At the edge of North-South politics: Indigenous Peoples and strategies of survival in the Amazon Basin

We can say Indigenous Peoples in the Amazon Basin are still in a process of colonial encounter and under constant identity reconstruction. In going far beyond the state sovereign dominion, flowing to the borders, such encounter in its contemporary trend reveals a friction between traditional interest-based politics and Indigenous cosmologies, local leaders and global activists, governments and international institutions, states and people. All these binaries find a fruitful stage in the Amazon Basin, where foreign investors, speculators, environmentalism and developmental policies collide with each other leading to the performance of North-South Politics. Indigenous Peoples, usually seen as human resources, obstacles or even proxies to the politics and policies involving such dichotomies, are emerging in recent years as fundamental agents in shaping the politics of the region. They are setting the tone for being political in a multi-scaled space constituted by the global, the international and the local. Additionally, in front of the articulations they have been establishing with diverse actors such as international agencies, activists, governments, local labour communities, these peoples contribute to the idea of the forest as a social landscape (Tsing, 2005:XII:1), formulating policies that lead to their social and political agency. The presentation will focus on this complex contemporary colonial encounter in the forest, which brings to discussion the complementary and conflictive relationship between citizenship and indigeneity, local and global. In looking at this, the idea is to overcome such dichotomies and think about the possibilities of becoming political beyond colonial cosmopolitanism and national (post)developmentalism.