveling to Brazil to investigate "mental disorders in pure Brazilian Indians." We also learn of Kraepelin's personal commitment, in 1917, to the creation of the German Institute for Psychiatric Research (Deutsche Forschungsanstalt für Psychiatrie, DFA), whose mission was the investigation of mental and nervous illnesses. For the institution's creation, the German physician depended on several sources, including the industrialist Gustav Krupp (1870-1950).

In the same year as the DFA was created, French psychologist George Dumas (1866-1946) made his third expedition to Brazil. It was closely tied in with France's foreign cultural policy for Latin America, but not exclusively so. An old acquaintance of the Brazilian elites, Dumas, representing the French armed forces, was keen to obtain Brazil's support for the war against Germany. Muñoz studies this event in detail and shows how French-German rivalries, in a context of *Totaler Krieg* (total war), were played out in Latin America. This part certainly bears the influence of Rinke's (2020) book on the period. His research is important because it shows the role of science in the interactions between Germany and Latin America, especially after the First World War.

The economic chaos that marked the beginning of the Weimar Republic (1919-1933) had much to do with the effects of *Totaler Krieg* on Germany. This also affected the DFA. To improve the institution's finances and construct a building to house it, once again the figure of Kraepelin – pivotal in Muñoz's narrative – reappears. In 1926, he managed to secure US\$ 325,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation, in the United States, which enabled the construction to go ahead. The building was opened two years later, with a bust of Kraepelin at the main entrance (Muñoz, 2018, p.163).

In the interwar years, the German-Brazilian network was important for some scientific developments. One remarkable figure in this context, who earned an international reputation, was the African Brazilian psychiatrist Juliano Moreira (1873-1933). Married to a German woman and fluent in the language, he was a trailblazer in Brazilian psychiatry, directing an important asylum in Rio de Janeiro. Respected in his homeland and elsewhere, Moreira maintained ties with German scientists in Munich, Hamburg, and Berlin. He returned to Germany, where he stayed from 1928 to 1929, before an extended stay in Japan, where he was held in high regard. In the following years, Moreira's career went into decline. There were two reasons for this: (1) he was forcibly retired under the Vargas regime, which took power in 1930, something it is hard not to attribute to racism, but on which Muñoz is silent; (2) he suffered poor health after contracting tuberculosis.

The final chapters of *Clínica, laboratório e eugenia* are its highpoint. Muñoz refers to the obsolescence of the interpretation posited by Nancy Stepan (2005), for whom negative eugenics did not bear fruit in Brazil. He traces the trajectories of Renato Kehl (1889-1974) and above all of Ignacio da Cunha Lopes (1891-1973), about whom he presents a lot of original information, to show quite the opposite. He also retells the fascinating story of Ernst Rüdin, who reshaped the DFA after Kraepelin's death in 1927, and especially with

the rise of Nazism as of 1933. The original clinical and neuropathological framework of the institution's work, as championed by Kraepelin, gave way to racial hygiene prevention and genetic psychiatry under Rüdin. Muñoz points out the spurious connections between him and the Third Reich (1933-1945). Despite his correspondence with Hitler, Ernst Rüdin was keen to be remembered as a member of the German resistance during the years of National Socialism.

I suggest, dear reader, that you do not refrain from reading Muñoz's book: a model of how to write transnational history of science in an original and imaginative way. Make his book yours.

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