

## **The Ontology of the Present. Rethinking Social Theory through Brazil**

I work at the intersection of twentieth century continental philosophy and sociology. In my research I am trying to develop a coherent theoretical framework that brings German social philosophy, Anglo-Saxon social theory, French sociological theory and Brazilian social thought into a productive dialogue. Being stationed in the Global South (Brazil, but also with experience in India), I do not so much seek to “deprovincialize” as to “reprovincialize” metropolitan theories by taking them apart and putting them together again on a new terrain that reveals their inner limits. If post- and decolonial approaches have challenged the presuppositions of metropolitan theories, the effects of living in critical times are even more radical. They demand that one simultaneously de- and reconstructs the conceptual categories one uses to make sense of the ontology of the present.

The research project is conceived of as a social-theoretical contribution to the interdisciplinary interpretation of the “signature of the present”. Drawing on social and political theory and the so-called “Studies”, it wants to systematically think through some of the most urgent societal problems of today. And it proposes to do so from the vantage point of Brazil and under the guidance of the pioneering sociology of knowledge of Karl Mannheim.

In continuity with the current renewal of critical theory in Europe, the United States and Latin America, it wants to “capture our time in concepts” (Hegel), understand the “ontology of actuality” (Foucault), and propose a theoretically informed diagnosis of the epoch. The research project as a whole contains five closely interrelated sections: 1) Social Theory in the Age of Reconstruction, 2) A Theory of Critical Moments; 3) Ontology of the Present: *Zeitdiagnose*; 4) A Social Theory of the Second Post-Modernity and 5) The Pragmatics of the Extreme Right in Brazil. Together, the five sections outline a comprehensive research project that will become a book.