RESEARCH PROJECT

Project name: Troubled Teens: Psychiatry and the Shaping of Adolescence in the Wake of Brazil’s New Democracy

Description: This ethnographic programme of research has followed the lives of a core group of 90 young people, participants of the ongoing 1982 Pelotas birth cohort study, from the time these youth were 15 years of age up until their 25th birthday (1997-2007).

Drawing also from anthropologically-informed quantitative surveys conducted with the larger cohort study sample, the research aims to explore how the psychiatric medicalisation and politisation of adolescence is altering young people’s trajectory into adulthood.

The study highlights the influence of distinct scientific and clinical styles of reasoning in shaping the emergence of divergent typologies of adolescent psychopathology and biosocial transformation; and it analyses these against the backdrop Brazil’s recent psychiatric deinstitutionalization movement, health care reform, and new forms of governing health and economic inequities.

Exploring the differential social distribution of theories of adolescent psychopathological and of therapeutic technologies, publications underscore the ways that psychiatric knowledge and practice provide experts, patients and the population at large with a platform through which to enact class struggles and debate the causes and perils of inequity.

Principle investigators: Dominique Béhague

Investigators: Cesar Victora

Aims: to identity the ways that psychiatric knowledge and practice provide experts, patients and the population at large with a platform through which to enact class struggles and debate the causes and perils of inequity.


Partners: Department of Social Medicine, Federal University of Pelotas

Publications:


- 2012  Béhague, DP Gonçalves, H Gigante, D, Kirkwood, BR “Taming troubled teens: the social production of mental morbidity amongst young mothers in Pelotas, Brazil” Social Science & Medicine 74 (3) 434-443


• 2009 Béhague, DP “Psychiatry and the politicization of youth in Pelotas, Brazil: the equivocal uses of “conduct disorder” and related diagnoses” *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 23(4): 455-482.


• 2008 Béhague, DP, Gonçalves, H and Victora CG “Anthropology and Epidemiology: Learning epistemological lessons through a collaborative venture” *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva* Volume 13, Number 6, September/October:1701-10. (With three invited commentaries (p.1711-1714) and authors’ responses (p.1715-1717)).


Presentations:

2014 *(Invited)* “Differential ideologies of psycho-sexual developmental failure and the (dis)empowerment of adolescence: class politics, epidemiology and psychiatric practice in Southern Brazil” Short seminar at the School for Advanced Research (SAR), Santa Fe, Arizona “Questioning the “Global” in Global Psychiatry” Organizers: Elizabeth Davis and Li Zhang, October.


2012 *Invited* European Social Science History Conference (ESSHC) “Changing Conceptions of Normal Childhood Behaviour: International Perspectives on ADHD and Learning Disability” organized by Matthew Smith, Lecturer and Wellcome Trust Research Fellow (Strathclyde).


2011 *Invited* “Biopsychiatry, pharmacology, and the (dis)empowerment of adolescent development” London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine Medical Anthropology Seminar Series May 24, London.


2010 *Invited* “Crises and permutations of power in Southern Brazilian psychiatry” European Association of Social Anthropologists. For invited panel “Crisis and resolution: imagination and the transformation of psychiatric care” August 24-27, Maynooth.


2005 (Organiser) Organizer for a volunteered panel entitled “Domains of psychiatric practice,” American Anthropological Association, with 9 speakers and Professor Janis Jenkins as the discussant. San Francisco, California.