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Contents

Articles

Of blood and laughs: The Brazilian Periphery of Letters and the concept of universality 1–16

João do Rio: um cronista esquecido entre a dicotomia Machado-Euclides 17–31

O asfalto é nosso palco: a experiência do espetáculo *1961-2013* no contexto das marchas de junho de 2013 32–45

The Brazilian Black Front and the Newspaper *A Voz da Raça*: Strategies for Political and Social Mobilization in 1930s Brazil 46–57

Brazilian Diaspora in the Czech Republic: An Ethnographic Probe into the Brazilian Community 58–73

Financing Universal Sanitation: Regulation, Investibility and the Political Economy of Water Infrastructure 74–96

Authoritarian governance and the university: Repression and social control in Brazilian higher education under the Military Dictatorship (1964–1988) 97–110

From resistance to denial: An analysis of the relation between the Armed Forces and the National Truth Commission 111–124

The Right to Take Rights Away: Brazil's 1964 & 2016 Coups 125–142

Glass Ceilings in the State: Gender and Discretionary Appointments in Brazil's Federal Bureaucracy 143–164

A Look at Cooperative Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations in Brazil Based on the 1988 Federal Constitution 165–182

A Geoinformação na formulação de Políticas Públicas de redução da vulnerabilidade: uma análise do Programa Territórios Sociais na favela da Rocinha 183–199

Ecos de unidades: nacionalismo, identidade e a luta contra a extrema-direita em perspectiva sino-brasileira comparada 200–214

Book Review

Brazilian Socio-Economic Dynamics: Contexts and Contemporary Realities, by Gilmar Masiero (Springer, 2025) 215–217

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Of blood and laughs: The Brazilian Periphery of Letters and the concept of universality

Abstract

The objective of the following paper is to present the UERJ/Fiocruz extension program called "Literary History in citizenship education in peripheral territories – articulations with the *Brazilian Periphery of Letters* (PBL)" and to problematize the idea, and the crises, of the concept of universality. The work of Antonio Candido has served as a basis to defend literature as a universal concept. However, several authors have seriously questioned the practices and meanings that bolster the concept of "universal", and others that come from it, like "humanity" and "civilization". Consequently, there has been a destabilization of these concepts based on the idea of universality, compelling us to think once again about the universal right to literature and its social functions, making it worth asking what the consequences are for literary history and with this right, in such an epistemological framework, and in search for answers with PBL itself.

If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge?

Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice* (1597)

1. The project "Literary History in citizenship education in peripheral territories – articulations with the Brazilian Periphery of Letters (PBL)" is an extension program developed in the Department of History of the State University of Rio de Janeiro (UERJ) that seeks to bring together academic knowledge and the cultural production of literary collectives active in urban peripheries of various Brazilian cities, namely those involved in the *Brazilian Periphery of Letters* (PBL) and the *Bando Editorial Favelofágico*,[1] organised by Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (Fiocruz). The PBL is a network of literary collectives active in favelas and the outskirts of urban centers. Including 13 literary collectives, through the *Bando Editorial Favelofágico*, this network operates in 8 Brazilian state capitals: Recife, Fortaleza, Salvador, Brasília, Belo Horizonte, São Paulo, Porto Alegre and Rio de Janeiro. With its roots in Health Promotion, Fiocruz aims to foster cultural public policy for areas with high social vulnerability. With this outreach proposal, the extension program intends to construct a transdisciplinary space for both active listening and knowledge exchange, that allows us to comprehend what peripheral subjects do with literature and how

[1]We will use the Portuguese abbreviation PBL from now in the text. The "Bando Editorial Favelofágico" is a publisher team whose name brings the idea of a "gang" that works with a typical "cultural anthropophagy" (a concept proposed by the Brazilian modernist Oswald de Andrade) made in the favelas (slums). For more information: https://periferiabrasileiradeletras.org/ and on instagram @pbl_uerj2023. The outreach work and research for this paper receive support from ProCiência/UERJ, APQ1/FAPERJ and Social Cooperation of the Presidency of Fiocruz.

they do it, taking into consideration the way they see and determine themselves, how they perceive their social and historical positioning, what literary form and content they choose and how they construct and edit their texts. From this, we seek to reformulate and fine tune the *modus operandi* and the adequacy of academic content that will be exchanged, to mobilize epistemological vectors that guide the individual and collective subjects in the universe of words, temporality and sociability in their territories.

In this case, understanding a periphery is fundamental. Especially, in the framework of this article's debate, the PBL dialogues with human rights and with concepts such as universality and civilization, stressing the importance of a project that aims towards a solidarity-based society and, if possible, towards a horizon of equality and equity. Solidarity is an aspect significantly present in favela culture (Eugênio, 2013), but fear and vulnerability are also a constituent feature that require our attention. Focusing on debates about social and historical formation, such extension program makes possible, for both the PBL and the University, situations of mutual creation and learning, towards the broadening of citizenship, through critical knowledge, historical consciousness, and active participation in cultural production. This strengthens, consequently, the relationship of solidarity between the academic world and society.

We understand, furthermore, that a "*Brazilian Periphery of Letters*" lies in critical dialogue with national Literary History, as the latter includes a canon of works and authors considered to hold the necessary qualities to be seen as "historical". Moreover, the PBL clearly means an incision in the structure of the distinguished Brazilian Academy of Letters, founded by Machado de Assis and José Veríssimo in Rio de Janeiro, in 1897[2]. It seems opportune, therefore, to accompany certain discussions that are underway in the field of historiography that, in some way or another, involve PBL and support this extension program.

2. In the last decades History has experienced what has been coined an ethical-political shift (Rangel & Araújo, 2015) that has consolidated with the increasing pressures of anti-intellectualism, historical and scientific denial and the "post truth" practices, which dissolve the possibilities of valid knowledge or the existence of reality itself. In this context within Historiography, without abandoning the connections between knowledge and power that should be fought against, we have seen theoretical and methodological transformations, which at the same time maintain rigor in the construction of knowledge and make disciplinary protocols more flexible. This allows for the renovation of the historic field, involving transdisciplinary approaches and methods that make educators and the general public closer to the knowledge academically produced and vice-versa.

One of these renovating axes resides in the relationship between History and Literature, about how much it served as a pillar in the formation of a corpus of authors, works and readers, aimed at thinking about the country, its social and cultural characteristics, its numerous problems inherited from the colonial process and/or generated by the interference of the capitalist modernization. Before the creation of an academic discipline, it was the lettered who thought about an independent Brazil, who analyzed its social, economic, and political formation, who created its lettered culture, who fought for what they considered to be a civilizer process, and for the "right to literature" (Candido, 2006). Such literary commitment deeply influenced the participation of Literature in the cognitive and political dynamics that comprised a so-called "national formation", as well as the debates about its origins, (im)possibilities, historical devel-

[2]Academia Brasileira de Letras (ABL). Available at: http://www.academia.org.br (accessed: July 25, 2023).

opments, and even its end. *Mutatis mutandis*, these issues have remained alive and pertinent until today in the context of transdisciplinary relations that entwine historical and literary dimensions, both regarding its theoretical reflections and its educational and social praxis.

In this frame of reference, the work of Candido fulfilled a seminal role, whether because of his ponderings on the "forming of Brazilian literature" in general, and about texts and authors in particular, or through the broad range of methodological and theoretical issues that he discussed so acutely. Both literary creation and accomplishment are understood as necessary aesthetic experiences to the establishment of a national, regional or local literary system – that consolidates itself when it is composed of a solid group of authors, works and public –, also necessary for a social formation strictly speaking. In the framework, therefore, where literary phenomenon are defined in relation to national cultures, what has to be taken in to account are the historical problems derived from colonization, from the tense relation between metropolises and colonies, before and after their independences, and from the search for autonomy, not only political, but also cultural/literary. Fully aware of this, Candido developed two concepts, "two-edged literature" and "dialectic between localism and cosmopolitism" (Candido, 1989a, 1989b), within which the issue of universality as a criterion of aesthetic quality is also included. One could say, risking being unduly brief, that his main references were the debates between Silvio Romero and Machado de Assis at the end of the 19th century, and the modernist proposals of Mário de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade, among others, in the first half of the 20th century. The ideas of cultural ingurgitation of Oswaldian anthropophagy added, in Candido, to the analysis of the later works of Machado de Assis, with an emphasized space also for critical articles like "Instinto de Nacionalidade" (Nationality Instinct), in which Machado defends that Brazilian literature united potently the language and the aesthetics of Portugal (the colonizer), with the content's "local color", as the Romantic Nationalism of Brazil in the 1800s wished for. In other words, the lettered Brazilian's possessed cultural "nest egg" that took them beyond a mere imitation of Europe, an imitation that Silvio Romero's gaze was limited to (Pinha, 2012; Schwarz, 1987). All this enabled Candido to consider, with Machado de Assis, that the Brazilian literary system was well established, despite not being able to say the same about social formation – which maybe never could be complete (Arantes, 1992; B. de M. Vieira, 2022). Thus, a national work in the fullness of its literary quality could also be considered a universal work.

Candido, moreover, was always concerned about the general public's access to literature, especially in a country with a strong colonial inheritance and legacy of slavery, where illiteracy and social inequality are bitter historical scars. The problem is discussed in various texts, like "Perversão da Aufklarung" (Aufklarung's Perversion), and in "Direito à literatura" (Right to Literature) (Candido, 2002, 2011) in which Candido writes an explicit defense of literature as both a universal value and right:

> I will call literature, in the broadest sense possible, all creations with a poetic, fictional or dramatic touch on all levels of a society, in all types of culture, from what we call folklore, legend, jokes, until the most complex and difficult forms of written production of the great civilizations. // From this perspective literature emerges clearly as a universal manifestation of all men, of all times. There is no people and no man that can live without it, that is, without the possibility of entering in contact with some type of imaginary creation. Like everyone dreams every night, no one is capable of passing twenty four hours of their day without surrendering some moments to the fabled universe [...] However, if no one can get through twenty four hours without diving into the universe of fiction and of poetry, literature understood in a broad way as I referred to

> seems to correspond to a universal necessity that needs to be fulfilled, and its fulfilment is itself a right [...] As it is not possible to have psychological balance without dreams during sleep, perhaps there is no social balance without literature. Therefore, it is an indispensable factor of humanization and, moreover, confirms man in its humanity, because it acts in the most part in the subconscious and unconscious. [...] Every literary work is first and foremost a type of object, a constructed object and the humanizing power of this construction, as a construction, is considerable. // Indeed, when they elaborate a structure, the poet or narrator proposes a model of coherence, created by the force of the organized word. [...] If we clearly perceive it or not, the character of a literary work as an organized thing becomes a factor that makes us more capable in ordering our own mind and feelings; and consequently, more capable to organize the vision we have of the world. (Candido, 2011, pp. 176–179)

And, furthermore:

> I have just focused on literature's relation with human rights from two different angles. First, I confirmed that literature corresponds to a universal necessity that should be fulfilled, under penalty of mutilating personality, since it gives form to feelings and to our world vision it organizes us, frees us from chaos and thus, humanizes us. To deny the fruition of literature is to mutilate our humanity. Secondly, literature can be a conscious instrument of unmasking, due to the way it pinpoints situations where rights are being restricted, or even denied, like misery, servitude, and spiritual mutilation. On both levels it has a lot to do with the struggle for human rights. // How a society is organized can restrict or broaden the fruition of this humanizing asset. What is serious in a society like Brazil is that it resolutely continues to stratify possibilities, treating many material and spiritual heritage that are incompressible as compressible. In our society fruition is organized according to class to the extent that a common man is practically unable to know of the existence of and enjoy reading Machado de Assis or Mário de Andrade. (Candido, 2011, p. 188)

These long quotes are justified by the fact that these thoughts are central to the PBL and *Favelofagia* projects, that have the "Right to Literature" as one of their pillars, or in other words, the notion that the popular classes, specifically those that live in the peripheral areas of large urban centers, including favelas, can participate and do participate in the experience of creation, circulation and public reception of literature, despite all of the physical and symbolic violence that exists in these areas. The effects of this, together with their problematization, will be discussed below.

3. If the concept of universality for Candido has two faces, both cosmopolitism and the right to the power to organize the chaos through imaginary creation, for many other thinkers, however, there are serious issues with the practices and meanings that support the concept of "universal", and others which come from it, like "individual rights", "Nation-State", "citizenship", "civilization", etc. The concept is detrimentally marked by its origin in the Enlightenment and its use by European countries' imperialism and colonialism in the 1800s, with goals of domination over other peoples, territories, and their cultures, as well as for exercising social control over the poor and workers, class struggles and intersectional conflicts within each country. The issue of universality is as old as history itself and the debates are central for Historiography and for all of the Humanities, because it involves the problem of commensurability of human beings among one another – between individuals, groups and cultures – and human species with other beings. As there are almost infinite debates, we will try to be strict here.

Within the field of Historiography, the problem of universality/singularity has been fundamental in the theoretical and methodological debates at least since the 18th Century, especially with the advent of the Enlightenment. Its permanence until today is due to numerous appropriations and reformulations, both through liberalism and through left-wing views which anchored the issue in political clashes fought in the heat of the revolutionary processes. In these, as in the case of the Paris Commune, the meanings of universal/singular did not previously exist, but came from the necessity to respond to the practical problems about the territorial organization of the anti-bourgeoisie struggle and the transnational links of solidarity: the communal imagination proclaimed a Universal Republic in which "local autonomous unity, within an internationalist horizon" were combined (Ross, 2021, p. 22). In the 20th century, the I World War meant an existential storm that completely disturbed the experience of time and entailed the loss of credibility of almost all the vital categories of historical interpretation – including *Geist* and *Kultur* – , in other words, the concepts of spirit (of time, of people) and of culture that had sustained the historiographical operations of temporal and spatial simultaneity, and of local identity and national political unity[3]. More recently, at the core of European historiographical discussions, the dynamics of globalization and the advent of "Global History", in dialogue and opposition with the weather-beaten "World History" or "Universal History", generated questioning about the idea of "universal time", observing, overall the dynamics of the interaction between local and global, uniformization and differentiation[4]. This can be noted since the 1980s in numerous mobilizations, in copious places, with their demands for memory, for identity/acknowledgment and for heritage, including "universal heritage of humanity" promoted by UNESCO, being clear that no one contemplates "reactivating temporal schemes mobilized by the universal histories connected to the philosophy of history of the 19th century and the imperial colonies" (Hartog, 2013, pp. 165–178).

It is undeniable that in contemporary times, Adorno's reflections are referential, especially about the impact on, or even the fracture of, this commensurability provoked by capitalism and by fascisms, with the Great War (1914–1945), including the extermination and labor camps, but also the atomic bombs, as the signpost of the catastrophe, of contemporary reification and barbarism, affecting the forming of subjectivities, the world of labor, the Arts, and aesthetic, political and economic thought. Throughout his work, based on Marxian considerations about the ideological character of human rights and the capacity of capital to shape individualities and temporalities, he criticizes the abstraction of the concept of universality and defends the historical concreteness that allows its praxis and gives substance to such a concept. In *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life*, Adorno observed that the ideas of necessity and universality from the bourgeois perspective show a "formula of history", in the sense that "mischief comes from thought as might [*Gewalt*: power, violence], the shortcut of the path which finds the generality solely through what is impenetrable, whose theoretical content [*Gehalt*] is preserved in impenetrability itself, not in the derived congruence of various objects" (Adorno, 1992, p. 66).

[3]For Lucian Hölscher, however, History in the 20th century was not, and could not be, experienced as a whole – both meaningful and continuous – as had happened in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the notion of simultaneity had made it possible for the Enlightenment thinkers to conceptualise a connection between events in space and time, and conceive a "non-simultaneity of the simultaneous" that enabled thought about the temporal order in a universal/world sense, and then position the civilisations (Hölscher, 2014).

[4]For a reading of Global History from the perspective of Latin America and its exclusion/inclusion in international debates, see Serulnikov (2020).

Refuting Schiller, in the 94th aphorism he emphasizes the increasing impossibility, within the fascism, of the representation of what is historical; he considers that connecting an alienated history to the heart of human beings would be the pretext to legitimize as human and understandable the dehumanization of history (Adorno, 1992, p. 126). In *Negative Dialectics*, this reflection is anchored in the problem of social pain, which requires concepts that are not abstract or constructed a priori, but constructed through the materiality of life, from suffering and the necessity for emancipation: "Its agony is the world's agony raised to a concept. Cognition must bow to it, unless concretion is once more to be debased into the ideology it starts becoming in fact" (Adorno, 2009, p. 14).

The question of universality/commensurability is not recent and has gone down intra and inter-disciplinary, both straighter and windier roads, most notably in Philosophy, Anthropology, Psychoanalysis and their numerous debates with Historiography, due to the imbalance and indeterminacy between what is universal, general, transtemporal, trans-spatial, structural, and what is singular, local, contingent, temporal and spatially situated. This has been observed from the debates between Structural Anthropology and History – when Lévi-Strauss denounced the racist and ethnocentric character of the European historians, whose focus drunk on social evolution stopped them from seeing that societies have different forms of existing in time, and that civilizations are formed less through a continuous and cumulative route and more like a game of chess where sometimes you win sometimes you lose (Hartog, 2013; Lévi-Strauss, 1970) –, to the Subaltern Studies in which Said (2005), Chakrabarty (2021) and Spivak (2010), to mention just a few, seek to deconstruct the Western philosophical and historical knowledge discourses to demonstrate how much the core of their said universal truths were ideological, Eurocentric, authoritarian, domineering and ambiguous. For Frantz Fanon, the violence of the colonizing processes resulted in the breaking of bonds of solidarity previously existent in the dominated territories, promoting Machiavellian exploration of rivalries and tearing deep into feelings of belonging and communality, which results in a collective psychic illness and, consequently, in low esteem and in the psychological introjection of prejudice and hierarchies of class, race and gender, transmitted by the colonizer (Fanon, 1968).

In the Brazilian context, what have been named "identity movements" of women, indigenous and black people, presents nowadays important criticism of universalizing ideas. Géssica Guimarães' *Ensaio feminista sobre o sujeito universal* [Feminist essay on the universal subject] is about what is called an abstraction, an invention, or fiction, that is, the construction of the image of "man" as a "universal subject" that has worked as a model for all of humanity, generating a conception of normality, and a so called correct norm for social roles to be performed by individuals of different genders and ethnicities. Instead of being plural and diverse like humanity is, the universal subject plays home to a one-dimensional image of a white European man, because it emerges from the world-system formed by the European Naval and Commercial Expansion of the 16th and 17th centuries, which was later affirmed with the Enlightenment of the 18th and 19th centuries. Such an image receives an aura of indisputability and is called on in the most diverse cultural, political and scientific manifestations:

> It presents itself as a human form in its absolute character, consummated, almost an essence, whether in its present condition or in its projection to the past and future. Its presence is perceived in the most diverse spaces of life, because it works as a parameter of what is considered legitimate as humanity, like a prototype of a human being that has all the items of quality and, because of

> this, serves as a model for everyone else. Although the universal subject is not someone of skin and bone, a historical person or something of that type, it is an ideal showing what humanity should be like. (Guimarães, 2022, p. 33)

In this way, the problem resides in that

> this abstraction is completely impregnated in our historical imagination, in our cultural practices, in our social relations, in the State structure itself, and in public policy. Consequently, most laws, scientific hypotheses and the way that we produce knowledge still allude to a subject that is supposed to be universal. (Guimarães, 2022, pp. 17–18)

The clearness of her voice as she stands up as a woman "against such a universal subject", joins, and at the same time opposes in its tone, the indignant voice of the indigenous intellectual Ailton Krenak when he talks of the tragedy that has befallen the indigenous communities of Brazil, either due to the interests of capital in the medium and long term, or due to the perverse negligence during Bolsonaro's government (2018–2022) translated in actions of genocide. In his texts and public interventions, Krenak mobilizes, sometimes contradictorily, according to what his argument and struggle needs, the universal ideas of "humanity" and "civilization"[5]:

> Throughout history, humans, in fact, this exclusive club of humanity – that is in the universal declaration of human rights and in institutional protocols –, have devastated everything around them. As if they have chosen a caste, humanity, and everyone that is outside of this are a sub-humanity. This does not just include the *caiçaras*, *quilombolas*[6] and indigenous peoples, but every life that we deliberately left on the roadside. And this road is that of progress: this awaited idea that we are going somewhere. There is a horizon, we are going there, and we leave along the way everything that does not interest us, what is left over, the sub-humanity – some of us are part of it. (Krenak, 2020, p. 10)

Krenak provides a discerning analysis of what is going on in Brazil and in the globalised world, under the destructive order of capital, making use of the resource of detachment, as a place of equidistance in which he, as an indigenous person, can change perspective "kaleidoscopedly" and defend the identity of his "relatives" while criticising the Brazilian identity; he can praise the indigenous civilizations whilst condemning the western-European civilization; he can use reason while calling out abuses carried out in the past in its name; he can support democracy whilst he reproaches its very limits… making it possible to know, without obligatorily acknowledging, Brazilian history, so many times misplaced in the body and in ideas and that give everybody the elements to, simultaneously, love the country for its beauty and, maybe, hate it for its structural violence.

Nevertheless, we can find a different standpoint when observing Black people's perspective: Sueli Carneiro's classic thesis relates the issue to the deteriorated life conditions of the Black population in Brazil, scarred by racism, by poverty, by the difficulty to access education, by violent death. In a country that hides racism, between its complete denial and its relative or total

[5]For a discussion between Anthropology and History, in the middle of the 20th century, see Braudel, where we can find: "there is *a civilisation*, conception that puts up for discussion the whole of humanity, and *the civilisations*, scattered in time and in space." (1992, p. 236).

[6]*Caiçara:* name given to the indigenous communities that live on the coastal regions of the south and southeast of Brazil. *Quilombola*: who lives in *quilombo*, name given in Brazil to the communities organised by fugitive slaves during slavery. Contemporary *quilombos* are communities of poor black, indigenous and mixed-race people still in an act of resistance in today's Brazil.

acceptance, she says that disputes around the problem of race are unveiled both in theoretical plan and in political action. These disputes today reach high levels of polarization, crossing the initiatives for the implementation of public policies that could guarantee universal rights and act in the reversal of the unfavorable life conditions experienced by a large part of the Black population (Carneiro, 2005). From Cida Bento's point of view, in *O Pacto da branquitude* (*The Whiteness' Pact*), a white invisibility, unnamed social practices, the silence and pacts of protection, including the idea that universality belongs to the white group, must be renounced:

> it is urgent to make silence speak, to think and debate, to not condemn society to repeating indefinitely similar anti-humanitarian acts. It is about the inheritance inscribed on the subjectivity of the collective, but that is not acknowledged publicly. The white heir identifies with other white heirs and benefits from this inheritance, whether concretely or symbolically [...] the pact suppresses the memories that evoke suffering and shame, because they are related to slavery. (Bento, 2022, pp. 24–25)
>
> Analysing the European's view about the non-European, it can be concluded that the former won in force and in identity, a type of substitute, clandestine, subterranean identity, placing himself as the "universal man", in comparison with the non-Europeans. // So, at the core of the colonial process in which whiteness was constituted, the Europeans, the white people, created a common identity that used Africans, black people, as their main contrast. The unequal nature of this relationship allowed white people to stipulate and disseminate their own meaning and of others through projection, exclusion, denial and acts of repression. (Bento, 2022, pp. 28–29)

In brief, what is on the agenda is a "politics of viscerality" (Duke Franklin Humanities Institute, 2016)[7], because the problem of commensurability and solidarity, not without contrasts and controversies, is embedded in the relation between what would be "universal", "singular", "cosmopolitan" and "local". In these dynamics history and historiography were constituted, generating complex situations for the socio-political experience, the intercultural exchange and the construction of knowledge in the colonized countries, that remain scarred by colonialism and slavery in many temporal dimensions and durations.

4. Despite contradictions, or just because of them, the social practices and correlative concepts founded in the idea of universality have become unstable, which demands assessing once again the universal right to literature and its social function. What happens to literary history and to this right, in such an epistemological framework? And with the dialectic between localism and cosmopolitism that, according to Candido, formed the Brazilian literary system?

The anecdotic episode in which Schwarz has found a Machado de Assis' book translated into French on a "universal works" shelf, in a bookshop in Paris (!)[8], provides us with ideas about this problem. It is doubtless that Machado's book was there because of the aesthetic quality of his literature, the very quality that is one of the criteria for national and international canons. The fact that the poor black boy had become one of the founders of the Brazilian Academy of Letters, very aware of the hierarchies and perversities that slavery engendered in national daily life, without giving up his search for ascension and social status (TV Obra Aberta, 2002), made Machado familiar with these power relations, which does not mean that he could break them at the international realm... How can we penetrate the relations of power that are strongly

[7]Mbembe means the problem of the colonized's answer to the colonizer's violence: if repeating this violence or refusing any, or searching for something else. We think that the "semiotic guerrilla" during the military dictatorships in Latin America belongs to this framework, as well as the *Favelofagia*.

[8]In a Seminar held in the Literary Studies Department at UFRJ, on September 25, 2012.

pervaded by eurocentrism, racism, chauvinism, sexism, colonialism, that structure the World Republic of Letters (Casanova, 2002), and, contrary to the proposal of a communal universal republic, are not aligned with relations of solidarity?... The three following examples demonstrate that the issue is also recurrent in the field of Literary History, Theory and Critique in Brazil and Latin America, where the problem of "universalism" and the debates about the local, universal, and cosmopolitan, remain.

In a comparative study about Argentinian and Brazilian avant-garde art magazines in the beginning of the 20th century, Elaine Queiroz addresses visions of various Latin American theorists and literary historians about the so-called dilemma between the cosmopolitan and nationalist orientation of the region, observing that "each author, in their own way, seeks not only to criticize the state of dependence of Latin American literature, but also to find an exit for this cultural dependency. Their interpretations convert into flags for contra-hegemony" seeking to solve the specific problems of the subcontinent (Queiroz, 2018, pp. 33–34). The debates of these intellectuals, added to the vanguard authors themselves, mean a political positioning and an intervention in their present, and, in the middle of a "mosaic of paradoxes" with "contrasting positions and opinions" the heterogeneity of voices presents a common element: the tension between the European models and the national/regional characteristics. The questioning of the notions of imitation, copy, influence, original source leads to new paradigms that emphasise the transcultural character or the notion of peripheral modernity in Latin American culture. Instead of "dialectic interpretation followed by many", or in other words, the localism x cosmopolitism dialectic or "universal-European x singular/Latin American", the author prefers the notion of a pendular movement, or a "tension", as more adequate to study Argentinian and Brazilian vanguards (Queiroz, 2018, pp. 33–34).

In the case of Argentina, Siskind resumes the role of Jorge Luís Borges in opening "a place of cosmopolitan-marginal enunciation", from which he would have dismantled "the antagonistic formation of the literary-world field organized around the notions of cultural difference, where the cosmopolitan Latin American writers localize the origin of their exclusion", and from where they seek recognition and inclusion in the "imaginary and indifferent territory of a cosmopolitan literature" (Siskind, 2016, p. 18). Considering, therefore, that the "world" is this cosmopolitan and imaginary discursive space, normally defined by a radical exteriority in relation to Latin American singularity, he sustains that the concept "cosmopolitanism" is better than "universalism", based on the argument that:

> it is necessary to read this differential affirmation of a cosmopolitan and disruptive aesthetic identity, not within the framework of a cultural politics of singularity, but as a strategic literary practice that forces its way towards the realm of the universal; but it is not a question of a universal *qua* universal but of a marginal universalism, a markedly non-universal universalism from which it is possible to denounce both the hegemonic structures of Eurocentric exclusion and the self-marginalization that results from the nationalist normative discourse. (Siskind, 2016, pp. 18–19)

Natali (2006), in direct dialogue with Candido's text "Right to Literature", returns to Marx to criticize the abstract content of this universalistic claim. Natali sees the presence of Goethian *Weltliteratur* in Candido, as a world literary system that sets up a universal heritage of humanity; whilst also Anthropology had brought him closer to popular and folkloric forms of literature, allowing him to broaden his notion of literature to include different forms of orality and even

popular song. It happens due to a democratic longing, based on an educational and performative model of democracy. Therefore, the author says, the humanization through literature is carried out through thought, reason, organization of words, endowment of meaning – this places Candido near the Enlightenment, or even the Liberalism, if one sees in him the combination of universalistic humanism and human rights on one hand, and "superficial multicultural tolerance" on the other, in the name of a common good that is really a liberal proposal of inclusion through modernization, having its ultimate standard in capital. So, humanization through literature brings with it a modernizing proposal, within which the abstraction is correlated to the exchange of merchandise in the capitalist market: "universal" is an abstract value that abstracts real work, something characteristic in bourgeois society. Natali turns to Chakrabarty, for whom universality is not possible in the historical forms of capital – and therefore, literature is not universal, but the phantasmagorical abstraction requires that singular discursive practices are translated to the universal concept of literature. "All of these discursive practices, however, will always exist with the universalizing impulse, like the worker in the factory in relation to abstract work" (Natali, 2006, p. 42). Thus, it is up to comparative literature to meet the materiality of the singular texts and discourses, recognizing the ruins of the comparison of literature universalized by abstraction.

It is clear this is a central issue in Latin America, and numerous other authors could be mentioned, above all after the current "decolonial shift", that revisits Fanon's thinking, the "epistemologies of the South" and the concept of "coloniality of power and knowledge" of the Modernity/Coloniality group (Quijano, 2005; Santos & Meneses, 2009). It draws attention that (almost) all maintain the polarity or dialect universal/singularity and the search for a concept that at the same time can tackle the problem and substitute the concept of "universality", whether it be a "pendular movement", "tension", "cosmopolitism", "transnationality", "transtemporality", "transculturality"[9]...

But a question remains to be answered consistently: do other cultural groups, non-Europeans, nonwhites, those not tied to the Enlightenment, have a notion, concept or another tool that operates the meaning of universality, without its mark of origin? The anthropologist Viveiros de Castro sought in the perspectivism of the indigenous cultures studied in Brazil a route beyond the traditional categories that organize knowledge dually – human/animal, objective/subjective, body/spirit, etc. –, in aid of the relational content of cosmological categories. It is, then, *in relation and in perspective* that the percept (not the concept) of what is human and what is not is constructed, and in a possible meaning for the universal would reside not in the structural anthropological fact, but in the collective-relational reality that presents propensity towards a "trans-contextual stability of form"[10]. Even if it is a possible answer, the question remains open for the research of other cultures, in other times and spaces. This is why our

[9]During the 2023 Latin American Studies Association (LASA) Congress, the roundtable called "Other epistemologies and the question of universalism", on the 26th May 2023 with the organisation of Maxwell A. Cameron (University of Bristol), brought heated debates about David Lehman's (Cambridge University) recently launched *After the Decolonial*. In a very brief way, the criticisms of the book sought to define that "decolonisation is not a metaphor", but an experience of struggles for returning the land to indigenous peoples, as well as differentiating "transversal effects" of a "false universalism" that in fact excludes.

[10]From the perspective of an animal in relation to a person, the human is him and the person is the animal. Viveiros de Castro quotes Weiss: "humanity is the primeval substance from which a lot, if not all categories and beings and things of the universe emerged" (Viveiros de Castro, 2002, p. 245).

project asked the members of the PBL and the participants of the workshop entitled: "Was it Machado de Assis that discovered Brazil?!", which happened in June 2023.

5. What does the literature produced in urban peripheries, as we have seen through the projects of PBL and the *Bando Editorial Favelofágico,* have to say about the concept/percept of universality and about the relation between history and literature? What does this destabilization of the concept of universality mean for PBL, if it's guiding star is Candido's text "Right to Literature", as a universal right, and if the issues of aesthetic quality and the relations of power of the Republic of Letters are based in criteria of universality? The collection of answers, still underway, reveals a varied spectrum, from the response of someone surprised when discovering they belong to the Brazilian and world history, to the mistrust of the political content of the concept – who created it, what were their intentions, their take-aways? –, passing through the demand for a "scientific" base for such.

For the PBL coordinators, the crisis of the universal as a valid concept does not undermine the experience of this network of literary collectives guided by the idea that literature is a human right. It guides the PBL because it was set up in Brazilian peripheries. It would be very different if these literature collectives were not peripherical. There is a particularity in the challenge of doing political and cultural resistance through literature in areas like favelas. What should be considered urgent regarding human rights in an area where injustice and social inequality are a feature of life? Should we ask how the condition to create literature is directly and negatively affected? The answer is yes. But because literature, in these areas, has shown itself to be more a strategic tool of struggle, than a right.

And here is one of the main contemporary aspects of a periphery. Violence in the favelas could be associated to barbarism as a condition of socio-political existence. And this condition is only possible with a partnership with State authorities, because armed violence in the peripheral areas is not only due to drug and weapon trafficking, but also illegal police activity. Not always direct and explicit, necropolitics (Mbembe, 2018) acts as a State project, without which, paradoxically, the existence of favelas would not be viable. Therefore, fear is a concrete element in the life of those who live in favelas. It does not mean that everyone is always terrified; but the system of fear and terror curtails the idea of freedom: freedom for dissent, for litigation, without assuming that their bodies, their lives are at risk.

How can you produce literature from this locus? The fact is that, apparently, literature still receives an invisibility cloak in the favelas, given a certain idea of a "perfumery" that has always been attributed to the arts: something inconsequential or unimportant in changing or influencing reality. Regarding this point, through its critical mobilization of people, the PBL has managed to tackle situations where fear is forged. In the case of the periphery, the right to literature is mistakable with the right to fight for more rights. In both we are talking about the pursuit of a certain connection with the universal that should be guaranteed: the right to literature as something broad, a legacy of humanity and of other peripheral areas that readers and authors should be able to receive and exercise freely. It is appropriate to emphasize the importance of the pursuit for universality for those that are not included in humanity comprised in the human rights declarations.

Overthrowing canonisation is maybe an ongoing struggle, also by the writers from the peripheries. And this is another aspect of the universal: the struggle to reach what is called canonical, always questioning: what is canonical for literature from the periphery? Here the *Bando*

Editorial Favelofágico and its ongoing literary aesthetic come in: the idea of *favelofagia* was born in 2014, in the favela of Manguinhos (RJ), searching for the possibility of a literature that breaks with local determinism. Or in other words, that authors from the periphery can have a literary project never limited within their daily experience of the periphery. Rather, it is up to the author's pen to create a magnificent contour of narrative, through the act of writing, for any imaginable content. *Favelofagia* is the search for a literature that, within an intersectional vision, constructs an aesthetic of black and working-class authors, who, coming from favelas, produce art and manage a subversive perspective. It is no doubt that through short stories and novels, *favelofagia* has sought Machado de Assis' lessons. Authors and publishers, in their majority black and from the periphery, want to manage to subvert tragic places to create something that is not determined by pain and scars, despite never denying them.

It is maybe about the desire to create a new canon, because it is important to reach this place of the universal: which helps a large number of people to access *one* perspective. And in this case, we are putting a pledge on the perspective that separates it from prejudice, from authoritarianism, that repels fascism which is also present in art. *Favelofagia is close to the discussion about universality because it questions what is being put as universal today*. And as an aesthetic project, it has the ambition to reach many people, the most diverse of people, because it believes that it is putting in perspective, in the projection of the future, a broadening of knowledge and of sensibilities, fighting against stereotypes about those who live in the favelas. A literature that fights against the effects of fear with solidarity, this is what is hoped for.

6. The destabilization of the concept of universality, as can be perceived from the oldest and more recent criticism, has not meant that it has been totally overcome. This possibly will not happen, because there is the risk of tearing the bonds of solidarity that help vulnerable populations to survive and that allow living together with respect to differences. *In extremis*, there is a risk of fracturing the very commensurability that makes it possible for the human species to exercise and understand itself as humanity.

During the last decades, the studies about the environmental crises and the Anthropocene have once again made intellectuals and social movements closer to the idea of universality, given the need to bring people and countries together on a global scale to face the problem that requires increasing urgency, as we can see even with a critic like Chakrabarty (Hall Centre, 2017). Likewise, in combating classic Cartesian reason, Vieira confirms that it is "in this very context of the breach of the human being-nature solidarity that today's ecological crisis is posed as a great challenge for humanity" (L. Vieira, 2023). To these, we can add the terrible humanitarian challenges that are underway, including forced immigration, hunger, genocide and ethnocide, and femicides, the murders, State violence, etc.[11].

It is true, there are many violent deaths in the Brazilian peripheries, every day, every night, in homes, in the streets, in the nooks and crannies of life. They are areas inhabited by the racial-

[11] According to data from the *17th. Brazilian Public Security Yearbook* (Fórum Brasileiro de Segurança Pública, 2023), rape cases increased by 8% in Brazil in 2022, with 88.7% of victims being female. Data indicates that the Brazilian police killed 17 people a day throughout 2022. The Violence Monitor portal shows that Brazil broke a record for feminicides in 2022, with a woman killed every 6 hours adding up to 1,400 deaths motivated by gender, and black women represent 61.1% of the group. (Velasco et al., 2023). The BID study carried out with the Igarapé Institute of Brazil (2018), the Latin American and Caribbean region was shown to be the most violent in the world with only 9% of the world population, being the only region in the world where the main cause of death is murder (52% of deaths). The region concentrates 39% of global murders and 41 of the 50 most dangerous metropolises (Deutsche Welle, 2018).

ized, turned into monetized subjects by capital, but without the money necessary for reasonable economic articulations, scapegoats who become "killable" because of their race, gender or class. They are "territories of exception" because of their exposure to interpersonal and police, physical and symbolic violence, and for its total disadvantage in relation to the access to public assets, in comparison to the middle/upper class neighborhoods – it is common to hear that, in these areas, "the military dictatorship never ended". All of this worsened during the violent years of Bolsonaro's government, which took apart what was constructed during the process of democratization since 1985. Conceptions like exceptionality, necropolitics, killability (Franco, 2021), "precarious lives" to whom the right to grief ("grievability") is not possible (Butler, 2019), are very applicable here. It is also applicable to Butler's idea of feedback between vulnerability and resistance in social and political praxis, in such a way that the concepts do not have "pure" meanings, but instead are cut across by precise social-historical situations and diverse mediations. The very struggle of racialised groups, like the Black Lives Matter movement, goes beyond the purely singular meaning of identity and reaches a universal dimension that defends life *per se*: all lives matter (LA Review of Books, 2015).

Similarly, it is what happens in the PBL collectives and the *favelofágica* literature. The collection of short stories *Grãos Imastigáveis: contos favelofágicos*, and the novels: *É quase como voltar para casa*, by Janaína Abílio, *Tudo o que prometi ser*, by Daniel Brazil, *Carniça*, by Rafael Simeão, and *Chã de Dentro* by Dani Ribeiro[12] were published by the Bando Editorial Favelofágico in 2022, in Rio de Janeiro, with its afterword-letter written by the Fiocruz presidency, signed by Nísia Trindade Lima, today Minister of Health of Lula's government (2023–). They fulfill the project's goal of freely creating and maintaining literacy, with tears and laughter, with a tragic sense and acid verve, as well as humor, irony, and some wit. Amidst the violence and vulnerabilities, the authors resist and elaborate a "rhapsode quilombo" in which singularity and universality, realism and fantasy, intertwine inextricably.

In face of all this, we consider that the destabilization of the concepts of universality, humanization, civilization, refer in fact to the evident necessity that the universal must be concrete, and not abstract; that it comes about materially in everybody's lives, in all times, places and cultures. In other words, we consider pertinent the general criticism of the universal concepts, but emphasize the importance of the preservation of a central nucleus, i.e., that which joins the human species (or genus) as such, allowing the idea of "humanity". Without this a rupture could be caused, a break with what metaphorically can be called "solder" or "alloy" that makes possible the acknowledgment between different individuals, groups and cultures. Consequently, it would fracture the link that potentially guarantees that they are considered and respected as "humans" and "non-killable", just the opposite of what is happening in the peripheral areas governed by necropolitics (Franco, 2021). It seems to us to be a search for what Adorno called a "non-concept", aiming at a conceptual coinage that is not cut across by identification with the pretense of universality, relative to a world that turns lopsidedly, but instead a cognitive dynamic attentive to a singular-historic moment that shelters real, vital, painful, but authentic, existence (Adorno, 2009)[13]. It is a dynamic related to the struggle for emancipation and for the

[12]The suggestive titles could be understood as: *Unpalatable Grains: Favelophagic Tales*; *It's almost like coming home*; *Everything I promised to be*; *Carrion*; *Topside*.

[13]Braudel, instead, raises the issue: "Towards a modern humanism – In truth, today would we have the need for a new, a third world, outside culture and civilisation, with which we would no longer have to create a scale of values? In this half of the 20th century, we have an insidious need, like in the middle of the 18th century, of a new

end of suffering; if it sounds utopian on one hand, on the other it is urgent facing the globalised violence and the destructivity of capital that threatens vulnerable peripheral areas and life on earth. The Brazilian Periphery of Letters and *Favelofagia* are part of this struggle.

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word to conjure possible danger and catastrophes, to speak our tenacious hopes. [...] Humanism is a way to hope, to want humans to be fraternal with each other and that the civilisations, each one on its own, and altogether, save themselves and save us. It is accepting, wishing that the doors of the present open widely to the future [...]" (Braudel, 1992, p. 288).

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BRASILIANA: JOURNAL FOR BRAZILIAN STUDIES

João do Rio: um cronista esquecido entre a dicotomia Machado-Euclides

Resumo

Este trabalho analisa como o processo de consagração literária brasileira dos anos 1930 excluiu o cronista João do Rio do cânone nacional. Propõe-se que o crítico Cassiano Ricardo, ao consolidar uma dicotomia analítica entre Machado de Assis e Euclides da Cunha como "tipos ideais", fixou um paradigma crítico que marginalizou estéticas divergentes. A partir dessa oposição historiográfica e do exame das crônicas jornalísticas de João do Rio, investiga-se como sua escrita se esquiva de tais parâmetros. Demonstra-se que, embora rotulado como um autor do "litoral" cosmopolita, João do Rio formulou uma leitura social profundamente enraizada na experiência brasileira ao narrar a história e a agência dos sujeitos marginalizados e heróis obscuros da *Belle Époque* carioca.

Palavras-chave: João do Rio; sociologia da literatura; Cassiano Ricardo; *Belle Époque* carioca; historiografia literária

João do Rio: a forgotten chronicler within the Machado-Euclides dichotomy

Abstract

This paper analyzes how the process of Brazilian literary canonization in the 1930s excluded the chronicler João do Rio from the national canon. It argues that critic Cassiano Ricardo, by consolidating an analytical dichotomy between Machado de Assis and Euclides da Cunha as "ideal types", established a critical paradigm that marginalized divergent aesthetics. Based on this historiographical opposition and on an examination of João do Rio's journalistic chronicles, this study investigates how his writing evades such parameters. It demonstrates that, despite being labeled as a writer of the cosmopolitan "littoral", João do Rio formulated a social reading deeply rooted in the Brazilian experience by narrating the history and agency of marginalized subjects and obscure heroes of Rio de Janeiro's *Belle Époque*.

Keywords: João do Rio; sociology of literature; Cassiano Ricardo; carioca *Belle Époque*; literary historiography

Introdução

Paulo Barreto, conhecido pelo pseudônimo João do Rio (1881-1921), consolidou-se como o cronista por excelência do Rio de Janeiro do início do século XX. Jornalista, tradutor e teatrólogo,

sua produção literária passou por uma profunda reavaliação crítica nas últimas décadas, que resgatou tanto o valor estético de sua prosa quanto a agudeza de suas análises sociológicas. Descrito por Antonio Candido (1978, p. 197) como um "radical de ocasião", João do Rio seria um "inesperado observador da miséria", que por vezes chegava a assumir um corajoso tom de denúncia, mas sem se filiar aos que se diziam adeptos ou simpatizantes do socialismo e do anarquismo.

A fortuna crítica do autor costuma sublinhar seu entusiasmo pelas inovações técnicas e culturais da modernidade, a exemplo do cinematógrafo e do automóvel. A própria coluna semanal *Cinematographo*, assinada pelo autor e publicada na *Gazeta de Notícias* entre 1907 e 1910, serviu como vitrine dos principais eventos da *Belle Époque* carioca após as reformas urbanísticas do prefeito Pereira Passos (1903-1906).

Entretanto, esses mesmos estudiosos salientam que, paralelamente ao fascínio pelo ambiente cosmopolita do litoral, emerge na obra de maturidade do cronista uma profunda perplexidade diante das contradições da modernização. Esse impasse manifesta-se no declínio das tradições locais, na marginalização social e no arrefecimento do cientificismo positivista que moldou os primeiros escritos de João do Rio, dando lugar a uma visão mais complexa, fluida e ambivalente da realidade urbana.

Utilizando-se de sínteses, seu estilo elimina conectivos e termos de conclusão, apresenta diálogos dinâmicos e estabelece uma prosa ora seca, objetiva e célere, como os transeuntes e os carros que começam a circular pelas ruas da cidade grande; ora abundante em predicativos e descrições comoventes, com elementos de viés sentimental e mesmo poético (Levin, 1996, p. 119).

O resultado desse esforço é a consolidação da *crônica jornalística* – uma hibridização de tipologias narrativas e argumentativas calcada no cotidiano –, que culminou em sua eleição para a cadeira 26 da Academia Brasileira de Letras, em 1910, com apenas 29 anos (Ivo, 2012, pp. 14–15). Sob essa ótica, Paulo Barreto configura-se como um dos intelectuais que anteciparam as inquietações estéticas do Modernismo da década de 1920.

Nesse horizonte de transição, delineia-se uma aproximação incontornável com a figura de Machado de Assis (1839-1908), este também reconhecido tardiamente como um modernista *avant la lettre*. Guardadas as devidas distâncias geracionais, ambos partilhavam marcadores sociais e estéticos decisivos: eram intelectuais negros, avessos à militância político-partidária estrita, irônicos em relação às convenções sociais e profundamente influenciados pela tradição literária inglesa. Sobretudo, consagraram-se como os maiores cartógrafos da experiência urbana carioca na virada do século XX.

João do Rio, contudo, não estabeleceu uma ruptura radical com o naturalismo e o cientificismo positivista da Geração de 1870 – capitaneada por Sílvio Romero e José Veríssimo – nos mesmos termos em que o fez o autor de *Dom Casmurro*. Essa fricção teórica evidencia-se em *O momento literário* (1908), ciclo de entrevistas no qual Sílvio Romero participa ativamente, enquanto José Veríssimo e Machado de Assis figuram entre os que não responderam. A este último, Paulo Barreto dedicou uma deferência motivada por sua "sensibilidade grande", ao passo que Veríssimo se recusou a colaborar por considerar que o cronista operava um processo de "fazer livros à custa dos outros".

O apagamento historiográfico do escritor carioca nas décadas seguintes à sua morte não se deu por acaso, mas alinhou-se ao escopo ideológico dos críticos literários do Estado Novo (1937-

1945). Diferentemente de Machado de Assis, que permaneceu como alvo constante de contestações no suplemento *Autores e Livros* do jornal *A Manhã* – principal vetor do projeto político-cultural do governo Vargas –, João do Rio foi preterido pelo debate canônico. A direção desse periódico estava sob o comando do poeta e ensaísta Cassiano Ricardo (1895-1974), intelectual conservador e acadêmico da ABL, cuja chancela pelo regime varguista consolidou-se após o impacto de sua obra *Marcha para Oeste* (1940).

Nesse quadro, o presente artigo formula a clivagem entre o cosmopolitismo litorâneo de Machado de Assis, deplorado pelo governo estadonovista, e o regionalismo de Euclides da Cunha, alçado a modelo de brasilidade pelo regime. É precisamente nesse entremeio – ou a meio caminho entre os "tipos ideais" arquitetados por Cassiano Ricardo – que se torna possível reposicionar o objeto deste estudo. Investigar as causas que legaram a obra de Paulo Barreto ao ostracismo pelos modernistas, permitindo sua retomada crítica apenas na segunda metade da década de 1970 (Candido, 1978, p. 197), exige compreender como sua escrita desafiava a própria polarização geográfica e cultural da época.

Propõe-se, assim, que Cassiano Ricardo – um dos críticos mais influentes no processo de consagração literária da década de 1930 – acabou por marginalizar a figura de João do Rio ao sedimentar a dicotomia entre Machado de Assis e Euclides da Cunha. Ao assumir essa oposição por uma perspectiva de "tipos ideais", o ensaísta estabeleceu um modelo paradigmático para a atividade crítico-literária subsequente que desconsiderou a relevância de Paulo Barreto na cena intelectual do início do século.

Diante desses parâmetros teóricos, este trabalho investiga como as crônicas jornalísticas do escritor carioca constroem uma leitura social singular, capaz de descrevê-lo como um escritor do litoral que opera um pensamento autenticamente brasileiro ao narrar a história dos heróis obscuros da cidade. Para além da imagem de um literato conservador e sem compromissos com preceitos revolucionários, testa-se a hipótese de que sua obra constitui uma síntese complexa entre a sensibilidade machadiana e a euclidiana. Ao transitar entre a sofisticação dos salões do *five o'clock* e a crueza dos confins e interiores áridos da capital, o autor carioca unifica, esteticamente, a fratura cultural de sua época.

Selecionou-se, para tanto, um conjunto de crônicas que supera o "cosmopolitismo dissolvente" atribuído a Machado de Assis nos termos de Cassiano Ricardo. Essa escolha metodológica justifica-se pela acentuada propensão etnográfica de Paulo Barreto, cuja escrita – pautada pela observação participante – resulta em uma descrição densa sobre a construção do Brasil republicano e do *homo urbanus* tropical (O'Donnell, 2008, pp. 15–16). Mais do que literatura, esse *corpus* documental configura-se como um verdadeiro diário de campo que, em paralelo ao instrumental da então recém-formada Escola de Chicago, logra aplicar a perspectiva da alteridade ao próprio ambiente cotidiano do pesquisador.

Destacam-se, no escopo desta análise, as crônicas "Cabotinos", "*Chers Confrères*", "Cordões", "A musa das ruas", "Os trabalhadores de estiva", "A fome negra" e "Na favela". Nesses textos, identifica-se que, embora o autor preste deferência à ostentação urbanística e à modernização da República, não se priva de denunciar o violento contraste entre as moradias precárias no Morro da Providência – ocupado pelos ex-combatentes das forças governamentais que atuaram em Canudos – e a retórica de um Rio de Janeiro que "se civiliza". Enquanto alguns escritos expõem a aspereza do trabalho na estiva, descrita como uma "morte lenta entre os pesos"; outros transitam pela leveza sofisticada da vida boêmia, inventariam a cultura do carnaval de rua como

elemento de nivelamento social, ou mapeiam cançonetas e modinhas cuja historicidade constitui um valioso repositório para a compreensão da vida urbana.

A partir da delimitação dessa seleta de crônicas, e sob o pano de fundo dos debates em torno da brasilidade engendrados pelo Estado Novo e suas interseções com o movimento modernista – aqui focalizados na recepção crítica de Cassiano Ricardo –, o presente artigo estrutura-se em duas seções fundamentais. A primeira centra-se na leitura ricardiana sobre Machado de Assis, mapeando pontos de contato e distanciamento em relação ao cosmopolitismo etnográfico de João do Rio. A segunda realiza operação semelhante no que tange a Euclides da Cunha e à *flânerie* bandeirante do cronista carioca. Em ambos os casos, o que fica patente é o equilíbrio não desprovido de tensão entre as tendências localistas e cosmopolitas, entre singularidade e cópia, configurando uma dialética perene acerca do que constitui o componente nacional.

1. João do Rio: o cosmopolita etnográfico

A Primeira Guerra Mundial colocou em xeque o otimismo característico da *Belle Époque*, repercutindo na intelectualidade brasileira por meio de uma série de questionamentos sobre a construção da ideia de nação e de um programa de futuro para as artes literárias. Diante da efervescência da década de 1920 – marcada pelo esfacelamento da Política do Café com Leite e pelo advento do Tenentismo, períodos não vivenciados por Paulo Barreto –, observa-se a emergência do movimento modernista, capitaneado pelas elites culturais paulistas. Nesse cenário, destacaram-se nomes como Graça Aranha, Mário de Andrade, Oswald de Andrade, Menotti Del Picchia, Guilherme de Almeida e Paulo Prado. Posteriormente, parcela expressiva desses intelectuais comporia o grupo Bandeira (1936) junto a Cassiano Ricardo, configurando uma ramificação ideológica e estética do movimento da década anterior (Bosi, 2017, p. 391).

O ponto fulcral dessa transição reside no fato de que tanto a geração de 1920 quanto a de 1930-1945, em que pese mobilizarem os mesmos atores sociais, debruçavam-se sobre o problema nacional ao desenvolver teorias acerca da formação sociológica do país. O debate orbitava em torno do que significava ser brasileiro: buscava-se delimitar as especificidades da identidade e da cultura locais, bem como determinar de que maneira a nação deveria ser manejada politicamente e representada na estética subjacente.

O embate que se verifica no Estado Novo é demonstrado de maneira sintética por Monica Velloso na antinomia que vincula literatura-subjetividade-litoral-cosmopolitismo em contraposição a sociologia-objetividade-sertão-brasilidade. A nacionalidade, tema central das formulações dos intelectuais da época, apresenta-se cindida entre duas realidades, a do litoral e a do sertão, em uma divisão geográfica de saberes, evidenciando uma clivagem entre aqueles intelectuais que viam o Brasil literariamente, do ponto de vista do litoral e da cidade, e aqueles que o enxergavam sociologicamente, da perspectiva do sertão e do interior. Em outras palavras, houve uma sofisticação da tese dos "dois Brasis" (Velloso, 1988, pp. 244–245).

Os intelectuais estadonovistas, de viés conservador, deram continuidade ao cientificismo positivista do século anterior e orientaram seus debates para a "realidade nacional". A literatura produzida por esse grupo passou a ser trabalhada de forma pragmática e objetiva, visando à descrição sociológica do verdadeiro Brasil, que tem o sertão e o interior como seu cerne. Desse ponto de vista, a nação autêntica não poderia estar no litoral e na cidade. O retrato do país, compreendido como reprodução imagética e documental do real, não admitia como tema os

centros urbanos, tampouco tolerava parâmetros estéticos baseados em uma linguagem subjetiva, sentimental e disruptiva dos padrões formais da língua portuguesa.

O naturalismo, que em tempos anteriores e por um breve período fora combatido por Machado de Assis, continuava a figurar como a norma a ser seguida. Consequentemente, a maioria dos escritores cariocas orientados pela temática urbana – que abordavam a Rua do Ouvidor, os salões aristocráticos de Botafogo ou os subúrbios humildes, grupo no qual se incluíam Machado e João do Rio – passou a ser proscrita. Sob a ótica do regime, essa produção refletia uma literatura importada e cosmopolita, deslocada no Novo Mundo e, portanto, subsidiária de uma visão externa e deturpada da realidade e identidade locais. Tratava-se de uma perspectiva subjetivista, ficcional, associada a uma projeção exógena e, por conseguinte, artificial do Brasil. Desse modo, a ruptura operada pelos modernistas paulistas, enquanto grupo atuante, passou a significar também a ruptura com Machado de Assis, outrora lido como um pré-modernista.

Machado, assim como os modernistas, encontrava-se afastado da sociedade e, portanto, incapaz de apreendê-la. Sob essa perspectiva crítica, o uso da irreverência, da ironia e da abordagem jocosa não os tornava aptos a lidar com a realidade, que aparecia sempre misturada à ficção. A perplexidade e o ceticismo modernistas não se coadunavam com as premissas da constatação e do testemunho, objetivos primordiais da literatura. Ao contrário, promoviam a dessacralização da arte, ou seja, a abolição da ideia de inviolabilidade do fazer artístico e a ruptura com quaisquer restrições ou parâmetros de ordem estética, fática ou moral.

Cassiano Ricardo aprofunda a chave de leitura do alheamento à identidade nacional no ensaio *O bandeirante Euclides*, publicado originalmente em 1959. Na obra, o crítico contrapõe de forma sistemática o perfil psicológico e estético de Machado de Assis ao modelo de brasilidade euclidiano:

> A inteligência de Machado é daquelas referidas por Henry Massis: *souffre d'une vacance abominable* em face dos problemas brasileiros. Está sempre contaminando, por um negativismo sorridente mas chuvinha miúda, que corrói [...] toda e qualquer convicção a respeito dos valores da vida. Negativismo próprio do litoral. [...] Nunca seria um modelo, ou uma simples indicação, no domínio das virtudes bandeirantes. A sua formação, o seu pessimismo, jamais lhe dariam o ímpeto, a coragem para afrontar o desconhecido. O seu profundo desdém pelo sertão o impediria de se meter com gente rústica ou de falar tupi. O seu desejo de não parecer que era mestiço, escondendo a própria origem, o teria obstado, naturalmente, de se macular na companhia daqueles bandoleros de San Pablo [...] Não é preciso, entretanto, este divertimento à custa de hipóteses. Bastará o confronto do *Brás Cubas* com *Os Sertões*. (Ricardo, 2000, p. 3)

Muitos foram os ataques contra Machado e sua obra nesse mesmo tom. Foi chamado de autor desenraizado, bruxo maldito (o "bruxo do Cosme Velho"), fascinado pelas paixões e perversões humanas. Além de padecer, na visão ricardiana, de alienação, fuga, descompromisso com a nação e descaso frente aos problemas políticos, sua obra, de difícil compreensão, tampouco se comunicava com o público – a relação autor-público sendo outro ditame estadonovista, segundo seus intelectuais.

Podem-se levantar, diante disso, inúmeros aspectos das invectivas contra Machado que podem ser identificadas na análise das crônicas de João do Rio: primeiro, a ideia de que Machado sofria a "hemiplegia do litoral", ou seja, pertencia a uma tipologia de autores que se classificavam como "europeus, cosmopolitas, litorâneos, embora nascidos no Brasil"; além disso, a

concepção de que sua obra estava maculada por um "cosmopolitismo dissolvente" (Ricardo, 2000, p. 2).

Da mesma forma que Machado, João do Rio, o "repórter maldito da noite carioca", faz claras referências, em seus escritos, a suas leituras estrangeiras e demonstra apreço por autores europeus. Sem dúvida, Paulo Barreto configura-se como um cosmopolita, sendo impensável que Cassiano Ricardo hesitasse em tachá-lo como dissolvente – isto é, como formador de um público alienado das verdadeiras questões nacionais. Contudo, não constitui o escopo deste trabalho promover um diálogo direto com o ensaísta do regime, embora caso o ideólogo varguista analisasse o cosmopolitismo do cronista carioca, fatalmente encontraria dificuldades em enquadrá-lo.

De todo modo, João do Rio recorre a um sem-número de estrangeirismos e expressões em outros idiomas. Em meio à linguagem muitas vezes coloquial de suas crônicas, opera a importação de vocábulos sem qualquer tentativa de tradução ou explicação ao leitor. A lista é extensa quando descreve a sociedade do *five o'clock* e das *saisons*, as *modern girls* e os *flirtations*, os *chopps* e os *music-halls*, as *jazz-bands* e o *fox-trot*, os *tramways* e os *land-trotters* – enfim, tudo aquilo de *spleenético* ou *snob* encontrável na *urbs*. O autor chega a extremos no emprego da ironia por meio de efeitos metalinguísticos, como na crônica "*Chers Confrères*", na qual explica que os jornalistas estrangeiros em *tournées* desertam os *boulevards*, metem-se num transatlântico e saltam neste país – *le pays des palmiers où chantent les sabiás* (Barreto, 2009, p. 162) – uma referência direta à "Canção do exílio" (1843) do poeta romântico Gonçalves Dias.

Mas não se pode apreender, nos termos de Cassiano, um atributo dissolvente no cosmopolitismo de João do Rio. Pelo próprio argumento de Cassiano Ricardo para justificar sua crítica – qual seja, o de que não há comunicação entre autor e público –, verifica-se que esta é abundante na obra do cronista carioca.

A relação autor-público constituía um requisito da cartilha do Estado Novo, elemento que se faz notar no escritor carioca até mesmo em uma crônica como "*Chers Confrères*". Nesse texto, o cronista constrói um texto repleto de termos estrangeiros justamente para surtir a reação de estranhamento no brasileiro comum diante de um viajante verborrágico com ares de aventureiro. O incômodo do leitor espelha o embaraço da situação descrita. O público de Paulo Barreto partilha a sensação de inadequação e o ridículo da cena. O autor consegue transmitir sua mensagem, seja pela exposição dos estrangeiros que circulavam no Rio de Janeiro do início do século XX provocando ininteligibilidade no contato com a população local, seja pela maleabilidade de suas escolhas vocabulares, como se verifica em outras crônicas.

Por outro lado, as crônicas-reportagem eram marcadamente pessoais, tratando do cotidiano do autor e de acontecimentos que ele buscava apurar *in loco*. Nada mais distante da imagem do intelectual elitista, encastelado em sua torre de marfim – arquétipo frequentemente atribuído a Machado de Assis ou aos modernistas, que atuavam sobretudo no campo ficcional e da imaginação. O caráter documental de sua obra antecipa, de certo modo, requisitos que seriam caros ao projeto nacionalista posterior, realizando-se no próprio *modus operandi* de João do Rio: o autor consegue contrabalançar o elitismo da técnica com sua "etnografia".

Em *As religiões no Rio* – compilação de 1904 das crônicas publicadas na coluna homônima da *Gazeta de Notícias* –, o escritor adentra os espaços das várias crenças professadas na cidade. Ele entrevista líderes religiosos, descreve ritos e transcreve hinos sacros nas línguas de origem de cada fé inventariada. Trata-se de um autêntico trabalho etnográfico: o autor flana pela cidade,

transitando de locais suntuosos, como "A Igreja Positivista" na Glória, a territórios marginalizados e criminalizados pelo Estado, como os terreiros de candomblé da zona portuária e do Morro da Providência.

A postura do escritor, entretanto, oscilava entre a denúncia solene da tragédia social e o deslumbramento diante do exótico, cético e irônico; dividia-se, ainda, entre o registro das mazelas dos subúrbios e o entusiasmo pelas reformas urbanas e avanços tecnológicos. Essa dinâmica não o impedia de lamentar o abandono ou o desaparecimento de costumes tradicionais. É o que se observa nas crônicas "O último burro", em que descreve a derradeira viagem de um bonde de tração animal, e "A decadência da arte do Guignol", em que relata o ocaso desse teatro de fantoches. Embora importado de Paris, o Guignol logrou ganhar vida local ao incorporar enredos da história nacional, cantigas à moda dos repentes nordestinos e personagens inéditos, como o João Minhoca.

Portanto, não se poderia atribuir a ele a pecha de mero pessimista ou cético. Sua visão da modernidade e do próprio Brasil revela-se mais pragmática, objetiva e desapaixonada, pautada pelo mapeamento de contradições políticas e sociais. O diálogo da crônica "Cabotinos", presente no livro *Vida vertiginosa* (1911), ilustra essa postura ao encenar o embate entre um "velho político" e um "jornalista moço":

> – V. Ex. hoje está deliciosamente pessimista...
>
> – Estou a dizer coisas velhas com um certo pejo de as repetir.
>
> O homem moderno não tem nem pessimismo nem optimismo, porque não tem alma. O homem moderno trata da sua vida, vê se não perde a ocasião de apanhar o seu, que é quase sempre o dos outros, livre e desembaraçadamente. (Barreto, 1911, p. 186)

O diagnóstico do entrevistado aponta que a totalidade dos brasileiros manifesta inclinação ao cabotinismo e ao exibicionismo, sob a justificativa de que "somos um país de chefes", constituído por doutores ou coronéis, mas invariavelmente chefes.

Com efeito, constata-se que a influência de valores alienígenas nas crônicas de João do Rio não se reduz à mera arte mimética. Tais produções resguardam os traços da "força original da terra", uma vez que articulam a "linguagem brasileira" da urbe, gerando uma expressão artística que expõe a violência e a pujança de um mundo novo urbanizado – ou em vias de urbanização. Esses epítetos foram mobilizados por Cassiano Ricardo na exaltação de Euclides da Cunha em *Marcha para Oeste*.

O intelectual paulistano explica, em seu tratado sobre o bandeirismo no Brasil, que a escolha do título "para Oeste", em detrimento de "para o Oeste" – prescindindo, portanto, do artigo masculino –, foi intencional:

> Indica apenas a direção, sem determinar ainda a região que viria a ser conquistada pelo bandeirante. Para Oeste quer dizer apenas em oposição ao litoral. Qualquer deslocação do litoral para o interior seria, inevitavelmente, para Oeste. [...]
>
> Não se tratava, como hoje, do Oeste do Brasil.
>
> Direi então: para Oeste, ao início, para um Oeste sem saber até onde; para o Oeste, depois, – para um Oeste já determinado. No primeiro caso, o rumo; no segundo, a região. (Ricardo, 1959, v. 1, pp. XLV–XLVI)

Entretanto, se Euclides da Cunha consagra-se como o arquétipo do escritor bandeirante – modelo de uma escrita sociológica amalgamada à literatura –, o reconhecimento do litoral como

ponto de partida emerge na própria obra de Cassiano Ricardo. O bandeirante consubstancia-se na figura do paulista, o qual desponta no litoral e se espraia pelas regiões interiores.[1] Historicamente, o mato-grossense, o paranaense, o catarinense, o rio-grandense e o fluminense, constituem-se, todos, como paulistas (Ricardo, 1959, v. 2, p. 303).

Em termos efetivos, Cassiano Ricardo inaugura uma nova abordagem simbólica acerca do bandeirante que, até a Revolução Constitucionalista de 1932, restringia-se a identificar tal figura ao paulista e às elites de São Paulo opositoras a Getúlio Vargas. Em *Marcha para Oeste*, em consonância com os propósitos do projeto nacionalista do Estado Novo, o autor mobiliza o aparato empírico de historiadores como Taunay, Paulo Prado e Alfredo Ellis para mitificar o bandeirante como pioneiro na gênese do Estado brasileiro e insígnia da representação nacional. A estrutura histórica da chefia de mestiços indígenas na bandeira converter-se-ia, assim, em uma propensão popular direcionada a um governo forte, no qual a cooperação, a solidariedade e o sofrimento no sertão atuariam como elementos fundantes e niveladores das assimetrias sociais, assegurando a unidade nacional (Abud, 2019, pp. 176–178).

Nesse diapasão, Euclides da Cunha configurar-se-ia naquilo que a sociologia de Max Weber (2015) define como o tipo ideal do escritor bandeirante, cuja trajetória intelectual parte do litoral rumo ao interior. Paralelamente, João do Rio pode ser interpretado como um homólogo desse "bandeirante", na medida em que transita de um litoral "cosmopolita" em direção a um "interior nacional" e nativo, efetuando deslocamentos através das clivagens e hierarquias sociais.[2]

Como se demonstrará adiante, João do Rio movia-se pelos rincões da urbe na condição de *flâneur* – categoria central na sociologia urbana de Walter Benjamin (1989) – contudo obstinado a descortinar e desbravar o espaço social. Movido por um propósito manifesto, o cronista adentra geografias marginalizadas e evitadas, desvelando a sociabilidade, as práticas cotidianas e os conflitos intrínsecos a essas regiões que, por negligência, receio ou desconhecimento, restam preteridas, inclusive pelo poder público. Ao converter tal alteridade em matéria literária, ele opera, fundamentalmente, a mediação que articula a obra ao seu público.

2. João do Rio: o *flâneur* bandeirante

Foram destacadas na seção anterior a tradição regionalista e positivista do Estado Novo, em consonância com o declínio político do Sudeste em prol do Nordeste e do Sul do país. Semelhante inflexão projetou-se na literatura, a qual passou a ser legitimada como documento dotado de capacidade para refletir a face do Brasil real, à guisa de uma fotografia. A produção literária equivaleria à nação, e a nação seria a região, conceitualizada como interior (Velloso, 1988, p. 255).

Machado de Assis constituiria a antítese do projeto intelectual estadonovista – com suas raízes biográficas e vida particular reclusas em uma câmara escura, apartado de sua escrita na relação autor-obra e expressando, eminentemente, a ficção e a imaginação. Euclides da Cunha, por outro lado, figuraria como o autor-símbolo, arquétipo e herói da literatura do regime, com suas origens familiares interioranas expostas à luz, e cuja escrita desvelava, de maneira objetiva, essa mesma trajetória pessoal. Ademais, a articulação autor-obra estabelecer-se-ia nitidamente na temática, na seriedade e no pragmatismo da produção euclidiana. O Estado Novo, afinal,

[1]Sobre as diferenças e proximidades entre o paulista, de base geográfica, e o bandeirante, dotado de sentido simbólico e com esteio na tradição, veja-se Queiroz (1992, p. 80).

[2]A propósito da guinada nacional do bandeirantismo, passando das entradas sertanistas colonizadoras para um conceito alargado e nacionalizado de bandeira, veja-se Moog (1957, a partir da p. 235).

tendeu a ser o palco da proliferação e da recuperação de narrativas autobiográficas, tanto em romances quanto em ensaios sociológicos. Evidenciam essa tendência, por exemplo, os intelectuais pernambucanos Joaquim Nabuco, com o resgate de *Minha formação* (1900), e Gilberto Freyre, pelo impacto de *Casa-grande & senzala* (1933).

Os Sertões (1902), de Euclides da Cunha, nasce justamente de sua atividade de jornalista correspondente na Guerra de Canudos, em 1897, conjuntura na qual o relato evidencia o declínio da subjetividade e a ascensão da ciência. A narrativa opera o retrato daqueles eventos em virtude da observação direta do autor. Monica Velloso, citando Luiz Costa Lima, explica o culto à observação existente na época, momento em que o sujeito-autor emudeceria suas emoções e juízos de valor, conforme "o princípio da fidelidade, segundo o qual ao escritor cabe tão-somente o papel de fazer falar o seu objeto" (Velloso, 1988, p. 257).

A neutralidade do temperamento e o pleno domínio do cientificismo, do rigor e da precisão – produtores das "verdades positivas" –, não são encontrados, todavia, na obra de Paulo Barreto. Subsiste o culto à observação, embora permeado pelas impressões do autor, manifestas seja pelo narrador, seja por outro personagem inserido na crônica. A indignação, a revolta, a acusação e a denúncia social constituem elementos estruturantes de sua produção.

Nesse ponto distanciam-se Euclides da Cunha e João do Rio, ambos imortais da ABL (Euclides desde 1903, na cadeira n. 7) e jornalistas de campo fluminenses – o da guerra do interior e o da vida vertiginosa dos conflitos urbanos. A divergência explicita-se na medida em que a denúncia social de João do Rio sobressai à sua literatura. Trata-se de uma dinâmica inversa à de Euclides, cuja magnitude da epopeia sobre Canudos obscureceu a injustiça denunciada, perpetrada pelo litoral contra o interior baiano de Antônio Conselheiro – e, portanto, contra a própria nação –, fato este que o próprio autor viria a lamentar em missiva a Machado de Assis. As amarras do cientificismo positivista, capital de consagração no meio literário-intelectual (Bourdieu, 1996), cobraram seu tributo aos seus adeptos.

O cronista carioca seria o candidato por excelência a discípulo dessa matriz de pensamento. Sua formação foi marcada pela convivência com os positivistas ortodoxos do Apostolado Positivista. Seu pai, Alfredo Coelho Barreto, era um fervoroso seguidor dos preceitos comtistas a ponto de Paulo Barreto ter sido o primeiro a receber o sacramento inicial da instituição, equivalente ao batismo católico (Lins, 2009, p. 574). Contudo, a influência do positivismo na obra de João do Rio – embora marcante na fase inicial de seus escritos – foi arrefecida nos períodos de maturidade e consagração do autor (Rodrigues, 1996).

No que tange à aproximação entre Euclides e João do Rio, faz-se necessário retomar a análise de *Marcha para Oeste* e do fenômeno do bandeirismo, cuja definição é assim sintetizada por Cassiano Ricardo:

> Não se trata apenas da bandeira, instrumento específico de uma sociedade e de um sistema de vida, mas de "bandeirismo". E como quem pratica "atos de bandeirismo" pode ser chamado bandeirante, a palavra "bandeirante" toma um sentido mais amplo; sinônimo de pioneiro, de sertanista, de grande empreendedor; é o que funda cidades, o que atende à voz do Oeste, o que toma parte em expedições para o interior do país, o que emigra de uma região para outra, (de um foco de produção para outro, o de atração) com qualquer um dos objetivos da bandeira. (Ricardo, 1959, v. 2, p. 303)

Os textos de *A alma encantadora das ruas* (1908), veiculados a princípio na *Gazeta de Notícias* e na *Revista Kosmos* entre 1904 e 1907, partilham do espírito da bandeira e da prática dos "atos de bandeirismo" teorizados por Cassiano Ricardo.

Sob essa ótica, um eventual parecer de Cassiano Ricardo acerca da produção de Paulo Barreto decerto se deteria em crônicas como "Cordões". Nela, o crítico literário poderia estabelecer um paralelo com Mário de Andrade, seu antigo parceiro do grupo Bandeira. Nesta narrativa, Paulo Barreto inventaria os festejos momescos e as marchinhas como elementos constitutivos da folia carioca e, por extensão, da identidade brasileira. O cronista atribui o enraizamento dessa cultura nacional aos "grupos da Gamboa, do Saco, da Saúde, de S. Diogo, da Cidade Nova", localizando a gênese dos cordões no "*Afoxé* africano, dia em que se debocha a religião" (Barreto, 2008, p. 147).

Contudo, essa etnografia do carnaval não passaria infensa, primeiramente, ao "deslize" de uma concepção universalista de mundo e a uma subsequente reação cosmopolita de aversão às turbas – contrastantes com a ordem urbana idealizada – antes de se render ao reconhecimento dessa manifestação popular:

> Há em todas as sociedades, em todos os meios, em todos os prazeres, um núcleo dos mais persistentes, que através do tempo guarda a chama pura do entusiasmo. [...] Os cordões são os núcleos irredutíveis da folia carioca, brotam como um fulgor mais vivo e são antes de tudo bem do povo, bem da terra, bem da alma encantadora e bárbara do Rio. (Barreto, 2008, p. 143)

Nesse mesmo sentido, nota-se, na crônica "A musa das ruas", a coexistência do erudito com o popular por meio das modinhas e cançonetas dos poetas das ruas, manifestações que agradavam tanto à "ralé" quanto às mocinhas dos salões. Se este gênero musical teve por inspiração a poética portuguesa e se em Paris ele era "a rapsódia da miséria e a vergasta irônica", em terras cariocas o cenário diferiu. Na capital federal, "a Musa foi a senhora capaz de entrar num salão e se conservar num ambiente respeitável" (Barreto, 2008, p. 238), em um processo de dignificação das "quadras mancas" que traduzem o patriotismo, a fé, a pilhéria e o anseio da população e da alma do Brasil.

Diante disso, a incursão empreendida por João do Rio durante três anos pelas ruas do Rio de Janeiro configura-se genuinamente como uma expressão de bandeirismo. Ao atender à "voz do Oeste" daquilo que pioneiramente adentrou, observou e descreveu, o autor não se contentou em travar expedições em uma única seara temática ou região da cidade. Em última análise, Paulo Barreto estaria, décadas antes, seguindo o conselho de Cassiano Ricardo:

> Um caminho aberto é uma direção imposta. Estabeleceu-se a direção – e se o litoral continua sendo a antítese do Oeste – é claro que os caminhos dos pioneiros terão sempre que ser retomados para que a sociedade se desloque dos seus pontos de fixação litorânea para o *hinterland* que a espera, rico e deserto, como uma determinação histórica à espera de uma confirmação sociológica. (Ricardo, 1959, v. 2, p. 367)

Tal dinâmica se verifica primordialmente em "Os trabalhadores de estiva" e "A fome negra", crônicas nas quais o escritor carioca abdica da temática cultural para se voltar aos problemas sociais manifestos nos espaços periféricos da cidade. Na primeira narrativa, o autor analisa atores sociais marginalizados pela própria força policial. "São criaturas ferozes! Nem a tiro", afirma um delegado da época. João do Rio, em contrapartida, os descreve como homens de fisionomias resignadas à luz do sol, dotados de excessivo desenvolvimento muscular, palidez embaciada e

mãos degeneradas pelo trabalho. Sob sua ótica, eles aparentam um "baixo-relevo de desilusão", embora se movimentem como flechas na "ronda diabólica" (Barreto, 2008, pp. 161–163).

"Aqueles seres ligavam-se aos guinchos; eram parte da máquina; agiam inconscientemente", observa João do Rio sobre os estivadores (Barreto, 2008, p. 164). O cronista adota uma postura etnográfica contundente diante das cenas que testemunha: dialoga com os sujeitos, perscruta suas preocupações e concede-lhes voz. O texto revela que o autor não é movido apenas pelo espanto, mas pelo reconhecimento da "força de vontade incrível" desse grupo, que já se organizara em classe profissional e reivindicava direitos por meio de reuniões e greves. Em sua reconstituição histórica, até a conquista da redução da jornada de trabalho de nove horas, João do Rio rememora que a estiva figurava como o destino comum dos malandros da Gamboa.

"Depois da revolta, começou a se fazer sentir o elemento brasileiro e, desde então, foi uma longa e pertinaz conquista" (Barreto, 2008, p. 165). Subentende-se que o autor se refere à Revolta da Vacina (1904), momento em que estivadores e foguistas percorreram as empresas de navegação para exigir a suspensão dos serviços por dois dias (Carvalho, 1987, p. 109). O episódio vincula-se também à União dos Operários Estivadores, que se consolidou historicamente como o primeiro sindicato do Brasil (Arantes, 2010, p. 56). De tal jaez era a etnografia bandeirante de João do Rio.

Por sua vez, em "A fome negra", o cronista relata a vida dos trabalhadores da mineração de manganês e carvão na Ilha da Conceição, em Niterói. A Fome Negra é a denominação do trecho no qual se alojavam, em um barracão, os trabalhadores da atividade extrativista, próximo à pedreira localizada na parte norte da ilha. Percebe-se, de imediato, que a temática desta crônica, à semelhança da anterior, evoca a influência da obra *Germinal* (1885), de Émile Zola. O autor francês era amplamente admirado por João do Rio, a ponto de o cronista ter adotado, entre outros, o pseudônimo de Claude no início de sua carreira – o mesmo utilizado por Zola (Rodrigues, 1996, p. 49).

As condições subumanas de existência são detalhadas por meio de frases curtas e precisas, isentas de impressões pessoais ou figuras de linguagem:

> Mas, já na luz incerta daquele quadrilátero, eles levantavam-se, impelidos pela necessidade como as feras de uma *ménagerie* ao chicote do domador. Não lavaram o rosto, não descansaram. Ainda estremunhados, sorviam uma água quente, da cor do pó que lhes impregnava a pele, partindo o pão com escaras da mesma fuligem metálica, e poucos eram os que se sentavam, com as pernas em compasso, tristes. (Barreto, 2008, p. 168)

A mão de obra era composta por imigrantes portugueses e espanhóis – aldeões "ingênuos" aliciados por agentes no porto ou que transladavam diretamente dos navios para os saveiros de trabalho, com o escopo de acúmulo pecuniário. "Uma vez apanhados pelo mecanismo de aços, ferros e carne humana, uma vez utensílio apropriado ao andamento da máquina, tornam-se autômatos com a teimosia de objetos movidos a vapor" (Barreto, 2008, pp. 169–170).

Reitera-se, com isso, o argumento da automação dos trabalhadores submetidos a condições indignas. Nesse cenário, a sujeição decorre do total desconhecimento da capital federal, uma vez que se encontravam isolados no interior de uma ilha. À semelhança do argumento desenvolvido por Cassiano Ricardo, décadas mais tarde, a respeito dos seringueiros cearenses na Amazônia, João do Rio deparou-se com pioneiros imigrantes na exploração de um ambiente inóspito e segregado:

> [...] limitam o Brasil às ilhas do trabalho, quando muito aos recantos primitivos de Niterói. Há homens que, anos depois de desembarcar, nunca pisaram no Rio e outros que, quase uma existência na ilha, voltaram para a terra com algum dinheiro e a certeza da morte. (Barreto, 2008, p. 170)

A crônica "Na favela – Trecho inédito do Rio: a morada dos gatunos e desordeiros" (1903) constitui o epítome do bandeirismo de Paulo Barreto, por registrar a primeira vez que alguém "sobe o morro" para documentá-lo, antecipando-se inclusive às próprias incursões das forças de segurança pública. O cenário em tela é o Morro da Providência, a primeira favela do Brasil e uma das consequências mais notáveis da Guerra de Canudos (1896-1897), travada na Bahia entre as forças republicanas e os seguidores de Antônio Conselheiro.

Publicada na *Gazeta de Notícias* um ano após o lançamento de *Os Sertões*, essa produção anônima do início da carreira do autor teve sua autoria estabelecida recentemente, com base na datação, no veículo de publicação, no estilo e na temática abordada (Barreto, 2015, p. 89). O escritor carioca, que, conforme já assinalado, utilizava diversos pseudônimos nos primeiros anos de carreira, também publicava algumas crônicas apocrifamente. Não obstante, a abordagem etnográfica do objeto faz-se presente e evidencia o pioneirismo do autor que, apesar de contar com apenas 21 anos em 1903, já demonstrava a desenvoltura de quem produzia profissionalmente desde os 17 anos.

"Se tens coragem, vai lá acima. Eu fico. Muito cuidadinho com a pele. Adeus!" (Barreto, 2015, p. 84). Foi este o conselho de um "prudente cavalheiro" no sopé do morro. Por sua vez, o informante que acompanhava João do Rio na empreitada quis ter certeza da decisão do escritor:

> – Mas vem cá, homem, escuta. É impossível ir lá acima sem uma informação.
>
> – Ora, os jornais têm dado, a polícia sabe.
>
> Neste Morro da Providência moram os mais terríveis malandros do mundo, com mulheres tremendas e assassinatos semanais.
>
> – Isso é literário demais!
>
> – Literário? Olha, só gostas dos romances do visconde Ponson ou do visconde Montepin, tens campo vasto para examinar de perto uma sociedade como a inventada por eles.
>
> – Muitas mortes?
>
> – Semanalmente.
>
> – Pois então subo. (Barreto, 2015, p. 85)

Segue então o autor no caminho íngreme, descrevendo as habitações com o mesmo espanto manifesto anos depois no relato sobre os barracões da Ilha da Conceição:

> [...] são baiucas, são pocilgas, são indescritíveis. A maior parte não tem metro e meio de altura e consta apenas de quatro estacas formando um quadrilátero com o chão por soalho. Aí se acumulam famílias numerosas, crianças nuas, com o ventre enorme, mulheres amarelas e duvidosas quase despidas. As febres grassam em todo o morro. Não são só essas espécies de casas, lôbregas, sem luz, causa das moléstias. Ladeando o caminho grandes poças de águas estagnadas exalam um terrível mau cheiro. Ouvem-se a todo momento gritos, pragas, aparecem caras coléricas às portas, cachorros uivam. (Barreto, 2015, p. 85)

João do Rio interpela "um tipo alto, a carregar água" e inicia suas investigações. O morador relata que paga aluguel a um senhorio e que o morro é dividido em quatro partes, cada uma

com um administrador. Menciona, ainda, que há áreas mais pacíficas, em que só ocorrem casos de brigas familiares, de "homens que batem nas mulheres". João do Rio consegue conversar com "um dos administradores dessa interessante vida", que, "prestativo, leva-nos a todos os lados do morro informando-nos". Tendo em vista que o jogo de capoeira estava proscrito desde 1890, o objetivo do autor é levantar dados sobre os capoeiras, os assassinos de aluguel da época:

> O morro da Providência sempre foi um lugar célebre de capoeiragem e assassinatos. Outrora, no lugar onde hoje existe o Cruzeiro, mandado fazer pela Santa Casa, bem no pico da montanha, é que se davam as lições de capoeiragem. Chamavam o china seco e a polícia monárquica nunca pôde acabar com o centro de horror. Depois da Guerra de Canudos, os mais ousados facínoras voltaram a habitar o píncaro do morro denominado Favela, porque no reduto não há polícia que não seja derrotada. (Barreto, 2015, p. 86)

Percebe-se nesse trecho uma sutileza que liga os "dois Brasis", não do ponto de vista da geografia, mas da perspectiva dos acontecimentos históricos e das dinâmicas sociais. A "favela" não adquiriu, nos primórdios, um significado puramente botânico ou migratório. Simbolicamente, trata-se dos homens que se decepcionaram e romperam com a estrutura governamental, e fundaram um novo modo de vida no alto de um monte – os conselheiristas fortificados em Canudos, defendendo a tradição religiosa do sertão, e os ex-soldados fortificados no Rio de Janeiro, preenchendo o vazio da omissão estatal.

Para derrotar os "favelados" de Antônio Conselheiro, vitoriosos e impenetráveis nas primeiras três expedições da guerra, seria preciso mobilizar uma força descomunal e mesmo desproporcional, chegando ao ponto da chacina. Quanto aos "favelados" da Providência – dadas as proporções que o povoamento do morro atingiu –, foram incorporados como poder paralelo e subsidiário, o que em muito explica as dinâmicas dos morros cariocas atualmente. Esse fenômeno das interações entre poder estatal e poder local, no início do século XX, foi identificado com propriedade por Paulo Barreto:

> A polícia resolveu um interessante meio de acabar com tais cenas: fazer os facínoras "prestar serviços ao delegado", como dizem. Essa ingênua ideia deu em resultado serem aproveitados os valentões da pior espécie, que se tornaram terríveis e são agora os diretores dos conflitos. (Barreto, 2015, p. 87)

Uma "infâmia em pleno centro da cidade", constata João do Rio. Contudo, ainda havia um último reduto por descobrir. É com o *ethos* de um pesquisador de campo intrépido, para quem a vocação de informar vale pôr a vida em risco, que ele se lança à seguinte incursão:

> – Quer ir à farsa?
>
> Este lugar, para o qual se desce por escarpas terríveis, é uma gruta que toma um grande ângulo do morro, e dá de frente para a pedreira. Aí vivem gatunos, assassinos, perseguidos pela polícia, que atracam à noite os trabalhadores e sustentam-se de aves roubadas, de burros e cabras que apanham a jeito.
>
> – V Sa. dá licença, mas não é bom ir lá sem gente.
>
> – Por quê?
>
> – Porque recebem a tiro.
>
> – Deixamos o informante e descemos.
>
> – A gruta é profundíssima e escura. Quando lhe chegamos à boca, um grito soa e reboa em prolongado eco.

– Olá! Que quer você? E salta um homem nu da cintura para cima, estrábico. Não há nada mais fácil do que a mentira calma para sustar a raiva desses impulsivos.

Quando o homem chega junto a nós, perguntamos muito tranquilos pelo primeiro nome do assassino que nos vem à cabeça.

– Não está! É servicinho?

– É.

– Às ordens de V. Sa. (Barreto, 2015, pp. 87–88)

Estabelecida a confiança – ou pelo menos a simpatia –, o informante começa a explicar quantos pertencem ao grupo, os horários em que estão no local e o tempo que permanecem ali, revelando um submundo, herdeiro de Canudos, incrustado no interior da capital, que se abre ao conhecimento do público leitor. Como dito por Cassiano Ricardo, "todo brasileiro que abre caminhos novos é, hoje, um bandeirante" (1959, v. 2, p. 391). Diante disso, pode-se afirmar sem hesitação que o *flâneur* João do Rio retomou o caminho antes desbravado pelo bandeirante Euclides.

Considerações finais

As épocas produzem seus grandes nomes na literatura, respaldados em seus círculos sociais de consagração. Alguns escritores são lembrados e imortalizados nas gerações futuras; outros são esquecidos, aguardando uma oportunidade sempre latente de vir a público, enquanto há aqueles descobertos pela primeira vez ou recuperados décadas após sua morte. Paulo Barreto insere-se nesse último grupo. Aclamado pelo público de seu tempo, conseguiu se comunicar com os mais diversos perfis de leitores. Foi profundo conhecedor do mercado, dos círculos literários e dos cânones estéticos de então, mas não se furtou a inovar, misturar estilos e criar o seu próprio, revelando-se, em muitos sentidos, um precursor tanto do modernismo quanto da literatura sociológica do Estado Novo.

João do Rio não viveu o bastante para acompanhar a Semana de 1922 e seus desdobramentos. De fato, seria difícil vislumbrar a figura do dândi, negro, gordo e homossexual, circulando entre a elite literária cosmopolita de São Paulo. Esse distanciamento se pautou não por seus predicados individuais, mas porque o cronista carioca acabou enquadrado em uma chave do século XIX: para os modernistas, simplesmente como um sujeito da *Belle Époque*; e, na visão de Cassiano Ricardo, como um cosmopolita e, portanto, desprovido de brasilidade. O que ficou foi a imagem de um sujeito ultrapassado. Em outras palavras, o *flâneur* cosmopolita obscureceu o etnógrafo.

Porém, por meio da imaginação e da criatividade, Paulo Barreto procurou expressar a realidade social do país, configurando o cenário com os elementos necessários à comunicação dos fatos e à inteligibilidade da mensagem. Ele não buscou recriar a imagem do Brasil e dos brasileiros sob a lupa dos salões eruditos europeus, mas, sim, investigar as origens do que identificou como características da brasilidade. Um cosmopolitismo não dissolvente, diria Cassiano.

Não se poderia, tampouco, associar sua obra à dos intelectuais do Estado Novo, cuja literatura sociológica foi produzida nos moldes do rigor da academia. Sobra-lhe um estilo singular, que consegue compor com uma metodologia de pesquisa etnográfica baseada na entrevista, no testemunho, no uso de informantes, na observação e na documentação. Nos recônditos da cidade, pulsa o interior de João do Rio, que continua sendo, a seu modo, a "força original da terra".

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BRASILIANA: JOURNAL FOR BRAZILIAN STUDIES

O asfalto é nosso palco: a experiência do espetáculo *1961-2013* no contexto das marchas de junho de 2013

Resumo

Este artigo retrata a experiência do espetáculo *1961-2013* do grupo *ZAP 18* (Zona de Arte da Periferia – 18 é o número do endereço do espaço), de Belo Horizonte, no contexto das passeatas de junho de 2013. A peça – montada em 2009 – se estruturava como uma grande linha do tempo e buscava contar a história recente do Brasil, por meio de canções emblemáticas, o olhar da juventude e de movimentos sociais. Coincidência ou não, o espetáculo foi reestruturado no primeiro semestre de 2013 e estava em cartaz justamente nos momentos mais tensos das chamadas "jornadas de junho", que ocorreram no Brasil durante a Copa das Confederações, evento-teste da Fifa para a Copa do Mundo de Futebol de 2014. Por meio de entrevistas com os envolvidos, memórias autoetnográficas e autores que discutem a urbanidade e o movimento das cidades, tentarei estabelecer pontes entre a estrutura da peça e o contexto sociopolítico de 2013.

The street is our stage: the experience of the play *1961-2013* in the 2013 June Marches

Abstract

This article portrays the experience of the play *1961-2013*, from *ZAP 18* (Peripheral Artistic Zone – 18 is the venue's address number), of Belo Horizonte, in the context of the 2013 June Marches in Brazil. The play – from 2009 – was structured as a long timeline and was meant to tell the recent Brazilian history, through remarkable songs, the youth and social movements points of view. Coincidently or not, the play was restructured in the first semester of 2013 and it was playing during the tensest moments of the "June Journeys", which occurred in Brazil during the Confederation Cup, a test event promoted by Fifa, before the World Cup of Football 2014. Through interviews with the artists, personal memories and some authors who discuss the urbanity, I have tried to establish connections between the play and Brazil social political context in 2013.

É o desafio de quem faz teatro e realidade, porque a realidade sempre vai invadir sua sala de ensaio sem pedir licença. Ela não vai bater antes, ela vai arrebentar sua porta.

(Falabella, 2017)

Figura 1

Divulgação da temporada da peça em junho de 2013



Nota. Foto: Talita Oliveira. Fonte: Arquivo *ZAP 18*.

A frase de Cida Falabella, diretora teatral, integrante da *ZAP 18*[1], serve como epígrafe para pensar na característica inacabada do espetáculo *1961-2013*[2], sobretudo em meados de 2013. Na trajetória da peça, o choque entre realidade e teatro, palco e rua, nunca foi tão intenso quanto em junho daquele ano, quando o espetáculo já acumulava quatro anos de carreira e tínhamos mais uma temporada programada. Foi justamente naquele período que milhares de pessoas saíram às ruas para protestar sob diferentes bandeiras e interesses, durante a realização da Copa das Confederações de Futebol, em várias cidades de todo o Brasil[3]. Tratava-se de um evento-teste promovido pela FIFA nos países sede da Copa do Mundo de Futebol. A coincidência torna-se ainda maior, pois estávamos prestes a estrear uma nova versão do trabalho, substituindo artistas da versão original da peça, de 2009.

[1]A *ZAP 18* (Zona de Arte da Periferia) é um coletivo artístico que possui sua sede - de mesmo nome, no bairro Serrano, regional Pampulha de Belo Horizonte – desde 2002 e lá desenvolve sua pesquisa voltada para teatro e realidade(s). Na trajetória do grupo, destacam-se trabalhos como *Esta Noite Mãe Coragem* (2006), *1961-2009* (2009) e *Homem Vazio na Selva da Cidade* (2017), espetáculos que trazem um forte posicionamento do grupo diante de fatos, situações e contextos sociais prementes que fazem parte da rotina de seus integrantes e de seus vizinhos no bairro Serrano e região. Para saber mais: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=14e1Lw9Twz4&t=13s

[2]O espetáculo teve seu nome alterado a cada novo ano. Apesar das muitas mudanças, considero que tivemos duas versões principais: a primeira *1961-2009* e a segunda, *1961-2013*, que serve de base para este texto. A segunda versão completa do trabalho está disponível na página: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pLKOtCik134&t=31s

[3]Para ser justo, o episódio que desencadeou as passeatas Brasil afora foi o aumento de 20 centavos na passagem de ônibus de São Paulo, capital. Com isso, o Movimento Passe Livre (MPL) convocou diversos protestos que levaram multidões às ruas da cidade e várias pessoas "aproveitaram" a ocasião para protestar contra outras coisas, como a corrupção, a realização dos grandes eventos no país. Para saber mais sobre o Movimento Passe Livre, recomendo: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8FacFeGixxY (acesso em 26 de agosto de 2017).

A rotina de apresentações durante aquela temporada, em meio à tensão que percorria o país, era sentida por nós já que nos encontrávamos na fricção cidadãos-artistas, saindo às pressas das passeatas para chegar à *ZAP 18*, receber o público para mais uma noite de apresentação e (tentar) refletir sobre os caminhos dos protestos, a repressão policial e o futuro que se projetava para nós, em um momento turbulento e bastante nebuloso, já que os protestos englobavam insatisfações muitas, algumas bastante contraditórias. Havia uma geração, na qual os atores do espetáculo estavam todos incluídos, que não tinha passado pela efervescência proporcionada pelos grandes atos e concentrações populares dos anos anteriores: a campanha das *Diretas Já*, de 1984, pedindo a retomada democrática, com eleições diretas; ou o movimento dos *caras pintadas*, de 1992, quando milhares de pessoas saíram as ruas para protestar contra o presidente Fernando Collor de Mello, que acuado pelas ruas, pela opinião pública e pelo legislativo, foi o primeiro presidente deposto do cargo.

Depois disso, é possível dizer que os ânimos populares e o ímpeto de ocupar as ruas em protesto arrefeceram. Os movimentos sociais dirão que sempre estiveram nas ruas [e talvez estivessem realmente], protestando contra o que veio na sequência: a política neoliberal iniciada por Itamar Franco e consagrada nos governos Fernando Henrique Cardoso, com o imperativo de retirada de direitos de vários setores sociais, que iam às ruas para protestar. A impressão, no entanto, é que se trataram de movimentos isolados, seja pela narrativa criada pela mídia, seja pela falta de adesão da população como um todo nestas lutas – talvez pelos dois motivos. Depois, com a eleição de Luís Inácio Lula da Silva e um governo de esquerda (centro-esquerda), finalmente, os movimentos sociais viram alguma possibilidade de diálogo, de "sentar à mesa" com o poder público e colocar suas demandas. Houve um inegável arrefecimento das lutas sociais e, consequentemente, um esvaziamento das ruas. A partir dos primeiros anos da década de 2010, para ser exato em 2013, os ânimos se acirravam em torno de um projeto desenvolvimentista de país que estava chegando ao seu limite. Depois de 10 anos de governos do Partido dos Trabalhadores – com a dupla Lula e Dilma Rousseff – parte da população se voltou contra os governantes e, em 2013, saiu às ruas, em grandes passeatas em várias cidades Brasil afora.

Falemos, portanto, de como o espetáculo nos levou até os protestos, do que vimos nas ruas em junho de 2013 e como diretamente os acontecimentos das ruas de Belo Horizonte e de outras cidades do Brasil influenciaram na temporada do espetáculo. Antes, contudo, é preciso contar a trajetória e as pulsões que rendem a primeira versão do espetáculo *1961-2009*, da *ZAP 18*.

Uma peça, duas versões

A peça *1961-2009* pretendeu ser uma longa linha do tempo da história do Brasil, a partir da década de 1960. Os atores usavam seus nomes próprios e se assumiam como sujeitos históricos, "aquele que participa de maneira ativa, mas é também aquele que assume um papel. Estas duas facetas estão presentes na concepção sociológica do termo" (Wautier, 2001, p. 63), o que significava que o ator, também, participava dos processos que narrava, e era evocado a contar sua versão da história do país, de algum modo, concordando com Féral,

> o ator é chamado a "fazer" (*doing*), a "estar presente", a assumir os riscos e a mostrar o fazer (*showing the doing*), em outras palavras, a afirmar a performatividade do processo. A atenção do espectador se coloca na execução do gesto, na criação da forma, na dissolução dos signos e em sua reconstrução permanente. Uma estética da presença se instaura. (Féral, 2008, p. 209)

A encenação se valia de imagens históricas projetadas em uma grande tela que ficava em uma das extremidades da área cênica. A plateia se dispunha em dois compridos lances de arquibancadas, como passarela, com público dos dois lados, uma arquibancada de frente para a outra. Tal disposição podia remeter à rua, a um sambódromo como a Marquês de Sapucaí ou à própria linha do tempo histórica. "Vai passar nessa avenida um samba popular", diz o samba de Chico Buarque, que sintetiza arquétipos da história do Brasil.

Liderados pelo professor e pesquisador Davi de Oliveira Pinto, fizemos uma extensa pesquisa de músicas que marcaram época e remetiam aos processos históricos do país: *Aroeira*, de Geraldo Vandré; *E agora, José?*, de Paulo Diniz; *O Bêbado e a Equilibrista*, de Aldir Blanc, para citar algumas. Outros três elementos fundamentais para a construção dramatúrgica foram: depoimentos colhidos, em vídeo, de integrantes de movimentos sociais[4] que nos ajudaram a entender a dimensão das lutas populares; depoimentos de alunos de nossa oficina para adolescentes, que traziam a percepção de história dos mais jovens para o espetáculo; e os depoimentos pessoais dos atores sob a provocação *o dia em que virei adulto*[5], que buscava misturar narrativas pessoais, com fatos históricos.

Uma vez que o espetáculo fez uma longa carreira [foram seis anos, até 2015], o próprio nome da peça nos servia como provocação e como um dispositivo performativo, ou seja, uma cena "ancorada em alternâncias de fluxos sêmicos e de suportes, o hipersigno teatral, da mutação, da desterritoriedade, da pulsação do híbrido. O contemporâneo contempla o múltiplo, a fusão, a diluição de gêneros: trágico, lírico, épico, dramático; epifania, crueldade e paródia convivem na mesma cena" (Cohen, 2004, p. XXV). Segundo Silva, "este tipo de teatro, chamado sucessivamente de pós-moderno, pós-dramático ou performativo, trouxe também uma série de tensionamentos e de indecibilidades, tanto no que tange a cena e sua estrutura (a sua dramaturgia e os elementos que ela utiliza), quanto à maneira como o ator pensa, cria e atualiza o seu modo de estar-em-cena, além de transformar a relação estabelecida entre ator e espectador, entre palco e plateia" (Silva, 2013, pp. 11–12).

A ideia era atualizar as temporadas sempre, se possível até o dia da apresentação ou da temporada em curso. Dessa forma, fizemos *1961-2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 e 2015*. Sempre que uma nova temporada se avizinhava era preciso voltar à sala de ensaio e pensar em cortes, supressões e adições à nossa longa linha tempo. Via de regra, o pouco tempo para lidar com um conteúdo tão próximo fez com que os ensaios e as soluções de novas cenas fossem um tanto quanto precários. Trabalhávamos quase sempre com a possibilidade de depoimentos e reflexões dos atores, notícias de jornal, também textos e reflexões publicados por outros autores e pensadores sobre a atualidade dos fatos. Embora o trabalho tenha passado por mudanças

[4]Levante Popular da Juventude, Movimento dos Trabalhadores Desempregados, Marcha Mundial das Mulheres, Consulta Popular, Movimento de Cursinhos pré-vestibulares contribuíram para dar complexidade e profundidade à peça, em depoimentos gravados em vídeo para a primeira versão. N.A.

[5]A partir de uma provocação do dramaturgo Antonio Hildebrando, passamos a refletir sobre o momento exato [ou quase] que sentimos que nossa vida adulta havia começado. O exercício cênico pedia a correlação entre fato pessoal e fato histórico. Assim sendo, Renato narrava sobre uma relação sexual que rendia uma gravidez indesejada de uma parceira. Eu narrava minha relação com o futebol, o sonho de ser jogador e a emoção com a conquista do Brasil, na Copa do Mundo de 1994. Thiago contava a morte precoce de seu pai e como isso lhe pediu amadurecimento ainda muito jovem. E finalmente, Wesley refletia sobre a economia [plano Cruzeiro, Cruzado, Cruzado II, Cruzeiro Novo, etc.] no Brasil, por meio de seu desejo de ter aparelhos de videogame, o que nunca era possível já que sua família passava por dificuldades financeiras. N.A.

Figura 2
Cena de 1961-2013



Nota. Fonte: Madana Mohana/Arquivo *ZAP 18*.

diuturnas, eu destaco duas versões principais e mais estruturadas da peça: a versão de estreia *1961-2009* e *1961-2013*.

Na primeira versão, éramos Renato Hermeto, Thiago Macêdo, Wesley Rios e Gustavo Falabella Rocha. Também o trio musical responsável pela execução, ao vivo, das músicas, formado por Francisco Rocha, Daniel Vilela e Elisa Santana [a mesma que assinava a direção da peça ao lado de Cida Falabella]. Em 2009, o Brasil ainda era governado por Luís Inácio Lula da Silva e havia um otimismo alvissareiro no ar, com editais e verbas para a cultura, cotas raciais nas universidades públicas e programas efetivos de distribuição de renda, como o Bolsa Família. Além de um momento econômico bastante promissor, *boom das commodities*, com emprego e renda para grande parte da população. Havia críticas, é claro. Já tínhamos passado pelo esquema do Mensalão para nos lembrar da endêmica corrupção política do país, mesmo em um país governado por um partido tão crítico a isso historicamente, como o PT – Partido dos Trabalhadores.

O espetáculo começava na década de 1960, no ambiente político conturbado que renderia o Golpe Militar de 1964. A primeira sequência tinha a figura folclórica e confusa de Jânio Quadros, passava por João Goulart, aprofundava-se nos anos de chumbo da ditadura, encarnada pelo secundarista Edson Luiz, morto pela polícia, em uma revolta estudantil no Rio de Janeiro. Depois, Anistia, Diretas Já, o processo de redemocratização e também as grandes greves no ABC paulista ao fim dos anos 1970, quando surge a figura contundente de Lula. Lula era figura central na peça, mostrávamos como ele se moldou, a cada eleição perdida, para finalmente se transformar em um candidato de consenso em 2002, quando é eleito pela primeira vez, após três derrotas. Com as transformações de Lula e nossas histórias pessoais, íamos nos aproximando de 2009. O espetáculo se encerrava com notícias de jornal do dia da apresentação e alguma reflexão trazida pelos atores, que depois passavam a palavra ao público.

A versão de 2013 mantém a estrutura das primeiras décadas de nossa linha do tempo, mas opta por músicas diferentes. Além disso, do elenco original, permanecem Gustavo Rocha e Thiago Macêdo; nos lugares de Renato Hermeto e Wesley Rios, entram Lucas Costa e Renata Andréa, esta última também assume o papel desempenhado por Elisa Santana e passa a compor o trio musical, que tem Robert Moura, no lugar de Daniel Vilela. Consequentemente, com dois novos atores em cena, os depoimentos individuais foram alterados e reposicionados em nossa linha do tempo[6]. No processo de refazer a peça, novos depoimentos de militantes de movimentos sociais foram gravados. Afinal, os fatos se desenrolavam, a história do país seguia (segue!) viva. Além disso, havia uma nova personagem, a presidenta Dilma Rousseff, que sucedeu a Lula e era uma figura de menos consenso.

O ano de 2013 é marcado pelas jornadas de junho. Em Belo Horizonte, o roteiro invariavelmente era o mesmo: concentração na Praça 7 de Setembro, no centro da capital mineira e caminhada até o estádio do Mineirão, na região da Pampulha onde os jogos ocorriam. Uma caminhada de aproximadamente 5 quilômetros.

Para nós, entre 20 e 30 de junho daquele turbulento 2013, a rotina era: fazer a marcha do centro da cidade até os arredores do Mineirão e seguir para a *ZAP 18* para uma nova apresentação do espetáculo. Enquanto nos preparávamos para entrar em cena, as ruas continuavam movimentadas e tensas, com conflitos violentos entre parte dos manifestantes e a polícia. Na pressa de dar conta dos acontecimentos de horas antes, fazíamos edições relâmpago de conteúdos audiovisuais que seriam projetados em nosso telão naquela mesma noite, combinávamos depoimentos que entrariam na apresentação de logo mais. Em algumas apresentações daquela temporada, terminávamos o espetáculo com transmissões da *Mídia Ninja*[7] projetadas em nossa tela.

No nosso entendimento, não é demais lembrar: a peça cumpria sua função, em seu tempo e espaço, mas o clima tenso seguia fora dali. O teatro com sua mania de grandeza esbarrando em suas limitações reais. A rua, a polícia, o gás lacrimogêneo, a cavalaria, os conflitos [algumas mortes, inclusive. Não nos esqueçamos jamais] eram reais. Nada era mais "real", direto ao ponto que aqueles acontecimentos. Não havia nada mais contundente, naquele momento, que a realidade crua das ruas de todo o Brasil. Há uma história emblemática de Augusto Boal dando oficinas de seu Teatro do Oprimido para guerrilheiros das FARC (Forças Armadas Revolucionárias Colombianas). Após inúmeros exercícios cênicos provocativos e reflexivos – como sói ocorrer nas dinâmicas propostas pelo teatrólogo, os integrantes do grupo paramilitar ofereceram suas armas de fogo para Boal, para que ele pudesse contribuir com a luta na qual eles estejam engajados. Boal responde: "minha arma é o teatro". Com cinco palavras apenas, Boal situa o que é fazer teatro quando flertamos com as realidades que nos rodeiam. É, ao mesmo tempo, uma grandeza e uma limitação do ofício.

Naquela temporada atravessada pelas jornadas de junho, lidando com as pulsões de um real tão próximo, complexo, desafiador, a maneira mais potente para estabelecer esse diálogo entre teatro e realidade era abrir as portas do galpão da *ZAP 18* para a rua e deixar que os fatos invadissem o espaço, sem filtro.

[6]Lucas Costa contava a história e as dificuldades de seu avô, líder sindical durante a ditadura militar e Renata Andrea narrava sua relação com a música, lembrando clássicos da MPB. N.A.

[7]Em sua página na Internet, a Mídia Ninja se descreve como "uma rede de comunicação descentralizada que produz e dissemina conteúdo baseado no trabalho colaborativo e no compartilhamento online". Acesse https://ninja.oximity.com/. N.A.

A cidade feita de cidades

Outro aspecto importante na segunda versão da peça, de 2013, foi sua aproximação com os assuntos ligados à cidade de Belo Horizonte e suas lutas próprias, mais atuais. O espetáculo, desde sua primeira versão (2009), aborda as décadas de 1960, 1970, 1980, 1990 e 2000, mais voltado para assuntos do Brasil. A partir do novo formato, de 2013 em diante, houve uma clara intenção de trazer as questões da cidade para a cena. "Ninguém mora no país, eu moro em Belo Horizonte, no bairro Serrano. O país é uma construção que tem uma grande abstração. Ele é concreto, mas é um imaginário", aponta a diretora Cida Falabella (2017).

A força presente nos lugares, como a *ZAP 18*, implica a valorização "das cidades na cidade" (Hissa, 2006). Assim como Falabella, o pesquisador aponta que "a cidade não é uma tessitura socioespacial monolítica, feita de linhas mestras e de bordados macroestruturais que anulam a vida de esquinas, ruelas e becos, de quintais que assombram modernidades, de vilas, bairros e subterrâneos" (Hissa, 2007, p. 6). Isso é, para além da abstração do Brasil ou do estado de Minas Gerais, também há a abstração que é Belo Horizonte. Ou seja, uma cidade abriga muitas, com suas peculiaridades regionais, riquezas e problemas. Histórias e moradores. Bairros mais afastados, mais antigos, outros menos e assim por diante. O bairro Serrano tem suas peculiaridades, mas também dialoga com a cidade e com a periferia da cidade da qual faz parte.

Britto e Jacques (2012) nos dizem que a *cidade-logotipo* [ou *cidade-outdoor*, "composta de cenários espetacularizados, desencarnados". (Britto & Jacques, 2012, p. 154)] deixa de ser cenário e ganha corpo, em seu cotidiano, ao ser praticada, tornando-se, assim, outro corpo. Assim, erige uma alteridade que foge à disciplina e às regras segregatórias impostas pelos planejamentos urbanos que apenas reforçam a manutenção da relação previsível entre corpo e cidade. A experiência corporal dos *errantes*[8] (Jacques, 2012) – práticas, vivências ou experiências cotidianas – são capazes de atualizar o próprio urbanismo. As apropriações e improvisações feitas são capazes de instaurar dinâmicas e legitimar (ou não) aquilo que foi projetado. São, pois, as experiências do espaço que o reinventam. A cidade praticada deixa de ser cenário e sobrevive à espetacularização, graças às práticas e ações contínuas e diárias dos *errantes.*

A cidade praticada nos faz lembrar dos *praticantes ordinários* de Michel de Certeau (1994) ou os *homens lentos* de Milton Santos (2006). Para o primeiro, são as enunciações pedestres, vividas na escala 1 x 1, que atualizam os mapas e esquemas urbanos. As astúcias criativas dos praticantes são capazes de não fixar rotas, fabular caminhos, propor subversões no esquema urbano. Já para Santos, na contramão da velocidade, do fluxo frenético das grandes metrópoles, os homens lentos apostam em um tempo outro e por conta deste ritmo mais calmo são dotados de maior poder de enraizamento e observação.

> A cidade, ao ser praticada, deixa de ser cenário e "ganha corpo" pelo uso cotidiano, tornando-se outro corpo: uma alteridade com a qual o corpo do cidadão se relaciona sob a mediação dos projetos e planejamentos urbanos que disciplinam essa dinâmica relacional com regras segregatórias, baseadas em princípios de assepsia, acessibilidade, segurança e estetização, e que apenas contribuem para a manutenção da dissociação entre corpo e cidade. (Britto & Jacques, 2012, p. 153)

[8]Em *Elogio aos errantes*, Jacques (2012) nos fala de uma *errantologia*, uma prática nômade de divagar e errar pela cidade, desafiando seus esquemas e mapas pré-definidos. Jacques destaca que os errantes não perambulam mais pelos campos, mas sim pelas grandes cidades, recusando o controle disciplinar dos planos modernos. Suas errâncias se configuram como uma denúncia das intervenções urbanísticas, que extirpam das grandes cidades as experiências mais subjetivas e não-controladas. N.A.

Consequentemente, devemos pensar que a prática da cidade se dará na rotina dos dias, na rua, no bairro onde se vive e não no território nacional. Além disso, o comentário de Cida e os pensamentos de Jacques e Hissa denotam o aprofundamento dessa consciência do grupo em sua lida no bairro Serrano, desde 2002. A noção de pertencimento se aprofunda na tentativa da *ZAP 18* consolidar sua atuação no bairro, com seus vizinhos, e sua região.

> A cidade é feita de cidades, metáfora de lugar, de um lado, e, de outro, extensão coerente de bordados periféricos que atravessam espaços nodais, ao se servir de linhas mestras. [...] Cidades invisíveis, fora do *écran*, lugares feitos da vida cotidiana e da cidadania que encontram significados, fortalecendo sua vocação para a transformação do mundo. Portanto, o processo de revalorização dos lugares, pela via da mobilidade das fronteiras entre ciência e saberes locais, ao redesenhar as arquiteturas do pensamento utópico, concede voz e visibilidade — emergência — às cidades feitas de ruelas e de becos, de vilas e de quintais que, no interior das cidades de avenidas iluminadas, edificam espaços de esperança. (Hissa, 2007, p. 12)

Assim, ao nos aproximarmos de Belo Horizonte e de seus movimentos de luta, dialogamos com essa ideia de cidade(s) múltipla(s) proposta por Hissa. Na capital mineira, por exemplo, a eleição do prefeito Marcio Lacerda, em fins de 2008, desencadeou algumas mobilizações populares, com forte teor político-performativo-artístico que consolidaram movimentos atuantes na cidade, num trânsito entre arte, política e ocupação dos espaços públicos. As medidas impopulares de Lacerda puderam ser sentidas logo no segundo ano de seu primeiro mandato, que é quando surge a *Praia da Estação*.

O movimento é uma reação ao decreto municipal número 13.798 que proibia eventos públicos na Praça da Estação[9]. A resposta inusitada foi reunir pessoas para tomar "banho de mar" na praça. Desde janeiro de 2010, durante o verão, os "banhistas" se reúnem, geralmente aos sábados, para tomar banho de sol e se banhar nas fontes da praça e/ou com água dos caminhões pipas que são chamados e pagos por uma "vaquinha" coletiva entre os presentes. A praia é precursora[10] desse novo movimento de ocupação da praça e abriu as portas para outros, como o carnaval de rua da cidade. Com trajes de banho, isopores, cangas, instrumentos musicais, os presentes se moviam entre a festa e a manifestação, numa clara relação entre arte e ativismo, ou *artivismo*, como aponta o pesquisador Isaque Ribeiro (2017). Ele chama a atenção para o caráter simbólico da praia, que conseguiria, segundo ele, transformar o chão de concreto em areia, as fontes da praça em mar e o ruído dos carros que passam no centro da cidade em som do mar. "Na praia, cimento da lúdica revolução", segundo versos da banda Graveola e o Lixo Polifônico (2011). A praia da estação é apenas um de muitos encontros que passaram a acontecer na praça, temos ainda ensaios de blocos de carnaval, assembleias populares, saraus de poesia, para citar apenas alguns.

Em cena, no espetáculo *1961-2013* buscamos falar da *Praia da Estação*, da retomada do *Carnaval de Rua* da cidade, das ocupações urbanas (como *Dandara*, *Rosa Leão*, *Izidora*, *Guarani Kaiowá*

[9]Localizada no centro de Belo Horizonte, a Praça da Estação é um dos marcos da fundação da cidade, pois por ela chegavam os trens com trabalhadores e materiais que ajudaram a construir a nova capital de Minas Gerais. Hoje, a praça tem o Museu de Artes e Ofício, subvencionado pela Prefeitura de Belo Horizonte, além de ser uma das principais estações da única linha de metrô da cidade. N.A.

[10]Em depoimento colhido, em 2013, para a "nova" versão de 1961-2009, o ator e ativista Gustavo Bones, do grupo teatral Espanca!, reflete sobre os caminhos dos movimentos que tiveram na Praça (praia) da Estação, seu ponto de convergência, sua arena. Bones diz que as bandeiras andaram tão misturadas que ele não conseguia mais distinguir o que era luta por moradia, por mobilidade, pelo direito à cidade, o que era o carnaval e as muitas representações artísticas e simbólicas que se constituíram na Praça da Estação, no mesmo tempo e espaço.

entre várias outras), da ocupação da Câmara Municipal[11] em 2013, do *Tarifa Zero*, do movimento *Fora Lacerda!*[12] e muitas outras bandeiras que surgiram e que nos aproximaram de uma realidade muito mais próxima que aquela sediada nos Palácios de Brasília. Ao abordar as lutas de nossa cidade, também buscávamos espelhar nossa própria luta na rotina de nossa sede no bairro Serrano.

Figura 3

Elenco de 1961-2013*: Renata Andréa* (*à frente*), *Gustavo F. Rocha* (*à esquerda*), *Thiago Macêdo* (*à direita*) *e Lucas Costa* (*ao fundo*)



Nota. Foto: Madana Mohana. Fonte: Arquivo *ZAP 18*.

Conclusão

A longa carreira de *1961-2009* foi um propulsor do "retorno" da *ZAP 18* à cidade em uma relação mais politizada e mais problematizada. O estreitamento da relação com Belo Horizonte, vem como consequência de uma reflexão sobre a temática histórica do espetáculo *1961-2013* e uma constatação de que, na realidade, nosso cotidiano, como artistas e cidadãos se dá na cidade onde vivemos e, sobretudo, em nossas vizinhanças. Ali, pois, há uma dimensão prática cotidi-

[11] Destaco duas ocupações da Câmara Municipal de Vereadores de Belo Horizonte, ocorrida recentemente e que interessam à essa pesquisa. A primeira ocorrida em meados de 2013 e a segunda em 2015. Ambas foram motivadas pelo aumento das tarifas de passagem de ônibus na cidade. As ocupações eram verdadeiros acampamentos, com os ocupantes fazendo comida, dormindo e contava também com apresentações musicais, saraus e outras performances artísticas. Sugiro a leitura: http://hojeemdia.com.br/horizontes/manifestantes-mant%C3%AAm-ocupa%C3%A7%C3%A3o-a-c%C3%A2mara-de-bh-pelo-segundo-dia-1.166607 e https://www.em.com.br/app/noticia/gerais/2015/09/11/interna_gerais,687308/manifestantes-anunciam-fim-da-ocupacao-da-camara-de-bh.shtml [Acesso em 04/12/2017]

[12] No bojo da efervescência da Praia da Estação, surge o movimento Fora Lacerda! que contesta as ações e decisões do prefeito Marcio Lacerda, que governou Belo Horizonte, durante oito anos (entre 2009 e 2016), com uma política de gentrificação de espaços públicos e pouca interlocução com os movimentos sociais da cidade.

ana que foge a algumas abstrações, como pensar na História do Brasil como um todo ou projetar os fatos históricos nacionais e ignorar peculiaridades locais. Portanto, com o passar dos anos e, consequentemente, com a longeva carreira de *1961-2013*, fomos nos aproximando de movimentos políticos e questões próprias de quem vive aqui, em Belo Horizonte.

Ao olhar para trás e pensar no percorrido da peça, depois de tantas versões e alterações, a diretora Cida Falabella avalia que, na realidade, a ZAP 18 praticamente montou dois espetáculos "diferentes". Em um trabalho tão calcado no posicionamento do grupo e nas histórias pessoais de seus atores seria natural, sim, imaginar que mudanças trariam novos posicionamentos e novas narrativas. Para Cida Falabella, o espetáculo era bem estruturado, por mais que não tivesse uma dramaturgia construída enquanto forma clássica do drama, nos termos de Szondi (2001), mas "a própria história do Brasil era a dramaturgia", comenta Falabella (2017). Havia também, segundo ela, uma parte histórica "mais dura", nas primeiras versões, que permitiam interferências das vivências pessoais dos atores, mas que contava com uma estrutura mais amarrada, em que pessoal e histórico se intercalavam. Cida Falabella ressalta o inacabamento da peça e sua consequente aproximação com a performance, a partir de sua segunda versão, de 2013: "É certo que perdemos algumas coisas, o espetáculo ficou mais bagunçado, se transformou em um grande retalho. Por outro lado, ele fica mais performático" (2017).

A partir de 2013, houve uma necessidade de reagir, em cena, aos fatos que vinham da rua em ritmo acelerado e essa pressa de estar a par dos ocorridos também pôde ser vista na nova versão da peça, que passou a se aproximar ainda mais da *performance*, em vários momentos. Féral (2008), em diálogo com Schechner, lembra que não há certo ou errado, verdadeiro ou falso em uma performance, ela simplesmente acontece,

> obedece frequentemente a vários princípios contraditórios, não receia combinar estilos díspares, nem apresentar colagens de estilos de atuação heterogêneos. (...) Contém em si momentos e procedimentos nos quais tudo parece desconstruir-se e desfazer-se entre os dedos de quem quer que pense deter os cordéis e as chaves do espetáculo. (Pavis, 1999, p. 299)

Féral (2008) lança mão do conceito de *eventness* para problematizar o caráter inacabado e processual de uma *performance*. Pois, "ela amplifica, portanto, o aspecto lúdico dos eventos bem como o aspecto lúdico daqueles que deles participam (*performers*, objetos ou máquinas). Existe um risco real para o *performer*" (Féral, 2008, p. 203). O risco assumido pelo espetáculo *1961-2009* é semelhante ao descrito por Féral, pois não havia tempo hábil para fazer qualquer outra coisa que não fosse escancarar nossas dúvidas e angústias em meio ao calor vindo das manifestações de algumas horas atrás, sendo que algumas ainda estavam em curso enquanto a peça se apresentava. Nesse momento, percebemos que as circunstâncias macropolíticas foram fundamentais para a transição estética da ZAP 18, que passou a incorporar a

> transformação do ator em *performer*, descrição dos acontecimentos da ação cênica em detrimento da representação ou de um jogo de ilusão, espetáculo centrado na imagem e na ação e não mais sobre o texto, apelo à uma receptividade do espectador de natureza essencialmente especular ou aos modos das percepções próprias da tecnologia... (Féral, 2008, p. 198)

De maneira dialógica, porosa, compreendemos que um dos papéis possíveis para *1961-2013*, na temporada de junho de 2013, era proporcionar o espírito comunitário de assembleia, nos termos de Butler (2018), "e que os significados políticos transmitidos pelas manifestações sejam não apenas aqueles transmitidos pelo discurso, seja ele escrito ou falado" (Butler, 2018, pp. 13–

15), mas, aberta aos debates públicos, questões, dúvidas tanto do público quanto dos mesmos cidadãos-artistas. A perplexidade, a incapacidade de avaliação do que ocorria, a impossibilidade de projetar um futuro nítido também estavam com eles.

> [...] Mas não digam vocês: o homem
> Não é um artista. Erguendo tal divisória
> Entre vocês e o mundo, apenas se lançam
> Fora do mundo. Negassem ser ele
> Um artista, poderia ele negar
> Que fossem homens, e isto
> Seria uma censura maior. Digam antes:
> Ele é um artista, porque é um homem.
>
> (Brecht, 2011, p. 103)

A passagem acima vem do poema *Sobre o teatro cotidiano*, do encenador alemão Bertolt Brecht, escrito há pelo menos meio século e nos serve perfeitamente para pensar sobre esse teatro que deseja se aproximar do seu público, não apenas de um espectador idealizado, mas da diversidade presente, em espaços como a ZAP 18, na periferia de Belo Horizonte, por exemplo[13]. Portanto, o risco de que nos fala Féral se dá em conexão com nosso público, sem erguer barreiras entre a cena e a realidade. Entre o mundo da cena e o mundo real. Sem idealizar respostas, enredos possíveis no palco alheios ao que se passa ao seu redor. O espetáculo foi ensaiado, pensado, combinado, mas insistimos que sua característica performática se dá justamente nesse inacabamento, nesse desejo premente de dialogar com assuntos e questões daquele dia, que atravessavam direta ou indiretamente a vida daquelas pessoas presentes no palco e na plateia, bem como outras tantas.

A inclusão dos novos materiais, durante aquela temporada em junho de 2013, era feita de muitas maneiras, mas destacamos duas principais: 1. Edição de vídeo, antes do espetáculo, quando possível, nos reuníamos para pensar na inclusão de novos vídeos, geralmente material compartilhado em redes sociais e/ou portais de notícias; 2. Microfone aberto – a versão de 2013 da peça terminava com a leitura de uma carta na qual, nós nos desculpávamos por nossa impotência de não conseguir falar sobre todos os assuntos que estavam em pauta e reconhecendo que nossa principal ferramenta era o teatro, mas que mesmo ele não era suficiente para dar vazão aos pensamentos e discussões fundamentais que o momento pedia. A carta tinha como motivação a frase "o teatro não pode tudo".

O espetáculo *1961-2013* foi fundamental na trajetória da *ZAP 18* por alguns fatores. Um dos mais importantes foi ter acirrado as tensões entre teatro e realidades, parte da pesquisa que o grupo desenvolve desde 2006, com a peça *Esta Noite Mãe Coragem.* Além disso, a confluência entre o que o trabalho propunha e as tensões das passeatas de junho de 2013 nos deram a dimensão do que o teatro "pode" e do que o teatro "não pode" fazer. O espetáculo permaneceu no repertório do grupo até 2015, depois da reeleição de Dilma e a escalada de tensões evidentes com setores mais conservadores da política e da sociedade [A análise pode parecer simplória e

[13]Um breve aparte histórico: Brecht é uma inspiração por tudo que nos legou enquanto pensador do teatro e também por conta de suas observações argutas das relações sociais. Na *ZAP 18*, recorremos à sua obra e pensamento sempre ou quase sempre. Em 2006, montamos *Esta noite mãe coragem*, uma versão brasileira de seu texto *Mãe coragem e seus filhos*. Apesar de todo seu brilhantismo, Brecht é um homem de outro tempo. Consequentemente, aqui vemos ele usar Homem (Menschen, em alemão, que assim como o português lida com gêneros masculinos e femininos em suas construções semânticas) para se referir à humanidade. Mantivemos a tradução do poema como no original, mas uma atualização necessária ao termo substituiria homem por pessoa ou até mulher. N.A.

talvez de fato o seja, mas não pretendo aqui analisar os caminhos que levaram ao impedimento de Dilma, em 2016]. Fizemos temporadas e apresentações da peça, tanto na *ZAP 18* como em outros espaços em Belo Horizonte e no interior de Minas Gerais. *1961-2009*, *1961-2013* foi importante porque ajudou a nos aproximar de uma juventude engajada em movimentos sociais que viam na peça um importante instrumento de articulação do pensamento crítico e político brasileiro contemporâneo. Apresentamos, em mais de uma ocasião, a peça em/ou para encontros de movimentos sociais ou convidados por estudantes.

Com o passar do tempo e as dificuldades para manter o elenco engajado nos ensaios e reflexões sobre os contextos sociais políticos econômicos do Brasil, avaliamos que a peça já havia cumprido seu papel. Paramos de apresentá-la antes de Dilma ser golpeada, antes de Michel Temer assumir e ser absolvido por recebimento de propinas, de empresários que lavavam dinheiro e incluíam papelão no processamento de carne bovina. Paramos antes de Sérgio Moro se transformar em símbolo da luta anticorrupção, com a Operação Lava Jato e das prisões de vários políticos ligados aos governos petistas, incluindo o ex-presidente Lula, forte candidato nas eleições de 2018. Paramos antes da guinada conservadora que alçou Jair Bolsonaro à presidência da república e todas as consequências trágicas de sua presidência. Deixamos de fazer a peça antes da pandemia de Sars-Cov-2 e o enorme impacto na vida de pessoas ao redor do mundo, inclusive, artistas de teatro que estão privados do seu bem maior: o contato direto com seu público.

De tempos em tempos, volta o desejo de retomar o trabalho. Obviamente, sabendo que neste momento (2020/2021), não será possível fazer apresentações com presença do público. Sabendo também que os descaminhos da nossa democracia, desde aquelas jornadas de junho de 2013, tornaram-se mais complexos, mais obscuros e também menos otimistas. A guinada conservadora [é importante lembrar] reificada pelo bolsonarismo elegeu artistas e toda produção simbólica como inimigos de suas pautas. Em termos práticos, já no governo Temer, houve a tentativa de fechamento do Ministério da Cultura, o que não ocorreu em 2016, por pressão e militância de artistas Brasil afora, mas ocorreria, como uma das primeiras medidas da presidência de Bolsonaro. Vimos chocados – porém, não surpresos – as censuras, perseguições e ataques da patrulha ideológica, tentando corroer reputações, julgar o que seria [ou não] artístico[14]. Apesar de tamanhas adversidades, parece-nos que os artistas e as artes sejam tão fundamentais como salvaguarda da diversidade e complexidade de nossa sociedade. Também como olhar crítico, histórico, engajado. Quanto mais somos atacados, mais nosso trabalho torna-se fundamental. Em 2020, em virtude de um projeto feito em formato virtual – em tempos de pandemia da

[14]Os exemplos são vários: a atriz transsexual Renata Carvalho foi perseguida por conta do espetáculo O Evangelho segundo Jesus, Rainha do Céu, em apresentações em Belo Horizonte, Salvador e outras cidades. O artista Wagner Schwartz foi perseguido por conta da performance La Bête, em que ficava nu. Sua performance virou alvo quando uma mãe levou a filha menor de idade e a menina interagiu com Schwartz, no MAM, em São Paulo. A exposição Queermuseu, em Porto Alegre e a exposição do artista Pedro Moraleida, em Belo Horizonte, foram alvos de grupos religiosos em vigília que exigiram sua interrupção. No primeiro caso, com sucesso. Hoje mesmo, dia 29 de janeiro de 2021, soube que a obra Deus é Mãe, uma enorme tela de quase 2.000 metros quadrados pintada, ao ar livre, na empena de um dos prédios do centro de Belo Horizonte foi denunciada como "crime contra o meio-ambiente". Robinho Santana que assina a obra, com participação de Lmb, Bani, Tek e Zoto, bem como as organizadoras do Circuito Urbano de Artes (CURA) responderão criminalmente pela pintura que mostra uma família negra: uma mãe carrega um filho no colo e segura a mão de outro. Aparentemente, o que incomodou a Polícia Militar de Minas Gerais são os escritos ao redor da imagem feitos com lettering tradicional do pixo. N.A.

Covid-19, disponibilizamos uma filmagem da peça[15], em sua versão 2013, com um novo epílogo adicionado à filmagem, atualizando algumas questões, mas ainda com mesma angústia de tudo que o teatro não pode. Ainda assim, inspirados em Boal – na passagem já citada aqui em que ele recusa os fuzis –, escolhemos a elaboração estética, ética e crítica. Escolhemos o teatro como nossa arma. Deixo aqui um trecho antes de me despedir:

> [...] A gente queria falar que o pensamento conservador, misógino, homofóbico, anticientífico, estúpido é anterior ao Bolsonarismo. Ele já nos ronda há bastante tempo e vai durar mais que a presidência do ex-capitão. A gente queria falar sobre a floresta amazônica, a grilagem de terra, o desmatamento criminoso da floresta e o risco de desaparecimento que vários indígenas brasileiros sofrem.
>
> A gente queria falar que o PT, Partido dos Trabalhadores, não é o partido mais corrupto da história do Brasil.
>
> A gente queria falar que Lula foi retirado politicamente de uma eleição em um julgamento estapafúrdio, sem provas e com algumas convicções.
>
> A gente queria falar de racismo e das cotas. A gente queria falar do genocídio da juventude negra. A gente queria falar que Black Lives Matter. VIDAS NEGRAS IMPORTAM.
>
> A gente queria falar sobre o pior presidente do Brasil seria eleito em 2018, capaz de ignorar uma pandemia mundial e deixar milhares de brasileiros morrerem por sua inação negligente, por suas decisões monocráticas e por sua falta de empatia pelo povo que o elegeu.
>
> Essa peça deixou de ser apresentada em 2015.
>
> E sobre o futuro nós não podemos falar.
>
> O teatro não pode tudo. A arte não pode tudo. Na impossibilidade de abarcar toda a história e sua complexidade, compartilhamos com vocês nesse espetáculo mutante e interminável o mais importante: a luta por um país melhor, passa pela construção de um olhar crítico, mas também esperançoso.
>
> Esperamos ter dado nossa contribuição.

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[15] Para ver o espetáculo na íntegra, vá até o perfil da ZAP 18, no Youtube. Lá também há outros espetáculos e conteúdos: https://youtu.be/izUgEgm65lo

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The Brazilian Black Front and the Newspaper *A Voz da Raça*: Strategies for Political and Social Mobilization in 1930s Brazil

Abstract

This article examines the role of the Frente Negra Brasileira (FNB) and its newspaper, *A Voz da Raça*, in challenging the racialized structure of Brazil's social contract during the 1930s. Historically, the Brazilian social contract was built on the exclusion and subjugation of the Black population, perpetuating a system of racial and social domination. The FNB, founded in 1931, marked a turning point by promoting affirmative actions aimed at social, economic, and political inclusion. Through *A Voz da Raça*, the organization articulated a counter-hegemonic narrative that sought to empower and mobilize Black communities against systemic oppression. Drawing on primary sources and critical race theory, the study adopts a methodological approach combining archival analysis and interpretive discourse analysis. It also refutes claims that the FNB aligned with integralist ideology, highlighting the organization's internal progressive faction and cultural and political strategies. The article explores the deracialization of Brazil's social contract, laying the groundwork for further research on systemic transformation and the enduring struggle for racial justice and inclusion in Brazilian society.

Keywords: Brazilian politics; Black politics; racial contract; racism; social mobilization

Resumo

Este artigo examina o papel da Frente Negra Brasileira (FNB) e de seu jornal, *A Voz da Raça*, na contestação da estrutura racializada do contrato social brasileiro durante a década de 1930. Historicamente, o contrato social no Brasil foi construído com base na exclusão e subjugação da população negra, perpetuando um sistema de dominação racial e social. Fundada em 1931, a FNB representou um ponto de inflexão ao promover ações afirmativas voltadas à inclusão social, econômica e política. Por meio de *A Voz da Raça*, a organização articulou uma narrativa contra-hegemônica que buscava empoderar e mobilizar as comunidades negras contra a opressão sistêmica. Com base na análise de fontes primárias e no uso de categorias da teoria crítica da raça, o estudo adota uma abordagem metodológica que combina análise documental e análise interpretativa do discurso. O artigo também refuta alegações de que a FNB teria se alinhado à ideologia integralista, destacando a atuação de sua ala progressista interna e suas estratégias culturais e políticas. Explora-se, assim, o processo de desracialização do contrato social brasileiro, abrindo caminho para pesquisas futuras sobre transformação sistêmica e a contínua luta por justiça racial e inclusão na sociedade brasileira.

Palavras-chave: política brasileira; política negra; contrato racial; racismo; mobilização social

Introduction

The Brazilian social contract was historically built on the exclusion and subjugation of the Black population, a structure of ethnic and social domination that persisted from the slavery period through the post-abolition era. In this context, the first initiatives aimed at breaking this dynamic emerged during the slavery regime. Still, in the republican period, political and social actions gained greater prominence, particularly through the work of the Brazilian Black Front (FNB). Founded in 1931, the FNB marked a milestone in the struggle for the emancipation of the Black population, promoting affirmative actions aimed at the social, economic, and political inclusion of this segment of society.

In this article, I analyze how the FNB, through *A Voz da Raça*, challenged the structures of racial exclusion underpinning the Brazilian social contract. Drawing on primary sources—archival materials from the FNB, including editions of *A Voz da Raça*—and secondary literature (Barbosa, 2012; Cavalcanti & Ramos, 1978; Domingues, 2004; Moura, 1992), I argue that the actions of the FNB initiated a process of deracializing this social contract, fostering the mobilization and organization of the Black population within a context of institutionalized exclusion. Methodologically, the article combines archival analysis of the newspaper with critical race theory and discourse analysis to interpret how the FNB articulated a counter-hegemonic political project. This study represents the beginning of a broader research agenda on the deracialization of the Brazilian social contract, which will be further explored in future works.

The article also makes an important historiographical contribution by examining the internal composition of the FNB and challenging its characterization as "integralist," a reference to the far-right Brazilian movement inspired by fascist ideals in the 1930s. This challenge is based on two main points. First, the FNB exhibited significant internal fragmentation stemming from the political polarization among its leadership. This analysis highlights the existence of a progressive faction within the organization, closely connected to Black grassroots communities in São Paulo and other regions of Brazil, which distanced itself from the conservative ideologies associated with integralism. Second, the confusion arises from the similarity between the colors used by the integralist movement, whose members wore green uniforms, and those of the Barra Funda Carnival Group, associated with the FNB and known as the "*Cordão Carnavalesco Camisa Verde*." To avoid wrongful association, the carnival group changed its name to "*Cordão Camisa Verde e Branco*," emphasizing its non-political, non-institutional nature and distancing itself from erroneous interpretations.

The article is organized as follows. The first section analyzes the racialization of the Brazilian social contract, tracing its origins back to the pre-republican period. The second section outlines the methodological approach used in this study, which combines archival analysis with critical discourse and race theory. The third section revisits the history of the FNB, clarifying why it cannot be associated with integralism. The fourth section examines the role of the newspaper *A Voz da Raça*, both as an instrument for the internal coordination of the FNB and as a vehicle for societal impact in Brazil. Finally, the last section presents the conclusions and suggests directions for future research.

The Racialization of the Brazilian Social Contract

Records regarding the arrival of the first enslaved Africans in Brazil are scarce and imprecise. The most widely accepted theory suggests that, in 1538, Jorge Lopes Bixorda, a trader leasing the rights to Brazilwood, trafficked the first enslaved Africans to Bahia. The trafficking of people between Africa and Brazil quickly became an extremely profitable activity. Between 1701 and 1810, approximately 1.8 million Africans were disembarked at Brazilian colonial ports. Despite the scale of this system, the country's first Constitution, enacted in 1824, made no direct mention of the terms "slaves" or "slavery."

Before the abolition of slavery, the Brazilian state was already implementing exclusionary policies targeting the enslaved population. In 1830, the first Brazilian Penal Code criminalized insurrections and revolts, aiming to suppress resistance. Five years later, in response to the Carrancas and Malês Revolts, Law No. 4 of June 10, 1835, imposed severe punishments on enslaved individuals who killed, injured, or committed any type of physical aggression against their masters. In 1837, Law No. 1 of January 14 prohibited "enslaved and African Black people, even if free or freed," from attending public schools, further entrenching educational segregation. By 1850, Law No. 601 of September 18 barred Black people from owning land or accumulating wealth—a measure designed, with abolition already on the horizon, to prevent the Black population from competing economically with landowners.

In 1888, Brazil became the last Western country to abolish slavery. The following year, the Proclamation of the Republic established a State that continued and deepened exclusionary policies targeting the Black population. An analysis of the laws that imposed barriers to the inclusion of Black people in society reveals the origins of structural and systemic racism, meticulously engineered by the ruling class and perpetuated by the republican State, particularly in the post-abolition period.

An emblematic example is the 1890 Penal Code, which criminalized *capoeira*, a cultural and resistance practice created by enslaved Africans in Brazil. *Capoeira* combines bodily movements, music, and elements of combat, serving as a means of cultural preservation and a strategy for self-defense against oppressors. The new legislation imposed penalties of 2 to 6 months in prison for those who "wandered" the streets without work or a fixed residence, practicing *capoeira* in streets or public squares. These measures sought to marginalize Black individuals further and prevent them from preserving their traditions and solidarity networks. The text states:

> Article 399. Failing to practice a profession, trade, or any means of earning a living without possessing means of subsistence and a fixed residence; subsisting through an occupation prohibited by law or manifestly offensive to morality and good customs […]
> Article 402. Performing in streets and public squares exercises of agility and physical skill known as *capoeiragem*; engaging in running with weapons or instruments capable of causing bodily harm, provoking disturbances or disorders, threatening a specific or unspecified person, or instilling fear of some harm:
> Penalty – imprisonment from two to six months.
> Sole paragraph. Belonging to a gang or group is considered an aggravating circumstance for the *capoeirista*. (Brasil, 1890)

Decree No. 145 of 1893 authorized the deportation of "vagrants, vagabonds, and *capoeiras*" to penal colonies, while Decree No. 3745 of 1899 denied bail to defendants considered "vagrants" or without a fixed residence, enabling police raids without judicial oversight. The legal frame-

work explicitly aimed to prevent the newly freed population from occupying public spaces while denying them any opportunity for social integration. This exclusion aligned with the whitening policy that dominated political debates of the time, promoted by the elites to reshape Brazilian society toward a European model. In this context, the Black population was quickly marginalized, transitioning from a condition of being free to being incarcerated, perpetuating a cycle of exclusion and institutionalized social control.

Throughout the republican period, no system of public policies was implemented to integrate freed slaves and their descendants into society in a dignified and equitable manner. This population was deprived of fundamental rights, such as adequate housing, healthcare, food, formal education, and job opportunities. Without any State support, the newly freed were forced to occupy marginalized areas, often remote and lacking basic infrastructure. In the Southeast region, for example, they began living on hillsides and other spaces that were unwanted by the urban elites. Under these precarious conditions, without access to basic services, these communities gave rise to favelas, a reflection of the social exclusion and structural racism that characterized post-abolition Brazil.

Without access to basic resources such as employment, housing, or any prospect of change, the lives of formerly enslaved people in Brazil between the late 19th century and the first half of the 20th century were marked by poverty and neglect. The marginalization of the Black population in Brazil stretches from the period of enslavement through the post-abolition era. Enslaved labor was systematically exploited and highly valued by the elites, but with the advance of urbanization and the formal end of slavery, the Black population was pushed further to the margins of society. Oligarchic elites, who historically controlled the State, actively devised political strategies to block the social, intellectual, and economic advancement of Black Brazilians (Moura, 1977).

In addition to legal mechanisms and whitening policies, the ideological construction of Brazilian national identity reinforced racial exclusion. Emerging in the early 20th century, the myth of racial democracy (Freyre, 1933) gained intellectual legitimacy by portraying Brazil as a harmonious society born of miscegenation and cultural fusion. This narrative, while celebrated as a sign of tolerance, effectively erased structural racial inequalities by denying the existence of racism (Guimarães, 1999; Hasenbalg, 1979). It functioned as a powerful ideological tool that invalidated collective mobilization against racial injustice, suggesting that race no longer mattered in post-abolition Brazil. As a result, racial hierarchies were perpetuated through silence, and demands for reparative justice were dismissed as unnecessary or divisive.

This reality of exclusion and marginalization, perpetuated by the oligarchic elites, led the Black population to seek forms of organization and resistance in the face of the absence of inclusive public policies. In this context, the need for collective mobilization emerged, exemplified by the formation of the first entity dedicated to the struggle for the rights of the Black population during the Brazilian republican period: the Brazilian Black Front (*Frente Negra Brasileira*).

Methodology

This article draws on a qualitative, interpretive methodology that combines archival research with critical discourse analysis. The primary sources analyzed are editions of *A Voz da Raça*, published by the Frente Negra Brasileira (FNB) between 1933 and 1937. These materials were accessed through digitized and physical archives, with particular attention paid to editorials,

event announcements, denunciations, and opinion columns. The content of the newspaper was read not only for its explicit messages but also for its rhetorical strategies, political framing, and mobilization efforts.

In addition, the study engages with secondary literature on the FNB and Brazilian racial politics, including works by Barbosa (2012), Domingues (2004, 2008), Moura (1977, 1992, 2014), and others. These sources provided historical and analytical context to interpret the FNB's actions within the broader trajectory of Black mobilization and resistance in 20th-century Brazil. The article also draws from theories of the racial contract (Mills, 1997) and from critiques of Brazilian racial ideology (Freyre, 1933; Guimarães, 1999; Hasenbalg, 1979) to frame the structural dimensions of racial exclusion that the FNB sought to challenge.

By combining close reading of press sources with theoretical insights from political philosophy and critical race studies, the article seeks to situate *A Voz da Raça* as a political instrument that both reflected and shaped Black political consciousness during a period of state repression and ideological contestation.

The Brazilian Black Front (FNB)

The 1930s, during which the Brazilian Black Front (*Frente Negra Brasileira*) was founded, were marked by profound political and social transformations in Brazil, driven by Getúlio Vargas's rise to power in 1930. The 1930 Revolution, born out of dissatisfaction with the oligarchic system, led to the ousting of President Washington Luís and ushered in the Vargas Era, characterized by a combination of populism and authoritarianism, particularly between 1937 and 1945.

In this context of State centralization, political instability, and social exclusion, the FNB was founded on September 16, 1931, in São Paulo as an organized response by the Black population to historical inequalities and structural racism. The FNB established a comprehensive social organization model, including schools, soccer teams, theater groups, legal assistance, medical and dental services, political training courses, and arts and crafts programs. It also published the newspaper *A Voz da Raça*, solidifying its role as a landmark in the struggle for emancipation and representation of the Black population (Domingues, 2004, 2008).

The FNB articulated a national project in which the Black population would play a central role and occupy positions of power. To achieve this, it invested in young people's education and political training, aiming to develop Black leaders capable of transforming society. The organization also provided social assistance in the areas of education and healthcare while promoting large social events with a predominance of Afro-Brazilian culture as a counterpoint to the racial segregation imposed on the Black population within Brazil's social structure. In São Paulo, this segregation was particularly evident, with the subtle but systematic exclusion of Black individuals from events held by the white bourgeoisie.

The *Rosas Negras* group, composed of Black women, played a central role in organizing the cultural, musical, and social activities of the FNB. Through dances, meetings, and events, they mobilized the Black community in various neighborhoods, strengthening support networks and expanding the organization's influence. The grand dances held at Avenida Liberdade No. 602 headquarters attracted a diverse audience, including members and leaders from other regions, connecting the capital, the coast, and the interior of São Paulo. Cities like Campinas, Sorocaba, Santos, and Cubatão became key regional hubs, enabling the FNB to expand its activities to other states, such as Rio de Janeiro and Pernambuco. This network consolidated the FNB as

the main Black political and social nucleus in Brazil, serving as a model of organization and resistance in the fight for representation and the rights of the Black population.

The FNB quickly expanded its influence, inspiring the formation of groups with the same name in several states, including Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais, Espírito Santo, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Sul, and Bahia. With its remarkable activities, the organization became a true mass movement, gathering approximately 20,000 members distributed across 60 delegations. The FNB's political power was evident, as reported in newspapers of the time, which even highlighted President Getúlio Vargas receiving the organization's leaders with prominence to incorporate them into his alliance network. While some leaders aligned with Vargas, most chose an independent path, leading to the emergence of transforming the organization into a political party. This progression culminated in 1936 with the founding of the *Partido da Frente Negra* (Black Front Party), the first and only Black political party in Brazil, solidifying the FNB as a highly relevant political and social force.

When the actions of the Black Front Party (*Partido da Frente Negra*) were about to be implemented, Getúlio Vargas dissolved the party, along with the Brazilian Integralist Action (*Ação Integralista Brasileira*, AIB) and the Brazilian Communist Party. The justification for the dissolution was the alleged threat of political coups, such as the attempt led by Luís Carlos Prestes in 1935 and, later, by the integralists of Plínio Salgado. After the party was outlawed, former members tried to keep the movement alive, but the country's political context made unity difficult. Many feared being labeled as opponents of Vargas and ending up in the regime's political prisons. Among the most notable leaders was Francisco Lucrécio, a former combatant in the 1932 Constitutional Revolution, who fought to preserve the organization. However, he was defeated by the political circumstances and the new reality in Brazil, which fragmented the Black Movement across various emerging political parties.

One of the objectives of this article is to clarify the confusion regarding the supposed affinity between the FNB and integralism, a far-right movement led by Plínio Salgado in the 1930s and heavily influenced by fascist ideals. This interpretation arises from two main factors. The first is the internal division within the FNB (Cavalcanti & Ramos, 1978), resulting from differing political currents among its leaders. On one side, Arlindo Veiga dos Santos aligned himself with the nationalist-oriented integralist movement associated with the AIB party. On the other, José Correia Leite and Francisco Lucrécio leaned toward the organization's progressive wing, advocating more strongly for the fight for rights and social justice.

The then-president of the FNB, Arlindo Veiga dos Santos, was an enthusiast of a nationalist movement, as he believed it would be the means to integrate the Black population into the broader project of structuring Brazilian society. The political landscape of the time, marked by intense disputes over power, narratives, and ideologies, fostered the emergence of conservative ideas, even within spaces of sociability composed of individuals excluded from Brazil's social structure. Veiga was one of the main architects of a political project aimed at the independent inclusion of the Black population in spaces of power. However, this proposal also had inherent ambiguity: while the FNB advocated for including Black people in economic, political, and educational spheres, its positions under Veiga's leadership displayed elements aligned with integralist thought, seeking through an ethnic-racial discourse to express a white, elitist, and conservative interiority (Moura, 2014).

On the other hand, the FNB also included intellectuals with a more progressive perspective, which was essential for expanding its reach into spaces where the Black community organized around social niches. In these spaces, preserving cultural, social, symbolic, and communal values was crucial to ensuring this population's physical survival and collective identity. One of the FNB's leading progressive intellectuals was Francisco Lucrécio, who maintained a keen focus on community leadership and sought to connect the social organization experiences of peripheral areas with the progressive actions promoted by the FNB.

Among the social niches with which Lucrécio frequently engaged were samba schools and carnival groups, which played a central role in the cultural life of Black communities. The FNB's approach to these carnival entities aimed primarily to use these spaces to raise awareness and enhance the knowledge of the Black population participating. Creating storylines that narrated Black people's history and struggles was a key strategy for fostering a critical perspective on social and racial realities. This collaboration reflects the FNB's commitment to engaging in the social life of the Black population through actions that integrated culture and politics, with many of its leaders directly involved in these initiatives (Barbosa, 2012).

José Correia Leite, commonly known as Correia Leite, was one of the leading intellectuals in the FNB's leadership and a staunch advocate of progressive ideas. He openly criticized the influence of *patrianovismo*, which he argued distorted the organization's ideals to secure the support of the Black community. Correia Leite noted that one of the factors fueling ideological conflicts within the FNB was the political stance of its newspaper, *O Clarim da Alvorada*, which often confronted the conservative factions led by figures such as Arlindo Veiga dos Santos.

Moreover, other members also expressed dissatisfaction with the direction of the Frente, leading to the establishment of the Socialist Black Front (*Frente Negra Socialista*) during an ideological rupture. At the time, it was noted that many believed only *O Clarim* represented a dissenting voice, but there were others. One group, identifying with leftist ideals, left the organization when right-wing ideas began to prevail and went on to form the Socialist Black Front (Barbosa, 2012).

The second source of confusion stems from the similarity between the names of the radical AIB group, known as "Os Camisas Verdes" (The Green Shirts)—whose members wore green uniforms—and the *Camisa Verde* Carnival Group, associated with former FNB members and popularly called the "*Cordão Carnavalesco Camisa Verde*." The cultural and social impact of the *Cordão Camisa Verde* was significant for the Black community living in the Barra Funda neighborhood of São Paulo, quickly making the group well-known. However, with the government of Getúlio Vargas cracking down on the integralist movement and due to the association of the green shirts with integralism, the police forced the *Cordão* to change its name to emphasize its cultural, non-political nature. Thus, the group officially became known as the "*Cordão Camisa Verde e Branco*," incorporating white into its name to avoid misunderstanding.

The analysis of progressive currents of thought within the FNB is essential to avoid a narrow interpretation focused solely on the political practices suggested by the conservative faction, whose Black political project often neglected ethnic-racial issues as a central axis of the debate. Examining the proposals and actions led by figures such as José Correia Leite and Francisco Lucrécio provides a broader and more critical perspective on the crucial role of the FNB in developing initiatives that directly impacted the lives of thousands of Black families across Brazil. This approach allows us to understand the FNB as a pluralistic space marked by ideological

disputes and a movement that played a significant role in the struggle for justice and social inclusion. The next section will address one of the FNB's main strategies for mobilizing the Black population: the newspaper *A Voz da Raça*.

The Black Press and the Newspaper *A Voz da Raça*

As discussed in the previous section, the Brazilian Black Front (*Frente Negra Brasileira*, FNB) played a fundamental role in promoting activities to foster sociability among the Black population in São Paulo, influencing and impacting Black communities in various regions. This model of social organization represented an important milestone for social inclusion, the valorization of Black culture, and the construction of a new critical perspective, especially through education, which redefined the role and identity of this population within Brazilian society.

Among the strategic activities developed by the FNB, one stood out as essential for "*aquilombar*" (unify and empower) the Black population around the affirmative actions promoted by the organization: the creation of its newspaper, *A Voz da Raça*. The newspaper had a relatively short lifespan. Initially published biweekly from 1933 to April 28, 1934, it transitioned to a monthly publication in May 1934. Its circulation continued until November 1937, when the FNB was forced to cease its activities due to the political restrictions imposed by Getúlio Vargas's dictatorship.

Black activists and intellectuals faced a monumental task in ensuring the circulation of the newspapers. Despite numerous obstacles that, combined, could have rendered their publication unfeasible, the strategies adopted by the activists proved effective. Thanks to these assertive actions, the editors overcame the challenges. They kept the newspapers circulating, reaffirming their commitment to the fight for representation and disseminating information for the Black community. In the first edition of the newspaper (Figure 1), they write:

Figure 1

Newspaper A Voz da Raça, *Issue 1* (*1933*)



Note. Image supplied by the author.

> This newspaper emerges at a time when it is necessary to make public, today, tomorrow, and always, the interests and shared ideas of the race because the other publications, albeit veteran ones, due to political grudges, have failed to do so. However, this does not matter; as the saying goes, "It is pain that teaches one to cry out!…" And if it weren't for the pain, this newspaper would

> not exist, and we would continue standing still, being the target of the continuous actions of São Paulo's dailies, which, quietly, discard the manuscripts that, in the present moment, address the morality and political unity of Black people. (*A Voz da Raça*, 18 March 1933, p. 1)

In issue no. 67 of the newspaper *A Voz da Raça*, published in July 1937 (Figure 2), a tribute is paid to the poet Ciro Costa, a writer, member of the São Paulo Academy of Letters, and fervent advocate for Black causes. This edition exemplifies the newspaper's central role as a vehicle for dialogue and engagement with the Black community, offering information and perspectives ignored by the hegemonic press. This commitment to representation gave the newspaper significant credibility, politically and socially connecting São Paulo's Black population and encouraging their participation in the organizational strategies promoted by the FNB.

Figure 2

Newspaper A Voz da Raça*, Issue 67 (1937)*



A VOZ DA RAÇA

Orgam da "GENTE NEGRA BRASILEIRA"

MENSARIO INDEPENDENTE

DEUS PATRIA RAÇA e FAMILIA

Ano IV | SÃO PAULO, JULHO DE 1937 | Num. 67

CONGRAÇAR..

RAJOVIA

A FRENTE NEGRA BRASILEIRA PRESTA UMA HOMENAGEM A' MEMORIA DO POETA CIRO COSTA

Note. Image supplied by the author.

This role of fostering engagement was evident from the very first edition of the newspaper (Figure 1), published in 1933, which featured the headline: "The color prejudice in Brazil can only be truly felt by us, Black people." This statement not only denounced the systemic racism of the period but also initiated a political and social debate that reinforced the awakening of consciousness among the Black population. Throughout its issues, *A Voz da Raça* established itself as a space of resistance, strengthening community mobilization and fighting against the erasure perpetuated by São Paulo's elite.

In addition to addressing racism directly and constructively, the newspaper *A Voz da Raça* also included advertisements that reflected the FNB's political stance, emphasizing themes such as God, patriotism, race, and family, aligned with the political climate of the time. Other advertisements highlighted activities promoted by the FNB, such as dance parties and initiatives that valued Black entrepreneurship, featuring beauty salons, law offices, and other local businesses. The newspaper also publicized social, cultural, and sporting events organized by the FNB, including music festivals featuring carnival groups, the creation of a dedicated library, and sports festivals. Additionally, events like family outings to tourist resorts underscored the importance of community integration, solidifying the FNB's role as a space for mobilization and celebrating Black identity across various aspects of social life.

One of the advertisements published in the newspaper *A Voz da Raça* highlighted the farewell to the organization's first headquarters, already anticipating the beginning of activities at its new

location. Aiming to attract as many members of the Black community as possible, the newspaper described the event as follows:

> The festival is sponsored by the "Festivities Committee" of the F.N.B. on the 25th of this month, at 9 PM, in the spacious hall of the *Classes Laboriosas*, located at Rua do Carmo, 25. This festival will be the last of the first series, and as such, it has been organized with great care by the "Festivities Committee," which will close this series on a high note. The second series of festivals, also sponsored by the same committee, led by the dedicated *frentenegrino* Dr. J. S. Camargo, will begin next May, possibly on the 13th, and will feature exclusively original and unpublished works by *frentenegrino* authors. (*A Voz da Raça*, 18 March 1933, p. 4)

Also, in its first edition, in addition to highlighting the actions of the FNB itself, the newspaper's editors used the platform to denounce abuses committed by the State's repressive apparatus, recognizing the vehicle's impact on other segments of society. One initiative was publishing a letter of complaint addressed to the police chief, demanding action regarding a case of abuse of authority. As criticisms of the State's public policies became more frequent, it became increasingly evident how these policies were part of a repressive system that perpetuated the exclusion and oppression of the Black population:

> On the night of the 12th of this month, the Theatrical Group of the F.N.B. was at headquarters rehearsing pieces from its repertoire for an upcoming performance planned for the near future. At midnight, as the rehearsal ended, several young women were leaving for home accompanied by young men when, upon reaching Rua Conde de São Joaquim, they were approached by security inspectors. One of the inspectors asked the young men where they were coming from. They responded that they had all come from the *Frente Negra Brasileira*. Without any justifiable reason, the inspector immediately ordered their arrest and instructed them to get into the police car. This did not happen due to the protests of those present, as there was no reason for such a measure; everyone behaved respectfully, and the young men had accompanied the young women to ensure their safe return home given the late hour. The Chief of Police must take action to curb such abuses by his subordinates. The *Frente Negra* is not a suspicious or clandestine organization and should deserve respect; its members should not be detained or humiliated when leaving its headquarters. Thus, we present our rightful complaint to His Excellency so that such incidents do not happen again. (*A Voz da Raça*, 18 March 1933, p. 1)

The creation of the newspaper *A Voz da Raça* was a strategic initiative by the FNB to cultivate a critical mass capable of occupying positions of power in a society marked by class inequality. The project was part of the broader movement of the Brazilian Black press, which, by the 1930s, was already playing a prominent role in challenging the centralizing system of the hegemonic media and providing a platform for the fight for rights and recognition of the Black population.

The FNB used the newspaper to construct a narrative to foster Black intellectualism in Brazil. The concept of a Black intellectual involves the ability to develop a decolonized social thought grounded in the anti-racist organizational experiences of a significant portion of the population who, historically excluded from the structuring of Brazilian society, began transforming their cognitive capacity into an instrument for mobilization and resistance (Moura, 2014). Black intellectuals, still bearing the marks of a post-slavery context characterized by disarray, anxiety, and exclusion, found in the press space to counteract centuries of invisibility and exclusion from the formation of national political thought.

Recognizing the absence of public policies addressing racial inequalities, the FNB organized itself in the private sphere, using the newspaper as a counter-hegemonic and emancipatory tool. *A Voz da Raça* became an important political engagement instrument crafted by Black intellectuals to confront racism and social exclusion. Despite the alignment of its founder, Arlindo Veiga dos Santos, with integralist ideologies, the newspaper was crucial in fostering political discussions about racism, historical marginalization, and its "*aquilombador*" role in mobilizing dozens of Black families and leaders around strategies of organization and resistance.

In alignment with other Black Press publications, *A Voz da Raça* established a model of action that became a common denominator across Afro-Brazilian media. The newspaper consistently brought critical issues affecting the Black community to the forefront, creating a space for in-depth debates on racism, segregation, and structural inequality. Its circulation extended beyond São Paulo, reaching a network of Black organizations that relied on the publication to unify their communities around strategies for political empowerment and social inclusion within Brazil's racially stratified urban fabric.

This model was not entirely unprecedented; it drew inspiration from earlier publications such as *O Clarim da Alvorada*, which had also challenged the invisibility and marginalization imposed by dominant media outlets. What distinguished *A Voz da Raça*, however, was its dual function as both the official voice of an organized political movement and an autonomous space of intellectual and cultural production. While many of its articles echoed the ideological tensions within the FNB, the newspaper also addressed broader publics, building a shared political vocabulary that facilitated cross-regional mobilization. In doing so, it reinforced a sense of collective identity among Afro-Brazilians during a period marked by political repression, censorship, and social surveillance.

Conclusion

This article began by analyzing the Brazilian social contract, which has historically positioned the Black population in a state of antagonism and subordination, both during the pre-republican and post-republican periods. I argued that the first ruptures enabling the emancipation of the Black population from this social antagonism began during the slavery period. However, the most impactful political and social actions in the post-abolition period were promoted by the *Frente Negra Brasileira* (FNB). This organization played a fundamental role in constructing a narrative that challenged the structure of the State by advocating for the inclusion of the Black population in social, economic, and political spheres. In the 1930s, the FNB emerged as the leading force against racism in Brazil. Among its main mobilization tools was the newspaper *A Voz da Raça*, analyzed in the previous section, which consolidated the fight for emancipation and racial justice.

The Brazilian social contract follows a structure that perpetuates ethnic and social domination, with the core of this dynamic rooted in the process of racializing the contract. The racial contract is a system of domination where its creators occupy the dominant position, while other social groups are relegated to subordinate roles (Mills, 1997). Analyzing this stratification through the lens of gender and race reveals a structural problem that persists to this day: the systematic exclusion of certain groups from access to power and privilege.

This contract of domination creates a barrier that hinders the Black population's rise to the higher strata of society, as it is argued that it was not designed for the Brazilian social context. To

build a fully democratic and inclusive society capable of equitably integrating ethnicities and genders, it is essential to question and revise the social contract model that underpinned the creation of the Brazilian State. This contract reproduces patterns of domination rooted in white European nations, whose social realities do not face the same challenges of ethnic diversity and inequality that characterize Brazil's social structure.

Thus, it is possible to analyze the significant political role the *Frente Negra Brasileira* played through its strategic use of the newspaper *A Voz da Raça*. The *Frente* was a pioneering social and political organization that, through affirmative actions aimed at empowering the Black population, took the first steps toward the deracialization of the social contract imposed as the model for organizing Brazil's State. This process of deracialization requires the deconstruction of a structure that has historically failed to meet the demands of different social groups, particularly the Black population, which is an integral part of the collective of subjects that form Brazilian society. This article serves as the starting point for a broader research agenda on the deracialization of the social contract, which I intend to explore and deepen in future studies.

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Brazilian Diaspora in the Czech Republic: An Ethnographic Probe into the Brazilian Community

Abstract

This research draws on an online survey and semi-structured qualitative interviews with Brazilians living in the Czech Republic. Despite the limitation of a relatively small sample size, this research offers a compelling exploration of the Brazilian community's life in the Czech Republic, contributing to a broader understanding of diaspora dynamics in the region. While the number of Brazilians in the Czech Republic remains low and there are no significant historical ties between the countries, it nevertheless represents an important research topic in the field of 'new diasporas' that may arise in different parts of the world. In our paper, we discuss different themes that relate to the migrants' experience of living abroad and how they conceptualise their Brazilian identity under new conditions. We use an interpretive approach to understand the subjective meanings ascribed by the members of the diaspora to relations in the country of origin and in the Czech Republic.

Resumo

Esta pesquisa baseia-se em uma pesquisa online e em entrevistas qualitativas semiestruturadas com brasileiros que vivem na República Tcheca. Apesar da limitação de um tamanho de amostra relativamente pequeno, esta pesquisa oferece uma exploração convincente da vida da comunidade brasileira na República Tcheca, contribuindo para uma compreensão mais ampla da dinâmica da diáspora na região. Embora o número de brasileiros na República Tcheca permaneça baixo e não existam laços históricos significativos entre os países, representa, no entanto, um importante tópico de pesquisa no campo das "novas diásporas" que podem surgir em diferentes partes do mundo. Em nosso artigo, discutimos diferentes temas relacionados à experiência dos migrantes de viver no exterior e como eles conceituam sua identidade brasileira sob novas condições. Utilizamos uma abordagem interpretativa para compreender os significados subjetivos atribuídos pelos membros da diáspora às relações no país de origem e na República Tcheca.

Introduction

The Czech Republic is home to many ethnic and national minorities whose composition is determined by the geographic location in Central Europe of the country and in some cases also by historical ties with countries outside Europe (e.g. relatively strong Vietnamese community). The Brazilian diaspora in the Czech Republic represents a very small community. According to the Czech Statistical Office, there were 1,291 Brazilians in the Czech Republic, who held a residence permit of 12 months or longer (Czech Statistical Office, 2023). The numbers imply that

the community of Brazilians is very small compared to Czechs living in Brazil. While the actual community of Czechs in Brazil counts around 5,000 people, it is estimated that approx. half a million Brazilians are of Czech ancestry, including some famous people. Among them, probably the most known person is the grandfather of Brazilian president (1956–1961) Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira (Embaixada da República Tcheca em Brasília, 2022).

Unlike Brazil, the Czech Republic has only become a country of immigration recently. Until the 1990s, Czechoslovakia was a country of emigration. However, with the breakup of Czechoslovakia and subsequent economic opportunities for migrants that followed, the Czech Republic became a country of immigration. Since 2014, the Czech Republic has allowed dual citizenship. The main countries of origin of foreigners in the Czech Republic are relatively stable over time and include Ukraine, Slovakia, Vietnam, Russia, and Romania. Currently, the largest group of foreigners in the Czech Republic is formed by Ukrainians. In 2022, nationals of Ukraine in the Czech Republic numbered 637 thousand (of which 432 thousand people were granted temporary protection). The other two most represented groups are the citizens of Slovakia (117 000) and Vietnam (66 000) (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, 2023). The capital city Prague hosts the most foreigners in the Czech Republic by large and the discrepancies in the numbers of foreigners across the region are remarkable. At the same time, the setup of our research has enabled us to inquire about the experience of foreigners who live in different regions of the Czech Republic. Moreover, it is important to inquire about the experience of migrants who live in a relatively new country of immigration and how their transnational connections are formed and sustained over time.

The main aim of this article is to conduct a probe into the Brazilian community in the Czech Republic and reveal its characteristics in relation to diaspora theories. In other words, the theories on diasporas will be assessed and derived into key features, which will be explored in the context of the Brazilian community in the Czech Republic. There are two main reasons behind the aim. First, research on the Brazilian community in the Czech Republic is relatively rare and even well-written analyses might be outdated because they were published years ago. Second, diaspora research is unconsolidated and requires further assessment which might bring original ideas for theoretical concepts. Methodically, this contribution is an exploratory case study using original data collected by the authors. We use surveys and interviews to elicit different information from Brazilians living in the Czech Republic. We use an interpretive approach to reveal the meanings given by members of the Brazilian community in the Czech Republic to different issues that are important in their lives. Hence, this research gives insight into a less explored community within the Czech Republic and at the same time, investigates larger transnational processes that form the diasporic consciousness of Brazilians living abroad.

Diaspora research: From ethnic nationalism to transnational entities

The term geography is rarely used in connection with diaspora despite its invocation of space, place, or scale (Glick Schiller, 2011). However, the term diaspora has been increasingly used to strengthen the sense of unity among people residing in different geographical locations. For the purposes of our research, Brazilian diaspora means people having Brazilian citizenship or identifying themselves as Brazilian who (for some reason) migrated to the territory of the Czech Republic. The word 'migrated' is purposefully used in the specification as dispersal still has a connotation of non-voluntary migration due to its early connection with dramatic historic events

despite many scholars using the term as a synonym for migrant groups. However, over time, the word diaspora has evolved to include national groups not necessarily displaced by force (Siar, 2014). Next, we will discuss the conceptual evolution of the term diaspora and the diaspora policies used by certain states to engage diaspora members.

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, the word *diaspora* comes from the ancient Greek words *dia* and *speiro* meaning 'to sow over' (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2022). Unsurprisingly, the word referred to Greeks in the Hellenic world and was also referring to the expulsion of Israelites or Jews from their ancestral homeland in the 6th century. In the past, it was used to refer mainly to the classical Jewish, Greek, or Armenian diasporas. In the last decades, the term was developed and theorised by scholars who are far from a unified understanding of the word as definitions vary significantly. For example, Grossman (2019) made a large-scale assessment by using large-scale data analysis software to reveal the most relevant attributes of the diaspora definition. According to Grossman (2019, p. 1264), the diaspora is *'a transnational community whose members (or their ancestors) emigrated or were dispersed from their original homeland but remain oriented to it and preserve a group identity'*. As noted by Grossman (2019), this definition is based on six key characteristics including (1) transnationalism; (2) community; (3) dispersal and immigration; (4) being outside the homeland; (5) homeland orientation; and (6) group identity. All six characteristics are further assessed in this research demonstrating interesting variability within a single definition.

Other authors, such as Cohen (2022, p. 6), characterise diasporic inception by being dispersed from an original 'centre' to two or more foreign regions. Diaspora members retain a collective memory, vision or myth about their original homeland and remain separate from their host societies. They see their homeland as idealised and they relate to it and their ethnocommunal consciousness. Further research on diasporic consciousness has spun from the British Sikh diaspora and the role of Bollywood cinema in reconciling their value systems (Takhar et al., 2012) to diaspora building a sense of commonality as well as distance among Haitians (Glick Schiller, 2011). Duarte (2005) has investigated how Brazilians in Australia re-conceptualise their Brazilian identity under diasporic conditions. The study identified four patterns that can be seen as indicative of diaspora consciousness, (1) the co-presence of 'here' and 'there'; (2) the re-creation of 'Brazilian spaces' in Australia; (3) 'othering' in relation to Anglo-Australians, and (4) a reflexive appraisal of the homeland and its cultural values and norms. It is yet to see how this is valid in other contexts but we will discuss more about the research on Brazilian diaspora in the following section. It seems that literature remains 'chiefly concerned with diasporas in the west and north, and [with] processes of place-making and claims-making in Western countries of arrival' (Alexander et al., 2016, p. 2). However, there are also exceptions to this and our paper attempts to shed light on diaspora experience in a new country of immigration.

The term diaspora can encompass the actual members of the communities. On one hand, diasporas can be treated as 'bona fide actual entities' with quantifiable memberships, which essentializes their ethnic component (Sheffer, 2003). On the other hand, diasporas need to stress their transnational component and their connection with people in the countries of origin. Some scholars distinguish between ethnonational and transnational diasporas (Sheffer, 2006). There are different capacities and strategies posed by the Armenian or Indian ethnonational diaspora and Latino or Muslim transnational networks. Sheffer (2006) further notes that the role of diasporas has been strengthened in the past years. At the same time, people who create transna-

tional entities are not necessarily migrants. They might be a 1.5-, second or third generation of migrants or they can only engage in the larger transnational social field because of other reasons (Levitt & Glick Schiller, 2004). Tölölyan (1991, p. 5) called diasporas 'the exemplary communities of the transnational moment'. While embodying the transnational turn in migration studies, diasporas have also played a significant role in the creation of transnational communities.

Some scholars perceive diaspora in more abstract terms and put an emphasis on peoples' engagement in the diaspora. It can mean the personal attachment of people towards diasporas, or even more abstract use to denote 'an idiom, stance or claim' (Brubaker, 2005). Not everyone decides to engage in the diaspora as some people prefer to identify with the country of settlement. Glick Schiller et al. (1992, p. 11) argue that 'while some migrants identify more with one society than the other, the majority seem to maintain several identities that link them simultaneously to more than one nation.' However, not all migrants are transnational. Therefore, the conceptualization of elective diasporas helps to recognize this trend (Jöns et al., 2015). For them, it can help 'replace the biologically and territorially grounded concepts ... that emphasise ... emotional attachment and one's choice to participate in diasporic communities' (Jöns et al., 2015, p. 114). Hence, it is important to highlight the voluntariness in association with the diaspora and that not everyone prefers to be connected with other diaspora members or the country of origin.

Cohen (1996, p. 516) argues that transnational bonds no longer have to be cemented by migration or by exclusive territorial claims. Diasporas can be held together through the mind or a shared imagination. This leads to the fact that diasporas can be perceived as imagined communities (Anderson, 1983). While the term imagined community was originally coined to refer to the nation, it can nevertheless be useful in the conceptualization of diasporas. Imagination is also important in the possibility of returning to the country of origin. For some members of the diaspora, the (imagined) return represents a part of their diasporic experience. Some members of the diaspora might eventually return and create a 'counter-diaspora' (Christou & King, 2015). Some diaspora returnees might feel alienated from the society where they migrated and create a symbolic boundary between themselves and host country population (Pawłowska, 2017). The concept of diasporic return has been greatly developed by Tsuda (1999, 2003) in the case of Brazilian-Japanese returnees to both Japan and Brazil. Brazilians of Japanese descent migrated to Japan in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of economic incentives to migrate as unskilled workers. Interestingly, their number was estimated at 220,000 and continued to grow despite the economic recession in Japan (Tsuda, 1999). Between 2007 and 2011, roughly 107,000 migrants returned to Brazil and about 170,000 Brazilians continue to live and work in Japan (Migration Policy Institute [MPI], 2018).

Another feature of diasporas is the role of networks that have, to an extent, become transnational. There is a triadic relationship (Safran, 1991; Vertovec, 1999) between (a) globally dispersed ethnic groups, (b) the territorial states and contexts where such groups reside, and (c) the homeland states and contexts from which they or their ancestors came. Diaspora policies of the homeland represent another important strand of research. The 'politics of homeland' engages members of diasporas or transnational communities in a variety of ways (Vertovec, 1999). Clifford (1994) examined the politics of diasporas, exploring how diaspora communities can engage in activism, advocacy, and political mobilisation. Furthermore, diasporas can influence policy decisions and engage in issues related to human rights, conflicts, and humanitarian causes. The role of diasporas can also be related to lobbying for various causes (such as the Arme-

nian diaspora's lobbying for the recognition of the Armenian genocide in 1915 or the Kurdish diaspora's lobbying for the recognition of the Kurdish state). It can also be connected with electoral influence both in countries of origin and countries of settlement. Similarly, diasporas can engage in migration and development (through remittances, social remittances and collective remittances) and post-conflict reconstruction and peacebuilding (Laakso & Hautaniemi, 2014).

Brazilian diaspora

Brazil has recently shifted its role from a country of immigration to a country of emigration and there is ongoing research on the Brazilian diaspora (Padilla, 2011). Its size is estimated at more than 3 million people globally (Marcus, 2014). On average, about 100,000 Brazilians have left the country per year since 2000, with about half of the total from the southeastern states of Minas Gerais, Paraná, São Paulo, and Goiás (MPI, 2018). The greatest numbers of Brazilians live in Northern America and consequently, most research has focused on these diaspora groups (Barbosa, 2016; Margolis, 1993). In the Czech Republic, there are more than 1,000 Brazilians. Brazil does not have a specific law to engage its diaspora members, nor does it have a ministry or a specialised agency dealing with the members of the diaspora. However, there is an Undersecretary General for Brazilian Communities Abroad in the Ministry of External Relations. Brazil allows dual citizenship, enabling Brazilians who have acquired citizenship in another country to maintain their Brazilian nationality (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023). It allows Brazilians living abroad to participate in national elections regardless of their geographical location.

A large strand of research on Brazilian diaspora inquired about its members' identity. Duarte (2005) researched 'diasporic consciousness' of Brazilians living in Australia who came mainly as a labour diaspora. For many of them, the reason to come was to save enough money to guarantee a better standard of living after their return to Brazil. Apart from economic reasons, frequently cited reason among the respondents was 'search for adventure' and 'disillusionment with Brazil'. The latter also appeared in Sales' (1999) account of ethnic identity construction among Brazilians in the USA. However, the metaphor of 'roots' being central to Brazilian identity among the diaspora members was central to respondents in Duarte's (2005) paper. In a metaphorical way, one respondent put it, 'Australia is my second home, and I love living here, but my heart is 'green and yellow'. This corresponds with the way Clifford (1994, p. 308) conceptualises diaspora discourse which 'articulates, or bends together, both roots and routes ... outside the national time/space in order to live inside, with a difference'. Given this, new forms of identity and community consciousness appear.

Some research on Brazilian diaspora has also focused on the dispersion of Pentecostalism from Brazil thanks to its diaspora (Chaves, 2017; Ikeuchi, 2019; Rocha & Vásquez, 2013). Even Brazilian athletes were seen as the missionaries of this religion (Rial, 2012). There is also research on African inspired religion in Brazil and its perseverance and transnational dimension (Matory, 2009). For example, *Orixás*, deities of several African religions related to Yoruba, have appeared in European countries (Saraiva, 2017). Another strand of research on Brazilian diaspora has dealt with the music, art and television programmes forming and catering to the Brazilian diaspora. Despite the language being different from other 'Latino' diasporas and the juxtaposition of the 'Anglo' host culture and the migrants' home culture, there is a shared Latin American identity (Bachmann, 2011). Finally, research has also noted the habitus of capoeira, a martial art, differs in the UK and Brazil (Delamont & Stephens, 2008). The practice of capoeira

in Canada has engaged with the local multicultural and Aboriginal politics and it has called into question the past heritage and transnational circulation routes (Joseph, 2012). The word 'saudade' that evokes nostalgia and melancholic feelings of longing for something often appeared in the works on the Brazilian diaspora (das Graças Brightwell, 2020; López-Calvo, 2019).

Data and methods

Authors faced many challenges in finding enough respondents for the online questionnaire, which was built up to cover most of the theoretical aspects identified as relevant for the complex understanding of the Brazilian community in the Czech Republic. The collection was conducted between 1st March and 30th April 2023. There were different ways how research participants were recruited. One of them was a Facebook group titled 'Brasileiros em Praga' (Brasilians in Prague) containing some 174 members. Due to the very low number of respondents, we have used another way and asked the Brazilian embassy in Prague with a request to help us with the promotion of the research. As a result, the Embassy promoted the questionnaire on its social networks, which attracted several more respondents. Finally, we asked respondents to share the questionnaires among other Brazilians living in the Czech Republic.

After two months, a sample of n=44 respondents filled out the questionnaire. It is important to note, that the sample is not at all representative, which is given by the fact that respondents were contacted mainly via social networks and thereby there was not a random sampling procedure involved. Moreover, the number of respondents is relatively low, representing approx. 4 percent of the Brazilian population living in the Czech Republic and findings can not be generalized to the entire Brazilian diaspora living in the Czech Republic. Instead, findings refer to the studied group and may only suggest potential trends within the broader population.

On the other hand, there are serious debates on the minimum sample size and statistical significance (e. g. in z or t test). There is a debate over the claim that a minimum sample of n=30 shall reasonably lead to validity of the normal distribution (see, e.g., Hesterberg, n.d.; Kwak & Kim, 2017; Perezgonzales, 2016, p. 4). However, a larger sample is always better and the significance is influenced also by other factors including the field of application. It is evident that the sample of 30 people in medical research or pharmacology is too small. However, in social sciences using qualitative assessment the sample might be enough to provide some idea about basic characteristics of a specific group, especially when the research is accompanied by social anthropological attitudes to illustrate the cases. It is evident that a relatively little sample is one of the key flaws of the presented research. However, despite this fact, it provides an interesting probe into the life of the Brazilian community in the Czech Republic.

To triangulate our data and add more details on the life of Brazilians living in the Czech Republic, we conducted in-depth interviews with survey participants, who agreed to be contacted for a follow-up interview. The online interviews were conducted during the months of August and September 2023. Among the interviewees were 8 Brazilians that have been living in the Czech Republic in the past years. Their length of stay in the Czech Republic ranged from 2 to 15 years. Table 1 below contains their general classification and further information about their stay and reason to move to the Czech Republic.

These participants are all adults who volunteered and agreed to answer questions about other aspects of their stay. There was an oral informed consent process and participants were able to withdraw from research any time or not to answer any questions. The interviews were

Table 1
Preliminary information on participants

Participant	Gender	Length of stay	Reason for moving from Brazil
1	Male	6 years	Transferred jobs within the same company
2	Female	6 years	Study (Bachelor's)
3	Female	2 years	Study (Czech language)
4	Female	2 years	Study (postdoc)
5	Male	15 years	Expat
6	Male	5 years	Study (PhD) and work
7	Male	4 years	Transferred jobs within the same company
8	Male	2 years	Study (Master's)

Note. Source: authors.

conducted in English or Brazilian Portuguese based on the preferences of the participants. Participants 1, 6, 7 and 8 were interviewed individually. Participants 2-5 participated in the same focus group interview. We manually transcribed the interviews and translated them into English, if necessary. We then coded them in Atlas.ti software.

Survey

Based on the median, the typical Brazilian in the Czech Republic is a young, 34-year-old woman with a university degree in a non-technical area, who has already spent four years in Prague, working for some corporate company dealing with finance or trade. However, this picture might be misleading, as Brazilians living in Czechia represent a highly heterogeneous group, which is evident also from socio-demographic analysis. In our sample, there are 24 women and 20 men with a very similar average age in both groups close to 36 years and median of 34 years. Overall, Brazilians in the Czech Republic have a high level of education. Out of 44 people, 40 hold university degrees and one out of the remaining four is still studying. There are no significant differences between men and women regarding education level. What slightly differs is the area of education; men tend to have technical education more often (13 out of 20 men) than women (just 9 out of 24 women). What differs is also the average length of stay in the Czech Republic, which is on average 56.7 months, however the median is some 10 months lower. Women respondents lived in Czechia on average for 58.2 months and men 54.9 months. There is, however, a long interval among individual respondents, ranging from 2 months to over 20 years.

It is important to note that the length of stay is an important independent variable that correlates well with other dependent variables. For example, the length of stay (unsurprisingly) positively correlated with the level of Czech language skill ($P = 0.65$) and having a Czech partner ($P = 0.43$). The strongest correlation is naturally in between the length of being with a Czech partner (independent variable) and staying in the Czech Republic ($P = 0.76$). In other words, having a Czech partner and staying longer in the Czech Republic leads to better Czech language skill. Both men and women have similar language skills: on a scale from 0 'none' to 10 'almost native speaker' the self-evaluation scored on average of 3.2.

There are also other tendencies observed related to length of stay. The longer stay in the Czech Republic, the fewer tendency to return to Brazil within the next few years ($P = -0.36$) and lower the intensity of contacts with friends and family in Brazil ($P = -0.38$). On the other hand, longer stay in the Czech Republic is positively related to having experienced of discrimination or

prejudice due to Brazilian origin (P = 0.33). This might be caused by having more opportunities and social interactions over time. Having a Czech partner was one of main motivations to travel and stay in the Czech Republic (12 out of 44 respondents), which is of the same strength as traveling and staying in the Czech Republic due to study. However, the main motivation behind is professional (15 out of 44 respondents) while the quality of life in a safe country is only of little relevance (5 out of 44 respondents). It means that economic factors are dominant in migrating to the Czech Republic. However, some of the respondents indicated previous contacts or positive relationship towards the country:

> *'My mother was living in the Czech Republic for 7 years and then returned to Brazil. She was talking about the Czech Republic a lot and I wanted to have the same experience'* (survey respondent 6); or *'when I was young, I was here for a study stay. After some years I have decided to return'* (survey respondent 18) or '*I have had some relatives, who lived here for some time and they recommended the Czech Republic as a country for a good life'* (survey respondent 7).

Respondents indicating economic motivations replied that '*I came here because of a very specific job position*' (survey respondent 4) or because '*a country issued a visa for me*' (survey respondent 33).

Economic life of Brazilians is related to many factors. Due to relatively high levels of education, Brazilians work in various high-performing sectors of the economy or qualified professions. Most of the respondents work in the IT sector (12 out of 44) which is followed by trade and finance (9 out of 44). Five respondents work in university related jobs, as lecturers or researchers and the same number of respondents work in technical professions requiring high technical qualification (such as engineers, technology specialists, industry experts etc). Four respondents work in low-qualified professions, such as waitress, assistants, receptionists etc. There are in total 6 students in the sample of 44, and also some people with rare professions including an animal care zoologist or artistic carpenter. Overall, the vast majority of Brazilians (36 people) think that their economic situation and living standard in the Czech Republic is much better or slightly better than in Brazil. In total 11 respondents send money back home, to the family, at least once per year.

Family aspect is very important in the life of Brazilians. In the question 'what do you miss the most about Brazil in the Czech Republic?', 12 respondents mentioned family. However, some other things prevailed: 26 respondents out of 44 mentioned Brazilian food. Friends, Brazilian climate or festivals were also often mentioned. Family (back in Brazil) also plays an important motivation factor for return. Respondents were asked to evaluate on a scale from 0 'not at all' to 10 'almost certain' how much is probable to return to Brazil within 12 months, a horizon of a few years and longer horizon beyond five years. The average expectation of return within 12 months is as little as 1.8 without gender difference. In the mid-term horizon of a few years, it is slightly higher at the average of 4.2, which is slightly higher in the case of women (4.6) and lower in the case of men (3.4). Out of 44, 28 respondents did not plan to return, even in the long term period and there are 16 respondents who ever consider return due to different factors.

Respondents considering return had to chose pre-defined factors and add significance of the factor ranging from 0 to 10. Most important factor behind decision to return was realisation, that 'Brazil is their home' (average score of 4,6); second and third factor with average score close to 4,0 was the desire to die and be buried in the homeland, which is almost equally strong as the intention to return and contribute something back to Brazilian society. Another three

factors proved relevant, with a score average of 3,7: the motivation to enjoy new skills in Brazil, family reasons such as the help to ageing parents, or the motivation to work back in Brazil. The weakest factor seems to be the motivation to find a partner in Brazil or form a family there (average score of 2,7). Generally, women tend to think about returning more than men; the patriotic reasons and the intention to die and be buried in the homeland are even stronger than motivations relating to the family. This factor is stronger among women (average close to 7 compared to average 2 in the case of men). Among men it is merely a realisation that 'Brazil is their home'. This preliminary analysis leads to the premise that Brazilian women are more tied to a homeland, which could be proven also in the number of contact with Brazilians in Brazil, frequency of flying back home or interest in the home country.

This premise was not confirmed as the frequency of flying back home is almost same among women and men. Only 4 respondents from the sample of 44 travel back home several times per year. Much likely is travelling once per year (17 respondents) or once per several years (16 respondents) and 7 respondents have not been back to Brazil yet. Unsurprisingly, those having family back in Brazil are having an increased frequency of flying back home. Also regarding contacts (contacting Brazilians in Brazil or other Brazilians in the Czech Republic) does not differ much among men and women. What is different is the frequency. While Brazilians in Brazil (including family) are contacted usually several times a week, other Brazilians in the Czech Republic are contacted in lower intensity, usually several times a month. In total 19 respondents from the sample of 44 declare daily contact with Brazilians living in Brazil, which shows their significant transnational ties. In this subgroup, women are more represented than men.

After living in the Czech Republic, most of the Brazilians (22 respondents) declare no effect on their Brazilian identity in terms of strengthening or weakening, 12 respondents are declaring weakening of the identity and 10 respondents are declaring stronger Brazilian identity. There seems to be two interesting factors related to identity. First, an increasing level of Czech language skills leads to declared weakening of Brazilian identity ($P = -0.34$) and second, increased living standard (in comparison to Brazil) leads to declared weakening of Brazilian identity ($P = -0.33$). Although the significance of P is not very high, both correlations are logical and may be based on causality.

A special area is perception of Czech system openness to Brazilians in comparison to Czechs. In general, Brazilian men consider the Czech healthcare, education and labour market more closed than Brazilian women. On on a scale from '0' (not at all open) to '10' (very open), the education scored on average 4.65 (men) to 5.37 (women), labour market scored 6.7 (men) to 7.0 (women) and healthcare scored 6 (men) to 7 (women). The analysis of factors behind showed that expecting return back to Brazil within 12 months negatively correlates well with labour market openness ($P = -0.51$). In other words, those who think that the Czech labour market is closed are soon returning back to Brazil. There seem to be other reasons behind this. For example, the length of a partnership with a Czech partner (independent variable) is positively correlated with open perception, however, the Pearson coefficient is not strong, at $P = 0.26$ in case of the labour market or healthcare but even less in the case of education ($P = 0.15$). Moreover, perceiving labour market open correlates with the perception of open healthcare ($P = 0.57$). This is quite logical causality due to compulsory social and healthcare insurance for workers and employers to pay.

Interviews

First, as a means to investigate how their feeling of belonging shifted after them moving away, we asked participants whether they currently consider Brazil or the Czech Republic to be their home. Attachment to family or other interpersonal relationships who currently live in Brazil was a predominant reason among half of the responses who felt more attached to Brazil. On the other hand, the participants who did not choose Brazil either had partners who were European or claimed they have adapted to the 'European lifestyle'. Some of the interviewees elaborated on their personal reasons.

> *"After 15 years in Czechia, I don't feel in Brazil at home anymore, so I would say it is the Czech Republic now. I know the place very well and I complain about the same things as Czechs"* (Participant 5).
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> *"I thought* [*it was*] *Brazil but now I feel I don't have a home now, so neither.* (...) *Here, people are too quiet.* (...) *In Brazil everything is so loud everywhere. In Europe, it's so calm – you take the bus and it's so quiet"* (Participant 2).

None of the interviewees manifested a strong interest in moving back to Brazil at the time of the interview. However, a few participants mentioned the possibility of onward migration to other countries in Europe instead of staying in the Czech Republic.

Connected to the theme of transnational engagement are the elections. Participating in Brazilian elections is mandatory for Brazilian citizens even if they live abroad. Alternatively, if they choose not to cast their votes, the Electoral Ministry demands paying a nominal fee and filling out a form with a justification for being absent. The maximum penalty is the cancellation of one of their national identification numbers, the *Cadastro de Pessoas Físicas* (or CPF). Three of our participants claimed they have not participated in the presidential election of 2022, while others reported having participated by voting at the Brazilian Embassy in Prague. Among those who did not vote, bureaucracy and travelling were appointed as some of the reasons.

Participants also discussed the things they yearned for while outside of their country of origin. The most recurrent theme in their answers was related to making drinks or cooking dishes from their national cuisine. Additionally, the majority of the answers around the topic of 'missing Brazil' mentioned family and Brazilian friends. In their words:

> *"I don't miss the country Brazil at all, but I miss certain things from or in Brazil. I miss Rio de Janeiro, my hometown, and my friends there.* (...) *I sometimes make myself some caipirinhas or listen to bossa nova when I'm feeling nostalgic"* (Participant 8).
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> *"I miss Brazil. And of course, the food.* (...) *I usually try to cook Brazilian food at home but it's not always possible because of the ingredients, mainly vegetables and fruits. But other than that, I have some Brazilian friends here so we meet very regularly. And other than that I guess what I mean the most from Brazil is my family. For instance, I usually talk to my mother once a week, usually during Sunday"* (Participant 7).

Interestingly, local places and local culture were seen as important to interviewees rather than an overarching 'Brazilian culture'. Many of them stressed the large diversity of Brazil and its regional differences (compared to the relatively homogeneous Czech Republic). Keeping in touch with significant others from Brazil was also a habit that most of the other participants claimed to have and social media is the preferred form of communication. They also mention that such communication occurs frequently.

It is also through the internet that most Brazilians we interviewed consume news-related content about Brazil. In order to investigate whether their informational environment has changed after immigration, we asked them if they still follow the news from Brazil. Five participants mentioned that they are frequent users of websites and social media accounts of Brazilian news outlets. Additionally, some of them report differences in the type of information they receive while living in the Czech Republic.

> *"I follow the news* [*about Brazil*] *on the internet but I must say that the news from other countries do not get much coverage here. In Brazil, on the other hand, that happens quite often. So I feel that being here means to live in a sort of a bubble. There is plenty of news about Czechia, Ukraine, and sometimes Germany"* (Participant 2).
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> *"Same as* [*participant 4*]. *Also, I follow news outlets for expats in Prague. They're all in English and I feel they are very filtered in a way. I don't think I am getting the content I should get"* (Participant 3).

Among the participants who claimed not to follow news from Brazil regularly or at all, the reasons mentioned were the following:

> *"Information is still the same and is quite negative and I'm not sure how that would influence my life. So I'd rather skip it"* (Participant 1).
>
> *"*[*About watching news programs from Brazil*] (...) *basically limiting the time, because if you are too much into Brazil, then you're not integrating into the Czech Republic"* (Participant 6).
>
> *"Sometimes I read newspapers, sometimes I get information from social media and family, but I try to avoid consuming too much news from Brazil. I find them to be often heartbreaking and I don't like being reminded of the reasons why I chose to leave the country and not come back"* (Participant 8).

Another theme that was discussed related to respondents' understanding of their national identity. When discussing this topic, we asked them to define what it means to be Brazilian.

> *"People in Brazil are very friendly but definitely not self-aware. Generally loud, they never go by rules. Brazilians are nice, but will come 30 minutes late, but then still apologise. Brazilians tend to be dishonest, sometimes not in a bad way but just because of the system. We're born in a corrupt system, it's embedded in the culture. But overall people are very positive and happy and definitely hard workers and a very heterogeneous population"* (Participant 1).
>
> *"Being happy, speaking loud. Maybe dancing as well and really in love with sports and being able to adapt in any condition, and this is the recipe of Brazil"* (Participant 6).

The participants also stressed the heterogeneity of the population.

> *"Sometimes I miss the loudness, which is characteristic to Brazilians.* (...) *We live with passion, we do things with love and we connect through food with other people.* (...) *We have to touch other people, we hug... but compared to the other countries in Europe and also Czech Republic, Brazilians tend to see things in a loving way, we don't see black and white, but something in between* (...) *we see people in an emotional and not rational way"* (Participant 2).
>
> *"*(...) *There's not only one type of Brazilian, there are many. So I think in general it is just being born there, speaking Brazilian Portuguese and having the culture"* (Participant 7).

When delving into the intricacies of what living away from Brazil could mean for their Brazilian identity. Some respondents believed that living away from Brazil could mean losing some of their Brazilian identity. As an example, they also discussed difficulties in speaking Brazilian Portuguese.

> *"Portuguese is a language that changes so fast, especially because of the internet. Every year when I visit Brazil there is some expression I don't understand"* (Participant 2).
>
> *"I agree. When I speak with my family through the phone they always tell me I sound like an Italian that just arrived in São Paulo. They can barely understand me"* (Participant 5).

However, some participants did not think that it would have an impact on the affective part of their Brazilian identity and feeling like a Brazilian.

> *"I am afraid I am gonna lose the communication/cultural aspects. Because everything changes so fast. Maybe this will make me less Brazilian in the eyes of other Brazilians, but not for myself"* (Participant 4).

The last question regarded the topic of facing discrimination while living in the Czech Republic. Among the respondents who claimed they have experienced such episodes, certain locations, physical characteristics and the language barrier were considered relevant factors. Some foreigners encountered difficulties with the state administration when they did not feel welcome.

> *"In my case… I am white male, tall and slim, so people initially would have nothing against me. I could be from anywhere. But then when I need to speak a language, a barrier appears. So I think it's more towards a foreigner in general, not directly Brazilian. But I would imagine black people or women or black women for sure they face that. Because I've seen that. And not a direct discrimination, but it's what happens often in the official offices. I really think they do it on purpose"* (Participant 1).
>
> *"The only time when I did not feel welcome was during my appointments at the immigration agency. The workers there are notoriously bad-tempered and seem to do their best to make all immigrants feel unwelcome"* (Participant 8).

There were also instances of verbal violence when people challenged them for not speaking Czech in public places. While these are isolated incidents, they show a worrying pattern that can threaten the feeling of belonging of foreigners in the Czech Republic.

> *"Also, one time I was at the metro station and a guy heard me speaking in Portuguese with my wife and he started to stare at me and say: 'Máš problém?'*[1] *and I said 'Nemluvím česky'*[2]*. I don't know what he was trying to do, if he was just trying to start a fight with me… so this was weird. And then later he was doing the same thing with another guy. So I guess he was just drunk or wanting to start a fight with someone that doesn't speak Czech"* (Participant 4).
>
> *"*[*Agreeing with participant 4*] *Once I was on the bus in Prague speaking on the phone and an old lady started yelling at me saying 'we are in the Czech Republic, you have to speak Czech' "* (Participant 2).

The interviewees agreed that the situation can differ across regions of the Czech Republic and in smaller and bigger cities.

> *"For me, it depends on the region in Czech. It varies largely but basically in big cities like Prague or Brno, there is no discrimination. But when you go to a village, definitely. You feel like an alien coming out of outer space and everybody looks at you. It strongly depends on the looks. People in villages get confused because they don't know you, what you think or do, whether you are a threat or not. But this is not only the case in Czechia, but I also felt this in Ireland, too"* (Participant 5).

[1]In English: "Do you have a problem?", with an invective connotation.
[2]In English: "I don't speak Czech".

> *"I also lived outside Prague in a village in the South Moravian Region… If I went out with my Brazilian shirt, I would definitely be looked at by someone. 'It's like okay, you are from outside.' I feel that when Czechs approach me they don't know what I am.. I can look like a Czech but if I pronounce something wrong it completely falls apart"* (Participant 6).

Discussion and concluding remarks

The results obtained from the survey coincide partially with what was reported during the interviews. First, the correspondence between the educational profile of both interview and survey respondents is noticeable and a clear indication that the Brazilian community living in the Czech Republic is, in its majority, highly skilled. This means that many of the Brazilians living there have a tertiary education and work in highly specialised professions. Secondly, the intention of not desiring to return to Brazil in the near future was high in both samples. While there was some intention of possible onward migration within the EU, the majority of respondents wanted to stay in the Czech Republic for a foreseeable time. This could indicate that the Brazilian community is embedded in the Czech Republic and has a non-transient nature despite its small size.

There is an element of similarity between our qualitative findings and those of Duarte (2005). More specifically, on how Brazilians in the diaspora we interviewed keep strong ties with their families and friends who live in Brazil and how that plays a pivotal role in their perception of home, that is, their 'roots'. This is, indeed, a strong factor within the identity of this diaspora group, and indicates that being far away from homeland does not mean a complete rupture from it. Further similarities also include some of the patterns that indicate their diaspora consciousness. We can deprehend from the interviews that many Brazilians attempt to 'live here and there' and forge transnational connections. They keep following local news, conversing with loved ones frequently through social media despite the time difference and participating in the elections. However, the latter is also a requirement by law so there is an element of coercion despite some interviewees not taking part by choice (and facing the consequences such as a penalty).

Concerning the situation in the Czech Republic, some interviewees reported hostility regarding their appearance or speaking a different language. Certain locations, physical characteristics and the language barrier appeared to be relevant factors for encountering discrimination. This means that feelings of belonging of Brazilians in the Czech Republic might be endangered by these factors. Simultaneously, Brazilians in the Czech Republic surveyed in our research reported a high level of intention to stay in the Czech Republic or elsewhere in the European Union. Among the factors that might lead to this are family ties in the Czech Republic or disenfranchisement with the situation in Brazil.

Also, some concepts used by our interviewees to define what it means to be Brazilian reinforce the previous findings on how some of social norms and cultural values are appraised. When comparing Brazilian society to the one they found while living in the Czech Republic, Brazilians consider themselves more loud and lively, as well as less rational and more emotional. The 'disillusionment with Brazil' was present in some of the responses of our interviewees when answering why they do not keep up with news from Brazil and is yet another similarity between our findings and the ones of Duarte (2005) and Sales (1999). While showing

certain similarities, our results cannot be generalised to Brazilians living in other countries and our research is having some inherent limits, notably: lack of randomized sampling method (as we have used on-line survey and online qualitative semi-structured interviews in the individual and group setting), and relatively small sample of respondents, representing only approx. 4 % of Brazilians living in the Czech Republic.

However, when accepting these limits, the research represents an attempt to focus on a less well-known migrant group in the Czech Republic and inquire about its features, specifics, and perception of life outside of Brazil. There are no large discrepancies between the findings from the survey and interviews, and the interviews allowed us to delve more into the conditions of how this diasporic group perceives itself and the day-to-day challenges they face in their lives in the Czech Republic. Certainly, it would be interesting to follow up with a more focused study comparing the Brazilian diaspora in different European countries. The Brazilian diaspora is quite specific due to its language being dissimilar to other Latin American groups. However, it would be interesting to find out how its experience differs from other Latin American migrants living in Europe.

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Financing Universal Sanitation: Regulation, Investibility and the Political Economy of Water Infrastructure

Abstract

Sanitation is difficult to finance for reasons that have little to do with the availability of savings. Networks absorb sunk capital, revenues are set politically, assets outlive the governments that authorise them, and universal service obliges providers to reach households whose capacity to pay is weakest exactly where unit costs run highest. Four literatures have grown around these facts and rarely speak to one another: public health and human rights, concerned with access, affordability and accountability; utility regulation, concerned with commitment, tariffs and administrative capacity; infrastructure finance, concerned with risk allocation, bankability and creditor protection; and critical political economy, which follows the financialisation of water through debt, ownership and valuation. This review integrates them around a single object: the claim on future tariff revenue, and the institutional work that manufactures, prices and enforces it. Financeability, on this reading, is produced rather than discovered. Territorial design, revenue rules, project preparation, regulatory credibility and enforceable creditor rights make an asset investible; public development banks shape that outcome through preparation and standardisation at least as much as through lending. Because the same arrangements redistribute risk and authority among users, governments and investors, the volume of capital mobilised tells us almost nothing about universalisation on its own. Brazil supplies the sharpest available test. A statutory deadline of 2033, a drive towards regionalised provision, national reference norms and a fast-growing market in infrastructure debentures now operate in a sector still marked by deep territorial inequality and uneven regulatory capacity. The review sets out what a credible research agenda must measure, and why ownership is the wrong variable to measure it with.

Keywords: water and sanitation; infrastructure finance; regulation; financialisation; human rights; development banks; Brazil

1. Introduction

Brazil has written a deadline into law. Article 11-B of Law 11,445/2007, as amended by Law 14,026/2020, requires every contract for water and sewerage services to carry universalisation targets: 99 per cent of the population supplied with potable water and 90 per cent with sewage collection and treatment by 31 December 2033. The most recent national figures, published by the Ministry of Cities through the *Sistema Nacional de Informações em Saneamento Básico* (National Sanitation Information System) for reference year 2023, put piped water at 83.1 per cent of the

population and sewerage collection at 59.7 per cent (Brasil, 2007, 2020; Ministério das Cidades, 2025). Closing that distance inside a decade is not, in the first instance, an engineering problem. It is the problem of persuading capital to fund assets whose returns depend on tariffs that politicians set, regulators police and courts occasionally rewrite.

The Brazilian deadline sits inside a global arithmetic. Costing the water and sanitation targets of Sustainable Development Goal 6 across 140 countries, Hutton and Varughese (2016) estimated an annual capital requirement of roughly US$114 billion for safely managed services, about three times the investment then flowing into the sector. Figures of this kind are usually deployed to reach a single conclusion: public budgets cannot carry the burden alone, so private capital must be mobilised. The inference moves too quickly. It treats the shortfall as a quantity of money rather than as a set of conditions under which money will or will not move, and it stops precisely where the interesting questions begin, namely what happens to tariffs, service and public authority once capital does arrive.

Sanitation is an unusually demanding case for any theory of infrastructure investment, and it is worth being explicit about why. The assets are sunk and specific: a trunk sewer has no alternative use and no resale market. Revenues come from tariffs that households see on a monthly bill, which makes them politically salient in a way that wholesale electricity prices are not. Service is spatially fixed, and no government can credibly threaten to abandon a neighbourhood it has already connected. Users cannot substitute away from the network. Put together, these features mean that the value of the investment depends on public decisions taken long after the money is committed, and that the ordinary remedies of contract law sit uneasily beside an obligation the state cannot renounce.

Four bodies of scholarship have taken up different parts of this problem. Public-health research measures what inadequate water and sanitation do to human beings; the estimates are large and concentrated among the poor (Prüss-Ustün et al., 2019; Wolf et al., 2023). Human-rights scholarship converts those findings into a normative standard with observable components, from availability and quality through to affordability, non-discrimination and accountability (Brown et al., 2016; Heller, 2022). Utility regulation asks how a state binds itself credibly enough to attract sunk capital while retaining the discretion that changing circumstances demand (Armstrong & Sappington, 2006; Estache & Wren-Lewis, 2009; Levy & Spiller, 1994). Infrastructure finance studies the architecture through which future cash flows are turned into securities with maturity, price and priority (Esty, 2004; Subramanian & Tung, 2016). Critical political economy, finally, treats water as a site where accumulation is reorganised, and asks who ends up bearing the risks and who collects the returns (Bayliss, 2014; Loftus et al., 2019; Swyngedouw, 2005).

These conversations touch without converging, and the failures of contact are specific rather than general. Rights-based work often treats finance as an implementation constraint and leaves the contractual claims sold to investors unexamined, so that leverage and covenant structure disappear from an analysis of exclusion. Financial economics carries the analysis as far as spread and tenor and stops, rarely asking who pays the tariff that services the debt. Regulation scholarship is rich on commitment and information asymmetry but comparatively quiet about the balance sheets regulators inherit after financial close, even though those balance sheets constrain every subsequent tariff review. Critical political economy supplies the sharpest vocabulary for the distribution of risk and value, and is at its strongest when it names particular mechanisms

rather than inferring them from the presence of private capital (Ahlers & Merme, 2016; Christophers, 2015; Loftus et al., 2019). The result is four sets of findings about what appear to be four different objects, when in fact they are one.

This review does three things. It reads the four literatures against a common object, the claim on future tariff revenue, and asks how each explains that claim's construction, pricing, enforcement and distributive consequences. It converts the critical vocabulary of financialisation into variables an empirical researcher can actually observe, since leverage, distributions, tenor, security and regulatory accommodation are recorded somewhere, while "financialisation" as such is not. And it uses Brazil not as an illustration but as a case selected for its analytical leverage, because the country now varies on regulatory capacity, ownership, territorial scale and financing instrument simultaneously, and because a statutory deadline supplies an unusually clean benchmark against which performance can be judged.

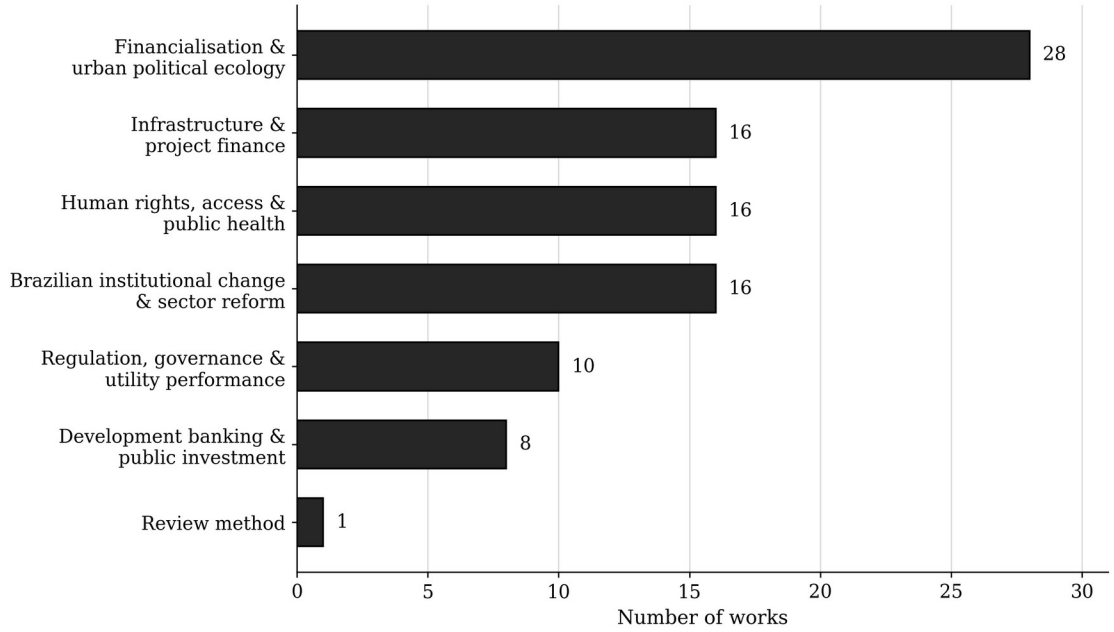
The claim developed here is that financeability is produced, not discovered. Long before a security is placed or a loan signed, territorial organisation defines the revenue base; tariff and indexation rules shape expected cash flow; concession and corporate forms locate obligations; project preparation converts statutory goals into engineering and financial schedules; regulators and courts condition commitment; and creditor protections determine what happens when performance deteriorates. Public banks supply capital, but their organisational capacity to prepare, coordinate and standardise projects may matter more. Once those arrangements harden, finance holds enforceable claims on the revenue that households generate, and the analytical question becomes how financial durability interacts with affordability, investment execution and public authority across the life of the asset.

This review is integrative and mechanism-centred rather than systematic, and the choice is deliberate. Systematic protocols work best when a field shares concepts, units of analysis and outcome measures; this field shares none of the three, and a protocol optimised for comparability would have excluded much of the critical geography and most of the legal-institutional work that carries the argument (Snyder, 2019). Searches combined water and sanitation with finance, bankability, project finance, regulation, tariffs, concessions, development banks, financialisation, political ecology, human rights, affordability and Brazil. Targeted searches of publisher platforms and scholarly indexes were supplemented by backward and forward citation chaining from canonical and recent contributions, and completed on 12 August 2026. Peer-reviewed articles took priority, alongside scholarly books of direct conceptual relevance. Every item retained in the analytical corpus carries a DOI verified against publisher or bibliographic metadata; items whose bibliographic identity could not be established with confidence were dropped rather than cited. Ninety-five works survived that filter. The corpus is not a census of sanitation scholarship, and readers should treat the descriptive figures that follow as a description of what this review reads, nothing more.

That distribution reflects fields that matured on different timetables. Work on neoliberalisation and urban political ecology predates the contemporary debate over blended finance by a decade or more, while scholarship on human rights, on financialisation and on Brazilian regulatory change has expanded sharply since the mid-2010s. That convergence is the interpretive point of Figures 1 and 2: financeability, rights and political economy increasingly appear in the same empirical settings, yet they continue to be analysed with different dependent variables and, more often than not, by different people.

Figure 1

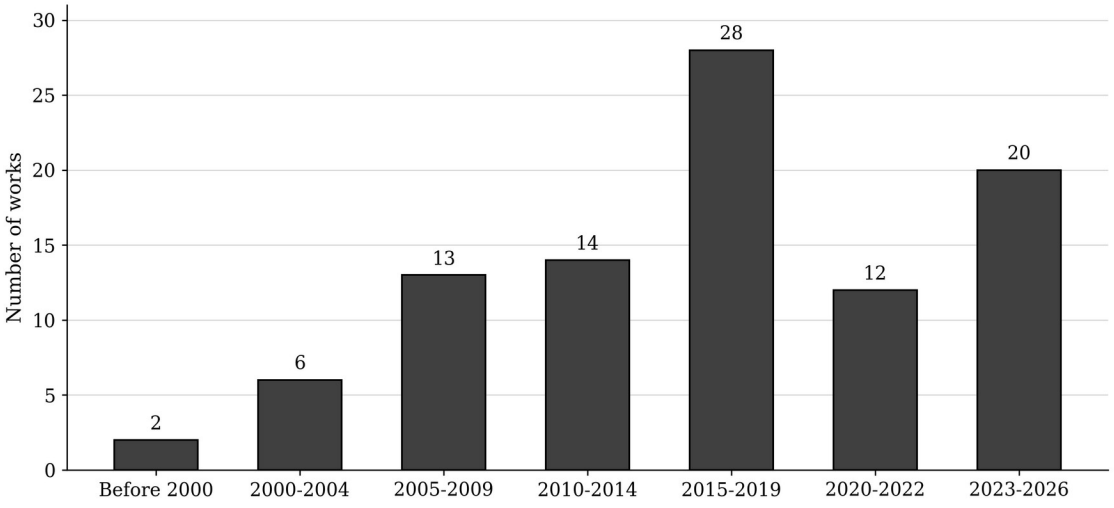
Analytical composition of the reviewed corpus



Note. Source: author coding of the 95 DOI-verified works retained in this review. Each work is assigned to its dominant analytical contribution. The categories describe the review corpus and do not measure the wider sanitation literature. Official documents and statistical sources cited in the text are excluded from the coding.

Figure 2

Publication profile of the reviewed corpus



Note. Source: author coding of the 95 DOI-verified works retained in this review, by year of publication as cited. Publication periods describe the review corpus only.

Seven further sections follow. Section 2 treats sanitation as an essential service and a set of enforceable rights. Section 3 turns to regulation and governance in capital-intensive utilities. Section 4 examines infrastructure finance, bankability and development banking. Section 5 brings in the British and wider critical literature on neoliberalisation, urban political ecology and financialisation. Section 6 uses Brazil as the site where these approaches meet. Section 7 develops an integrated research agenda, and Section 8 concludes.

2. Sanitation, public health and the right to services

Any argument about sanitation finance rests on a prior claim about why the service matters, and the epidemiological evidence here is stronger than in most areas of infrastructure policy. Safe water, adequate sanitation and hygiene shape exposure to diarrhoeal disease, enteric infection, parasitic disease and, through repeated infection, to nutritional deficit; inadequate provision compounds vulnerabilities already produced by poverty and poor housing (Prüss-Ustün et al., 2019). The most recent global assessment, covering domestic settings across a wide set of adverse outcomes, reinforces the scale of the attributable burden and its concentration in low- and middle-income countries (Wolf et al., 2023). What matters analytically is the causal chain those studies describe. Health gains depend on continuity, on safe management and on actual use, which means that expenditure and installed capacity are poor proxies for policy performance. Investment is an input, network availability an intermediate condition, and effective household service the outcome through which welfare gains are realised. Financing arrangements that optimise the first two while leaving the third to chance are not simply incomplete; they are measuring the wrong thing.

Léo Heller's work matters for this review because it connects legal obligation to the practical conditions under which a service becomes usable. The human rights to water and sanitation carry substantive dimensions — availability, accessibility, affordability, quality, acceptability — together with procedural ones: equality, non-discrimination, participation, information and accountability (Heller, 2022). Earlier work with Brazilian co-authors showed how the framework reorients public policy by obliging governments to ask who is excluded, why the exclusion persists, and what institutional remedy is available (Brown et al., 2016). Those criteria survive changes in ownership, financing instrument and regulatory architecture, which is precisely what makes them useful as dependent variables in studies of financial reform.

Among groups that network indicators obscure, the distributive content of the framework becomes visible. Research with vulnerable populations in Brazil shows formal entitlement coexisting with practical barriers to water and sanitation, among them unstable housing, discrimination and dependence on discretionary access granted case by case (Neves-Silva & Heller, 2016). Work with people experiencing homelessness documents the gap between the presence of public-space infrastructure and the everyday capacity to obtain water, hygiene and sanitation with dignity (Neves-Silva et al., 2018). Because inadequate provision touches health, housing, education, work and bodily security at once, the interdependence of rights is not a rhetorical flourish but an empirical observation about how deprivation compounds (Neves-Silva et al., 2019).

Territory and gender complicate measurement further. Evidence from an urban occupation in the Belo Horizonte metropolitan region links inadequate water and sewerage to health outcomes, quality of life and gendered burdens inside households and communities (Arruda &

Heller, 2022). Heller's later intervention on gender equality presses the point that the state carries responsibility for conditions routinely displaced onto unpaid care and domestic labour (Heller, 2023). For infrastructure finance the implication is uncomfortable. Service areas and investment schedules aggregate households whose exposure to service failure differs sharply, and a project can hit an average coverage target while concentrating burdens at its margins — which is exactly where the marginal cost of connection is highest and the marginal revenue lowest.

Tariffs concentrate the tension. They recover operating costs, fund maintenance and can contribute to investment, and in doing so they distribute the cost of a monopoly service across consumption bands, income groups and territories. Affordability depends far more on tariff structure, connection charges and subsidy rules than on the average tariff, and the classic cross-country evidence on utility subsidies is sobering: consumption subsidies delivered through the tariff frequently benefit connected, better-off households rather than the unconnected poor (Komives et al., 2005). Recent work continues to find that subsidy design, not subsidy volume, determines whether affordability improves (Fagundes et al., 2025; Neto & Camkin, 2020). A rights-based assessment asks whether households can sustain effective use without sacrificing other basic needs, and that question becomes sharper as financing agreements make future cash-flow commitments more rigid.

Rural provision shows why bankability cannot substitute for public responsibility. A detailed post-mortem of a failed rural water and sanitation initiative in Brazil traces how implementation collapsed despite a recognised social need, because coordination and delivery arrangements did not hold (Roland et al., 2022). Rural and peripheral systems combine sparse demand, higher unit costs and thinner local administrative capacity. Each of those features lowers commercial attractiveness and, by the same token, strengthens the case for public finance, subsidy and sustained institutional support. The places that markets reach last are the places where the statutory target will ultimately be won or lost.

The rights literature also sharpens the privatisation debate, and does so in a way that resists slogans on either side. Evidence from Minas Gerais maps how government, private-sector and civil-society actors attach materially different meanings to universalisation and to the risks of tariff increases or service exclusion under privatisation proposals (Neves-Silva et al., 2023). Internationally, human-rights scholars have questioned policy agendas that elevate financial mobilisation into an organising objective for water without comparable attention to public obligation (Heller et al., 2023; Karunananthan, 2019). The empirical implication is precise rather than polemical: evaluations of reform must observe financial structure and service outcomes together, and must stop treating ownership as a proxy for either.

Once debt enters, these criteria become inputs to regulatory risk analysis rather than external commentary on it. Debt disciplines project companies through reporting requirements, reserve accounts and restrictions on transfers; debt service simultaneously narrows managerial room when affordability measures, deferred maintenance or unforeseen capital needs press on the same cash flow. Whether that trade-off turns socially damaging depends on covenant design, tariff regulation, refinancing exposure and what regulators can actually see. Brazilian evidence from the Covid-19 period shows agencies varying considerably in their responsiveness to continuity and affordability (Victral & Heller, 2023), and recent work on a heavily financialised concession raises pointed questions about leverage, tariffs and unequal access (Barra et al., 2026).

The contribution of human-rights analysis to this literature is not moral framing. It is a set of observable outcomes against which claims about financeability can be tested.

3. Regulation and governance in capital-intensive utilities

Water and sewerage systems display, almost in caricature, the features that made utility regulation a founding problem of institutional economics. Assets are sunk and specific, duplication is usually wasteful, and providers know more about their own costs than users or public authorities ever will. Investors face the prospect that tariffs or service conditions will change after capital is committed; governments and users face underinvestment, cost padding and strategic renegotiation. Regulation must hold this reciprocal commitment problem together across horizons in which demand, environmental standards, technology and political preferences will all move (Estache & Wren-Lewis, 2009; Levy & Spiller, 1994). Three decades of theory have clarified the instruments available and the informational conditions under which each performs, without dissolving the underlying dilemma (Armstrong & Sappington, 2006).

The credible-commitment tradition supplies one foundation. Investment depends in part on whether institutional arrangements constrain arbitrary policy change and offer workable procedures for resolving disputes, and those arrangements extend well beyond the regulator to courts, administrative law, legislative checks and the organisation of political competition (Levy & Spiller, 1994). The instruments chosen to govern tariffs, disclosure, performance and contracting also determine what actors can see and contest, which makes policy design part of the institutional environment rather than a neutral application of it (Lascoumes & Le Galès, 2007). Incomplete-contract analysis reinforces the point from another direction: residual control rights and renegotiation procedures shape investment incentives precisely because comprehensive contracting over a thirty-year horizon is impossible (Hart, 2003). A concession can specify indexation formulae and review windows in considerable detail and still leave most of the future unaddressed.

Developing-country regulation adds capacity constraints and institutional fragmentation to that problem. Agencies may lack specialised staff, reliable cost data or insulation from short electoral cycles. Authority over tariffs, service territories and environmental obligations is often divided across levels of government, reproducing the tension between decentralisation, depoliticisation and scale that ran through the water reforms of the 1990s (Herrera & Post, 2014). Formally adopting an independent regulator therefore produces limited behavioural change where surrounding institutions supply weak support for monitoring or enforcement. Scholarship on the regulatory state in the Global South warns against treating organisational form as a portable technology whose effects travel independently of political and administrative context (Black, 2001; Dubash & Morgan, 2012). Regulatory quality is manufactured out of information systems, professional capacity, legal authority and working relationships with ministries, municipalities, courts and civil society — none of which arrives with the statute.

Concessions make the difficulty visible because renegotiation is so common. Evidence from Latin American infrastructure shows contracts being reopened after award at high rates, with outcomes shaped by regulatory arrangements and political incentives (Guasch et al., 2008). Some of that adaptation is unavoidable and even desirable over long horizons. The problem arises when adaptation becomes opaque or opportunistic, or when it systematically returns risk to the public sector after competitive bidding has established the terms. Finance introduces

a further party to the negotiation. Lenders and bondholders may welcome contractual changes that preserve debt service even where the distributive consequences for users or taxpayers are adverse, which is why a regulator who reads the service contract without reading the financing structure behind it is working with half the document.

Tariff regulation concentrates these tensions in a single instrument. Price-cap and cost-based models distribute productivity risk differently and demand different informational capacities from the regulator. In sanitation, tariffs also fund investment programmes whose geography is uneven: dense urban areas generate stronger revenues, while peripheral and low-income territories require more capital per connection. Cross-subsidy can pool those differences within a service area, but its feasibility turns on territorial scale and on whether redistribution can be defended politically. Regionalisation is therefore an engineering arrangement and a financial institution at the same time. Pooling municipalities with different revenue bases and investment needs supports internal subsidy and enlarges the cash-flow base; it also distances decisions from local users and complicates intergovernmental accountability. Whether consolidation delivers the efficiency gains attributed to it is, notably, an open empirical question even in high-income settings (Klien & Michaud, 2019).

Brazilian scholarship offers unusually rich evidence on these governance problems. Studies preceding the 2020 reform documented heterogeneous efficiency across providers and linked performance to regional provision, ownership arrangements and operator independence without reducing outcomes to any single variable (Ferro et al., 2014). Research on regulatory authorities found that institutional design and regulatory presence could support efficiency and universalisation, while warning that implementation varied sharply across jurisdictions (Carvalho & Sampaio, 2015). Later estimates confirm measurable associations between regulation and utility efficiency, again within a sector marked by deep heterogeneity in governance and operating conditions (Carvalho et al., 2023). Assessments conducted after the new framework continue to find uneven autonomy, transparency, accountability and technical capacity across agencies (Andres et al., 2024).

Federalism intensifies the coordination problem. Municipal responsibility for local services coexists with state-level utilities, metropolitan systems and federal legislation; tariffs may be regulated by local, intermunicipal or state bodies, while national institutions now issue reference norms intended to reduce divergence. The architecture generates a standing tension between decentralised titularity and the benefits of regulatory scale (Sampaio & Sampaio, 2020). A national reference norm improves comparability and sets common expectations, yet implementation still depends on subnational agencies with unequal resources and different political environments. Standardisation can lower transaction costs for investors long before it standardises regulatory performance, and the gap between those two effects is where much of the interesting variation lives.

This perspective clarifies what bankability actually asks of regulation. Creditors price the probability that promised cash flows will remain available over the life of the debt, and that assessment takes in tariff adjustment, enforceability, the allocation of demand and construction risk, termination compensation and the regulator's capacity to apply rules predictably. Stronger commitment lengthens financing horizons. But credible regulation must also preserve lawful adaptation to new information, environmental shocks and affordability pressure, and a regime

that protects investors by extinguishing legitimate public discretion tends to become politically fragile — generating, in the end, the very risk it was designed to suppress.

4. Infrastructure finance, bankability and development banking

Discussions of sanitation finance conventionally open with a gap. Investment needs are estimated, public budgets are compared against them, and the difference is offered as evidence that private capital must be mobilised — a framing that has organised debate on private participation in urban water for well over a decade (Marin, 2009). The arithmetic usefully conveys scale. It also obscures the mechanisms that stop savings from becoming infrastructure. Water and sewerage projects offer weak or uncertain revenue precisely where social need is greatest. Municipal balance sheets are constrained, utilities may lack audited accounts, preparation is often poor, and tariff systems frequently fail to generate cash flows that commercial lenders regard as predictable. The distance between social need and investible opportunity is institutional before it is financial (Machete & Marques, 2021; Pories et al., 2019). Public-finance analysis of public-private partnerships reaches a compatible conclusion from first principles: contract design and the allocation of public risk determine the economic substance of the arrangement, whatever its accounting treatment (Engel et al., 2013). Critical reviews of the PPP revival add that the instrument has often been selected for its fiscal optics rather than its efficiency properties (Bayliss & Van Waeyenberge, 2018).

Bankability names part of this problem, though the literature uses the term inconsistently enough to cause trouble. Sometimes it refers narrowly to the capacity of project cash flows to service debt under plausible stress. Elsewhere it stretches to cover governance, sponsor quality, regulatory credibility, project preparation and the entire enabling environment. That elasticity matters, because a project may be technically sound and socially valuable while failing a commercial lender's return threshold, and another may clear the threshold only because guarantees or tariff commitments have transferred risk away from investors at public expense. Treating bankability as actor-dependent resolves much of the confusion: what a commercial bank, a development bank, an institutional investor and a public authority each regard as financeable reflects different mandates, risk tolerances and required returns (McCoy & Schwartz, 2023).

Project finance shows, in concrete terms, how a long-duration claim is assembled. The wider law-and-finance literature establishes the premise that enforceable rights and creditor priority shape both the supply and the terms of capital (La Porta et al., 1998; Pistor, 2013). Special-purpose companies then isolate project cash flows and liabilities from the sponsor's balance sheet; contracts allocate construction, operating and demand risk among counterparties; and security interests, reserve accounts, covenants and step-in rights give creditors instruments with which to defend repayment. Project-finance loans differ from ordinary syndicated credits precisely because lenders lean so heavily on project-specific contractual architecture and monitoring (Kleimeier & Megginson, 2000). Legal institutions matter because creditor rights have value only where claims can be verified and enforced (Subramanian & Tung, 2016), and non-financial contracts feed back into financing terms by moving identifiable risks onto contractors, suppliers or offtakers (Corielli et al., 2010).

Sanitation complicates the template, because the revenue underneath the structure is a regulated essential service. Creditors are pricing tariff cash flow inside the public-law environment that produces it, which makes the service area, the tariff formula, the investment obligation and

the legal status of the concession integral parts of the asset rather than context surrounding it. Political risk consequently enters debt structure through far more than sovereign instability: tariff freezes, contested indexation, changes in service requirements, non-payment by public counterparties, licence disputes and renegotiation all sit in the same category. Development-bank participation can mitigate several of these risks and signal confidence, although causal identification is genuinely hard, since public lenders may simply select stronger projects (Hainz & Kleimeier, 2012).

Maturity deserves more attention than it usually receives. Long-lived assets can in principle support long-term finance, and institutional investors can supply long-duration capital where governance, scale and risk profile match their mandates (Andonov et al., 2021). In practice, uncertainty about cash flows, regulation or refinancing shortens the horizon creditors will accept, pushing sponsors towards repeated refinancing and exposing essential infrastructure to whatever market conditions prevail at each rollover. Tenor in project finance reflects project risk, contractual structure and the institutional environment rather than physical asset life alone (Thierie & De Moor, 2019). Evidence on project bonds points the same way: primary-market spreads can differ systematically from comparable corporate debt, which should caution anyone assuming that access to capital markets automatically lowers financing costs (Guedes & Pinto, 2023). For sanitation, tenor and spread are best treated as separate outcomes, since a structure may buy maturity by paying investors more for it.

Blended finance attempts to bridge the distance between socially valuable projects and private risk-return requirements by combining concessional and commercial capital. Guarantees, first-loss tranches, concessional loans and technical assistance can improve terms or absorb risks that markets decline to hold. Where public intervention addresses an identified constraint, the logic is sound. Evaluation becomes far more difficult when success is measured by leverage ratios, because mobilising a large volume of private capital looks efficient even when public actors retain the downside, users fund high returns through tariffs, or projects cluster in commercially attractive territories. The WASH literature is consistent on the sequencing: blended structures work after core service institutions, revenues and project preparation have been strengthened, not instead of them (Pories et al., 2019).

Public development banks occupy a distinctive position because they can lend, structure and shape markets at once. Conventional accounts emphasise their capacity to relieve long-term credit constraints, provide counter-cyclical finance and support investments whose social returns private lenders undervalue (Griffith-Jones & Ocampo, 2018). A market-shaping perspective widens the mandate, focusing on how public banks create investment opportunities, set conditions and coordinate actors around policy objectives rather than merely correcting failures (Mazzucato & Penna, 2016). Empirical work on BNDES shows that state-owned development banks can affect firm-level finance and investment, with benefits contingent on allocation and governance rather than ownership form as such (Lazzarini et al., 2015). Historical analysis situates the bank within a developmental state whose instruments adapted to liberalised capital markets and shifting political coalitions (Hochstetler & Montero, 2013).

Water finance makes the organisational role of these institutions especially visible. Project preparation is expensive, specialised and uncertain: engineering studies, demand forecasts, legal due diligence, environmental licensing, tariff modelling and public consultation must all be coordinated before an auction can be held or financing arranged. Small municipalities rarely

have the capacity to procure and supervise that work. A development bank can fund preparation, establish common documentation and convene several levels of government around a single timetable. Comparative research on development banking in the water sector shows public lenders operating with horizons and policy objectives that differ from those of commercial banks (Reis, 2022). The governance question is what they do with that position, since the same institution can absorb risk quietly or attach conditions to investment quality, affordability and delivery.

Mission-oriented scholarship presses exactly that question. Framing finance as a means of organising investment around measurable societal goals, it argues that public institutions should share risks while also shaping rewards and retaining the capacity to steer (Mazzucato, 2018; Mazzucato & Zaqout, 2025). Sanitation fits the frame closely, because universal service is a mission with an explicit distributive edge: the hardest investments are the ones with the lowest direct financial return. Public capital, cross-subsidy and conditionality are therefore not transitional supports to be withdrawn as markets deepen. They are structural components of universalisation, and a financing architecture that treats them as temporary is likely to stall at the point where the remaining deficit is concentrated.

5. Financialisation and the distribution of risk and value

Critical political economy widens the frame from the price of capital to the institutions and spatial relations through which water is reorganised as an economic and financial object. Harvey's account of neoliberalisation is useful at this level of abstraction because it directs attention to privatisation, market discipline and the redistribution of assets and decision-making power that accompanied late twentieth-century restructuring (Harvey, 2005). Water scholarship made that argument concrete. Swyngedouw read privatisation as a contested reworking of access, ownership and accumulation, while urban political ecology situated water networks inside conflicts over scale, class and the uneven production of the city (Swyngedouw, 2005; Swyngedouw & Heynen, 2003). An earlier and still valuable corrective came from Budds and McGranahan (2003), who showed that the privatisation debate had largely missed its target, since the great majority of the unserved were nowhere near a network that any operator, public or private, was proposing to extend.

The British critical-geography tradition pushed the analysis closer to everyday infrastructure. Loftus and Lumsden showed how urban waterscapes are reproduced through social relations and struggles over hegemony alongside the engineering system (Loftus & Lumsden, 2008). Loftus subsequently argued for political ecologies capable of connecting material flows, labour, institutions and political contestation without collapsing water politics into a generic narrative of scarcity (Loftus, 2009). His later work on water security placed the right to water inside that critical geography, drawing attention to the political choices concealed by apparently technical security frameworks (Loftus, 2015). Hydrosocial-territory research extends the argument by treating territory itself as produced through interactions among infrastructure, institutions, knowledge and power (Boelens et al., 2016).

England and Wales remain the best-documented case of how these processes become financial. Market environmentalism recast water utilities around private ownership and regulatory price-setting, embedding environmental and service objectives inside a commercial framework whose distributive consequences stayed contested (Bakker, 2005, 2010). Later work followed

the financial structures built on top of regulated household revenues. Allen and Pryke reconstructed how the ring-fenced utility and its ownership chain could support financial strategies that were almost impossible to read from the operating company's accounts alone (Allen & Pryke, 2013). Bayliss documented the expansion of leverage and investor-oriented practice, and then examined the material and regulatory infrastructures that made those strategies workable (Bayliss, 2014, 2017). Evidence on private-equity ownership shows value extraction outpacing the regulatory tools designed to observe it (Bayliss et al., 2023).

England matters analytically above all because it separates privatisation from financialisation. A private operator can remain conservatively financed; a regulated utility can become highly leveraged through ownership structures, intra-group debt or upstream distributions. The variables that matter sit in balance sheets, financing vehicles, covenant packages, dividend policies and regulatory rules, not in the ownership label. Broader work on infrastructure as an asset class makes the same move at the level of the financial product, showing how local revenue streams are reassembled into instruments legible to distant portfolios (O'Neill, 2019; Torrance, 2008). Pryke and Allen arrive at the issue from the direction of Chile, where infrastructure value is constructed through contractual and valuation practices that link local water revenues to Canadian pension liabilities (Pryke & Allen, 2022). Ahlers and Merme make the corresponding governance point: financialisation has uneven effects because governance arrangements determine which risks, returns and development outcomes are socialised and which are privatised (Ahlers & Merme, 2016).

Project-level research adds a necessary distinction. Financialising desalination can involve public guarantees, purchase agreements and risk allocation that stabilise returns without reproducing the corporate structures observed in English utilities (Loftus & March, 2016). Studies of the Spanish water industry show accumulation strategies shifting with the corporate and financial environment rather than following a single script (March & Purcell, 2014). The wider political-economy literature accordingly treats financialisation as a family of mechanisms with heterogeneous institutional forms (Loftus et al., 2019), and Christophers' (2015) caution against conceptual overreach applies with particular force here: a term that explains privatisation, leverage, valuation, austerity and asset management equally well is at risk of explaining none of them. Evidence from Kenya reinforces the point empirically, since the slow development of financialised water arrangements there reflects political and institutional limits on converting service revenues into investible claims, even where governments and donors actively sought private finance (Williams, 2021).

Territorial scale runs through all of these mechanisms. Financial value depends on which users and assets fall inside the revenue perimeter, on how profitable and costly areas are combined, and on whether cross-subsidy is permitted. Regionalisation can pool risk and sustain investment in lower-income municipalities; it can equally reallocate authority away from local institutions. Urban political ecology is helpful precisely because it treats the service territory as an object of governance with distributive consequences rather than as a technical given. The same boundary that improves cash-flow diversification also decides who subsidises whom, which peripheral investments enter the programme, and whose claims take priority when resources tighten.

Debates over remunicipalisation supply an institutional counterpoint. Return to public ownership has occurred where governments or users grew dissatisfied with private provision,

yet outcomes depend on financing capacity, legal design and administrative competence, and the ownership label again reveals only part of the change (Hall et al., 2013; McDonald, 2018). Bakker's analysis of "public" water warns against treating publicness as a simple property category, since public authority is assembled out of institutions, service obligations and forms of accountability (Bakker, 2013). Read together, these contributions discipline causal inference: ownership changes matter through specific governance and financing mechanisms, and the mechanisms are what require identification.

The Wall Street Consensus literature situates contemporary de-risking within a broader transformation of development policy, in which fiscally constrained governments are encouraged to convert social needs into asset classes that satisfy institutional-investor requirements through guarantees, blended finance and regulatory reform (Gabor, 2021). Subsequent work on green hydrogen extends the diagnosis to industrial policy, showing how de-risking reorganises the state's relationship to private capital well beyond social infrastructure (Gabor & Sylla, 2023). Water exposes both the power and the limits of the argument. Public intervention is unavoidable in systems where low-income areas cannot recover full costs through tariffs; what remains genuinely contestable is whether public risk absorption is designed around service goals or around the protection of investor returns. Mission-oriented finance and critical political economy start from different normative premises and converge on the same empirical requirement: examine conditionality, risk distribution and public capacity directly (Mazzucato & Zaqout, 2025).

Brazil has become a major setting in which these arguments can be tested against a changing regulatory and financial architecture. Research has connected fiscal austerity and market-oriented reform to the expansion of private finance in sanitation (Almeida & Hungaro, 2021), traced the institutional work through which actors secure financial returns under political uncertainty (Cruxên, 2024), and interpreted the recent reforms through a financialisation lens (Britto, 2025). The newest evidence also shows why claims must stay mechanism-specific: leverage, tariff commitments, dividend policy, concession design and regulatory oversight need to be observed directly before system-level consequences can be attributed to financialisation at all (Barra et al., 2026).

6. Brazil as a critical site of convergence

Brazil brings the literature together because its sanitation sector combines a large federation, historically significant state-owned utilities, municipal service authority, severe territorial inequality and a financing environment in rapid transition. Public, mixed and private providers have coexisted for decades; private concessions predate the 2020 reform, as do development-bank lending and capital-market instruments. What has changed since 2020 is the scale and contractual form through which investment is organised, as regionalisation, national reference norms and large concession programmes reshape the perimeter within which revenue is pooled and obligations are assumed.

Evidence from the pre-reform period already showed why ownership alone explains little. Efficiency varied across providers with regional organisation, scale and managerial independence as much as with property structure (Ferro et al., 2014; Seroa da Motta & Moreira, 2006). Regulatory institutions influenced the path to universalisation because investment incentives had to coexist with user protection and service obligations (Carvalho & Sampaio, 2015). More recent estimates find measurable relationships between regulation and utility efficiency while

preserving the picture of a heterogeneous sector (Carvalho et al., 2023). Work on public-private partnership arrangements in Brazilian water reached a similarly two-sided verdict well before the reform, identifying gains in investment capacity alongside recurrent weaknesses in contract design and regulatory supervision (Marques, 2016).

Federalism adds a coordination problem inseparable from finance. Municipal authority over local services coexists with state utilities, metropolitan systems and federal legislation; tariffs may be regulated by local, intermunicipal or state entities, while national reference norms seek to reduce divergence. The architecture generates transaction costs in project preparation and supervision, and uncertainty about how common standards will be implemented (Sampaio & Sampaio, 2020). Assessments of Brazilian regulatory agencies continue to find wide variation in autonomy, transparency, accountability and technical capacity (Andres et al., 2024) — variation that matters more, not less, once national norms create the appearance of uniformity.

Law 14,026/2020 addresses part of this fragmentation (Brasil, 2020). It strengthens universalisation targets, encourages regionalised provision and competitive contracting, and assigns the *Agência Nacional de Águas e Saneamento Básico* (National Agency for Water and Basic Sanitation) a reference-norm role intended to harmonise regulatory practice across a fragmented landscape. From a financing perspective, regionalisation enlarges revenue pools and investment programmes, making project preparation and capital-market issuance viable at scales unavailable to isolated municipalities. From a rights perspective, the same aggregation demands scrutiny of how investment, cross-subsidy and voice are distributed among participating municipalities. Minas Gerais illustrates how contested those choices are, with government, private-sector and civil-society actors holding materially different expectations about privatisation, tariffs and universal access (Neves-Silva et al., 2023).

Empirical work has begun to measure outcomes directly rather than infer them. A generalised synthetic-control study evaluates sanitation concessions in Southern Brazil against service indicators (Silva et al., 2024). A difference-in-differences analysis covering more than three thousand municipalities over two decades finds positive effects of private provision on access to water, sewerage and treatment alongside higher tariffs, which is a useful reminder that access and affordability are separate dependent variables that can move in opposite directions (Côrtes et al., 2023). Research on utilities' financial standing shows that pathways into privatisation are related to firms' prior financial condition, raising a selection problem that undermines naive public-private comparisons (Nunes & Marques, 2025). Work on tariff regulation, affordability and emergency responsiveness indicates that institutional capacity shapes who absorbs adjustment costs (Fagundes et al., 2025; Victral & Heller, 2023).

The financing layer has become materially more consequential over the same period. Debentures issued under Law 12,431/2011, and since 2024 under the parallel regime created by Law 14,801/2024, give creditors a direct relationship with regulated service revenue (Brasil, 2011, 2024). Of the R$236.3 billion raised through debenture offerings in Brazil in 2023, sanitation accounted for R$28.4 billion, ranking third behind electricity and transport and logistics (ANBIMA, 2024). Development-bank project preparation can reduce coordination costs before capital enters, and public lending can extend maturities or support investments that commercial finance would price more punitively. Brazil is therefore an unusually good setting in which to combine project-finance variables — maturity, security, amortisation, covenants, sponsor support — with regulatory variables such as tariff review, investment execution and service targets.

Absent that integration, rising issuance will continue to be misread as improving sector performance.

A wider Brazilian literature on state capacity sharpens the point from outside the sector. Research on the country's nuclear programme shows how ambitious, capital-intensive policy underperforms when technological strategy, institutional coordination and domestic capability-building fail to align over time (Nicolini Gabriel & Belém Lopes, 2025). The comparison has obvious limits, but the institutional lesson travels: durable investment programmes require organisations able to connect long-horizon objectives to domestic capabilities, implementation and political continuity. Sanitation adds regulated household revenue and non-renounceable local service obligations to that coordination problem, which makes it harder rather than easier.

Critical research then asks who benefits from the new architecture and who remains exposed. Studies of austerity, financial returns and recent concession structures identify risks arising from leverage, distribution and the priority attached to investor claims (Almeida & Hungaro, 2021; Barra et al., 2026; Britto, 2025; Cruxên, 2024). The human-rights literature supplies observable criteria against which those concerns can be tested: continuity, affordability, access in informal and rural areas, non-discrimination, information and participation (Arruda & Heller, 2022; Heller, 2022; Roland et al., 2022). Connecting those measures to specific debt and contract structures would move the Brazilian debate past its long-running and largely unproductive argument about public versus private ownership.

The research opportunity is strong because Brazil combines institutional variation with increasingly granular financial and service data. A mature empirical agenda can compare concessions and utilities across regulatory environments, trace financing from project preparation through to issued instruments, and follow service outcomes over time. The central identification challenge is selection, and it operates at two levels: projects that reach capital markets differ systematically from those that do not, and municipalities included in regional concessions differ from those left outside. Credible designs will need pre-treatment information, transparent case selection and a clear analytical separation between financing outcomes and service outcomes.

7. Discussion: towards an integrated research agenda

The literature now supports a more integrated account of sanitation investment than any single field can provide. Public-health and rights research identifies the outcomes that justify intervention; regulation explains how long-lived monopoly obligations are governed; finance shows how future revenues become claims with price, maturity and priority; political economy reveals how those claims redistribute authority and value. The analytical gain comes from following the same project or utility across all four domains, which allows financeability, regulatory credibility and universalisation to be treated as related outcomes rather than as substitutes for one another. Movement in one does not guarantee movement in the others, and the cases where they diverge are the informative ones.

Territorial design is the most promising bridge. Service boundaries determine demand, the composition of the tariff base, the scope for cross-subsidy and the distribution of investment obligations; they also fix the scale at which regulators collect information and communities exercise voice. Urban political ecology describes those boundaries as hydrosocial and political, while project finance reads them as the perimeter supporting cash flow. Both readings are correct, and empirical work can use them together by testing how alternative territorial arrangements affect

financing terms, investment distribution and household access (Boelens et al., 2016; Klien & Michaud, 2019).

Financial claims deserve direct observation rather than inference. Debt carries maturity, indexation, amortisation profile, security, covenants and refinancing exposure. Equity brings governance rights, expected returns and exit horizons. Public support appears as direct lending, guarantees, grants or subsidised preparation. Each of these features allocates risk across time and among institutions, and each is recorded somewhere — in prospectuses, regulatory filings, concession contracts and rating reports. Treating them as measurable variables avoids the standard error of reading the financing mechanism off the ownership structure, and it makes critical claims testable, since the effects of financialisation should be visible through identifiable channels: leverage, distributions, the priority of debt service, regulatory accommodation.

Regulatory information systems need to match that granularity. A regulator who observes service indicators but cannot see refinancing risk, covenant pressure or intra-group transfers will discover financial fragility only after it has already affected investment or tariffs. A regulator who monitors balance sheets without mapping household connections and affordability can protect solvency while missing exclusion entirely. The reporting architecture that would serve both purposes links financing instruments, project identifiers, investment schedules, concession territories and service outcomes over time, and its absence is currently the binding constraint on research as much as on supervision. Such integration would also let analysts distinguish temporary financing stress from structural underinvestment, a distinction that matters enormously for policy and is almost impossible to draw from published accounts alone.

Public development banks sit at a consequential point in the chain, and their effect cannot be assessed by the volume they lend or the private capital they claim to have mobilised. Preparation, standardisation, technical assistance and conditionality change which projects become financeable and what obligations those projects carry (Griffith-Jones & Ocampo, 2018; Mazzucato & Penna, 2016; Reis, 2022). Mission-oriented finance supplies a usable evaluation criterion: public risk-taking should be tied to measurable public value, with governance arrangements capable of learning and adjusting as implementation unfolds (Mazzucato & Zaqout, 2025). Leverage ratios are an input to that assessment, never a substitute for it.

The critical literature adds a question about durability that the finance literature tends not to ask. Long-term finance stabilises investment; it also locks in claims on tariff revenue and narrows future regulatory choice. The empirical task is to establish when contractual commitment protects productive investment and when it hardens distributive arrangements that later prove socially or environmentally costly. England and Wales demonstrate how ownership chains and leverage evolve inside a formally stable regulatory regime (Allen & Pryke, 2013; Bayliss et al., 2023). Developing-country evidence shows financialisation advancing slowly and unevenly where political and institutional conditions resist standard asset-making strategies (Williams, 2021). Neither pattern is the default; both need explaining.

Rights-based scholarship keeps the dependent variable anchored in service. Universalisation requires effective connections, continuity of supply, water quality, sewage collection and treatment, affordability, dignity and non-discrimination. These outcomes should be disaggregated by income, gender, race where data permit, rurality and settlement type, because average coverage systematically conceals the populations for whom service is most precarious (Arruda & Heller, 2022; Neves-Silva & Heller, 2016; Neves-Silva et al., 2018). Financial research becomes

more precise, not less rigorous, when these variables enter the design, since they reveal whether a financing architecture delivers the public purpose invoked to justify it.

The agenda that follows is demanding but coherent. It asks how states and firms construct financeable claims, how regulators govern those claims after financial close, how financial commitments redistribute risk, and whether investment reaches households on acceptable terms. Sanitation is a particularly good laboratory for the inquiry because physical assets, regulated cash flows and social rights remain inseparable across very long horizons. The strongest future work will combine security-level and firm-level financial data with contract analysis, regulatory institutions and household service outcomes, and will resist letting any one layer stand in as a proxy for the others.

8. Conclusion

Sanitation finance is usually presented as a paradox: enormous social need alongside persistent difficulty in mobilising long-term investment. The literature reviewed here supports a more concrete diagnosis. Capital reaches networks through institutional arrangements that define territories, revenues, obligations, regulatory procedures and creditor rights, and project preparation together with public coordination determines whether those elements cohere before financial markets become relevant at all. The quantity of savings available to investors is one part of the financing problem, and rarely the binding one.

Those arrangements carry distributive consequences. Long-term debt matches funding to asset life and imposes useful discipline on execution; leverage, refinancing pressure and rigid cash-flow commitments shift adjustment onto tariffs, maintenance or public support. Regionalisation diversifies revenues and sustains cross-subsidy; it also redistributes authority among municipalities and users. Public development banks absorb risk and organise projects; the public value of their intervention depends on the conditions attached to finance and on the capacity to monitor delivery. In each pair, the second clause is not a caveat. It is the part that determines whether universalisation actually arrives.

Brazil concentrates these questions in a sector undergoing simultaneous institutional and financial transformation. Regulatory heterogeneity persists alongside national reference norms; large concessions coexist with state-owned providers; development-bank preparation interacts with capital-market issuance; human-rights research continues to document uneven access and vulnerability. The combination makes the country a strong setting for causal and mechanism-oriented research, provided studies distinguish project selection from financing outcomes and both from service outcomes, and resist the temptation to infer performance from ownership or from financial close.

A rigorous sanitation-finance literature should ultimately follow the money into service. It should identify how a claim on future tariff revenue is constructed, measure the terms on which capital enters, observe how regulators and public authorities respond over time, and test whether households receive continuous, affordable and safe services. That approach preserves the economic importance of finance while keeping universalisation as the criterion against which every institutional innovation is judged. On the evidence assembled here, the 2033 deadline will not be met or missed in the capital markets. It will be met or missed in the peripheral and rural territories where the remaining deficit is concentrated, and where financeability, as currently constructed, is weakest.

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BRASILIANA: JOURNAL FOR BRAZILIAN STUDIES

Authoritarian governance and the university: Repression and social control in Brazilian higher education under the Military Dictatorship (1964–1988)

Abstract

This article analyzes repression and social control in Brazilian higher education during the Military Dictatorship (1964-1988), examining how state power operated through an institutionalized system of surveillance, punishment, and ideological normalization. Grounded in theories of social control (Cohen, Garland) and Aróstegui's concept of illegitimacy of origin, the study understands repression not merely as coercion, but as a bureaucratic and rationalized mechanism sustaining authoritarian order. The analysis draws on diverse documentary sources (repressive reports, military doctrines, surveillance records, and Ministry of Education archives) interpreted through a critical and comparative historical approach. The findings reveal institutional, political and ideological networks that structured control within universities, demonstrating how repression functioned as state policy aimed at reorganizing political and social life. The article also highlights the persistence of bureaucratic control and moral regulation beyond 1988, emphasizing the role of historical memory and critical awareness in resisting the normalization of authoritarian practices in educational life.

Keywords: higher education; repression; Military Dictatorship; social control; Brazil

Resumo

Este artigo analisa a repressão e o controle social na educação superior brasileira durante a Ditadura Militar (1964-1988), examinando como o poder estatal operou por meio de um sistema institucionalizado de vigilância, punição e normalização ideológica. Fundamentado nas teorias do controle social (Cohen, Garland) e no conceito de ilegitimidade de origem de Aróstegui, o estudo compreende a repressão não apenas como coerção, mas como um mecanismo burocrático e racionalizado de sustentação da ordem autoritária. A análise baseia-se em diversas fontes documentais (relatórios repressivos, doutrinas militares, registros de vigilância e arquivos do Ministério da Educação) interpretadas por meio de uma abordagem histórica crítica e comparativa. Os resultados evidenciam as redes institucionais, políticas e ideológicas que estruturaram o controle nas universidades, demonstrando como a repressão operou como política de Estado voltada à reorganização da vida política e social. O artigo destaca ainda a persistência de mecanismos de controle burocrático e regulação moral após 1988, ressaltando a importância da memória histórica e da consciência crítica para resistir à normalização de práticas autoritárias no campo educacional.

Palavras-chave: educação superior; repressão; ditadura militar; controle social; Brasil

Historical legacies and contemporary challenges

How was repression implemented within Brazilian higher education, and to what extent did it operate as a systematic mode of authoritarian governance? Which repressive methods were mobilized during the Military Dictatorship (1964-1988), and what conceptual and historical frameworks sustained their continuity over time? These questions guide the present analysis.

Rather than offering an exhaustive account, this article maps the principal repressive methods employed to control students, faculty, and administrative staff in Brazilian universities, conceptualizing repression as a central component of state governance. Repressive practices did not function in isolation; they were articulated with surveillance, censorship, propaganda, and administrative regulation, forming an institutionalized system of social control embedded in public policy.

Following the 1964 coup, the military regime implemented coordinated actions across multiple sectors of society through a model of governance that combined traditional coercion with modern bureaucratic and ideological techniques. The objective was to preserve a deeply unequal social order rooted in colonial hierarchies and historical patterns of exclusion, reinforced in the Cold War context by fears of political radicalization and social mobilization. Repression in Brazil thus drew on a long genealogy of state violence, encompassing colonial domination, slavery, and repeated military campaigns against popular resistance.

The Military Dictatorship institutionalized this legacy by constructing an extensive apparatus of control that penetrated civilian institutions, including universities, which became strategic arenas of dispute. Higher education was subjected to surveillance, censorship, purges, and ideological intervention, legitimized through legal norms, administrative procedures, and security doctrines. Within this framework, repression functioned not merely as episodic violence but as a rationalized and bureaucratized form of governance aimed at restructuring political, social, and intellectual life.

Authoritarian control is therefore understood as a deliberate state policy that subordinated education to the imperatives of security, order, and stability. Repression operated simultaneously as a governmental technique and as a public policy embedded in the institutional architecture of the authoritarian state, producing durable effects beyond the formal end of the dictatorship.

The analysis also engages with memory studies to demonstrate how repression extended into the regulation of remembrance. The suppression of archives, silencing of academic voices, and distortion of historical narratives contributed to the persistence of authoritarian mentalities after 1988. Recent political crises and the resurgence of denialist discourses underscore the urgency of critically examining these legacies. Mapping repression within higher education thus remains essential not only for historiography, but for safeguarding democratic culture and intellectual autonomy.

Repression, social control, and governance

The analysis of repressive methods applied to higher education during the Brazilian Military Dictatorship is grounded in the interdisciplinary field of social control studies, which conceptualizes control as the ensemble of institutional, normative, and cultural mechanisms through which societies regulate behavior and produce legitimacy. Drawing on the contributions of Co-

hen (1985), Deflem (2007), and Garland (1993, 2001), repression is understood not merely as episodic coercion, but as a rationalized and bureaucratic strategy that integrates punishment, surveillance, and ideological normalization. Within this analytical framework, social control operates simultaneously as a disciplinary mechanism and as a symbolic order that legitimizes domination under the rhetoric of national security and social stability.

Social control assumes a central analytical role in this study, as repression is treated as one of the core modes sustaining authoritarian governance. Following Cohen's (1985, p. 1) classic definition, social control refers to "the organized ways in which a society responds to behavior and to people it views as deviant, threatening, or undesirable." This perspective allows repression to be situated within a broader system of governance rather than reduced to isolated acts of violence.

Empirically, the investigation examines four interrelated modes of control (repression, surveillance, the formation of intellectuals, and propaganda) and their systematic interaction within higher education. These modes did not operate as occasional or improvised responses but formed a relatively stable structure between 1964 and 1988, justifying their treatment as interconnected components of a coherent system of social control (Cohen & Scull, 1983, p. 7). Although not always centrally coordinated, their functional complementarity reveals repression as an integral element of a wider architecture of governance.

Within this system, punishment played a decisive role. As demonstrated by Rusche and Kirchheimer (1939/1984), Foucault (1975/1987), and Garland (1993, 2001), punitive practices are historically contingent and deeply embedded in economic, political, and moral configurations. In this study, repression and punishment are treated as complementary but analytically distinct. Following Aróstegui (2012), repression is conceptualized as an intrinsically illegitimate form of punishment—one that exceeds the moral and legal boundaries of legitimate sanctioning. Aróstegui's notion of the "illegitimacy of origin" illuminates how authoritarian regimes naturalize illegality by converting violence into a routine instrument of order. In higher education, this illegitimacy manifested in the suppression of academic autonomy, the moralization of knowledge production, and the criminalization of dissent.

The empirical evidence further demonstrates the coexistence of multiple temporalities of repression within the Brazilian dictatorship. Modern techniques—such as electric shocks and chemical substances like sodium pentothal—were employed alongside traditional practices, including *pau-de-arara* torture and simulated drowning. Even when restricted to the republican period (post-1889), the continuity of repressive practices across distinct political regimes becomes evident. Political-ideological repression, often associated with authoritarian regimes, also occurred during democratic intervals, as illustrated by the outlawing of the Brazilian Communist Party in 1947. These continuities reveal how successive configurations of control rearticulated inherited structures, underscoring repression as a persistent feature of Brazil's political trajectory.

Methodologically, the research adopts a critical, systematic, and comparative approach inspired by Rüsen's (2010a, 2010b) theory of historical consciousness, situating historical knowledge within its temporal, cultural, and social contexts. This perspective enables the critical interrogation of official narratives and the exposure of interpretive frameworks that sustained authoritarian governance. Freire's (1996) notion of epistemological curiosity informs the interpretive stance, fostering resistance to authoritarian normalization, while Goldmann's (1978) principle

of totality guides the integrated analysis of political, social, and ideological dimensions of primary sources.

The corpus of sources includes: (1) documents from formal repressive proceedings; (2) military doctrinal texts; (3) surveillance records; and (4) materials from the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) concerning state intervention in higher education. These documents were digitized, cataloged, and analyzed comparatively, with attention to their producers, contexts, and intended functions. This process reveals how repression was codified and legitimized through bureaucratic language and policy discourse.

Finally, the study adopts 1964–1988 as its analytical timeframe, following Codato (2005) and Lemos (2014), who identify the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution as the effective closure of the authoritarian cycle. Conceptually, the term "Military Dictatorship" is employed (Fernandes, 1982) to emphasize the centrality of military leadership and the militarization of society, particularly within higher education (Mathias, 2004). Regime manuals, such as those produced by the Escola Superior de Guerra (EMFA/ESG/DE, 1975), explicitly framed governance according to "principles of war," legitimizing the transformation of universities into ideological instruments. Yet higher education also remained a central arena of resistance, precisely because of its strategic role in opposing authoritarian power (Arquidiocese de São Paulo, 1985).

Multiple forms, shared objectives: repression as authoritarian governance

Repressive practices during the Brazilian Military Dictatorship assumed multiple forms, often shaped by local circumstances and institutional specificities. Despite this diversity, these practices shared common objectives: disciplining dissent, producing deterrence, and legitimizing authoritarian governance within higher education. Rather than isolated excesses, repression operated through a repertoire of measures that combined coercion, administrative regulation, and symbolic violence.

A revealing case is that of Professor Maria Luiza de Carvalho Armando. Although she signed a protest letter against the purge of colleagues at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS) in 1969, she was not immediately dismissed, unlike other co-signatories who refused to recant when confronted by Favorino Mercio, Chief of Staff to the Minister of Education, Tarso Dutra. In an unusual move, Maria Luiza repeatedly demanded her own expulsion, submitting petitions to the university administration, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC), and even the Third Army Headquarters, where she personally delivered her request. Initially denied, her dismissal was later carried out through an "internal purge" that concealed its political nature under administrative procedures. Framed as a contractual issue (the alleged failure to renew her employment contract), this measure exemplifies how repression was bureaucratized to obscure its coercive intent.

Repressive actions also unfolded during public demonstrations, frequently targeting university students due to their central role in resistance movements. The so-called "Massacre of Praia Vermelha" on September 23, 1966, illustrates this dynamic. Police forces attacked a protest march in Rio de Janeiro and pursued demonstrators into the former National Faculty of Medicine, violently assaulting more than 600 individuals who sought refuge inside, including numerous students such as Sylvia Vargas, then a medical student at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (Alves & Bonisolo, 2006). Such operations, like home invasions against political dissidents, were designed not only to repress physically but to intimidate and deter broader social networks.

Large-scale interventions further demonstrate the articulation of repression as governance. The invasion of the CRUSP student residence complex at the University of São Paulo on December 17, 1968, was followed by the opening of an Army Police Inquiry (IPM) ordered by General Manuel Rodrigues de Carvalho Lisboa to investigate alleged "subversive activities." The intervention reportedly resulted from requests by São Paulo's Secretary of Public Security, Hely Lopes Meirelles, and by Alfredo Buzaid, then Rector of the University of São Paulo (Fon, 1979, p. 18). In 1969, General José Canavarro Pereira indicted several students under the National Security Law, accusing them of transforming CRUSP into a "permanent and dangerous focus of subversion" through propaganda, mobilization, and alleged preparation for armed struggle (Fon, 1979, p. 18; Joffily, 2008, p. 30).

The report's depiction of CRUSP as a "ghetto" where "all remnants of authority had been destroyed" (Brazil, 1969) encapsulates the regime's worldview. In this logic, repression was framed not as an exception but as a moral and political necessity. Across diverse forms and contexts, repressive practices converged toward a shared objective: asserting authoritarian governance over universities by redefining dissent as a threat to national security and social order.

Toward a mapping of repressive methods

This section maps the principal repressive methods employed against higher education during the Brazilian Military Dictatorship, based on extensive empirical research previously developed [---]. Rather than presenting an exhaustive inventory, the aim is to identify patterns, functions, and logics of repression as instruments of authoritarian governance. These methods did not operate in isolation; they formed an articulated repertoire of control designed to discipline academic life, dismantle resistance, and restructure universities according to the imperatives of national security.

Purges

The term "purge" (*"expurgo"*) was widely used to describe the summary dismissal of individuals from academic positions for political or ideological reasons. Such measures produced profound economic, professional, political, and psychological harm. Three main types of purges were employed: external, when decisions originated outside the institution; internal, when initiated by institutional authorities themselves; and indirect, when intimidation and threats compelled individuals to resign. In all cases, purges functioned as mechanisms of exclusion and deterrence.

Beyond material loss, purges imposed a dual stigma. Expelled individuals became permanent objects of surveillance, assumed to be "recidivist subversives," while also being socially isolated, as colleagues feared association. Professors, students, technical-administrative staff, and even rectors and deans across Brazil were subjected to this form of repression, severely damaging the intellectual and scientific life of universities.

Revocation of political rights

The revocation of political rights (typically for ten years) often accompanied purges, reinforcing their punitive effects. These measures imposed public stigma, frequently amplified by press coverage. Professors such as Antônio de Pádua Ferreira da Silva, Armando Temperani Pereira, and Brasil Rodrigues Barbosa lost both political rights and academic positions after 1964. Such

cases were widespread and illustrate how repression extended beyond individuals to affect the collective academic environment, fostering fear, self-censorship, and long-term institutional impoverishment.

Stigmatization

Stigmatization constituted a central symbolic dimension of repression. Individuals labeled as "subversive," "leftist," or "purged" were publicly exposed as enemies of order. Newspapers regularly published names of punished students, as in the 1971 *Correio do Povo* article listing expelled UFRGS students or the 1976 *Correio Braziliense* report identifying dozens of reprimanded University of Brasília students. Even when punishments were mild, public exposure amplified their deterrent effect.

Visual stigmatization also targeted militants through "wanted" posters. The case of Hiroaki Torigoe, a medical student and ALN member portrayed nationwide as a "wanted terrorist," exemplifies how imagery functioned to isolate individuals socially and legitimize extreme repression (Brazil/SEDH/CEMDP, 2007).

Imprisonment

Imprisonment included arrests officially acknowledged by the regime, as opposed to kidnappings. Arbitrary detentions "for questioning" were routine. Students such as Adolar Koch (UFRGS) were detained and interrogated without formal charges (Koch, 2006). Similar cases occurred nationwide, including the detention of UFPE students by DOPS/PE in 1977 (*Informação nº 74/77*, 1977).

Preventive detentions were common among those tried by military courts. Many students abandoned their studies, families, or country to go underground or join armed resistance (Arquidiocese de São Paulo, 1985). Detentions followed protests such as the Ibiúna Congress and the 1981 Praia Vermelha demonstrations. Sites of imprisonment included police stations, military barracks, ships, and remote locations such as Fernando de Noronha (Del Roio, 2012).

Prominent academics, like Florestan Fernandes, José Leite Lopes, Paulo Freire, among others, were imprisoned, underscoring the regime's systematic targeting of intellectuals. The *Brasil: Nunca Mais* project documents numerous prosecutions, including that of Alberto Goulart Paes Filho (UFBA), convicted for alleged "communist indoctrination" in his lectures.

Kidnapping

Kidnappings were abductions officially denied by the state. Victims such as Francisco José de Oliveira (USP), Emanuel Bezerra dos Santos, and Alceri Maria Gomes da Silva were tortured and murdered, their bodies hidden or falsified (Brazil/SEDH/CEMDP, 2007). Such practices institutionalized extralegal violence while preserving a façade of legality.

Banishment

Political banishment (forced exile) was used primarily during hostage exchange operations. While presented as a humanitarian solution, banishment served to remove perceived enemies from national territory. According to Gaspari (2002), all militants who attempted to return between 1971 and 1973 were executed.

The trajectories of Jeová Assis Gomes and Maria Auxiliadora Lara Barcellos illustrate the devastating consequences of banishment. Both were expelled from universities, tortured, exiled, and ultimately killed or driven to suicide (Brazil/SEDH/CEMDP, 2007).

Torture

Torture was a core instrument of authoritarian governance. Students and professors—including Carlos Eduardo Pires Fleury, Armando Temperani Pereira, and José Roberto Spiegner—were systematically tortured (Brazil/SEDH/CEMDP, 2007). Torture functioned not only to extract information but to terrorize academic environments, enforcing self-censorship and dismantling spaces of intellectual autonomy.

Torture resulting in death

Deaths under torture served as instruments of terror. Victims such as Alexandre Vannucchi Leme, tortured to death at DOI-CODI/SP in 1973, exemplify how lethal violence was combined with concealment, including anonymous burial in Perus. As Joffily (2013) notes, such killings aimed to eliminate opponents, intimidate others, and display institutional power.

Assassinations and disguised executions

Some murders were presented as deaths in armed confrontations, as in the killing of students during protests in 1968 (Brazil/SEDH/CEMDP, 2007). Others were disguised as accidents or shootouts, including the executions of Ranúsia Alves Rodrigues and Catarina Helena Abi-Eçab (Cirano, n.d.).

Induced and simulated suicide

Prolonged torture led some victims to suicide, including Frei Tito and Juan Antonio Carrasco Forrastal. In other cases, executions were staged as suicides, as with Luiz Eduardo Merlino, whose death was falsely attributed to a traffic accident. These practices reveal the psychological dimension of repression aimed at destroying identity and memory.

Sealed coffins, body concealment, and disappearances

Sealed coffins prevented families from viewing bodies, concealing torture marks. Body concealment involved burying victims anonymously, erasing both physical presence and memory and promoting 'radial violence' (Abós, 1979). Political disappearances constituted one of the most devastating forms of repression. The disappearance of Ana Rosa Kucinski Silva (USP) and her husband exemplifies the enduring trauma inflicted on families and academic communities.

Disappearances dismantled intellectual networks and produced collective fear, operating as a technology of terror that extended repression beyond the individual. By denying bodies, names, and mourning, the dictatorship sought to eliminate not only opponents but their place in historical memory.

The hidden side of repression

A substantial portion of the dictatorship's repressive apparatus operated in plain sight, routinely referenced in newspapers, official speeches, and ministerial declarations. Alongside this

visible dimension, however, existed a concealed layer of repression: practices considered indispensable for maintaining control yet politically impossible to acknowledge openly. This hidden dimension was not limited to torture and assassination; it also encompassed measures formally authorized within the regime's illegitimate legal framework, whose application nevertheless required discretion.

A report issued by the Army Intelligence Center (*Centro de Informações do Exército* – CIE) in July 1972 exemplifies this dual logic. The document warned state security agencies of an imminent "wave of agitation in the student sector" during Independence Week, allegedly intended to undermine the Sesquicentennial celebrations. Notably, the report anticipated that such mobilization would "increase progressively in intensity in proportion to the degree of repression executed." To contain this risk, the Minister of the Army reportedly ordered that demonstrations be "repressed with maximum rigor," while simultaneously instructing that arrests be avoided on university campuses, at least initially.

These directives reveal a refined awareness of the symbolic economy of repression. Visibility itself was a variable to be managed. At times, repression was deliberately staged as spectacle, functioning as warning and deterrent. At others, it was executed discreetly, sufficiently forceful to neutralize dissent without generating public outrage or galvanizing further protest. This calibrated oscillation between exposure and concealment underscores the intimate relationship between repression and the manufacturing of consent, suggesting that apparent social acquiescence often resulted from coercion and intimidation, even as genuine support for the regime also existed.

Crucially, the regime's repressive practices functioned as an integrated system of social control. Assassinations, enforced disappearances, body concealment, and psychological torture were not isolated excesses but coordinated strategies aimed at dismantling social bonds and producing a climate of permanent fear. Grounded in the National Security Doctrine (DSN), these practices were framed as necessary instruments for safeguarding order and stability, thereby normalizing political violence as a routine technology of governance.

Repression, agency, and the functional logic of social control

What systematic functions did repression perform within the broader architecture of social control under the Brazilian Military Dictatorship? While repressive practices may have produced contingent or unintended effects, the analysis here is limited to their structured and deliberate functions, as conceived and operationalized by the regime.

According to classifications developed by surveillance agencies, and, crucially, to the perceptions of repressive agents themselves, individuals labeled as "subversives" were categorized based on their presumed recoverability. This notion, derived from doctrines disseminated by the Escola Superior de Guerra (ESG) and embedded within the National Security Doctrine (*Doutrina de Segurança Nacional* – DSN), held that certain subjects could be "reconverted" or "rehabilitated," abandoning their association with the internal "enemy." In such cases, repression aimed not at elimination but at behavioral realignment, seeking to inculcate attitudes deemed compatible with "civic responsibility" and "national development."

This framework reveals a more complex reality than the frequently invoked image of repression as mere mechanical obedience to orders. While a clear hierarchical chain of command existed, headed by the dictatorship and the National Security Council (*Conselho de Segurança*

Nacional – CSN), repression depended on countless discretionary decisions made at intermediate and lower levels. Torturers, rectors, members of purge commissions, intelligence analysts, and even clerical personnel who transformed raw information into "intelligence" exercised situational power to define who was "recoverable" and who was irredeemably "subversive." This does not dilute responsibility at the top; rather, it underscores the diffusion of agency and complicity throughout the apparatus.

Consequently, repressive measures varied according to these classifications. Some were designed to "correct" behavior through comparatively mild sanctions, such as expulsions, dismissals, or short-term imprisonment. Others sought the definitive neutralization of those deemed irrecoverable, often labeled "terrorists", through imprisonment, exile, or elimination. Disguised executions, including simulated suicides and enforced disappearances, were preferred techniques when concealment was feasible.

Underlying these practices was what Magalhães (1997) identified as a "logic of suspicion," according to which virtually anyone could become a subversive. This mentality justified permanent vigilance and transformed fear into a central mechanism of domination. Visibility itself became strategic: certain punishments were deliberately exposed to function as exemplary sanctions, multiplying their impact through public stigma and producing deterrent effects that extended well beyond the immediate targets.

Repression also fulfilled a normative function. It did not merely punish transgressions; it prescribed acceptable conduct, shaping behavior within academic and professional fields through implicit and explicit rules enforced by threat. At the symbolic level, the public display of repression, or of its outcomes, served to legitimize the regime, "demonstrating" the existence of subversion and the necessity of authoritarian control.

Finally, repression reinforced its own institutional logic. Reports circulated internally within surveillance agencies, such as a 1969 SNI document describing mass arrests on the Ilha do Fundão campus, functioned as feedback mechanisms. They validated vigilance, showcased the alleged "success" of repression, and completed the cycle linking surveillance, punishment, and ideological self-justification within the dictatorship's system of social control.

Mapping repressive methods and social control

The documentary analysis reveals a dense and institutionalized system of repressive practices that extended far beyond overt censorship or episodic police intervention. In Brazilian higher education, repression operated through multiple, interdependent mechanisms articulating coercion, surveillance, punishment, and ideological normalization. In line with Stanley Cohen's (1985) conception of social control, these practices must be understood not as isolated acts of force, but as organized and rationalized responses to behaviors and subjects constructed as deviant, threatening, or politically undesirable. Repression thus formed part of a broader architecture of authoritarian governance aimed at disciplining intellectual production and subordinating universities to the regime's political, moral, and security-oriented order.

At the institutional level, the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) functioned in close coordination with civil and military intelligence agencies, particularly the *Serviço Nacional de Informações* (SNI) and its Divisions of Security and Information (DSIs), including the DSI/MEC itself. This interinstitutional circulation of information produced a nationwide apparatus of observation, classification, and intervention in academic life. Professors, students, and adminis-

trators were systematically monitored, investigated, and sanctioned according to political criteria rather than academic merit. As Cohen (1985) emphasizes, social control operates as much through categorization and labeling as through punishment; in this sense, surveillance reports routinely reframed critical thought as a threat to national security, transforming universities into spaces governed by suspicion and ideological vigilance.

At the political and legal level, repression was consolidated through a series of institutional acts, decrees, and administrative regulations that endowed authoritarian practices with bureaucratic and legal form. Institutional Act n. 5 (1968) marked a decisive turning point by expanding the state's authority to dismiss faculty members, dissolve student organizations, suspend civil rights, and intervene directly in university governance. Following Garland's (1993, 2001) analysis of punishment as a historically situated and politically productive practice, these measures reveal how coercion was normalized through administrative routines, blurring the boundaries between legality and repression. Punishment, in this context, functioned less as an exceptional response to infractions than as a regular instrument for regulating conduct and reshaping institutional life.

At the ideological level, the dictatorship promoted an educational discourse centered on moral renewal, national unity, and depoliticization. Pedagogical reforms introduced under the rhetoric of modernization and efficiency sought to realign higher education with developmentalist and technocratic imperatives, marginalizing critical and humanistic perspectives. This process resonates with Garland's notion of normalization, whereby disciplinary mechanisms operate through moral and symbolic frameworks that render domination intelligible and acceptable. Through curricula, evaluation systems, and institutional language, the regime aimed to produce compliant intellectuals and to redefine academic activity as an extension of patriotic duty and social discipline.

Taken together, these mechanisms demonstrate that repression was neither accidental nor merely reactive, but a structured and deliberate component of state policy. Drawing on Aróstegui's (2012) concept of the illegitimacy of origin, repression can be understood as an intrinsically illegitimate form of punishment that nonetheless sought to legitimize itself through bureaucratic rationalization and moral discourse. The authoritarian state transformed violence into governance by embedding coercive practices within legal, administrative, and symbolic frameworks that obscured their arbitrary and anti-democratic nature.

Ultimately, the analysis underscores how higher education became both a privileged target and an active vector of authoritarian governance. Universities were simultaneously subjected to repression and mobilized as instruments for reproducing the regime's values, hierarchies, and rationalities. This configuration reveals the depth of state intervention in the intellectual and moral foundations of Brazilian society during the dictatorship and highlights the persistence of bureaucratic control and moral regulation beyond 1988. In this sense, the study reinforces the importance of historical memory and critical awareness as essential tools for resisting the normalization of authoritarian practices in educational life.

Repression, normalization, and the legacies of authoritarian control

The analysis of repression and social control in Brazilian higher education during the Military Dictatorship (1964-1988) demonstrates that repression operated as a coherent, institutionalized, and bureaucratically rationalized system, rather than as a set of sporadic or merely reactive mea-

sures. The articulation between state agencies, legal-administrative instruments, and ideological apparatuses produced a regime of normalization that reshaped the boundaries of academic autonomy, citizenship, and intellectual freedom. In this context, universities emerged as strategic arenas of authoritarian governance: spaces of contestation and resistance, but also privileged sites through which the regime sought to discipline knowledge and reorganize social and political life under the rhetoric of modernization and national security.

The repression of academic actors (students, professors, and administrative staff) was marked by a broad repertoire of practices, ranging from overt measures such as purges, revocation of political rights, and arbitrary imprisonment, to clandestine operations including torture, enforced disappearances, and disguised assassinations. Surveillance permeated everyday academic life through infiltration, cooperation between repressive organs and university administrations, and extensive networks of denunciation and intelligence reporting. These practices were not isolated or improvised; they were embedded in an organized structure informed by the National Security Doctrine and executed through a hierarchical apparatus that encompassed both military and civilian institutions.

As a mechanism of authoritarian governance, repression in higher education followed methodical and bureaucratic procedures. Agencies such as DOI-CODI and DOPS maintained systematic records of individuals classified as threats to national security, while instruments such as Institutional Act n. 5 (1968) and Decree-Law 477 provided formal justification for the punishment of political dissent within educational institutions. In line with theories of social control, these practices reveal how punishment and surveillance were normalized through administrative routines, transforming coercion into an apparently legitimate form of governance aimed at neutralizing opposition, disciplining bodies, and suppressing critical thought.

The analysis identifies three interrelated axes structuring repression in higher education: institutional control, control of bodies, and control of ideas. Institutional control operated through surveillance, sanctions, and direct intervention in university governance, including the appointment of regime-aligned rectors and the establishment of internal intelligence units such as CISMEC and the DSI/MEC. Control of bodies involved expulsions, imprisonment, torture, and enforced disappearances, designed to dismantle networks of resistance and disseminate fear. Control of ideas targeted intellectual production itself, through censorship, intimidation, and the policing of research and teaching, fostering self-censorship and ideological conformity.

The conceptual foundations of this apparatus combined Cold War anti-communism with long-standing colonial hierarchies and the militarization of political life. The construction of the "internal enemy" legitimized repression as a moral and patriotic duty, transforming education into a central battlefield of authoritarian governance. While rooted in specific national conditions, these dynamics reflected broader Latin American patterns of state violence and ideological control during the period, in which security doctrines functioned simultaneously as justification and method for suppressing dissent.

Over time, the forms and intensity of repression shifted. The initial phase of the dictatorship emphasized purges and institutional interventions, while the 1970s witnessed the escalation of torture, executions, and disappearances. During the political "opening" of the late 1970s and early 1980s, repression became more selective and discreet, without dismantling its underlying structures. Bureaucratic control, ideological monitoring, and administrative coercion persisted, recalibrated to sustain the appearance of liberalization while preserving authoritarian power.

These findings underscore that repression was not merely a response to opposition, but a structural component of authoritarian governance. Moreover, elements of this logic persisted beyond 1988, through the bureaucratization of control, the moralization of dissent, and the depoliticization of academic life. Such continuities highlight how the authoritarian legacy of the dictatorship remains embedded in institutional practices and symbolic frameworks within Brazilian society.

In this sense, the reflections of Araújo and Santos (2007) on the politics of memory and forgetting are central. Selective remembrance and institutional silences surrounding authoritarian practices constitute forms of ongoing violence that hinder the consolidation of democracy. The struggle for historical memory is therefore inseparable from the defense of academic autonomy and democratic life. By exposing the mechanisms through which repression was legitimized and normalized, this study contributes not only to historiography, but also to a critical understanding of the conditions under which authoritarian practices can reemerge under new forms of legitimacy. The mapping of repression in higher education thus stands as both an analytical contribution and an ethical imperative, reaffirming education as a space of critical inquiry, plural knowledge, and democratic vigilance.

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From resistance to denial: An analysis of the relation between the Armed Forces and the National Truth Commission*

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the relationship that different sectors of the Brazilian Armed Forces have established with the National Truth Commission (NTC). The analysis proposed for this study is carried out in three moments. In the first of them, the discussions, crises and setbacks that preceded the creation of the Commission are analyzed. Next, the focus shifts to the way in which different sectors of the Brazilian Armed Forces interacted with the NTC during its work. Finally, it is observed how these sectors positioned themselves and acted, from December 2014, in light of the results produced by the entity.

Keywords: National Truth Commission; civil-military dictatorship in Brazil (1964–1985); Brazilian Armed Forces

Resumo

Este estudo tem como objetivo analisar a relação que diferentes setores das Forças Armadas brasileiras estabeleceram com a Comissão Nacional da Verdade (CNV). A análise proposta para este artigo é realizada em três momentos. No primeiro deles são analisadas as discussões, crises e retrocessos que antecederam a criação da Comissão. Na sequência, o foco recai na forma que diferentes setores das Forças Armadas brasileiras interagiram com a CNV durante o seu mandato. Finalmente, observa-se como estes setores se posicionaram e atuaram, a partir de dezembro de 2014, diante dos resultados produzidos pela entidade.

Palavras-chave: Comissão Nacional da Verdade; ditadura civil-militar no Brasil (1964–1985); Forças Armadas do Brasil

Introduction

Between 1964 and 1985, Brazil lived under a civil-military dictatorship aligned from an ideological point of view to the precepts of the National Security Doctrine (in Brazilian Portuguese: Doutrina de Segurança Nacional – DSN) (Martins, 1988; Padrós, 2008). Initiated with the deposition of the João Goulart government (1961-1964), the Brazilian dictatorship was not an isolated

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event in the Latin American region, specifically in the Southern Cone countries, since Argentina (1976-1983), Chile (1973-1990) and Uruguay (1973-1985) also went through similar authoritarian regimes between the 1960s and 1990s.

Installed in a context marked by the Cold War, the increased anti-communism in the region (due to the success of the Cuban Revolution in, 1959) and the economic crisis, the Brazilian dictatorship was responsible for massive human rights violations. The persecution, revocation of rights, imprisonment, exile, torture, death and disappearance of anyone who could be identified as an opponent of the authoritarian regime was something recurrent in the period. Relying on a repressive apparatus structured in all regions of the country, the dictatorship left, as a result of its repression, hundreds of dead and missing individuals, thousands of political prisoners and exiles, thousands of people who lost their jobs (public and private) and parliamentary mandates (Comissão Nacional da Verdade, 2014).

In 1974, anticipating the exhaustion of the regime's economic project (which would be interrupted, among other factors, by the international oil crisis) and, also, the intensification of the strengthening of the consented opposition, the new dictator-President, Ernesto Geisel, began the process of "slow, gradual and safe" detente (Arturi, 2001). Highly controlled, the process of transition to democracy in the country was carried out until 1985, when the last of the dictators-presidents (João Figueiredo, 1979-1985) ended his term.

It is important to note that the transition in Brazil did not take place in a linear way. On the contrary, the long process, that lasted more than over a decade, is marked by moments of conflict between the regime and the opposition, including clashes among different sectors within the authoritarian regime's support base, which were not favorable to the end of the dictatorship (Arturi, 2001; Gugliano & Gallo, 2013). Disputes aside, the control of the process remained predominantly in the hands of the dictatorial government, which was gradually liberalizing the regime, as had been planned, prior to 1974 by the Geisel-Golbery alliance.

With the end of the authoritarian regime, the Brazilian state, as occurred in other countries in the region, began to address the aftermath of the political repression practiced during the dictatorship and established policies (of memory) aimed at the reparation of the victims and their families. Memory policies aimed at rehabilitation or, in other words, reparation of victims, vary greatly according to each context, and, above all, according to the target audience for which they are intended. These can be accomplished through measures that provide symbolic reparation, monetary compensation, pensions, the provision of services, the guarantee of rights such as scholarships or medical assistance, reintegration into the public service, among others (Solís Delgadillo, 2015).

Specifically, the reparation of the victims of the Brazilian dictatorship, unlike what occurred in other countries, was carried out gradually, slowly, and, above all, belatedly. Effectively initiated from 1995 on, with the enactment of Law No. 9.140 (intended for the families of political deceased and disappeared individuals), the reparation of the victims of political repression begins to progress more than a decade after the last dictator-president left the office, concluding the transition process to democracy. In 2001, through a provisional measure converted into Law No. 10,559 of 2002, the Amnesty Commission was created, being responsible for extending reparations to other sectors of the population that had been persecuted by the dictatorship. In 2011, finally, Law No. 12,528 was approved, which created the National Truth Commission (NTC).

Considering the above, this study aims to analyze the relation that different sectors of the Brazilian Armed Forces have established with the Nacional Truth Commission. The analysis proposed for this study is carried out in three stages. In the first of them, the discussions, crises, and setbacks (involving the Federal Government, the Ministry of Defense and sectors of the Armed Forces) that preceded the creation of the Commission are analyzed. Subsequently, the focus shifts to how different sectors of the Brazilian Armed Forces interacted with the Nacional Truth Commission (NTC) during its work, either cooperating or not in the reconstitution of facts related to the political repression practiced by the civil-military dictatorship (1964-1985). In a third moment, it is observed how these sectors positioned themselves and acted, starting from December 2014, in the face of the results produced by the entity.

It is important to mention that, for this study, the approach on the Armed Forces – NTC relation occasionally takes into account the statements issued by the Military Club regarding the memory policies implemented in the country. The Military Club is a civil society association formed by reserve military servicemen and their families. It is not to be confused, therefore, with the Armed Forces as an institution of the Republic. Although it is not possible to treat as synonymous what is said by the Military Club with the institutional positions of the Brazilian Armed Forces, it is a fact that both institutions have a high degree of affinity regarding topics such as the memory of political repression.

Between resistance and concession: the Armed Forces before the creation of the NTC

Regarding the Brazilian case specifically, it can be observed that the development of human rights policies has advanced significantly since the Vienna Conference in 1993. In addition to reinserting the topic into the discussion agenda, the Conference suggested that countries concerned with the protection of human rights could reorganize them internally (Koerner, 2003) by creating a "National Human Rights Action Plan" (NHRAP): a document that aimed to make the countries participating in the meeting establish a national agenda to formulate policies for human rights and, furthermore, align it with the international standards set within the scope of the conference.

In Brazil, the first two editions of the document, NHRAP-1 and NHRAP-2, were launched respectively in 1996 and 2002, during the governments of the President Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002). However, it is with the publication of NHRAP-3, in December 2009, that a significant expansion of addressing the memory of repression in the country takes place, dedicating to the theme (in this new edition of the document) a specific Guiding Axis: Axis VI, named "Right to Memory and Truth" (Brasil, 2010). As equally important as the existence of an Axis dedicated to the topic, however, was the original content of this section of the document. In addition to establishing the need to preserve and promote the memory of the period (directive No. 24), and the revision of legislation that, produced by the military and based on the National Security Doctrine, continued to be applied in the country (directive No. 25), the creation of a national Truth Commission was also foreseen (directive No. 23).

Before the launch of the new edition of the Program, in December 2009, there was an attempt to have its provisions to be scrutinized by all ministries, in order to assess greater legitimacy to the guidelines established by the conferences that drafted the document (Brasil, 2010, p. 11). The launch of the Program was delayed for almost a year due to the presentation of an opposing

position, by the Ministry of Defense, to the investigation of violations that occurred during the authoritarian period (IPEA, 2010, p. 285).

Between the end of 2009, when NHRAP-3 was published, and the beginning of the year 2010, there were a series of public statements and controversial discussions about the release of the new edition of the program, and especially about the content of Guiding Axis VI. Involving human rights advocates on one side and the Armed Forces represented by Defense Minister Nelson Jobim on the other, the controversies highlighted the strength with which some ideas have resonated within public opinion since the transition to democracy.

Evoked the thesis of reciprocal amnesty, that is, the idea that everything that happened should be forgotten since many crimes were also committed by left-wing militants, the discussions that took place generated significant tension, leading to a retreat of the Federal Government, which in May 2010 issued Decree No. 7,177, amending provisions of the Program. At the height of the crisis, it is important to mention, the Minister of Defense and the commanders of the 3 Armed Forces threatened to collectively resign from their positions, if the document remained unchanged by the Federal Government (Passarinho, 2010; Samarco & Lopes, 2009).

With the Decree, the time frame to be investigated by the National Truth Commission, which in the original version of NHRAP-3 was referred to as the period of dictatorship, would come to include all crimes committed by the Brazilian State between 1946 and 1988, with the Amnesty Law (Law No. 6,683 of, 1979) been reinforced, as an objective limit to its work. Thus, the organization would be responsible for clarifying the crimes committed by the repression but could not punish those responsible.

The votes on the Project in the Chamber of Deputies and Senate were finalized respectively in September and October 2011, the first year of President Dilma Rousseff's term. Before the presidential sanction, however, and upon being approved by the Chamber of Deputies including amendments proposed by the DEM (Democratas - Brazilian center-right political party) and the PSDB (Partido da Social Democracia Brasileira - Brazilian center political party), the text was taken to vote in the Senate with *extremely urgent urgency*, being there approved without amendments. In accordance with the provisions of the amendments approved by the Chamber of Deputies, limitations were added to the appointment of NTC members, who could not, for example, be affiliated with any political party.

The parliamentary debate on the Law Project that created the NTC, according to Janaína de Almeida Teles (2020, p. 247), was marked by pragmatism, immediacy, and the logic of "national reconciliation". At that time, the then-Deputy Jair Bolsonaro, at the time affiliated with the PP/RJ (Partido Progessista/Rio de Janeiro - Brazilian center-right political party), was one of the main voices opposed to the creation of the Commission, basing his statments on the idea of revanchism, reaffirming the need to investigate the left-wing crimes and classifying it as an attack on the military (Sainz et al., 2020). According to the survey made by Antonio Teixeira de Barros (2020, p. 9), although the parliamentary debate on the NTC was mostly carried out by deputies and senators from parties on the left-wing of the political spectrum, Jair Bolsonaro was, among all, the parliamentarian who made the largest number of pronouncements addressing the issue.

The fact is that the controversies and twists that arose from the disclosure of the new text of the NHRAP delayed the proceedings of the Law Project that would create The Truth Commission (Law Project No. 7,736 of, 2010). Being approved by both Houses of the National Congress

only in October 2011, and its creation Law (Law No. 12,528/2011) sanctioned by President Dilma Rousseff in November of the same year, the NTC began its activities on May 16, 2012 (almost two and a half years after the launch of NHRAP-3).

As if it weren't enough for the period to be investigated by the Commission to be expanded to include crimes committed in a Democratic political scenario (from, 1946 to the, 1964 Coup), human rights advocacy groups had their expectations relativized by two other limitations. The first, concerns the limited number of members: only 7 individuals to analyze crimes committed in almost 50 years of history, in a country that has a territory that is as vast as Brazil. The other limitation was related to the duration of the Commission's work: initially, it would be only 2 years, however, in December 2013, the Presidency of the Republic extended its duration, and the deadline for the closure of activities was extended until December 2014, when its Final Report would be delivered.

Limited or not, the fact is that the creation of the NTC ended up being accepted by wide sectors of the political spectrum of the country, inside and outside the representative institutions. An element that demonstrates the arrangement established around its installation is the meeting, on the solemnity that marked the beginning of its work, of all the former Presidents of the period of the New Republic. The Armed Forces, in this scenario, transitioned from a posture marked by resistance to the concession, by ensuring that the hegemonic interpretation of the amnesty would be respected by the entity. Concession, however, is not synonymous with unrestricted acceptance of its existence. Especially by sectors opposed to the reparation of the victims of the authoritarian regime that continued to exist.

Between collaboration and insubordination: the Armed Forces during the work of the NTC

Between May 2012 and 2014, the NTC conducted or supported 80 public hearings (in various regions of the country) with victims of the dictatorship, witnesses, and even with agents of repression who were summoned to provide testimony. More than 1,000 testimonies were collected in public activities or in a private form. During the same period, the work teams that were created within the framework of the Commission conducted investigations and documentary research in various public institutions and archives. On December 10, 2014, the NTC delivered its final report of its activities to President Dilma Rousseff.

With two thousand pages, the final report was divided into 3 volumes. The first, set out the objectives of the Commission, presents an overview of political history in Brazil from 1946 on, details how the repressive structure worked in the country and the techniques used by State agents during the dictatorship, highlighting the links between the Brazilian repressive structure and neighboring countries, which acted in a coordinated manner within the framework of an international repressive connection: "Operation Condor". Having done that, exposing the chain of command existing in the period, it assesses the balance of repression and, naming 377 direct or indirect responsible for the crimes committed in the period (many of them already deceased), establishes a set of 29 recommendations.

In the second volume, the role played by parts of civil society and businessmen in the Coup and during the dictatorship is analyzed, as well as the various forms of opposition and resistance to the military's seizure and occupation of power in the country. In addition, data regarding the repression that was practiced against specific segments of Brazilian society is presented: from

members of the Armed Forces who were opposed to the seizure of power in 1964, to urban workers, peasants, indigenous people, religious individuals, people from the LGBT+ community, university teachers and students.

The third and final volume of the report lists and profiles 434 individuals who were recognized as deceased or missing as a result of political violence between 1946 and 1988. Referred to, in the "introduction to Volume 3", as a list that can be revised, it is also recognized by the members of NTC as limited, such limitations being attributed to the constant lack of collaboration on the part of members of the Armed Forces. As stated in the document:

The gaps in this history of executions, torture and concealment of corpses of political opponents of the military dictatorship could be better elucidated today if the Armed Forces had made available to the NTC the collections of archives of CIE (Army Information Center – in Brazilian Portuguese: Centro de Informações do Exército), CISA (Air Force Security Information Center – in Brazilian Portuguese: Centro de Informações de Segurança da Aeronáutica) and Cenimar (Navy Information Center – in Brazilian Portuguese: Centro de Informações da Marinha) produced during the dictatorship, and if, similarly, all the required information had been provided, as reported in Chapter 2 of volume 1 of the NTC report. The military authorities have chosen to maintain the pattern of negative or insufficient response that has been in place for fifty years, preventing, in this way, the circumstances and perpetrators of serious human rights violations that occurred during the military dictatorship from being known.

To prevent the reproduction of anti-democratic behavior by the Armed Forces, to mitigate the maintenance of these sectors as *veto players* of the new democracy, and to put an end to the impunity of crimes commited in the name of the authoritarian regime, the NTC, within the set of 29 recommendations presented in its final report, suggested, among other measures: a) that the Brazilian Armed Forces publicly acknowleged the repression practiced by its agents during the period investigated by The Truth Commission; b) that the civil, criminal and administrative responsibility of those involved in human rights violations during the dictatorship be investigated and attributed, with the application of the Amnesty Law being removed in these cases; c) that the the curriculum of the military academies should be reformulated based on democratic values and respect for human rights; d) official activities commemorating the 1964 Coup should be prohibited; e) a national system for preventing and combating torture should be improved and strengthened; f) the National Security Law should be repealed; f) the state Military Courts should be abolished; and g) the right of access to the archives of repression should be made effective.

Although limited, the document represented a progress in the addressing of the issue on a national level. In addition to identifying those responsible for a range of human rights violations, and recommending a series of measures against the persistent impunity, the final report incorporates into the debate on the civil-military dictatorship the recognition of at least three important aspects, which concern: 1) the existence of an organized repressive apparatus, which, operating in all regions of the country, systematically committed violations during the dictatorship; 2) the scope of repression: according to the data provided in the report, political repression was not restricted to sectors of the armed conflict, affecting urban and rural workers, university teachers and students, dissident military personnel, Indigenous people and people with different sexual orientations; 3) the involvement of civilian segments in the Coup and the dictatorship,

with the role of businessmen who benefited from the economic modernization carried out by the dictatorship being essential to the maintenance of the regime.

During the work of the Commission, the collaboration of the Armed Forces as an institution, as mentioned, was restricted. There was, therefore, no facilitation of the investigative work carried out by the working groups created within the scope of the NTC. Either because the institutions repeatedly denied the existence of documents on the period. Being also because their active and/or reserve members, for the most part, refused to effectively cooperate with their testimonies. When appearing before the commissioners to testify in this regard, most of the agents of repression opted for silence (Lourenço, 2014).

When they spoke, which is the case of the testimonies of Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra, a retired colonel and agent of repression recognized for his work with the DOI-CODI of São Paulo (Operations Information Detachment – Internal Defense Operations Center – In Brazilian Portuguese: Destacamento de Operações de Informações - Centro de Operações de Defesa Interna), and Paulo Malhães, a retired lieutenant colonel and member of the Army Information Center (CIE), their demonstrations served to reiterate elements that, hegemonically, constitute the corporation's thinking since the 1964 Coup. Ustra, for example, referred to the victims of the dictatorship as "terrorists" and denied that they died in offices under his command (Mendes, 2013). Malhães, although he did not deny the practice of torture and disappearance, stated that he had fulfilled his duty and had no regrets for the human rights violations committed during the dictatorship (Jornal Nacional, 2014).

As a rule, the Armed Forces institutionally refrained from issuing any comment when asked by news agencies to take a position on the work of the NTC. When something displeased active-duty and reserve members, as it happened in September 2014, when Defense Minister Celso Amorim acknowledged the existence of crimes committed by the dictatorship in a letter sent to the Commission, the voice of the corporation was heard through a manifesto signed by 27 generals who, although belonging to the reserve, did not constitute dissonant voices on the part of the active-duty officers (Mendes, 2014).

If before the approval of the law that created the NTC the position of the Armed Forces transitioned from institutional resistance, through the Ministry of Defense, to concession, during the work of the entity, the situation changed significantly from May 2012. As an institution, the Armed Forces avoided, whenever possible, open confrontation with the Commission and its members. For the media, the general rule was to remain silent. Within a bureaucratic perspective, there was some degree of collaboration, although the denial of the existence of documents and archives, however, bordered on insubordination. The fact that former agents of the repressive apparatus appeared to testify can also be understood as a sign of collaboration with the agency, even though the silence has guided most of these participations. A sort of indirect insubordination, however, was present in the voices of Agents of repression who provided testimonies, as well as in those of reserve and/or Military Club members, who verbalized what active-duty officers were prevented from saying publicly by duty of office.

From criticism to denial: the Armed Forces after the work of the NTC

On December 10, 2014, during the morning, the final report of the NTC was delivered to President Dilma Rousseff in a solemnity held at the Planalto Palace. On the same day, the first elaborate criticisms by sectors associated with the Armed Forces began to circulate. As the institution

was silent regarding the subject, the Military Club, for example, spoke out, vehemently criticizing the report, having stated that:

> [...] The report could only be a collection of half-truths, slanders, and whole lies, packed with pieces of truth whose disclosure confirms the socialist orientation of the commissioners. Of its 29 recommendations, several directly target the Armed Forces as agents of the state. None refers to the actions of terrorists, guerrillas, kidnappers and leftist assassins who tried to seize power by force and establish a Soviet, Chinese or Cuban style of a communist totalitarian government in the country. [...] (Salomão, 2014).

After the publication of the report, even active-duty military personnel spoke out publicly, since they felt personally affected by information contained in the document. This is the case, for example, of the Army general Sérgio Etchegoyen, whose father was listed in the report as responsible for human rights violations during the dictatorship. In a statement, the general and his family affirmed that the work of the NTC was superficial (Gazeta do Povo, 2014).

The criticisms that circulated, although they may have been momentarily diluted amid a significant set of materials and opinions favorable to the outcome of the NTC's work, can be considered as the tip of the iceberg (along with the Armed Forces) on the subject. Much more than residual or random, such public demonstrations, led by sectors associated with the Armed Forces, whether active-duty or reserve members, showed that, within their walls, representative portions of the corporation never accepted the progress promoted by memory policies in the country. If there has been progress in the scope of this agenda, it is because exogenous conjunctural circumstances (external to the Armed Forces) favored its realization. The silent institutional concession towards reparative measures, therefore, has always been covertly guided by the resignation demanded by hierarchy and/or the resentment shared, typically, only among *inter pairs*.

Recently, in a book organized by Celso Castro (2021), General Villas Bôas, commander of the Brazilian Army between 2015 and 2019, stated, in an interview with the researcher, that the creation of the NTC was a breaking point in the relationship between the Armed Forces and the PT (Partido dos Trabalhadores - Brazilian center-left political party) governments, directly affecting the support given by its members to the removal of President Dilma Rousseff. Added to the other reparation measures implemented throughout the 1990s and 2000s, NTC would have represented a sort of "last straw" in terms of tolerance towards memory policies.

Analyzing retrospectively, it is possible to observe that the months that preceded and followed the completion of the work of The Truth Commission in the country were marked, respectively, by the 2014 elections and their consequences. In October 2014, President Dilma Rousseff was re-elected in a tight race against candidate Aécio Neves (PSDB). For the first time since direct elections for the presidency resumed, the defeated candidate questioned the result of the polls, casting doubt on the integrity of the electoral process. Despite the Superior Electoral Court (in Brazilian Portuguese: Tribunal Superior Eleitoral – TSE) having reaffirmed the outcome achieved through the voting, there was something different forming on the horizon.

In March 2015, a few months after the presidential inauguration ceremony for the beginning of the President's second term, the streets of the country began to be occupied, frequently, by large anti-government demonstrations. Orchestrated by sectors of the right-wing and extreme right-wing, the acts started a phenomenon that has become recurrent in street demonstrations in

the country: people carrying banners and posters calling not only for the end of the government and corruption, but also requesting the return of the military to power, defending torture, and saluting former agents of repression.

Considering the events mentioned, it is clear that the recent political conjuncture, marked by the approval of the *impeachment* of President Dilma Rousseff, in 2016, and the presidential election of 2018, in which a far-right politician was elected to the office, directly impacted the execution of activities related to the main reparation policies in place in the country since the 1990s.

Within the scope of the Amnesty Commission, specifically, from August 2016, when the parliamentary Coup that removed Dilma Rousseff from the presidency advanced and her vice president, Michel Temer, took office, the Commission underwent a deep restructuring that had repercussions on the range of its actions (Carta Capital, 2017). In addition to the fact that the new government significantly and arbitrarily changes the composition of the commission, the change in the pace and format of its work is visible. The trial caravans no longer occur, the public apologies likewise, and furthermore, an attempt to undermine their functions is denounced. Supporting the accusation, in addition to the change in the publicity of the commission's work, was the fact that its autonomy had been reduced, and its decisions were subject to the evaluation of the Attorney General's Office (in Brazilian portuguese: Advocacia Geral da União – AGU), which issued orders denying the granting of certain compensations (Calvi, 2018).

As of January 2019, with the inauguration cerimony of Jair Bolsonaro as president of the Republic, the Commission undergoes new changes, which deepen the measures that had been taken since the Temer government (2016-2018). The first of these concerns the relocation of the agency, which was linked to the Ministry of Justice since its creation, to the Ministry of Women, Family and Human Rights (MWFHR). Although the relocation to a ministerial department dedicated to human rights seems appropriate, because it has a self-evident thematic affinity, the change is more complex than it seems. The MWFHR was created by the new government after a ministerial reform marked by controversies, with the department headed by Damares Alves, a figure associated with the "ideological wing" of the government, representing evangelical and conservative sectors linked to the new president.

This is a change that represents a significant symbolic and political rupture, on the part of the Federal Government, regarding the way the issue of reparations to the victims of the dictatorship had been treated for more than fifteen years in the country. Closely associated with Justice, the issue now falls within the purview of a Ministry that, even though it bears the term "human rights" in its name, was clearly created with the intention of subordinating the guarantee of such rights to a stereotypical, conservative, and religious vision of them.

The relocation to a new Ministry posed other problems, objectives, regarding the work of the Amnesty Commission. Changes in the composition of the entity, loss of transparency in the dissemination of information, changes on the website, with the suppression of materials (books, magazines, reports) produced by the Commission over the years, all contributed, during the first year of the Bolsonaro Government, to the slowdown and dismantling of a public policy that, for years, had been successfully implemented. Regarding specifically the way in which the analysis of applications was carried out, the format implemented since 2016 has been consolidated under the new ministerial department. That is, the trials, which before were often held in public sessions and with apologies to the victims, began to be held behind closed doors, im-

personally. A significant modification was the change in the Commission's regulations, aiming at reduction of possibilities for administrative appeals presented against the decisions made by the entity. Only one appeal can be filed by those who have had their application rejected or partially denied.

Another controversial change that came with the new administration was the disassociation of the recognition of the condition of political amnesty from the granting of eventual pecuniary compensation to victims. Previously, the amnestied person had defined, in the same decision, whether to grant monetary compensation for damage caused by political persecution. As of 2019, in order to receive such compensation, it is now necessary for the interested party to file a court application in this regard. According to Victor Neiva, representative of the political amnesties in the Commission, who would be exonerated by Minister Damares Alves in October 2019, the measure represents a major setback for the victims of the dictatorship, who, in addition to waiting years for the granting of amnesty, will have to wait, indefinitely, and via judicial process, to receive pecuniary reparation (Leitão, 2019).

As if the aforementioned problems were not enough, other facts related to the Commission during the year 2019 serve as elements that synthesize the entity's directions under the new government. In March, Minister Damares Alves said publicly that she would open the" little boxes " of compensation granted by the Amnesty Commission, in a speech that suggests that decisions favorable to the victims of the dictatorship would have been excused (Turollo Jr., 2019). In September, it became public knowleged that the guidance given to the Commission was to "deny requests en masse", which in practice, occurred. Of the 80 applications considered until September 2019, 74 were denied (Coletta, 2019). In 2021, the trend continues, with around 90% of requests for reparations being denied, and, according to an article published by *El País* (Benites, 2021), members of the Federal Government aim to extinguish the Commission by 2022.

The deep changes and setbacks intensified since the beginning of the new Federal Government have not been restricted to the Amnesty Commission. Regarding the CEMDP (Special Commission on Political Deaths and Disappearances – in Brazilian Portuguese: Comissão Especial Sobre Mortos e Desaparecidos Politicos), it has also been the target of measures implemented by both the Temer and current governments. Responsible for investigating the cases of deaths and disappearances that occurred during the dictatorship and for granting economic reparations to the families of the victims, CEMDP had also been working in recent years to identify the remains of political militants persecuted by the repressive apparatus. With the arbitrary alteration of its composition (first in 2016, then in 2019), combined with the ongoing reduction of the budget allocated to the aforementioned organizations, the Bolsonaro Government, although it cannot be accused of extinguishing memory policies in the country, can be identified as responsible for their weakening, as well as for their impracticability (Gallo, 2023).

Regarding the NTC, the prospect presented is completed by the fact that most of the recommendations contained in the final report have not been implemented. Of a total of 29 recommendations made by the Commission, 22 remain only on paper, according to a survey by the Center for Transitional Justice Studies (J. Castro, 2021). Even those in which there has been some progress, in some cases, it is still quite limited. Criminal proceedings regarding the crimes of the dictatorship have been initiated, but no agents have been punished. The Amnesty Law and the National Security Law enacted by the authoritarian regime remain in force. Files regarding the repression held by the Armed Forces remain inaccessible.

Significant changes in the Brazilian political scenario since 2015, deepened in 2016 with the deposition of the President and the Temer Government, and again between 2019 and 2022, during the Bolsonaro Government, attest to the change of perspective, through the executive and its ministries, towards the theme of the memory of the dictatorship and the reparation of the victims. Added to the perception of former President Bolsonaro about the authoritarian past, the growing presence of active-duty and reserve military in positions that, in previous administrations, were occupied mostly by civilians, is a central element for understanding the direction of memory policies in the country, and not only for the deployments of the NTC. In summary, it is observed that the corporation transitioned from concession to denial, perhaps feeling supported by the changes in the political conjuncture.

Considerations

The main objective of this study was to analyze the relation established between the Armed Forces and the NTC. The intended analysis was performed in three stages. The first one, focusing on the context prior to the installation of the Commission. The second, dedicated to the period between 2012 and 2014, when it served its mandate. And the third, focused on the developments after the delivery of the Final Report produced within the framework of the Brazilian Truth Commission.

As mentioned in the introduction, although the Brazilian Armed Forces cannot be confused, institutionally, with private associations formed by reserve military personnel and/or their families, it is a fact that the positions issued, for example, by the Military Club, reverberate ideas firmly rooted in the corporation. Thus, there is no way to dissociate, precisely, what is said publicly by a private institution from what, ultimately, makes up the worldview that is shared by active-duty military.

The data analyzed here allowed to draw a scenery regarding the (tense) relations between the Armed Forces and the NTC, from which the changes in how sectors associated with the military corporation positioned themselves, either supporting or hindering the efforts of the entity responsible for addressing the issue of dictatorship memory in the country, became evident. Initially, the behavior oscillated from resistance, via the Ministry of Defense, to concession, to the extent that, trimmed "edges" in the Law Project that provided its creation, it ended up being accepted.

Between 2012 and 2014, during the Commission's mandate, the tension escalated. The Armed Forces, as a state institution, kept silent about the actions of the NTC, its commissioners and working groups established by it, collaborating within the required bureaucratic limit. They responded by reiterating the absence of archives and the absence of documents. They acted on the edge, so that their actions could not be considered as insubordination. Former agents of repression, in their turn, when summoned to testify before the members of the Commission, surprised. Either because they attended, but also, in some cases, because they verbalized what they wanted to record for public opinion. Somehow, it was through the voices of former agents of repression and the Military Club, which continuously criticized the work of the NTC, that the voice of active-duty officers who, out of duty, tried to remain impartial was indirectly heard.

The breaking point in the relation occurred, precisely, after the delivery of the Final Report and the end of the NTC's mandate, in December 2014. Criticism, more than expected, gave way,

in a short time, to denialism. Reserve and active-duty officers publicly criticized the document produced by the commissioners, questioned the veracity and impartiality of the Commission, publicly evoked ideas repeatedly disseminated at the height of the dictatorship, attacking the victims, relativizing the violations, and denying events.

As part of the "slow, gradual and safe" transition project carried out in the country between the 1970s and 1980s, the Armed Forces were preserved as actors with high veto power in the political scenario of the New Republic, being the guarantee of their impunity related to the crimes of the dictatorship one of the main prerogatives they were assured (Arturi, 2001). It is not by chance, in this sense, that even though they have adapted to the new context, and, over the years, allowed advancements such as the creation of the Ministry of Defense in 1999, the institution has always resisted in some way when the subject was the memory of the dictatorship and the issue of the validity of the amnesty (D'Araujo, 2010, 2012).

Faced with a conjuncture of successive crises such as the one that has been experienced since 2015 in the country, it is not surprising, therefore, that sectors committed to impunity, oblivion and denial of the facts that occurred between 1964 and 1985 have gained space, little by little, making it impossible to comply with the recommendations of the NTC and the continuity of the reparation measures that had been implemented. Who wins, in a situation like the one described, is easy to identify. Who loses is democracy, and all those who depend on it.

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The Right to Take Rights Away: Brazil's 1964 & 2016 Coups

Abstract

Leigh Payne's right-against-rights framework describes deliberate tactics employed by the Right Wing to undermine, attack, and destroy democracy in defence of the status quo. Working under the assertion that both Brazil's 1964 military coup and 2016 presidential impeachment were coups perpetrated by the Right Wing, this investigation serves to connect both events via this singular framework to demonstrate how they were both specifically "right-against-rights coups," analyse the fragility of Brazilian democracy in the face of the Right Wing, and discern the future of Brazil's democracy.

Keywords: democracy; coups; Right Wing; Brazil; anti-communism; rights; dictatorship

Resumo

A estrutura teórica ("framework") do right-against-rights desenvolvido por Leigh Payne descreve táticas deliberadas utilizadas pela extrema direita para minar, atacar e destruir a democracia em defesa do status quo. Partindo da premissa de que tanto o golpe militar de 1964 quanto o impeachment presidencial de 2016 no Brasil constituíram golpes perpetrados pela direita, esta investigação busca conectar ambos os eventos por meio desse framework, demonstrando como ambos se configuraram especificamente como "golpes de direita contra os direitos", analisar a fragilidade da democracia brasileira diante da atuação da direita e investigar os possíveis futuros da democracia no país.

Palavras-chave: democracia; golpe; extrema direita; Brasil; anticomunismo; direitos; ditadura

Introduction

Although they are separated by more than 52 years, both João Goulart's military overthrow and Dilma Rousseff's impeachment share many of the same actors, reasons, and actions, and ultimately, are both right-wing-led coups. Proponents of both coups hid behind anti-communism and Christian morality to roll back social and economic progress made under each leader — what Leigh Payne labels "the right against rights" (2023). Aided by a reactionary conservative media, coup plotters undermined the strength of Brazil's democracy and dealt a strong blow to the outspoken representation of the poor and marginalized. Goulart's ousting led to 21 years of military rule with little accountability for the suffering caused. Similarly, Dilma's removal saw supporters of the dictatorship, including Jair Bolsonaro, vote for her impeachment and subsequently elect him president (Jalalzai et al., 2022). In Brazil, history may not repeat itself, but it certainly rhymes.

While scholars noted similarities with Goulart's coup during Dilma's impeachment, none explicitly linked the two, let alone through any one framework. This investigation closes this analytical gap by demonstrating how both were "right-against-rights" coups, and is valuable for two reasons. First, it makes an original contribution to the literature on Brazilian history and politics, and democracy overall. Using the right-against-rights framework complicates Brazil's democratic narrative, challenges its resilience against the Right, and redefines what a coup is. In a nation that has failed to deal with the legacy of its dictatorship, challenging these narratives is crucial, as complacency and indifference towards democracy are what enable right-wing domination and destruction of democracy.

Second, as historian Ollie Johnson III wrote, studying Goulart's coup is of "contemporary importance because the authoritarian rulers that followed denied social justice to millions and failed to address poverty and social inequality in a meaningful way, which makes the struggle continue today" (2001, p. 2). The Workers' Party (PT) efforts to combat social justice issues in the 2000s were aggressively challenged by the Right in 2016, coinciding with a global rise of economically backed right-wing movements the likes many nations have not seen before—but Brazil has. Brazil's history serves as a stark warning: the protection of capital veiled as a fight for Christian morality and anti-communism continues to threaten democracy. Understanding these patterns allows scholars and the public to defend democracy before it is undone. As Adam Przeworski reminds us, 'Vigilance in defence of democracy…is a never-ending task' (2024).

This investigation will demonstrate how a legal impeachment resembles a coup, define 'the Right' and their reasons for attacking democracy in 1964 and 2016, and explain why they viewed the expansion of rights as a threat. The paper is structured into four sections: Methodology and overview of Payne's framework, existing literature on the coups, a comparative analysis of the coups through Payne's framework, and an assessment of their impact and legacy on Brazil's current political situation.

Section 1: Methodology

The Right

For this investigation, 'The Right', or right wing, in Brazil is defined by its concerns for preserving the economic interests of landowners, capital holders, and the financial elite of the country (Johnson, 2001). They have largely controlled Brazilian politics since the founding of the Republic in 1889 and have historically demonstrated broad ambivalence towards democracy when its interests were threatened. By the 1960s, having found that their electoral prospects were unfavourable and "based on the assumption that the maintenance of democracy would imperil their interest by leading to eventual power for reformists… [they] promoted a pre-emptive coup" (Johnson, 2001, p. 25).

Following the return of democracy with the 1988 constitution, and 14 years of PT rule from 2002, a more socially conservative Right emerged, exemplified by the "Beef, Bible, Bullets" caucus, headed by evangelical extremists in Congress (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 25).[1] While still economically driven, this modern Right is extremely socially conservative and actively opposes progress in areas of gender equality, LGBTQ rights, and social programs for the poor (Ansell, 2018; Payne, 2023). Ideologically, they believe rights should be earned, not univer-

sal, and thus oppose the social progress of the Left and their attempts to expand rights (Payne, 2023).

Thus, the Right can be identified as socially and economically conservative, ambivalent towards democracy, and concerned with prioritizing its own interests over those of the country at large. They are made up of many in the financial elite, upper and upper-middle classes, anti-communists, and Christian extremists.

The Right-Against-Rights

While the similarities between the coups are evident, analytically, Payne's work shows a clear thread that ties the two together. Writing primarily about the late 2000s to late 2010s, Payne defines the right-against-rights as a "collective extra-institutional and institutional mobilization to check, rollback, or reverse specific rights promoted by previously marginalized groups and communities...to restore, promote, or advance a status quo ante of traditional, political, social, economic, and cultural rights" (2023, p. 3). In other words, the right-against-rights are the ways the Right undoes the advances of others to promote their own gains and supremacy.

Payne describes six distinct tactics employed by the Right: Framing, creating moral panics by targeting specific 'villains'; Legitimating Myths, blaming enemies with lies to appeal to diverse constituencies; Leadership and Organization, involving central figures and key organizations to mobilize and support their actions/rhetoric; Double Militancy, working both within and outside political institutions to win a wide range of support; Transnational Advocacy, seeking external (international) allies; and Visibility and Disruptive Action, using protests and misinformation to gain attention and support (Payne, 2023, pp. 37–45). This framework is essential for demonstrating how both coups represent 'right-against-rights' actions.

This Investigation

The use of Payne's right-against-rights is deliberate to connect two distinct, historically significant events through one singular framework. The qualitative information gathered from primary and secondary sources through digital and archival research was filtered through this investigation's research questions for relevancy and applicability to the framework. While an investigation into this topic could theoretically be conducted through several theories and criteria, for example, analysing each president's economy as the cause of the coup, this investigation worked to identify similarities through Payne's framework. Works that identified Brazil's right wing during both time periods, that spoke of the coups as coups rather than "interventions," and that explained the interactions between the government and its adversaries through legal and extra-legal means were pivotal for this investigation. However, even sources that argued on the contrary were important and read against the grain to better understand the thinking of those who perpetrated or supported the coup.

While research on Dilma Rousseff's ousting was more abundant due to its recency, collecting information on João Goulart's presidency and the 1964 coup presented challenges due to limited digital and frequently superficial discussions, which meant a reliance on mid-to-late 20th-century printed literature. For both periods, a critical discourse analysis (Dunn & Neumann, 2016) was employed to identify the inherent biases and intentions hidden behind the words of authors and actors involved in the coups and the ways they tried to naturalize concepts that would otherwise be foreign or contradictory to observers' opinions. Recognizing that media and

other actors are not neutral (Payne, 2023; Pimentel & Marques, 2021), this approach was crucial to identify inherent biases, intentionality, and how language was used to shape perceptions and legitimize actions surrounding the coups.

Section 2: The Coups

> Bankers, industrialists, landowners, the rich and privileged, the parasites, and all those who thrive on exploitation celebrated their victory. But not the workers. They had been defeated. (Bandeira, 1977, p. 186)

At the heart of each coup was an economic crisis, exacerbated by the media and political opponents who turned the middle class against the government under the guise of Christianity and anti-communism. The Right was more concerned with protecting their interests than protecting democracy, and so facilitated and perpetrated each coup. This section will provide a brief but detailed summary of each coup to provide the necessary context for the rest of this investigation.

Goulart

When President João Goulart took office in 1961, Brazil effectively entered a state of political crisis that would proliferate until 1964 and define his presidency. First governing under a limited parliamentary system, when presidential powers were finally restored to him, the Right did everything it could to get him out of power until, on April 1st, 1964, they were successful.

A wealthy landowner from Rio Grande do Sul, João Goulart was a political protégé of Getúlio Vargas, inheriting his mentor's connection with Brazil's urban working class and becoming a powerful union ally and broker between the working class and the often-distant government (Bandeira, 1977, p. 26) Leading the Brazilian Labor Party (PTB), he transformed it into a major political force, emphasizing reform to supersede Brazil's social structure and elevate education, productivity, and consumerism (Bandeira, 1977, p. 41; Johnson, 2001). As such, he declared the PTB "a party of the left, of the masses, and a party willing to democratically transform Brazil's societal structure" (Bandeira, 1977, p. 41). This was a fundamental turning point in Goulart's political career and one that would define his approach to politics and solidify his support base, but also his opposition.

From 1955 to 1960, Goulart served as vice president to Juscelino Kubitschek of the centrist Social Democratic Party (PSD) (Bandeira, 1977, p. 35).[2] His vice-presidency was marked by engagement with labour movements and unions, and facilitating a leftward shift in Brazil's main political parties: the PTB, PSD, and the UDN (National Democratic Union). Progressive branches from the PSD and even from the right-leaning UDN emerged to form a progressive faction called the Nationalist Parliamentary Front (FPN) alongside the PTB, and their policies would become key to the reforms Goulart would attempt during his time in office (Johnson, 2001, p. 14). By the end of Kubitschek's presidency, Goulart had established himself as the central figure in the Brazilian progressive cause.

In 1960, Goulart won vice presidential re-election under Jânio Quadros, who pursued a "non-aligned" foreign policy but elsewhere didn't really break from the more capitalist-friendly politics of his predecessors (Parker, 1979, p. 12). When Quadros abruptly resigned in 1961 in a miscalculated move to garner support for constitutional reforms he wanted, Goulart, his vice

president, prepared to take over as president. However, his leftist ideology alarmed the Right and prompted Congress, on the orders of military leaders, to undemocratically alter the constitution and restructure the presidency into a weakened parliamentary system (Parker, 1979, p. 6). With this new system in place, Goulart was sworn in.

Goulart's first two years as president were spent fighting the parliamentary system and reining in the unfolding economic crisis through a three-year plan centred on his *reformas de base*, or basic reforms (Bandeira, 1977).[3] His tenure also saw growing tensions with the United States. Nationalization efforts, his continuation of non-aligned foreign policy, accusation of communist sympathies, and Kennedy's refusal to fund his economic recovery program all contributed to tense US-Brazil relations (Bandeira, 1977; Johnson, 2001; Loureiro, 2017). So, as domestic coup conspiracies grew, so did the United States' involvement.

In 1963, Goulart supporters took to the streets to demand a plebiscite to restore his presidential powers (Bandeira, 1977, p. 58). In what Goulart declared his "real election," the people voted almost unanimously to restore his presidential powers — a massive show of strength for Goulart and his policies — and emboldened him to pass his reforms (Bandeira, 1977, p. 88). For the next year, his *reformas de base* became the basis of his presidential platform and dictated much of the policy he and his congressional allies tried to pass. Among these policies were tax reform, education reform, and most significantly, agrarian reform (Loureiro, 2017). While all reforms challenged the interests of the Right, agrarian reform is what most drew opposition because of its direct attack on the elite classes of Brazil and its association with communism. It also challenged foreign business interests, especially those of American companies, who were quick to denounce Goulart as a communist land grabber (Bandeira, 1977, p. 149). Moniz Bandeira, in his work on Goulart's government and policies before the coup, writes not only about the massive support these reforms had with the public, but also the vehement opposition with which the Right defied the reforms to the very end (Bandeira, 1977).

It is against this backdrop that, in early 1964, coup conspiracies came into full bloom. Organized by the military, funded by the wealthy, propelled by the media, and aided by the Americans, the first three months of 1964 served to weaken Goulart, attempt to tarnish his image, garner support against him from the population, and then, finally, oust him (Bandeira, 1977; Johnson, 2001; Parker, 1979). In this, the Right was largely successful. Thousands from the upper middle class took to the streets to protest him in mid-March, while conservative media forces worked tirelessly to call his presidential capacities into question (Bandeira, 1977; Cestari, 2022). Members of the UDN, working with the American government, ensured that loans and foreign aid were denied, and reforms and policies blocked, choking the Brazilian economy and sending it into free fall (Bandeira, 1977; Loureiro, 2017). With the aid of the CIA, Brazilian military leaders began planning an offensive to take on Goulart and march toward Rio and then Brasilia. Thus, by late March, when military forces began marching towards Rio, there was little Goulart could do if he wanted to avoid bloodshed. As he did not want to risk civil war by staging his own intervention, Goulart fled Brasilia and then Brazil altogether (Parker, 1979). On April 1st, 1964, Congress illegally declared the presidency vacant and ushered in 21 years of repressive, harsh, anti-democratic military rule.

Dilma

President Dilma Rousseff entered Brazilian politics as a direct result of Goulart's ousting and the subsequent military dictatorship and made the fight against the Right a centrepiece of her political career.

In the mid-1970s, Dilma was arrested and tortured by the military dictatorship for her involvement with a left-wing militant opposition group (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 13). This episode forced her to take a step back from political action, and only after the dictatorship ended did she re-enter politics. First joining the centre-left PDT, she eventually joined the Workers' Party (PT) and rapidly rose through its ranks to work closely with President Luiz Ignacio Lula da Silva (Lula), positioning herself for an eventual presidential run (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, pp. 76–77).

Lula was arguably Brazil's most popular and successful president in the nation's history, leaving office with an approval rating of nearly 90% in 2012. Benefiting from a "tripod" of factors, as Peter Prengaman puts it, where "a commodities boom paid for more social inclusion, [which] fostered internal consumption," he had managed to grow Brazil's economy by nearly 4 percent every year and lift millions out of poverty (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021). Dilma joined Lula's team as his incumbent energy minister in 2001, and, despite her relative inexperience in the federal government, proved to be an important voice in his cabinet (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 77). After a corruption scandal known as the Mensalão broke out among top PT officials, including many in Lula's administration, Lula promoted Dilma to Chief of Staff in 2005 to distance himself from those affiliated with the scandal (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 15).[4] The first woman to hold this position in Brazil's history, Dilma's time as Chief of Staff gave Lula and the rest of the PT higher-ups the confidence to select her as the 2010 candidate for the presidency, which she won with a second-round victory of 56% of the votes (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 16).

Dilma's first term largely built off the PT's eight years of success. While Brazil initially weathered the 2008 financial crisis unscathed, the end of China's commodities boom by 2012 led to an economic downturn. To maintain government social programs afloat, Dilma began encroaching on Brazil's economic elite (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 53). This marked a departure from Lula's strategy, which had allowed the rich to prosper while helping the poor. Brazil's conservative economic forces had been happy to feign support for the PT so long as the country's economy continued growing and their interests left untouched (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 53). When this became unsustainable, Dilma's government intervened in sectors, pressured the financial system to reduce interest rates, and increased public investment and subsidized loans (Saad Filho, 2016). These measures alienated Brazil's financial elite, marking a critical divergence from Lula's path and weakening Dilma's support.

Conservatives initially lacked a major movement to rally against Dilma until the 2013 "Free Pass" movement. Driven by anger over infrastructure, World Cup/Olympics spending, and rising transportation costs, this initially left-wing protest, championing LGBT, indigenous rights, and an end to police brutality, was co-opted by right-wing protestors, who gradually displaced its original organizers (Ansell, 2018, pp. 314–315; Payne, 2023) Amid these evolving protests, Brazil's 2014 elections were held. Dilma, running for re-election, faced off against the centre-right Brazilian Social Democracy Party (PSDB) opposition leader Aécio Neves (Van Dijk, 2017, p. 201). Dilma won by a narrow margin, 51.64% to 48.36%, and faced immediate accusations of

electoral fraud (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 22). The courts were quick to throw out these baseless accusations, but they were a sign of things to come. Neves began fuelling outrage over the election, asking supporters to take to the streets to protest the allegedly "fraudulent" results, while others on the Right even advocated for military intervention (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 22). Despite these protests, Dilma attended her second inauguration in January 2015 with the hope she would be able to continue the job she was elected to do.

By early 2015, the original Free Pass protest movement had amalgamated into a general conservative counter-protest positioned against the Left, the PT, and especially Dilma (Ansell, 2018; Prengaman & Savarese, 2021). At the movement's core were accusations of corruption stemming from the Operation *Lava Jato* (Car Wash) investigation. The *Lava Jato*operation, led by Curitiba judge Sergio Moro, was a massive investigation looking into business executives and politicians of all political parties involved in a scheme where "top executives at multi-national construction companies like Odebrecht, OAS, Andrade Gutierez, etc. formed a cartel that decided who would get multibillion-dollar building contracts doled out at various levels of government" (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 25). Implicated in the scandal was also former president Lula, among several other high-ranking PT officials (Van Dijk, 2017, p. 201). However, never had the PT, and especially not Dilma herself, stepped in to block the investigation, nor did she ever face any corruption charges relating to *Lava Jato*— unlike the 1/3 of the Chamber of Deputies under investigation by Sergio Moro (Ansell, 2018). So, with a massive corruption scandal unfolding in the background, Aécio Neves, working with Chamber president Eduardo Cunha — who was also being investigated on corruption charges — opened impeachment proceedings against Dilma in December 2015. Ironically, the actual accusations Dilma faced had nothing to do with *Lava Jato* or infrastructure spending. Instead, she faced accusations of *pedaladas fiscais* or deceptive budgetary measures. Suggestive of the illegality of these proceedings, both former presidents Lula and Fernando Henrique Cardoso had done similar *pedaladas fiscais* and had not faced punishment (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 59).

In April 2016, the Chamber of Deputies voted overwhelmingly (367-167) to bring impeachment proceedings to the Senate (Ansell, 2018, p. 319). Notably, almost no deputies cited *pedaladas fiscais* in their speeches, instead invoking God, families, and pets, often with a jubilant and misogynistic tone, using phrases like 'tchau querida' (goodbye dear) to belittle Dilma. Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil's future far-right president, famously dedicated his vote to Dilma's torturer, Colonel Carlos Alberto Brilhante Ustra, directly linking the impeachment to the 1964 coup and thus highlighting the Right's continued effort to undermine democracy; "They lost in '64 and they lost now in 2016!" (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 139). Despite widespread protests and support from progressives, the Senate voted 55-22 to suspend Dilma, confirming her impeachment four months later in August 2016, and officially removing her from office. While his analysis of Dilma's impeachment is very neutral, Peter Prengaman asks a pivotal question about the decision to impeach Dilma: If the president had committed crimes so grave that she deserved to be removed from office, should she not also be barred from seeking other political posts? Or even jailed? (2021, p. 204). Prengaman's question perfectly captures the hypocrisy and arbitrariness of Dilma's removal. Like Goulart, Dilma was a victim of right-wing political persecution for challenging the interests of the Right, who, as punishment, attacked democracy to protect their interests.

The following section will dive into the details of the coups and their conspirators and explicitly demonstrate how these coups constitute right-against-rights coups.

Section 3: Tactics of the Right

> On the impact of the religious appeal and anti-communist propaganda, promoted by the reactionary media, considerable sects of the middle class, punished by high inflation, moved to the right and aided the anti-government fight. (Bandeira, 1977, p. 166)

Framing: Moral Panic and Anti-Communism

Framing is one of the most important tactics used by the Right Wing in its fight against rights. At its core, this tactic is used to create moral and/or national panic, targeting perceived 'villains' with extreme language, often through sexism, racism, or homophobia (Payne, 2023, p. 38). This panic is then co-opted to justify undemocratic actions and reduce disapproval of coups. This is an abundantly clear tactic in the case of both Goulart and Dilma, and in very similar ways. The Right framed both leaders' governments and persons as being morally corrupt and failing the country because of communist tendencies/sympathies, their radical ideals, and inept leadership. Furthermore, in the case of Dilma, the Right took further liberties to attack her gender. This was an especially effective tactic against her because they were able to play into misogynistic stereotypes already present against female leaders (Jalalzai et al., 2022). Thus, with both presidents, the Right framed their struggle as one against powerful negative forces threatening the very way of life of the nation.

Members of the media portrayed Goulart as a weak ruler and a puppet of the unions who were using him to undermine the Brazilian state (Cestari, 2022, p. 303). Foreign governments, especially the United States, further contributed to this image: the US ambassador to Brazil, Lincoln Gordon, believed Goulart to be "incompetent" and relayed this information to the American president and members of the State Department (Parker, 1979, p. 11). This portrayal of Goulart as incompetent has been refuted by scholars like Bandeira and Johnson, who have instead labeled him as "pragmatic" and an "experienced progressive politician, well-prepared to lead" (Bandeira, 1977, p. 43; Johnson, 2001, p. 4). His alleged radicalism, stemming from his staunch support of his *reformas de base*, was a deliberate mischaracterization by his political enemies who wanted to undermine his popular reform program, which directly challenged elite control of the economy (Johnson, 2001, pp. 4–6). His alleged radical nature relates to his "communist beliefs." Often working in tandem, the Right used his "radical" persona to frame his presidency as one working to create a syndicalist revolution that would harm Brazilians and transform the nation into a Soviet puppet state (Bandeira, 1977, p. 33). While most Brazilians supported his *reformas de base*, the Right was able to convince many that the reforms that threatened them—land and tax reform—also threatened the everyday Brazilian. They framed what was an opportunity for greater equality and democracy as a national threat, legitimizing the need for military takeover. This anti-reformist campaign was so effective that in 2016, the same exact language and attacks were used.

Dilma, like her predecessor, was portrayed as a "communist radical" threatening to mount a "Soviet style" takeover of Brazil (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 109). The extent to which Dilma's opponents truly believed in the threat of her alleged communist tendencies is debatable,

but what is not debatable is the efficacy of this rhetoric (Ansell, 2018; Prengaman & Savarese, 2021; Van Dijk, 2017). Like with Goulart, these attacks were used to frame her as the villain of a national crisis that only opponents could resolve — even through military intervention — but the most significant use of framing against Dilma targeted her gender. Female leaders disproportionately face more hateful scrutiny than male leaders, especially regarding corruption (Jalalzai et al., 2022, p. 2). Dilma endured violent misogynistic attacks, including rumours, perpetuated by the media, of her secret lesbianism, having nervous explosions, and emotional instability, while others used violent gendered imagery to "protest" her (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021; Sattler, 2023). Ultimately, her removal came not from any actual crimes but from a fabricated moral failing of the country (Ansell, 2018; Pimentel & Marques, 2021). The rhetoric from politicians, media, and protestors alike was religious, nationalist, and anti-leftist, but never legal or constitutionalist. Legislator's post-impeachment speeches said nothing about her alleged crimes but, instead, "justified their votes in religiously inflected moral rhetoric, citing 'God' and 'Family' " framing her ousting as a moral necessity to curtail PT's progressive achievements (Ansell, 2018, p. 320).

Legitimating Myths: Military Nostalgia and Fracturing Support

Legitimating myth tactic sought to provide a rhetorical alternative to the current government only the Right could deliver. Dilma and Goulart represented symptoms of a failing system which, under previous right-wing rule, had not existed. The Right fabricated the necessity for a coup and invoked an idyllic past while creating divides in progressive movements and weakening the Left's support, making the Right seem strong and united.

This tactic is especially interesting to analyse in Brazil because of how rhetorically interconnected both coups are. Dilma's ousters directly reference the military past that followed Goulart's ousting as the idyllic one to return to (Chavarro et al., 2016). Bolsonaro's pro-dictatorship remark during the impeachment proceedings aside, several protestors and politicians actively called for military intervention and, more directly, the *return* of military rule (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021). Additionally, the justification for ousting the two leaders based on a communist threat is equally pervasive. Under Goulart, the Right referenced a coup that occurred under Getúlio Vargas in the mid-1930s against an alleged imminent communist takeover, which led to an eight-year dictatorship (Bevins, 2022). In the 1960s, they claimed Goulart had to be removed to avoid a similar, imminent communist threat, which again did not exist (Parker, 1979, p. 58). Likewise, Dilma's removal and calls for the return of military rule were fuelled by another "communist threat" (Ansell, 2018, p. 316). These calls for a return to military rule are important in understanding how these two coups constitute right-against-rights coups because they directly correlate to Payne's framework and the importance of rhetoric in staging these coups. As this paper has repeatedly emphasized, convincing large swaths of the population to support an action that contradicts their interests is crucial to these movements. Despite widespread historical agreement on the benefits of Goulart's reforms, the Right successfully fabricated a scenario to justify an extremely anti-democratic shift that favoured the few (Bandeira, 1977; Johnson, 2001; Loureiro et al., 2015).

Rhetoric, however, is not sufficient to oust a president, so while the creation of this image is necessary, it must also be accompanied by more tangible actions. This is where the creation of divides among progressive factions becomes important. Under Goulart, the Right propped

up several CIA and privately funded right-leaning think tanks and organizations to change public opinion and foster support for right-wing causes (Bandeira, 1977; Cestari, 2022). Many groups attempted to infiltrate typically left-wing circles like universities, peasant groups, and unions to weaken Goulart's support. Many organizations used anti-communist rhetoric to urge these groups to denounce Goulart, but they were mostly unsuccessful (Bandeira, 1977, p. 124). Nevertheless, the existence of this internal countermovement demonstrates the extent to which the Right had been able to spread its influence and how powerful, having the CIA fund these groups, the Right was.

Against Dilma, the Right was more successful at creating divisions among supporters as, by this point, the Right's efforts in splitting supporters had become a key component in their anti-progressive efforts (Corredor, 2019; Payne, 2023). As the Free Pass movement demonstrated, dissatisfaction from the Left toward the government already existed in a tangible form. However, by co-opting the movement, the Right excluded the original left-wing protestors and maintained the façade of the protest being a unified anti-Dilma movement. Furthermore, via more traditional political avenues, the Right successfully split many Brazilians, including those on the Left, on social issues like abortion, homosexuality, and gender, simultaneously attacking Dilma's platform and positioning her as more radical (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021; Van Dijk, 2017). Thus, powerful rhetorical attacks and imagery, partnered with the fracturing of traditional support bases, allowed the Right to infiltrate, weaken, and antagonize both governments, not only facilitating their removals but also justifying it.

Organization: Globo and Journalistic Manipulation

Leadership plays an important role in staging a right-against-rights coup, but perhaps not as important as the organizational forces that worked behind the scenes to solidify their efforts (Payne, 2023). Figures like Jair Bolsonaro and Sergio Moro or Carlos Lacerda and Castelo Branco were important for each coup, but the media, the "movement entrepreneurs," as Payne labels them, played an especially pivotal role in legitimizing both coups, downplaying accusations of a coup, and creating discontent among the public (Payne, 2023, p. 43; Pimentel & Marques, 2021, p. 277). As such, this section explores the media's crucial organizational and legitimizing role in the coups.

Several of the same newspapers that supported the military coup against Goulart actively supported removing Dilma in 2016 (NPC, 2017). No media company, however, was more involved in both coups than Globo. Globo is Brazil's largest and most viewed media company and has by far the most sway on public opinion (Van Dijk, 2017, p. 204). Following the coup in 1964, they established the Jornal Nacional, a nightly news program that effectively became the dictatorship's mouthpiece and has remained the nation's most viewed news program to this day (Memórias da Ditadura, 2024). This same Jornal Nacional was responsible for blasting Dilma throughout her presidency, blaming her for the country's deteriorating economic, moral, and social state (Van Dijk, 2017). Pimentel and Marques, citing scholars like Cook (2011), Firmstone (2008), and Pérez-Liñan, demonstrate that media organizations, especially in Latin America, function as strategic political actors with deliberate motives (Pimentel & Marques, 2021). The media profoundly shapes political agendas, rather than simply reporting on them, and rarely ever act as independent entities.

Within this understanding, Pimentel and Marques argue that Globo intentionally deconstructed narratives of Dilma's impeachment being a coup during her removal (2021). In 2016 40 of Globo's 49 editorials attempted to refute coup claims, associating the word "coup" with terms like "farse" and "propaganda," while framing the impeachment as an economic necessity (Pimentel & Marques, 2021, p. 285). Van Dijk similarly argues that Globo, representing the conservative middle class and "right wing oligarchy", had spent years fighting so that the "PT [did] not win" and that one of its main strategies was emphasizing the legitimacy and constitutionality of the impeachment (2017, pp. 200–204). Therefore, if the media simultaneously was denouncing claims of a coup while propagating the legitimacy of the impeachment, then Globo, and the rest of the conservative media conglomerates in Brazil were manipulating viewers and readers against the government. This claim is further substantiated by Globo's publication titles. Van Dijk shows that 45 of the 60 main front page Globo headlines of March and April 2016 were about Dilma, Lula, PT, or impeachment, and that these articles contained biased or false assertions and presuppositions in ways that readers could not or would not readily check (Van Dijk, 2017, pp. 210–212). Globo's coverage of the *Lava Jato* investigation was massively disproportionate when it concerned Dilma compared to the rest of the investigation; This intentional bias served to exaggerate public discontent and Dilma's alleged corruption, while minimizing her support, thus ensuring public condemnation (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021).

Van Dijk concludes her argument by suggesting that "the very notion of the impeachment being a coup provoked furious reactions from Globo, because it also reminds readers of Globo's association with the coup and military dictatorship of 1964" (2017). Globo was one of the first newspapers to come out announcing the victory over Goulart on April 2nd (O Globo, n.d.). The days that followed, headlines celebrated the "Resurgence of Democracy," the "Hope of the Military," and plans for "Decommunizing the Nation" (O Globo, n.d.). They were not the only media company that aided in ousting Goulart, however.

Larissa Cestari's work explores a "counter-newspaper" called *Notícias Populares* (Popular News) that was specifically created to oppose the PTB and Goulart's government (Cestari, 2022, p. 297). Its two principal goals were to take away readers from the more left-leaning, widely read *Útlima Hora* (Latest Hour) newspaper, and, second, to "depoliticize" the working class (2022, p. 295). As Pimentel and Marques demonstrate, the media plays an important role in shaping political agendas and facilitating the diffusion of certain ideas; *Notícias Populares* wanted to restrict the working class's access to political information to limit the PTB and Goulart's growing support (Cestari, 2022, p. 305). The Right, fearing the growing expansion of democracy, used *Notícias Populares* to "dumb down" the newspaper scene and include only "sex, crime, and sports," using political mentions only to denounce the "communists and amoral activities" of the Goulart regime and promote the political campaigns of those on the Right, especially Carlos Lacerda (Cestari, 2022, p. 312). When the coup ousted Goulart, *Notícias Populares'* owner Herbert Levy lost all interest in the newspaper and let it fade into relative obscurity, his job having been done.

The examples of both Globo and *Notícias Populares* show the anti-politics or negative partisanship the Right constructs when fighting their opponents; their opposition to allowing free and fair discussions and conversations to occur; and how they use the media to hide their intentions while attacking the Left.[5] The media will always be political, but the way that the Right

has monopolized the Brazilian media shows the limitations of Brazil's democracy both in 1964 and in 2016 and explains how they were able to co-opt so much public support.

Transnational Advocacy: The CIA, the USA, and Think Tanks

In a right-against-rights coup, the Right builds far-reaching networks to amplify their demands and garner international support from like-minded billionaires, governments, think tanks, or other organizations (Payne, 2023, p. 44). Against Goulart, this was important because of the American government's desire to remove him and the CIA's support of the Brazilian Right. Dilma's removal was aided by right-wing think tanks and the Right's online media presence, which helped intensify dissatisfaction and weaken her support (Ansell, 2018, pp. 315–316). The goal for members of these transnational actors was to protect their interests and capital invested in Brazil, as well as to provide more straightforward ideological support.

The largest protest held against Goulart, the "March for Family, with God, For Liberty," was organized by right-wing groups directly funded by the CIA and were intellectually aligned with the most extreme American Cold War hawks (Bandeira, 1977, p. 166). Similarly, between 2014 and 2016, many anti-Dilma protest groups received resources and intellectual support from US-based organizations like "The Atlas Network," a right-wing think tank (Ansell, 2018, p. 315). The Atlas Network created hundreds of grants across Latin America to support right-wing groups and was an adamant supporter of the Free Brazil Movement, one of the many right-wing online movements in Brazil at the time (Ansell, 2018, p. 315). They used anti-leftist, anti-PT, and anti-Dilma narratives online and frequently invoked authoritarian messaging and calls for military coups (Ansell, 2018; Payne, 2023). The Atlas Network's support was critical to fund and expand the Free Brazil Movement's reach and message.

The United States' role in 1964 goes beyond funding protest groups, however. Bandeira claims that the US had installed over 5000 Green Berets in the northeast of the country, both to help feed information to the military from the ground as well as to prepare for any potential invasion to oust Goulart by force (1977, p. 138). Millions were spent on city to gubernatorial campaigns to weaken the PTB and Goulart, with a key target being Leonel Brizola, governor of Rio Grande do Sul and a strong ally of Goulart who had nationalized an American company (Bandeira, 1977; Parker, 1979). Finally, the only reason the US did not put boots on the ground to remove Goulart was that they did not need to (Parker, 1979, p. 104). They were fully ready to send a small army to invade Brazil, had already provided intelligence and logistics to the Brazilian military, and had been actively cutting loans and credit so Goulart's economy would be severely weakened (Parker, 1979). This dominating alliance with the Brazilian Right remained strong throughout the military dictatorship and continues today.

Double Militancy: Disruptive Action, Protestors, and Politicians

Payne distinguishes between what she labels "double militancy" and "visibility and disruptive action" as two distinct tactics in the right-against-rights (Payne, 2023, pp. 43–45).[6] Ultimately, this distinction is unnecessary. Double militancy involves a mixture of standard institutional tactics, like working with like-minded political partners, lobbying, or campaigning/running for political office, with an engagement in extra-institutional actions like disruptive street mobilizations (Payne, 2023, p. 43). Therefore, combining the two tactics allows for a more comprehensive

explanation of how the Right uses both institutional and extra-institutional manoeuvres to challenge rights and oust leaders.

While seemingly contradictory, double militancy allows for a war of two fronts to be waged: a public, media-captured popular revolt against the government and "the system," and another, private but tactical one through "the system" itself. This contradiction is clear in both Dilma's and Goulart's coup, where street protestors were adamantly anti-government and attacked the nation's democratic institutions, but also had as primary supporters and proponents of the coup the very lawmakers and politicians they claimed to oppose. Both coups thus exemplify the middle ground on the double militancy spectrum.

Disruptive Action

The co-opted Free Pass Movement in 2015 and 2016, and the "March for Family, with God, For Liberty" which numbered more than 200,000 mostly women protesting the Goulart government, are the strongest examples of Payne's disruptive action (Ansell, 2018; Bandeira, 1977; Payne, 2023). In both instances, hundreds of thousands of protestors took to the streets with signs and chants that demonstrated their anger towards the government, their moral opposition to the leaders, and the need for a change in government (Parker, 1979; Prengaman & Savarese, 2021). Part of the efficacy of the anti-Goulart marches was the crowd itself. The marches, led primarily by women of the middle and upper classes, deliberately showcased elite dissatisfaction with the government (Parker, 1979, p. 63). Banners were explicitly anti-communist and pro-Christianity, warning about Brazil becoming "another Cuba," while also pleading for the return of a "Christian government" (Parker, 1979, p. 63). This framing deliberately positioned the coup as a moral and legal necessity, portraying Goulart as the source of the nation's troubles, and the "everyday women" marching gave the protests the façade of a popular revolt. The anti-Dilma protests follow a similar pattern.

Clad in green and yellow, protestors, again primarily from the middle and upper classes, took to the streets of Brazil's major cities in opposition to Dilma's government, corruption, and presidency specifically (Ansell, 2018, p. 317). Even though much of the Chamber of Deputies was under investigation for corruption charges, Dilma was singled out as the centre of an ambiguous "corruption" she seemed to embody. Protestors, mirroring the media, exhibited the "negative partisanship" that had plagued Brazil by this point, not calling for any specific, democratic change, but simply Dilma and the PT's ousting (Ansell, 2018, p. 326). Blow-up dolls of her and Lula in prison clothing were floated down Avenida Paulista, big crosses were held by Evangelical protestors in the crowds, and Globo televised it all (Van Dijk, 2017, p. 203). All this noise gave the feeling that the entirety of Brazil was against her, drowning out the counterprotests the Left held, and preparing the country for what seemed like the only natural next step: removing Dilma. However, as Bandeira wrote of 1964, these protests featured the "obviously limited participation of the lower classes" (1977, p. 185). The poor and marginalized, like in 1964, seeing their rights publicly and celebratorily being stripped away, did not join the waves of green and yellow.

Institutional Effort

The impeachment votes conducted by Congress, as well as the *Lava Jato* investigation carried out by Sergio Moro, represent the institutional efforts carried out against Dilma, while the po-

litical and economic friction intentionally created by Lacerda and the UDN demonstrate the institutional work carried out against Goulart.

Dilma's removal —a parliamentary or constitutionalist coup — highlighted the effective, tactical use of "legalist" means to remove her by politicians (Pitts et al., 2016). Congress granted itself full authority to condemn Dilma for the crimes they claimed she committed, both legal and moral (Ansell, 2018; Prengaman & Savarese, 2021). Eduardo Cunha, president of the Chamber of Deputies, was committed to removing Dilma because of the several corruption charges he faced and wished would go away with her (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 27). Far-right politicians wanted her removed because of her commitment to the PT's social programs as well as gender and LGBTQ rights. And Sergio Moro, leader of the *Lava Jato* investigation, wanted her removed because of his commitment to the anti-PT cause, like many other traditional right-wingers (Van Dijk, 2017, p. 201). These various right-wing forces joined together to push through the "impeachment" legislation, garner public support for it, manufacture legal justifications, and swiftly oust her.

Government insiders also destabilized Goulart's administration. Carlos Lacerda, UDN leader and vehement Goulart opposer, worked tirelessly to stagnate Goulart's government from within. He and the UDN were the primary opposition to all of Goulart's *reformas de base*, making it so that none of banking regulation, administrative reform, tax reform, agrarian reform, and constitutional reform ever passed (Johnson, 2001, p. 101). They not only blocked these reforms but also generated economic instability, rejecting several of Goulart's economic recovery plans. This effort was strengthened by JFK and LBJ rejecting Goulart's request for financial aid (Loureiro, 2017). The UDN successfully fabricated the idea that Goulart's government was inefficient and harmful and advocated for his removal. This was especially tactical because those hurt by economic stagnation were the middle and upper classes, the strongest supporters of the coup. Lacerda and the UDN embraced the military coup, confirming their anti-democratic convictions and "selective support for civilian rule," and tactically using the government to oust the president (Johnson, 2001, p. 112).

Section 4: Conclusion

A right-against-rights coup occurs when the Right successfully removes a democratically elected leader to protect its own interests at the expense of the poor, marginalized, and democracy itself. This investigation demonstrated that João Goulart's 1964 removal is a right-against-rights coup, not simply a military coup, because he was illegally ousted for attempting progressive, redistributive reform that directly challenged the Right's interests. Similarly, Dilma Rousseff's 2016 ousting is a right-against-rights coup, not an impeachment, not only because she was removed without being charged with a crime, but specifically because her "impeachment" was spurred by her attempts at protecting social programs and the advancement of the rights of the marginalized. While both presidencies had their challenges, their illegal removals, driven by the Right's desire to "restore, promote or advance a status quo ante of traditional, political, social, economic, and cultural rights," fundamentally undermined democracy. And if democracy is no longer present, the culprits of its removal must be named — in this case, the Right.

This investigation employed Payne's right-against-rights tactics to show how the Right staged each coup in Brazil. Through Framing and Legitimating Myths, the Right fabricated negative images of both Goulart and Dilma, positioning themselves as the only alternative

to the presidencies and ultimately, democracy. Organization, particularly through media, played the key role of legitimizing both coups and promoting a one-sided perspective. Transnational Advocacy allowed the coups to garner international support, funding, and legitimacy, especially with CIA involvement in removing Goulart. Finally, Double Militancy enabled a two-front war where anti-government street mobilizations were supported by the very government they claimed to oppose. These tactics definitively illustrate how both presidents suffered a right-against-rights coup.

Did the Right achieve their goals by ousting the presidents then? Goulart ran on a platform of major reforms aimed at greater equity and expanding Brazil's democracy. Dilma sought to continue the work carried out by the PT, lifting millions out of extreme poverty and advancing social rights for the marginalized. Neither president was able to fulfil their goals, and the reaction following their ousting was an aggressive undoing of these policies and reforms. The military dictatorship cemented the inequities Goulart tried to tackle and halted any attempt at further progress. In 2018, Bolsonaro effectively returned the military to the presidency and began a campaign to strip away the rights of the many. Therefore, the answer to this question is a definitive yes. Brazilian politics has historically always been elitist, and unfortunately, it largely remains so to this day (Johnson, 2001, p. 15).

The legacy of these coups continues to shape a complex outlook for 2025. Lula's narrow reelection campaign in 2022 seemed to signal a return of PT politics. However, an insurrection similar to that of the United States in 2021 took place on January 8th, 2023, in Brasilia, later revealed to be part of a broader unsuccessful coup plot put in place by former president Bolsonaro allies, which included the assassination of Lula, his vice-president, Geraldo Alckmin, and the head of Brazil's Supreme Court, Alexandre de Moraes (Al Jazeera, 2025). Nearing the end of 2025, Bolsonaro is heading to prison for his crimes, yet the Brazilian Right remains committed as ever to his ideals and hateful politics. Simultaneously, the Chamber of Deputies has become dominated by the Right and passed increasingly right-wing legislation (Sales, 2025). Furthermore, the judiciary branch's power has steadily grown in recent years and, with the growing power of the Chamber of Deputies, seems to threaten the very authority of the presidency, reminiscent of the situation Goulart found himself in when he first took office.

Thus, 2025 paints an interesting picture. While a coup attempt was thwarted, and its proponents heading to jail, the power of Brazil's government seems to be increasingly moving away from the president and into the hands of Brazil's Congress, which remains heavily right-leaning and unwilling to make the reforms the nation has been attempting since the 1960s. If Goulart and Dilma's coups' legacy served to warn Brazil of the threat of the Right's anti-democratic intentions, then it appears the country has not learned from its past. But if the coups serve to help prevent future direct attacks on democracy, then perhaps something has been learned, if only just.

Leigh Payne's right-against-rights framework describes deliberate tactics employed by the Right Wing to undermine, attack, and destroy democracy in defence of the status quo. Working under the assertion that both Brazil's 1964 military coup and 2016 presidential impeachment were coups perpetrated by the Right Wing, this investigation serves to connect both events via this singular framework to demonstrate how they were both specifically "right-against-rights coups," analyse the fragility of Brazilian democracy in the face of the Right Wing, and discern the future of Brazil's democracy.

[1] The "BBB" is made up of evangelical politicians (Bible), politicians who defend gun rights (Bullet), and politicians who defend the interests of agriculturalists/landowners (Bull). They are among the most conservative politicians in Brazil's congress (Pessoa Cavalcanti, 2023)

[2] At the time, Brazilians could elect presidents and vice presidents from different tickets, and Goulart was elected with more votes than Kubitschek (Bandeira, 1977, p. 35).

[3] Devised by famed economist Celso Furtado, the plan sought to decrease rising levels of inflation and reverse external disequilibria without compromising growth through foreign aid, especially from the US. It also defended the need for structural reforms, particularly land and tax reforms, to tackle Brazil's deep-rooted poverty and income inequality (Loureiro, 2017, p. 62)

[4] The Mensalão scandal was an unconventional corruption scandal where opposition members in the Chamber of Deputies would receive payments from state-owned companies to help pass legislation supported by the PT, much of which became the celebrated cornerstones of the Lula administration (Prengaman & Savarese, 2021, p. 113)

[5] Political behavior characterized less by support for one's own party than by intensifying antipathy to one's perceived opponents (Pierson, 2017, p. 109).

[6] Taking to the streets to protest with provocative signs and slogans to challenge the "political elite" and represent the "popular sector." Unconventional street politics also capture media attention (Payne, 2023, p. 45).

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Glass Ceilings in the State: Gender and Discretionary Appointments in Brazil's Federal Bureaucracy

Abstract

This study investigates the intersection of gender and political affiliation in Brazil's federal bureaucracy, focusing on discretionary appointments to high-level positions within ministerial departments. Drawing on data from the SIAPE system (1999–2018) and employing logistic regression models, it analyses the influence of gender, race, partisan affiliation, ties to the public sector, and education on appointments to levels 5, 6, and 7. The findings reveal that gender and political affiliation are pivotal factors: women are significantly underrepresented at higher hierarchical levels, with their likelihood of appointment decreasing at levels 6 and 7. Conversely, partisan affiliation increases the probability of securing these positions, underscoring the enduring role of political patronage in Brazil's coalition presidential system. The study highlights the dual challenges of gender bias and political opportunism in achieving equitable representation in public administration. While the presence of women in level 5 roles has increased, their progression to higher positions remains constrained by structural and cultural barriers. This research contributes to the discourse on representative bureaucracy by providing empirical evidence on the gendered dynamics of political appointments. It advocates for policies to address these disparities, including transparent selection processes and measures promoting gender equality, ultimately enriching governance and policymaking in Brazil.

Keywords: gender; political appointments; public bureaucracy; Brazil; policymaking

Introduction

Political power has been historically concentrated in the hands of men, with most nations led by male political figures. However, the dynamics of policymaking deserves a more nuanced examination. While numerous studies have explored the barriers faced by women in the private sector and electoral politics (e.g., Hessami & Fonseca, 2020; Purcell et al., 2010; Taparia & Lenka, 2022), research addressing similar challenges within the public sector remains relatively limited.

Given that bureaucrats play a pivotal role in policy design and implementation, understanding the composition of the leading bureaucratic body is essential for assessing both the constraints and opportunities of representative democracy. In this sense, representative bureaucracy theories state that public bureaucracy should mirror the population's socioeconomic characteristics to promote equitable and responsive public policies (Kennedy et al., 2025). Therefore, understanding the barriers women face in advancing within the public sector is essential for developing more equitable gender policies.

This article presents the findings of an unprecedented statistical study analysing the gender composition of the central government bureaucracy in Brazil. Brazil's federal civil service system is hybrid, with positions filled through both competitive public examinations and discretionary political appointments. Drawing on institutional theories, most studies on the Brazilian federal system examine the role of political parties in appointing individuals to these discretionary high-ranking roles. These studies suggest that the President of the Republic strategically allocates these appointments in exchange for political support, reinforcing the patronage dynamics that characterise the country's governance structure (Lopez & Silva, 2019).

Hence, existing studies on discretionary appointments primarily focus on the role of political parties, often overlooking other factors that influence the likelihood of appointment to high-level bureaucratic positions. Meanwhile, research on women's access to leadership roles has predominantly centred on the private sector. This study seeks to bridge this gap by analysing the composition of Brazil's central government bureaucracy, quantitatively estimating the impact of gender on the odds of being appointed to the highest posts.

This article advances the field by employing inferential statistical methods to assess the impact of multiple factors on political appointments, offering novel insights and suggesting new directions for future research. Using data from the Brazilian public bureaucracy's human resources system (SIAPE, 1999–2018), I applied probit and logit models to estimate the effects of gender on appointments to the highest positions within the federal bureaucracy, also comparing Dilma Rousseff (2011), the only female president Brazil had, and Michel Temer (2016 and 2018) administrations. In addition to verifying correlation between gender and appointment, the models also tested if having a woman as the president of Brazil resulted in more women holding high-echelon posts.

This is the first large-scale quantitative study to systematically examine the impacts of gender in the Brazilian public bureaucracy. The statistical analysis revealed that gender is as influential as partisan affiliation in determining appointments to these roles, but having a female Chief Executive does not necessarily translate into increased female representation at the top levels of government. These findings underscore the need for further research to examine the barriers and opportunities women face in advancing within the public bureaucracy, ultimately contributing to a more representative bureaucracy.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. The next section presents a narrative literature review, synthesising the literature on representative bureaucracy and discretionary appointments in Brazil. The subsequent section, "Data and Methods," outlines the methodological approach and research design, detailing the procedures employed in the analysis. The results section presents the findings derived from the regression models, supplemented by additional empirical evidence. Finally, the conclusion summarises the key insights and proposes future directions for advancing the research agenda on gender and the public bureaucracy.

Literature Review

Gender Dynamics and Representative Bureaucracy

The concept of representation in the social sciences lacks a single, universally accepted definition. However, a broad and widely recognised interpretation associates representation with the act of "acting on behalf of someone." In her seminal work, Pitkin (1967) distinguishes be-

tween different forms of representation, including substantive representation and descriptive representation. Substantive representation occurs when a representative advocates for the interests and needs of their constituents, whereas descriptive representation refers to a demographic resemblance between representatives and those they represent (Pitkin, 1967). This distinction has been extensively applied in gender studies, which often discuss if increasing the number of women in leadership and decision-making positions will enhance the alignment between public policies and women's preferences or empower women (Hinojosa, 2021; Mendelberg et al., 2014).

Similarly to the concept of "descriptive representation", representative bureaucracy theories state that the composition of the public bureaucracy should mirror the demographic and social characteristics of the population. Passive representation refers to the extent to which the public bureaucracy reflects the demographic composition of society, whereas active representation occurs when the social groups that bureaucrats passively represent actually benefit from the policies they help design or implement (Kennedy et al., 2025). Although passive representation does not translate necessarily into active representation, identity is a key component in this field. Gender identity, in particular, is an important component of policy outcomes. As a sociological term, gender comprises social relations implying an unbalance of power in which men get social, economic or political benefits (Kennedy et al., 2020).

The ideal of masculinity – a series of traits related to "being a man" – was historically institutionalised as the correct way to act in public organisations (Kennedy et al., 2020). Not surprisingly, political institutions are often dominated by men. The United States, one of the most important liberal democracies, have never had a female president. In Brazil, Dilma Rousseff was the only female president, and she was impeached in 2016 in a dubious process full of misogynist manifestations. Likewise, the high-echelon posts in the Brazilian public bureaucracy are dominated by men, with a few exceptions in specific policy domains – most of them related to social care or less prioritised areas (D'Araújo & Ribeiro, 2018).

Masculinity continued to be the "dominant and invisible ideology of public administration" (Kennedy et al., 2020, p. 1107). Whereas the first studies of representative bureaucracy focused on socioeconomic elements and class, gender and race became increasingly relevant in this field (Kennedy et al., 2025). Gender is one of the broad demographic terms that define "identity", the core element of descriptive representation and studies on representative bureaucracy. However, data collection is still a major challenge, as most studies use quantitative data and techniques largely based on surveys or census in which individuals check off boxes identifying themselves by the binary definition of sex – female or male (Kennedy et al., 2020).

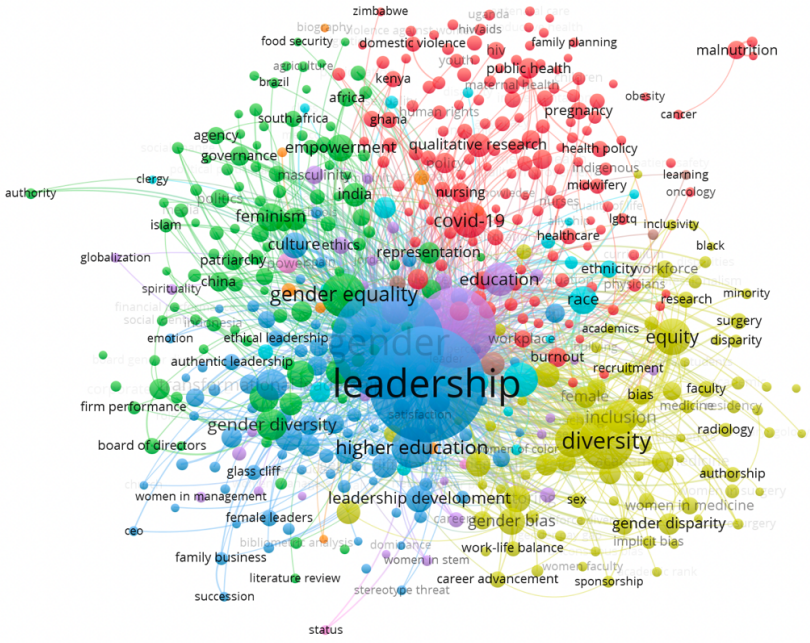
Moreover, these studies focus predominantly on the United States or European countries. Despite the relevance of the gender inequalities in Brazil, there are few empirical studies that analyse gender-related data within the public bureaucracy. Most existing research on gender in Brazil tends to focus on the private sector or politically elected positions, often overlooking non-elected roles such as government officials. Most gender studies focus on the private sector, addressing the "glass ceiling", the unofficial barriers for women to advance their professions (Purcell et al., 2010). The glass ceiling is intrinsically related to the private sector, as studies

on gender in public organisations are still scarce (Caceres-Rodriguez, 2011) compared to the private sector[1].

Figure 1 illustrates the field through a network map of keywords. Using the keywords 'gender' and 'leadership', I downloaded the metadata of 18,676 publications from 2000 to 2025. The lines measure the force of links between keywords and the circles the occurrence. Words such as "firms" and "business" are part of clusters, whereas there is no mention to public administration or civil service. Most keywords related to representation refer to the private sector, such as "board of directors", "family business", and "firm performance". Keywords related to the public sector refer to public health or politics.

Figure 1

Network map (co-occurrence of keywords)



Note. Source: metadata from Scopus. Network map made via VOSviewer. Co-occurrence = 15.

Studies on gender usually give more emphasis to managerial positions in the private sector or electoral institutions and actors, such as parliaments and candidates. There are less studies focused on gender inequalities related to government officers. Empirical studies on the public bureaucracy, which examine how public posts are filled, focus on other variables that might affect the likelihood to be appointed to high-level positions in the public bureaucracy, which refers to non-elected government officers. Women's access to leadership positions in public bureaucracies—specifically non-elected roles—remains underexplored in this literature compared to the private sector.

[1]I conducted a search on Scopus using two keyword combinations: (1) "glass ceiling" AND ("public sector" OR "public administration" OR "public office"), and (2) "glass ceiling" AND ("companies" OR "private sector" OR "firms"). The first search returned 64 publications, whereas the second yielded 252. When searching for "female" and "leadership", the network maps helped to identify connections among keywords, which were predominantly associated with the private sector, as discussed above.

Women's leadership in public bureaucracy is essential for analysing representation, as bureaucrats play a pivotal role in policy design and implementation. Representative bureaucracy, therefore, posits that greater identity congruence between bureaucrats and citizens enhances policy effectiveness and public trust. It assumes that a more diverse bureaucracy, reflecting the social composition of the population, can lead to more equitable and responsive governance (Kennedy et al., 2020). Thus, the role of gender in public administration has still much to advance in studies on gender, public policy, and representation.

Discretionary Appointments in Brazil

The Brazilian political system is described as a "coalition presidentialism," a term that reflects its distinctive institutional framework, which combines a multi-party system, federalism, and a presidential form of government. This unique configuration leads to intricate negotiations between the president and multiple political parties, shaping governance through complex bargaining dynamics (Abranches, 1988, 2018). Governability is only possible if the president negotiates with parties with diverse ideologies. In this context, public offices are considered a currency for the president to buy political support from political parties (Perlin & Santos, 2019).

Regarding its civil service, Brazil has a hybrid system in which most positions are held by career civil servants recruited via competitive public examinations. However, managerial posts are primarily discretionary, which means that the president or the minister has the formal authority to appoint anyone. Most of these discretionary posts (called 'DAS', an abbreviation for direction and superior management in Portuguese) were historically held by career civil servants. Until 2021[2], there were six official managerial positions, the sixth being the highest among the bureaucrats, usually the heads of the secretariats and departments[3]. The database used in this study has an extra level (7), which sits above this formal hierarchy.

There is a solid and expanding body of research that examines the factors influencing the appointment of individuals to high-echelon positions within the public bureaucracy in several countries or regions. Considering the coalition presidentialism in Brazil, most national studies focus on the role of political parties in appointing individuals in exchange to supporting the president. The main independent variable in these studies is partisan affiliation. "Politization" or "bureaucratic partisanship" are often estimated through the number of partisans appointed to discretionary posts. Other variables, such as gender and race, remain underexplored in this literature, largely due to the predominant focus on specific organisations and rules, particularly political parties and electoral systems (Albrecht, 2023, 2024).

Empirically, most studies address the role of political parties by investigating high-level officers' partisan affiliations (Borges & Coêlho, 2015; Lopez & Silva, 2019; Praça & Lopez, 2018) . They introduce measures to analyse the Ministers' profiles (Borges & Coêlho, 2015), analyse patronage appointments against bureaucratic autonomy (Bersch et al., 2016) or estimate the effects of partisan affiliation on appointments (Lopez & Silva, 2019; Praça & Lopez, 2018). The term "patronage" is typically employed in reference to the actions of political parties trying to appoint their partisans to public posts (Albrecht, 2024). These studies point out that public offices are part of the president's "toolbox" as a political strategy to gather support from political parties (Lopez & Silva, 2019; Perlin & Santos, 2019).

[2]This structure changed due to a new presidential decree (1042/2021) approved by Jair Bolsonaro.
[3]In this research, level 7 posts refer to particular high-level positions which are not officially part of the hierarchy.

There is less focus on other political organisations, such as interest groups (Lopes & Vieira, 2020). Some scholars investigated other characteristics of the public bureaucracy, presenting rates related to gender distribution and ties with trade unions or other types of organisations (D'Araújo & Petek, 2018). These revealed that the number of women in managerial posts has increased over time (D'Araújo, 2014; D'Araújo & Petek, 2018), but this number diminishes according to the hierarchical level (Cavalcante & Carvalho, 2017; D'Araújo, 2014). Moreover, women's participation is superior in specific areas (Cavalcante & Carvalho, 2017; Ventura, 2018). However, these studies are mainly descriptive.

Only a few studies address the underrepresentation of women in ministerial and executive bureaucratic roles, but these are limited to specific political roles or domains. While examining ministerial appointments, Palotti and Cavalcante (2019) highlight the strategic political calculations that often disadvantage women in these roles. Likewise, Gitirana and Kreuz (2020) conduct a prosopography of female ministers in Brazil, showing that while women have gained access to high-ranking positions, institutional and political barriers still limit their influence. Belançon (2019) brings a historical analysis of feminist policies and social movements in Brazil. Other works focus on specific domains, such as academia (Siqueira et al., 2016) or the judicial branch (Fragale Filho et al., 2015).

There were a few recent initiatives to examine gender dynamics within the public bureaucracy, such as the special issue from the Brazilian Journal of Civil Service (*Revista do Serviço Público*, 2026). Still, most studies are qualitative or descriptive (e.g., Bussmann & Monteiro, 2026; Guedes et al., 2025). Large-N studies on the impacts of gender on political appointments to other posts within the central government (e.g., directors) are still scarce. Viana and Tokarski (2019) analyse the impacts of gender and race, but they use a survey from 2018.

This paper complements the previous studies by bringing a quantitative analysis of gender and discretionary appointments in the central government, estimating the impacts of gender on appointments to the highest leadership roles at ministerial departments. By focusing on the intersection between gender and political appointments, this study contributes to filling a critical gap in the literature and offers new empirical evidence on the dynamics of representational equity within Brazil's federal bureaucracy.

Data and Research Methods

This article introduces the findings of an unprecedented quantitative study on the public bureaucracy. Brazil has a hybrid system in which public offices are filled through competitive public examinations and discretionary appointments. Between 2011 and 2018, these discretionary positions—known as DAS (*Direção e Assessoramento Superior*)—were organized into six hierarchical levels. Within ministries, levels 1 and 2 correspond to administrative posts, level 3 to coordination roles, level 5 to director positions, and level 6 to heads of Secretariats (Albrecht, 2022). In the dataset used in this study, level 7 refers to special appointments that sit above this formal hierarchy.

The main research technique was probit and logit regression models, which are used when the dependent variable is binary. These models were employed to analyse the odds/probability of being appointed to the highest posts (levels 6 and 7) in the central government. Therefore, the event of interest is "being appointed". The model was expressed according to the following expression:

$$P(\text{Appointed} = 1 \mid X) = \frac{1}{1 + e^{-(\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \cdots + \beta_k X_k)}}$$

In the models, the dependent variable (Y) represents the probability of appointment to a high-level position (level 6 or 7). As the number of level-7 posts is relatively small, I combined these positions with level-6 posts[4]. The vector of independent variables (X) includes gender (male), race (white), partisan affiliation (affiliated with a political party), education level, and formal ties to the public service (whether the individual is a career civil servant). The central hypothesis guiding the analysis is that being a man (or self-identifying as male) increases the likelihood of the event of interest—that is, being appointed to a high-echelon position in the federal bureaucracy.

I tested this hypothesis using probit and logit models, applied first to the full dataset and then separately to each presidential administration. The analysis focused on three key points in time: Dilma Rousseff (2011), Michel Temer I (2016), and Michel Temer II (2018). For the models covering the full sample, the unit of analysis was the individual officer. To address the fact that some officers held multiple roles over time and could therefore appear more than once in the dataset, I created a unique identifier for the individual-post dyad. This allowed me to control for repeated observations at the officer/post level. Subsequent models were conducted as cross-sectional snapshots for each administration year, enabling a comparison of patterns in appointments across different political contexts. This approach helps to capture both the overall trends and the specific dynamics of each government period.

Probit and logistic regression were carried out to analyse the impacts of gender on the likelihood of being appointed to a high-level position, with race, ties with public service, partisan affiliation, and education as control variables. Logit regression was chosen as a nonlinear model for binary dependent variables, analysing the probability of an event happening (Stock & Watson, 2020). The analysis was conducted with R (scripts are available on open repositories). The likelihood of being appointed to one of the highest post was calculated through marginal effects (probit) and odds-ratio (logit)[5].

The microdata used in this research was extracted from the Federal Government's Personnel Administration System (SIAPE), a system with information on officers working for the central government and the Superior Electoral Court (same dataset used by Lopez & Silva, 2019). SIAPE provides the names, race (self-stated), gender, ties with civil service, and level of education of officers, whereas the Electoral Court has information on their partisan affiliations. The two datasets were merged into a single database with data from 1999 to 2018. This dataset was provided by the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) [6].

The dataset includes information on public officers occupying positions at levels 5, 6, and 7 of the federal bureaucracy in May and November of each year between 1999 and 2018. Given this longitudinal structure, the same individual may appear in multiple observations across different time points. This occurs because the unit of analysis is not the individual officer but the

[4]I previously ran tests with levels 5, 6, and 7 separately.

[5]For more details on the coefficients, see the statistical appendix.

[6]I would like to acknowledge the contributions of the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA) for building and sharing the dataset, especially Acir dos Santos Almeida and Felix Lopez, who coordinate relevant projects on the public bureaucracy in Brazil. This dataset cannot be shared with the public, as it contains sensitive information. All the scripts used for the analysis are available in a public repository.

position held at each specific point in time. To avoid issues of autocorrelation and the risk of drawing misleading conclusions from repeated observations of the same individuals, I opted to work with the person as the unit of analysis and cross-sectional "snapshots" of the data. This approach, used in other studies (Ban et al., n.d.; Lopez & Silva, 2019), enables a clearer assessment of the composition of the bureaucracy at distinct political moments, reflecting the characteristics of officeholders at key points during different administrations.

Thus, the unit of analysis for the full dataset is the individual–post dyad, which avoids duplication when someone was appointed more than one time[7]. In addition to the full sample ("dataset_full"), I constructed three separate datasets, each corresponding to a specific political context and time frame:

i. data_rousseff11: A snapshot of all government officers holding levels 5 to 7 positions in November 2011, during the first term of President Dilma Rousseff ($N = 774$).
ii. data_temer16: A snapshot of officeholders in November 2016, reflecting the early period of President Michel Temer's administration following the impeachment ($N = 733$).
iii. data_temer18: A snapshot from November 2018, capturing the composition of the high bureaucracy at the end of Temer's presidency ($N = 817$).

By focusing on these three critical time points, the analysis captures variation across different political contexts while maintaining comparability and minimising potential bias associated with repeated observations of the same individuals over time. I selected the years 2011, 2016, and 2018 for comparison based on both theoretical and practical considerations. Empirical studies on political appointments suggest that most changes in high-level bureaucratic positions occur during the initial years of a new presidential term, as incoming governments typically seek to align the bureaucracy with their policy priorities.

Therefore, 2011 represents the early phase of Dilma Rousseff's first mandate, while 2016 reflects the beginning of Michel Temer's administration following the impeachment process. 2018 was included as it was the most recent data available in the dataset, offering a snapshot of the bureaucracy at the end of Temer's presidency. Moreover, Dilma Rousseff remains the only female president in Brazil's history, making her administration a particularly relevant case for analysis, especially in research that examines the role of gender in elite bureaucratic appointments.

The variables included in the models were:

i) High echelon ("highechelon"): a binary variable indicating if the person holds a level 6 or 7 post, with yes (=1) or no (=0). Brazil's discretionary system has six levels for public offices. The fifth usually refers to the post of director. The sixth refers to the position of the Secretary, who controls the departments in the ministries. An extra level (7) refers to special positions, such as Junior Ministers. There is no consensus on how to classify high-echelon bureaucrats in Brazil. Some scholars classify DAS-5 positions as part of the mid-level bureaucracy (Cavalcante et al., 2018), while others consider them to be high-ranking posts (Lopez & Silva, 2019). For the purposes of this article, the statistical models focused on the highest

[7]This coding strategy may entail some information loss, as posts are distinguished only by hierarchical level (5, 6, or 7). Consequently, multiple appointments of the same individual to level-5 posts are collapsed into a single observation. Despite this limitation, the approach remains appropriate for the purposes of this analysis. The research focuses on access to and circulation within hierarchical levels of the public bureaucracy rather than on specific organisational units or job functions. Collapsing multiple appointments at the same hierarchical level into a single observation therefore does not affect the core analytical objective, which is to capture individuals' presence at a given level of authority. Moreover, this strategy reduces duplication and avoids over-representing individuals with multiple appointments at the same level, thereby producing more conservative and robust estimates.

positions in the federal bureaucracy, corresponding to DAS levels 6 and 7 while the article also presents some descriptive statistics on all high-level posts (from 5 to 7).

ii) Gender ("gender"): a binary variable indicating if the person is male (=1) or female (=0)
iii) Race ("race"): a binary variable indicating if the person is white (=1) or non-white (=0)
iv) Situation ("career"): a binary variable indicating if the person is a career civil servant (=1) or not (=0). This variable indicates if the person has formal ties with the public sector or is an outsider.
v) Partisan affiliation ("party") is a binary variable indicating whether a person is affiliated with a political party (=1) or not (=0).
vi) Education ("edu"): a three-factor variable with the categories 'Primary School' (=1), 'Secondary School' (=2), and 'Higher Education' (=3).

This study has some limitations. First, the variables used for sex and race serve only as proxies for the broader concepts of gender and ethnicity. In the Brazilian context, race is self-reported and often reflects how individuals perceive their own racial identity, while gender is typically inferred from biological sex as recorded in official documents. Secondly, the sample is restricted to public officers already appointed to high-level positions (levels 5, 6, and 7), which limits generalisability to the broader civil service. Nevertheless, statistical analysis remains feasible and meaningful, as this dataset represents a talent pool from which most high-echelon appointments are drawn. Despite these constraints, the research offers important insights into the role of gender and political parties in shaping appointment patterns, as well as highlighting differences across hierarchical levels within the bureaucracy.

The code in R used for this research was developed with the assistance of GPT 5. It was constantly reassessed and tested by the researcher. All the scripts are available in a public repository. The statistical appendix provides more details on the models.

Analysis and Discussion

The Brazilian civil service system (brief contextualisation)

In Brazil, there are two main entry routes into the public service: competitive public examinations (known as "*concurso público*" in Portuguese) and discretionary appointments. DAS positions (*Direção e Assessoramento Superior* – Senior Management and Advisory Positions) are open to any individual, regardless of whether they already belong to the civil service or come from outside government careers. In contrast, FCPE roles (*Funções Comissionadas do Poder Executivo* – Commissioned Functions of the Executive Branch) are reserved exclusively for career civil servants, that is, individuals who entered the public service through competitive examinations (Albrecht, 2022).

The DAS posts are officially divided into six levels. The first two levels (DAS 1 and 2) are primarily administrative roles. The intermediate levels (DAS 3 and 4) are coordination positions, typically involving managerial responsibilities. The top two levels (DAS 5 and 6) correspond to senior posts with greater political influence—usually held by directors and secretariat heads. Additionally, the database includes a seventh level (DAS 7), which refers to special high-ranking positions within the administrative hierarchy, such as junior ministers. The databases used in this study contain information on DAS levels 5 to 7, which represent the upper echelons of the

Brazilian public bureaucracy. The analysis focuses exclusively on the national (central) government.

This dual structure of entry routes and diverse career streams reflects Brazil's hybrid civil service system, which combines elements of merit-based recruitment with spaces for political discretion in appointments, especially at higher managerial levels. The research literature focuses on the DAS posts, as these are discretionary roles – anyone can be appointed by the authorities. Previous studies focus on partisan affiliation of government officers as a proxy for politicisation (Borges & Coêlho, 2015; Lopez & Silva, 2019) and the evolution of the rules regarding these appointments (Albrecht, 2022). Although some studies mention gender (Belançon, 2018; Gitirana & Kreuz, 2020), there is no systematic analysis of the impacts of gender and race on discretionary appointments. The analysis presented here fills this gap by evaluating the statistical significance of these variables and their impacts on appointments.

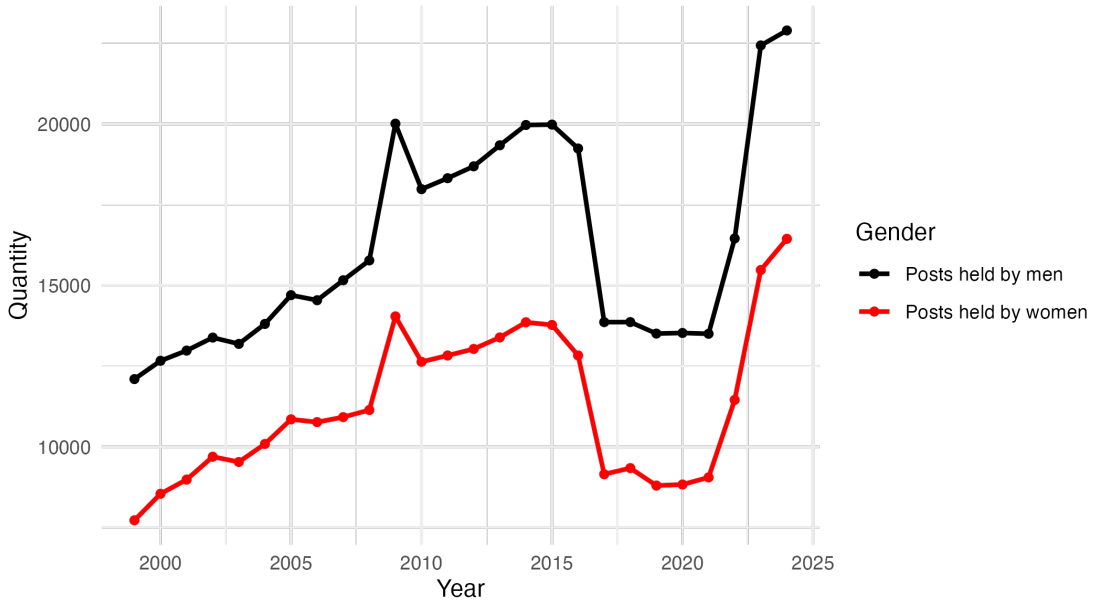
Descriptive statistics

Before presenting the results of the statistical models, it is important to first examine the database through descriptive statistics. Recent research highlights a notable increase in the representation of women in managerial positions within the Brazilian central government (D'Araújo & Petek, 2018). However, this increase in female representation has not been linear across the main categories of managerial posts. The data for this section comes from the *Atlas do Estado Brasileiro*, produced by IPEA, which provides the number of positions occupied by men and women across different managerial levels.

As shown in Figure 2, over the past two decades, the trends in appointments for both men and women have followed similar trajectories, reflecting broader shifts in the composition of the federal bureaucracy.

Figure 2

Discretionary posts (5, 6, 7) held by women and men by year (line graph)

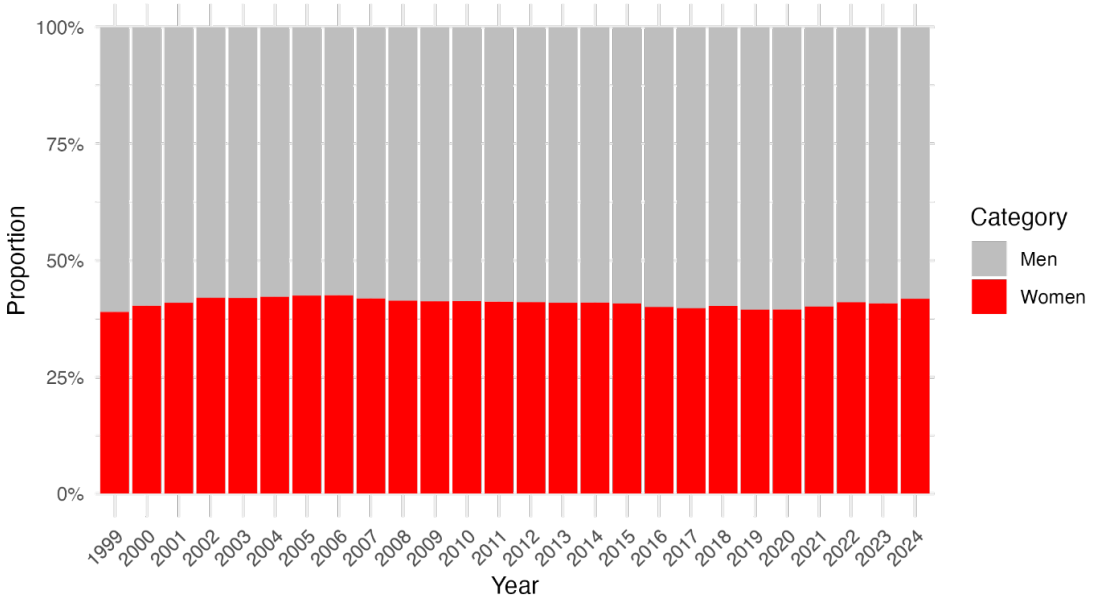


Note. Source: IPEA (*Atlas do Estado Brasileiro*).

Previous research (D'Araújo, 2014; D'Araújo & Petek, 2018) has pointed that the number of women holding top-level positions have increased over the years. However, the proportion of women holding posts was low the entire period. The bar graph in Figure 3 shows that the proportion of women in managerial positions fluctuated between 1999 and 2024, with a slight increase observed from 1999 to 2006. Throughout the entire period, women consistently held less than 50% of these posts.

Figure 3

Discretionary posts (5, 6, 7) held by women and men by year (proportion)



Note. Source: IPEA (*Atlas do Estado Brasileiro*).

Overall, the data reveal increases in the total number of discretionary posts (DAS 5 to 7) over the past two decades. However, despite this overall growth, the gender distribution remained imbalanced. As shown in Figure 2, the proportion of women in these positions has fluctuated over time, showing modest increases in certain periods—such as between 1999 and 2006 and more recently (2022-2025)—but consistently remaining below the 50% threshold throughout the entire period from 1999 to 2024.

The increase observed by the research literature (D'Araújo, 2014; D'Araújo & Petek, 2018) might result from a broader increase in the quantity of posts. The following sections examine whether gender has a statistically significant effect on the likelihood of holding a discretionary post, using regression models that control for additional individual characteristics.

Regression analysis

The models employed in this analysis included the following independent variables: gender, race, education, partisan affiliation, and career status (whether the individual is a career civil servant). The main variable is gender while the others are control variables. These variables are commonly used in the research literature as proxies for levels of politicisation and professionalisation within the bureaucracy (e.g., Lopez & Silva, 2019, for partisanship). Tables 1 and 2 present the results of probit and logit models applied to the highest posts (6–7). The analysis

uses the full dataset covering the period from 1999 to 2018, with the individual-post dyad as the unit of analysis ($N = 5{,}640$).

Table 1
Probit and logit models – Levels 6–7 positions (full dataset)

	Dependent variable:	
	Appointed to Level 6 or 7	
	probit	*logistic*
	Probit	Logit
	(1)	(2)
Man	0.247***	0.425***
	(0.045)	(0.079)
White	0.047	0.082
	(0.051)	(0.087)
Edu2	−0.057	−0.099
	(0.310)	(0.514)
Edu3	−0.028	−0.054
	(0.298)	(0.495)
Party	0.272***	0.453***
	(0.052)	(0.086)
Career	−0.204***	−0.347***
	(0.039)	(0.067)
Constant	−0.844***	−1.390***
	(0.302)	(0.503)
Observations	5,100	5,100
Log likelihood	−2,769.339	−2,769.483
Akaike inf. crit.	5,552.678	5,552.967

Note. Source: dataset_full (unit of analysis: individual-post dyad), $N = 5{,}640$. $^{*}p < .10$. $^{**}p < .05$. $^{***}p < .01$.

Both the probit and logit models confirm that being a man significantly increases the likelihood of appointment to a high-echelon post. In both models, gender, party affiliation, and career background emerge as statistically significant factors at a significance level of 0.001 (99% confidence). Specifically, being male and a partisan are positively associated with the probability of appointment, while having a formal career in the civil service shows a negative relationship. This suggests that most individuals appointed to senior discretionary positions come from outside the permanent bureaucracy, reinforcing findings from previous studies (Lopez & Silva, 2019).

In this sense, Lopez and Silva (2019) argue that the number of partisans increased during the Workers' Party mandate and is higher among professionals who do not have formal ties with civil service. They also highlight that the quantity of partisans is relatively low among appointees. They do not mention gender or race, limiting their analysis to partisan politics.

According to the probit model—based on the analysis of marginal effects (see Statistical Appendix)—being a man increases the probability of appointment by 7.5 percentage points, a result comparable to the effect of party affiliation (8.3 percentage points). The logit models show even stronger effects: being male increases the odds of appointment by 52%, while party affiliation increases the odds by 57%.

Overall, the models yielded results largely consistent with expectations regarding the statistical significance of gender. However, when the analysis was disaggregated by presidential mandate, some unexpected patterns emerged. As shown in Tables 2, 3, and 4, being male was statistically significant only during the Rousseff administration—and notably at the 1% significance level, with an unexpected positive coefficient (with "man" as the reference). In contrast, gender was statistically insignificant during the first Temer administration (2016). By 2018, gender became statistically significant again, this time at the 5% level. In 2016 and 2018, career background and party affiliation remained consistent and significant predictors of appointments.

Table 2

Probit and logit models – Levels 6–7 positions (Rousseff, 2011)

	Dependent variable:	
	Appointed to Level 6 or 7	
	probit	*logistic*
	Probit	Logit
	(1)	(2)
Man	0.348***	0.612***
	(0.120)	(0.216)
White	0.112	0.199
	(0.144)	(0.255)
Edu2	−0.282	−0.470
	(0.735)	(1.262)
Edu3	−0.166	−0.233
	(0.687)	(1.175)
Party	0.255*	0.432**
	(0.130)	(0.220)
Career	−0.129	−0.226
	(0.107)	(0.185)
Constant	−0.942	−1.627
	(0.699)	(1.198)
Observations	743	743
Log likelihood	−379.541	−379.544
Akaike inf. crit.	773.083	773.089

Note. Source: data_rousseff11 ($N = 774$). $^{*}p < .10$. $^{**}p < .05$. $^{***}p < .01$.

Tables 3 and 4 introduce the results of probit and logit models estimating the odds of being appointed to the highest posts during Temer administrations (2016 and 2018). Career and party affiliation are the most significant predictors. Having a civil service background (i.e., ties to the public sector) decreases the likelihood of appointment, whereas partisan affiliation increases it. These findings are consistent with previous research, which suggests that lacking ties to the public sector—being an "outsider"—combined with strong political connections, increases the odds of being appointed to the highest posts (Lopez & Silva, 2019).

However, gender was unexpectedly insignificant in 2016 and significant at the 5% significance level in 2018.

Based on the analysis of marginal effects from the probit model using the 2018 data (see Statistical Appendix), being male increases the probability of appointment by 7.9 percentage

Table 3
Probit and logit models – Levels 6–7 positions (Temer, 2016)

	Dependent variable:	
	Appointed to Level 6 or 7	
	probit	*logistic*
	Probit	Logit
	(1)	(2)
Man	0.049	0.071
	(0.129)	(0.225)
White	0.074	0.140
	(0.150)	(0.266)
Edu2	3.799	11.886
	(146.954)	(535.411)
Edu3	4.137	12.448
	(146.954)	(535.411)
Party	0.492^{***}	0.822^{***}
	(0.137)	(0.228)
Career	-0.377^{***}	-0.656^{***}
	(0.113)	(0.197)
Constant	−4.943	−13.777
	(146.954)	(535.411)
Observations	696	696
Log likelihood	−340.452	−340.596
Akaike inf. crit.	694.904	695.192

Note. Source: data_temer16 ($N = 733$). $^{*}p < .10$. $^{**}p < .05$. $^{***}p < .01$.

points, while partisan affiliation increases it by 10.1 percentage points. In contrast, having a civil service career background decreases the probability by 6.9 percentage points. The logit model (odds ratios) yields similar patterns: being male increases the odds of appointment by 67%, partisan affiliation increases the odds by 87%, and a civil service background reduces the odds by 36%. Therefore, we can conclude that partisan affiliation was particularly relevant during Temer administrations. However, it is still surprising that being a male played a more important role in Rousseff's first mandate.

These results highlight the need for a closer examination of the data from the Rousseff and Temer administrations. Figures 4 and 5 illustrate the proportion of women holding posts at each level during the Rousseff administration (2011) and the Temer administration (2016), respectively.

The proportion of women holding level 5 and 6 positions was higher during the Rousseff administration. However, somewhat unexpectedly, the proportion of women in level 7 positions was greater during the Temer administration. These findings may help explain why gender was statistically significant during the Rousseff administration, with men still having a higher likelihood of being appointed to these positions in the probit and logit models using 2011 data. This does not imply that having a female leader is irrelevant for advancing gender equality; however, it does highlight that female leadership alone does not guarantee an increased presence of women in top-level posts.

Table 4

Probit and logit models – Levels 6–7 positions (Temer, 2018)

	Dependent variable:	
	Appointed to Level 6 or 7	
	probit	*logistic*
	Probit	Logit
	(1)	(2)
Man	0.296**	0.516**
	(0.123)	(0.222)
White	0.140	0.264
	(0.130)	(0.233)
Edu2	−1.200	−2.078
	(0.945)	(1.558)
Edu3	−0.463	−0.740
	(0.896)	(1.440)
Party	0.375***	0.628***
	(0.134)	(0.226)
Career	−0.256**	−0.446**
	(0.107)	(0.187)
Constant	−0.623	−1.095
	(0.912)	(1.472)
Observations	790	790
Log likelihood	−380.822	−380.952
Akaike inf. crit.	775.643	775.903

Note. Source: data_temer18 ($N = 817$). $^{*}p < .10$. $^{**}p < .05$. $^{***}p < .01$.

Figure 4

Proportion of women holding posts (DAS 5, 6, and 7) by level – Rousseff (2011)

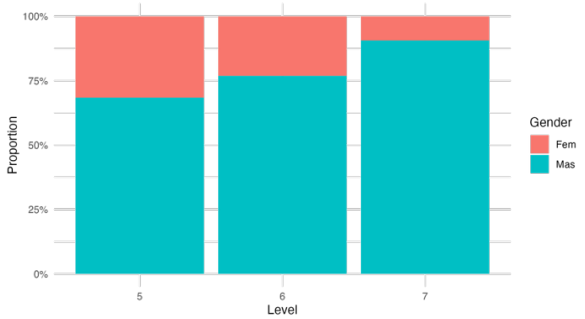
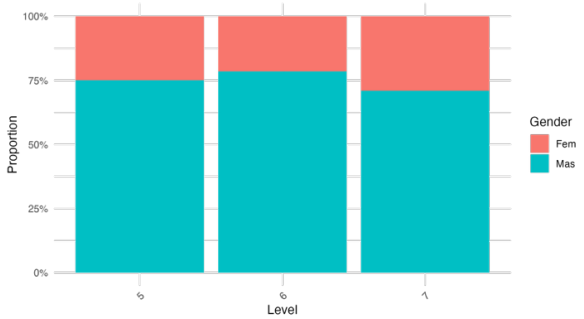


Figure 5

Proportion of women holding posts (DAS 5, 6, and 7) by level – Temer (2016)



Note. Sources: data_rousseff11 and data_temer16.

It is important to interpret these results with caution. The analysis of race remains inconclusive due to substantial missing data, which poses challenges for robust statistical inference. Moreover, because race in Brazil is self-declared, there are potential issues with data accuracy and consistency. This is a limitation that warrants greater attention in future research. In addition, the database has only information on appointees to levels 5 to 7 posts. Ideally, there would be a database with a random sample of the population, but this is impractical.

Nonetheless, the results from the models based on the full dataset remain valid and reinforce key findings from the literature: party affiliation and career background are consistently significant variables influencing appointments, but gender emerges as an equally relevant factor. Gender demonstrated an effect comparable in magnitude to that of political party affiliation. Therefore, the study reinforces the relevance of further analysing the "glass ceiling" in the public sector.

Women might face similar challenges in the private and public sectors. However, public administration implies additional challenges as it is intricated with politics – particularly in discretionary appointments. Brazil's institutional framework leads to complex negotiations between presidents and political parties (Abranches, 1988, 2018; Lopez & Silva, 2019; Perlin & Santos, 2019). One might ask how gender interplays within this dynamic.

While analysing Minister's profiles, Gitirana and Kreuz (2020) point out that the women who are successful in being appointed are a specific group which could accumulate political capital. Which types of political capital and cultural aspects are relevant for discretionary appointments? Coalition presidentialism might be not enough to understand the reasons discretionary appointments, as culture, informal institutions, and personal relations may also play a key role. Hence, this research reveals that there might be other factors in addition to formal institutions.

Final remarks

This study has provided empirical evidence on the interplay between gender and other variables in shaping the composition of Brazil's federal bureaucracy. Complementing previous studies (Bussmann & Monteiro, 2026; D'Araújo, 2014; D'Araújo & Petek, 2018; Guedes et al., 2025), which were mainly descriptive, it provided a quantitative estimation of the impacts of gender on the odds of being appointed to a top-level post within the Brazilian federal bureaucracy.

The findings confirm that gender remains a significant barrier to achieving higher bureaucratic positions overall, and that the presence of women in public administration has not increased as much as pointed out by the research literature (D'Araújo, 2014; D'Araújo & Petek, 2018). According to data on managerial posts, women continue to be underrepresented at the upper levels of bureaucracy, revealing persistent institutional and societal obstacles that hinder gender equality in discretionary appointments. Moreover, the study revealed that gender is as important as political parties although it receives less attention from the research literature on discretionary appointments. This underscores the need for further examination of how political dynamics shape bureaucratic structures and the extent gender interplays with other variables (education, race, partisan affiliation) in recruitment processes.

This research literature is dominated by analytical frameworks developed in the Global North (Albrecht, 2023, 2024), notably presidential studies in the United States (e.g., Lewis, 2011) and studies on political parties and patronage in Europe (Kopecký et al., 2016, 2022). The re-

search literature on Brazil mixes both approaches by analysing the presidential dilemma and negotiation with political parties. It gives too much emphasis to partisan politics whereas overlooking other variables.

Although race and education were not statistically significant in this study, this does not imply their irrelevance. Instead, potential data limitations—such as the lack of disaggregated racial information and the absence of detailed education variables beyond the bachelor's level[8]—may have constrained the analysis. Future research should incorporate more comprehensive datasets to examine these dimensions in greater depth, ensuring a more nuanced understanding of the factors influencing bureaucratic career trajectories. Moreover, this research has not examined interactions between variables. Future studies could conduct a more in-depth analysis of interaction effects, such as the relationship between education and gender or race and gender.

The findings point to the need for policy interventions aimed at promoting gender equality and reducing partisan biases in discretionary appointments within the public bureaucracy. Possible measures include the implementation of gender quotas, the establishment of more transparent selection processes, and mechanisms that prioritise merit-based appointments while fostering greater diversity within the public administration. In addition, mixed-method studies—combined qualitative techniques such as semi-structured interviews and quantitative approaches—could provide deeper insights into the recruitment processes and informal barriers that may hinder women's advancement within public administration, i.e., the "glass ceiling" in the public sector.

Finally, this study underscores the importance of expanding research on public administration in the Global South. The field remains largely dominated by studies focused on the United States and European contexts, often overlooking the unique institutional, political, and cultural dynamics of developing democracies. A research agenda that is more attuned to the specificities of Brazil and similar contexts is essential for advancing a more comprehensive understanding of bureaucratic representation. For instance, systematic studies focusing on informal institutions are notably limited.

By shedding light on the complexities surrounding gender and discretionary appointments in Brazil, this study lays the groundwork for further investigations into how these dynamics impact broader governance and policymaking processes. Future research should continue to examine the intersection of gender, race, education, and partisan affiliation, ensuring that bureaucratic structures evolve towards greater equity, inclusivity, and democratic legitimacy.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA). Restrictions apply to the availability of these data, which were used under license for this study. Data are available from the authors with the permission of IPEA.

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Statistical Appendix

Table A1

Full dataset

	Probit	Logit
Deviance residuals, Min	−0.9949	−1.0011
Deviance residuals, 1Q	−0.8110	−0.8073
Deviance residuals, Median	−0.6996	−0.6994
Deviance residuals, 3Q	−0.5512	−0.5556
Deviance residuals, Max	2.0029	1.9919
Null deviance (df)	5627.9 (5099)	5627.9 (5099)
Residual deviance (df)	5538.7 (5093)	5539.0 (5093)
Observations deleted due to missingness	540	540
AIC	5552.7	5553
Fisher scoring iterations	4	4
	Marginal effects	**Odds ratios**
(Intercept)	–	0.2491596
male	0.07549	1.5292867
white	0.01453	1.0855254
party	0.08323	1.5729392
career	−0.06236	0.7068652
edu2	−0.01748	0.9055349
edu3	−0.008679	0.9476238

Note. Source: dataset_full.

Table A2

Rousseff 2011

	Probit	Logit
Deviance residuals, Min	−0.9233	−0.9291
Deviance residuals, 1Q	−0.7117	−0.7104
Deviance residuals, Median	−0.6529	−0.6478
Deviance residuals, 3Q	−0.5283	−0.5312
Deviance residuals, Max	2.2053	2.1985
Null deviance (df)	774.13 (742)	774.13 (742)
Residual deviance (df)	759.08 (736)	759.09 (736)
Observations deleted due to missingness	31	31
AIC	773.08	773.09
Fisher scoring iterations	4	4
	Marginal effects	Odds ratios
(Intercept)	–	0.1964902
male	0.09986	1.8435707
white	0.03206	1.2204854
party	0.07295	1.5406702
career	−0.03699	0.7976302
edu2	−0.08256	0.6250638
edu3	−0.05052	0.7922920

Note. Source: data_rousseff11.

Table A3

Temer 2016

	Probit	Logit
Deviance residuals, Min	−1.0510	−1.0544
Deviance residuals, 1Q	−0.7541	−0.7521
Deviance residuals, Median	−0.5589	−0.5598
Deviance residuals, 3Q	−0.5243	−0.5245
Deviance residuals, Max	2.3030	2.2613
Null deviance (df)	712.34 (695)	712.34 (695)
Residual deviance (df)	680.90 (689)	681.19 (689)
Observations deleted due to missingness	37	37
AIC	694.9	695.19
Fisher scoring iterations	12	12
	Marginal effects	Odds ratios
(Intercept)	–	0.000001039139
male	0.01347	1.073643937190
white	0.02027	1.150266215209
party	0.1345	2.274670461035
career	−0.1033	0.518938774765
edu2	0.1313	145215.775506720471
edu3	0.2123	254712.731354273245

Note. Source: data_temer16.

Table A4

Temer 2018

	Probit	Logit
Deviance residuals, Min	−1.0531	−1.0473
Deviance residuals, 1Q	−0.6752	−0.6673
Deviance residuals, Median	−0.6143	−0.6146
Deviance residuals, 3Q	−0.4335	−0.4411
Deviance residuals, Max	2.5651	2.5084
Null deviance (df)	790.64 (789)	790.64 (789)
Residual deviance (df)	761.64 (783)	761.90 (783)
Observations deleted due to missingness	27	27
AIC	775.64	775.9
Fisher scoring iterations	4	5
	Marginal effects	Odds ratios
(Intercept)	–	0.3345805
male	0.07975	1.6760885
white	0.03767	1.3027185
party	0.101	1.8737154
career	−0.06901	0.6402992
edu2	−0.2928	0.1251966
edu3	−0.149	0.4769599

Note. Source: data_temer18.

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A Look at Cooperative Federalism and Intergovernmental Relations in Brazil Based on the 1988 Federal Constitution

Abstract

Brazil is administratively organized under a federal system. For the population to be able to live under the social welfare state provided for in the 1988 Federal Constitution and have their social rights guaranteed, public policies and intergovernmental relations must function effectively. Even with many problems yet to be resolved and a persistently high level of inequality, we can say that the past three decades in Brazil have been a period of progress for the Brazilian population. Universal public health care and the gradual expansion of the right to education, first at the elementary level and then extending to all levels of basic education, are among the most frequently cited milestones. There are others. This text aims to bring all these developments together, as well as to interpret them and identify paths forward to address the challenges that still remain.

Keywords: Brazil; federalism; intergovernmental relations

Resumo

O Brasil está organizado administrativamente sob o regime federativo. Para que a população consiga viver sob o Estado de Bem-Estar Social previsto na Constituição Federal de 1988 e tenha seus direitos sociais garantidos, é preciso que as políticas públicas e as relações intergovernamentais funcionem. Mesmo com muitos problemas a resolver, e um grau de desigualdade persistentemente alto, podemos dizer que essas últimas três décadas no Brasil foram um período em que a população brasileira experimentou avanços. A saúde pública universalizada e o gradativo direito ao acesso à escolaridade, primeiro em nível fundamental, e depois alcançando toda a educação básica, são marcos entre os mais citados. Há outros. O texto tem como objetivo amarrar todos esses acontecimentos bem como interpretar e apontar caminhos para os desafios que ainda permanecem.

Palavras-chave: Brasil; federalismo; relações intergovernamentais

Introduction

The 1988 Federal Constitution (CF 1988) represented a milestone in the country's redemocratization, ensuring the full restoration of Brazilian federalism, along with the strengthening of subnational units and the underlying political process. In the formulation of public policies, the framers of the Constitution chose to prioritize the principle of concurrent jurisdiction: the federal government, states, and municipalities are responsible for providing social services and must act in a cooperative and coordinated manner (Arretche, 2000; C. Souza, 2006; Ismael, 2005).

In this sense, in Brazil, intergovernmental relations are fundamental to the advancement of the welfare state, to combating poverty, and to addressing social inequality.

The list of shared responsibilities would suggest that Brazilian federalism is more cooperative than competitive in nature. However, difficulties are observed in the exercise of intergovernmental cooperation, due to a process marked by political antagonisms and conflicts among federated entities, the presence of significant regional inequalities, and the absence of clear rules for institutionalizing partnership at the federal level (C. Souza, 2006; Ismael & Pereira, 2022).

The purpose of this article is to discuss and address the challenge of understanding the Brazilian federation through an analytical framework that resists the labels of "centralized" or "decentralized." This federation is characterized by the implementation of federal public policies that are imposed on subnational entities, although their approval depends on the National Congress. This federal arrangement is also characterized by limitations imposed on the legislative capacity of subnational entities with regard to the formulation of their own policies. These limitations stem both from the constitutional framework governing the powers of federal entities and from decisions of the Federal Supreme Court. This institutional aspect has influenced the analysis of Brazilian federalism by various authors, particularly in their recognition of the central role played by the Judiciary in the dynamics of federal centralism in Brazil (Macedo, 2018). Furthermore, few exclusive constitutional powers are allocated to states and municipalities. On the other hand, states and municipalities enjoy broad administrative autonomy, are responsible for implementing various national public policies, and have access to a share of public resources unprecedented in Brazilian constitutional history, especially in the case of municipalities (Souza, 2005). In other words, the institutional arrangement of Brazilian federalism operates with both centralizing and decentralizing tendencies, driven by different forces with diverse motivations that produce a wide variety of outcomes (Almeida, 2005).

Since our objective is to discuss the main characteristics of Brazilian federalism in the context of the country's redemocratization, particularly beginning in the 1990s, a period during which the 1988 Constitution was consolidated, we will begin our analysis with a brief examination of the implementation of the federalist model in Brazil. The focus will be on highlighting the main differences between this trajectory and that observed in the United States. Next, we will highlight that the dynamics of federalism changed with the end of the military dictatorship and the enactment of the 1988 Constitution, expanding the participation of subnational units in the decision-making process, while still preserving the central government's leading role. Mechanisms of a cooperative federal arrangement are present, but one cannot ignore the growing competition between Brazilian states and the centralizing power of the federal government. Furthermore, we will argue that, during the period under study, the lack of intergovernmental cooperation presented a persistent challenge to be resolved, with negative repercussions in social areas, such as basic education. Despite this, we will argue that the central government proved to be essential at specific moments, such as in the case of the implementation of sociology in high school. Finally, we will emphasize that social and economic inequalities among states and municipalities in Brazil remain profound, renewing the challenge of finding the most effective institutional pathways capable of reducing these disparities.

Historical Aspects of Brazilian Federalism

Many countries have adopted federalism as a model for state organization in the contemporary world, and Brazil is among them. The federalist model has spread throughout the world and demonstrated its ability to adapt to distinct realities. And, of course, it has stimulated theoretical and conceptual debate regarding its main characteristics, since no two federations are alike (Carvalho, 2016; ENAP, 2017).

Brazil has Iberian origins, like Peru, Argentina, and most Latin American countries; nevertheless, we take the U.S. federal model as our reference (Raposo, 2011). The nineteenth century was a period marked by significant constitutional and institutional changes in the country's political history. Initially, we adopted a unitary state and a monarchical regime, a model that prevailed after independence from Portugal, and later transitioned to a federal state and a presidential system, an institutional arrangement that emerged at the time of the Proclamation of the Republic and was enshrined in the 1891 Constitution.

One of the leading architects of Brazilian federalism was the jurist and politician Rui Barbosa. The movement toward federalism in Brazil was, in a sense, aimed at ensuring political and financial autonomy for the former provinces, subnational administrative units during the imperial period, with the intention of maintaining the country's political and territorial unity (Faoro, 2012). We moved away from the unitary system that existed during the imperial era, but we retained the idea of centralization in Brazilian political culture. The unitary state in colonial Brazil and later during the imperial period was a legacy of Portugal (Faoro, 2012).

Although Brazil took the American federalist model, adopted in the late 18th century, as its reference, Brazilian federalism would take on its own distinct characteristics, reflecting the historical, political, and cultural differences between the two countries (Ismael, 2005). A summary of the intellectual debate surrounding this issue should be highlighted. The first federal experiment in Brazil took place between 1891 and 1930. During this period, the member states of the federation gained political and financial autonomy as part of a classic decentralization movement. However, the process did not promote socioeconomic development or the implementation of high-quality public policies, serving instead the interests of state oligarchies. Beginning in the 1930s, with Getúlio Vargas's rise to national power, the idea of centralization would once again be vigorously supported, and federalism would be viewed with suspicion.

Sociologist Francisco Oliveira highlights two complementary perspectives on the characteristics of Brazilian society, which help explain the path that diverged from that of the United States, with Brazil adopting a more centralized federalist model (Oliveira, 1997). Francisco Oliveira notes that Oliveira Vianna, one of the leading intellectuals during the Vargas administration, believed that political decentralization would not succeed due to the lack of civic culture in subnational units, turning the country into a "republic of colonels", which indeed happened during the Old Republic (Faoro, 2012; Leal, 2012). Francisco Oliveira also states that Celso Furtado, another important figure in 20th-century social thought, advocated for cooperative federalism, with the central government playing the leading role in reducing social and economic inequalities among Brazilian regions and states. Although they took different paths, Oliveira Vianna and Celso Furtado both advocated for a more centralized form of federalism than that practiced in the United States.

Strictly speaking, one could say that the federalist model adopted in the United States reflects a particular political culture that already existed during the era of British rule (Tocqueville,

2014a, 2014b). The adoption of federalism in Brazil raises a central question: how was an institutional model conceived in a distinct historical context appropriated and adapted to the specific characteristics of Brazilian society? In fact, the implementation of the classic model of modern federalism in the Brazilian context required adaptations. Here, one observes a lack of civic culture at the local level, in the sense of low social participation, which ultimately hinders the implementation of a more decentralized political arrangement like the American one (Carvalho, 2016).

In addition to the American influence, given the cooperative conception of our 1988 Federal Constitution, we were also influenced by German federalism. The cooperative model of federalism emerged during the Bismarck era (1870) and was consolidated in the 1946 Constitution (Araujo, 2010). The idea was to free Germany from the traumatic experience of Nazism. The German model was established based on the principle of subsidiarity. This principle ensures that decision-making takes place as close to the citizen as possible (Berthier, 2016). The Union should act only when its action is more effective than action taken at the regional or local level, unless the matter falls within its exclusive jurisdiction. Furthermore, the postwar German Federal Constitution is guided by the principle of ensuring social homogeneity within the national territory, a decisive factor in Germany's reunification in the 1990s (Schultze, 1995).

Federal Dynamics in the Context of Redemocratization

The 1988 Federal Constitution introduced the novelty of strengthening the municipality as a third level of government, alongside the states and the federal government. Previously, municipalities were part of a state, a sort of state-level unit. Scholars refer to them as "mere administrative units without a political life of their own" (Leal, 2012, p. 255). With the country's redemocratization beginning in the 1980s, municipal elections were held in 1985 and 1988, which led to increased mobilization of mayors at the national level. Municipalities are the sphere closest to the population: people live in cities, and political citizenship begins at this territorial level. With the advancement of the decentralization process in Brazil, mayors and city council members can respond more quickly in terms of local solutions for their cities in areas such as basic sanitation, transportation, housing, and early childhood and elementary education, among others (Neves, 2000). We are a country of vast territorial dimensions with a majority of small and medium-sized cities, many of which lack sufficient tax revenue to finance the implementation of public policies, one of the essential items on the public agenda (Arretche, 2012; IBGE, 2019a).

The 1988 Constitution also expanded the responsibilities of the member states, for example in the areas of public safety, health, and education (for further details, see C. Souza, 2006, pp. 196–197), and established a more decentralized model of federal organization for the country. Historically, Brazilian federalism has followed a pendulum-like pattern, with alternating periods of centralization and decentralization (Carvalho, 2016). With the end of the military dictatorship, a period marked by strong centralization, the country returned to its federal structure and embraced the idea of strengthening subnational units (Arretche, 2012). Within the framework established by the 1988 Constitution, it is also possible to analyze Brazilian federalism through the cooperation-competition continuum, with the simultaneous presence of cooperative and competitive elements in the national federal system. On the one hand, there are constitutional transfers from the federal government to states, municipalities, and regions, which can be defined as mechanisms of vertical cooperation. On the other hand, as states gain greater leg-

islative autonomy in tax matters, competition among them to attract private investment gains momentum (Ismael, 2005).

The new institutional arrangement raised expectations regarding the decentralization process, with the aim of advancing toward democratic public administration and bringing governments closer to citizens. To this end, it sought to decentralize resources and decision-making authority to the subnational levels. The new legal framework was called by many the "Citizen's Constitution," as it sought to ensure a new social contract based on the universalization of citizens' rights, following nearly three decades of military dictatorship. From these new constitutional foundations, a decentralized and democratic federation would emerge, capable of addressing the social debt inherited from the authoritarian period. Arretche (2012) and Lessa (2001) argue that contrary to the expectations raised, 1988 was in fact yet another stage in the great movement toward state centralization that began in the 1930s, under the developmentalist state led by President Getúlio Vargas. The research agenda on Brazilian federalism has focused on the debate regarding the potential outcomes and consequences of a federation that centralizes decision-making on public policies, as mandated by the Constitution, but decentralizes their implementation.

It is important to note that developmentalism is an economic model based on an alliance between the state, business leaders, and workers for national development, with the primary goal of industrializing the country through high levels of public investment and the presence of state-owned enterprises in the economy. It is also worth noting that the connection between education and democracy is a recent one and was not previously recognized (Hochman, 2013). The central debate since the Vargas era, continuing through the military dictatorship, centered on development, but the prevailing view relegated the tackling of serious social problems to the background. Major national issues were expected to be linked to this overarching agenda: development, in other words, overcoming economic underdevelopment. Linking education, health, or the reduction of regional inequalities to the democratic experience was a novelty in the context of the 1988 Constitution. It was in this context that the recent federal design sought to grant greater autonomy to local governments in the implementation of public policies with the aim of increasing their effectiveness.

According to Arretche, for reasons linked to the trajectory of the developmentalist state in Brazil, the National Congress endowed the federal government with regulatory authority and spending capacity that allowed it (and continues to allow it) to decisively influence the agenda of subnational governments, despite the political, fiscal, and jurisdictional decentralization adopted under the 1988 Constitution. Expectations of greater decentralization did not materialize; on the contrary, they were gradually reversed: "In short, the 1988 Constitution did not produce political institutions that would weaken the central government in relation to subnational governments" (Arretche, 2012, pp. 69–70). Ismael (2013a) notes that, beginning in the second half of the 1990s, during the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration, there was a reconcentration of tax revenues favoring the federal government, with the support of the National Congress. At that time, the primary alignment of state caucuses in both chambers of the National Congress was with the federal government, which explains many of the changes during that period, changes that were highly favorable to strengthening central power, particularly at the expense of state governments.

Arretche (2012) notes that, unlike other countries, we do not have politically relevant religious or ethnic divisions. However, one of the hallmarks of Brazilian federalism is the maintenance of a high degree of power concentrated in the federal government, with broad legislative and regulatory authority, and the fact that our federation comprises subnational units with profound socioeconomic inequalities. The author also states that Brazilians' distrust of local officials' commitment to citizens' rights is deeply entrenched in the national political imagination. There is a concern about leaving important decisions in the hands of local politicians. The concept of the nation, combined with these local distrusts, has firmly established in the public imagination the idea that the federal government is authorized to supervise and regulate subnational units.

According to Abrucio (1998), the tax decentralization approved in the 1988 Constitution was, in large part, the result of the strengthening of the governors elected in 1982. Furthermore, there was a loss of political support for the Sarney administration during the National Constituent Assembly held in 1987 and 1988. The difficulty in forming parliamentary majorities to support the federal government was one of the reasons for decentralization. It was a false impression that we had ushered in an unprecedented model of federalism. Years later, in 1995, the Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration managed to coordinate a coalition-based presidential system to recentralize tax revenues. To this day, governors protest this change that occurred in the mid-1990s, which made the states more dependent on resources from the federal government, especially those with less fiscal capacity. The Fernando Henrique Cardoso administration succeeded in coordinating an agenda that shaped Brazilian federalism as we know it today, taking advantage of the windows of opportunity left by the 1988 Constitution itself. And the National Congress voted in favor of fiscal recentralization, as lawmakers were more aligned with the central government than with the subnational units they represent (Arretche, 2012).

Scholars of the federalist model in the contemporary world point out that states serve as laboratories for public policy and experimentation, and it is significant that this is the case. In fact, states are valued within the federal system because they represent the setting where citizenship and democracy can be fully exercised, and also because it is believed that states more frequently provide the necessary means to implement public services in innovative ways, at low cost, and with greater effectiveness (Elazar, 1984). Nevertheless, the federal government still decides almost everything in Brazil. Arretche (2012) points out that implementing public policies and having a say in revenues and expenditures says little about autonomy in the decision-making process. The author cites several aspects that point in this direction. Ministries within the federal government have the authority to regulate and supervise the departments responsible for their respective portfolios at the state and municipal levels. Constitutional transfers made by the federal government to municipalities are the main source of revenue for the overwhelming majority of local governments. And even with this revenue, many of them depend on additional funds from the central government to ensure that social needs are met. In summary, Arretche (2012) asserts that, in Brazil, it is possible to combine the decentralized delivery of public services with the centralization of authority over the rules governing their delivery, which brings the Brazilian federalist model closer to centralized European federations.

Therefore, it is argued that Brazilian federalism can be understood as a model of cooperative federalism with centralized decision-making, in which the federal government concentrates legislative and regulatory powers, while states and municipalities are responsible for implementing a significant portion of public policies.

This line of reasoning suggests four premises: Premise 1: Brazil is constitutionally a federation. Premise 2: Subnational entities possess political and administrative autonomy. Premise 3: The federal government concentrates: legislation; financing; coordination; and the setting of national standards. Premise 4: Day-to-day implementation takes place in the states and municipalities. These premises support the conclusion that Brazilian federalism combines centralized decision-making with decentralized implementation. We must now empirically test this conclusion. But first, we need to discuss intergovernmental relations under Brazilian federalism.

Intergovernmental Relations and the Provision of Public Policies in Brazil

According to C. Souza (2006), with regard to concurrent powers, that is, those shared by the three levels of government, which are the primary drivers of intergovernmental relations, the framers of the 1988 Constitution made a clear choice in favor of the principle that responsibility for providing most public services, especially social services, is shared by all three levels. The extensive list of shared powers would suggest that Brazilian federalism is more cooperative in nature than dual or competitive. These powers are classified into two broad groups, substantive and legislative, each with their respective subdivisions. However, despite the large number of shared competences, in practice there is a significant gap between what the Constitution provides for and its implementation. The goal of cooperative federalism is far from being achieved for two main reasons: the first relates to the varying capacities of subnational governments to implement public policies, given the enormous existing inequalities in finances, human resources, and management. The second is the absence of constitutional or institutional mechanisms to regulate intergovernmental relations and foster cooperation, making the system highly competitive.

The same author further asserts that the logic governing the distribution of powers among the constituent entities of the federation is paradoxical. On the one hand, the framers decided to reduce federal financial resources relative to the other two levels of government, a situation that was relatively reversed beginning in the mid-1990s. On the other hand, the framers of the Constitution expanded the federal government's legislative and jurisdictional powers, while simultaneously broadening the range of shared powers without adopting more comprehensive mechanisms for intergovernmental relations.

C. Souza (2006) also states that overlapping powers are the primary drivers of intergovernmental relations. The same author clarifies that, since our federal system is highly competitive, conflicts between levels of government are resolved by the Federal Supreme Court. This assessment is similar to that of other researchers who highlight the role of the judiciary in Brazilian centralism (Macedo, 2018). With regard to education, conflicts between different branches of government within subnational units or disagreements among different State Boards of Education, for example, are also resolved at the federal level, specifically by the National Education Council/Chamber of Basic Education (Cury, 2010).

The 1988 Constitution expanded the states' authority to enact laws granting tax incentives, thereby influencing the establishment of private companies within the country. This possibility was exploited by several governors and created a competitive environment known as the "tax war" (Ismael, 2005). For example, if an automobile manufacturer, part of a large foreign multinational, announces its intention to establish a plant in Brazil, this causes interested Brazilian states to compete with one another to secure that factory for one of their cities. This dynamic

was particularly strong in Brazil during the 1990s and thereafter. Setting limits on competition among Brazilian states requires tax reform in the National Congress, which should aim to promote federal balance (Rezende, 2012).

The Brazilian federal experience since the 1990s has been marked by the predominance of a competitive-cooperative federalism, which originates in the national Constitution and is fueled by the political process itself involving the Union and the states of the federation. There is a simultaneous presence of vertical cooperation, resulting from constitutional transfers from the federal government to the states, municipalities, and regions, and horizontal competition, as in the aforementioned "fiscal war" among the states. This dynamic often transforms federal entities into economic actors, fueling conflicts and tensions among them (Varsano, 1997). It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that, beginning in the 1990s, the federal government progressively assumed a role more focused on integrating the country into the international economy than on reducing regional inequalities. In other words, "the great pressure is to integrate the country into the international community with greater urgency than the country integrates itself" (Camargo, 1999, p. 46). The drive to establish external ties has become a priority, to some extent postponing any discussion of changes to and the strengthening of federal policies aimed at reducing regional inequalities.

Objectively speaking, the concentration of power at the federal level is very high in Brazil. The federal government wields considerable political influence, and this fact has concrete and observable manifestations. The National Congress has extensive legislative prerogatives, significant regulatory capacity, and substantial control over the allocation of resources (Arretche, 2012; Ismael, 2005). The National Congress centralizes nearly all decision-making and wields considerable power over state legislature. The federal government's economic policy has a significant impact on the economic growth of the states. Furthermore, great importance is attributed to the President of the Republic in Brazilian political culture. Some describe the presidential system here as "imperial presidentialism," and the federation is structured based on this political legacy (Fernandes, 1988). And for good reasons. The President of the Republic wields significant decision-making power over tax collection and also has the authority to appoint top executives at state-owned companies and public banks that play a significant economic role in Brazil, such as Petrobras, Banco do Brasil, and the National Bank for Economic and Social Development, among others.

Arretche (2012) asserts that one of the major dilemmas facing modern democratic states concerns the authority of the central government and, by extension, the rights of subnational governments. This relates to the debate over the system of checks and balances in the federalist model (Hamilton et al., 2011). The Brazilian federal system combines broad legislative authority for the federal government with limited institutional opportunities for subnational governments to exercise a veto. On the other hand, still regarding institutional controls, it is worth highlighting the role of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the Courts of Auditors, which oversee public spending by the federal government, states, and municipalities.

An analysis of the relationship between the federal government and the National Congress beginning in the 1990s indicates that legislative caucuses remained loyal to the interests of the federal government during the administrations of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995–2002) and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva (2003–2010), reflecting the strength of the incumbent president (Cheibub & Limongi, 2007). Arretche (2012) notes that in a democratic setting, it is more diffi-

cult for the federal government to convince other levels of government that it should concentrate resources. In Brazil, however, this did occur, largely because the 1988 Constitution left open the possibility of concentrating tax revenues at the federal level. We will now discuss the impacts of these specific characteristics of the Brazilian federation and empirically test the hypothesis of centralized federalism that recent literature has addressed.

Centralization versus Decentralization: The Case of Implementing Sociology in High School

One of the major questions regarding Brazilian federalism is why some national social policies are implemented by subnational units while others are not. The answer, as many studies have shown, lies in the federal government's ability to design policies with incentives strong enough to encourage federated entities to participate. Policies that lacked such incentives failed to gain the support of subnational governments (Souza, 2010). In other words, one of the defining characteristics of Brazilian federalism is precisely its centralizing nature in decision-making and, paradoxically, its decentralizing nature in implementation. Therefore, within this institutional framework, the role of rules and incentives for subnational governments' participation is even more critical.

The case of sociology in high school illustrates this dynamic. While its presence in the state school system was based on administrative regulations and exhibited a low degree of institutionalization, the enactment of Law No. 11,684/2008 altered this scenario by making the offering of the subject mandatory throughout the country. Following the establishment of this policy at the federal level, Sociology began to enjoy greater institutional support, reflected, among other aspects, in the inclusion of specific textbooks in the National Textbook Program (PNLD), participation in federal teacher-training programs such as the Institutional Program for Teaching Initiation Scholarships (PIBID), and, subsequently, in the creation of the National Network Professional Master's Program in Sociology (PROFSOCIO). For the period between 2008 and 2018, the centralization of decision-making regarding the mandatory nature of the subject was associated with the strengthening of its institutionalization within the Brazilian educational system. This finding aligns with the literature on federalism, which examines, across various areas of public policy, the effects of decision-making centralization by the federal government and the decentralization of implementation to states and municipalities. In the case of Sociology in high school, the evidence suggests that establishing its mandatory status at the federal level contributed to expanding the subject's normative and institutional support.

In total, this study identified five types of incentives that the federal government can use to implement public policies at the national level.

Financial incentives

The federal government makes the transfer of funds contingent on meeting certain requirements, such as: the creation of management councils; the development of municipal plans; the establishment of specific funds; the provision of data to national information systems; the achievement of targets; and accountability.

Municipalities comply because the cost of non-compliance means losing federal funds. Literature asserts that, although implementation is decentralized, decision-making power remains

largely concentrated in the federal government, precisely because it controls a large portion of the funding.

Regulatory Incentives

The federal government establishes national standards that reduce the discretion of subnational governments. This can occur through: laws; decrees; administrative orders; national guidelines; curriculum standards; and operational standards.

Technical incentives

The federal government provides administrative capacity to local governments. For example, it offers: computerized systems; training for managers; technical assistance; the production of indicators; and the development of manuals.

This aspect tends to receive less attention, but it is very important for small municipalities.

Political incentives

Participation yields political benefits. Mayors and governors gain: resources; visibility; public works; and expanded services. Furthermore, not participating can result in electoral costs.

National monitoring systems and coordination by the federal government

Coordination does not end with the transfer of funds. The federal government establishes permanent monitoring mechanisms, such as: indicators; audits; evaluations; accountability; and information systems. But how does federal coordination take place?

The literature generally states that it occurs through federal coordination. This involves several mechanisms simultaneously. The federal government: defines national objectives; establishes minimum standards; creates implementation rules; funds a significant portion of the policy; monitors results; and negotiates continuously with states and municipalities. In other words, implementation is decentralized, but policy formulation, regulation, and a large portion of the funding remain centralized.

The Case of Sociology in High School

In 2008, the federal government did more than just pass a law (No. 11,684/2008). It created the conditions for its implementation through various mechanisms. For example: making the subject mandatory nationwide; developing curriculum guidelines; including sociology in the National Book Program (PNLD); strengthening teacher training through the PIBID program; subsequently, creating the PROFSOCIO program; and including the subject in national assessments and curricula.

These instruments significantly increased the states' capacity to implement educational policy.

In other words, the federal government's capacity for coordination stems from a combination of regulatory authority, financial capacity, incentive mechanisms, and permanent monitoring and evaluation tools. It is this combination that makes the relatively uniform implementation of national policies possible in a federation that is highly decentralized from an administrative standpoint.

Law No. 11,684/2008 is not a typical example of a policy based primarily on financial incentives, as is the case with the SUS (Sistema Único de Saúde, or Unified Health System), the SUAS (Sistema Único de Assistência Social, or Unified Social Assistance System), or Fundeb (Fundo de Manutenção e Desenvolvimento da Educação Básica e de Valorização dos Profissionais da Educação, or Fund for the Maintenance and Development of Basic Education and Appreciation of the Teaching Profession). It illustrates, above all, the combination of regulatory coordination, institutional support, and, to a lesser extent, technical and financial incentives.

Prior to 2008, there was relative decentralization and little coordination among the federated entities. The offering of Sociology depended largely on the decisions of state education systems. This meant that: some states included the subject; others removed it; there was significant curricular instability; and the subject had a low degree of institutionalization.

In terms of federalism, the federal government did not exercise a sufficiently strong coordinating role to ensure uniform implementation. With the passage of Law No. 11,684/2008, the decision ceased to be predominantly a state matter and became a national one. The federal government established a mandatory standard for the entire country. This is the first instrument of coordination: normative coordination. From that point on, states and municipalities no longer decide whether or not to offer the subject. Mandatory status now stems from federal legislation.

However, the coordination of public policy among different levels of government is not limited to the law. The mere existence of a law would hardly be sufficient to consolidate the subject. The federal government began to mobilize various complementary instruments. For example: inclusion of the subject in the National Textbook Program (PNLD); funding for teacher training through the PIBID program; subsequently, the creation of PROFSOCIO; development of national curriculum guidelines; and incorporation of the subject into national curriculum documents. These mechanisms significantly reduced implementation costs for the states.

Therefore, in the case of sociology in high school, the incentives were not primarily conditional transfers of funds to encourage states to participate. The states did not participate voluntarily. They began to comply with a legal requirement. The incentives worked in a different way. It can be said that the federal government created the conditions for implementation to take place. These conditions involved normative incentives, national mandatory requirements and curriculum standards, technical incentives, teacher training, production of materials, and pedagogical guidelines, as well as indirect financial incentives, funding for the PIBID program, free distribution of textbooks, and funding for training programs. These mechanisms reduced the administrative and financial costs faced by the states.

The case of Sociology demonstrates that, in certain public policies, the federal government's capacity for coordination does not stem solely from direct funding of subnational governments. It results from a combination of regulatory authority, financial support, and technical assistance, creating conditions for national policies to be implemented in a relatively uniform manner by state education system.

As a result, the process of institutionalizing Sociology in high school vividly illustrates the federal government's capacity for coordination within the Brazilian federal system. Prior to Law No. 11,684/2008, the inclusion of the subject depended largely on the decisions of state education systems, which led to significant curricular heterogeneity and instability. The mandatory requirement established at the federal level changed this situation by standardizing the decision regarding its offering throughout the national territory. However, federal coordination was not

limited to the enactment of the legal provision. The federal government mobilized a set of instruments designed to facilitate its implementation, including the production and distribution of textbooks, teacher training programs such as PIBID, the creation of PROFSOCIO, and the development of national curriculum guidelines. These mechanisms reduced the implementation costs faced by the states and expanded their administrative capacity to carry out the policy. From this perspective, the strengthening of Sociology between 2008 and 2018 serves as an example of how the combination of regulatory coordination, technical support, and financial incentives can facilitate the relatively uniform implementation of a national public policy in a federation characterized by administrative decentralization.

Brazil, a continental country with territorial inequalities

Social inequality, in its various forms (racial, gender, class, territorial, age, or income inequality in the labor market), represents one of the greatest challenges facing democratic societies at the beginning of the 21st century (Scalon, 2004). Brazil is no exception, with a history marked by social, economic, and political processes that have produced and perpetuated inequality among families and individuals. According to the Human Development Report 2021/2022, prepared by the United Nations Development Program, Brazil's Gini index was close to 0.50, the highest in South America (UNDP, 2022).

When the analysis focuses on the territorial dimension, it becomes clear that Brazil is an example of an asymmetric federation. The country has 5,568 municipalities (IBGE, 2023). There is, however, a long-standing spatial concentration of economic activity. Consequently, some localities have few economic activities and, as a result, a low capacity to collect taxes and no financial autonomy, which compromises the implementation of public policies. Most of their revenue comes from mandatory constitutional transfers from the federal government, and even so, meeting the population's needs depends on the federal government's social programs.

National statistics on the distribution of municipalities according to their share of Brazil's GDP indicate that, in 2020, the group of the most developed localities, comprising 425 municipalities, accounted for 75% of GDP (IBGE, 2022). It can be said that in this group of cities we find the best opportunities for employment and social mobility, the highest-quality public education and health services, recreational areas equipped with adequate infrastructure, and so on. This does not mean they are without problems; urban violence is worth mentioning. But few doubt the strong appeal of these municipalities, so the phenomenon of internal migration is a common response to territorial inequalities in the country.

Horizontal cooperation between Brazilian states and municipalities is also rarely practiced. There are good examples of intergovernmental consortia in some areas, particularly in urban settings, but they fall far short of their potential. At the municipal level, cooperation could help solve common problems, optimize available resources, and promote the professional development of human resources (Dieguez, 2011). At the state level, it is still difficult for governors to work together to find solutions. This rarely happens. In general, meetings take place between states and the federal government as part of the process of competing for resources concentrated in the central government. This is one reason, though not the only one, why states do not discuss solutions to common problems without the federal government. The state of Rio de Janeiro, for example, faces a serious and well-known problem in the area of public safety. Neighboring

states in Brazil's Southeast region (São Paulo, Minas Gerais, and Espírito Santo) could devise coordinated strategies, but this does not happen.

Given the significant federal asymmetries and the low financial autonomy of many subnational entities, it is common to see subnational units seeking to establish partnerships with the central government. Even more developed states do not shy away from entering this federal competition, as they recognize the importance of federal resources for infrastructure projects and improvements in social services. The distribution of tax revenues in 2007, after constitutional transfers, was as follows: 53.41% went to the federal government, 26.94% to the states, and 19.58% to the municipalities. This result takes into account the recentralization approved by the National Congress in the mid-1990s, which resulted in gains for the federal government and greater losses for the states (Ismael, 2013). Assuming that the federal government holds approximately 53% of the national tax revenue, this means it has substantial resources to distribute across the country, which translates into enormous political power, encouraging governors and mayors to engage with the federal government as negotiators (Mazzini, 2021).

According to P. H. G. F. Souza (2018), territorial inequality in Brazil exists across all dimensions, to a greater or lesser extent. There are significant differences between regions, within regions, within states, and even within the same city. The author asserts that it is difficult to speak of reducing inequalities in such a scenario. And there is no sign that this will be resolved. Data from 2019 show that per capita income in the Northeast is half that of the Southeast (IBGE, 2019b). Given this scenario, with a region having half the country's per capita income and facing greater difficulty in attracting private investment capital, how can we even consider increasing decentralization in a way that allows states and municipalities to implement their public policies using their own tax revenue? Is it possible? Is it desirable? Would it be fair? In other words, this type of decentralization, in a country like Brazil, would pose major obstacles to the expansion of political, civil, and social rights.

Arretche (2012) asserts that there is little fiscal space for states to govern themselves, and that each state's specific situation is a determining factor. Among the states of the Northeast, budgetary constraints are more severe. In Brazil, an agenda for the future must include combating regional inequalities. Other dimensions of inequality, such as income, gender, and race, rightfully have a place in public debate, but regional inequalities must also be placed on the agenda.

For Celso Furtado, the challenge was to integrate the Northeast into the national industrialization process. Oliveira (2008) noted that until the early 20th century, Brazil was a vast archipelago made up of various regional "islands"; there was no integration. Furtado made a major contribution to the emergence of cooperative federalism in Brazil during the 1940s and 1950s. He understood that the process of industrialization and economic modernization did not encompass the entire country, and that a specific strategy was needed for the economy of the Northeast. In this regard, he advocated for cooperative federalism, in which one of the federal government's roles was to cooperate with less developed states and municipalities, thereby reducing regional inequalities. The assumption that the federal government should play a greater leading role, without this being problematic, highlights a central aspect of the differences between Brazilian and U.S. federalism (Ismael, 2005).

Arretche (2012), like Furtado, also believes that Brazil's significant regional inequalities were and remain one of the main drivers behind the adoption of federalism. The author argues that,

throughout the 20th century, the Brazilian federation became highly integrated, even though each level of government possesses its own political authority. The process of building the national state operated toward the centralization of political authority. It is true that ethnic or religious divisions hold no significant political weight; however, the divide between poor and rich constituent units lies at the root of the choice for a state design that allows for "maintaining the Union" and avoiding the disruptive risks associated with a majority-rule system. Ensuring a balance in the representation of rich and poor jurisdictions has historically been a central component of the design of Brazilian political institutions.

Furtado (2009) did not view the Northeast in isolation, but as part of a national development project. He argued that it was necessary to envision the federation as a win-win game; some may win more than others, but everyone must win. And industrialization was the way to unite the country and redefine its place in the international division of labor. His ideas went far beyond combating poverty in the Northeast. The 1964 military coup put an end to this project to reformulate the federal pact, at least for the time being.

J. Castro (2012) describes our development as "superficial progress" and asserts that, behind the facade of progress, unproductive large estates, the system of slave-based plantations, backwardness, ignorance, extreme poverty, and hunger persisted. He makes it clear that the country's development projects did not aim to improve the population's food conditions and left most of the population starving. Furthermore, he argues that the philosophy of Brazilian development in recent years was conceived around the idea of further developing what was already developed, rather than integrating its two marginal regions, the Northeast and the Amazon, into the national economic system.

Shared federal responsibilities: the example of education

The National Congress has not established regulations for federal coordination involving the federal government, states, and municipalities in the area of basic education. The concept of basic education in Brazil comprises three stages: early childhood education, elementary school, and high school. This undermines the choice of cooperative federalism based on the principle of reciprocal collaboration. Because of this omission, it becomes possible to interpret intergovernmental cooperation, in order for it to occur, as a voluntary association among federated entities, something reduced to what it could (and should) be.

Cassini and Nascimento, exploring the complexities of Brazilian federalism, in which distinct administrative bodies must cooperate and collaborate to provide shared public services, ask: "But how can shared responsibilities be carried out if the Constitution establishes that each federated entity must provide public services separately?" (Cassini & Nascimento, 2018, p. 43).

The evidence examined throughout this study supports the hypothesis that Brazilian federalism combines centralized decision-making, decentralized implementation, and federative cooperation. The case of the institutionalization of sociology in high school illustrates this arrangement by demonstrating that national public policies tend to achieve a higher degree of implementation when the federal government exercises functions of normative coordination, financing, monitoring, and technical support for subnational entities. Decentralized implementation, in and of itself, does not ensure the uniformity of public policies; this depends on the federal government's ability to secure the adherence of subnational governments and coordinate their execution through various institutional instruments.

From this perspective, cooperation among levels of government does not eliminate the asymmetry of decision-making power characteristic of Brazilian federalism. On the contrary, it constitutes precisely the mechanism through which the federal government coordinates the decentralized execution of national policies, while simultaneously preserving the administrative autonomy of subnational entities and the capacity to define national objectives.

The literature characterizes Brazilian federalism as cooperative (Abrucio; Souza) and, at the same time, highlights the preservation of broad decision-making authority by the federal government (Arretche). Based on these elements, we propose interpreting the Brazilian case as a model of cooperative federalism with centralized decision-making, in which the cooperation among federal entities occurs under the Union's normative, financial, regulatory, and technical coordination. This formulation seeks to synthesize two characteristics that are often analyzed separately in the literature: the federal government's strong capacity for coordination and the decentralization of public policy implementation by state and municipal governments.

Final Considerations

The 1988 Constitution (CF 1988) adopted the concept of cooperative federalism in Brazil, recognizing that addressing social inequality is a central issue in redemocratization, and that social and economic disparities among subnational units weaken the federation and hinder the universalization of social rights throughout the country. The federal government must play a leading role in the federalist model to support localities where there is very little economic activity and a lack of their own resources to finance public services, even taking into account the mandatory transfers established by the 1988 Constitution. Furthermore, the central government must exercise federal coordination in areas critical to meeting social needs and establish a corresponding national evaluation system to assess the results achieved.

No one doubts the importance of the federal government in a country marked by regional inequalities. But state and municipal governments need to function effectively, addressing realities they know well, mobilizing a qualified bureaucracy, and interacting with the population to set priorities. Decentralization has faced historical challenges, and it cannot yet be said that these have been completely overcome. It is a goal to be achieved, for the sake of better public policy design, spending efficiency, and social participation. However, the exercise of shared powers by federated entities remains a problem to be resolved within the federal pact. This requires willingness to engage in dialogue rather than political confrontation; institutional development rather than voluntarism and improvisation; and a commitment to the public interest rather than personal agendas.

The decentralization process must also address legislative activity, which is currently heavily concentrated in the National Congress. State Legislative Assemblies and City Councils are often prevented from legislating, even when the bills address issues raised at the state or local level and reflect the diversity among the member states of the federation. This ultimately reduces the legislative bodies to a lesser role than they could play and discourages civic participation.

The cooperative federalism outlined in the 1988 Constitution still needs to be refined at the institutional level and in terms of political culture, because subnational entities often reject cooperative dynamic among themselves. In the area of basic education, for example, given that public services are provided by different levels of government, educational policies are becoming increasingly individualized, leading to disparities in the quality of education among states

and even among municipalities within the same state. This situation must be addressed, and the solution lies in intergovernmental cooperation. On the other hand, the competitive environment that has prevailed since 1990 among Brazilian states can only be mitigated through the passage of tax reform in the National Congress. Ultimately, if we seek a country with greater equality in access to social services and the creation of employment opportunities across all regions, incentives for cooperation are indispensable, and limits on federal competition are necessary.

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A Geoinformação na formulação de Políticas Públicas de redução da vulnerabilidade: uma análise do Programa Territórios Sociais na favela da Rocinha

Resumo

A geoinformação possui papel estratégico na formulação e gestão de políticas públicas, ao favorecer a análise territorializada das condições de vida da população. No âmbito do programa Territórios Sociais os dados georreferenciados, provenientes da busca ativa, apontam padrões de vulnerabilidades, que revelam desigualdades internas nas áreas mapeadas. A Rocinha - maior favela do Brasil, segundo o último censo demográfico do Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) - é uma das 1.072 favelas do município do Rio de Janeiro, e, assim como as demais, apresenta condições inadequadas de infraestrutura, padrões de moradia e limitações no acesso aos direitos sociais básicos. Entretanto, cada localidade possui especificidades que precisam ser consideradas. Além disso, os problemas identificados não se apresentam de maneira homogênea no território, manifestando-se de formas distintas em diferentes áreas de uma mesma comunidade. O conhecimento da localização espacial dessas vulnerabilidades subsidia tomadas de decisões mais assertivas, orientando ações focalizadas que promovam a inclusão social.

Palavras-chave: geoinformação; políticas públicas; inclusão social; Rocinha; território

Abstract

Geoinformation plays a strategic role in the formulation and management of public policies, by favoring the territorialized analysis of the population's living conditions. Within the scope of the Territórios Sociais Program, georeferenced data, obtained through active outreach, point to patterns of vulnerability that reveal internal inequalities in the mapped areas. Rocinha – the largest favela in Brazil, according to the latest demographic census of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) – is one of the 1,072 favelas in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro, and, like the others, presents inadequate infrastructure conditions, housing standards, and limitations in access to basic social rights. However, each locality has specificities that need to be considered. Furthermore, the identified problems are not homogeneous across the territory, manifesting themselves in different ways in different areas of the same community. Knowledge of the spatial location of these vulnerabilities supports more assertive decision-making, guiding focused actions that promote social inclusion.

Keywords: geoinformation; public policy; social inclusion; Rocinha; territory

Introdução

As políticas públicas são um dos instrumentos pelo qual o Estado consegue cumprir suas funções e objetivos constitucionais, bem como garantir os direitos dos seus cidadãos e o bem comum "as políticas públicas são o resultado da atividade política, requerem várias ações estratégicas destinadas a implementar os objetivos desejados, e por isso envolvem mais de uma decisão política" (Dias & Matos, 2017, p. 27).

O Estado é a única instância capaz de articular o conjunto de ações que compõem uma política pública, a partir de uma coordenação estratégica, escala ampla e unidade de sentido. As políticas públicas são vistas como expedientes de coordenação estratégica para materializar os direitos estabelecidos na Constituição de 1988. O Estado é quem coordena tanto os meios à sua disposição quanto as atividades de atores privados. O Estado é o sujeito ativo principal de todo o ciclo da política pública: elaboração, planejamento, execução e financiamento (Bucci, 2023).

Uma das instâncias mais sensíveis para o Estado desenvolver as políticas Públicas e garantir direitos é atuando junto às pessoas mais vulneráveis que vivem na pobreza e sem acessar serviços e direitos básicos. De acordo com o IBRE, do IBGE, a pobreza e a extrema pobreza caíram de forma significativa no Brasil entre 2022 e 2024, segundo o supracitado órgão, a recuperação do mercado de trabalho e transferências de programas sociais são grandes responsáveis por isso, visto que o Novo Bolsa Família criou um novo desenho ampliando a focalização desta política pública às famílias que mais precisam.

Em 2024, o percentual de pessoas em situação de pobreza é de 23,4%, a despeito da redução, isso ainda representa 50,7 milhões de pessoas vivendo nessa situação. Em 2024, 3,6% da população brasileira encontrava-se em extrema pobreza, o que indica ainda 7 milhões de pessoas nessa situação. No Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 18,8% das pessoas vivem em situação de pobreza e 3,2% em situação de extrema pobreza (IBRE, 2025).

Identificar essas pessoas não é tarefa fácil, por isso a importância do uso de dados e evidências para subsidiar a tomada de decisão e o desenho das políticas públicas para resolver problemas sociais complexos. As evidências e a participação social tornam-se aliadas na construção de uma agenda de políticas mais assertivas. É o caso do programa Territórios Sociais, que realiza uma busca ativa nas favelas da cidade do Rio de Janeiro a fim de identificar as famílias mais vulneráveis, colocá-las nos serviços da prefeitura e em políticas sociais federais a fim de reduzir o risco social ao qual elas estão expostas, após um ano de atendimento pelas secretarias municipais, essas mesmas famílias são reavaliadas para que se possa compreender o nível de mudança na vida dessas pessoas.

Uma das favelas que recebeu o programa, foi a Rocinha, mais de 24 mil entrevistas foram realizadas nesse território e tiveram sua renda, acesso à saúde, educação, emprego, alimentação e condições habitacionais avaliadas, dessas, mais de 5 mil famílias entraram para o monitoramento do programa.

Além dessa introdução, a segunda seção apresentará o histórico e a caracterização do território da favela da Rocinha. A seção 3, falará mais da metodologia e dos objetivos do programa Territórios Sociais, bem como apresentará dados iniciais do mapeamento do programa na Rocinha. A quarta seção aponta a relevância do uso de dados, evidências e geoinformação como apoio às políticas públicas. A quinta seção discute os principais resultados, apresentando na seção final as considerações finais.

Histórico e caracterização do território

A história da Rocinha não pode ser compreendida a partir de uma narrativa simplificada que a descreva como um "vazio" subitamente ocupado após loteamentos privados nas primeiras décadas do século XX. A partir da leitura da tese de Costa (2019) e do cruzamento com outras produções sobre o território, é possível notar que a Rocinha é resultado de um processo histórico, marcado pela coexistência de práticas rurais, industriais e urbanas, pelo avanço desigual da cidade e, principalmente, pela ação cotidiana de seus moradores. Essa perspectiva, construída tanto por pesquisas acadêmicas quanto pelas memórias reunidas pelo Museu Sankofa Rocinha, permite enxergar a Rocinha a partir de dentro, como um território que se constrói ao mesmo tempo em que constrói a cidade, como diz Antônio Carlos Firmino, coordenador do Museu Sankofa Rocinha.

Na virada do século XIX para o século XX, enquanto a parte baixa da Gávea consolidava-se como polo industrial, com crescimento de vilas de operários e construção de infraestrutura, a parte alta mantinha características rurais. As pesquisas de Costa (2019) mostram que havia ali lavradores, pequenos produtores, criadores de animais e trabalhadores que extraíam lenha e carvão da mata. Muitos desses moradores cultivavam hortaliças que abasteciam mercados e feiras da cidade, indicando que o território já possuía um papel econômico ativo e conectado à dinâmica urbana. É nesse contexto que surge o vínculo entre a produção agrícola local e o nome "Rocinha". Costa evidencia que o território já era conhecido pelas pequenas roças e hortas que abasteciam a feira da Praça Santos Dumont, onde diziam que as frutas e verduras vinham de uma "rocinha" no alto da Gávea.

A compra, em 1915, da antiga fazenda da Rocinha pela Companhia Castro Guidão representou uma mudança importante. A partir da década de 1920, a empresa inicia loteamentos acessíveis para trabalhadores pobres, aproveitando-se da demanda crescente por moradia na zona sul, que vivia valorização acelerada (Costa, 2019). Esses loteamentos não inauguram a ocupação; apenas intensificam um processo já existente. A Rocinha não nasce "do lote", mas "com o lote": famílias que já viviam da agricultura e trabalhadores recém-chegados das fábricas passam a adquirir pequenas partes do terreno, construindo casas simples com seus próprios recursos.

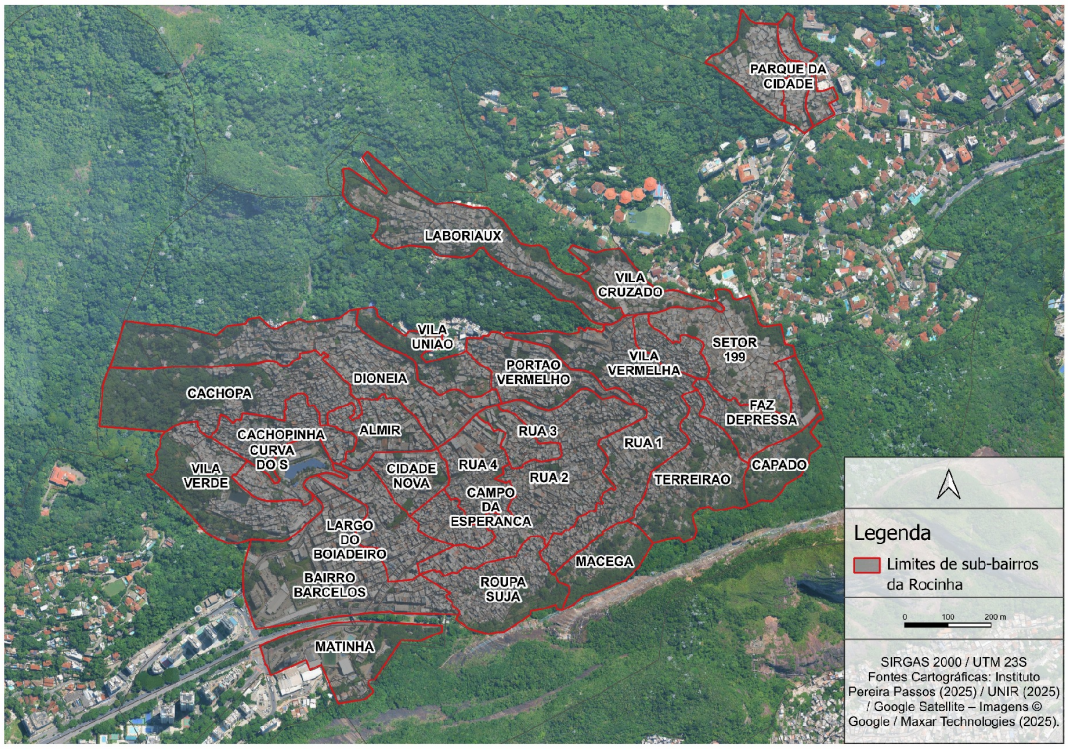
Desde cedo, portanto, a Rocinha se organiza como um território de trabalhadores, refletindo a própria dinâmica da Gávea, um bairro marcado pela presença simultânea das fábricas e pela agricultura. Esse cenário fica evidente quando observamos a expansão da Gávea, onde se concentravam vilas operárias e intensas relações de trabalho industrial (Fraiha & Lobo, 2002). Mais tarde, parte desse espaço se transformou no Parque Proletário, ainda na década de 1940, recebendo famílias removidas de áreas próximas e reforçando a ligação histórica entre políticas habitacionais, industrialização e a formação das favelas cariocas.

Ao longo do século XX, a Rocinha se expande em ritmo acelerado. O asfaltamento da Estrada da Gávea nos anos 1930, aliado à industrialização e ao crescimento da zona sul, intensifica ainda mais a ocupação dos loteamentos. Na década de 1950, a Rocinha já aparece como a favela mais populosa da cidade, segundo o Censo Demográfico de Favelas do antigo Distrito Federal (Valladares & Medeiros, 2003). As desigualdades se aprofundam: de um lado, a valorização crescente da Gávea e de São Conrado; de outro, a precariedade, a ausência de políticas públicas e o adensamento da Rocinha, que crescia sem o apoio do poder público.

Essa realidade gera mobilização. A partir dos anos 1960, inicia-se um ciclo de organização comunitária que marca a história local: mutirões de limpeza de valões, reivindicações por saneamento básico e resistências às remoções do governo Carlos Lacerda. Nos anos 1970, chegam escolas, postos de saúde e as primeiras obras de canalização. Em 1993, pela Lei 1.995, a Rocinha é oficialmente reconhecida como bairro, embora sem correspondência em melhorias estruturais. A favela integra a Área de Planejamento 2 (AP) e a XXVII Região Administrativa (RA) (Figura 1).

Figura 1

Limites da favela da Rocinha



Nota. Fonte: Instituto Pereira Passos (2025), UNIR (2025).

Os dados demográficos também ajudam a dimensionar essa trajetória. Em 1999, o Instituto Municipal de Urbanismo Pereira Passos (IPP) estimava a área ocupada em 837.595,55 m², já em 2022 aponta para 847.899,95 m². O Censo do Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística (IBGE) de 2000 indicou mais de 56 mil habitantes e mais de 16 mil domicílios. Em 2022, a Rocinha registrou 72.021 pessoas e 32.901 domicílios, embora moradores apontem números que ultrapassam 150 mil pessoas, nos últimos anos a Rocinha passa por um processo de verticalização, indicando seu crescimento contínuo.

A distribuição populacional por cor ou raça na Rocinha (Tabela 1), revela uma predominância de pessoas pardas, seguida por brancas e pretas. Esses números reforçam características já reconhecidas nos grandes complexos de favelas do Rio de Janeiro, onde há forte presença de populações negras, historicamente associadas a processos de desigualdade socioeconômica e ocupação informal dos territórios.

O grupo pardo representa quase metade da população (33.561 pessoas), a presença equilibrada entre homens (16.666) e mulheres (16.895) sugere estabilidade na composição por gênero

Tabela 1
Composição por cor ou raça e sexo

Cor ou raça	Total	Homens	Mulheres
Branca	26.125	12.568	13.557
Preta	12.217	6.057	6.160
Amarela	40	15	25
Parda	33.561	16.666	16.895
Indígena	74	49	25
Sem declaração	4	2	2
Total	72.021	35.357	36.664

Nota. Fonte: SIDRA/IBGE.

nesse segmento. Em seguida, a população branca soma 26.125 residentes, apresentando também equilíbrio entre homens (12.568) e mulheres (13.557). Esse dado contrasta com outras favelas do país onde a população branca tende a ser menor, indicando uma particularidade da Rocinha.

Já a população preta contabiliza 12.217 moradores, com leve predominância feminina (6.160). A soma de pretos e pardos evidencia que a maioria absoluta da população da Rocinha se identifica como negra, conforme os critérios do IBGE, o que reforça a forte presença da negritude no território. Grupos menos numerosos, como amarelos (40 pessoas), indígenas (74) e indivíduos sem declaração (4), aparecem com proporções muito reduzidas, mas ainda assim revelam diversidade. A divisão entre homens (35.357) e mulheres (36.664) no total geral demonstra uma leve maioria feminina, comum nos levantamentos demográficos.

De modo geral, o quadro reforça que a Rocinha é um território majoritariamente negro (somando pardos e pretos) e com composição equilibrada de gênero. Esses elementos são fundamentais para fazer análises sobre desigualdades e políticas públicas.

Se voltarmos à perspectiva dos moradores, como propõe o Museu Sankofa Rocinha, a Rocinha se revela não apenas como um espaço de carência, mas como um território de origem, memória e pertencimento.

As falas reunidas pelo Museu reforçam isso: "É o lugar onde eu posso sonhar", "É o lugar onde eu nasci, me criei.", "A Rocinha é minha casa, né! A Rocinha é onde eu moro". Essas narrativas fazem parte da história tanto quanto os mapas ou censos. Elas mostram que a Rocinha sempre foi, antes de tudo, um espaço produzido coletivamente.

Metodologia e objetivo do programa Territórios Sociais

O programa Territórios Sociais é uma iniciativa da Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro que visa à redução da pobreza multidimensional. Partindo do pressuposto de que a utilização de dados é fundamental para a gestão das políticas públicas, o Programa realiza análise territorial para identificar áreas com baixos desempenhos em indicadores socioeconômicos e classifica famílias em situação de maior vulnerabilidade para priorização no atendimento.

A estratégia considera uma concepção ampliada de pobreza, que não se limita à pobreza monetária, mas também reflete as dificuldades de acesso aos direitos, buscando promover a inclusão social.

Desenhado em 2016 por técnicos da Prefeitura do Rio, Territórios Sociais foi pensado como uma estratégia para identificar territórios e famílias com dificuldade de acesso aos direitos soci-

ais, e que são invisibilizados pelas políticas públicas. Além de evidenciar esses territórios e as diferenças internas que eles possuem, o Programa utiliza a intersetorialidade como estratégia para o enfrentamento à pobreza multidimensional.

Em 2017 foi dado início à execução em 180 setores censitários que tinham os piores Índices de Desenvolvimento Social (IDS) da cidade. Os resultados satisfatórios deste piloto possibilitaram a continuidade do programa, onde a metodologia foi aprimorada e a gestão da informação ganhou maior robustez. Um módulo de monitoramento específico para o Programa foi criado e as entrevistas georreferenciadas trouxeram mais qualidade para a produção de informações territorializadas.

Em 2019, foi iniciada uma nova fase do Territórios Sociais, denominada "Grandes Complexos". Nessa fase, foram selecionados dez grandes complexos de favelas do Rio de Janeiro, tendo como principal critério a localização em regiões administrativas com os piores desempenhos no Índice de Progresso Social (IPS). Nesse mesmo ano, foi firmado um acordo de contribuição entre a Prefeitura e o Programa das Nações Unidas para os Assentamentos Humanos (ONU-Habitat), e o programa passou a ser executado em parceria com a agência.

No ano de 2022, o programa Territórios Sociais ampliou sua atuação e foi implementado simultaneamente em todas as áreas de planejamento da cidade. Desde então, segue em fase de expansão e permanece como uma iniciativa estratégica para a gestão municipal. Nessa etapa de expansão, a seleção dos territórios considerou o Índice de Desenvolvimento Social (IDS), além de contribuições de profissionais da Prefeitura que atuam nos equipamentos públicos.

O programa é estruturado em três etapas principais: busca ativa, plano de ação integrada e monitoramento.

Na etapa da busca ativa é realizado um mapeamento por setor censitário e são feitas visitas a cada domicílio, para a aplicação de um questionário, composto por perguntas que permitem identificar demandas do território, da família e do indivíduo. A partir das respostas, é possível calcular o Índice de Pobreza Multidimensional (IPM) de cada família.

Criado em 2010 pelo Programa das Nações Unidas para o Desenvolvimento (PNUD) e pela Iniciativa de Pobreza e Desenvolvimento Humano de Oxford (OPHI), o IPM considera três dimensões da pobreza: saúde, educação e padrão de vida. Ele é composto por indicadores que medem as privações de cada família, privações essas que impactam diretamente sua qualidade de vida.

Para o programa Territórios Sociais o IPM foi adaptado, considerando 11 indicadores distribuídos nas três dimensões mencionadas. O valor do IPM varia de 0 a 1 e as dimensões são igualmente ponderadas, representando 1/3 cada ou 0,33. São consideradas famílias multidimensionalmente pobres aquelas com valor de IPM superior a 0,33, o que corresponde aos riscos 2 e 3 em termos de vulnerabilidade à pobreza.

As famílias prioritárias para o monitoramento de Territórios Sociais são aquelas classificadas nos riscos 2 e 3 do IPM, bem como as que declararam estar em extrema pobreza (renda per capita até 109,00), e que não estão inseridas no Cadastro Único para Programas Sociais.

A coleta primária de dados possibilita um retrato das condições de vulnerabilidade existentes em uma área. No entanto, esse diagnóstico ganha maior relevância quando articulado a ações efetivas das políticas públicas, que são fundamentais para a redução das desigualdades. É nessa perspectiva que se insere a segunda etapa do programa: o plano de ação integrada.

Para responder de forma adequada às múltiplas privações que atingem famílias em situação de pobreza, torna-se indispensável um olhar ampliado sobre esse fenômeno multifacetado. Isso exige não apenas o reconhecimento das vulnerabilidades, mas também a articulação entre diferentes políticas públicas. Nesse sentido, as ações integradas entre os órgãos que compõem a iniciativa Territórios Sociais são fundamentais para garantir a efetividade do trabalho.

O Programa dispõe de um Comitê Gestor, coordenado pelo Instituto Pereira Passos, e com a participação de representantes de 11 Secretarias Municipais: Saúde, Educação, Assistência Social, Trabalho e Renda, Cultura, Habitação, Ação Comunitária, Meio Ambiente, Juventude, Mulher e Inclusão.

A terceira etapa inclui o monitoramento e a avaliação de Territórios Sociais. Os registros das coletas realizadas na busca ativa, bem como os atendimentos feitos pelas Secretarias do protocolo básico são inseridos em uma plataforma específica, dentro do Sistema de Informações Urbanas do Município do Rio de Janeiro (SIURB). Tais registros possibilitam acompanhar a evolução do trabalho de campo e o atendimento prestado pelas Secretarias.

Além dos dados inseridos na plataforma do Programa, os registros administrativos produzidos pelos órgãos municipais contribuem para a melhor compreensão acerca do alcance das intervenções realizadas. Um ano após o atendimento no protocolo básico, são realizadas novas visitas para a condução das entrevistas de avaliação com as famílias. O questionário é aplicado novamente, com o objetivo de mensurar a efetividade do trabalho desenvolvido.

O programa Territórios Sociais teve início na Rocinha em junho de 2019, durante a fase de Grandes Complexos. Cerca de dez agentes de campo participaram da coleta de dados, que foi concluída em 2022. A entrada em campo foi precedida de articulação com as lideranças locais e a equipe foi formada, majoritariamente, por moradores da comunidade.

Considerando as dimensões da Rocinha, a estratégia mais eficaz para realizar uma pesquisa censitária em todo o território foi a divisão da equipe em duas: uma responsável pela parte alta e outra pela parte baixa da comunidade.

O questionário aplicado incluiu perguntas que permitiram identificar o perfil das famílias e dos indivíduos residentes no território. Além disso, abordou temas relacionados à renda, segurança alimentar, acesso à documentação, condições de saúde, trabalho, escolaridade e habitação. As entrevistas foram georreferenciadas, o que possibilitou evidenciar com maior precisão as vulnerabilidades existentes em cada microterritório.

De acordo com a Tabela 2, foram realizadas 24.709 entrevistas, 5.086 famílias foram classificadas como prioritárias para atendimento e monitoramento dos órgãos municipais, por estarem em maior risco social. Quanto ao IPM, 410 famílias foram identificadas nos riscos 2 ou 3, enquanto 3.861 famílias estavam em extrema pobreza, sem inclusão no Cadastro Único para Programas Sociais, que é a porta de entrada para Programas e benefícios, como os de transferência de renda.

A utilização de dados e da geoinformação no apoio a políticas públicas

De acordo com Pinheiro (2022), na perspectiva tradicional das Políticas Públicas Baseadas em Evidências (PPBE), as evidências assumem um papel central, sendo concebidas como instrumentos fundamentais para racionalizar os processos de decisão. Nessa visão (a tradicional), as evidências se confundem com o conhecimento científico produzido por métodos rigorosos, sistematizados e reprodutíveis.

Tabela 2
Resultados gerais

Indicador	Número
Entrevistas realizadas	24.729
Famílias para monitoramento	5.086 (20,6%)
Famílias em riscos 2 ou 3 do IPM	410 (1,7%)
Famílias em extrema pobreza fora do CadÚnico	3.861 (15,6%)

Nota. Fonte: Instituto Pereira Passos.

Nesse contexto, a função atribuída às evidências é essencialmente instrumental: elas servem como ferramentas técnicas, objetivas e mecânicas, capazes de determinar "o que funciona" ou "não funciona" na busca por fins específicos, como eficácia e otimização de custo-benefício. A decisão política, nesse modelo, aparece como fruto dos dados e resultados científicos que direcionam de forma quase automática a escolha das melhores alternativas.

Além disso, essa abordagem tradicional pressupõe uma neutralidade inerente ao processo decisório. Acredita-se que, ao basear as decisões em evidências é possível superar disputas político-ideológicas, mitos e subjetividades, conferindo legitimidade e autoridade simbólica às políticas adotadas. A objetividade da ciência torna-se, assim, o fundamento da superioridade das PPBE, representando um caminho técnico e imparcial para a solução de problemas públicos (Pinheiro, 2022).

No entanto "é implausível que o uso da racionalidade instrumental, meramente sobre as evidências científicas, seja suficiente para assegurar o progresso e o bem-estar sociais no longo prazo" (Koga et al., 2022, p. 35).

Desse modo, dada a multidimensionalidade do conceito de evidência, Pinheiro (2022), propõe um modelo moderado, intermediário que rejeita os extremos, sendo assim um modelo mais realista e pragmático, que reconheça a complexidade do mundo social sem abandonar a possibilidade de análise racional.

Os autores discorrem que o uso de evidências não ocorre de forma uniforme, mas é profundamente moldado pelo contexto em que as decisões são tomadas. Essas dimensões podem ser de esferas e níveis de governo: abrangem os três poderes nos níveis federativos (União, Estados e Municípios); áreas de política pública: políticas sociais, de saúde, educacionais, de controle e gestão, macroeconômicas, de infraestrutura, ambientais, de inclusão produtiva rural e de ciência, tecnologia e inovação e unidade de análise: A investigação ocorre em múltiplos níveis: o individual (focando em burocratas e gestores), o organizacional-institucional e o sistêmico (Koga et al., 2022).

Para os autores, o Estado – que não é apenas um consumidor de dados – aparece como um produtor de dados. Organizações públicas geram e sistematizam continuamente informações por meio de instrumentos como notas técnicas, registros administrativos, sistemas de monitoramento e avaliações internas. As fontes estatais, como as estatísticas oficiais e os registros administrativos (por exemplo, o Cadastro Único), têm sido elementos cruciais para o desenvolvimento social, permitindo o desenho, o acompanhamento e a avaliação de políticas (Koga et al., 2022).

De acordo com os autores a produção estatal de evidências não é um processo neutro ou técnico isolado. Ela é influenciada pela moldura contextual, marcada por interesses, valores políticos e disputas intra e interinstitucionais. Portanto, o conhecimento gerado pelo Estado não

emerge de um vácuo, mas reflete e é moldado pelo ambiente institucional e político no qual está inserido.

Outro importante instrumento para formulação e implementação de políticas públicas é a geoinformação.

Trabalhar com geoinformação significa, antes de mais nada, utilizar computadores como instrumentos de representação de dados espacialmente referenciados. Deste modo, o problema fundamental da Ciência da Geoinformação é o estudo e a implementação de diferentes formas de representação computacional do espaço geográfico. É costume dizer-se que Geoprocessamento é uma tecnologia interdisciplinar, que permite a convergência de diferentes disciplinas científicas para o estudo de fenômenos ambientais e urbanos. Ou ainda, que "o espaço é uma linguagem comum" para as diferentes disciplinas do conhecimento (Câmara & Monteiro, 2001, p. 21).

Desse modo, a geoinformação aparece enquanto uma solução inteligente e multidisciplinar que relaciona a formulação de políticas públicas com o planejamento e ordenamento territorial a fim de criar soluções mais eficientes para o entendimento e o uso dos espaços.

O programa Territórios Sociais, utiliza os dados coletados na busca ativa para selecionar as famílias mais vulneráveis nas comunidades do Rio de Janeiro. Esses dados – que são evidências – deixam claro quais são as múltiplas privações as quais essas famílias estão submetidas a fim de que a partir dessas informações, o poder público municipal consiga atendê-las em seus serviços essenciais para que elas possam ter o seu risco social diminuído e seu quadro de pobreza amenizado.

Todos os dados da busca ativa do programa são georreferenciados, então a partir disso, é possível caracterizar de forma espacial os territórios da cidade do Rio de Janeiro, evidenciando onde estão as famílias mais vulneráveis, os territórios e regiões mais vulneráveis da cidade, bem como um mapeamento de quais são essas privações. O que facilita a tomada de decisão da prefeitura e também o desenho das políticas públicas que visam atuar na solução dos problemas encontrados.

Apresentação dos dados

Nesta seção serão apresentados parte dos dados em tabelas e mapas resultantes da Busca Ativa do Programa Territórios Sociais. A espacialização desses dados permite não apenas a visualização da distribuição territorial dos indicadores, mas também reconhecer as áreas de maior incidência. Assim, será possível compreender, de forma mais precisa, tanto a localização, como a concentração de diferentes vulnerabilidades identificadas na área de estudo.

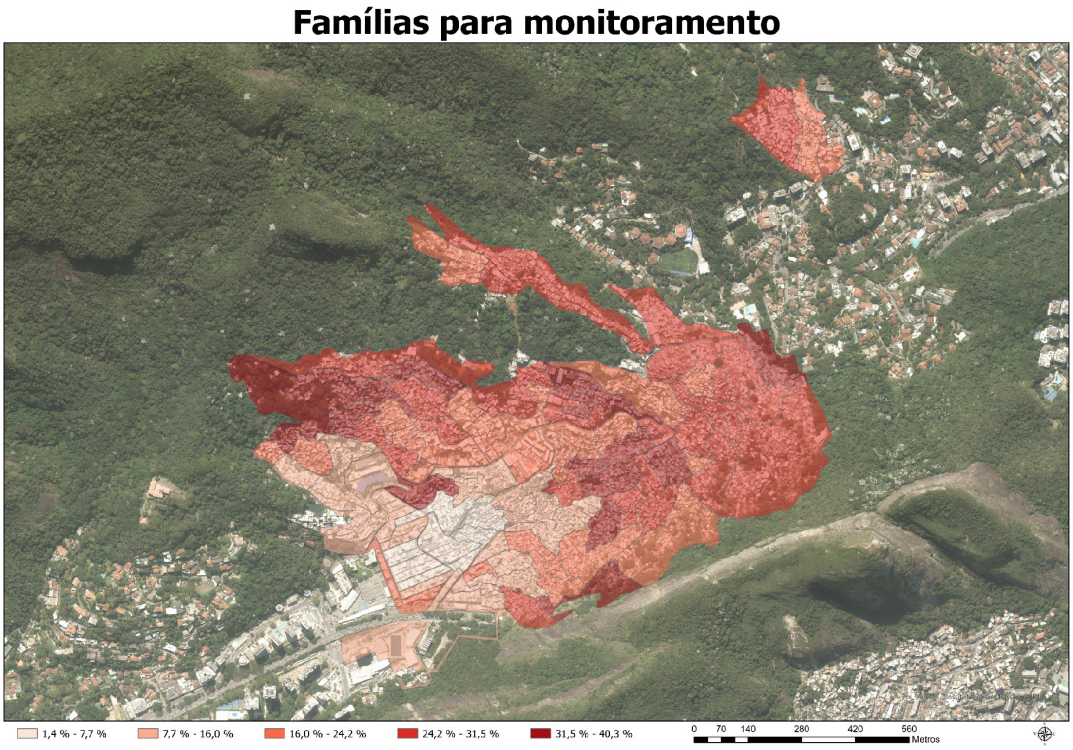
Durante a pesquisa da busca ativa na Rocinha foi apurado o dado de que 21.095 famílias possuem renda menor que três salários mínimos, o que significa cerca de 85% das entrevistadas. Além disso, 7.951 núcleos familiares viviam com renda per capita menor que meio salário mínimo - o que as classifica como famílias de baixa renda – isto é, aproximadamente 32% das famílias responderam o questionário.

O mapa da Figura 2 revela a distribuição das famílias classificadas para monitoramento. A partir dele, percebe-se que elas estão presentes por todo o território, mas há uma concentração significativa nos setores mais elevados e distantes das principais vias de acesso à comunidade. Nesse âmbito, alguns setores que estão nos limites da favela, com exceção dos que se localizam nas partes baixas, destacam-se por concentrarem as maiores porcentagens de famílias com

maior risco social, de acordo com a classificação do programa. Enquanto isso, a maior parte dos setores que se encontram próximos a logradouros pertencentes a chamada "cidade formal" experienciam, de modo geral, uma menor vulnerabilidade social.

Figura 2

Famílias para monitoramento



Nota. Fonte: Instituto Pereira Passos, 2025.

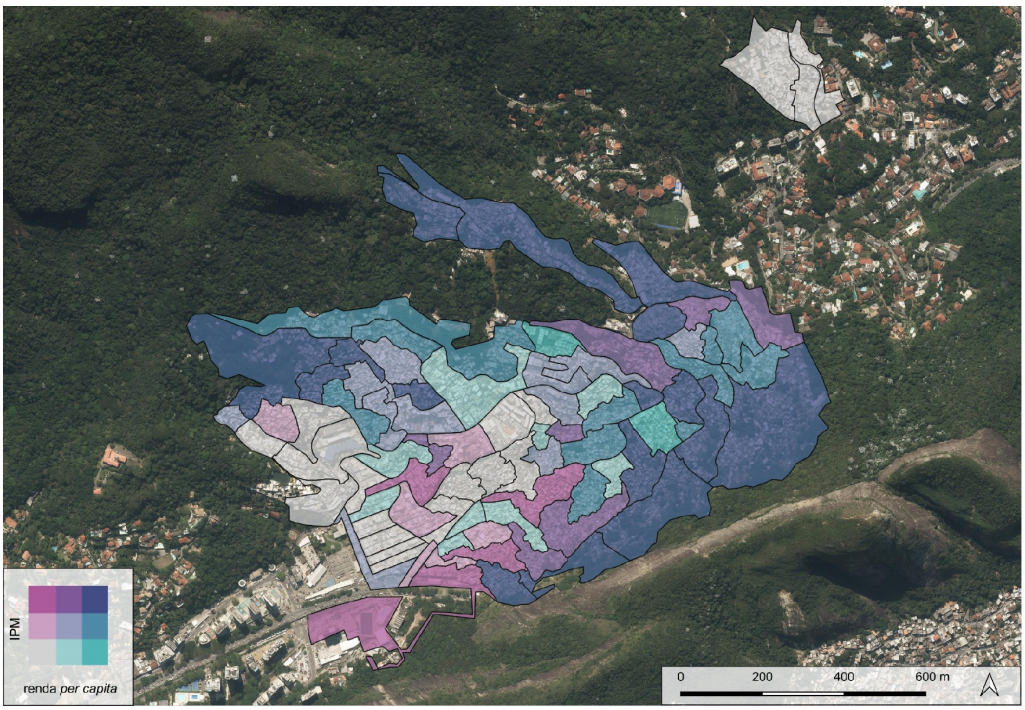
O Programa Territórios Sociais, apesar de considerar o quesito monetário, tem seu questionário baseado no Índice de Pobreza Multidimensional. Assim, outras privações são consideradas na identificação das famílias em risco social. No mapa da Figura 3, é possível observar os níveis de correlação entre IPM e renda per capita. Há uma forte correlação entre esses dois indicadores nos setores que margeiam todo o limite leste e sudeste da Rocinha passando pelos sub-bairros Faz Depressa, Capado, Terreirão, Macega e Roupa Suja. Além disso, os setores mais ao norte e alguns do extremo noroeste também evidenciam essa alta correlação entre IPM e renda per capita. Em síntese, nessas áreas mencionadas, o IPM é inversamente proporcional à renda per capita, ou seja, quanto menor a renda per capita maior o IPM.

No quesito emprego, foram identificados, nesse território, 7.447 maiores de idade sem emprego e 4.382 jovens sem trabalhar e sem estudar. No mapa da Figura 4, é possível visualizar a espacialização de pessoas maiores de dezoito anos sem emprego e percebe-se que o padrão espacial, visto anteriormente nos outros mapas, se repete para as áreas limítrofes da favela. Desse modo, observou-se uma concentração significativa desse grupo nas áreas mais altas da favela, sobretudo nas margens leste, nordeste e norte. Novamente, na parte baixa da favela, as porcentagens de desempregados são, em geral, menores.

O acesso à documentação também é um ponto de atenção na identificação de famílias vulneráveis, pois possuir documentação é um pré-requisito para acessar diversos serviços essen-

Figura 3

Mapa bivariado de renda per capita e IPM



Nota. Fonte: Instituto Pereira Passos, 2025.

ciais, além do próprio mercado de trabalho. Na Rocinha, foram localizados 1.157 indivíduos maiores de dezoito anos sem carteira de trabalho. Além disso, 1.241 maiores de idade não possuíam carteira de identidade e 1.076 não tinham cadastro de pessoa física (CPF). Também havia 550 pessoas sem certidão de nascimento.

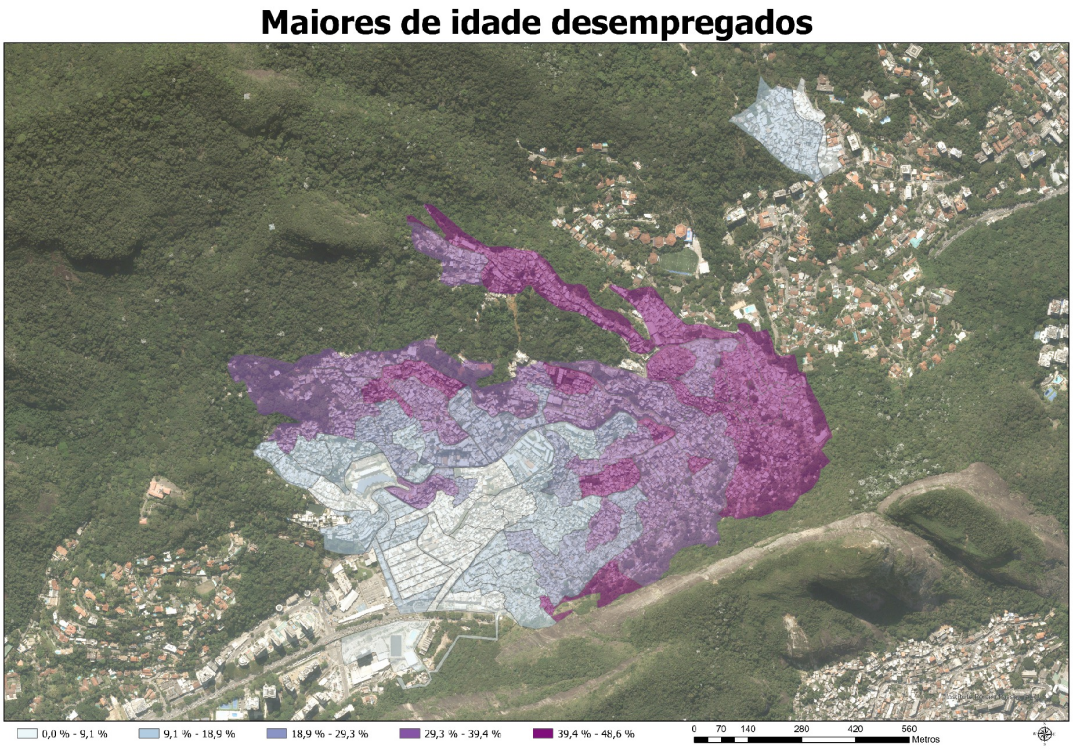
No mapa da Figura 5, observa-se como está distribuído no território o acesso a documentação. Os setores com tonalidade mais clara são os que possuem mais acesso a documentação e os setores que apresentam tonalidade em rosa mais escuro são aqueles que têm maior número de indivíduos sem algum tipo de documento. Nesse viés, observa-se que há núcleos sem acesso eficaz à documentação tanto na parte baixa da favela, quanto na porção alta. Todavia, é na área mais ao sul onde encontram-se os setores mais destacados.

Quanto às edificações presentes na Rocinha, essas, em sua maioria, foram construídas fora do padrão urbanístico definido para a cidade do Rio de Janeiro. Tal fato é muito comum não somente nessa área, mas na maior parte das favelas e comunidades urbanas do município. Assim, ao visualizar o mapa das características da edificação (Figura 6), compreende-se que os domicílios com aspectos mais precários encontram-se nas áreas limítrofes da favela, especialmente nos sub-bairros Vila Cruzado, Faz Depressa, Capado, Terreirão e Macega.

Os dados sobre as condições habitacionais (Tabela 3) evidenciam carências que impactam diretamente o bem-estar, a saúde e a dignidade das famílias. Eles mostram a presença de 1.322 famílias sem acesso à água ou rede de esgoto, representando 5,4% do total de famílias entrevistadas. A situação de 312 famílias sem chuveiro ou vaso sanitário, equivalente a 1,3%, expressa a

Figura 4

Maiores de idade desempregados



Nota. Fonte: Instituto Pereira Passos, 2025.

falta de dignidade dessas famílias. A ausência de banheiro adequado indica precariedade, com impactos sobre saúde e condições mínimas de higiene.

Tabela 3

Condições habitacionais

Indicador	Famílias
Famílias sem acesso a água ou esgoto da rede	1.322
Famílias sem piso ou parede de alvenaria	278
Famílias sem chuveiro ou vaso sanitário	312
Famílias sem fogão ou geladeira	643

Nota. Fonte: Instituto Pereira Passos.

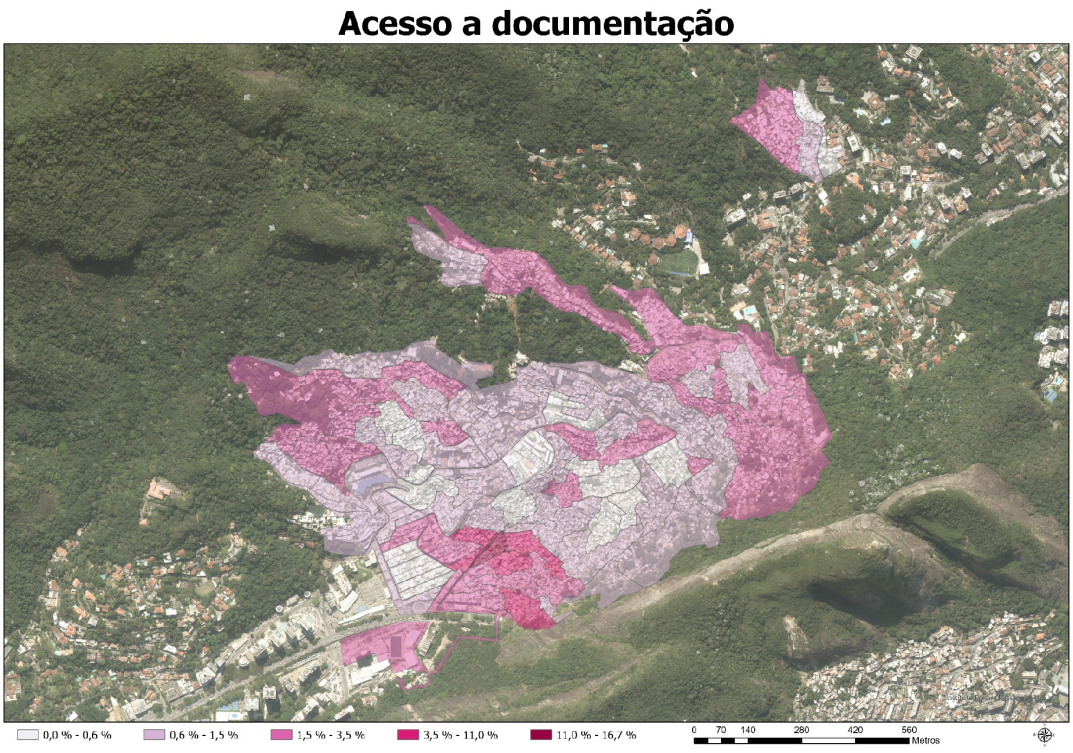
Esse dado, quando associado aos dados sobre falta de água e falta de acesso a rede de esgoto, evidenciam um conjunto de vulnerabilidades que uma alimenta a outra.

Outro indicador relevante é o de 278 famílias vivendo em moradias sem piso ou parede de alvenaria, o que corresponde a 1,1%. Embora o percentual seja relativamente baixo, ele revela a existência de construções possivelmente frágeis e vulneráveis a chuvas, infiltrações ou ao risco de desabamento.

Por fim, há 643 famílias sem fogão ou geladeira, cerca de 2,6% das famílias. Esse indicador demonstra limitações no acesso a bens domésticos básicos que permitem preparo e conservação de alimentos.

Figura 5

Acesso a documentação



Nota. Fonte: Instituto Pereira Passos, 2025.

No âmbito da educação (Tabela 4 e Figura 7), a existência de crianças fora da escola é um aspecto que desperta grande preocupação, pois essa situação contribui diretamente para o aumento da vulnerabilidade desses indivíduos, a evasão ou não inserção escolar na infância tende a gerar impactos no desenvolvimento social, emocional e profissional dessas crianças. Na Rocinha, foram encontradas 295 crianças e adolescentes, de 4 a 14 anos (faixa etária com obrigatoriedade de vaga pela rede municipal de ensino) que não frequentavam a escola, durante a pesquisa de busca ativa. Esses indivíduos estavam concentrados, sobretudo, nas localidades do Faz Depressa, Capado e em partes da Vila Verde, Cachopa e Cachopinha. Além disso, parte do Bairro Barcelos, o sub-bairro da Rua 4 e alguns setores próximos a ele também se destacam no número de indivíduos fora da escola.

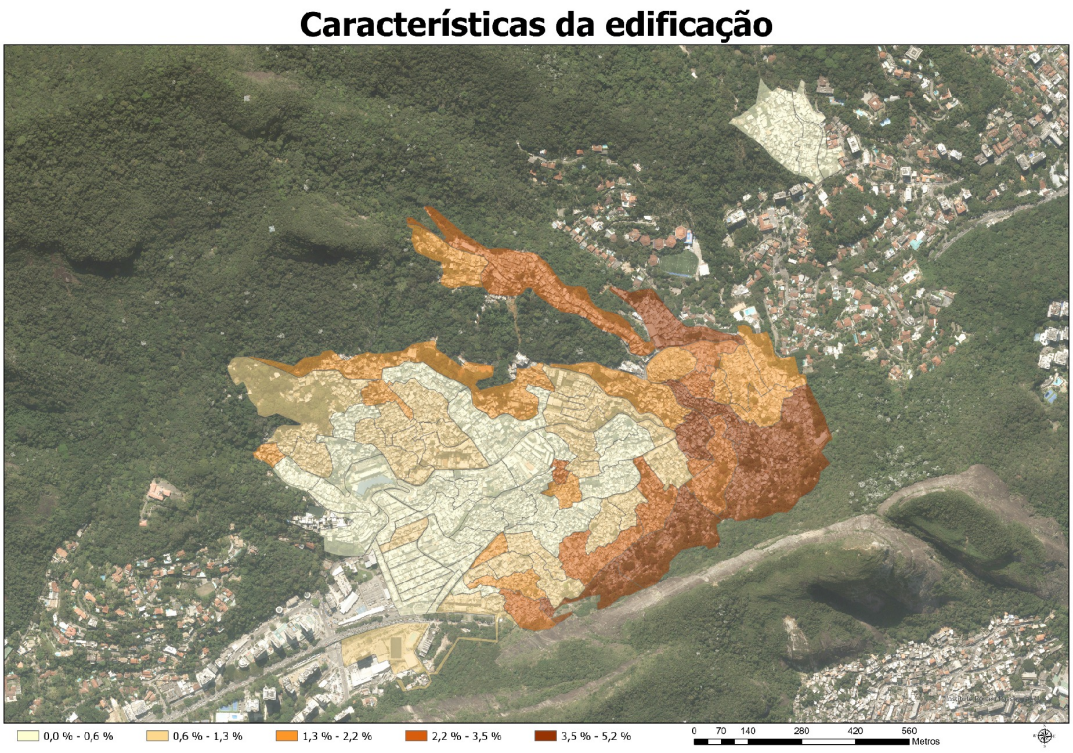
Entre os adultos há 17.370 pessoas maiores de idade sem o Ensino Fundamental completo, sugerindo que uma parte da população não conseguiu concluir as etapas básicas da escolarização, o que limita oportunidades de trabalho, ou seja, reduz a renda potencial. Esse cenário é agravado pelo número ainda maior de 26.537 adultos sem o Ensino Médio completo, revelando que grande parte da população enfrenta barreiras educacionais.

Em conjunto, esses dados mostram que a educação na Rocinha enfrenta desafios intergeracionais: crianças com acesso insuficiente à educação formal e à educação infantil convivem com adultos que carregam um histórico de escolarização interrompida. Esse ambiente perpetua o ciclo de desigualdade e reduz as possibilidades de ascensão social.

Os dados de saúde (Tabela 5) evidenciam vulnerabilidades que afetam diretamente a qualidade de vida das famílias da Rocinha. Os dados revelam 1.183 pessoas com deficiência e se

Figura 6

Características da edificação



Nota. Fonte: Instituto Pereira Passos, 2025.

tratando de um território com limitações urbanas, isso pode aumentar barreiras no acesso à educação, trabalho e mobilidade.

Os dados revelam também que 39 famílias vivenciaram mortalidade de crianças menores de seis anos. Mesmo sendo um número relativamente pequeno, ele pode vir acompanhado de situações de extrema fragilidade social. O dado de 45 adolescentes grávidas reforça desafios relacionados à educação sexual. Além disso, a gravidez na adolescência tende a interromper os estudos e gerar dependência econômica.

A situação alimentar das famílias também é preocupante: 5.326 delas, ou 21,5%, enfrentam insegurança alimentar, o que implica dificuldades reais em garantir refeições adequadas e suficientes. Esse indicador reforça a gravidade da pobreza registrada e evidencia impactos diretos na saúde, no bem-estar e no desenvolvimento, especialmente, de crianças e adolescentes.

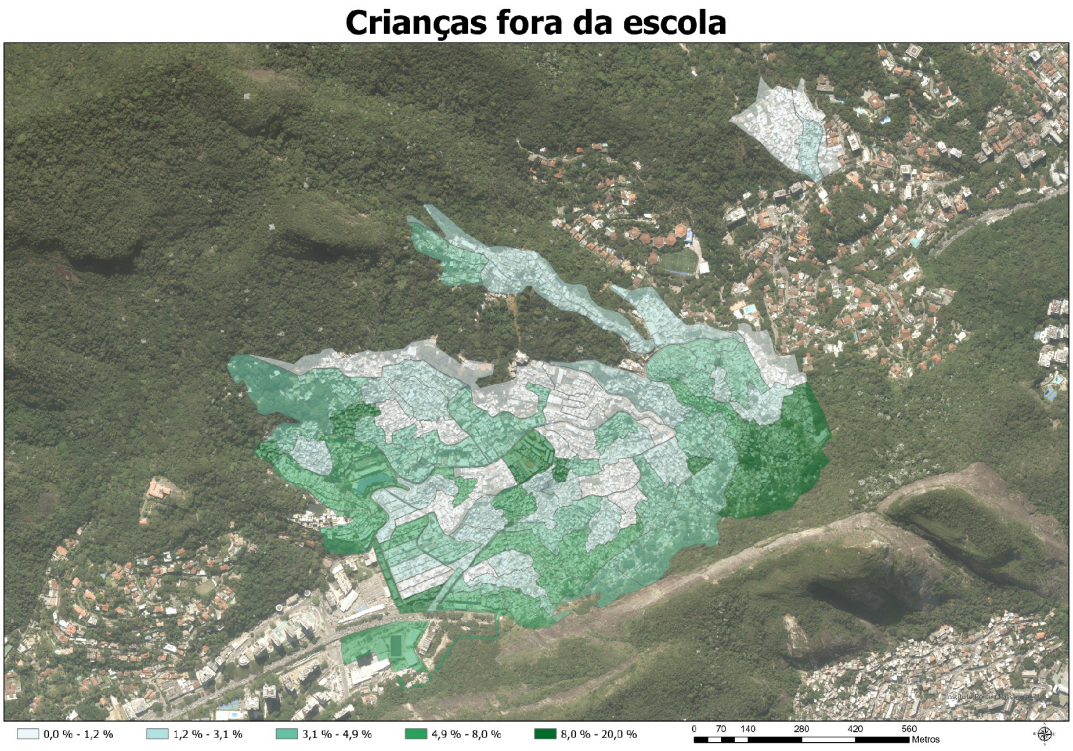
Por fim, o número de 5.239 famílias sem filtro de água. A falta de filtragem da água indica risco elevado de consumo de água inadequada, favorecendo doenças, como diarreias e infecções intestinais.

Em linhas gerais, os dados georreferenciados permitiram a espacialização da informação através dos produtos cartográficos apresentados. A partir desse processo, foi possível identificar que a vulnerabilidade, apesar de estar presente em todo território, não está distribuída de forma homogênea. Em síntese, observou-se que, na maioria dos aspectos analisados, a carência é maior nas localidades mais altas e menor em sub-bairros localizados na parte baixa da favela.

Esse fato evidencia, portanto, um contraste dentro da própria Rocinha. Assim, domicílios e famílias que estão nas áreas mais próximas às entradas e saídas da favela acessam com mais

Figura 7

Crianças fora da escola



Nota. Fonte: Instituto Pereira Passos, 2025.

facilidade infraestruturas e serviços, enquanto aquelas que habitam zonas de mais difícil acesso expressam maiores insuficiências no alcance de serviços e infraestruturas que favorecem melhores condições de vida.

Considerações finais

As análises desenvolvidas neste artigo reforçam que o uso de dados na formulação e na gestão de políticas públicas não apenas é relevante, mas constitui um elemento fundamental para a construção de intervenções mais eficazes. Seja na concepção de novas iniciativas, seja no aprimoramento de programas já existentes, os dados devem orientar o planejamento, a tomada de decisão e a alocação dos recursos públicos.

A gestão eficiente de políticas públicas em contextos urbanos exige o reconhecimento da heterogeneidade que caracteriza as cidades. Compreender suas potencialidades e fragilidades e desenvolver respostas ajustadas às especificidades locais são passos indispensáveis para que os objetivos sejam alcançados de forma mais precisa.

O estudo apresentado contribui para o entendimento de que políticas públicas baseadas em evidências apresentam maior potencial de efetividade. Quando se trata de reduzir vulnerabilidades sociais, essa ponderação ganha ainda mais relevância: é imprescindível considerar a diversidade interna dos territórios, reconhecendo que eles não constituem unidades homogêneas, mas sim espaços marcados por desigualdades e dinâmicas próprias. Assim, o uso qualificado de dados territorializados se mostra não apenas útil, mas essencial para a formulação de políticas mais equitativas.

O investimento em pesquisas capazes de captar demandas locais, assim como em tecnologias da informação, deve ser estimulado, pois ambos têm impacto direto na produção de informações qualificadas. Programas como Territórios Sociais, desenvolvido pela Prefeitura do Rio de Janeiro, são importantes para retratar as condições de vida da população em uma escala territorial que chega ao nível do setor censitário.

Esse grau de desagregação permite um olhar mais detalhado sobre a complexa realidade dos territórios mais precarizados da cidade, revelando nuances que são frequentemente invisibilizadas por indicadores agregados.

Os registros da Rocinha, aqui apresentados, ilustram bem essa consideração. É uma favela localizada na zona sul do Rio de Janeiro, frequentemente visitada por turistas. Na totalidade, possui melhores resultados em vários indicadores quando comparada a outras favelas da cidade. No entanto, quando há o aprofundamento sobre as especificidades territoriais, saltam aos olhos as desigualdades internas. Áreas conhecidas como Laboriaux, Cachola, Dioneia e 199, nas partes mais altas da comunidade, têm piores resultados em indicadores diversos, que evidenciam maior concentração de pessoas em situação de pobreza multidimensional.

As informações produzidas por Territórios Sociais vão além do simples retrato da vulnerabilidade das comunidades atendidas. Elas se desdobram em ações concretas, como a priorização de atendimentos por parte das políticas setoriais que compõem a iniciativa. Os dados gerados pelo Programa são utilizados como diagnóstico inicial e têm subsidiado projetos de melhorias habitacionais, iniciativas de urbanização e a ampliação da rede de atenção básica em saúde.

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BRASILIANA: JOURNAL FOR BRAZILIAN STUDIES

Ecos de unidades: nacionalismo, identidade e a luta contra a extrema-direita em perspectiva sino-brasileira comparada

Resumo

Este artigo investiga a dualidade do nacionalismo como força de coesão e exclusão na constituição dos Estados nacionais da China e do Brasil. Apoiando-se na teoria das "comunidades imaginadas" de Benedict Anderson, analisa-se como na China o coletivismo preexistente para converter o sistema dinástico em um Estado-nação moderno, promovendo a unidade interna e a resistência contra ingerências externas. Em contrapartida, no cenário brasileiro, o discurso nacionalista historicamente atuou para consolidar as hierarquias de poder colonial e marginalizar populações negras e indígenas. Propõe-se que os movimentos progressistas no Brasil podem se beneficiar ao ressignificar a ideia de nação como um instrumento inclusivo e integrador, opondo-se à retórica excludente promovida pela extrema-direita. O estudo sugere, por fim, que a reconfiguração desse sentimento coletivo constitui uma estratégia fundamental para mobilizar o apoio popular e consolidar a democracia frente a investidas autoritárias.

Palavras-chave: nacionalismo; Estado-nação; grupos étnicos; China; Brasil; fascismo

Abstract

This article examines the dual role of nationalism as a force for cohesion and exclusion within the nation-state formations of China and Brazil. Drawing on Benedict Anderson's theory of "Imagined Communities", the study explores how China leveraged national sentiment to transition from a dynastic system to a modern nation-state, fostering unity and resistance against foreign interventions. Conversely, in Brazil, nationalism has been used to perpetuate colonial power hierarchies and exclude Black and Indigenous populations. It is proposed that Brazilian progressive movements could benefit from redefining the national bond as an inclusive and unifying tool, providing an alternative to the exclusionary rhetoric promoted by the far-right. Finally, this study suggests that reimagining the national community could be a crucial strategy for mobilizing popular support and strengthening democracy in the face of authoritarian challenges.

Keywords: nationalism; nation-state; ethnic groups; China; Brazil; fascism

Introdução

Nas últimas décadas, o diagnóstico sobre a perda de relevância do Estado-nação diante dos fluxos transnacionais se tornou recorrente nas ciências sociais, sob o influxo de teses

pós-nacionais e de hibridização cultural (Appadurai, 1995). Contudo, a categoria "nacional" persiste como eixo central de identificação subjetiva e articulação política. Longe de constituir um anacronismo, o pertencimento nacional atua como relevante vetor de coesão social interna e de legitimidade soberana nas relações internacionais contemporâneas. Este artigo analisa o papel do nacionalismo na transição e reconfiguração de duas grandes estruturas estatais continentais situadas fora do centro dinâmico do capitalismo transnacional: a passagem da China de sua milenar estrutura imperial-dinástica para um Estado nacional moderno (do final do século XIX a meados do século XX), e a refundação do Brasil como uma República oligárquica que buscou disciplinar sua diversidade interna sob os parâmetros de modernidade e raça no mesmo período.

Apoiando-se na formulação de Benedict Anderson (2013) de nação como uma comunidade política imaginada — inerentemente limitada e soberana —, analisa-se como o "nacionalismo oficial" emergiu como estratégia de reação estatal. Essa dinâmica foi mobilizada por antigos Estados dinásticos e elites imperiais como ferramenta para neutralizar e englobar os nascentes movimentos baseados em identidades étnicas e populares. A comparação entre a China e o Brasil, dois cenários históricos, demográficos e culturais à primeira vista incomensuráveis, justifica-se metodologicamente pelo seu potencial heurístico de contraste. Ambos os territórios, de proporções continentais e situados fora do centro dinâmico do Norte Global, viram-se impelidos a traduzir e adaptar os conceitos exógenos de "nação", "Estado moderno" e "raça" na virada do século XIX para o XX. Contudo, as respostas a essa imposição epistemológica e política foram divergentes. Enquanto a China operou uma transição do sistema imperial-dinástico acoplando o conceito de nacionalismo (*minzu zhuyi*) a uma narrativa preexistente de unidade civilizacional e resistência anti-imperialista popular, no Brasil o ideário nacional foi construído de cima para baixo por elites intelectuais herdeiras do poder colonial.

No cenário brasileiro, o nacionalismo oficial e as teorias de branqueamento serviram para aprofundar as clivagens sociais, alienando as populações negra e indígena do sentimento de pertença ao próprio Estado. Em contrapartida, a dinâmica histórica chinesa se pautou, secularmente, na busca pela unificação territorial e pela acomodação das diferenças étnicas sob uma autoridade central consolidada, transformando o sentimento nacional em um instrumento de soberania popular.

A comparação entre ambos os casos, portanto, permite desuniversalizar o modelo eurocêntrico de Estado-nação. O cenário brasileiro se beneficia da análise do caso chinês ao demonstrar que o nacionalismo, quando redefinido de baixo para cima e desvinculado de exclusões raciais, deixa de ser um monopólio das elites dominantes para se converter em força emancipatória de *solidariedade* coletiva e salvaguarda da soberania popular. Ao evidenciar esse potencial de ressignificação, o presente estudo oferece subsídios para que os movimentos progressistas no Brasil reformulem essa força de caráter ambivalente. O vínculo nacional se converte, assim, em uma ferramenta de coesão, inclusão e justiça social, capaz de fazer frente às derivas autocráticas e segregacionistas da extrema-direita contemporânea.

Este estudo se estrutura em duas seções principais: a primeira examina o conceito de "nacionalismo oficial" formulado por Anderson (2013), enquanto a segunda desenvolve uma análise comparativa e simétrica sobre a recepção das teorias sociais ocidentais na China e no Brasil, revelando como as elites letradas e os movimentos populares de ambos os países articularam a ideia de nação — seja pela exclusão eugênica e mimetismo colonial no caso brasileiro,

seja pelo resgate de matrizes relacionais e pela formulação do nacionalismo cívico-racial (*minzu zhuyi*) no caso chinês. A análise conclui propondo que a reconfiguração da ideia de nação sirva de alicerce para um projeto político integrador que promova canais de cidadania substantiva e reciprocidade para grupos historicamente submetidos à exclusão estrutural, oferecendo uma barreira democrática contra retóricas autocráticas.

Nacionalismo e pertencimento

A análise contemporânea do nacionalismo, apesar da densa produção teórica acumulada ao longo do século XX, ainda apresenta complexidades analíticas significativas. Contudo, ao superar abordagens teleológicas que previam o esgotamento precoce do Estado-nação, torna-se viável reposicionar as dinâmicas de pertença nacional como instâncias ativas de coesão social. Essa reavaliação permite redimensionar a relevância dessas identidades, tanto na estruturação das subjetividades locais quanto no próprio rearranjo das forças políticas globais.

O século XVIII, na Europa Ocidental, foi caracterizado pelo que Benedict Anderson (2013, p. 38) descreve como o "amanhecer da era do nacionalismo", em contraste com o declínio dos paradigmas religiosos. O autor postula que a ideia de nação emergiu à medida que três pilares culturais perdiam influência sobre a psique coletiva: a noção de que uma língua escrita estava intrinsecamente ligada à verdade ontológica, a crença em uma hierarquia social centrada em monarcas de direito divino e, por fim, uma concepção de tempo que mesclava cosmologia e história.

O declínio desses axiomas, irradiado a partir da Europa Ocidental, aliado a transformações econômicas, avanços tecnológicos e à evolução dos meios de comunicação, provocou uma distinção clara entre cosmologia e história. Esse processo propiciou uma nova forma de integrar, de maneira significativa, fraternidade, poder e temporalidade (Anderson, 2013, p. 70). Sob essa ótica, o teórico argumenta que o nacionalismo se configura como uma "comunidade imaginada", não no sentido pejorativo de *falsidade*, mas como reflexo da necessidade de indivíduos desconhecidos de se sentirem integrados a um todo coletivo, unidos por laços de solidariedade compartilhados (Anderson, 2013, p. 32).

A caracterização da nação como uma comunidade imaginada se vincula, de forma estreita, à territorialidade atribuída ao grupo. Os limites fronteiriços demarcam não apenas a extensão geográfica de sua existência, mas também assinalam o início de outros territórios soberanos. Essa representação se articula diretamente com questões de soberania e com o reconhecimento recíproco entre os Estados, influenciando as relações políticas em escala global. A "condição nacional" representa o critério de legitimidade mais universalmente aceito na política contemporânea (Anderson, 2013, pp. 28, 34).

Entre as categorias formuladas por Anderson alinhadas à presente discussão, a definição de "nacionalismo oficial" assume centralidade. Esse nacionalismo, compreendido como estratégia adotada por Estados consolidados ou em consolidação, sobretudo no século XIX, visava fortalecer a unidade nacional diante de desafios internos e externos. O termo "oficial" remete à abordagem descendente empregada, em oposição às formas de mobilização nacional que emergiram de movimentos populares de base. O nacionalismo oficial representava, portanto, a fusão entre a nação e o império dinástico.

> A chave para situar o "nacionalismo oficial" é lembrar que ele se desenvolveu depois, e em reação aos movimentos nacionais populares que proliferavam na Europa desde os anos 1820 (Anderson, 2013, p. 131).
>
> (...) o "nacionalismo oficial" foi, desde o princípio, uma política consciente e auto defensiva, intimamente ligada à preservação dos interesses dinásticos imperiais. Mas, estando "ali para todos verem", ele podia ser copiado da mesma maneira que as reformas militares prussianas do início do século XIX, e pela mesma variedade de sistemas políticos e sociais. O único traço permanente desse estilo de nacionalismo consistia, e ainda consiste, em ser oficial — isto é, algo que emana do Estado, e serve antes e acima de tudo aos interesses dele (Anderson, 2013, p. 221).

Com o intuito de assegurar credibilidade, os promotores do nacionalismo oficial desenvolveram métodos de validação tanto no plano interno quanto no cenário internacional. Buscava-se agrupar sociedades progressivamente heterogêneas e dinâmicas — impulsionadas pelos processos de industrialização e urbanização — por meio da construção de narrativas nacionais voltadas a cultivar lealdade e comunhão. Além disso, formularam-se diretrizes de política externa, por vezes de caráter expansionista, destinadas a mitigar ameaças de outras nações. Cumpre notar que o nacionalismo oficial emergiu como estratégia das elites dominantes para salvaguardar sua posição frente à ameaça de marginalização ou exclusão. Diante de crises multidimensionais, as elites governantes se apropriaram de expedientes nacionalistas para perpetuar sua dominação.

> Esses "nacionalismos oficiais" podem ser explicados como uma maneira de combinar a naturalização e a manutenção do poder dinástico, em especial sobre os imensos domínios poliglotas amealhados desde a Idade Média, ou, dizendo de outra forma, de esticar a pele curta e apertada da nação sobre o corpo gigantesco do império (Anderson, 2013, p. 131).
>
> Eis aí um bom exemplo do caráter do nacionalismo oficial: uma estratégia de antecipação adotada por grupos dominantes ameaçados de marginalização ou exclusão de uma nascente comunidade imaginada em termos nacionais (Anderson, 2013, p. 221).

Nesse sentido, as formulações de Appadurai (1995) sobre o Estado-nação e suas interações com as identidades étnicas se articulam ao conceito andersoniano de nacionalismo oficial, especialmente ao considerar o caráter regulador assumido pelo aparato estatal durante sua consolidação no século XX. O autor argumenta que

> (...) o Estado-nação muitas vezes criou, revitalizou ou fraturou identidades étnicas que antes eram fluidas, negociáveis ou nascentes. Claro que os termos usados para mobilizar a violência étnica hoje podem ter uma longa história. Mas as realidades a que se referem — língua servo-croata, costumes bascos, cozinha lituana — foram sobretudo cristalizadas no século XIX e princípio do século XX. Nacionalismo e etnicidade alimentam-se, portanto mutuamente quando os nacionalistas constroem categorias étnicas que, por sua vez, levam outros a construir contra-etnicidades e então, em tempos de crise política, estas requerem contra-Estados baseados nos contra nacionalismos acabados de descobrir. Por cada nacionalismo que parece ter um destino natural há um outro que é subproduto reativo (Appadurai, 1995, p. 217).

Embora Appadurai (1995) não opere diretamente com a distinção entre as reações estatais e as mobilizações populares de base nacional, suas reflexões sobre os desdobramentos dos Estados-nações contemporâneos oferecem importantes subsídios para compreender essa transição. Sob essa perspectiva, dois aspectos se mostram essenciais. Primeiro, os Estados nacionais surgidos fora do eixo euro-americano não constituem réplicas miméticas do modelo ocidental.

Ainda que reproduzam aparatos burocráticos formalmente semelhantes, tais estruturas são reconfiguradas pelas visões de pertença projetadas em seus processos de formação. Além disso, em analogia ao "nacionalismo oficial" descrito por Anderson (2013) — que operou como reação defensiva das dinastias e elites imperiais europeias do século XIX para neutralizar e englobar as mobilizações populares —, o transplante de modelos estatais para outras regiões demandou que as elites locais forjassem símbolos de coesão de caráter descendente. Todavia, esse processo de tradução assimilou elementos culturais preexistentes e formas autóctones de organização coletiva (Geertz, 2008, p. 185), subvertendo a universalidade presumida da matriz ocidental.

Considerar esse aspecto não implica uma apologia dos Estados nacionais, especialmente daqueles discutidos por Appadurai (1995), mas sim uma investigação sistemática sobre as particularidades de cada estrutura estatal, muitas das quais persistem na contemporaneidade, tanto em nações europeias quanto não europeias.

No âmbito das dinâmicas dos Estados nacionais, delineiam-se diversas abordagens analíticas. Uma delas se relaciona à manutenção de um conjunto de ideias que, nos termos de Anderson (2013), fomenta o sentimento de pertença a um grupo unificado, sustentado pela crença de que outros indivíduos desconhecidos compartilham dos mesmos princípios e expressões culturais. Há também uma dimensão simbólica relevante: na origem dos Estados nacionais, seus símbolos foram impostos; no entanto, na contemporaneidade, estes se tornaram fundamentais para a coesão social, vinculando a coletividade a fronteiras culturais e geográficas estabelecidas ao longo de seus processos históricos de formação.

Outro aspecto fundamental diz respeito à singularidade de cada estrutura social e à maneira como esta incorporou as teorias sobre a constituição dos Estados nacionais, articulando-as a manifestações culturais e cosmovisões preexistentes ao século XIX. Essa integração influenciou a criação de aparatos governamentais, o modo como a burocracia estatal interage com os distintos segmentos sociais — de caráter étnico ou não — sob sua autoridade, bem como a maneira como essas nações se posicionam perante outros Estados. Portanto, generalizar a abordagem sobre os Estados nacionais constitui um reducionismo que negligencia a complexidade intrínseca a essa análise. Não por acaso, Anderson (2013) evidencia o caráter instrumental da adoção de símbolos nacionais por governos europeus, os quais preservavam a dinâmica opressiva de regimes precedentes, sobretudo como estratégia de contraposição, no âmbito das relações de poder, às identidades nacionais emergentes de movimentos populares.

A articulação entre as estruturas estatais e os grupos étnicos, sob a perspectiva de Appadurai (1995), demanda uma postura analítica que recuse a universalização do Estado-nação de matriz europeia como modelo heurístico padrão. Esse panorama impõe a incorporação de historicidades e arranjos sociais que precederam a própria instituição da modernidade política. Sob essa ótica, a "elasticidade" e o tensionamento de fronteiras identitárias, conforme formulados na teoria da etnicidade de Fredrik Barth (Poutignat & Streiff-Fenart, 1997), não se restringem a demarcações político-administrativas, mas operam de modo dinâmico nas relações de alteridade entre os próprios grupos minoritários.

Assim, ao analisar as trajetórias de constituição do Estado nacional na China e no Brasil, torna-se fundamental ponderar as especificidades históricas de cada formação. Isso pressupõe mapear as configurações étnicas preexistentes no século XIX, as condições de recepção e tradução de teorias nacionalistas exógenas, bem como a influência mútua entre as elites dirigentes e os grupos subalternizados na disputa pela ressignificação do aparato estatal.

Esse processo demandou a mobilização de repertórios simbólicos para forjar identidades coletivas voltadas a universalizar o pertencimento nacional. A seção seguinte examina as particularidades históricas e as matrizes de coesão que definiram as experiências de ambas as sociedades.

Unidade e fragmentação: China e Brasil

Sentimento de Unidade na China do Século XIX

A China, durante a transição do século XIX para o século XX, caracterizou-se por uma dinâmica complexa de movimentos sociais voltados para a transformação do país. De um lado, manifestava-se uma profunda insatisfação com a dinastia Qing (1644-1912), decorrente de severas crises de governança interna — marcadas por uma estrutura fiscal rígida e inalterada desde o século XVII, pela precarização e corrupção sistêmica no funcionalismo público local, e pela incapacidade estatal de conter insurreições camponesas de grande porte, como a Rebelião do Lótus Branco (Rowe, 2009). A esses fatores se somavam as pressões e vulnerabilidades geopolíticas advindas da relação com o imperialismo ocidental, que buscava no território chinês novos mercados e domínios soberanos (Mühlhahn, 2019, p. 203). Entre os movimentos de resistência que culminaram no desmoronamento do regime dinástico, destacaram-se a Associação Literária (*Wenxue she*) e a Sociedade Progressista do Novo Exército (*Gongjin Hui*), cujas ações de ocupação em cidades como Wuchang, Hanyang e Hankou — posteriormente integradas no aglomerado urbano atualmente conhecido como Wuhan — foram determinantes para deflagrar o processo revolucionário (Zhang, 2015, p. 427).

O colapso de uma ordem imperial de mais de dois milênios abriu caminho para movimentos revolucionários subsequentes, culminando na Revolução Comunista de 1949. Ainda que essa ruptura também tenha desencadeado, no plano cultural, uma ampla reformulação de valores tradicionais, sob a crescente influência de teorias ocidentais. Esse processo resultou na investigação de novas normas sociais condizentes com a organização da China contemporânea (Rowe, 2009, p. 237). A convergência de elementos tradicionais e concepções ocidentais transformou a esfera intelectual, preparando o terreno para futuros desdobramentos artísticos. Nesse período, Shanghai se consolidou como um relevante polo de irradiação cultural, onde as novas correntes de pensamento passaram a influenciar diversos segmentos da sociedade (Mühlhahn, 2019, p. 253).

Nota-se que a coesão social na China, apesar das pressões externas voltadas à sua fragmentação, preexistia ao próprio conceito moderno de nacionalismo. Em termos antropológicos, o antropólogo chinês Fei Xiaotong (1992) definiu que, ao contrário do modelo individualista ocidental, a sociabilidade chinesa se assenta no conceito de *lun* (ordenamento relacional), estruturado em círculos concêntricos de interdependência e reciprocidade ativa.

Nesse sentido, o sentimento de pertença a uma civilização comum e a um destino compartilhado se manifestava, secularmente, em matrizes culturais diversas, como na ética confuciana, que concebia as relações de reciprocidade e a hierarquia familiar como microcosmo da ordem estatal, e no princípio cosmológico e político da "Grande Unidade" (*dayitong*). Esse ideário postulava a centralização administrativa e a integração territorial, sob a legitimidade do Mandato do Céu, como alicerces fundamentais para coordenar os esforços coletivos de subsistência, infraestrutura e salvaguarda contra catástrofes (Huang, 1997; Rowe, 2009). Ao longo de sua tra-

jetória, a China se caracterizou pela persistente busca de unificação sob uma autoridade centralizada. Conforme aponta Rowe (2009, p. 40), o Primeiro Imperador, Qin Shihuang, no século III AEC, demonstrou que, embora a China pudesse ser conquistada, ela não poderia ser permanentemente fragmentada, operando sob um mecanismo de autorregulação no qual períodos de colapso eram sucedidos por longas eras de reintegração imperial[1].

Do ponto de vista das relações étnicas, durante a dinastia Tang (618-907 EC) um dispositivo específico das leis do Império (*Tang Lü: Mingli diyi*) estipulava que os conflitos internos no âmbito de um mesmo grupo étnico deveriam ser resolvidos conforme as tradições e costumes desse grupo específico, enquanto os conflitos entre grupos étnicos eram regulados pelas leis centrais (Zhang, 2015, p. 128). Durante a dinastia Qing, o sistema político implementou diretrizes visando à integração dos diversos grupos[2]. Essas medidas de governança contribuíram para reforçar uma identidade coletiva que buscava articular a diversidade cultural interna, preservando práticas locais ao mesmo tempo em que superava divisões provinciais e regionais. Essa abordagem se mostrou particularmente relevante durante a transição do século XIX para o XX, período marcado pelo acirramento das pressões coloniais europeias e japonesas. Historicamente, as disputas étnicas constituíram uma constante; contudo, a orientação política predominante privilegiava a integração e o fortalecimento do poder central, inclusive mediante o reforço de laços econômicos, culturais e políticos. Essa diretriz se vinculava à necessidade de preservar a coesão do país, em face de séculos de conflitos internos que haviam provocado crises de escassez e perda maciça de vidas humanas (Zhang, 2015, p. 134). No contexto das Guerras do Ópio e das imposições decorrentes de tratados desiguais[3], o sentimento de unidade preexistente na China foi catalisado pela emergência da ideia de nação, sob o influxo de formulações teóricas ocidentais, não resultando em uma fratura interna, mas sim na sua apropriação e ressignificação estratégica, onde intelectuais reformistas e revolucionários, sobretudo Sun Yat-sen[4], articularam o conceito de *Minzu*[5] (nacionalismo cívico-racial) para neutralizar o viés de subalternidade racial ocidental e defender a soberania nacional a partir de um senso de comunidade civilizacional compartilhada (Mühlhahn, 2019).

[1](...) the First Emperor Qin Shihuang in the third century b.c., had demonstrated throughout its long history that it could be conquered but not permanently fragmented. Some self-righting mechanism seemed to dictate that periods of break-down would be followed by longer eras of reintegration. The empire had been able to sustain its enormous size in the area known as "China proper" or "Inner China" for over two millennia. No other political unit of comparable scale—not the Roman or Holy Roman empires in the West, nor the Mamluk or Ottoman empires in the Islamic world, nor the Mongol empire in central Asia—had survived nearly so long (Rowe, 2009, p. 40).

[2]Destaca-se a capilaridade do Édito Sagrado de Kangxi (1670), cuja versão ampliada por Yongzheng em 1724 foi estruturada para ser traduzida quinzenalmente por eruditos locais nos idiomas das minorias. No plano jurídico e administrativo, essa flexibilidade institucional se manifestou na permissão de aplicação paralela da lei islâmica em Xinjiang sob o imperador Qianlong e na preservação do governo indireto de chefias *indígenas* (tusi) no sudoeste, cujas elites nativas permaneceram no controle regional por meio de órgãos administrativos, mesmo após a imposição do controle direto estatal (Herman, 2006; Millward & Newby, 2006; Rowe, 2009).

[3]Os "tratados desiguais" se referem ao conjunto de acordos coercitivos impostos à China pelas potências imperialistas ocidentais e pelo Japão após sucessivas derrotas militares no século XIX (Bezerra, 1986; Mühlhahn, 2019; Rowe, 2009).

[4]Também conhecido na China como Sun Zhongshan, ele foi um estadista, político e líder revolucionário pioneiro da China republicana, Sun atualmente é frequentemente considerado o Pai da Nação.

[5]Minzu zhuyi significa literalmente conceito de nação (nacionalismo), no entanto o termo difere do sentido de nacionalismo normalmente compreendido fora da China. O termo é o primeiro dos Três Princípios do Povo (Sanmin Zhuyi) propostos por Sun Yat-sen, e representa uma busca pela soberania, autodeterminação e igualdade do povo chinês frente ao imperialismo estrangeiro da época.

Esse cenário impulsionou a articulação de um nacionalismo chinês, centrado na defesa da integridade territorial e da soberania nacional. Tal conceito encontrou ampla ressonância entre intelectuais de distintas vertentes ideológicas, desde posições conservadoras até correntes progressistas (Mühlhahn, 2019, p. 186). Desse modo, o sentimento de unidade na China — embora tenha enfrentado severas instabilidades decorrentes de fragmentações políticas e incursões estrangeiras ao longo da história — desempenhou um papel determinante na transição secular e na consolidação do Estado nacional contemporâneo.

Após a fundação da República em 1912, processo que refletiu a renovação desse sentimento de coesão, a Revolução de 1949 também mobilizou elementos expressivos de unidade. Diante das adversidades vivenciadas no século XIX — consagrado historiograficamente como o "Século das Humilhações" —, além de conflitos internos e da ingerência estrangeira, a China enfrentou uma guerra civil, período no qual as premissas revolucionárias atuaram como instrumento de salvaguarda da integridade territorial e da soberania. Apesar das instabilidades políticas subsequentes, sobretudo as vinculadas ao período da Revolução Cultural, o processo revolucionário se consolidou como força de integração capaz de responder às demandas sociais, rompendo com o ordenamento estatal precedente e instituindo um Estado-nação alinhado às aspirações históricas de unidade e soberania popular. Na contemporaneidade, as dinâmicas de integração territorial, soberania e preservação da estrutura social — incluindo as relações entre as minorias étnicas e o grupo majoritário — permanecem em constante debate no país[6].

Populações negra e indígena: a exclusão no cenário brasileiro

O período colonial, a partir do século XVI, foi marcado pelo início do tráfico compulsório de africanos escravizados, prática que se intensificou ao longo dos séculos XVII e XVIII, totalizando o ingresso estimado de quatro milhões de pessoas. Na transição do século XIX para o XX, a população negra livre continuou a sofrer os impactos do racismo estrutural, à medida que o regime republicano recém-instalado reproduziu práticas hostis a esses cidadãos, perpetuando, sob novas bases jurídicas — de caráter não escravista —, as dinâmicas excludentes do ordenamento estatal anterior. Desprovida de políticas públicas de integração, os negros sofriam com a suposta inferioridade biológica, o que inviabilizava qualquer perspectiva de mobilidade ao naturalizar a exclusão como uma condição inata.

Ainda que a abolição do regime escravista tenha ocorrido, a efetiva integração desses grupos na sociedade nacional permanece como um projeto inacabado. A persistência do racismo, robustecido pelas teorias eugenistas na virada para o século XX, serviu de sustentáculo ideológico para o projeto de construção nacional das elites. Intelectuais influenciados pelo darwinismo social de Herbert Spencer e pelas teses de branqueamento gradual — a exemplo de Sílvio Romero e Raimundo Nina Rodrigues — postularam a inferioridade biológica e cultural das populações negra e indígena. Sob o pretexto de combater uma presumida "degenerescência" nacional, essas formulações justificaram tanto a imigração europeia subsidiada quanto a exclusão jurídica e política das classes populares, consolidando um modelo de nacionalismo oficial, excludente e centralizado (Bolsanello, 1996; Tamano, 2021). Esse cenário, aliado à ausência de políticas com-

[6]Diversos intelectuais e pesquisadores problematizam as relações entre o grupo majoritário Han e os grupos minoritários, apontando questões envolvendo a normatização e essencialismos. A discussão acadêmica se divide entre correntes que demandam maior autonomia pluralista para as identidades locais e aquelas que priorizam a coesão nacional unificada (Zhonghua Minzu) (Zang, 2007; Zhou, 2022).

pensatórias efetivas, limitou severamente o acesso desses grupos aos espaços de poder (Ribeiro, 1995, p. 234).

Em contrapartida, a mobilização da população negra em prol de sua sobrevivência, identidade e direitos constituiu uma constante histórica de resistência face às estruturas de marginalização impostas pelas elites dominantes. Os movimentos de resistência enfrentavam, por um lado, um conformismo social opressor e, por outro, a dependência em relação a estruturas dominadas pelo segmento hegemônico branco (Fernandes, 2013, p. 116).

Nesse contexto, as associações negras de base se multiplicaram nas primeiras décadas do século XX, articulando demandas cívicas, literárias e protetoras de caráter regional. Em 1931, a fundação da Frente Negra Brasileira (FNB) em São Paulo marcou um salto qualitativo nesse associativismo. Caracterizada por expressiva mobilização nacional e pioneiro protagonismo feminino, a FNB estruturou delegações em múltiplos estados e outras agremiações coetâneas de esquerda, convertendo a luta antirracista em força partidária em 1936 (Domingues, 2007, pp. 103, 107).

As décadas subsequentes mantiveram ativa a resistência e a busca por inclusão por meio de novas mobilizações coletivas. Em 1972, um grupo de estudantes criou o Centro de Cultura e Arte Negra (CECAN) e, em 1978, instituiu-se o Movimento Negro Unificado (MNU) — organização de forte inspiração marxista (Domingues, 2007, p. 112). Reconhecido como um marco na trajetória do movimento negro brasileiro, o MNU propôs, entre suas principais bandeiras, a unificação das lutas de todas as entidades antirracistas em âmbito nacional (Domingues, 2007, p. 114).

Mais tarde, o movimento negro passou a intervir também no campo educacional, propondo a revisão de conteúdos preconceituosos em livros didáticos e a formulação de novas diretrizes de capacitação docente voltadas ao desenvolvimento de uma pedagogia interétnica (Domingues, 2007, p. 115). Posteriormente, essas demandas amadureceram em direção a uma luta por transformações estruturais em diversos setores da sociedade que mantinham abordagens excludentes e racistas contra a população negra (Domingues, 2007, p. 117).

Paralelamente à trajetória de resistência negra, a inserção dos povos indígenas na comunidade nacional foi marcada por uma exclusão sistemática desde o contato. Sob vulnerabilidade biológica por enfermidades europeias da invasão colonial, eles passaram por um violento processo de desindianização, forçados a se adaptar a uma sociedade que destruía suas vidas e identidades. Mais tarde, o objetivo de torná-los trabalhadores submissos se materializou na política tutelar, consolidando uma estrutura de poder e abuso.

Para Darcy Ribeiro (1995, pp. 73–74), esse processo civilizatório interrompeu a linha evolutiva prévia das populações indígenas para, após subjugá-las, recrutar seus remanescentes como mão-de-obra servil da nova sociedade. João Pacheco de Oliveira (1998, p. 57) analisa que as missões religiosas integraram esses grupos ao Estado colonial como "índios mansos", gerando uma primeira "mistura". Posteriormente, o "diretório de índios" pendeu para o assimilacionismo ao estimular casamentos interétnicos e a fixação de colonos brancos nos aldeamentos, o que constituiu a segunda "mistura".

No Brasil, a resistência indígena ativa contra o esbulho territorial e corporal se manifestou em confrontos armados sistemáticos ao longo dos séculos. Desde o período colonial, coalizões multiétnicas — como a Confederação dos Tamoios (1554–1567) e a dos Kariris — reagiram à dominação europeia. Essa dinâmica se estendeu da resistência Guarani contra as bandeiras

paulistas e as demarcações do Tratado de Madri (Guerra Guaranítica, 1753–1756) à Cabanagem (1833–1836) na província do Grão-Pará. Longe de constituírem episódios isolados, tais revoltas revelam a recusa sistemática à tutela e à expropriação, prolongando-se até os conflitos do Contestado e as resistências contra ferrovias na virada para o século XX (Bicalho, 2010, pp. 19, 293–294).

Assim, a ideia de democracia racial proposta por Gilberto Freyre, ou mesmo o imaginário de que o brasileiro seria um povo formado pela harmônica fusão delas, constitui uma característica marcante da política de assimilação promovida pelo Estado nacional. Essa narrativa posiciona a "mistura" como um valor positivo em contraponto à ideia de "pureza" de outros povos, mas oculta assimetrias e hierarquias sociais profundas. Além disso, esse discurso apaga o fato de que o processo de colonização resultou em violência sistemática contra negros e indígenas, gerando um profundo abismo nas relações sociais, no qual essas populações sempre foram e permanecem caracterizadas como "Outros internos".

No processo de construção do Estado moderno brasileiro, no final do século XIX, os indígenas foram compelidos a se integrar a um sistema social que nunca os acolheu de modo pleno (Silva, 1995, p. 20). Essa transformação consolidou um ideário de nação alinhado à cultura das classes dominantes, as quais subjugavam negros, indígenas e seus descendentes, compelindo-os a se adaptar a um padrão preestabelecido. Esse fenômeno gerou uma representação nacional que excluía as contribuições de tais grupos na formação da identidade social brasileira. A busca por essa nova configuração revelou a dificuldade de unificar um país heterogêneo, cujas elites, distanciadas das realidades de uma população majoritariamente negra, indígena e de seus descendentes pardos, eram pouco articuladas.

Assim, a construção de uma burocracia e a criação de símbolos nacionais foram tarefas assumidas pelas classes letradas e pelos herdeiros da terra e do poder (Silva, 1995, p. 20). Inspirados sobretudo pelos Estados Unidos e por nações europeias (L. W. Vianna, 1991), esses grupos buscaram moldar um "novo Brasil" legitimado pelas teorias evolucionistas e pelo determinismo racial que patologizavam as maiorias negra e indígena, conforme discutido por Bolsanello (1996) e Tamano (2021).

Esse processo de construção do Estado-nação buscava convencer os povos autóctones de que a via da integração passava pela tutela, permitindo que a "inclusão" dessas populações ocorresse sem que o grupo hegemônico branco perdesse o domínio sobre elas. Essa dinâmica ocorreu tanto durante a Regência do Império quanto na subsequente República, por meio de órgãos especializados que se inspiravam em teorias evolucionistas e nos "princípios hierárquicos da vida militar e do serviço público" (Oliveira, 2016, p. 34).

Este paralelo revela a principal distinção no processo de construção da identidade nacional chinesa e brasileira, evidenciando a relevância da análise comparada. No cenário brasileiro, a intelectualidade que se dedicou à formulação de símbolos e buscou a "adequação dos diferentes" ao seu projeto de nação desconsiderou que a identidade nacional não se consolida no âmago dos sujeitos sem que neles exista um sentimento de unidade compartilhado. Enquanto na China o nacionalismo emerge como desdobramento de um sentimento de coesão preexistente, reforçando-o na transição do Estado dinástico para o nacional; no Brasil, os símbolos nacionais foram forjados pelas elites econômicas, políticas e intelectuais, à revelia das populações negra e indígena que, historicamente violentadas, não se reconheciam integradas ao país, bem como

dos sujeitos mestiços, vistos pelas lentes eugênicas como frutos de uma degeneração biológica e social.

A despeito dessa alienação do sentimento de pertença, as populações negra e indígena preservaram o vínculo com sua ancestralidade. No entanto, parcela expressiva dos descendentes desses grupos perdeu essa conexão histórica, afastando-se de suas identidades originárias. Segmento que, atualmente, representa a maioria da população brasileira — incluindo indivíduos que se autodeclaram brancos ao IBGE, mas são percebidos como pardos sob os padrões eurocêntricos.

Esse contingente, por um lado, viu-se desvinculado de elementos que dariam sentido à sua existência social e demarcariam sua alteridade frente a outras identidades. Por outro, esse grupo não foi contemplado pelo nacionalismo forjado pelas elites, sendo rotulado como "misturado", "impuro" e resultante de uma miscigenação interpretada como entrave ao desenvolvimento nacional. Essa imposição de um limbo identitário e a redução do pertencimento a um cálculo cromático operam como uma tecnologia de despolitização, que interdita a autoidentificação e desarticula a luta coletiva. É o que Longhini (2021) conceitua como as engrenagens do próprio etnocídio:

> Uma das estratégias do etnocídio é dizer que somos um "quase" de outras raças: se de pele clara, brancos; se de pele escura, negros; nessa conta colorista, desaparecemos. Além disso, os povos indígenas que têm a pele clara nunca estiveram livres de sofrer o genocídio, a retirada de suas terras, a violência do agronegócio. Nisso, a classificação pela cor da pele produz necessariamente o apagamento indígena, em que se tem apenas a caracterização do "descendente". Não à toa, ao sujeito político descendente não se possibilita a luta por terras indígenas, por demarcação (Longhini, 2021, p. 70).

Desse modo, o indivíduo que não é identificado claramente como branco, negro ou indígena se vê relegado a uma posição de "não lugar". A liminaridade de sua classificação gera um profundo sentimento de deslocamento social, inviabilizando sua representação em qualquer grupo existente. Se, por um lado, esse sujeito rejeita negros e indígenas na tentativa de se associar ao segmento branco; por outro, é por ele repelido em razão de uma suposta "mistura degenerativa".

Uma proposta comparativa

Ao retomar as formulações de Anderson (2013) sobre a emergência do nacionalismo oficial como reação aos movimentos de base étnica, e ao analisar comparativamente a formação dos Estados nacionais na China e no Brasil, delineia-se uma distinção de fundo. Esse contraste transcende as particularidades históricas que singularizam as trajetórias e as matrizes culturais de ambos os países.

Como examinado, o nacionalismo chinês emergiu em resposta à necessidade histórica de um sentimento de coesão, destinado a se contrapor às invasões estrangeiras e a promover a modernização do país, atuando prioritariamente como instrumento de resistência face às investidas externas. Cumpre sublinhar que esse sentimento de unidade não derivava simplesmente da continuidade da estrutura estatal da dinastia Qing. Após a proclamação da República em 1912, a China vivenciou uma guerra civil que culminou na vitória do Partido Comunista em 1949. Como nenhum dos grupos em conflito buscava restaurar o antigo regime imperial, evidencia-se que o Estado chinês se estruturou de forma híbrida. A ideia de nação (Zhonghua Minzu)

foi inicialmente articulada "de baixo para cima" por movimentos revolucionários plurais e não necessariamente marxistas, cujo principal marco foi a transição da China imperial com a eclosão da Revolução de 1911. Posteriormente, com a Revolução de 1949, essa força de mobilização popular foi institucionalizada pelo novo governo em uma síntese dialética. Longe de constituir um mero "nacionalismo oficial" de caráter preventivo e dinástico (Anderson, 2013), o Estado chinês contemporâneo se consolidou como uma estrutura de centralização estatal que se legitima e se oxigena de forma recursiva a partir de suas próprias mobilizações de base[7].

Em contraste com a experiência chinesa, o Estado nacional brasileiro foi estruturado "de cima para baixo". Essa construção preservou as dinâmicas de poder entre colonizadores e colonizados da era colonial, mas transpôs essas relações para o contexto dos novos ideais nacionalistas, que englobavam a proclamação da República e a adoção de símbolos nacionais:

> A crença numa missão civilizadora da elite dirigente foi o fator essencial para prover a administração de uma fonte indispensável de legitimidade. Isso ocorreu tanto com funcionários coloniais (nascidos na metrópole ou aqui) quanto com a elite local criolla, que realizou a emancipação política, primeiro monarquista e católica, depois, republicana e leiga (Oliveira, 2016, p. 20).

A interação desse "novo" Estado com os grupos historicamente marginalizados assumiu contornos singulares. Esses segmentos, embora alvos de uma tentativa de integração ao imaginário estatal dominante, nunca vivenciaram um sentimento de coesão similar ao desenvolvido na sociedade chinesa. No século XIX, essas populações ainda sofriam os impactos de práticas herdadas do período colonial, sendo tratadas pela estrutura estatal como "não humanos" ou seres inferiores que necessitavam ser "civilizados".

O Estado brasileiro foi continuamente dirigido por elites de origem europeia ou por seus descendentes diretos e indiretos, que perpetuavam uma visão exógena do país. Essa perspectiva influenciou a maneira como o aparato estatal tratou os grupos minoritários desde o século XIX, buscando inspiração em modelos ocidentais de organização social. Tal abordagem reflete o caráter de "nacionalismo oficial" adotado pelo país em sua formação, delineando um padrão de relações institucionais que priorizava os interesses das elites em detrimento da inclusão efetiva dos segmentos marginalizados na construção de uma identidade nacional coesa.

No entanto, importa recuperar as lutas travadas por esses grupos, historicamente excluídos de qualquer projeto de nação, os quais rejeitaram a imposição de uma pretensa "natureza pacífica" descrita por formulações teóricas posteriores. Essa resistência contínua define a relação histórica entre as populações pobres, negras e indígenas e o aparato estatal, bem como molda o tratamento dispensado pelo poder público a esses sujeitos na contemporaneidade.

Uma população que não se percebia vinculada a um coletivo composto por todas as alteridades étnicas que compartilhavam o mesmo território não poderia se engajar na disputa por seu controle ou edificação em termos nacionais. Séculos de escravidão e o genocídio indígena distanciaram a maioria dos brasileiros de qualquer identificação com essa coletividade, embora esta tenha se configurado como subproduto do processo colonizador do território. Desse modo,

[7]Essa legitimação se materializa na arquitetura de governança e participação de base. No meio urbano, a representação é estruturada de forma ascendente por meio dos Comitês de Moradores, cujos delegados eleitos compõem sucessivamente instâncias de bairros e distritos até a esfera municipal. No meio rural, a governança organiza-se por distritos e comunas, manifestando-se em práticas de sufrágio de aldeia e contratos rurais. Inspirada no método político da "linha de massas" e nas "bases vermelhas" da revolução, essa rede descentralizada opera de modo a processar e sistematizar demandas populares locais para retroalimentar as decisões e a formulação de políticas da administração central (Bezerra, 1986; Chen, 2018; Jabbour, 2020, 2021).

torna-se compreensível a recusa ou a impossibilidade de engajamento em um projeto de país ao qual esses grupos não se sentiam integrados.

A suposta passividade[8] comumente imputada ao povo brasileiro não decorre de uma inépcia revolucionária, mas sim da ausência de vínculo de sua identidade com uma comunidade inclusiva e projetada, ainda que, nos termos de Anderson, de forma imaginada, como nação. Portanto, tais povos mantiveram laços de pertença com os grupos de seus antepassados, preservando suas identidades, distanciando-se de uma ideia de coletivo nacional e permanecendo alheios a mobilizações nesse sentido.

Atualmente, os povos indígenas ainda enfrentam sérios obstáculos para que o Estado reconheça sua importância na formação da sociedade brasileira e para se libertarem do imaginário que os considera quase como uma especificidade "alegórica e cultural" do país. A população negra, em sua grande maioria, também se vê desassistida por esse aparato estatal, relegada às periferias urbanas e espaços vulnerabilizados como desdobramento de sua exclusão histórica do projeto de nação. Em contrapartida, os cargos de poder permanecem monopolizados pelo segmento dominante, que herdou, juntamente com seus sobrenomes, terras, poder econômico, influência política e capacidade decisória.

Embora se reconheçam avanços, resultantes de históricas lutas de resistência, estes permanecem desvinculados de um sentimento de unidade inclusivo, o que resulta em mobilizações fragmentadas que evidenciam a dificuldade de articulação mútua. Essas iniciativas se encontram ainda sob a tutela de um Estado que as engloba apenas mediante concessões pontuais de direitos, sem lhes assegurar, contudo, efetiva participação decisória sobre as diretrizes políticas nacionais. Tal dinâmica revela a estreita consonância da estrutura estatal contemporânea com o modelo centralizador consolidado no século XIX. Os símbolos nacionais, o sentimento de unidade e a prerrogativa desse "coletivismo" nacional permanecem como privilégios exclusivos das elites dominantes. Estas percebiam o Estado como um veículo para amalgamar seu ethos e sua visão de mundo, conferindo aos seus valores a coercitividade necessária.[9] Sob essa perspectiva, projetos políticos de viés autocrático frequentemente instrumentalizam elementos da esfera sagrada, acoplando dogmas religiosos ao discurso nacionalista para revestir suas narrativas de uma autoridade transcendental. Essa apropriação visa forjar a "aparência de objetividade" requerida para legitimar a coerção social e desmobilizar a contestação política.

Nesse contexto, de que maneira poderiam se posicionar as populações negra e indígena, senão ancoradas firmemente em suas práticas ancestrais de modo a preservar sua existência física e cultural? O Estado moderno brasileiro se estruturou por meio de instituições concebidas para sustentar um "nacionalismo oficial" que, historicamente, excluiu a vasta maioria de sua população.

[8]A ideia de que a formação social e política do Brasil se fez por vias brandas, consensuais ou de conciliação, negando o radicalismo de rupturas violentas, foi defendida por intérpretes como Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1995) e sua concepção de homem cordial baseado na emoção, na empatia e nos laços de sangue/coração; Gilberto Freyre (2006) a explicação de que a miscigenação teria promovido uma democracia racial; e Oliveira Vianna (1956), que via o povo brasileiro como disperso e naturalmente afeito à ordem vinda de cima. Teses que, salvo suas especificidades, viam na nossa história um traço de acomodação e inaptidão para a revolta.

[9]Ao investigar a capacidade de coesão social intrínseca aos sistemas de símbolos, Geertz (2008, p. 191) analisa o impacto de como o ethos e a visão de mundo estruturam uma adesão, dando ao conjunto de valores sociais uma aparência de objetividade: "(...) o mero convencionalismo satisfaz a muito poucas pessoas, em qualquer cultura. Por mais que o seu papel possa diferir em várias épocas, para diferentes indivíduos e em diferentes culturas, a religião, fundindo o ethos e a visão de mundo, dá ao conjunto de valores sociais aquilo que eles talvez mais precisam para serem coercivos; uma aparência de objetividade."

Conclusão

Este artigo buscou analisar, por meio de um estudo comparativo das dinâmicas de construção estatal na China e no Brasil, as complexidades subjacentes aos sentimentos de unidade e à fragmentação social. Esse esforço metodológico evidenciou que a tradução de conceitos exógenos, como Estado-nação e etnicidade, não seguiu uma trajetória linear unívoca.

O nacionalismo brasileiro, ao emergir sob a forma de um "nacionalismo oficial", adotou uma estratégia de integração que se revelou excludente e opressiva, ao perpetuar as hierarquias de poder preexistentes. Sem que houvesse uma ruptura popular, sua configuração contemporânea encontra-se intrinsecamente associada a processos institucionais de perpetuação da exclusão das populações negra e indígena, bem como de seus descendentes.

Ao observar a ascensão da extrema-direita no Brasil, em especial após as eleições de 2018, constata-se que a mobilização por meio de símbolos nacionalistas busca reabilitar uma narrativa de pertencimento restritiva, historicamente circunscrita às classes dominantes, dificultando a capacidade das forças progressistas de formular uma resposta que transcenda a mera crítica ao nacionalismo excludente (associado ao fascismo do século XX) e apresente um projeto inclusivo e unificador, sem que os símbolos patrióticos sejam abandonados.

Diante desse cenário, o contraste com o caso chinês aponta caminhos que transcendem o atomismo liberal. A coesão social chinesa não surge de um contrato abstrato entre indivíduos isolados, mas de uma constante reprodução de laços relacionais que subordinam o interesse privado à preservação do Todo, onde a legitimação do poder político depende de uma dinâmica recursiva entre as demandas locais organizadas e a centralidade estatal direcionada ao bem comum.

Nesse sentido, a reconstrução do sentimento nacional no Brasil exige sua disputa de baixo para cima forjada na construção de laços interdependentes que possam ressignificar a identidade atomizada por uma identidade coletivista, convertendo o sentimento de pertença em ferramenta de *solidariedade* ativa e inclusão democrática, esvaziando a manipulação segregacionista operada pela extrema-direita contemporânea, promovendo uma integração que ressignifique os elementos nacionais e congregue os diversos segmentos sociais em torno de uma identidade nacional compartilhada.

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Book Review

Brazilian Socio-Economic Dynamics: Contexts and Contemporary Realities

Masiero, G. (2025). *Brazilian socio-economic dynamics: Contexts and contemporary realities*. Springer. 157 pp. ISBN 978-3-031-87684-4. Hardcover, softcover and e-book.

Brazil is a country that constantly oscillates between ambitious promises for the future and the weight of enduring historical challenges. Marked by recurring cycles of progress and setback, the Brazilian experience unfolds within a broader context of ongoing social, political, and economic fluctuations. In this landscape of persistent ups and downs, how can Brazil be understood beyond reductive stereotypes or simplified narratives? Is it possible to speak of a single, cohesive nation, or should Brazil be more accurately conceived as a mosaic of multiple regional, cultural, and social identities, shaped by distinct historical trajectories and uneven patterns of development? These are some of the central questions explored in *Brazilian Socio-Economic Dynamics*, by Gilmar Masiero.

The work opens with a set of interpretive keys that guide the reader through the complex, often contradictory mechanisms that structure Brazilian society and the economy, shedding light on the forces that both constrain and propel the country's ongoing transformation. It provides a thorough analysis of Brazil's structural issues along with management recommendations. It is divided into two sections. An overview of Brazilian socioeconomic dynamics is provided in the first section, covering regional diversity, economic disparities, educational opportunities, and the nation's agribusiness production of global commodities. The second section covers the country's financial system, international presence, entrepreneurship, small businesses, and incubators, as well as its current and future challenges. It also discusses the need for scholarly literature to bolster conversations about Brazilian issues. In educational settings, the original research described here could be beneficial.

In each chapter, the author presents related topics for further exploration, encouraging continuous, reflective research throughout the work. As mentioned, the first part comprises three chapters, in which the author explores topics ranging from the vastness of territory and ethnic-cultural plurality to the intersections of settlement, economic growth, social inequality, and sustainability. After all, how can a thriving agribusiness sector be reconciled with an unequal educational system? In what direction is the country moving in terms of sustainable development?

Within this framework, the first chapter explores the diverse territories and their rich array of peoples, fauna, and flora. The second chapter connects demographic trends with the phases

of Brazilian economic growth and development, revealing contrasts ranging from education to agribusiness. The third highlights the dynamics of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, interlinking poverty, industrialization, the Amazon, and digitalization.

In the second part of the book, the author shifts his focus to Brazil in the global arena. In this dimension, is Brazil truly a cradle of entrepreneurship, or does it still stumble upon structural obstacles? Chapter four analyzes the entrepreneurial environment and its support institutions. Chapter five examines Brazil's insertion into global value chains, including the presence of multinationals and the flow of foreign investment. Finally, chapter six correlates political divisions with public administration, interconnecting them with the world of work and social movements.

Gilmar Masiero is a professor and researcher at the School of Economics, Business, Accounting, and Actuarial Science at the University of São Paulo (FEA-USP), one of Brazil's leading academic institutions. He has also accumulated significant international educational experience at Harvard University and the University of California, with a focus on Latin American studies. In addition, the professor has long been dedicated to the study of Asian countries, a scholarly engagement that significantly broadens his analytical perspective. This comparative background greatly enriches his understanding of Brazil's relations not only within Latin America but also in a broader global context. His work is grounded in a multidisciplinary perspective that invites the reader to rediscover Brazil in its multiple dimensions.

The central focus of the work is a deep and multifaceted analysis of the structures that sustain Brazil, particularly with an attentive view on how organizations influence the nation's overall development. The author examines a wide range of factors, including regional cultures and values, climate, public policies, sustainability approaches, and business management strategies, for those seeking a deeper understanding of Brazil's complexities. The book provides an excellent starting point for reflection on the country and proposes potential pathways to address its disparities.

Among the work's strengths, two aspects stand out as fundamental and structuring pillars of the author's analysis. The first lies in the author's extensive international experience, shaped by sustained intellectual and cultural engagement with societies across continents, with particular emphasis on Asia. This long-term exposure to diverse historical trajectories, development models, and cultural frameworks significantly enriches his interpretation of Brazil within the broader global context. Such cross-cultural dialogue allows the author to move beyond parochial or regionally limited perspectives, offering the reader a more holistic, comparative, and globally informed understanding of Brazil. This expanded viewpoint proves especially valuable for readers seeking to grasp the country's complexities, contradictions, and singularities in a more comprehensive and nuanced manner.

The second fundamental pillar of the work is the explicit recognition of Brazil's intrinsic complexity and ongoing dynamism, characteristics that resist simplistic explanations within rigid theoretical frameworks. Rather than approaching Brazil through a single analytical lens, the author adopts a multifocal perspective that captures the country's vast territorial, social, and cultural diversity while connecting its historical formation, economic structures, and processes of social transformation. By articulating these interconnected dimensions, the work provides a more integrated interpretation of Brazil's contemporary transformations. This approach not only deepens the reader's understanding of the forces shaping Brazil's evolution but also high-

lights the fluid and contested nature of its development, making the book an essential contribution for those seeking to comprehend the underlying dynamics of the country's past, present, and possible futures.

However, despite its merit, depth, and analytical richness, the work could benefit from a more extensive and detailed examination of specific dimensions of Brazilian reality. One area that would particularly profit from deeper exploration is the challenge of overcoming persistent educational inequalities through the strategic promotion of technological innovation. In a country like Brazil, which continually reinvents itself across different stages of development and navigates recurring cycles of progress and setbacks, digital transformation emerges as a crucial vector of social and educational change.

The integration of digital technologies in schools, universities, and across the broader education system plays a decisive role not only in expanding access to knowledge but also in redefining pedagogical practices, institutional capacities, and opportunities for social mobility. Greater attention to these dynamics would further strengthen the analytical scope of the work. This theme, therefore, emerges as a promising avenue for further reflection and could be productively developed in future research and publications by the author himself. In doing so, the author could offer a more comprehensive vision of how digital transformation reshapes the very foundations of democratic education in the 21st century.

Taken together, the various chapters of *Brazilian Socio-Economic Dynamics* prove to be more than a descriptive work; they are an invitation to reflection and elucidation that encourages the reader to rethink Brazil. Thus, how should one consider the global future, in which Brazil is simultaneously an environmental powerhouse, a demographic giant, a laboratory of inequalities, and an emerging innovation hub? The book's great virtue lies in uncovering new pathways of knowledge about Brazilian contradictions and potentialities, while connecting them globally toward dynamic progress in development and sustainability.

In general, *Brazilian Socio-Economic Dynamics* stands out as a groundbreaking contribution to Latin American Studies, marking a significant turning point in understanding Brazil in all its vastness and complexity and opening new horizons for reflection. After all, how can one rediscover and rethink Brazil as a whole? Nowadays, as Brazil emerges as a global leader in sustainability, all eyes are on the Amazon, an ecosystem that plays a crucial role in regulating the planet's climate. This presents Brazil with a unique opportunity to lead global discussions on sustainable development, innovation, and cultural diversity. By embracing the basic ideas outlined in the book, Brazil could not only reshape its own future but also set a transformative example for the world, in all its directions and perspectives.