

SÉRIE ANTROPOLOGIA

110

The anthropology of anthropology:

The Brazilian case

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Acknowledgments

I wrote this dissertation on anthropology in Brazil to examine in a deeper way the significance of being a Brazilian and an anthropologist. I tried to take advantage of my distance from Brazil in order to reflect on it. At the same time, I wanted to look at anthropology in general from my Brazilian viewpoint.

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CHAPTER ONE

Anthropology in Context

... class-explanation of the social beliefs and ideals implicit in sociological theory is no longer sufficient in the twentieth century. In this period we must also take account of the development of national ideals transcending social classes in order to understand the ideological aspects of sociological theories.

Elias, 1978a: 241-2

It is often accepted that anthropological questions have changed over time. One can trace developments in the study of kinship, magic, religion, social organization, and symbolism, in both the sequence of themes and the internal elaborations through which each of these themes went in the past hundred years.

However accepted the idea of historical change in anthropology may be, and however we may take for granted the variability over time of scientific problems in general, little attention has been paid to the way in which anthropological problems vary across socio-cultural contexts. The scientific reality of today is neither the scientific reality of yesterday nor will it be the scientific reality of tomorrow, but does it not change also in different contexts? The assertion that

“Anthropology sees everything as culturally bound ... everything but itself”¹

is a good statement of this state of affairs.

This study seeks to explore the variability of anthropological questions in different socio-cultural contexts, using the Brazilian case as its object of inquiry. A comparative approach is implicit, although other examples will only occasionally be brought into the text. I start from the premise that 1) the anthropologist's thought is embedded in his own socio-cultural configuration and 2) given that anthropology's development coincided with the formation of the European nation-states, the ideology of nationhood is a powerful parameter for the characterization of the social sciences in any particular country.

¹ McGrane, 1976:162.

The development of anthropology may be of interest to both historians of science and anthropologists themselves. Historians of anthropology generally start with the idea that anthropology is a science, and their questions revolve around the kind of science anthropology is and how it has developed. Recent studies distinguish two approaches:² one, which is called “traditional,” has as its main objective the classifying of the scientists of the past according to whether, and to what extent, they had anticipated the present state of the discipline. The other, the “new historiography of the sciences,” focuses on the intersection between history, epistemology, and the sciences. The latter approach questions whether the history of science should concentrate on specific works themselves — the theoretical and experimental problems as defined by the scientific community — or whether it should also consider the influence of technological, socio-economic, institutional and political factors. Also of interest to the “new historiography” is the question of whether there is a continuous development of knowledge from common sense to science, or whether science should be seen as an epistemological eruption in a particular historical period.³

Contrary to the general tendency among the historians of the discipline, anthropologists generally ask different questions. Self-reflection is their main concern, and this self-reflection originates in large part from their own work. This is especially true for those dealing with conceptual systems such as religion, symbolism, or language.⁴ Here the problem can be posed as follows: if we study other conceptual systems — be they religion, mythology, or rituals — as systems of knowledge, why not look at anthropology itself with the same perspective?

This recent trend in the discipline tries to respond to the challenging proposition that “primitive” beliefs cannot be understood by comparing them with science, as had been done in the past. Rather, anthropological interpretation of “primitive” beliefs should serve as models for understanding “science.”⁵ Whether or not anthropology is in fact a science is not the main point here; anthropology is one among several systems of knowledge, on a par with religion, philosophy, and art.⁶ The quest for scientificity is also dismissed and replaced by an increased interest in the nature of anthropology vis-à-vis the totality of ideas and values common to a society or current in a given social group. Those ideas and values are called either

2 Llobera, 1976.

3 An example of the “new historiography” is Stocking's article on “Ideas and Institutions in American Anthropology,” in which the author draws from both Shils' studies on the history of sociology and Kuhn's concept of a scientific paradigm. See Stocking, 1971.

4 Hallowell was one of the first to propose that the history of anthropology be “an anthropological problem.” See Hallowell, 1965.

5 Barnes, 1969.

⁶ See Schneider, 1976; Geertz, 1973.

“ideology,”⁷ “culture,”⁸ or “cosmology,”⁹ depending on the features stressed.

This study shares the concern of the anthropologist more than of the historian of science, and I adopt the concept of “ideology” emphasizing that the significant representations are basically those which relate to the nature and purpose of the political realm in nation states.¹⁰ With Dumont, I assume that any ideology is a social set of representations, and that whether any particular representation in that set is judged as true or false, rational or traditional, scientific or not, is irrelevant to the social nature of the idea or value.¹¹

Before moving to the discussion of the main problem of this dissertation, it should be noted that some articles have recently appeared which examine the state of anthropology in different countries. Those articles, however, limit themselves to a description, evaluation or commentary on research being carried out, with little or no analysis of the social and cultural implications of the discipline.¹²

A. The reversibility of anthropological knowledge

In the process of self-reflection in which anthropologists have recently been engaged, the basic assumptions of the discipline begin to be questioned. An important assumption, and one which has even defined anthropology for many, relates to the encounter between the anthropologist and the people he studies or, in other words, between the anthropologist and his “informants”. The problem is grounded in the various conceptions of the discipline — as “translation,”¹³ “description,”¹⁴ or “interpretation,”¹⁵ — but the main issue here is whether (i) there can be reversibility of anthropological knowledge, or whether (ii) anthropology is uni-directional.

⁷ Dumont, 1977:17.

⁸ Schneider, 1976; Geertz, 1973:340.

⁹ Tambiah, 1979.

¹⁰ Geertz, 1973:340. The emphasis on the political realm will be justified in the next chapters.

¹¹ Dumont, 1977:17.

¹² See, for instance, Gellner, 1976, on Soviet anthropology; Goldberg, 1976 on Israel; Grottanelli, 1977 on Italy; Khare, 1977 on South Asia; Koentjaraningrat's, 1977 on Indonesia; Magnarella and Turkdogn, 1965 on Turkey; McCall, 1963 on Scandinavia; Mendez-Domingues, 1975 on Guatemala; and Barber, 1977 on France.

¹³ Crick, 1976.

¹⁴ Silverstein, 1976.

¹⁵ Geertz, 1973.

Lévi-Strauss' famous statement that "it comes to the same thing in the end ... if the thought of the South American Indians takes shape under the action of mine, or mine under the action of theirs"¹⁶ exemplifies the first position mentioned above. For Lévi-Strauss, anthropology is bi-directional and opens up a channel of communication between the "primitive" and ourselves. Other anthropologists have espoused the same view, and many regret the virtual monologue that has been perpetuated in the discipline, in which "the only definitions of 'us' and 'them' have been given by us."¹⁷ If human beings are meaning-makers, this fact determines what general form a science of social action must assume and, since we all share a common humanity, "the other" and "we" cannot be absolutely opposed to one another. Appeals are often made for "those cultures which have been the objects of our inquiries to develop anthropological traditions of their own — scrutinizing themselves in ways which are not just a pale reflection of our interest in them — but also that they will make us the object of their speculation"¹⁸.

Louis Dumont takes on opposite stand. In a polemical article, Dumont dismisses the whole issue of the reversibility of anthropological knowledge. Since "there is no symmetry between the modern pole where anthropology stands and the non-modern pole."¹⁹ it is impossible to imagine a multiplicity of anthropologies corresponding to a multiplicity of cultures. There is just one anthropology — and it is the product of Western ideology, with its characteristic drive towards comparative thinking in universal terms.

Dumont's views make sense within the contrast he draws between the values of Western society and those of other types of civilization. Our society values, in the first place, are an embodiment of humanity at large. Most other societies, on the contrary, value the conformity of every element to its role in society. In one case the ideology is "individualist," in the other "holistic."²⁰ In this context, Mauss' conception of anthropology is in perfect fit with the Western mode of thinking.

For Mauss, anthropology meant the acceptance of the unity of mankind and the recognition of differences among men. Dumont retakes Mauss' views and rephrases them in terms of two principles — universalism and holism —, which are hierarchically related and not subject to interchange. At the global or general level of the hierarchy, one finds the universalistic values on which modern Western society is based; on a second level, the holism of a given society is that

¹⁶ Lévi-Strauss, 1962.

¹⁷ Crick, 1976:167.

¹⁸ Crick, 1976:167.

¹⁹ Dumont, 1978:88.

²⁰ India is the main example of a "holistic" and "hierarchical" society. Dumont, 1977:4.

which becomes the object of anthropological study. The result of this perspective is that anthropological thinking may develop only in societies in which this hierarchical relation between the values of universalism and holism obtains. “The idea that a modern society can be anthropologically studied by someone who is born and partially remains in another culture [implies that] the universal reference is totally forgotten.”²¹

I consider unsatisfactory both Lévi-Strauss’ position, which accepts that anthropological thinking may develop everywhere, and Dumont’s assertion that anthropology is possible only in Western-universalistic societies. If one is too unqualified, the other is too restrictive. In addition, I see both views as a-historical, a point I will develop later in this study.²² If one follows Dumont literally, anthropology would most unprobably develop in India, the hierarchical and holistic society par excellence. However, anthropology in India incorporates both the “traditional” Western conception of anthropology as the mutual interpretation of cultures,²³ as well as its rejection. Some Indian scholars question the Western anthropologist, who goes to India in a search for its universal implications, and maintain that anthropological research should be relevant to the country’s needs and directed towards problem-solving.²⁴

A point could be made here that only the universalistic view is truly anthropological. But, then, was it not Dumont himself who postulated that any object men construct has an existence of its own?²⁵ It seems reasonable to suppose that a look at the historical development of Indian anthropology might allow us to ascertain the relative weight which the different conceptions of anthropology hold within the total configuration of the social sciences.

The same, I believe, is true for Brazil. My starting point will thus be the search for the indigenous definition of the social scientists’ practice in Brazil. In the process of struggling for a definition of the different disciplines in Brazil, it will become clear whether self-defined “anthropologists” follow Dumont’s conception of “anthropology.” It will also become evident whether Dumont’s views are intrinsic to anthropological thinking — in which case social scientists would disavow “anthropology” as their practice if it did not conform to it — or, alternatively, whether Dumont’s viewpoint is just one possibility against which others must be contrasted. My contention is that the views of Dumont and Lévi-

²¹ Dumont, 1978:88.

²² See Chapter Six.

²³ See Madan, ms.

²⁴ Khare, 1977.

²⁵ Quoting Dumont on the realm of economy: “It should be obvious that there is nothing like an economy out there unless and until men construct such an object”. Dumont, 1977:24.

Strauss do not account for change or for the combinations of different elements in new structure, relying too much on pure and abstract models.

From the outset, however, I want to point out that it is not my purpose in this dissertation to disprove Dumont, but rather to carry the implications of his study further. Because he could so perceptively and so daringly put anthropology in relation to ideology in general, we may draw from his conclusions as a starting point and try to accomplish a comparative study out of his initial proposition. The Maussian model can be influential, dominant, or merely a distant reference, depending on the different socio-historical contexts in which anthropology develops. It is not contradicting Dumont, I believe, to argue that this model cannot be accepted as a timeless definition. As to the Lévi-Straussian argument, it is here put into question. It is my contention that the time may never arrive for those who had been studied to come and research the former anthropologists' societies. This kind of questioning might not be of interest for all cultures, and until the anthropologists of industrialized societies realize this fact, their hopes will have to remain open. In other words, translation of cultures might not be in the range of concern for all cultures, since their intellectual priorities may be different, and Western anthropologists, by imposing or trying to convince others of their interest, may reflect, in an inverted way, a new and sophisticated form of ethnocentrism.

This dissertation begins with a comparison between the ideas of Louis Dumont and Norbert Elias which exemplifies the approach I follow later. The comparison will provide us with an overall picture of the intellectual ideology of the French (through Dumont) and the Germans (through Elias) which will be of help later, given the influence French and German scholars had in Brazilian anthropology. It will also provide a preliminary example of the results one may expect from a comparison of theoretical perspectives once their social origins are considered. This point is of special importance, since one of the goals of this dissertation is to evaluate the relationship between the social sciences and national contexts.

B. Theoretical approach

Norbert Elias is a German scholar interested in studying Western civilization through the history of everyday behavior. In the first part of *The Civilizing Process*,²⁶ he analyzes the sociogenesis of the concepts of "civilization" and "culture." He notes that "civilization" expresses the self-consciousness of the West, sometimes the national consciousness. However, "civilization" does not mean the same thing in different Western nations, and he proceeds by elucidating its meaning in France and in Germany, contrasting this concept with that of "culture". With this purpose in mind, he goes back to the second half of the 18th century, when both concepts were first formulated.

²⁶Elias, 1978a.

Basically he finds that the difference between the French concept of “civilization” and the German concept of “kultur” lies in the fact that the former can refer to the political, economic, religious, technical, moral or social facts, while the latter refers essentially to the intellectual, artistic and religious. The concept of “kultur” implies a sharp dividing line between the intellect, art, and religion, on the one hand, and political, economic and social facts, on the other. “Civilization” describes a process, or the result of a process, whereas the German concept of “kultur” has a less direct relationship to the aspects of change. Finally, the concept of “civilization” plays down national differences between peoples; it emphasizes what is common to all human beings, expressing the self-assurance of peoples whose national boundaries and national identity have for centuries been so fully established that they have ceased to be the subject of any particular discussion. In contrast, “kultur” places special stress on national differences and the particular identity of groups.²⁷

Having identified the major components of each concept, Elias proceeds to analyze the social basis that allowed for their development. He traces the concepts’ origins in relation to the social position the intelligentsia held in French and German society of the 18th century, and then discusses how a recession of the *social class* element led to an advance of the *national* element in the antithesis of “kultur” and “civilization.” The concept of “kultur” primarily expresses the self-image of the German middle-class intellectual stratum. The intellectuals in Germany were a thin and scattered social layer, individualized to a high degree and in a particular form. They did not constitute, as did the court, a closed circle. Being composed predominantly of administrators and civil servants, intellectuals in the German university were the middle-class counterweight to the court. In this context, the development of the concept of “kultur” and the ideals it embodied reflected the position of the German intelligentsia vis-à-vis the center of power. Without a significant social hinterland and constituting the first bourgeois formation in Germany, intellectuals developed a bourgeois self-image and specifically middle-class ideas. Elias’ conclusion is that the political fragmentation of Germany can be connected both to the German intellectual class structure and to its social behavior and way of thinking.

By contrast, members of the French intelligentsia were collected in one place and held together within a more or less unified and central “good society.” There, as early as the 18th century, there was no longer any considerable difference of manners between the leading bourgeois groups and the courtly aristocracy.

These different sociogenesis explain the way in which the two concepts were advanced as *national* elements. By the second half of the 18th century the middle classes already played a political role in France, whereas they did not in Germany. In Germany the intellectual stratum was confined to the sphere of mind and ideas; in France, social, economic, administrative, and political issues — along with all

²⁷ By virtue of this fact, Elias write, it has acquired a great significance in such fields as ethnological and anthropological research. Elias, 1978a:5.

the other human questions — came within the range of interest of the courtly middle-class intelligentsia.

Louis Dumont discusses similar problems. But whereas Elias is defined as a social historian, Dumont is an anthropologist who, having started from the study of Indian civilization, became interested, by way of a contrast, in modern Western ideology. Dumont sees modern society as separated from traditional societies in general by a mental revolution which he calls the individualistic revolution. In traditional societies the main value emphasis and reference is on order, tradition, and the orientation of each particular human being to the ends prescribed for the society. In modern society, the main reference is to the attributes, claims and welfare of each individual human being, irrespective of his place in society.²⁸ In the first case, man is considered essentially a social being, deriving his very humanity from the society of which he is a part; in the second, each man is an individuum of the species, is a substance existing by itself, and there is a tendency to reduce, to obscure, or to suppress the social aspect of his nature.

Dumont's overall interest lies in depicting the processes by which this ideology came into being. He describes a general tendency by which the Christian religion fostered individualistic valuation and, on this basis, detached autonomous spheres of thought and action from the main body of values. The first and foremost sphere was that of the State and politics. Later on, by a further differentiation, the realm of economics was to appear.²⁹

I want to focus here on one of Dumont's essays for its interest in contrast to Elias's *The Civilizing Process*. In this study,³⁰ Dumont examines the differences between the concept of "nation" in France and in Germany. In modern ideology in general, the concept of the nation represents two things at once: a collection of individuals and a collective individual. From this, the French variant emerges which defines "nation" as the type of global society whose members are not aware of being essentially social beings, but only as so many equivalent embodiments of man in the abstract. They see themselves as Individuals. The Germans, unlike the French, accomplished the feat of seeing man as at once an individual and a social being. In German thought, the abstract individual becomes concrete, and the universal exists only in particularized forms. Looking at the two variants, then, Dumont concludes that the French have individualism in its elementary form, and the Germans have it in its composite or collective form: whereas the former is cosmopolitan, the latter in national.

In comparing the conclusions of Elias and Dumont, we note similarities, despite the fact that Elias is interested in studying the concepts of "civilization" (French) and "culture" (German), and Dumont, the French and German concepts of nation.

²⁸ Dumont, 1970:32.

²⁹ Dumont, 1965, 1970, 1971, 1974, 1975, 1977.

³⁰ Dumont, 1971.

In the end, each reinforces the conclusions of the other. Elias sees the French concept of “civilization” as deemphasizing national differences between peoples, and the German “culture” as placing special stress on national differences and on the particular identity of groups. In parallel fashion, Dumont shows the cosmopolitan aspect of the French concept of nation and the particularistic component of the German one.

However similar their conclusions, differences are marked, and here I want to draw attention, first, to the unit of analysis chosen by each: Elias is interested in the sociogenetic process by which two concepts were developed in two different countries and, from that, he proceeds to the study of the Western civilizing process. Dumont’s procedure is the inverse of this; his overall interest is in Western ideology per se, the national element being simply one variant, or “subculture”, of the larger unit. Interestingly enough, the comparison between the two approaches reflects the national origins of the authors: Elias, coming from a German tradition, focuses on the national differences and the particular identity of groups first, in order to understand a more general process; Dumont, from his French origins, takes as his unit of analysis a cosmopolitan subject par excellence — Western or modern ideology in general. National differences are “subcultures” or “subunits” of a more inclusive whole.

A second major difference between the two lies in the way in which they deal with their objects of analysis. Whereas Elias connects ideas with the social position of their holders, Dumont proposes that to isolate ideology “is a *sine qua non* condition for transcending it”³¹ — otherwise one remains caught within that ideology as the very medium of one’s own thought.³²

The comparison carried out above exemplifies the approach taken in this dissertation. First of all, I intend to consider the development of anthropology in Brazil by looking not simply at anthropologists’ ideas, but also at the embeddedness of those ideas in wider social processes, and especially in national ideology. I assume that social scientific ideas enjoy a “relative autonomy”³³ from their social background, within the limits of which one may attribute more or less “scientific” validity to them. The above comparison of Elias’ and Dumont’s analyses shows that similar conclusions may be reached even when the assumptions with which social scientists start differ. Without denying the importance of the issue of scientificity, I am here interested in finding the overarching interconnectedness between the social sciences and national ideologies. I believe, with Elias, that class-explanation is no longer sufficient to understand the ideological aspects of sociological theories, but rather that the

³¹ Dumont, 1977:27.

³² Gellner criticizes Dumont's *From Mandeville to Marx* (Dumont, 1977) as being a study of a disembodied ideology, "located in some intellectual Platonic heaven" (Gellner, 1978:275).

³³ For the concept of "relative autonomy" see Elias, 1971, 1972b.

development of national ideals transcending social classes are fundamental. Unlike Elias, however, I assume as a starting point that this interconnectedness between social science and national ideologies does not *necessarily* affect the scientific validity of a particular work.³⁴

From this follows a second point. I will not tell the chronological history of anthropology in Brazil, in the sense of a temporal unfolding of unstructured changes. By looking at anthropology in Brazil, I am examining a set of social representations created by a group of social scientists, and am looking at them against the background of the more general commonsense notions and world view which are shared by members of a given society.³⁵ I plan to attack the subject from several angles and, through them, to arrive at some basic issues which inform the development of anthropology in Brazil. In this way, one chapter looks at one individual anthropological writer and his intellectual and institucional career, another emphasizes a specific empirical theme, and still another focuses on a particular approach to the study of Brazilian society.³⁶ I do not make *a priori* distinction between the different social sciences as, for instance, between sociology, history, anthropology, or political science. Rather I want to see how some social scientists, starting with a common stock of concepts and approaches, proceeded to disengage the several disciplines from them.

Third, whenever nation-building processes or the ideology of nationhood become important concepts in the next chapters, I have in mind long term historical processes related to the development of national consciousness, participation and commitment.³⁷ As Elias reminds us, national ideologies usually represent the nation as something very old, almost eternal and immortal. In fact, state societies assumed in Europe the character of nation-states, in general, from the mid-18th century on, and even the most advanced of the contemporary industrial nation-states are still in the early stages of the processes of nation-building (considered as a phase of state formation).³⁸

Finally, I take side with Dumont when he writes that social anthropology is comparative at heart even when it is not explicitly so.³⁹ It was with the intention of making the Brazilian case comparable to others that this dissertation has been developed in its present form.⁴⁰

³⁴ See Chapter Six for a discussion of these ideas.

³⁵ Geertz, 1975:94.

³⁶ See Chapter Three, Four and Five, correspondingly.

³⁷ Tilly, 1975:70.

³⁸ Elias, 1972a.

³⁹ Dumont, 1977:3.

⁴⁰ See Chapter Six.

C. Plan of the dissertation

In this dissertation I take the 1930's as the sociogenetic moment in the development of a nationally-defined social science in Brazil. Chapter Two presents the reasons why I consider this a major moment in the development of an ideology of nationhood. This chapter provides an historical background to the institutionalization of the social sciences and examines the continuities between studies carried out before and after the 1930's in Brazil.

The next three chapters constitute the body of the dissertation. I follow two premises in their arrangement: first, I take for granted that the continuity of a discipline's name does not necessarily imply cognitive or institucional identity; second, I assume that it is impossible to write the history of a discipline without taking into account the development of neighboring disciplines, whether they have been models or rivals for it.⁴¹ It is the total configuration of the social sciences which I select as the background of my inquiry, and find it justified and desirable to speak of connections across disciplines.⁴²

The three central chapters are as follows: Chapter Three deals with the intellectual career and the work of Florestan Fernandes, considered the founder of a school of sociological thought in São Paulo. The basic purpose of the chapter is to understand why the Tupinambá studies, so carefully and laboriously conducted by Fernandes, did not attract much attention in Brazil. The importance of Fernandes' historical reconstruction of the social organization of the Tupinambá Indians (that inhabited Brazil in the 16th century) is that it represents the beginning of the institutionalization of the social sciences in Brazil, at which time the French (Durkheimian) influence was dominant. At this point, although there was no clear distinction between sociology and anthropology, the struggle to establish a national perspective and national themes was already a problem for Brazilian social scientists. A comparison of Fernandes's Tupinambá work with two later phases of his research — one on race relations between Whites and Blacks and the other on the problems of underdevelopment and dependency — shows that the frame of reference shifts from a tribal society of the 16th century to Brazil as a nation. This movement corresponds, in institutional terms, to a disengagement from a sociology conceived in a Durkheimian fashion to a *sociologia-feita-no-Brasil* (a sociology made in Brazil).

Indians are the topic of Chapter Four. Up until the 1950's, the Indians were regarded as the true object of anthropology by the German scholars who held

⁴¹ Lepenies, 1977. I here part with Anderson who, seeking to present the layout of the British social sciences, gives separate accounts for each discipline. Anderson, 1968.

⁴² See Chapter Three and Five. However, since my main interest is in anthropology, I disregard other areas such as political science, economics, philosophy as systematic comparative cases, and give more emphasis to sociology, with which anthropology has been debating more consistently over the years.

most of the institutional positions in the university system. However, as soon as Brazilian anthropologists took up the same topic, a shift occurred in the direction of accommodation and inclusion of aspects of the national society. The works of Darcy Ribeiro, Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira and Otávio Velho show how the interest in the Indians *per se* faded away and how the study of the Indians was progressively and correspondingly replaced by a focus on different aspects of the national society. In this process, the study of tribal organizations gave way to that of inter-ethnic contact, and afterwards to a focus on expansion frontiers. Peasants replace the Indians as an object of study in the last phase, though Indians are still the concern of Brazilian anthropologists in their role as citizens.

In Chapter Five I look at a specific social scientific approach, namely, the “universalistic” view of human societies as encompassing particular totalities. This approach is examined in the analysis of carnival and other Brazilian rituals carried out by Roberto da Matta, and then retrospectively linked to the literary analysis of Antonio Candido. I find that both literature and carnival have represented, in different moments, significant symbols of nationhood in Brazil.

Chapter Six concludes the dissertation by discussing the relationship between the development of the social sciences and the ideology of nationhood, particularly in relation to the issues of strata and territorial integration. I then place the Brazilian case in a larger historical context by both (a) comparing it to other national experiences, and (b) by looking at the social sciences within the development of social thought in Brazil prior to the 1930’s. Finally I reexamine the material analyzed in the three central chapters in terms of several issues, including those of: holism vs. universalism in Brazil; the role of the social scientist as “intellectual” and citizen; the antagonism and relationship between sociology and anthropology; the emphasis in anthropology on “society” rather than on “common humanity”; the “other” defined as “oppressed” rather than as “different” (as in anthropology in Europe); the Marxist influence in sociology vs. anthropology; and, in general, the issues of nation-building which are important for the definition of anthropology in Brazil.

The material this dissertation is based on consists of recorded interviews with social scientists, their published (and some unpublished) writings, and accounts of the development of anthropology in Brazil. In relation to the latter, I must point out the way in which the approach of this dissertation differs from the approaches which have been used up until now in Brazil.

Two opposing tendencies can be found in the general accounts of the development of anthropology in Brazil. One of them was developed by anthropologists of the German tradition (who institutionally occupied most of the available posts during the thirties and forties), who saw the study of Indians as the main characteristic of anthropological inquiry. In this case the object of analysis was more important than the theoretical or methodological approach. The major feature of their accounts is the classification of Indian studies in chronological terms. In one case, the time periods demarcated include a colonial period; that of von Martius’ travels in the first half of the 19th century; that of the German

ethnological expeditions of the turn of the century; and finally the contemporary period after World War I.⁴³ The major difference between these and the present study is that I do not see anthropology as constituted by the study of Indians. Rather I want to look at the Brazilian conception of the discipline and examine whether one finds any particular characteristic to it.

The second tendency in studies of Brazilian social sciences has been to account for them after the institutionalization during the thirties, without discrimination between the different disciplines. These studies thus are in conformity with the holistic idea of the “social sciences” domination during the thirties and forties.⁴⁴ In contrast to this second approach, I take the model of the “social sciences” as mainly applicable only to a distinct moment. My plan is to follow the struggle social scientists underwent in order to establish the boundaries of the different disciplines. The question of whether or not they were successful is examined below.

Finally, I must say that I consider this study to be itself anthropologically oriented. I start with a comprehensive problem, namely, the embeddedness of anthropology in the wider social processes occurring in a specific country. To deal with this question, I turn to concrete and microscopic cases, trying to draw from them the material with which to highlight the larger issues. I do this by asking different authors, through their works and/or personal interviewing, for their own understanding of what anthropology in Brazil is or ought to be. In this sense, I am looking for “indigenous” definitions and for the logic which informs the development of the social sciences in the country.⁴⁵ If one accepts the definition of anthropologists as those who attempt to discover what contributions parochial understandings can make to comprehensive ones, as Geertz proposes,⁴⁶ then this study is intended to fall into this category.

⁴³ This is Schaden's approach. Schaden, 1952, 1955b.

⁴⁴ See, for instance, Fernandes, 1975; Mota, 1978.

⁴⁵ By looking at their works as embodiments of their own society I proceed in the “Western-universalistic-individualistic” anthropological tradition, as the writings of Becker, 1971; Dumont, 1977; Geertz, 1975; and Leach, 1971 exemplify.

⁴⁶ Geertz, 1975:vii.

CHAPTER TWO

Historical Setting: Social Sciences in the 1930's

I suspect it is difficult to find, among the contemporary theories, any hypothesis [on Brazil] which has not been developed during the thirties. And possibly many of those formulated during that period are still waiting for the analysts who will reelaborate them.

W.G. Santos, 1970

It is the belief of many Brazilian social scientists that the institutionalization of the social sciences, which took place in the 1930's, established a dividing line between an "ideological" and a "scientific" phase of social studies in Brazil.⁴⁷ The thirties are adopted in this chapter as a sociogenetic moment for other reasons; what is important is that the thirties were a major ideology-producing period in Brazil. In addition, the institutionalization of the social sciences in that decade was a result of a change in the views of the dominant elites. For the first time in Brazilian history, education was called on to solve "the Brazilian problem," namely, the problems of national identity and of political and economic development. According to one of the founders of the Universidade de São Paulo, "We came to the conclusion that the Brazilian problem was, first of all, a problem of education."⁴⁸

In this chapter, I argue that the founding of the universities in this period promoted an increased specialization among the intellectuals, including novelists, politicians and the more recently arrived social scientists. The distinction between these categories of intellectuals had not been so clear during the first decades of the century. In this period the new social scientists also inherited the problems and

⁴⁷ Fernandes characterizes the pre-1930's studies as based on "free intuition" and writes of the emergent pattern of scientific work after the thirties (Fernandes, 1975); Leite describes the ideological phase of the *estudos brasileiros*, which preceeded the sociological studies of the fifties (Leite, 1969); and Mota contrasts the ideological period in which the concept of "culture" dominated with the studies on inequality between the social classes (Mota, 1978). See W.G. Santos, 1967 and Lamounier, 1977 for a critique of this approach.

⁴⁸ Mesquita, 1969; cit. by Schwartzman, 1979a:194.

the style of the self-educated man of letters of the pre-1930 period. This chapter thus serves as a background for the study of the writers that follow, and takes the thirties as important for an understanding of the relationship between the social sciences and the national context in which they developed. Rather than treating the 1930's as a dividing line, and looking at the period that preceded and the one that followed, the focus here is on the thirties themselves. I believe that it was then that the ideology of the "new country" reached its peak,⁴⁹ that the motives underlying the educators' and the politicians' program became explicit, and that the connections between the educational, political, and ideological aspects of the social sciences are thrown into sharper relief. The thirties also draw into focus the problems "modern" Brazil inherited from its past, even while this past underwent serious criticisms and plans were made to have it overthrown.

A. Education and national identity

In several senses Brazil is considered an historical "anomaly." Many historians take this as a starting point in descriptions of the country:

"In 1865 Brazil stood out in the Americas as a political anomaly — an Empire with a hereditary monarchy. While the Spanish Americans had fought to expel the Spanish crown in toto, the Brazilians marched to independence under the royal banner of one Braganza fighting the rest of the Portuguese royalty. Brazil also stood out as an economic and social anomaly — an essentially rural economy that continued to tolerate slavery, despite the end of the slave trade in 1850. ... In 1865, Brazil was Catholic, although, compared to New Spain, the Brazilian Church lacked both the wealth and the personnel to operate as a powerful and independent institution."⁵⁰

From this sense of anomaly, several writers also describe the ambivalent nature of basic Brazilian cultural categories. In one such view, European colonization in South America led to the dominance of the colonizers' culture, making the new generations of Brazilians "strangers in their own land."⁵¹ In other views Brazilian intellectual life is pictured as an interplay between "cosmopolitanism" and "localism,"⁵² or the Brazilian elite is seen as living in two worlds, the European and the Brazilian.⁵³ The fact is that, for the entire century following independence

⁴⁹ Candido, 1972.

⁵⁰ Skidmore, 1974:3.

⁵¹ Buarque de Holanda, 1955. See the Introduction.

⁵² Candido, 1976.

⁵³ Skidmore, 1974.

in 1822, the Brazilian self-image had to be asserted by opposing, struggling with, or accepting the European view of the country, a view which was predominantly negative in tone. It was only after the 1920's that Brazilians began to believe in their own separate identity in an assertive way. This identity was born after the great industrial and commercial development which followed World War I, the growing of cities, and the increase of European and Asian immigration.

For many writers the type of state-building that takes place in one country is intimately related to the existence of an educated elite.⁵⁴ However, the supposed necessity of a homogenous elite was never a real issue for Brazilians. Following the transfer of the Portuguese Court to Brazil in 1808, the elite shared similar ideals for the future of the nation.⁵⁵ Although the Crown had prohibited the founding of universities during the colonial period, the Brazilian elite was educated at the few existing religious seminaries, at the law schools founded in the late 18th century, but primarily at Coimbra, in Portugal,⁵⁶ one of the oldest European intellectual centers. This elite was thus able to deal satisfactorily with the administrative and political tasks of governing the country.

After Independence, however, an intellectual break with Portugal became absolutely necessary. Despite this, the idea of a Brazilian university had not taken root. From 1808 to 1882, twenty-four proposals for the foundation of universities went to Parliament, but were all rejected.⁵⁷ The basic idea was that "bread, gunpowder and iron sustain and defend the nations of the world,"⁵⁸ and all efforts were directed to the creation of schools of medicine, engineering, and law. Military schools also provided a medium for the homogenization of the elites. Later, during the period that preceded the Republic (1889) and with Comtian positivism as their orthodoxy,⁵⁹ these schools were influential in the attempt to wipe out the Romanticism and the Catholic world view which prevailed during most of the 19th century.

Romanticism had been an important movement in literature, and had spread to other areas as well. Its main feature was Indianism, or the idea that the Indian should be considered the supreme symbol of national identity. At mid-century, the elite looked for Indian ancestors in their genealogy and an Indian language, Tupi,

⁵⁴ See Carvalho, 1975:63-113 for the role of higher education in the homogeneity of Brazilian elite during the last century.

⁵⁵ A. Barros, 1977 and Carvalho, 1975.

⁵⁶ From 1550 to 1882 the Brazilian students at Coimbra numbered 2,500. Cf. Lima, 1978:201.

⁵⁷ Azevedo, 1958a:215-6.

⁵⁸ José Bonifácio, cit. by Schwartzman, 1979a:49.

⁵⁹ See Schwartzman, 1975, for the influence of positivism on the military of the frontier of Rio Grande do Sul.

was even proposed as a replacement for Portuguese as the official language. It is necessary to stress, however, that Indians, because they were virtually unknown to the elite, were pictured in a highly idealized manner. The Indian served merely as a symbol of national identity, as “an image” for the Brazilians and, as such, became the social type par excellence for the Romantics.⁶⁰

In Europe, during the early 19th century, Brazil was also being recognized as distinct from Portugal. But whereas the feeling in Brazil was nationalistic, in Europe the underlying problem was to evaluate the extent to which Brazil could be included in the expansionist adventures of the time.⁶¹ One aspect of this evaluation referred to the question of whether it was possible for “civilization” to develop in areas which lacked European conditions. The general view was that northern Europeans were the most highly developed races and enjoyed the best climates, which carried the implication that non-white races and tropical climates could never produce comparable civilizations.

These apologies for European superiority were exported to Latin America, along with European liberalism, and this combination created an uncomfortable situation for the Brazilian intellectual elite. Their literary view of the Indians as self-image, mainly optimistic in its general character, was immediately opposed by “scientific” theories of climatic and racial determinism.⁶² The Brazilian intelligentsia, so much influenced and linked to Europe, had to pose its questions of self-identity in the following terms: “Why are we not as developed as Europe?” By the end of the century, racist social theory had spread over the United States and Europe,⁶³ and Brazilians were confronted by the fact that their society was a multi-racial one. Their solution to the problem was the development of an indigenous theory, the “whitening” theory.”⁶⁴

This theory was based on the assumption of white superiority, but it incorporated the thesis that miscegenation did not inevitably produce “degenerates.” Instead,

⁶⁰ See Candido, 1964 and 1976 for an analysis of Romanticism as a debate with Portugal. Leite sees this movement as an optimistic view of the national character, in contrast with the pessimistic tone of the 1880-1950 period (Leite, 1969:145, 171). See Chapter Five for Candido's analysis of the poem “Caramuru”.

⁶¹ Some of the writings of the period were intended to give a description of the country as, for instance, Andrew Grant's *History of Brazil*, written in 1809, and Henry Koster's *Travels in Brazil*, published in 1817. Other examples are John Luccock's "Notes on Rio de Janeiro and the Southern Parts of Brazil" (1820) and Henderson's "A History of Brazil, comprising its Geography, Commerce, Colonization, and Aboriginal Inhabitants" (1821).

⁶² Skidmore, 1974.

⁶³ Skidmore, 1974:48-53.

⁶⁴ For an appraisal of the work of Silvio Romero, one of the proponents of the "whitening" theory, see Leite, 1969:178-194.

miscegenation would forge a healthy mixed population growing steadily whiter, both culturally and physically. The optimistic conclusion was that the black population was becoming progressively less numerous in Brazil for several reasons, including a supposedly lower birth rate, higher incidence of disease, and the social disorganization of the black population. From 1889 to 1914, the “whitening” theory was accepted by the majority of Brazilian intellectuals. However, others remained loyal to the European versions of racial and climatic determinism, including anthropologists.⁶⁵

It was also as a result of European influence that several ethnological museums were founded in the late 19th century,⁶⁶ and several commissions of geography and geology created to research the interior. Those commissions (among them the famous comissão Rondon) tried to follow in the naturalistic tradition, set by the German explorers before them,⁶⁷ but they primarily sought to make the hinterland known for the central government. The Rondon expeditions, organized from 1892 to 1930, aimed at exploring the interior in order to establish telegraphic lines. They ended up by contacting aboriginal populations and this resulted in the creation, in 1910, of the Indian Protection Service, a governmental agency whose purpose was to pacify and assimilate the Indian population into the national society.⁶⁸ Conforming to Comte’s positivistic ideas, the basic assumptions which guided the formation of the Indian Protection Service were evolutionistic, the Indian being considered merely a grown child. Territorial integration was thus the main problem the Service addressed itself to, since the limits of the country had been geographical and politically established for centuries but were still being socially demarcated. Whereas the Blacks were already seen as problematic in terms of social integration (as in the “whitening” theory), Indians were of concern to the central government mainly as an obstacle to potential territorial occupation.⁶⁹

At the turn of the century, the same schools of law, medicine and engineering still predominated in higher education. The Brazilian intellectuals were marked by their auto-didacticism — it was not from the universities but from foreign books,

⁶⁵ Such, for instance, are the physician-anthropologist Nina Rodrigues, of the Faculdade de Filosofia da Bahia, and some ethnographers of the Museu Paulista in São Paulo, and Museu Goeldi, in Belém, Pará.

⁶⁶ The Museu Paulista was founded in 1893, the Museu Paraense in 1894, and the reform of the Museu Nacional dates from 1890.

⁶⁷ See Chapter Four. Von Martius' expedition (1817-1920) and Von den Steinen's (1884 and 1887-8) became the most well known.

⁶⁸ See Ribeiro, 1962.

⁶⁹ Edgard Roquette-Pinto, who later was director of the Museu Nacional, also joined the Rondon Expeditions to study the physical characteristics of Indian groups. For an appraisal of Roquette-Pinto's contribution to anthropology and the development of physical anthropology at the Museu Nacional, see Castro Faria, 1952, 1959.

particularly French and German, that they got their education.⁷⁰ Some change had occurred, however, in terms of the general ideology. Brazil had already become a Republic (in 1889), and the intelligentsia at this point dealt with the sense of “national inadequacy” in three main groups: first, the “Brazilian chauvinists”; second, those who tried to cope with the European theories of determinism; and third, those who rejected the foreign frame of reference and who saw the root cause of the “national problem” in the alienation of the elite from their own national reality.⁷¹ The chauvinists, called “*os ufanistas*”, reacted to the European viewpoint by opposing it with a picture of a Brazil that was progressing admirably and that, given its natural resources, was destined for greatness.⁷² Some historians and writers representing the second trend tried to accommodate themselves to European theories of racial and climatic determinism.⁷³ The third group rejected the European frame of reference by showing that Brazil’s solution to its relative backwardness could not be achieved by a dialogue with any European theories of determinism. For them, it was only through a careful analysis of the historical causes of its current conditions that Brazil could establish its own identity. Some of them argued that racist theories were little more than rationalizations by the strong countries for the status quo; others emphasized the need for a “sociological nationalism,” pleading for a new mentality which would look for *Brazilian* solutions to *Brazilian* problems.⁷⁴ Those writers were the forerunners of a new understanding of the “Brazilian problem” that came to the fore later, during the twenties and thirties.

The critics of the 1920’s, unlike their predecessors of the two first decades of the Republican period, overcame uncertainty and felt free to offer a straightforward nationalistic critique of the political⁷⁵ and intellectual systems. The twenties marked the beginning of “Brazilian modernism,” which was expressed primarily as a literary movement.

This movement peaked in 1922, during the Week of Modern Art in São Paulo, which celebrated the first centennial of Brazilian Independence. The movement was actually inspired by the French and Italian avant-garde, but insisted that literature, music and painting should draw from what was considered ultimately

⁷⁰ The Portuguese continued to influence philologists and historians. Cf. Anísio Teixeira, cit. by Lima, 1978:203.

⁷¹ See Candido, 1976; Leite, 1969; Skidmore, 1974.

⁷² The prototype of this trend is Afonso Celso’s *Porque me Ufano do Meu País* (Why I am Proud of My Country). For an appraisal of Celso’s book, see Leite, 1969:195-200.

⁷³ Capistrano de Abreu’s *Capítulos da História Colonial* (1907), Euclides da Cunha’s epic *Os Sertões* (1902) and Graça Aranha’s *Canaã* (1902) are here the best examples.

⁷⁴ Cf. Manoel Bonfim and Alberto Torres, respectively. See Skidmore, 1974.

⁷⁵ See Lamounier, 1974 and 1977 for a study of the political thought of the First Republic.

national. Rather than continuing with the European idealization of the Indian, the primitiveness and the rudeness of Brazilian social and ethnic life were now seen as a positive heritage. In this sense, the Modernist movement sought to consolidate their aesthetic revolution by incorporating Brazilian themes, and thus the Week of Modern Art marked the ideological transition from a negative to a constructive phase. Mário de Andrade, the poet-musician-painter, was the prototype figure of the period. For him and other writers and artists, what was most important was their increasing confidence. It should be noted here that the Brazilian intellectual was still a “universal man,” and not a narrow specialist. Real prestige was reserved “for the polymath who approximated the ideal cultural type rising above professional specialization, while retaining his literary elegance.”⁷⁶ It is in accordance with this tendency that, rather than disappearing, the historical-sociological essay attained its fullest development at this time. But it is also at this moment that a “modernist” specialization emerged in the form of a new type of intellectual — the “educator.”

Gilberto Freyre, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda and Caio Prado Junior wrote the most well-known historical essays of the period. Having studied under Boas, Freyre decided to examine the formation of the Brazilian national character. His was an optimistic message: Brazilians could be proud of their unique, ethnically mixed, tropical civilization, whose problem should be attributed primarily to the system of slave-holding monoculture that had dominated the country until the second half of the 19th century. *Casa Grande e Senzala*, published in 1935, made a great impact and was a popular success.⁷⁷ Sérgio Buarque, unlike Freyre, wrote a short and concise book on the roots of Brazilian culture, but the impact was equally great.⁷⁸ *Formação do Brasil Contemporâneo*, written by Caio Prado, differed from both of the previous works, as it was an early attempt to give an “objective” and “materialistic” explanation of the past.⁷⁹

During this period, the long-prevalent assumption that race was the most important issue in historical development was no longer taken to be self-evident. In this context, education became a national issue and to a certain extent replaced worries about the country's inadequacy: “Our national problem is not

⁷⁶ Skidmore, 1974:221.

⁷⁷ After the institutionalization of the social sciences, and the increasing attempt to explain Brazilian underdevelopment in *social* terms, Freyre's work went under a severe critique for its “ideological” and not “scientific” approach. See, for instance, Fernandes, 1975. Along with Freyre, all analysis based on the concept of “culture” received the same appreciation. Cf. Mota, 1978; Leite, 1969. See also Chapte Three and Six of this dissertation. For a study of Freyre's sociological view of Brazilian slaveholding society, see Castro Santos, 1978.

⁷⁸ See Buarque de Holanda, 1955.

⁷⁹ Antonio Candido puts together *Casa Grande e Senzala*, *Raízes do Brasil* and *Formação do Brasil Contemporâneo* in the Introduction he wrote for the second of the three books. See Candido, 1975b.

transforming *mestiços* into whites. Our problem is the education of those who are here, whether light or dark.”⁸⁰ Despite the increased interest in science and technology that marked the late Empire, Brazil had continued to educate many more lawyers than scientists or engineers.⁸¹ Now a new conception of education was needed, one that could offer some hope of solving the problems of private and public administration. This new educational system would be capable of guiding the people and the nation towards “a modern social equilibrium.” Rejecting the short sighted positivist conception of education as applied science, it should awaken the younger generations to speculation and to research. Two important attempts to modernize the educational system were made during the thirties, one at Rio de Janeiro, the other at São Paulo. A digression is necessary here to examine why, in the long run, only the second attempt was successful in terms of institutional continuity and in terms of the development of lines of inquiry which were to be transmitted to and elaborated by generations of social scientists after the thirties.

B. Politics and education in São Paulo

In the state of São Paulo, the issue of education had strong political implications during the thirties. Within the “anomaly” that Brazilian historical formation represents, São Paulo is the anomalous state par excellence. Since the development of an agrarian coffee economy in the last century, it has become the most developed regional economy in the country. Despite its richness, however, São Paulo never attained political power corresponding to its economic strength.⁸²

The disparity between the two levels — economic and political — became acute in the Revolution of 1930. During the First Republic (1889-1930), São Paulo had still managed to maintain its power in the regime characterized by the “politics of the governors”; in this period, power alternately laid with São Paulo or with the state of Minas Gerais at the level of the central government. A crisis involving presidential succession brought about the Revolution of 1930, and São Paulo lost political power to a coalition of two other states, Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul.⁸³ At this point, the struggle over centralization vs. decentralization, which had been an issue since Independence, was decided in favor of the first. According to a perceptive critic, the Revolution of 1930 benefited from, and gave subsequent impetus to, a significant transformation, the main thrust of which was to justify the foundation of a centralized, tutelary State.⁸⁴

⁸⁰ Roquette-Pinto, 1927:59-62.

⁸¹ See Schwartzman, 1979a.

⁸² Schwartzman, 1975.

⁸³ For a study and bibliography of different interpretations of the Revolution of 1930, see Franco et al., 1970.

⁸⁴ Lamounier, 1974:294.

São Paulo, having always rebelled against the dominant patrimonial regime which had prevailed since colonial times, produced an intellectual elite which was more liberal and “modernizing” in ideological terms, and which proposed an European model of representation as the political solution for the country. It is not my point here to propose that theirs was the dominant ideology,⁸⁵ but simply to call attention to the fact that the *paulistas* have always tended to see politics as intimately related to the economic concerns of the region. Given those views, decentralization and representative government seemed to best serve their interests.

São Paulo, however, was in the losing side of the Revolution and, in the long run, patrimonialism and cooptation remained the basic features of the national political system. One faction in the Revolution of 1930 had a liberal perspective, which attracted some of the politicians of São Paulo. By 1932, however, those who had supported the revolution hoping for greater decentralization, realized that, in fact, centralization would result. A revolution in 1932, known as the Constitutional Revolution of São Paulo, was the last attempt to destroy the predominance of the central power over the regional interests, and it failed.⁸⁶

It is in this context that the issue of educational reform, which by this time was a national project, was taken up by São Paulo with specific purposes and goals. According to one of the founders of the Universidade de São Paulo, “having been defeated in the battlefield, we know that only through science and through our effort would we regain the hegemony that we had had for several decades in the central government.”⁸⁷ The Modernist movement of the twenties had already provided a sense of confidence in the state’s ability to produce significant artistic and literary works.⁸⁸ The task now was to educate an elite for political action.

On the national level, the movement for education gained momentum during the first industrial boom after World War I and reached its peak in the years from 1926 to 1935. During this period, several lines of educational thought were developed, institutionalized in different *academias*.⁸⁹ The period is also

⁸⁵ See Lamounier, 1977.

⁸⁶ At 1937, the interests of the central government became explicit in a policy of economic and industrial development, and in this context, despite the political repression characteristic of the period, São Paulo regained its political prestige. The power of ultimate decisions, however, was to remain in the hands of the central government, even during a later period of popular political participation (1945-1964).

⁸⁷ Mesquita Filho, 1969:199. Cit. by Schwartzman, 1979a:195.

⁸⁸ See Candido, 1958b, for the social aspects of literature in the state of São Paulo.

⁸⁹ Such are the Academia Brasileira de Ciências and the Academia Brasileira de Educação. See Schwartzman, 1979a.

characterized by the emergence of a new type of intellectual — the “educator.”⁹⁰ The educators believed education to be hierarchically prior even to economic development, since without an educated population economic development could not be attempted. Regionally, the late twenties saw the launching of several reforms⁹¹ and the beginning of the Conferências Nacionais de Educação. One of those conferences issued a document which became important as a guideline for the educators’ future policies. It was delivered to the press in 1932 and was signed by twenty-six of the most well-known intellectuals in the country.

This document, written by a Paulista educator,⁹² called for massive reforms. The “pioneers of the new education,” as they called themselves, based the proposal on their view of the role and function of the school in the context of the totality of Brazilian society. They believed that theirs was a sociological⁹³ approach and stated that the problem of education was socio-political in nature, and not merely administrative.

The Paulista ideology was evident in the document.⁹⁴ Though the State was seen as responsible for making education available to each “biological individual,” regional autonomy would have to be guaranteed. Furthermore, the great emphasis on the idea that education should serve individual rather than class interests implied that their ideals were democratically and not traditionally-oriented. In this view, education should be an essential public function, directed by the State. The technical, administrative and economic aspects of the educational system would be granted autonomy and would be adapted to the different interests and demands of each region and state. The “pioneers” also proposed that schooling should be secular, free, obligatory, and co-educational.

The Manifesto proposed both reforms in the elementary schools and the creation of universities, and blamed the late 19th century political system for the emphasis on professional schools and the academic mentality which resulted from the domineering role of law schools. Educators, as the social link between the self-

⁹⁰ Anísio Teixeira, Fernando de Azevedo, Almeida Junior, and Lourenço Filho are among them. See the biography of Anísio Teixeira by Hermes Lima (Lima, 1978) and the autobiography of Fernando de Azevedo (Azevedo, 1971).

⁹¹ Such as, for instance, that of the Distrito Federal in 1927, of Minas Gerais in the same year, of São Paulo in 1931. Cf. Azevedo, 1958a:83-95.

⁹²The *Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Escola Nova* was written by Fernando de Azevedo and is found in Azevedo, 1958a:59-81.

⁹³See Candido, 1958a for a study of the role of the educators as carriers of Durkheimian thought in that period.

⁹⁴In his autobiography Azevedo acknowledges the Durkheimian influence in his scientific perspective, and that of Marx in his political position. Azevedo, 1971:210.

taught literary men of the twenties and the social scientists that followed them, became important figures in the foundation of the universities during the thirties.⁹⁵

C. The early universities' experience

The results of the proposals of the “pioneers” differed according to the region or state in which they were adopted. In the Brazilian capital, Rio de Janeiro, the university created in 1935 was doomed to failure. The Universidade do Distrito Federal could not survive the contradiction between the liberal ideology on which it was based and the fact that it was to be a federal or “national” university, and thus under direct control of the central government.

At this point it was not in the central government's interest to create a liberal university; rather its priorities were in bureaucratic and administrative reforms, and from the Revolution of 1930 on, it made clear its intention to recover control of educational planning.⁹⁶ In the national administrative reform which was launched in the mid-1930's it was assumed that whoever carried out scientific research in a governmental institute, or taught in a federal university, was first of all a public servant, and only secondarily a researcher or a scientist. In 1937, a decree was passed which forbade any public servant to hold more than one job. Most of the professors that worked both at research institutes and at the Universidade do Distrito Federal decided to keep only the former appointment. In 1938 the university was dissolved.⁹⁷

Some writers today see the influence of positivism in those government policies. Although positivism had already been openly discredited among intellectuals, it was still a powerful element in the ideas both of the strong centrally organized state and of those engaged in technical education.⁹⁸ Rather than use the resources of the Universidade do Distrito Federal (UDF) the government decided to carry out a plan of “socialização de emergência” (emergency socialization) to train public servants in the values of state-building.⁹⁹ In this context, the failure of the

⁹⁵The best examples are Anísio Teixeira at Rio de Janeiro, and Fernando de Azevedo at the Universidade de São Paulo.

⁹⁶ For this purpose the Conselho Nacional de Educação was created, “to dictate the general guidelines of elementary school, of high school, of technical and college teaching, in the overall interest of the civilization and of the culture of the country”. Cited by Schwartzman, 1979a:174.

⁹⁷Perhaps an equally important factor was the fact that Anísio Teixeira, the educator who had planned the UDF and served as its first president, was removed from his public function, on grounds of political ties with the Communist Movement of 1935. This fact made professors skeptical about the future of the university. See Lima, 1978 and Schwartzman, 1979a:178.

⁹⁸ This point is well made by Schwartzman, 1979a:188-190.

⁹⁹ A. Barros, 1977.

UDF can be seen as the result of an incongruity between the liberal project of the “pioneers” and the goals set up by the central government. The pioneers had believed that it was possible to maintain the intellectual prestige that the capital of the Republic had had as the center of court life in the last century.¹⁰⁰

Events in São Paulo took a different course. First of all, the Universidade de São Paulo was not bound to the central government but, rather, it depended upon the local government, for whom autonomy was the catchword.

During the thirties in São Paulo, there were two major streams of educational thought: one proposed that the university should be a means to treat in a rational way the problems related to the development of an industrial society; the other saw the role of the university in the molding of a national elite for political action. New leaders were needed, and the university would help create them. The Escola de Sociologia e Política, created in 1933 by a group of the industrial sector, was founded in the first mood. The Universidade de São Paulo, heir of the second line of thought, was basically sustained by the agrarian coffee sector, newspaper owners,¹⁰¹ and the government of the state of São Paulo.

The basic program of the Escola de Sociologia e Política was laid out in the inauguration speech in 1933. There the two major points stressed were (i) the importance of sociology, understood as a discipline encompassing anthropology, economics, political science, and jurisprudence,¹⁰² and (ii) the lack of an educated elite to guide the people of the nation. These proposals resulted from the sense of injustice over the loss São Paulo had suffered in the Revolutions of 1930 and 1932. In the words of one of the founders of the Escola de Sociologia e Política, “the Brazilian revolution proved how small is the number of our statesmen and how profound is our ignorance of our real social situation.”¹⁰³ He pointed out that although it was at the vanguard of national development, São Paulo was suffering unfair restrictions. “The creation of this School, in this moment, represents the affirmation of the sincerity and noble purposes of São Paulo for the socio-political culture of the country, in the sense of contributing to the economic development and the formation of its elites.”¹⁰⁴ It is commonly accepted that Anglo-culture was the basic influence at the Escola de Sociologia e Política and that there empirical studies predominated over theoretical speculation.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ For a study of the intellectual circles of Rio de Janeiro at the turn of the century, see Machado Neto, 1973.

¹⁰¹ Julio de Mesquita Filho is the important figure here.

¹⁰² Simonsen, 1933:18.

¹⁰³ Simonsen, 1933:10.

¹⁰⁴ Simonsen, 1933:41.

¹⁰⁵ See Candido, 1958a:514 and Mota, 1978. When Radcliffe-Brown went to Brazil in 1942 he joined the Escola de Sociologia e Política.

By contrast, the plans for the Universidade de São Paulo were much more ambitious. Its founders, guided by liberal principles, proposed to educate not only the elite of São Paulo, but the national elite as well. “Without the focus on scientific research and on high culture, without the rigorous selection based on the criterion of excellence, and without a deep consciousness of the general interest, there is no democracy that can resist the assault of reactionary forces.”¹⁰⁶ This liberal program and purposes underlied the role of the Universidade de São Paulo: “We imagined USP to be the brain of the nationality, the regulatory center of its entire intellectual life.”¹⁰⁷

The Universidade de São Paulo was thus conceived as both an educational improvement and as a political project to educate a national elite. The danger of missing this point may lead to a partial picture of the whole process, such as we find in Lévi-Strauss’ comment that “because the oligarchy felt the need of a civic and secular public opinion to counterbalance the traditional influence of the Church and the army, as well as personal political rule, they undertook to make culture available to a wider audience by creating the Universidade de São Paulo.”¹⁰⁸ As shown above, the process was much more complex than this. The elite of São Paulo did not want a mere audience; they wanted to forge a new elite to govern the country, following their political and ideological ideals.

Those ideals were basically liberal,¹⁰⁹ and could be seen in the three principles of USP: first, the principle of the universality of knowledge, understood as an attempt to have as many different scientific fields represented as possible; second, the idea of integration of the different branches and professional schools into a single institution; and third, the idea of university autonomy, in terms of administrative and technical independence, and of freedom of intellectual expression.¹¹⁰ There was relative contempt for applied science and utilitarian projects, and a great emphasis was placed on the humanities and on pure science, an influence of the French and German models of the university. Those ideas come together in the proposal for the foundation of the USP:

- “a. the philosophical, scientific, literary and artistic culture of a country are the foundations on which the freedom and the progress of a nation are based;

¹⁰⁶ Mesquita Filho, 1969:170.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Lévi-Strauss, 1977:101.

¹⁰⁹ For an analysis of the liberal ideology of the newspaper *O Estado de São Paulo*, which played a major role in the foundation of the USP, see Capelato, 1974.

¹¹⁰ Antunha, 1974:72-3.

- b. a nation only acquires consciousness of itself, of its resources and of its destiny through the institutions of high and disinterested culture;
- c. the foundation of the universities, open to all, and selected according to their own capacities, is indispensable to the constitution of the governing elites, especially in countries like Brazil;
- d. São Paulo having attained a level of cultural maturity, the opportunity is favorable to create its own university, so as to raise the education of the man, of the professional and of the citizen.”¹¹¹

Present here are the issues of nationality, the liberal political ideology of São Paulo, the role of the educated elites in governing the nation, the purposes of the university, and the place São Paulo was to have in this process. Again, the same ideals of educating a national elite can be seen in the inaugural speech of 1936, when the students were told, in a Durkehimian vein, that they should dedicate their lives “to the creation of an ideal, of a collective consciousness, to shaping national values in the younger generation, and forging in them the collective spirit.”¹¹²

The organizational plan of the USP basically followed the French model, with a Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras as its main institute. The choice of the French model may be partially explained by the strong influence France had always had on Brazilian intellectual life. One should not forget, however, the European political context of this period, in which fascism was steadily growing. At this point, France represented a liberal alternative in relation to other European countries, and was more in tune with the overall purposes the university was expected to fulfill. Another important aspect of the choice of the French model was the fact that a single institution, the Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras (FFCL), would provide the integration needed for the rapid development and diffusion of a new mentality. It was up to the FFCL to minister all of the basic courses, while the professional ones would continue to be pursued at the other faculties.¹¹³

The Faculdade de Filosofia, in this context, was a great innovation. It was intended to break the traditional system that had consisted of schools of law, medicine and engineering. The FFCL aimed at nothing less than “to integrate the totality of human knowledge.”¹¹⁴ Interestingly, philosophy assumed the role of the

¹¹¹ Cf. Antunha, 1974:84.

¹¹² Mesquita Filho, 1969:166.

¹¹³ Schwartzman, 1979a.

¹¹⁴ Mesquita, 1969:189, cit. by Schwartzman, 1979a:206.

humanities as such, and it was in the FFCL that the social scientists received their basic instruction. Antonio Candido remarks: “As philosophy had never existed in Brazil as an institutional discipline, in the beginning of the FFCL, it had not the specific function of forming philosophers, but rather the general aim of creating a favorable atmosphere in which to develop a critical attitude and to speculate on the social and cultural reality of the country.”¹¹⁵

After the general plan had been delineated, the time came to choose professors and students, and it was immediately decided that all professors should be foreigners. Several reasons guided this decision: first, if the whole higher educational system was to be renovated, scholars from the most developed countries should be given the task of beginning the process. The founders of the USP decided, however, not to hire the greatest names in each area, but instead to invite former students of well-known professors, so that they would also profit from their experience in Brazil. Second, it was assumed that a temporary contract with foreign professors would allow more flexibility in the eventual substitution of the faculty, thus avoiding the rigid system of lifelong chairs which had been the characteristic of the former professional faculties.¹¹⁶

A commission was chosen to go to Europe and invite, in France, the professors of sociology, history, philosophy, ethnology and geography; in Italy, the professors of mathematics, geology, physics, paleontology and statistics; in Germany, the professors of zoology, chemistry and botany; and in England, the professors of natural history. The ideology of the founders of the USP was clear — the professors of the humanities would come from France, whereas Italy, whose political ideas they opposed, would provide the mathematicians, physicists, geologists.

When the time came to accept the students’ applications, the faculty realized how few they were. The simple fact was that the young generation in São Paulo was not yet prepared to accept the perspective of a “scientific” career, instead of the major professional ones of law, medicine, or engineering. To those who did not choose any of the three, a teaching career was one of the most appealing offer at the time. It was this latter group, who had to follow a course in pedagogy at the Instituto de Educação, that the faculty decided to convince of the important role of the new Faculdade de Filosofia, the variety of its courses, and the new perspectives open for those who decided to follow them. In March of 1935 the courses finally started, with 177 students enrolled, 64 of whom were in social sciences and philosophy. This heavy concentration on the humanities might well

¹¹⁵ Candido, 1978: 14.

¹¹⁶ Azevedo considers this one of the most important decisions of the founding of the USP. He argues that otherwise greed for chairs could have hampered the educational purposes of the university (Azevedo, 1958b). Schwartzman mentions that many Brazilian professors declined the offer, considering themselves unprepared for such a great responsibility (Schwartzman, 1979a).

have had to do with the origin of the students, most of them having come from pedagogy.

A great contrast was seen between the recruitment of regular students and the enthusiastic support the elite of São Paulo gave to the university. It is known that no special invitations were needed for them, and the elite followed the courses of the best known professors as avid auditors, much to the inhibition of the regular students.¹¹⁷ Members of the most important families, including the Governor himself, all attended lectures and courses. This helped establish a kind of war for prestige among the professors, a war which was fought not only at the university, but at different *patisseries*, *confeitarias*, and coffee shops, as well as at luncheons and tea-parties. Depending on the establishment chosen, on the number of people present, and on the importance of the official personalities who attended the meetings, the prestige of the various professors rose or fell.¹¹⁸

A contrast between the way the foreign professors and the Brazilian students recall their experiences during this period may give us a livelier picture of what it was like to live in São Paulo and participate in the experience, as much as it highlights the different perspectives under which they engaged in this collaboration.

The foreign professors, taking Lévi-Strauss' classical account as an example, were basically concerned with the students' capacity to acquire and comprehend the new ideas. They were also concerned with comparing their own ability and that of the local professors, and with the kind of student to whom they were transmitting their knowledge. The Brazilian students, on the other hand, were less concerned with their capacity to assimilate the teaching they were receiving than they were in judging the professors' basic attitude about teaching in a less developed country. They had decided to maintain a critical view of the foreign professors' influence, but were uncertain as to how to pursue their objectives. Here are some of Lévi-Strauss' recollections:

“I still remember that, when I arrived in Brazil to take part in the founding of the university, I regarded the lowly status of my Brazilian colleagues with a mixture of pity and condescension. Watching these poorly-paid professors, who were obliged to undertake odd jobs on the side in order to make a living, I felt proud to belong to a country of long-established culture, where a member of the professional classes could feel secure and respected. Little did I imagine that, twenty years later, my hard-working pupils would occupy university chairs, in some fields more numerous and better equipped than their French equivalents, and provided with libraries such as we would be delighted to possess.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁷ Schwartzman, 1979a and Lévi-Strauss, 1977.

¹¹⁸ Lévi-Strauss, 1977:104.

¹¹⁹ Lévi-Strauss, 1977:101.

He continues:

“Yet, these men and women of all ages who crowded into our lecture-rooms with a mixture of enthusiasm and suspiciousness had a lot of leeway to make up. They were young people anxious to obtain the posts that would be available to those who acquired the diplomas we awarded; they were also lawyers, engineers and established politicians who feared that they might soon have to compete against people with university degrees, if they did not have the wisdom to graduate themselves.”¹²⁰

In a sharp and witty style, he mentions the students’ motivations:

“Our students wanted to know everything but, whatever the field of interest, only the most recent theory seemed to be worthy of being memorized. They were indifferent to all the intellectual feasts of the past, which in any case they only knew of by hearsay since they did not read the original works, and were always ready to enthuse over new dishes. ... Ideas and theories held no intrinsic interest for them; they were merely instruments of prestige and the important thing was to be the first to know about them. To share a theory with other people already acquainted with it was like appearing in a dress that had already been worn; it entailed a loss of face.¹²¹ ... My colleagues and I, who were the products of a stringent system of academic training, often felt embarrassed. We had been taught to respect only fully matured ideas, and we found ourselves exposed to attacks by students who, while completely ignorant of the past, were always a few months ahead of us with the latest information.”¹²²

The other side of the experience is told by Florestan Fernandes, who would later be considered the father of a school of sociology in São Paulo. For Fernandes,

“the massive importation of foreign professors, first in missions, then in small groups, and finally individually, meant an enormous mobilization of

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Lévi-Strauss links this fact with the increased rate of differentiation between town and country (Lévi-Strauss, 1977:101). By taking Buarque de Holanda's analysis one arrives at a different interpretation. Buarque de Holanda also describes Brazilian intellectual style as directed "towards a kind of formal and exterior erudition, where exquisite names, pseudo-scientific propositions, quotations of foreign languages, are destined to fascinate the reader as would a collection of glittering and precious stones" (Buarque de Holanda, 1955:242). He links this attitude, however, to 16th century Portuguese society, where exterior manifestations were the sources of status in a society with a loose feudal stratification. In 20th century Brazil the urban elite made "talent and letters" the basis for a new kind of aristocracy.

¹²² Lévi-Strauss, 1977:102-3.

the cultural resources of the most developed countries. For the first time, modernization was organized in large scale and developed from within. It was an abrupt step forward ... in which the trapize artists acted without protective nets. We were the trapize artists and we had to decide what to do with the imported education we were receiving. What route should we follow?"¹²³

In Fernandes' opinion, the foreign professors saw their roles from an Illuminist perspective:

"They did not worry about the material nor the cultural basis for such a rapid intellectual mobilization. For the foreign professors, students were merely students, no matter their cultural background. Nor did they worry about the use we should give to their teaching."¹²⁴

What also bothered the Brazilian students, according to Fernandes, was the fact the foreign professors were not interested in gradually giving up control of the different disciplines to a new local generation. Rather they assumed they would be replaced by other professors of their country of origin, professors who would be chosen by them.

The students reacted strongly to this state of affairs. First, they felt the university had not been planned for the long run; secondly, they decided not to remain the ideological followers of the foreign professors, but only to retain their methodology and patterns of work. Their goal was to create scientific, philosophical, literary and artistic knowledge in an original way and with as much independence as possible. They would learn with the foreign professors the techniques and the institutional organization that were necessary for the development of intellectual work. Fernandes states that this spirit was dominant in his plans as a professor of sociology during the fifties: "To the old symbol of *made in France* I wanted to oppose the label *feito no Brasil* (made in Brazil). I was not searching for a narrow 'Brazilian sociology.' What I did want was to establish patterns of work that would allow us to reach *our* mode of social thinking and *our* contribution to sociology"¹²⁵.

The distinction between what was foreign and what should be national was very clearly felt at this moment, especially due to the ambiguous way in which foreign professors had come to teach Brazilians how to better understand their own "Brazilianness." The university set-up was ambiguous for both professors and students, but while for the former this was at most a temporary experience — few were the professors who remained in the country — for the latter the outcome of

¹²³ Fernandes, 1977:225.

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Fernandes, 1977:178.

the endeavor would shape the future of Brazilian social sciences and, indirectly, they believed, the future of the nation. It is not surprising, then, that the students' accounts of this period are often polemical and reflect this internal struggle.

The students perceived themselves as members of the middle-classes. They believed that, in contrast to the elite who founded the USP, their social background allowed them to be intellectually critical and revolutionary. Antonio Candido writes that, by creating a university, the oligarchy generated a "sorcerer's apprentice": the elite forged the conditions to educate intellectuals to express its values, but these intellectuals, in part because they came from the middle-classes, developed an attitude and a radical thinking that denied the founders' values. For the first time in Brazilian history, Candido argues, intellectuals were to put forward a non-aristocratic picture of Brazilian social reality. In contrast with the sociological essays of the twenties, written on and from a perspective of the dominant classes,¹²⁶ the social scientists turned to the oppressed sectors of the society: Blacks, Indians, peasants.¹²⁷

Fernandes states that the educational institutions created by the liberal politicians of the thirties were redefined and taken out of the control of their original founders. However, in an evaluation which differs from Candido's, he sees his generation as more critical and revolutionary only as a matter of degree. He believes that, for a moment, they had in their hands the possibility of making a critical analysis of the nature of national development, but "they did not carry those conclusions to their practical implications,"¹²⁸ by which Fernandes means that the established order was never actually threatened.

There is, however, no clear indication that the students really came from the middle-classes.¹²⁹ Fernandes was the son of a washerwoman, and recalls his uneasiness at the Faculdade de Filosofia, where the brightest students bore the names of traditional families.¹³⁰ Some of today's writers point to the elitism of the students who were, in fact, the sons of the coffee aristocracy.¹³¹ It is important to note here that the discussion of student's social origins is always directed to an evaluation of the degree of conservatism or of progressive thought they developed.

¹²⁶ The contrast in here made to Gilberto Freyre's essays. Candido, 1978.

¹²⁷ Candido, interview.

¹²⁸ Fernandes, 1977:244.

¹²⁹ Fernandes, 1977:230-45.

¹³⁰ Fernandes, 1977:158-9.

¹³¹ Mota, 1978.

Fernandes dismisses the whole issue by arguing that even if the students came from the middle-classes they were not, by implication, non-conformists, as Candido suggests. If it were true that the majority espoused socialist viewpoints, the simple truth was that they still worked within the liberal paradigm of the founders of the university. Theirs was simply a socialist “vocation.”¹³² Fernandes, today holding a militant and radical position towards socialist political participation, sees his generation as dominated by mild convictions, and refers to it as a “lost generation.”¹³³ Looking back at his student years, Fernandes concludes that the intellectual revolution he and his colleagues believed they were carrying out was nothing more than “a mystified conception of ‘developmentalism,’ still based on the liberal belief that spontaneous change is the solution, in and by itself, of all evil things.”¹³⁴

D. Social sciences and the thrust of nationality

Fernandes’ testimony brings us back to the fundamental problem towards whose solution the institutionalization of the social sciences was directed and the way in which it developed. The significance of the decision to found schools of sociology during the thirties goes beyond a simple case of educational reform, and is intimately linked to national political issues. A dramatic ideological shift occurred in the thirties whereby people came to believe that Brazil, once “traditional,” was suddenly “modern.” At this point, sociology, comprising all social sciences, was called to provide answers for the problems of building a society which was destined for development and which would be fit for the improvement of the human spirit. Fernandes’ complaint that his is a “lost generation” is based on his perception of their failure to fulfill the immense promise of the ideals in which they believed.

Social studies had for a long time been carried out in Brazil, although mainly by individual thinkers. A whole line of historians, writers, lawyers and educators had been the carriers of sociological thinking since the last decades of the 19th century.¹³⁵ In the thirties, the institutionalization of the social sciences, guided by the belief that it would foster a national and scientific view of men and society, allowed for a further specialization of social roles. Where before the intellectual elite was mainly represented by the self-taught literary men, now the social scientist would take the responsibility of critically evaluating national development.

¹³² Fernandes, 1977:252.

¹³³ Fernandes, 1977, esp. Chapter 9.

¹³⁴ Fernandes, 1977:244.

¹³⁵ Already in 1900 Paulo Egídio published *Estudos de Sociologia Criminal*, inspired by Durkheim's theory. See Candido, 1958a. It may be argued that "sociology" had not yet developed in the country, but, rather, that only "sociological manifestations" existed. (Cf. Candido, 1964:25 for the difference between "literature" and "literary manifestations").

Here the similarities between the Brazilian case and other instances in which the social sciences were called upon to represent the thrust of a new nationality are striking. It is sufficient to recall that during the Enlightenment sociological tradition was born in a similar context. Sociology developed in 18th century France as a world-historical innovation in the famous Institut National.¹³⁶ It developed out of one characteristic movement, namely, the protest against the jurisdiction of the Church over the civil society. A secular morality was needed, on which all men of good will could agree, and sociology promised to make science available for the betterment of social life, especially in the area of influencing national policies. Whether it is ever possible to resolve the paradox of a critical social science which develops against the vested interests of society, is a problem to which many have addressed themselves.¹³⁷ The fact is that, when the section of the social sciences in the Institut National was suppressed by Napoleon in 1803, the ability of the social sciences to scientifically direct the course of nation-building after the French Revolution was also suppressed.

Sociology in 19th century America had to face similar questions: "How do we proceed to remedy the evils of the new industrial society? How do we begin to initiate reforms that will achieve concrete good, rather than merely palliate, or perhaps even worsen the human lot?"¹³⁸ In both cases, in France and in the United States, the endeavor to develop a social science as a response to moral questions failed. In France the Institut failed because it was opposed by the state. In the United States, the American Social Science Association broke down as the several disciplines gave way to a practical and technocratic orientation to the solution of social problems.¹³⁹

It was in response to a similar situation that the institutionalization of the social sciences was carried out in Brazil. The social sciences were asked to forge a new intellectual elite to guide the destiny of the country. Against the authoritarian ideology of the state which was becoming increasingly dominant,¹⁴⁰ the social sciences would propose new models for nation-building. From the Enlightenment, Brazilian social scientists inherited the paradox of, on the one hand, "the human urgency of the social problem,"¹⁴¹ and, on the other hand, the necessity to uphold the respectability of objective science. It is not surprising, then, that France has always had such a great influence on Brazilian social scientists.¹⁴² From the

¹³⁶ Becker, 1971.

¹³⁷ See Fernandes, above. See Becker, 1971.

¹³⁸ Becker, 1971:5.

¹³⁹ Becker, 1971:33-5.

¹⁴⁰ Lamounier, 1977. See also Chapter Six.

¹⁴¹ Becker, 1971:6.

¹⁴² For an examination of the tendency French thought has developed to combine theory and praxis, see also Elias' analysis of the concept of "civilization". Elias, 1978a.

specific Brazilian historical context, they inherited other problems and questions as well.

One of these Brazilian features was the dominance of the literary mode as the medium par excellence of intellectual life. As Antonio Candido remarks, “Unlike what happened in other places, literature has been here, more than philosophy or the human sciences, the central phenomenon of spiritual life.”¹⁴³ Others have also drawn attention to the way in which literature and judicial questions absorbed the nation during the 19th century.¹⁴⁴ Darcy Ribeiro is another who emphatically argues that “the best mirror of Brazilian society is literature and not sociology.”¹⁴⁵ Himself an anthropologist, he says that “we can do without the social sciences, but we cannot do without literature.”¹⁴⁶ One historian notes that it was through literature that Brazilian intellectuals measured the country’s achievement of a unique national culture at the turn of the century. At this period the question in Brazil was: “Now that we have abolished both slavery and the monarchy, we must be becoming a more autonomous country. Where, then, is our national literature?”¹⁴⁷

Several explanations have been given to account for the predominance of this style of intellectual expression. Some stress the strong European influence, especially the French, which accorded great prestige to the humanities, to the exclusion of more pragmatic thought. Others call attention to the prolonged colonial status of the country, which, up until the 18th century, made the establishment of frontiers and maintenance of the territory the central national problems.¹⁴⁸ Given the continuity of the literary genre, the social sciences can be seen as a new variation on that traditional intellectual style. But here some claims of discontinuity between the two have been made.

This argument relates to the *scientific* nature of the works written after the thirties. Even a critic such as Antonio Candido does not avoid scientistic bias. Candido shows that there is a continuity in Brazil between literature and the social sciences in terms of their social functions,¹⁴⁹ but points out that his generation was the last in which literature was still considered absolutely necessary. “In the beginning of this century, everything had to wear literary clothes. Medicine to present itself had to be literature. Law the same. Sociology had to present itself as

¹⁴³ Candido, 1976:156.

¹⁴⁴ Azevedo, 1963:395.

¹⁴⁵ Ribeiro, interview.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Skidmore, 1974:87-8.

¹⁴⁸ Candido, 1976 and Fernandes, 1957.

¹⁴⁹ Candido, 1976.

Os Sertões, and even in *Casa Grande e Senzala* of Gilberto Freyre, sociology appears more like a romance of Proust.”¹⁵⁰ This approach changed with the foundation of the universities because it led to a new division and specialization of intellectual work. As a former student of the Universidade de São Paulo, Candido saw the change in the attitude of fellow students, who began to judge a book in terms of “This is not science, at most this is a literary book.”¹⁵¹

Although I agree with Candido’s perceptive view of the division of labor which the institutionalization of the social sciences fostered, taking the self-taught literary men as the prototype of the intellectual of the beginning of the century,¹⁵² I regard it as of only secondary importance for this study whether “science” or “ideology” were produced before or after the thirties.¹⁵³ The important points to keep in mind include, first, that the social scientist is seen as a critical intellectual who should contribute to the building of the nation from a scientific perspective. This ideology was imbedded in the foundation of the schools of sociology during the thirties. Second, young students had the challenge of confronting European influence and had, at the same time, to decide to what extent a “national” social science was possible or appropriate. In that context the tension between the national and the foreign poles was stretched almost to its limit. Cosmopolitanism vs. localism; internationalism vs. nationalism; universalism vs. holism; whatever terms are chosen, they represented the framework within which the students had to work, and at the moment no hierarchical relation between the two seemed the best solution. “The feeling in us is Brazilian, but the imagination is European,” said Joaquim Nabuco at the turn of the century. Olavo Bilac in 1907 wrote that “Our soul is still, and I believe always will be, an extension of the French soul.”¹⁵⁴ Those references echoed in the ears of the young students who opted to become social scientists after the thirties. So much was expected from them that it is no wonder they became the “sacred little monsters”¹⁵⁵ who would offer solutions to the problems of the nation.

¹⁵⁰ Candido, interview.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² For a study of the biographies of sixty writers who published between 1870 and 1930 and an analysis of the social structure that maintained the intellectual life of the period, see the interesting study by Machado Neto, 1973.

¹⁵³ For a critique of the “scientist” approach, see W.G. Santos, 1967.

¹⁵⁴ Cit. in Skidmore, 1974:92-3.

¹⁵⁵ That is how the students of the Universidade de São Paulo became known outside the walls of the university. Fernandes, 1977:165.

CHAPTER THREE

The Anthropology that Did Not Take Hold: Florestan Fernandes on the Tupinambá

“As has happened to other countries, Brazil needs to attain a minimum level of internal integration to allow it the conditions to organize and survive as an autonomous national society.”

Fernandes, 1968:132-3

The work of Florestan Fernandes¹⁵⁶ will be examined in this chapter because through his intellectual development it is possible to call attention to some important features in the development of academic social science in Brazil. The path Fernandes followed in his work is similar, in many respects, to the one by which the social sciences as a whole, and also anthropology, travelled. I see him, then, as both a carrier of its development, and as one who internalized the social pressures surrounding him at different moments. In the process of his intellectual development, during which he advanced in academic positions,¹⁵⁷ he helped make sociology the hegemonic social science among the others. For some 25 years this sociology responded, better than any other social science, to the quest for a nationally defined theory of society.

For heuristic purposes I have distinguished three phases in Fernandes' topics of interest: the first, which will be the main concern of the chapter, is represented by his studies on the Tupinambá Indians of the 16th century; the second, by his

¹⁵⁶ Florestan Fernandes was born in 1922. He got his B.A. in 1943 and his doctorate in 1952 at the Universidade de São Paulo. He also studied at the Escola de Sociologia e Política, where he got an M.A. in 1946. From 1945 to 1952 he was assistant professor in the chair of Sociology I; later he inherited the chair from Roger Bastide. In 1969 he was compulsorily retired by the government, on political grounds, together with dozens of social scientists around the country. He then taught in Toronto and at Yale, and in recent years returned to Brazil to teach in private universities and to serve as an advisor to publishing companies. Among his students are Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Octavio Ianni, Luiz Pereira, Marialice Foracchi, Maria Sylvia Carvalho Franco, Leoncio Martins Rodrigues, Paulo Singer, Juarez Brandão Lopes and Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira. The younger generation of his students include José de Souza Martins, José Carlos Pereira, Gabriel Cohn, and José César Gnaccarini. See Fernandes, 1977 (Chapters 8 and 9) and Fernandes, 1978a for his autobiography, and References at the end of this dissertation, for his main publications.

¹⁵⁷ See Footnote above.

studies on race relations; the third, by his interest in Brazil as a national society in relation to the other nations of the world.¹⁵⁸ Pervasive throughout his life are an emphasis on theoretical and methodological issues and on practical concerns with education.¹⁵⁹ Because this chapter is not intended as a study of Fernandes's accomplishments, it will not do justice to the extent and depth of his studies. Rather, it will specifically address one major point: the movement one can depict in his work from an anthropologically-oriented social science, heir of the Durkheimian-French framework, to a sociology interested in larger national processes. The Tupinambá studies represent, in this sense, the anthropology that did not succeed. This line of inquiry was discontinued and, in retrospect, may look unrelated to what followed. But why would Fernandes have spent seven years of his life in an historical reconstruction? Why choose the Tupinambá Indians as a subject of study?

An immediate answer would link the Tupinambá studies to the themes of the modernist movement of the twenties; to the influence of the French tradition; to the desire to contribute to Brazilian history by giving a scientific account of its zero point in time; to the anthropological influence of the Germans who took the Indians as their object of study. I believe, however, that an approach which focuses on the internal context of Fernandes's own intellectual development casts additional light on the problem.

In brief, I intend to use Fernandes's work as an example of a trend which occurred in the social sciences in Brazil. Through his work, I intend to depict the movement from an anthropologically-oriented social science to what in Brazil became conceived of as sociology; from a universalistic approach to social reality to a holistic one; and from culture to society as main concepts of analysis. This chapter begins with a seminal article written in 1956 on the "Theoretical Tendencies of Modern Ethnological Investigation in Brazil," in which Fernandes already felt self-confident enough to order Brazilian social studies in terms of his own work. The next section goes back in time to the studies of Blacks, to finally conclude with his later works on the national society.

A. The New Theoretical Tendencies

In the 1956 essay,¹⁶⁰ Fernandes gives a detailed account and a rich bibliography of the works carried out during the twentieth century in Brazil. He there distinguishes a pre-scientific period of social studies, in which the historical essays written by the literary men of the beginning of the century and the works of ethnologists such as Curt Nimuendaju are included, from the period after the

¹⁵⁸ This scheme is somehow akin to his own, cf. Fernandes, 1977 (chapter 8).

¹⁵⁹ See, for instance, Fernandes, 1943, 1966, 1977 (Chapter 6) on education; and Fernandes, 1947, 1959, 1961, on theoretical issues.

¹⁶⁰ Fernandes, 1975 (Chapter 4).

1930's, when efforts to contribute scientifically to social investigation were a primary concern. The institutionalization of the social sciences during the 1930's separates the two periods.¹⁶¹

Referring to the first period, Fernandes notes Nimuendaju's lack of theoretical sophistication, and considers the literary writers ideologically oriented, being mainly concerned with what, at the time, was a "problem" for the nation. Both lacked a minimum level of theoretical accomplishment which, for Fernandes, represented the criterion of scientific maturity. In relation to the second period, Fernandes describes three areas that had been of interest to Brazilian social sciences: (i) social change; (ii) religion, mythology, shamanism and magic; and (iii) social organization. He extensively comments on the first two, by mentioning studies carried out among Indian tribes, Afro-Brazilian communities, peasants and immigrants.¹⁶² While noting how those studies were deeply influenced by the empirical situations at hand, he sets aside the study of social organization — the third topic referred to above — as the area where theoretical concerns were emerging more consistently. His *A Organização Social dos Tupinambá* and *A Função Social da Guerra na Sociedade Tupinambá* fall into that category.¹⁶³

This essay is important for my purpose in two ways: first, Fernandes is very careful to classify all the studies he mentions as "ethnology" which he defines as "the study of the orientations and supra-individual effects of human behavior which can only be described and interpreted by considering the factors or processes that operate in one or several cultural levels."¹⁶⁴ Possibly because ethnology was the realm of the study of culture he did not include his work on race relations which has already been presented as a thesis in 1955.¹⁶⁵ The essay reads, thus, as a guideline to the direction he wanted to imprint on sociology from then on, in contrast with ethnology. Secondly, it is a self-evaluation of his own work.

Fernandes classifies theory into two levels. One is merely "descriptive," while the second, of a higher level of abstraction, is "interpretive". *A Organização Social*, he writes, was deliberately maintained at the descriptive level, while *A Função Social da Guerra*, because the first step had been successfully completed, could

¹⁶¹ See W. G. Santos, 1967 and 1970 for a critical review of Fernandes' article. W. G. Santos sees it as using an "institutional-scientificist" model for explaining the development of the social sciences in Brazil. A discussion and retaking of W. G. Santos's viewpoints are found in Lamounier, 1977.

¹⁶² Fernandes, 1975 (Chapter 4).

¹⁶³ Respectively, Fernandes 1963a and 1970. From now on referred to simply as *A Organização Social* and *A Função Social da Guerra*.

¹⁶⁴ Fernandes, 1975:141.

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Fernandes, 1964.

be interpretative of the material.¹⁶⁶ Implied was the idea that the second book had been the only interpretative explanation in ethnology in Brazil up to that point.

Although both *A Organização Social* and *A Função Social da Guerra* are considered classics in Brazilian social sciences, they are rarely read. Fernandes himself does not understand why the books have had so little attention compared to his later works. In writing these works, he wanted to prove that a Brazilian student could do scholarly work comparable to the best done in Europe. He discouraged his students, however, from following his path: “*A Função Social* is a little heavy, because it follows a tradition of dissertation we absorbed from the French. But this kind of dissertation — I wanted it to be the first and only attempt, after I completed it. How can you let someone spend four or five years of his life in a work like this? I had to prove that I could do it. And then acquire the prestige to change direction.” If it was good for France, it was not appropriate to Brazil. He continues: “Our university is new. In our intellectual milieu — I would not dare say ‘academic’ milieu — that was an exorbitant work. *A Organização Social* was only good for me, and *A Função Social* is a book that everybody thinks is important, but the editor himself found that important books do not always sell.”¹⁶⁷

The idea of working with the Tupinambá Indians resulted from a suggestion given by Herbert Baldus,¹⁶⁸ with whom Fernandes was taking a seminar at the Escola de Sociologia e Política. At this time (1945), Fernandes had already received his B.A. from the Universidade de São Paulo, and was now assistant professor in sociology. Wanting to broaden his academic background, he decided to study towards an M.A. degree at the Escola de Sociologia e Política, hoping to fill the gaps of a French-oriented education with an Anglo-Saxon training, which was believed to predominate at that school.¹⁶⁹

In order to write a final paper for the Baldus seminar, Fernandes chose to study the writings of the *cronista*¹⁷⁰ Gabriel Soares. It is unclear to him why he made that choice, but he recalls that Alfred Métraux’s¹⁷¹ belief in the impossibility of reconstructing the social organization of the Tupinambá had been discussed in the seminar, and proved a challenge to Fernandes. Relying on Gabriel Soares’ chronicles, Fernandes was able to discuss and complement certain aspects which

¹⁶⁶ See Fernandes, 1975:170; 178-181.

¹⁶⁷ Fernandes, interview.

¹⁶⁸ See Hopper, 1967:VII-VIII for a short biography of Baldus.

¹⁶⁹ Fernandes, 1977:168.

¹⁷⁰ I shall use the Portuguese word *cronista*, instead of the archaic “chronicler” to refer to anyone — traveller, Court official, etc. — who wrote on their experiences in early Colonial Brazil.

¹⁷¹ See Baldus, 1963 for the biography of Métraux.

were absent from Métraux's work on Tupinambá religion.¹⁷² Baldus then suggested a development of the essay, in which the work of several *cronistas* would be compared to see whether their accounts were consistent with one another.

This was the beginning of the larger project. *A Organização Social* was Fernandes' Master's thesis, defended in 1947 at the Escola de Sociologia e Política, followed in 1951 by *A Função Social da Guerra*, his doctoral dissertation presented at the Universidade de São Paulo. "The idea was, first, to work on the reconstruction of Tupinambá social organization and, then, to make a more rigorous interpretation of Tupinambá warfare. But the war was only the leit-motiv to study a civilizational system. You know, in the line of Marcel Mauss."¹⁷³

B. The Tupinambá

The Tupinambá lived in Brazil before the conquest by the Portuguese, occupying what are today the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro in the south, and the territories from Bahia to Sergipe in the north. The contacts between the Portuguese and the Indians, and the Indians' way of life, were fully described by the *cronistas* — missionaries, colonizers and travellers — during the 16th and 17th centuries. It was on those sources that Fernandes based his study.¹⁷⁴

A Organização Social,¹⁷⁵ the first of the two books, is divided into five chapters. In it, Fernandes defines social organization as "the whole of activities, actions and human relations organized in a configuration of social life."¹⁷⁶

The first chapter deals with the spatial distribution of tribes along the Brazilian coast. It describes the contact with the invaders, the wars between the Indians, the French and the Portuguese, and the migration of the Tupinambá to the north and the interior of Brazil.

The second chapter deals with the structure of local groups and gives detailed statistical data on their composition, on the relationship between the groups that formed a *maloca*¹⁷⁷ and the tribe, and that between the different tribes. It also discusses the economic system in terms of the integration of economic activities

¹⁷² See Métraux, 1950b.

¹⁷³ Fernandes, interview.

¹⁷⁴ The Tupinambá were the subject of the film "How Tasty Was My Frenchman" (Como era bom o meu francês), directed by Nelson Pereira dos Santos.

¹⁷⁵ See reviews by Candido, 1949 and Huxley, 1951.

¹⁷⁶ Fernandes, 1963a:20.

¹⁷⁷ The *maloca* was the large house which defined a residential group.

into the social structure.¹⁷⁸ Fernandes tries to link the economic system, seen as a social system which fulfills the fundamental human needs “defined culturally as social values,”¹⁷⁹ to the migration patterns and to the inter-tribal the cyclical warfare which prevailed at the time.

The third chapter is devoted to a discussion of the kinship system. Fernandes regrets, for the first time, the limitations of his sources. However, he is able to describe and analyze the kinship terminology, the rules of marriage and the organization of family life, and the principles that guided reciprocal behavior. Great attention is given to the ideas which the Tupinambá held on the role of both sexes in the conception of a child. Those ideas are considered by Fernandes to form the basis of the kinship terminology, the cult of male ancestors, and of the practice of the *couvade*.

Different social categories and the status attributed to them are discussed in the fourth chapter, as are the basis for status ascription through the age system and the channel for status acquisition outside that system. The cultural ideal of men as warriors is related to the acquisition of the status of adulthood through warfare and the ritual of sacrifice and consumption of an enemy.

The fifth chapter deals with the political system in terms of the role of the elders, and the choice of chiefs and the religious leaders.

Fernandes leaves for the conclusion the discussion of theoretical issues. It is there that he tries to link all aspects of Tupinambá society into a “total configuration”; he points out the consistency of the ecological organization with the social system, the morphological aspects of the tribal system, the relationship between social organization and religious beliefs, and the importance of religious values to the practice of warfare. He sees the Tupinambá social system as one which is kinship-based, but also as one in which the religious system provided the parameters within which individuals were ordered within society. In his words: “The basic structure consisted of the kinship system, which permeated and supplemented the other structures and systems of social relations. However, the basic social structure was totally infiltrated by religious values, for the tribal religious system echoed in the whole social organization.”¹⁸⁰

Here some comments are appropriate. The first has to do with Fernandes’s evaluation of *A Organização Social* as mere description. If it is true that his following book is more theoretically oriented, it is equally true that the seeds for it are here. The effort of compiling and classifying the different sources — each containing different kinds of information, different emphasis on distinct aspects of Tupinambá social life, each of distinct ethnographic quality, and dealing with

¹⁷⁸ This chapter was previously published as Fernandes, 1949a.

¹⁷⁹ Fernandes, 1949a:9.

¹⁸⁰ Fernandes, 1963a:355.

groups of different regions — was already an accomplishment of its own.¹⁸¹ To discover in this material the principles which guided their social organization was yet a further achievement. It is my contention that the preparation of *A Organização Social* provided Fernandes with “the solid intellectual tools which allowed [him] to inquire how one moves from the ‘facts’ to ‘theories,’ and which forced [him] to ask of the sociologist more than a good description of reality,”¹⁸² which is what Fernandes himself sees as the result of this research. His interpretation of human sacrifice, warfare and religious beliefs and their interrelationships bore the mark of Marcel Mauss, Gregory Bateson, and Karl Mannheim as well as of Durkheim, Evans-Pritchard, Malinowski, Radcliffe-Brown, Kroeber, and Gurvitch. Mauss, however, was his primary source of inspiration. “Despite all my readings in anthropology and ethnology, it was through Mauss that I worked with British, North-American and German anthropology.”¹⁸³

An incident which occurred at the Escola de Sociologia e Política may be recounted here to clarify Fernandes’ theoretical viewpoint. Although the Tupinambá research had been suggested by Herbert Baldus, it was under the tutelage of Donald Pierson that it finally began. In organizing the collected material, Pierson wanted every document to be discussed in terms of an hypothesis which could interpret the facts therein. In this way, he thought, the sources would be organized in a controlled manner. Fernandes did not accept this, and the disagreement between the two is seen in retrospect as a strange variant of usual discussions on “theory” vs. “description.” It was supposed that Fernandes, who had been educated at the Universidade de São Paulo, would not be an “empiricist.” As it developed, however, their positions were reversed. It is Fernandes who recalls saying to Pierson: “This forces it, Prof. Pierson. One can only truly know what the documents tell us after we reconstruct the totality. An isolated fact has one meaning in an empirical context, another in a context we reconstruct. If we start by forcing theory in the data, then we lose the data. If we already have the theory, then we do not need any research.”¹⁸⁴

Fernandes sees the debate as a dismissal of the view that the students of the Universidade de São Paulo were infatuated with theory, and as proof that he could respect data more than a professor of the Escola de Sociologia. While agreeing with Fernandes, I believe that he misses the point as he approached the empirical data with a theoretical perspective which was basically inspired by Mauss. It had

¹⁸¹See Fernandes, 1975 (Chapter 5) for a critical evaluation of the ethnographic contribution of the *cronistas*.

¹⁸²Fernandes, 1977:175.

¹⁸³Fernandes, interview.

¹⁸⁴Fernandes, interview.

to do with the notion of the “total phenomena” and the primacy of the totality over the different parts of a given social system.¹⁸⁵

The “description” which Fernandes mentions, then, reads more as a Maussian *interpretation* of Tupinambá social life as told by *cronistas* through their own comparison with their cultures of origin and their explanations of the Indian way of life and of the everyday behavior they witnessed.¹⁸⁶

In *A Organização Social* Fernandes used every piece of evidence available to account for Tupinambá social organization.¹⁸⁷ Little is said, however, about the contact of the Indians with the Portuguese and French.¹⁸⁸ At this moment, Fernandes wanted to give an account of the zero point in Brazilian history through a sociological description of the indigenous inhabitants, before or despite contact with the Europeans. In this sense, the book is a combination of the French tradition of the Universidade de São Paulo (in its theoretical inspiration) and of the German influence of Baldus (in the definition of its topic). It would be misleading, though, to concentrate only on the foreign influences and leave out the internal dynamics which link the Tupinambá studies to the modernist movement of the twenties and thirties.

Like the modernists, Fernandes had the idea of a zero point in Brazilian history, the search for the essence of Brazilianness, and a positive attitude towards the Indians. In addition, the project had been based on historical reconstruction, and was not the result of fieldwork. The modernists themselves had been very much inspired by the texts left by the *cronistas*. Unlike the modernists, however, who dealt with the subject in literary and poetic styles, freely combining Indian

¹⁸⁵ The misunderstanding between Fernandes and Pierson was not solved at the time, and Fernandes was dismissed from the research project. The interference of Baldus, however, settled the problem, and Pierson generously agreed to transfer the research funds to Baldus, under whom Fernandes concluded the project. (Fernandes, interview).

¹⁸⁶ One of the most impressive accounts was left by the German Hans Staden, who lived for ten years among the aborigines, nine months of which as a prisoner waiting for the day of his sacrifice. See Baldus, 1949 and Schaden, 1954a.

¹⁸⁷ This fact is attested to in the eighteen pages of the book's bibliography. It is divided into five parts: the first lists the theoretical sources; the second deals with the way the historical method is applied to the social sciences; the third and fourth are on primary and secondary historical sources; the last lists bibliographies on Indians of Brazil. See Fernandes, 1963a:356-374.

¹⁸⁸ Fernandes wrote just one essay on the Indian reaction to the conquest. Cf. Fernandes, 1960. The subject of the relation between Indians and the national society would later become dominant among anthropologists during the fifties and sixties. See Chapter Four.

legends, popular sayings, and folklore,¹⁸⁹ Fernandes tried to give a “scientific” picture of it.¹⁹⁰

The effort was not understood. Or perhaps an academic view of the subject did not answer the needs, at the time, which a highly weighted issue posed. The expectations of the few who had hoped the book would become obligatory reading were not fulfilled. “Nobody knows the book. The historians ignore it,” says Fernandes.¹⁹¹ Although the Brazilian elite had created the means for an academic milieu to develop, as part of the overall project of national self-affirmation, it was not ready to assimilate its results. In this context, Fernandes’s effort had exceeded the needs of the moment, being ahead of, or unrelated to, what followed. *A Função Social da Guerra* develops and makes clear these points.

A Função Social da Guerra was written between 1947 and 1952 and presented as a doctoral dissertation to the Universidade de São Paulo.¹⁹² Fernandes believed that, with *A Organização*, he had made a historical contribution, with the theoretical part of the project being developed in the second book.¹⁹³

The bridge between the two was made by an article in which Fernandes discussed the historical sources to be used and the methodological and theoretical approach to be adopted.¹⁹⁴ In this essay Fernandes wanted, first, to explain his understanding of “warfare.” Criticizing the perspective which adopted the Western or “civilized” definition of warfare, he made a point of taking into account the context in which it appeared.¹⁹⁵

“Taking warfare as a social phenomenon, part of the socio-cultural system of a given society, the sociological approach allows us to clarify crucial questions in relation to the motivation for warfare, its relation to social organization and vice-versa; the

¹⁸⁹ See Candido, 1976:131-165.

¹⁹⁰ Morse links Fernandes’ studies with the modernists Mario de Andrade and Oswald de Andrade. Cf. Morse, 1978:47. In his interview, Fernandes denied the influence.

¹⁹¹ Fernandes, interview.

¹⁹² During this period, when Fernandes returned to the USP after having completed his M.A. at the Escola de Sociologia e Política, he published several articles on methodological and theoretical issues, some of which became chapters in his book. See Fernandes, 1947, 1948a, 1948b, 1949a, 1949b, 1952.

¹⁹³ Fernandes, 1963a:9-12.

¹⁹⁴ Fernandes, 1975:191-298.

¹⁹⁵ This is done in a “Durkheimian style”, as when Durkheim defines “suicide” and “religion” as the starting points to *Suicide* and *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*.

influence of warlike values in the structuring of the personality and on the conditioning of human behavior.”¹⁹⁶

Crucial for his analysis was the way which the collective ideals of security, defined ideologically in different societies, influenced other realms of social reality.¹⁹⁷

Second, Fernandes points out his main sources of inspiration. Here the Maussian influence is at its peak, for instance, when Fernandes proposes that the realms of “economy,” “religion,” and “politics” — all the time in quotation marks — cannot be separated from each other before one examines the totality of a given society.¹⁹⁸ Gregory Bateson’s *Naven* is an obvious influence, as evidenced by Fernandes’ use of the concepts of *eidos* and *ethos*, and also by his choice of warfare as a means to understand Tupinambá society.¹⁹⁹ Finally, Karl Mannheim’s influence appears in the definition of ideology itself.²⁰⁰

The third major point of the article explains Fernandes’ explicit adoption of the “functionalist method” which would allow him to be faithful to the social reality studied: “To the extent that this method orients the investigation towards the form social phenomena integrate in the organization of societies and the function they play within them, it reduces the possibilities of deforming social reality.”²⁰¹

*A Função Social da Guerra*²⁰² is an eight hundred page book divided into three major parts: the first “describes how,” and the second “explains why” the Tupinambá devoted themselves so intensively to warfare; the third discusses the implications of warfare for the study of Tupinambá society and for a theory of war. Fernandes’ preoccupations with methodological issues, if only sketched out in the previous article, come into their own with this book. Here, every chapter is preceeded by methodological and theoretical considerations and by explanations of the questions being asked.²⁰³

¹⁹⁶ Fernandes, 1975:198.

¹⁹⁷ Fernandes, 1975:202.

¹⁹⁸ Fernandes, 1975:203.

¹⁹⁹ Bateson had used the *Naven* ritual for the same purpose.

²⁰⁰ For references to Mauss, see Fernandes, 1970:25; 1975:232, 285; to Bateson, see Fernandes, 1970:274, 317; 1975:270, 278; to Mannheim, Fernandes, 1963a:17; 1970:14, 22, 353.

²⁰¹ Fernandes, 1975:279.

²⁰² See review by Beiguelman, 1953.

²⁰³ A heavy style is characteristic of the book. As Candido puts it: “Florestan does not write in a pleasant or light style. He asks the reader for a great effort of concentration” (Candido, interview).

The main themes are warfare and the capture of enemies to be ritually killed and eaten in a sacrifice to Tupinambá ancestors. It struck the *cronistas* how the prisoner was often incorporated — generally for months, sometimes for years — into the life of the Tupinambá. He might be adopted by his owner, married into his family, or given as a present to a relative. As such, the prisoner was a temporary member of the society, with defined rights and obligations. During the months of captivity he was taught the appropriate behavior for the different phases of the sacrificial ritual, which he proudly followed when the time arrived. Besides constituting an offering of a male Tupinambá to his ancestors, the sacrifice of a prisoner enabled his owner to acquire the status of adulthood and to be married.

It is Fernandes' contention that warfare provides the means to study the social structure and the cosmological ideas that guide Tupinambá behavior. He proposes to understand the group's views on warfare both through their own exegesis, and through an analysis of their latent and unconscious meaning.²⁰⁴

The first part of the book discusses the "techniques" of war. In this approach, Fernandes follows Mannheim,²⁰⁵ for whom the social relations involved in the activities are as important as the objects and means of production. Fernandes' thesis here is that warfare, though interfering directly in the biotic equilibrium of the tribal communities, is not a simple technique of adaptation to the environment. Warfare is a function of human relations and addresses the religio-cultural order.²⁰⁶ Thus denying the utilitarian character of warfare, Fernandes argues that the cultural explanation — namely, revenge for the death of relatives²⁰⁷ — has to be taken into account. He also concludes that, unlike the case in the Western world, warfare among the Tupinambá was not transformed into a political instrument. Its realm of meaning remained mostly within the religious sphere which, in its turn, provided the Tupinambá with the strongest state of collective consciousness in terms of ties of solidarity among themselves and with their dead relatives.

The second part deals with Tupinambá mechanisms of social control and their relationship to warfare. Fernandes discusses the socialization of children, especially the formation of the male personality, linking it to the meaning and function of the rites of capture and killing of enemies.

²⁰⁴ Fernandes adopts Merton's concepts of manifest and latent functions to account for the "conscious" and "unconscious" meanings of warfare. Fernandes, 1970:329.

²⁰⁵ Fernandes, 1970:22.

²⁰⁶ Fernandes, 1970:63-5.

²⁰⁷ Fernandes, 1970:50, 68.

Here Fernandes explicitly deals with the concept of “social fact”²⁰⁸ and, following this line of analysis, mentions “the difficulty for our mentality, even with the help of the sociological method,”²⁰⁹ to understand fully Tupinambá warfare and its relationship to the religious realm. He explains that warfare did not merely have a religious *origin* (e.g., the spirits could interfere in various aspects of the expeditions), a religious *purpose* (e.g., enemies were captured for ritual sacrifice) or simply follow a religious *path* (e.g., the success or failure of war activities depended directly on the supernatural world).²¹⁰ It was as part of a functional whole that warfare was intrinsic to Tupinambá society and culture. Faithful to this approach, he puts again all Western terms, such as “military” or “political,” are in quotation marks²¹¹ and emphasizes that the right procedure should be to start with tribal conceptions and native exegesis, as recorded by the missionaries and travellers.²¹² The technical aspects of warfare, thus, were subordinated to human sacrifice. Human sacrifice, in its turn, was linked to the religious system by the sense of revenge on which the sacrifice was based. And sacrifice unfolded into warfare.²¹³

The conclusions are divided into two levels of explanations. The first and descriptive one, is based on Tupinambá exegesis. Fernandes recalls that warfare was the result of revenge for the death of relatives. The second, and interpretative, is related to Tupinambá unconscious motivations, which Fernandes elaborates as the revival of the collective spirit and the unification of a tribal “us.” After summarizing the relationship of warfare to the social organization, participation in the culture, individual personality structure, the cosmology, religion and morality, the kinship system, education, and the economy,²¹⁴ Fernandes concludes by proposing that in a society in which kinship ties are relatively weak and the “political” system not institutionalized, religion might play the dominant role in pulling together the whole corpus of the society. As the dominant sphere, religion determined the functional relationships of the different social domains. In other words, “Tupinambá warfare was the result of the religious application of the principles of reciprocity”.²¹⁵ Warfare did not “serve” religion, it was *part* of religion.

²⁰⁸ Fernandes, 1970:129.

²⁰⁹ Fernandes, 1970:157.

²¹⁰ Fernandes, 1970:157.

²¹¹ Fernandes, 1970:125-131; 136; 137.

²¹² Fernandes, 1970:153.

²¹³ Fernandes, 1970:209.

²¹⁴ Fernandes, 1970:361-369.

²¹⁵ Fernandes, 1970:350-357.

A Função Social da Guerra, like Bateson's *Naven*, did not "catch on" among either social scientists or the public in general. In contrast with Fernandes' book, Bateson's *Naven*, if we accept Kuper's viewpoint,²¹⁶ did not convince anthropologists of his time because its empirical basis was questionable. Bateson frankly admitted the ethnographic weakness of *Naven*, and this was too much for the British empiricists. In Fernandes' case, that was not the point. The ethnographic material was convincingly shown to be rich and well-worked out, and the theoretical assumptions fully developed. What was, then, basically wrong with the Tupinambá study?

Fernandes himself blames the heavy style and rigour which make it a difficult book to read. Some of his contemporary colleagues have different explanations, which are worth exploring.

Darcy Ribeiro,²¹⁷ for instance, frankly states that the eight hundred pages Fernandes published on the Tupinambá were a waste of intellectual energy, an energy which could have been better channelled towards the study of Brazil as a nation. "Someone said in those days that Florestan and I were a kind of tractor used to collect lettuce. With my tractor I collected Indian art and Florestan, eight hundred pages on the Tupinambá."²¹⁸ He continues: "Whatever the study of the Tupinambá could contribute to the theory of war, twenty pages on the subject would have been enough."²¹⁹

Darcy Ribeiro believes that the price for being an academic in an underdeveloped country is alienation:

"It is curious that for me to become a scientist, I had to leave aside my preoccupations with Brazil the nation and deal with small details of Indian life. It is true that they were important in theoretical terms, but it was impossible to match the two levels."²²⁰

He concludes by applying the same reasoning to Fernandes:

"Florestan's first task was to translate Engels. He abandoned the project to write *A Organização Social* and to study kinship. Theoretically he becomes a functionalist. Tries to be better than Merton, better than Talcott Parsons. Florestan loses himself in a theme which was forced upon him by an academic socialization which emphasized a search for science. This was his payment for a

²¹⁶ Kuper, 1975:96-8.

²¹⁷ See next chapter for an appraisal of Ribeiro's works.

²¹⁸ Ribeiro, interview.

²¹⁹ Ribeiro, interview.

²²⁰ Ribeiro, interview.

training which would allow him to be respected in the university. We were dispossessed from our own problems, we were dispossessed from Brazil.”²²¹

To account for the book’s fate, Antonio Candido also mentioned the style in which it was written, calling it a “scientific monograph,”²²² the purpose of which was to challenge Alfred Métraux’s belief that it was impossible to reconstruct the social organization of Tupinambá society. But he also pointed out that, unlike the topics treated in Fernandes’ later studies, the Tupinambá had never been a crucial question for Brazil.

Ribeiro and Candido, then, along different lines, give us the same general impression: the Tupinambá were not a “problem” in national ideological terms at the moment they were studied. Rather, we can infer that while Fernandes was striving to pick up on a national theme — the beginnings of Brazilian history — the theoretical problem he was dealing with was French. It was with Alfred Métraux that he was debating. It was from the French school that he got his theoretical inspiration. The combination of the two — the Brazilian theme, and the French theory — did not “catch on” mainly because the Brazilian public wanted something different. I suggest, and leave the development of the full implications of this point for later, that when Fernandes decided to study the Tupinambá, the national question was no longer of mere “identity.” Choosing a theme of the Modernist movement, and giving it a “scientific” treatment, Fernandes failed to recognize that the moment for such a theme had passed. This implies that the social sciences and the national ideology have been intimately linked in Brazil, even in the post-1930 period.²²³ The way one influences and determines the other will receive further attention in this study.

For the moment, it is sufficient to note that Fernandes’ studies came just after a period in which the concept of “culture,” as developed in American anthropology, had been very influential in the works of Gilberto Freyre. It is possible that the concept of “culture” made sense in contexts in which the “ideology of the new country”²²⁴ dominated the thinking of the intellectual elite. The “holism” of the concept of culture entailed an elective affinity with the search for a “holistic” identity. During the fifties, when the understanding that Brazil was already an established nation emerged as a more compelling idea, the concept of “society” increasingly overcame that of “culture.” In that context, “culture” came to be seen as an “ideological,” “non-scientific” and “reactionary” concept,²²⁵ given that the

²²¹ Ribeiro, interview.

²²² Candido, interview.

²²³ See Chapter Six.

²²⁴ See Candido, 1972.

²²⁵ See the recent book by Mota, 1978.

social sciences, and especially sociology, were then interested in dealing with the relations of power and inequality between Brazil and other nations of the world. Fernandes' work on the Tupinambá then represents a scholarly accomplishment but one which, in the intellectual context of that particular moment, is more the testimony of a search than the discovery of a secure ground on which to base further developments. A lack of congruity marked the Tupinambá studies and the dominant ideology of nationhood at the moment they were written. But the functional whole, the "totality" depicted in the realm of a reconstructed social reality, this notion had been well established.

Another point of reference from which to evaluate Fernandes' work is that of the Paulista academic scene. In that context they actually represented one of the first attempts at defining a method, a theory, and an object of analysis; a predominantly eclectic approach prevailed up until then. Although the institutionalization of the social sciences had occurred during the thirties, for more than a decade there had been little differentiation among them.

The period was marked by an enormous editorial boom,²²⁶ but the articles published in periodicals did not follow any clear pattern in terms of theses or theoretical lines of investigation. The most common subjects were cultural change, magic and religion, and social organization, studied either among Indian populations, minorities or peasants.²²⁷

The same eclectic approach could also be seen in the two main schools of sociology. Although both the Universidade de São Paulo and the Escola de Sociologia tried to distinguish themselves as respectively, French and Anglo-Saxon oriented, the difference was not always clear. Often the same professors taught in both schools and sometimes they taught sociology in one and anthropology in the other.²²⁸ The Museu Paulista, under the direction of Baldus, stood in between the two institutions — while it formed a part of the Universidade de São Paulo, Baldus's seminars were held at the Escola de Sociologia e Política.

It comes as no surprise, then, that the students also moved from one place to another. Fernandes is here again the example: after taking his B.A. at the Universidade de São Paulo, he asked to be admitted to the Escola de Sociologia, where he wrote *A Organização Social* under Baldus, later returning to the Universidade de São Paulo for his doctorate with *A Função Social da Guerra*. In

²²⁶ Evidence of this boom includes the textbooks dealing with the "Fundamentals of Sociology", "Theory and Research", "Studies of Social Organization", "Dictionaries of Ethnology and Sociology", plus collections such as the Brasiliana Series, the Biblioteca de Ciências Sociais, and the Biblioteca Histórica Brasileira. Examples of periodicals are *Sociologia*, the new series of the *Revista do Museu Paulista*, the increasingly important *Anhembi* and the *Revista do Arquivo Municipal*. See Fernandes, 1957.

²²⁷ See Fernandes, 1975; Candido, 1958a and Pereira de Queiroz, 1971.

²²⁸ Emilio Willems taught sociology at the Escola de Sociologia and anthropology at the Universidade de São Paulo during the same period.

this context, “an auspicious combination of sociology and anthropology”²²⁹ dominated their studies, a situation which Fernandes considers typically French.²³⁰

This was a learning period: “A moment arrived in my academic life when I had to leave the French approach aside. I had to leave anthropology in a secondary place and concentrate on sociology. After all, I was a professor of sociology.”²³¹ But what did Fernandes mean by “sociology”?

C. From Indians to Blacks: the confrontation with society

With the Tupinambá books, Fernandes had shown that a Brazilian student could write a study worthy of a French scholar,²³² thus proving that it was not a matter of “tradition” which separated Brazilians from Europeans. He had also acquired the belief that science and a sound methodological approach were the only basis for the study of society.²³³ However, at the same time, the question of how to combine a political viewpoint with an academic career — a problem which was posed to all of his generation — tormented him more than ever.²³⁴

During his college years he had participated in a Trotskyist group in São Paulo,²³⁵ which had as one of its goals the translation and publication of the classics of socialism. Fernandes himself was encharged of the translation of some of Marx's writings.²³⁶ At this point, he had already read Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, and contemporary sociologists, and sensed he could place Marx in terms of his

²²⁹ Candido, 1958a:517.

²³⁰ Fernandes, interview.

²³¹ Fernandes, interview. In 1941 chairs of anthropology were founded at the Universidade de São Paulo and the Escola de Sociologia, and in 1947, Departments of Sociology and Anthropology were created at both institutions.

²³² Métraux arranged for the translation into French and publication of the chapters written on human sacrifice. See Fernandes, 1978a:89 and, for the publication in French, Fernandes, 1952.

²³³ Métraux writes in his diary on November 12, 1951: “Long conversation with Florestan Fernandes, more intoxicated than ever of his own theories and methodology” (Métraux, 1978:329).

²³⁴ “How to bring together our socialism with academic work?” was, in Antonio Candido's words, the main question they shared at the beginning of their careers and debated through long hours of discussion. Candido, interview.

²³⁵ Fernandes, 1977:172.

²³⁶ He translated and wrote an introduction to *Contribution to a Critique of Political Economy*, published in Brazil in 1946. Fernandes, 1977:172.

contribution to sociological theory: “The richness and the modernity of [Marx's] thought astonished and fascinated me.”²³⁷

Retrospectively, one may say that Fernandes’ attempt to bring together socialism and sociology, unlike that of Darcy Ribeiro, for instance,²³⁸ was carried out within academia itself. Looking at his past, Fernandes writes that up until 1960 he could not tie his condition as a socialist to his condition as a sociologist.²³⁹ “This was something that transcended the possibilities of a ‘scientific sociology’ which could only be accepted, by the dominant elite, in terms of a positivistic sociologism-poorly-understood.”²⁴⁰

At the time, however, Fernandes’ goal was to develop the Brazilian way of sociological thinking. To accomplish this goal, Fernandes believed, he had to free himself from foreign conceptions of what a scholar should be.²⁴¹ It was necessary to transform “the act of being a university student into a real bond between the sociologist and Brazilian society, its human problem and its historical dilemmas.”²⁴² To organize a group of students and professors should be the next step. Through the group, it would be possible on the one hand to elaborate theories and acquire expertise in the use of “rational techniques in the service of social consciousness” and, on the other hand, “to intensify the political element intrinsic to the role of the sociologist.”²⁴³

The change towards the new direction was gradual, and started with a research on race relations in São Paulo, sponsored by UNESCO, with the purpose of establishing a scientifically acceptable definition of “race.” Considered to be a racial democracy, Brazil was chosen as a paradigmatic example.²⁴⁴ Though reluctant in the beginning to participate in the research, Fernandes was finally convinced by Roger Bastide to share its supervision.²⁴⁵

²³⁷ Fernandes, 1977:173.

²³⁸ See Chapter Four.

²³⁹ Fernandes, 1977:141.

²⁴⁰ Fernandes, 1977:141.

²⁴¹ Fernandes, 1977:197.

²⁴² Fernandes, 1977:197.

²⁴³ Fernandes, 1977:197-8. For a different perspective on the relationship between social values and social science, see Elias, 1978b:152-7.

²⁴⁴ For an appraisal of Brazil as a “racial democracy”, see Pierson, 1945; for an account of the UNESCO project, see *Revista de Antropologia*, vol. I, 1953:147-152; for the list of books published as a result of the research, see Borges Pereira, 1967; for the research plan and synthesis of the conclusions, see Bastide, 1957.

²⁴⁵ Fernandes, 1978a:92-5.

This was to be Fernandes' major empirical research and, from a theoretical perspective, would allow him to arrive at the theme of underdevelopment and dependency.²⁴⁶

“I was forced to study the structure of the Brazilian society of the past, the structure of the Brazilian society of the present. And to explain the differences between the two. I was also forced to understand what a caste society is; what a class society is; and how one gives place to the other. And, having the Blacks as a point of reference, to study larger issues such as the bourgeois revolution in Brazil.”²⁴⁷

The research on race relations was thus the leitmotiv which enabled Fernandes to pursue his goals. With the institutional basis provided by the research, Fernandes could form a group of sociologists and develop a line of inquiry which answered the need for both a scientific evaluation of Brazilian social reality, and the integration of the political perspective into academic life. The years of his intellectual maturity had started, characterized by him as “the confrontation with society.” This meant the choice of the national society as the basic framework of analysis, and the belief that a historical perspective was indispensable to the understanding of its structure and functioning.²⁴⁸

Three books present the major results of the research. In the first one, *Relações Raciais entre Negros e Brancos em São Paulo*, published in co-authorship with Roger Bastide,²⁴⁹ Fernandes wrote three chapters. One of them comprises an historical reconstruction of the social functions of slavery within a colonial economy, and its transition to capitalism. Another describes in depth the slave-based mode of production, and the overlapping of racial and social stratification in São Paulo. Finally, the third chapter deals with the struggle of racial groups and lower social strata within the existing social order. Through the study of race relations, Fernandes wanted to paint a broad picture of Brazilian society and deny the images that had prevailed up to then of the relationship between economy, society and State.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁶ Fernandes, 1978a:95-6.

²⁴⁷ Fernandes, interview. See Morse, 1978:47 for an appraisal of Fernandes' role in the research.

²⁴⁸ Fernandes, 1977:140-212.

²⁴⁹ Fernandes and Bastide, 1955.

²⁵⁰ Fernandes, 1977:198-9.

The second book, *A Integração do Negro na Sociedade de Classes*, published as a post-doctoral thesis at the Universidade de São Paulo,²⁵¹ tries, in 740 pages, to describe “how the People emerge in history.” Fernandes’ goal is, from an historical perspective, to show to what extent the social position of the Blacks in a traditional, caste-oriented society, changed when they were placed in a class society. Through the analysis of historical material and contemporary field data, he tries to ascertain who were the carriers of the bourgeois revolution in Brazil, how it developed, and why it was closed to the majority of the population. In the new social order, based on a competitive ethos, the Blacks still lived in the White Man’s world, being excluded from proper democratic participation.

O Negro no Mundo dos Brancos, the third book,²⁵² puts together essays written from 1942 to 1969 and provides us perhaps the best material to depict Fernandes’ underlying assumptions on the subject.

In this book he works with three major stages in Brazilian history: the colonial (1500-1822); the neo-colonial (1822-1888)²⁵³ in which, although already a nation-state, Brazil remained in the hands of the Portuguese Crown; and the “dependent” stage. For Fernandes, the situation of dependency is one in which the model of capitalist development is internalized by one country, but in which a subordinate relationship to a superpower or to several external hegemonic nations develop simultaneously.²⁵⁴ The result is a constellation of “dependent” and hegemonic nations.

Had the changes which characterize the period 1888-1930 occurred in a nondependent context, Brazil would have followed a different path. This is the period during which Fernandes assumes a “bourgeois revolution” took place. The predictions were that, in the phase of industrialization, Brazil would attain its autonomy. But since the central capitalist countries were interested in strengthening the national bourgeoisies in order to avoid the eruption of socialist revolutions, this did not happen.²⁵⁵

Internally, the bourgeois revolution marks the transition from a system based on castes and strata to a system based on social classes. In this transition, Abolition was the historical point at which the disintegration of the slave based social order and the integration of the competitive social order characteristic of class society overlapped. Fernandes assumes that in a capitalistic developed society the

²⁵¹ Fernandes, 1964.

²⁵² Fernandes, 1972.

²⁵³ I.e., from Independence to the Abolition of slavery.

²⁵⁴ Fernandes, 1978a:98. See Cardoso, 1977 for the genesis of the concept of “dependency”.

²⁵⁵ Fernandes, 1972:64-5. See Ibid: 64-68 for the roots of the competitive order in Brazil.

competitive order generates a system which assimilates all social classes. Under “dependent capitalism,” the class system is unable to perform the same functions.²⁵⁶

This being the case, Blacks in Brazil, whether under the caste or the class system, maintained a social position which was economically and social inferior. Fernandes explains this fact by noting that economic development during that period (1888-1930) was directed towards a modern capitalist form. It was not, however, accompanied by corresponding changes in the political and social spheres. Those were left to “spontaneous social processes.”²⁵⁷ The result was that the “economic time” was disconnected from political and social time, and assumed leadership over the others.²⁵⁸

Here a pause is appropriate in order to call attention to some points. First of all, Fernandes is still a functionalist who assumes the existence of integrated social systems and functionally working “social historical ages.”²⁵⁹ Integration of all sectors of a society, including the Black population, is the problem he addresses. It is in accordance with this framework, then, that the failure to attain a competitive social order is explained by concepts such as “sociocultural delay,” and “persistence of the past.”²⁶⁰

Second, for Fernandes, class systems are basically dictated by economic factors. He is open, however, to cultural and political explanations for the positions of Blacks. In the cultural realm, he proposes that one must act independently of the dominant historical-cultural patterns if one wishes to eliminate racial prejudice. “It is necessary to reach the pattern itself, which protects us from racism, but also turns us away from the path of racial democracy.”²⁶¹ By way of political explanation, he states that national emancipation in Latin America brought the disaggregation of the colonial system only at the level of the judicial system.

Again, the ideal on an integrated social system remains even if now covered by marxist overtones. In this context, Brazil is a special case for study, since

²⁵⁶ Fernandes, 1972:72-3.

²⁵⁷ Fernandes, 1972:31.

²⁵⁸ For a different interpretation, in which the author analyzes the separation of the “political” and “economic” axes, while paying attention to regional differences, see Schwartzman, 1975. For an analysis of the phenomenon in terms of the “politicization of the economy”, see Pereira-Reis, 1979.

²⁵⁹ Fernandes, 1972:83.

²⁶⁰ Fernandes, 1972:85.

²⁶¹ Fernandes, 1964:631.

“societies which deviated from a ‘normal’ type, inherent in a certain civilization, represent in themselves a theoretical problem for science.”²⁶²

Third, the egalitarian and democratic ideals which flourished in the race relations studies are noticeable. One commentator remarked that in the fifties “even radical intellectuals hoped for the benefits of a ‘bourgeois revolution’²⁶³, in an indirect reference to Fernandes’ work.

This was later to be changed. Fernandes’ former disbelief in the possibility of a spontaneous social development leading towards democracy led him to defend a socialist revolution as the only means to attain any kind of social equality. There was no solution possible in a capitalist society in which “the legal and political order [was] based on a democratic ideology, but its systems of production [was] organized on economic relations which institutionalized exploitation.”²⁶⁴ Miscegenation, which had been the traditional basis for considering Brazil a racial democracy, was simply an index of racial integration, but not an equally valid sign of *social* integration.²⁶⁵

Since Fernandes addressed himself to the study of Blacks and to the historical development of Brazilian society, an evaluation of his works has to be made in relation to both issues. On the one hand, it is necessary to contrast the historical theme with the political literature on the first decades of the century,²⁶⁶ and thus put in perspective the democratic and socialist assumptions of Fernandes’ works. On the other hand, as regards the study of Blacks, two contrasts have to be made: the first with the Modernist movement, mentioned before but now with the additional optimistic national character interpretations of Gilberto Freyre; and the second, with the “anthropological” studies previously carried out in Bahia by Nina Rodrigues and Arthur Ramos. Given the purpose of this study, the latter provide the most illuminating comparisons.²⁶⁷

Both these authors came from medicine to anthropology. Nina Rodrigues (1862-1906) started the study of Blacks in Bahia in an attempt to depict the relationship between criminality and race, in the racist mood which prevailed during those years. Though considered important, his works did not conform to the “whitening” model which was being developed in the country,²⁶⁸ and he published

²⁶² Fernandes, 1963b:6.

²⁶³ Bosi, 1978:iv.

²⁶⁴ Fernandes, 1972:256-283.

²⁶⁵ Fernandes, 1972:40.

²⁶⁶ See Lamounier, 1977.

²⁶⁷ Since the purpose of the comparison is to make Fernandes’ contribution more vivid, I am disregarding regional differences in the social sciences in Bahia and São Paulo.

²⁶⁸ Skidmore, 1974:57-62.

more in France than in Brazil proper.²⁶⁹ Arthur Ramos (1903-1946) considered himself Rodrigues' follower.²⁷⁰ He published his first study on "The Primitive and Madness" and then committed himself to the study of possession in Bahian Black religions. As theoretical sources, he used Lévy-Bruhl, Freud, and his former training in medicine. From Lévy-Bruhl, he adopted the concepts of pre-logical thought and the logic of participation; from Freud, the ideas contained in *Totem and Taboo*; and from medicine, the connections between African cults and the medical theory of hysteria. These ideas were then applied to the religion of Bahian Blacks to explain African "survivals" in the country.

This orientation was later changed. Through the reading of Herskovitz, Ramos reoriented his studies towards the theme of acculturation. However, the assumption of stages of development was still present in his understanding of acculturation in terms of one culture — the more "advanced" one — absorbing the other.²⁷¹ Despite the weaknesses, now widely acknowledged in the literature,²⁷² of Ramos' contributions, he held an impressive amount of institutional power throughout his life. Not only did he found a study group at the Medical School of Bahia, but when the Universidade do Distrito Federal was created, he was invited as professor of Social Psychology and, later, of Anthropology and Ethnography. He also taught at Louisiana State University on "Races and Cultures of Brazil" and attended a seminar with Herskovits at Northwestern University in 1941. He died in 1949 as the Chairman of the Department of Social Sciences of UNESCO. It is probably because of his influence, and despite the fact that he was not academically praised, that Ramos was and still is considered an important figure in the anthropological study of Black culture in Brazil.²⁷³

The ways in which Fernandes' approach differs from Ramos may be examined. First of all, Fernandes looked at race relations in terms of the structural and functional role Blacks held in Brazilian society as a whole. He opted for a historical as much as for a case-study approach, having analyzed the social position of Blacks before and after slavery was abolished.²⁷⁴ In contrast, Ramos

²⁶⁹ *L'Animisme Fetichiste des Negres de Bahia* was published in 1900 in Paris. *Africanos no Brasil* was published posthumously in Brazil. On Nina Rodrigues, see Azevedo, 1955:369-70; Leite, 1969:215ff.

²⁷⁰ On Ramos, see Schaden, 1950; Fernandes et al. 1950; Pourchet, 1949.

²⁷¹ Fernandes et al., 1950:449.

²⁷² Fernandes et al., 1950.

²⁷³ See Leite, 1969 for a recent study on Arthur Ramos.

²⁷⁴ One may argue that it was Fernandes' interest in race relations which led him to develop the idea of a major rupture in the premises on which Brazilian society had historically been organized. It may be that his division of Blacks into either slaves or free men biases his whole picture of Brazilian history. Also debatable is Fernandes' view of São Paulo as "typically Brazilian". See Fernandes, 1972:7. A different perspective can be drawn from Schwartzman, 1975.

was interested in human behavior, particularly in “conditions of deficiency.” This led him to put together “primitives,” ethnic minorities, children, the “alienated,” and “neurotics.”²⁷⁵ So whereas Ramos studied *Blacks*, Fernandes was looking at *race relations*. The emphasis was on the totality, on Brazil as a nation, and on its different patterns of integration, whether in the traditional-hierarchical society of the nineteenth century, or in the class-competitive society of the twentieth.

It is my contention here that, from a conception of Blacks as “anomalous” and a stress on the intrinsic characteristics of the distinctive “races,” Fernandes moved to the social relations realm, in which “race relations are social relations.”²⁷⁶ Consequently, the view of Blacks as “different” was replaced by one which saw them as “oppressed.” The implications of the change are clear: the first perspective was based on the *exclusion* of a social order defined by “us,” the second, on *inclusion* in the same order; the emphasis on “differences” led to the study of physical characteristics, personality, psychological traits, and degrees of civilization, whereas the stress on social configuration led to the study of hierarchy, oppression, social change, and social integration; the first led to the idea of “anormality,” the second to “inequality.” More importantly, if the first perspective was accepted at Ramos’ time as “anthropological,” Fernandes wanted his to be “sociological.”

With the study of race relations, Fernandes had finally confronted Brazilian social reality, and given its social sciences a model. Within the larger ideological context, the traditional “anthropological” perspective could only be seen as reactionary and denigrating to a large portion of the society. The confrontation with society meant the combination of the sociologist’s scientific approach with a political commitment to the improvement of society. It also meant the adoption of an historical perspective linked to structural-functional analysis, Brazil the nation as framework, the study of relations of domination, and a stress on the mechanisms of social integration — a model which was to influence the social sciences for decades.²⁷⁷

This view is corroborated by Antonio Candido: “The real contribution our generation left was to call the attention of Brazilian sociology to the study of the Indian, the Black, the poor, the *caboclo*.” Several professors were influential in this sense, but they approached the subject “with a kind of coldness we did not approve; they did not have the values we attached to it.”²⁷⁸

Candido’s generation wanted to incorporate the Black, the Indian, and the poor into the wholeness of a larger unity — Brazil as nation — and not see them at a distance, as “others,” or “in coldness.” From a grouping of Blacks with primitives,

²⁷⁵ Cf. Ramos's Curriculum Vitae, cit. in Fernandes et al, 1950:452.

²⁷⁶ Fernandes, interview.

²⁷⁷ See Morse, 1978; Lamounier & Cardoso, 1978:13-5.

²⁷⁸ Candido, interview. He gives Emilio Willems as an example.

children and neurotics, as in Ramos' work, Blacks were now put together with the poor and the Indians as the oppressed sectors in Brazilian society. This shift reflected the values and political views of the students of the Universidade de São Paulo. It also reflected the larger ideological context in the country during the fifties which essentially revolved around the consolidations of a national society. After a period of dictatorship from 1930 to 1945, known as *Estado Novo*, Brazil lived through a phase of liberalism from 1945 to 1964, when a new authoritarian regime was imposed by the military.²⁷⁹ If Elias is right in stating that one of the processes of nation-building consists of strata integration,²⁸⁰ Fernandes and his generation were only reflecting this general framework in their own views, offering their particular answer to the problems posed to them and making an evaluation of possible options. Some recall that, during the fifties, the issues of political organization, civil rights and political participation were all repudiated in view of the "real" problems, namely, "development and poverty."²⁸¹

D. From universalism to holism

A last phase of Fernandes' work deals with the issues of Brazil as an underdeveloped country, the problems of dependency, the integration of the social classes in this context, and the historical development of the state organization.²⁸² Those issues fall beyond the scope of this study, and in this section only the concept of a "bourgeois revolution" will be of interest.

It is my contention that Fernandes' intellectual career is marked by several simultaneous movements: from anthropology to sociology; from universalism to holism; from culture to society. His first studies on the Tupinambá were anthropological, used a universalistic approach, and focused on the social and the cultural. His later work on the bourgeois revolution stressed holism over universalism, and dealt more on a sociological level than with culture itself. A comparison between the theoretical concepts he used at the beginning of his career and those in his recent publications will serve as evidence for this argument.

²⁷⁹ For the authoritarian path to modernization in Brazil, see Pereira-Reis, 1979.

²⁸⁰ Elias, 1972a.

²⁸¹ Cardoso, 1972:3.

²⁸² See Fernandes, 1968, 1973, 1976. For a review of Fernandes, 1968 and 1976, see Lamounier & Cardoso, 1978; for a review of Fernandes, 1976, see Silveira, 1975; for a general appraisal of the intellectual development of Fernandes' work, see Mota, 1978:181-202.

To those who criticize his concept of the bourgeois revolution,²⁸³ Fernandes answers by explaining that it is not a “particular category.”²⁸⁴ Whether one calls it a bourgeois revolution or a capitalist revolution, what really is at stake is the passage to massive industrialization by a country at the world capitalist periphery.²⁸⁵ To look at the bourgeois revolution means to look for the human agents of the sociohistorical transformations which led to the dismantling of the slavelandowners regime and the formation of a class society in Brazil. Fernandes does not try to explain the Brazilian present through the European past, but through the conditions and the social factors which explain how and why the traditional order was broken in Brazil, and how and why modernization began. In sum,

“The Bourgeois revolution is not a historical event but a structural phenomenon, which can be reproduced in different ways, given certain conditions and given the fact that a certain national society is apt to absorb the correspondent model of civilization, making of it a historical necessity.”²⁸⁶

Fernandes’ book *A Revolução Burguesa no Brasil*²⁸⁷ opens with a look at the origins of the phenomenon in the period of Independence. This is followed by an essay on the formation of the competitive order in Brazil. The book closes with a study of the relationship between the bourgeois revolution and the context of dependent capitalism.

The crucial and important element of his analysis is the model of civilization which Brazil wanted to absorb. Fernandes traces back to Independence Brazilians’ desire to adopt the economic, social and political forms believed to be characteristic of the modern Western world. He describes how these forms developed in Brazil, within a particular dependent capitalist society and a particular historical configuration.

Independence was the first step in the emergence of the “modern Brazil,” which was the product of “a silent and long socio-economic revolution.”²⁸⁸

²⁸³ For a rebuttal of the idea of a bourgeois revolution in Brazil, see O. Velho, 1976a. For a series of bibliographies which call attention to continuities in Brazilian history rather than ruptures, see Cerqueira & Boschi, 1977; Franco et al., 1970; Lamounier & Cardoso, 1978; W. G. Santos, 1970.

²⁸⁴ Fernandes, 1978a:99.

²⁸⁵ Fernandes, 1978a:99.

²⁸⁶ Fernandes, 1976:21.

²⁸⁷ Fernandes, 1976.

²⁸⁸ Fernandes, 1976:71.

Independence, however, is not seen by Fernandes as oriented towards purely economic goals. Rather, he believes the first great step in the evolution of capitalism in Brazil was of a sociocultural order, seen especially in the liberal ideology adopted by the Brazilian elite.²⁸⁹ Fernandes explicitly states that “the creation of an independent national state was not the result, nor did it correspond to changes in the realm of the relations of production.”²⁹⁰ But given the structure of Brazilian social relations, the state embraced liberalism only at the judicial level. “In practice, liberalism was the instrument of the patrimonialist domination in the political level.”²⁹¹

Twenty years after beginning his study of the Tupinambá, Fernandes was still looking for the zero point of Brazilian history. Beyond differences of theoretical approach and topic of study which cannot be denied, lies the search for an explanation of Brazil as a unique historical product. With the Tupinambá, Fernandes looked at the first inhabitants of the national territory; taking Independence as the point of origin of “modern Brazil,” he tried to discover what was present in Brazil’s first moments as a nation-state. With the Tupinambá studies the zero point of Brazilian history was 1500; in *A Revolução Burguesa*, it had moved forward to 1822.

Also of interest are the implications of Fernandes’ use of the concept of a “bourgeois revolution” as compared with the concepts adopted in the Tupinambá studies. During the late forties and fifties, Fernandes was cautious about applying Western concepts such as “economics,” “politics,” and “warfare” to non-European societies. Both exegesis of the subjects of the investigation and of the functional whole were given priority over any perspective based on the concept of civilization. Fernandes considered as “economic” those actions “culturally defined in terms of [economic] social values.”²⁹² The concept of “warfare” was thoroughly discussed in *A Função Social da Guerra*.²⁹³

During the seventies, on the other hand, Fernandes felt justified in applying a concept such as “bourgeois revolution,” taken from the European historical experience, to a recognizably different social reality, precisely in order to show in what sense it assumed a different configuration. In the Tupinambá studies, then, Fernandes focused on a particular society to arrive at general conclusions; in the later phase, he looked at European history to understand a particular instance of Brazilian development.

²⁸⁹ Fernandes, 1976:34-71.

²⁹⁰ Fernandes, 1976:61.

²⁹¹ Fernandes, 1975:68.

²⁹² Fernandes, 1949a:8-9.

²⁹³ See Fernandes, 1975:195-7.

If we look at Fernandes' Tupinambá studies through Dumont's scheme of universalism and holism,²⁹⁴ universalism encompasses holism, given the use of quotation marks around the concepts of economy, politics, and military intended to call attention to the relativity of those concepts. Contradictory as it may seem, the opposite case obtains in his later work; despite the "universalistic" connotations of the European experience, the ultimate target of the analysis was the understanding of a particular holistic, social situation.

The transition from one approach to the other involved several other changes, including one in Fernandes' attitude towards science during the fifties as compared to the seventies. During the fifties, science and politics were well distinguished for Fernandes, with the university being the realm of scientific achievements. Although Fernandes' scientific bias did not disappear,²⁹⁵ it gave way to a preoccupation with how to combine sociology and politics. It is not surprising that Fernandes incorporated a Marxist framework to substitute for or complement the Maussian one. Fernandes, however, was always careful to avoid absorbing any "foreign" model (even a Marxist model) uncritically. He acknowledges the passing of many intellectual fashions, including those of Lukács, Sartre, Goldman, Althusser, Gramsci,²⁹⁶ and adheres to none. His own perspective is shown in his recent books, including *A Revolução Burguesa*. It is in clear contrast with *A Função Social da Guerra*, for instance, with which it differs even in style. In *A Função Social* every concept was discussed fully before being used, whereas *A Revolução Burguesa* is written in a freer style and with the purpose of being accessible to the lay reader.²⁹⁷

Rather than characterize Fernandes' approach in terms of a "combination" of science and politics, a better way to characterize his later works is to say that Fernandes realized that "a social scientist lives in a particular country."²⁹⁸ If *A Função Social da Guerra* would have made sense in France, it did not in Brazil, where, in particular, the socio-political context could not be ignored. A social scientist in Brazil worked within this context and had to come to grips with it sooner or later. These facts are clearly attested to by the very way accounts of the social sciences are given in Brazil.²⁹⁹ My point here is to look at Fernandes' later works not as a combination of science and politics, but rather as the outcome of a scientific approach within a specific socio-political context. Rather than dissociating science from ideology, I am contending that any scientific

²⁹⁴ See Chapter One.

²⁹⁵ See W.G. Santos, 1967. Also note Fernandes' address to the Associação Brasileira de Antropologia. Fernandes, 1961.

²⁹⁶ Fernandes, 1978a:158.

²⁹⁷ Fernandes, 1976:3. See reactions to the book in Fernandes, 1978a: 145.

²⁹⁸ Fernandes, 1978a:152.

²⁹⁹ See Lamounier & Cardoso, 1978 as a good example.

understanding of social reality will carry within it certain basic orientations of the society in which it developed, this being true in Brazil, as much as in France, Germany, India or any other country.³⁰⁰

A tendency towards modernization from above has been a constant feature in Brazilian history, the state, in this context, evolving towards authoritarian patterns even before the 1930 Revolution. From 1930 on, the privileged position of the state and the nature of the ruling coalition were the basis for the authoritarian modernization implemented under the Vargas dictatorship (1930-45). When Vargas fell in 1945, the path to national modernization had been firmly established, with the Brazilian state in charge of strictly controlled social forces.³⁰¹

As much as the political development of Brazilian institutions moved along authoritarian paths, the “liberalizing” period which began in 1945³⁰² produced new hopes that the intellectuals would contribute new options to these processes. It is in this context that many features of Fernandes’ work can be understood.

Many authors have pointed to the “developmental,” “nationalist,” and “radical” perspectives of the social sciences during the fifties and sixties;³⁰³ others have called attention to the change from the notion of a “new country,” which prevailed during the thirties, to the idea of “underdevelopment.”³⁰⁴ Fernandes himself, as seen above, characterized this period of his intellectual life as one of a “confrontation with society.”³⁰⁵ Without dismissing any of the above interpretations in toto, it is my contention here that Fernandes’ work can only be fully understood in relation to a specific problem and phase of nation-building, namely, that of “strata integration.”

The national state had been established, but it did not respond to the interests of the different sectors of the society. Brazil was far from a “liberal democracy,”³⁰⁶ if by this is meant a pattern of authority in which the public actor is checked by various autonomous powers, in which equality before the law is granted to all citizens, and in which all social interests have an opportunity to influence legislation.³⁰⁷ The fact that the state did not represent all of the different sectors of

³⁰⁰ Cf. Chapter One and Six.

³⁰¹ Pereira-Reis, 1979:263-284.

³⁰² This period ended in 1964 with a military coup.

³⁰³ See Mota, 1978:154-202.

³⁰⁴ See Candido, 1972.

³⁰⁵ Fernandes, 1977:179.

³⁰⁶ See W. G. Santos, 1978 for the liberal ideology in Brazil.

³⁰⁷ Pereira-Reis, 1979:24.

the society could only trouble a Paulista intellectual.³⁰⁸ Given the ruling minority's overwhelming power over the subordinate or “oppressed” sectors, the national situation had to be explained in order to assess the possibilities of change.

The first question for the social sciences, then, was related to the mechanisms by which the parts of the totality of society were held together. The second question addressed the nature of the parts themselves. Fernandes answered the first by analyzing the structure of Brazilian society at different historical moments, namely, the slavery-based society of the 19th century, and the capitalist competitive order of the 20th. His answer to the second focused on the composition of society in terms of “castes” in the 19th century and its further development into “social classes.” The bourgeois revolution accounted for the transition.

The presence of the whole, or the “totality” of the social system, was only implicit. Because the overall context was one of “strata integration,” stress could not be placed on the whole itself, but had to be on the parts which made up the whole and on the mechanisms holding together the parts. In addition, Marxism, with its emphasis on social classes, had a strong appeal in a context in which models for strata integration were being sought.

³⁰⁸ See Schwartzman, 1975.

CHAPTER FOUR

Indians and Territorial Integration

The Indian problem cannot be understood outside the framework of Brazilian society, since it only exists where and when Indians and non-Indians engage in contact.

Ribeiro, 1962:136

In the preceding chapter I called attention to the fact that a scientist is not merely an intellectual, but is also a citizen of a particular country at a particular time. By this I mean that the scientist is not one individual in a group of individuals, but a member of a society which defines itself as a particular nation-state.

It is often forgotten that nation-states are something quite new. National ideologies usually represent the nation as very old, or nearly eternal. In fact, however, state societies assumed in Europe the character of nation-states, broadly speaking, from only the second part of the 18th century on.³⁰⁹ They were the result of long-term and conflictual processes of integration and disintegration of previously independent groups. Two types of integration processes are territorial or regional integration and strata integration.³¹⁰

If this is valid in general terms, it is also true that nation-building processes vary from country to country. Despite the general ideological goals all nation-states pursue as a token of their nationwide equality,³¹¹ in each case the framework within which citizens struggle for access to the central positions of state power is different. The rights of citizenship in each country thus vary, as does the conceptualization of citizenship itself.³¹² Just as an external continuity in art styles may mask a change in the place arts holds in relation to society and culture,³¹³ this study is leading us to the conclusion that the same may be true in dealing with the “social sciences” in general.

³⁰⁹ Elias, 1972a.

³¹⁰ Elias, 1972a.

³¹¹ See Bendix, 1977.

³¹² Dumont, 1971.

³¹³ Dumont, 1971.

This chapter deals with anthropology in Brazil through some of the works of Darcy Ribeiro (b.1922), Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira (b.1928) and Otávio Guilherme Velho (b.1941). The material used in this chapter is highly selective and is not intended to cover the “history of anthropology” in Brazil. Rather, I have chosen a specific theme in the work of the mentioned anthropologists and follow its development. I intend to show how, starting from a model in which Indians were studied as the “different others,” Brazilian anthropologists progressively moved their interest from the Indians themselves to the national society and, in so doing, became increasingly involved in the issues of “territorial” and “strata integration.” However, unlike the Blacks, who had also been studied by anthropology and sociology,³¹⁴ the Indians remained (both in the national ideology which defined an “us,” and for the anthropologists themselves) a conceptual category which never lost its connotations of the “different.”

At the outset, it should be noted that Roberto Cardoso was Ribeiro’s student, and Velho, Cardoso’s. Darcy Ribeiro was educated at the Escola Livre de Sociologia e Política in São Paulo, having founded the first course in anthropology at the Museu do Índio at Rio de Janeiro. Cardoso, who had studied at the Universidade de São Paulo, was invited to be Ribeiro’s assistant, later founding the first graduate course in anthropology at the Museu Nacional, where Velho got his basic training.

A. Ribeiro and the classification of Indian groups

When Darcy Ribeiro³¹⁵ decided to study the relationship between Indians and the national society, many studies had been carried out on Indian populations in Brazil. Not only had the German ethnographers of last century left many descriptions of the tribes they studied,³¹⁶ but already in the twentieth century Curt Nimuendaju had written exhaustive accounts of the social organization of the Gê

³¹⁴ See Chapter Three.

³¹⁵ See Marsh Jr., 1978 for a review article of Ribeiro's work. See also Hopper, 1967:x-xi.

³¹⁶ German anthropologists had been a presence in Brazil since the 19th century and most markedly from the years 1884-1914, when numerous ethnological expeditions crossed the country in a search for answers to contemporary European questions of the state of "naturalness" of historical-cultural method. German explorers also gathered artifacts for the European ethnological museums. Karl von den Steinen, Paul Ehrenreich, Koch-Grunberg, and Max Schmidt are some of the figures of the period. Von Martins had been the most well-known early explorer, having travelled the country from 1817 to 1920, to prove that the aborigines of the New World were found in a state of secondary primitiveness. See Baldus, 1949, 1954, 1968; Schaden, 1952, 1955c.

tribes,³¹⁷ Baldus had started working with the Tapirapé,³¹⁸ and Schaden was studying the different aspects of Guaraní culture.³¹⁹

In general, the German studies dealt mainly with particular Indian tribes and specific features of their social systems such as religion, kinship, or mythology. The contact of Indians with the national society had not passed unnoticed, but the overall tendency was to publish separate articles dealing, on the one hand, with the study of Indians and, on the other hand, with “practical” issues.³²⁰

Darcy Ribeiro proposed to change this by bringing the contact of Indians with the national society to the fore. Up until this point, anthropologists turned to an acculturation theory to deal with the problem of contact.³²¹ It was a theory which, from the generation of Ribeiro on, Brazilian anthropologists considered partially or completely inadequate to deal with the situation found in Brazil. Ribeiro himself pointed out that the major shortcoming of this approach was that the process was conceived as necessarily bilateral and explained in terms of the selective adoption of foreign cultural elements.³²² As a substitute for the acculturation approach, he proposed to study “ethnic transfiguration.”

“Ethnic transfiguration” is defined as the process by which tribal populations confronting the national society develop the ability to survive as ethnic groups through a series of change in 1) their biological stratum; 2) their culture; and 3) the form of the relations they maintain with the society that surrounds them.³²³ This understanding of the process of contact between Indians and the national society derives from the models of ethnic formation and transformation conceived by Ribeiro as “evolutionary acceleration” and “historical incorporation,” to which I will return later.

It is interesting to note that Ribeiro started his research on Indians groups with the belief, originating in the “myth of national identity,” that the confrontation between the national society and tribal groups lead in Brazil to the disappearance

³¹⁷ Nimuendaju, 1914, 1938, 1942, 1946, 1952. On Nimuendaju, see Métraux, 1950a; Baldus, 1946; Cappeller, 1963; Schaden, 1947 and 1967. Baldus, 1946 presents a complete bibliography of Nimuendaju's works.

³¹⁸ Baldus, 1949, 1954. On Baldus, see *Revista do Museu Paulista*, vol. 18, 1970 and Schaden, 1971.

³¹⁹ Schaden, 1954b, 1955a.

³²⁰ See, for instance, Baldus, 1938 and Baldus, 1940. However, see also Baldus, 1948 and Schaden, 1955b.

³²¹ See Galvão, 1957, 1959; Schaden, 1969

³²² Ribeiro, 1970a:12.

³²³ Ribeiro, 1970a:13

of the tribal groups through absorption into the national society. His study, however, shows exactly the opposite with regard to the period from 1900 to 1960.³²⁴ He writes: “None of the indigenous groups about whom we obtained information were assimilated into the national society as indistinguishable parts of it.”³²⁵ The majority of the indigenous were exterminated and those that survived remained Indian, “no longer in their habits and customs, but in their self-identification as peoples different from the Brazilians and as victims of their domination.”³²⁶ In short, the study ended with the conclusion that the impact of civilization on tribal populations gives rise to “ethnic transfigurations and to full assimilation.”³²⁷

By confronting the myths of ethnic and social integration in Brazil, on the one hand Ribeiro rejected the picture which had prevailed up until then, and presented data to the contrary. Yet, on the other hand, like so many Brazilian social scientists, he was interested in how Brazilian society “ought to be” if the myth were to become reality.

One way or another, the problem of how and in what direction to project social change was put to all social scientists of Ribeiro’s generation. The solutions and strategies offered, however, varied greatly. Whereas some (including Fernandes) believed the “scientific” perspective should be combined with socialism, Ribeiro saw academia as a hindrance to creative imagination.³²⁸ To become a true intellectual, Ribeiro had to “un-learn” what he been taught: “I was formed and deformed by academia.” It was worthwhile, he thought, to study Indian communities as pieces of human society but, at the same time, it was a kind of payment he had to make to the anthropological fashion of the day. In this context, he says, “Kadiueu religion and mythology was a good theme. The same with kinship. It was important, it was fashionable. Plumage, that was wonderful! An excellent theme, which I took and developed. It was how I made my name as an anthropologist, because I was dealing with the fashionable themes.”³²⁹

Ribeiro believes his creativity was rescued because of his political commitment. This is something he shares with Florestan Fernandes:

³²⁴ Note the resemblance to Fernandes's studies on the Blacks (see Chapter Four). Ribeiro's research was also part of the UNESCO project. See Ribeiro, 1970a:8, footnote 1.

³²⁵ Ribeiro, 1970a:8.

³²⁶ Ribeiro, 1970a:8.

³²⁷ Henley, 1978.

³²⁸ See the recent polemic between Ribeiro and Da Matta. Ribeiro, 1979; Da Matta, 1979b.

³²⁹ Ribeiro, interview.

“Florestan and I came with another perspective to the university, call it leftist, marxist, communist, socialist, whatever you want. We were preoccupied with the nation as problem; with society as the object of transformation. Now, it is curious that, to be a scientist I had to leave aside the preoccupation with the nation and the understanding of Brazil, to contribute to the study of small details of Indian life. I admit they are important in theoretical terms, but totally insignificant to the destiny of the Indians themselves.”³³⁰

The other reason why Ribeiro did not become the perfect academic he was trained to was due to the readings of Brazilian literature and social thought he had to do as part of the fellowship requirements in his graduate student years.

“For this accidental reason, I made myself heir to Brazilian thought. I read the essayists and the social philosophers, and I could see the Brazilian effort of self-understanding very clearly in those readings. Because of this I was saved from becoming the perfect academic who is capable of going to the field and studying Indian kinship and being completely blind to the destiny of the Indians themselves.”³³¹

These remarks somehow sum up his complaints about anthropology in general, “which has an infinite ability to understand small details of Indian life, but within which perspective there is no place for the study of the ‘Brazilian tribe,’ the ‘American tribe,’ or the ‘Canadian tribe’.”³³² He waits for the day anthropology will be “the study of the men of today and of the societies of the present. An anthropology which tries to improve the nation’s discourse concerning itself. This anthropology is much more difficult, it is full of mistakes.”³³³ But he says he respects whoever accepts the risk of dealing with larger issues.³³⁴

For Ribeiro, then, the nation is not an implicit unit of analysis as in Fernandes’s case, but an explicit and intentional object of study. Before proceeding with further comparisons with Fernandes, I now turn to some aspects of Ribeiro’s career.

³³⁰ Ribeiro, interview.

³³¹ Ribeiro, interview. The research was conducted by Donald Pierson with the purpose of publishing a compilation of Brazilian social thinkers.

³³² Ribeiro, interview.

³³³ Ribeiro, interview.

³³⁴ Ribeiro, interview.

Defining himself as “an intellectual conscious of his people and loyal to them,”³³⁵ Ribeiro has combined, in his fifty-eight years, the role of anthropologist, educator, social thinker, novelist and politician. In 1946 he graduated from the Escola de Sociologia e Política in São Paulo, where he had gone after leaving his home state, Minas Gerais. Having majored in the social sciences, he wanted to work for a political cause. His plan was to join the Communist Party as an intellectual. Instead, he was offered a job in Rio de Janeiro, in the Indian Protection Service (Serviço de Proteção aos Índios). There his previous training with Herbert Baldus could be put into practice and, as an officer of the SPI, he published articles and books on different aspects of Indian life and on the role of indigenist policy in Brazil.³³⁶

Ribeiro worked for the SPI from 1947 to 1958, and became increasingly involved with Indian policies, under the influence of Candido Rondon, the founder of the SPI. In 1953, Ribeiro organized the Museu do Índio, a museum which attracted international attention as the first to be specifically designed to counteract race prejudice.³³⁷ During this period, Ribeiro slowly began to advocate different policies of assimilation and integration of the Indians in the national society: in 1954 he favored gradual integration into the society at large and saw it as an almost inevitable result of inter-ethnic contact. He proposed Indian reservations as the suitable environment for the slow assimilation of the White culture by the Indians. In 1957, Ribeiro stated that his main concern was not with maintaining tribal ways of life, but rather with simply saving Indians’ lives. It was merely coincidental that the survival of the Indians appeared to depend on a lowering of the rate of cultural change. In 1962, he favored the gradual incorporation of the tribes into the general society through education, as opposed to isolating them in reservations.³³⁸

The focus on Indian education was in accord with the role Ribeiro began to assume as a specialist in education. From 1955 to 1958 he founded and directed the first course in anthropology at the Indian Protection Service, designed in a style similar to a graduate program, in which both theoretical courses and fieldwork were required.³³⁹ The course was discontinued in 1958 when Ribeiro was invited to organize the Research Division of the Ministry of Education.

³³⁵ Ribeiro, interview.

³³⁶ Ribeiro, 1948, 1950, 1951, 1953, 1954a., 1954b., 1957 and Ribeiro & Ribeiro, 1957.

³³⁷ See *Current Anthropology*, 1970:403, footnote 1.

³³⁸ March Jr. 1978.

³³⁹ Nine months devoted to coursework were followed by three of fieldwork. The courses were taught by anthropologists, linguists and historians. Cardoso de Oliveira was Ribeiro's assistant at this time. See next section.

At this point, having become totally immersed in educational matters, Ribeiro became involved in the project for the creation of the Universidade de Brasília, of which he was the main planner and first rector during 1961 and 1962. For the next two years he was minister of Education, during which period a major campaign against illiteracy was developed throughout the country. He subsequently became the head of the Casa Civil, part of the President's cabinet, until the fall of the Goulart government in 1964.

In exile after 1964, he continued to write on the role of the university in Latin America, especially during his years in Uruguay and Venezuela. He also produced a series of books on the formation of modern national societies, using an evolutionist framework.

On his return to Brazil in 1971 Ribeiro finished his novel *Maíra*,³⁴⁰ in which inter-ethnic relations are again the subject. In the words of a commentator, *Maíra* is Ribeiro's "most moving work, for it recapitulates much of his previous work and writings on the Indian experience in the world of the Whites while at the same time making vivid on the personal level the man-against-man struggle for survival."³⁴¹ In *Maíra*, Ribeiro freely put together several of his field recollections, those he felt were not appropriate for a research report, but while nevertheless had impressed him as extraordinary. Through a bricolage of facts and myths, Ribeiro tells the story of Avá, from the Mairum tribe, who returns to his village after years in a seminary in Rome as Isaías, the acculturated Indian, and of Alma, the young woman from Rio de Janeiro who decides to find meaning in her life by living among the Indians.³⁴²

In recent years, in the unfolding process of civil participation in Brazil, Ribeiro has increasingly taken part in the reorganization of political parties, many times taking the issues of Indian problems as a wedge with which to enter public life.

One finds in Ribeiro's accounts of his career a pervasive desire to help shape the destiny of Brazil. This is recounted in terms of a dichotomy of commitment to or deviation from this overall goal. In his view, for instance, it was the concern with educational issues which made him return to the national themes which he had left aside during part of his years at the SPI. He depicts the same process in Fernandes' career: "It is curious that it was the problem of education which bound us again to the national themes. I was here at Rio, under Anísio Teixeira, fighting for public education. And just as a coincidence, Florestan was in São Paulo, leading the campaign for public schooling."³⁴³

³⁴⁰ Ribeiro, 1976.

³⁴¹ Marsh Jr. 1978:36.

³⁴² Antonio Candido considers *Maíra* one of the three best novels published in recent years in Brazil. Candido, interview.

³⁴³ Ribeiro, interview. See Fernandes, 1963b (Chapter 4).

The dichotomy becomes even clearer when he states that the four books he wrote in exile were the result of his yearning to put together “his two consciousnesses which did not know each other.”³⁴⁴ He explains:

“One was my perfectionist, scientific consciousness, which led me to write rigorous studies on plumage and religion. My other consciousness referred to a critical perspective, that para-Marxist way of looking at national issues as any politician, any citizen would, and, through them, to assume positions, to discuss problems, and to look for solutions.”³⁴⁵

The books were not totally successful. “I forced myself to build a theory of the American peoples which is a theory full of holes.” It is a theory to be redone, but it is a starting point for the day when anthropology will become a serious discipline. At that time, “anthropology will take Brazil as an entity, Canada an entity, and try to understand them.”³⁴⁶ Ribeiro also admits that his later work is weaker than his former publications in religion and mythology. “But those are prolific mistakes. I wanted to make mistakes in a large scale, so as to be corrected also in a large scale.”³⁴⁷

In brief, his four books³⁴⁸ propose to examine the scheme of social-cultural development in a succession of technological revolutions which are classified as Agricultural, Urban, Irrigation, Metalurgic, Pastoral, Mercantile, Industrial and, finally, Thermonuclear. He took his inspiration from Engels’ *The Origin of the Family, the Property and the State*, “that generous and grandiose theory of men,”³⁴⁹ trying to look at the flux of history so as to develop a strategy by which to interfere in this process. In this way, he sees himself as the heir to Marx although he disagrees with many of his ideas and is not considered by marxists as one of themselves.³⁵⁰

Within the proposed model of development, Ribeiro distinguishes two processes of ethnic transfiguration: where the peoples affected are the agents of the civilizing expansion, the process is one of “evolutionary acceleration.” That means that these societies, having mastered a new technology, are able to preserve

³⁴⁴ Ribeiro, interview.

³⁴⁵ Ribeiro, interview.

³⁴⁶ Ribeiro, interview.

³⁴⁷ Ribeiro, interview.

³⁴⁸ Ribeiro, 1968, 1970b, 1971a, 1971b.

³⁴⁹ Ribeiro, interview.

³⁵⁰ Ribeiro, interview.

their ethnic-cultural character while advancing socially, and sometimes even to impose it on other peoples. But where the peoples affected by the civilizational processes are acted upon by the expansionists, they undergo “historical incorporation.” This means that these peoples suffer the impact of technologically more developed societies and are subjugated by them, losing their autonomy and sometimes having their ethnic character damaged or destroyed.³⁵¹

Although Ribeiro is interested in culture-historical configurations, he does not see them as independent socio-entities. The entities are rather the individual societies and cultures of which they are composed and the national states into which they are devided.³⁵² The four types of configurations he distinguishes are as follows:

- 1) the Witness Peoples, the modern representatives of the ancient civilizations over which European expansion occurred;³⁵³
- 2) the new Peoples, the American peoples formed as a by-product of European expansion, by the fusion and acculturation of indigenous, Negro, and European matrices;³⁵⁴
- 3) the Transplanted Peoples, the nations resulting from overseas transplantation of European peoples preserving their ethnic profile and their original language and culture;³⁵⁵
- 4) the Emergent Peoples, the new nations of Africa and Asia, whose peoples have grown to nationhood from the tribal level or from colonial trading posts.³⁵⁶

Here I return to the points which link and distinguish Ribeiro and Fernandes, in order to place their ideas in a larger context.

First of all, one should consider their relationship with academia. Both Ribeiro’s and Fernandes’ works were basically informed by the effort to combine a “rational” or “scientific” view of society with the political role one ideally had as a member of the society. The major problem they faced was that science by itself could not fulfill their roles as citizens.

³⁵¹ Ribeiro, 1970b:404.

³⁵² Ribeiro, 1970b:406.

³⁵³ They include India, China, Indo-China, Japan, Korea and the Arab countries. In the Americas, they are represented by Mexico, Guatemala, Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador. Ribeiro, 1970b:406.

³⁵⁴ They include Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Antilla and some of the peoples of Central American, the Southern United States, Chile and Paraguay. Ribeiro, 1970b:408.

³⁵⁵ They include Australia and New Zealand, Israel, Rhodesia. Ribeiro, 1960b:413.

³⁵⁶ Ribeiro, 1970b:404.

The way in which they chose to solve this problem was, however, different: whereas Fernandes decided to establish a line of sociological studies at the Universidade de São Paulo, following an almost planned career, Ribeiro had no strict plans for a linear professional life. Fernandes became the founder of a “school of sociology” in São Paulo,³⁵⁷ while Ribeiro became involved in education, politics and literature. Both see their participation in the campaign for public education during the late fifties and early sixties as a crucial moment in restoring to them their sense of citizenship and of being intellectuals no longer alienated from their own reality.³⁵⁸

Second, both Ribeiro and Fernandes started their academic contributions by questioning the idea that Brazil is a racial democracy, which for more than a century had been the main theme of nation-building. In the process, they were led to show how mistaken this view of Brazil was, and to propose alternative principles on which to organize Brazilian society.³⁵⁹ In their studies, the nation as a unit of analysis came to the forefront, whether implicitly, as in the case of Fernandes, or explicitly, as with Ribeiro.

The idea that the nation should be the main concern became so clear for Ribeiro that his political role overrode his scientific perspective. For him, anthropological fieldwork, or for that matter, exile, both provided him with the extraordinary experience of looking at one’s own world from the viewpoint of an outsider. He generalizes and considers fieldwork a necessary step in reflecting on one’s nation. “It is only by leaving your own house that you are able to see it is a house. It is impossible to see it while being inside of it. You only see rooms. By leaving, you see your house is one amongst many. And that there is a street, and a whole world...”³⁶⁰

Finally, both consider historical appraisal a necessity, since the past has to be known in order to project events. Fernandes points out that “a sociology deprived of a historical framework and uninterested of the interpretation of the historical context has nothing to do with what I call *my* ‘sociological practice’.”³⁶¹ Ribeiro also insists on a historical perspective, but he espouses an evolutionist theory of

³⁵⁷ See Morse, 1978.

³⁵⁸ Ribeiro urges students who go abroad to be careful not to come back as “colonizers” of their own peoples. He also appeals to those who stay to read Brazilian authors: “Read Gilberto Freyre more respectfully than Lévi-Strauss! Get to know him, rewrite Gilberto, contest him, but read him!” (Ribeiro, interview).

³⁵⁹ “It is curious that although these UNESCO studies were motivated by showing a positive view of race relations in one part of the world from which it was thought that the rest of the world might learn something, they actually modified the world’s view of race relations in Brazil”. (Charles Wagley, cit. in Skidmore, 1974:282.)

³⁶⁰ Ribeiro, interview.

³⁶¹ Fernandes, 1976.

cultural stages. His approach is criticized, but Ribeiro sees the criticisms as mere academic quibbles. He believes that one has to develop an analysis with large historical perspectives in order to understand the present, and for this purpose history and evolution can be equated.³⁶²

I now turn to Ribeiro's classification of Indian groups and contrast it with other types of classifications which had been commonplace.

Ribeiro wrote his work on Indian contact while serving as a "naturalist"³⁶³ in the Indian Protection Service and this setting was the context in which he developed his ideas. His training with Herbert Baldus served him as a framework with which to understand Indian life, and he used it for the specific purposes of the SPI, namely, the designing of policies for the integration of Indian populations into the national society.³⁶⁴

One of Ribeiro's first preoccupations was to understand the role of the SPI as an intermediary between the central government, representing at a distance the interests of the expansionist frontiers, and the local government, which often expressed economic interests which collided with those of the Indians.³⁶⁵ Given that the work of pacification of Indian tribes answered more to the needs of the expansion of the national society than to those of the Indians, only assistance responded to actual indigenous needs. This fact led Ribeiro to assume a pessimistic view and to foresee that if assistance were not properly offered to the Indians, they would never be assimilated into the national community, as it was generally assumed they would.³⁶⁶

This sets the stage for Ribeiro's definitions of an Indian: "An Indian is any individual recognized as member of a community of pre-Columbian origin who identifies himself as ethnically different from nationals and is considered indigenous by the Brazilian population with whom he come in contact."³⁶⁷ The definition is heavily based on the relation of the Indian to the Brazilian society: it is not racial criteria nor cultural elements which matter, but the "unfamiliarity" of the Indians to the "nationals."

³⁶² Ribeiro, interview.

³⁶³ Ribeiro was admitted as a "naturalist" since the SPI had no positions for "anthropologists" or "ethnologists." Ribeiro, interview.

³⁶⁴ It is known that Ribeiro developed a close relationship with the Smithsonian Institute in Washington, but I do not know whether he used any comparative material from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

³⁶⁵ Ribeiro, 1962.

³⁶⁶ Ribeiro, 1962b:141.

³⁶⁷ Ribeiro, 1967b:105.

Ribeiro's argument is that in situations where Indian groups survive the bio-ecological consequences of contact, the effects of the contact are to be explained in terms of the social and economic relations that the national society seeks to impose on the Indian population. He rejects the explanation by which the survival of the indigenous population depends on the selective adoption of alien cultural patterns.³⁶⁸ He finally classifies Indian groups by taking into account 1) the type of contact with "civilization," and 2) the different types of frontiers of expansion.

Four categories of contact — isolation, intermittent contact, permanent contact, and integration — define successive and necessary stages in the process of integration of Indian populations into the national society. Some groups disappear before completing the stages, and the duration of each group's stay in a given stage depends on several cultural, social and economic factors. Among the economic factors are the different types of expansion frontiers the Indians confront.³⁶⁹

Ribeiro distinguishes two types of fronts: the "protectionist" fronts and the "economic" fronts.³⁷⁰ The first are composed of government functionaries and missions. He recognizes that in certain cases the presence of both the SPI and of a mission prevented the extermination of local Indian groups, but he finds that the SPI has had a more positive effect than the missions. The SPI has acted as a buffer between the indigenous societies and the economic fronts, and has in many occasions attempted to secure the land rights of certain groups. This is not to deny that the SPI has also capitulated to pressures from political and economic interests which worked against the Indians' advantage.³⁷¹

The three types of economic fronts — the extractive, the pastoral, and the agricultural — are used by Ribeiro to show how the various patterns of recruitment of indigenous labour and of appropriations of indigenous lands affect the Indians.

The extractive type of front uses the knowledge the Indians have of the local natural environment. They frequently have a devastating effect on the local Indian population, which derives from the fact that they often represent the vanguard of the colonization process. The members of the front bring diseases against which the Indians have no resistance, and are additionally aided by the fact that law is generally weak in those regions. Of the indigenous groups that existed in 1900 in

³⁶⁸ Henley, 1978.

³⁶⁹ Ribeiro, 1967b:112.

³⁷⁰ I borrow the term "economic front" from Henley, 1978, who used it to replace the direct translation of "spontaneous front" from Ribeiro, 1970a:15.

³⁷¹ In 1967 the SPI was replaced by the FUNAI (Indian National Foundation) in part due to the denunciation of SPI functionaries who acquiesced to atrocities committed against Indian populations.

the areas where extractives fronts have operated, Ribeiro estimates that 45% had become extinct by 1957.

The pastoral front has limited need of labour. The members of a pastoral front are not therefore usually concerned to hire the labour power of the local Indian population. Instead, they are only interested in clearing the land of Indian inhabitants and gaining legal title to it.

Finally, the agricultural fronts tend to be permanent and result in the highest rate of extinction of Indian populations. This might be due to the fact that the population has often already been devastated by an antecedent extractive front.

Ribeiro's conclusions in relation to the destiny of Indian populations are pessimistic in the overall: "We ought to conclude that indigenous culture and languages can survive autonomously only in unexplored areas or areas of recent and tentative penetration, or under the artificial conditions of protective intervention."³⁷² The national society seeks growth and homogeneity, and thus, social integration. For Ribeiro, however, social integration should not imply "de-Indianization" but rather "national unity without making all identical."³⁷³ If this goal shows itself impossible, then attention should be directed to the simple survival of the Indian as a human being.³⁷⁴

Many criticisms have been leveled at Ribeiro's classificatory scheme. Some of the critics emphasize its formal and static nature,³⁷⁵ some object to the fact that the scheme does not explain the situation where more than one type of front exist in a single region, and others still regret that emphasis is on particular examples rather than explanatory principles.³⁷⁶ The weakness of Ribeiro's statistical evidence has also been pointed out, as well as the difficulty of distinguishing between the category of "extinct" groups and "assimilated"³⁷⁷ ones. For the purpose of this study, however, our interest is on the light which can be shed on the issue of anthropology and the ideology of nationhood by comparing Ribeiro's scheme with the classifications of other social scientists.

Brazilian Indians, being a tiny and, until recently, remote fraction of the population, had been studied especially by foreign anthropologists and in terms of their own internal structure. In the past, they had been seen successively as living

³⁷² Ribeiro, 1967b:115.

³⁷³ Ribeiro, 1960:7.

³⁷⁴ Ribeiro, interview.

³⁷⁵ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1964:13-30.

³⁷⁶ Henley, 1978.

³⁷⁷ Henley, 1978:103-5.

evidence for European questions about a single or multiple origin of the human race, or as examples of a primitive society and/or mentality. The German ethnographers of last century, for instance, were interested in classifying Indian groups and Indian culture and in collecting ethnological material to fill European museums. Their findings were otherwise used as evidence in the intellectual debates taking place in Europe.³⁷⁸ In this century, not much has changed in relation to what concerns the irradiating center of the intellectual debates. Whether the concern was with the classification of “marginal cultures” in South America,³⁷⁹ the study of dual organizations,³⁸⁰ or the comparative study of social institutions and cultural categories of South American Indians,³⁸¹ Indian groups were always looked upon as distinctive societies in themselves or, in other words, as alternative ways of being “human.”

By contrast, Ribeiro’s classification scheme does not look at the Indian groups as “totalities” in their own terms, but rather conceives of the Indian as *part* of a society which is defined in national terms. His interest does not lie in viewing the Indian in conceptual or philosophical terms, but in terms of the problems which the national society faces when trying to integrate the Indian population. In this context, Ribeiro seldom speaks of the contact between Indians and *Whites*, but rather of Indians and the *nationals*, and says his interest in Indians derives less from a “justifiable innate human curiosity” than from “the destiny of the Indians as human beings.” Being thus, the different Indian groups are conceptually put together as a single category.

As mentioned before, Ribeiro’s effort has to be understood in terms of his work for the Indian Protection Service. The SPI was created as a result of expeditions led by Candido Rondon with the aim of exploring the interior of the country to establish telegraphic lines. Those expeditions, organized from 1892 to 1930, ended up by contacting aboriginal groups which Rondon believed should be pacified and assimilated into the national society.³⁸² In this context, Ribeiro’s work falls under the rubric of nation-building defined as both “territorial” and “strata” integration.³⁸³ It started as a matter of territorial integration in Rondon’s time, a period in which the western part of the country was practically unknown to the central government. Later, with Ribeiro’s, it incorporated the problem of strata

³⁷⁸For instance, van Martius, 1867, Steinen, 1894. When Wilhem Schmidt published “Kulturshichten in Sudamerika,” in 1913, as a first attempt to apply the historical-cultural method to the American continent, Max Schmidt, Paul Ehrenreich and Fritz Krause strongly opposed him, on the basis of their experience in Brazil.

³⁷⁹ Lowie, 1952; Nimuendaju, 1939, 1942, 1946.

³⁸⁰ Lévi-Strauss, 1963.

³⁸¹ Maybury-Lewis, 1974, 1979.

³⁸² See Baldus, 1958 and Ribeiro, 1959 for Rondon’s obituaries.

³⁸³ Elias, 1972a.

integration, as the struggle of the lower classes to enter the national society with the rights of true citizens. The attempt was to see Indians not so much as the “other” which is “different,” but the “other” who is oppressed and exploited by the national society. To those oppressed strata better opportunities should be granted. However, as I will be arguing later in this chapter, the Indian never totally lost the character of the “different” and, hence, was never totally conceptualized as part of an “us.”³⁸⁴

B. Contact as “inter-ethnic friction”

Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira was one of Ribeiro’s main critics. He was influenced by Ribeiro’s works³⁸⁵ but rejected his way of looking at contact between Indians and the national society in terms of “intergration.” For Roberto Cardoso, Ribeiro’s approach did not account for the situation as a *process*, but as a *state*.³⁸⁶ He recognized that it was a positive step to emphasize the actual survival of the Indians, thus shifting the interest, up to then put on culture, to the destiny of the populations themselves, but regretted that the result of Ribeiro’s work was more descriptive than theoretical. Ribeiro had failed to examine the mechanisms of interaction between Indians and Whites as inserted into distinct social systems — the tribal and the national.

Cardoso also saw the concept of “ethnic transfiguration” as too broadly conceived. Rather than trying to account for the ecological, biotic, economic, social, cultural and psychological dimensions which result from the situation of contact, Cardoso tried to make it theoretically more manageable through the concept of “inter-ethnic friction.”³⁸⁷

This concept was proposed to deal with the contact between tribal and national societies, in a context in which British and American theories, respectively, of “social change” and “acculturation,” proved inadequate.³⁸⁸ Basically Cardoso wanted to imprint on anthropology the same line that Brazilian sociologists had developed. This meant to leave the acculturation approach aside and focus on the relations brought about by the contact.³⁸⁹

³⁸⁴ See the issue of “emancipation” in the last section of this chapter.

³⁸⁵ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1976:XIII and 1978:16.

³⁸⁶ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1964:25-7.

³⁸⁷ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1978:16-7.

³⁸⁸ Cardoso deals with the concept of “social change” through Malinowski’s studies, and with “acculturation” as defined by Redfield, Linton and Herskovitz. Cardoso de Oliveira, 1963.

³⁸⁹ See a comparison between Fernandes’s *sociological* approach to the study of race relations and Ramos’s *anthropological* perspective in Chapter four.

Two orienting principles must guide the investigation of inter-ethnic contact. The first is to look at the relationship between the tribal and the national society as one of opposition. This opposition is not conceptualized as one between groups which are simply different one from the other. They are contradictory entities, and the existence of one tends to deny the other. In these terms, the situation of contact is “syncretic,” i.e., “a situation in which two groups are dialectically ‘unified’ through opposing interests.”³⁹⁰ The second principle is that the investigator determines the dimensions which best explain the dynamics of inter-ethnic contact. Here different strategies can be followed as, for instance, to take the economic dimension and look at how “exchange value” is incorporated in a production system previously based only on subsistence. Or one can look at ethnic identity to understand why Indian populations with economically advanced integration in regional societies still maintain mechanisms which hinder their identity as “nationals.” Or still, to ask who decides, in the last instance, the destiny of a certain population in an area of inter-ethnic contact.

A brief contrast with Ribeiro’s approach shows that Cardoso wanted, first, to provide a theoretical framework of explanation for the situation of contact; second, to call attention to the dynamic aspects of this situation; and third, to confront the dialectical nature of the phenomenon. Looking at inter-ethnic contact as “inter-ethnic friction,” Cardoso did not see two separate entities, but a totality unified by opposing interests. The interesting point here, in contrast to the foreign anthropologists’ notion that “totality” rested in the tribal societies, or to Ribeiro’s notion that two “totalities” confronts each other, is that Cardoso made contact itself the “totality.”

A better understanding of the meaning of the proposed concept can be reached in the context of Cardoso’s career, to which I now turn.

Cardoso³⁹¹ never planned to become an anthropologist, up to the day he was invited by Ribeiro to move from São Paulo to Rio de Janeiro, and work for the Indian Protection Service. His training had been in philosophy, and he had chosen the philosophy of science as his area of specialization. He decided that sociology would be the science in which he would be trained. “At this time the powerful paradigm in the philosophy of science was Piaget’s work. His biographical experience, of taking psychology as a scientific discipline in order to make contributions in psychology, in logic, philosophy and epistemology influenced us all.”³⁹² Cardoso planned to dedicate ten years to sociology and then to return to philosophy.

³⁹⁰ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1963:43.

³⁹¹ Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira was born in 1928.

³⁹² Cardoso de Oliveira, interview.

In 1953, having finished college, he was a kind of anomaly in the job market. He found that a major in philosophy with an interest in sociology made it difficult for him to be accepted as a professor at the Universidade de São Paulo. Alleged political motivations on the part of the Faculty were also an obstacle.³⁹³

It was common at the time to continue one's graduate studies in France, giving continuity to the training received at the USP.³⁹⁴ Instead, Cardoso decided to accept Ribeiros's offer, though he felt insecure as an anthropologist. His only background consisted of courses he had taken with Fernandes and Bastide.

Ribeiro thought Cardoso's training was good enough: "I went to São Paulo to find someone with talent to be my assistant at the Museu do Índio. I wanted someone who had studied anthropology and ethnology. But I did not find anyone intelligent enough. Roberto was the only one, but he had studied philosophy. But if Lévi-Strauss had learned anthropology after graduating, why not Roberto?"³⁹⁵

The move from São Paulo to the SPI was an important change: "It was the first break with a Paulista provincialism which turns to the interior of the state of São Paulo and looks towards Paris. Instead, I began to look at my own country."³⁹⁶

Cardoso spent one year studying Brazilian ethnology with Ribeiro and during the two following years was his teaching assistant in the course of anthropology taught at the Museu do Índio. During this time he learned how to approach Indian societies "as a point of reference which showed up, from the situation of contact, the nature of my own society."³⁹⁷

Ribeiro gave him the framework, but did not provide him the theory. "Darcy was never really interested in theory, he had always been much more interested in having a good picture of what happened in Brazil."³⁹⁸ Having been a student of Fernandes, however, Cardoso could only be upset by the lack of methodological and theoretical preoccupations. His first experience with the Terena³⁹⁹ dates from this period.

³⁹³ Cardoso de Oliveira, interview.

³⁹⁴ Cardoso had five professors from the Sorbonne during his undergraduate years at the USP. Cardoso, interview.

³⁹⁵ Ribeiro, interview.

³⁹⁶ Cardoso de Oliveira, interview.

³⁹⁷ Cardoso de Oliveira, interview.

³⁹⁸ Cardoso de Oliveira, interview.

³⁹⁹ The Terena research was conducted from July to November 1955, and from October-November 1957 and July-August 1958. (Cardoso de Oliveira, 1968:17.)

The Terena are Indians of the Guan group living in the south of the state of Mato Grosso. Their contact with the national society dates back to the 1830's, when the first pastoral fronts reached their territory. The contacts were mostly sporadic, but after 1869 they were accelerated as a result of the end of the war between Brazil and Paraguay. During this phase the first farmers were established in the region and the Indian labour incorporated in the regional economy. This process was later developed when the Indian Protection Service, founded in 1910, established Indian reservations in the region. By 1930, these reservations numbered eight, and were seen by the local population as a natural source of labour-power.⁴⁰⁰

Given the long contact between the Terena and the national society, Cardoso asked why an "acculturated" Indian group remained "Indian." The assumption, following the theories in vogue, was that the Indian would become assimilated as a result of the process of acculturation. Cardoso's work showed that Indian identity in the case of the Terena persisted despite cultural change. It persisted because of specific *social* relations which the theory of acculturation did not take into account.

It is from this point that Ribeiro's and Cardoso's work diverged. Ribeiro never really accepted the primacy of the social relations — economic, political, and kinship — over the acculturation approach. The theoretical difference coincided with Ribeiro's move to the Ministry of Education, and Cardoso's decision to join the Museu Nacional.

At the Museu Nacional Cardoso taught a course of "specialization" in anthropology, a first experiment which later became a graduate program. This course, taught from 1960 to 1962, involved some changes from the first one taught by Ribeiro: it was training in social — not cultural — anthropology; it accepted only candidates having a B.A. degree, and fieldwork was seen not simply as a requirement, but as a commitment to the researches being carried out by the program as a whole.⁴⁰¹ (Anthropology may have had to leave So Paulo, where sociology dominated hegemonically, in order to establish itself as a prestigious discipline.) During this period Cardoso also started the second phase of research among the Terena,⁴⁰² and began a study of the Tukuna Indians.

The Tukuna interested Cardoso because they provided an interesting comparison with the Terena. The basis for the comparison was still very much within Ribeiro's typology of economic fronts, for while the Terena lived in swamps in the middle of a pastoral front, the Tukuna were rubber-collectors inhabiting the equatorial forest. The Tukuna lived in the upper part of the Solimes river in the

⁴⁰⁰ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1968. The eight reservations occupy a territory of 25,000 hectares. The population in 1954 was 3,220 (Cardoso de Oliveira, 1968:47-9). See Cardoso de Oliveira, 1958a, 1958b, 1960, 1968 for the results of his study on the Terena.

⁴⁰¹ Cardoso de oliveira, 1962a.

⁴⁰² I.e., during October-November 1957.

Amazon and, despite their economic integration into the local economy, and the loss of political autonomy, their kinship institutions operated in the traditional way, as once observed by Nimuendaju⁴⁰³.

The research on the Tukuna became part of the study on Areas of Inter-Ethnic Friction in Brazil⁴⁰⁴, launched by Cardoso as a comparative project to test the notion of "inter-ethnic friction"⁴⁰⁵. Besides the Tukuna, two other cases were chosen. One comprised the Asurini and the Gaviões, two indigenous societies reached by nut-collectors in the region of the Solimões river. The Asurini, a Tupi tribe,⁴⁰⁶ had at the time only one pacified group, the rest being still isolated and unwilling to be in contact with the national society. The Gaviões, a Gê group,⁴⁰⁷ competed with the local Brazilian population in nut-collecting. The other case comprised the Krahô and Xerente, both Gê groups, and both living in the middle of pastoral fronts whose other inhabitants wanted the Indians out. In the Xerente case, tension between Indians and the front had assumed great proportions while among the Krahô the situation was more peaceful.⁴⁰⁸ When Cardoso decided to launch this large project, he also opted to accept Florestan Fernandes' invitation to present a doctoral dissertation at the Universidade de São Paulo.⁴⁰⁹

The doctorate at the Universidade de São Paulo required the presentation of a major and two minor dissertations. Cardoso's first idea for the major dissertation was to write a standard monograph on the Tukuna, "something like 'Tukuna Kinship and Social Organization,' so as to complete Nimuendaju's work."⁴¹⁰ But that implied leaving aside the preoccupation with inter-ethnic contact and return to the Tukuna for at least a year of intensive fieldwork. Instead, he opted to present the major thesis (to the Department of Sociology) on a comparison between the tribal and urban Terena,⁴¹¹ and to use the Tukuna material in the two minor dissertations. The first, presented to the chair of anthropology, used the

⁴⁰³ Nimuendaju, 1952.

⁴⁰⁴ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1962b.

⁴⁰⁵ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1962b, 1963.

⁴⁰⁶ The Asurini were studied by Roque de Barros Laraia. See Laraia and Da Matta, 1967.

⁴⁰⁷ The Gaviões were studied by Roberto da Matta. See Laraia and Da Matta, 1967. See also Chapter Five.

⁴⁰⁸ The Krahô were studied by Julio Cezar Melatti. See Melatti, 1967.

⁴⁰⁹ At this time, a formal invitation was necessary from a senior professor in order for a student to become a candidate for a doctorate at the Universidade de São Paulo.

⁴¹⁰ Cardoso de Oliveira, interview.

⁴¹¹ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1968. See Brandão, 1977 for a book review.

notion of inter-ethnic friction;⁴¹² the other, presented to the chair of logic, was on the totemic classification of the Tukuna.⁴¹³

It is interesting to note how the conception of a doctoral dissertation still followed a French model in the mid-sixties. This model was so powerful as to shift students' interests in the name of a proper academic work. As Cardoso points out: "In this period, all my work was leading in the direction of a dialectical anthropology, but as I had to make a break for the dissertation, I wanted to write a monograph."⁴¹⁴ But why was it a break? "Within the dialectical approach there was no model for a monograph at that time. The models were in the British School of Anthropology. I think that theoretically I made a step backwards at this point."⁴¹⁵

The time Cardoso spent writing his dissertation⁴¹⁶ partially coincided with the development of the Harvard-Central Brazil Project, which had the Museu Nacional as its sponsor in Brazil.⁴¹⁷ At this moment, two research projects were held at the same time and involved some of the same anthropologists: one on Areas of Inter-Ethnic Friction, the other on the Gê tribes of Central Brazil.

It is worth pointing out here the contrast between the two, since it shows very clearly two different approaches to Indian populations. The Inter-Ethnic Project was interested in elucidating the mechanisms of contact between Indians and the national society. The unit of analysis was the situation of contact itself. By contrast, the Harvard-Central Brazil project concentrated on the theoretical question of the nature of dual organization. It was intended as a comparative study of different Gê tribes so as to solve the anomaly which those tribes represented in the anthropological literature. This anomaly referred mainly to the existence of highly developed social systems in technically rudimentary societies.⁴¹⁸ The unit of analysis here was the tribal society itself, and the national society was excluded from theoretical concerns.⁴¹⁹ This case exemplifies the tendencies developing in Brazil, to incorporate the national society as an empirical and theoretical problem,

⁴¹² Cardoso de Oliveira, 1964.

⁴¹³ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1965.

⁴¹⁴ Cardoso de Oliveira, interview.

⁴¹⁵ Cardoso de oliveira, interview.

⁴¹⁶ I.e., 1964-5.

⁴¹⁷ The Project, directed by David Maybury-Lewis, lasted from 1962 to 1967.

⁴¹⁸ See Maybury-Lewis, 1974, 1979. See also Lévi-Strauss, 1963, 1960 and Maybury-Lewis, 1960 for the basic discussion which inspired the research.

⁴¹⁹ Some of the Ph.D. dissertations resulting from the project are: Bamberger, 1967; Crocker, 1967; Da Matta, 1970; Lave, 1967; Turner, 1966.

in contrast with the “foreign” tendency to exclude the national society from its unit of analysis.

From then on, Cardoso’s career unfolded at the Museu Nacional, where he created a graduate program under the aegis of a joint project with David Maybury-Lewis.⁴²⁰ The success of the program had its price for Cardoso: “In 1970 I came to the conclusion that I needed a year of intensive reading. I was feeling completely unproductive.”⁴²¹

The redirection of his studies, after a year at Harvard, took him towards the theme of ethnic identity, thus changing his earlier focus from social relations to the analysis of ideology. This was a return to the study of structures of thought, on which he had already touched in a book on the Tukuna. In 1972 Cardoso founded a new graduate program at the Universidade de Brasília, and continued writing on ethnic identity.⁴²² To this interest he added a new concern with anthropological theory, investigating how men became an object of sociological investigation during the Enlightenment, with a different perspective than that provided by philosophical introspection.⁴²³

In sum, Cardoso’s career shows the dilemmas of a social scientist who, having committed himself to anthropology, suffered the different pressures which awaited anyone who wanted to incorporate features of the “traditions” existing in the country while giving new directions to them.

When Cardoso decided for anthropology, the discipline was defined as the study of Indians. Cardoso accepted this definition, but believed that Indians should not be studied in and of themselves. He thus came closer to Ribeiro’s approach and moved further away from Baldus’ and Schaden’s. Ribeiro’s viewpoints, however, were much more practically and politically oriented than theoretical, and did not serve Cardoso so well in his desire to give anthropology an academic status within the Brazilian social sciences. In the latter goal he was inspired by Florestan Fernandes, both in theoretical terms and as example of how to foster the institutional development of anthropology⁴²⁴.

⁴²⁰ The program began in 1968 and the project was intended as a comparison between two cases of regional development, the Northeast and Central Brazil.

⁴²¹ Cardoso de Oliveira, interview.

⁴²² Cardoso de Oliveira, 1976.

⁴²³ Cardoso de Oliveira, interview.

⁴²⁴ Fernandes had layed out the model for a “school” to develop. Cardoso wanted to avoid the impasse generated in anthropology at the Universidade de São Paulo, where Schaden and Baldus, who had once been the major figures, did not organize students to continue their work. (Cardoso de Oliveira, interview.)

In this sense, he made himself heir of both Ribeiro and Fernandes: the theoretical framework of sociology and anthropology were not to be totally separated, and the Indians were to be accepted as objects of study as long as they were seen within the totality of inter-ethnic contact.

This became his practice of anthropology, but he was open to other theoretical influences and to collaboration with foreign anthropologists, in the belief that Brazilian social science could not close itself off from outside influence.⁴²⁵

I return now to the concept of “inter-ethnic friction,” as summing up Cardoso’s theoretical perspective and his attempt to learn from his predecessors while proposing new ideas. The concept incorporated the findings of sociology and of anthropology in Brazil, but it also left a problem for Cardoso and for the next generation to solve: what was the difference between anthropology and sociology in Brazil? Was the difference important and in what sense? *A Sociologia do Brasil Indígena*,⁴²⁶ a collection of essays written by Cardoso during a 15 year period,⁴²⁷ gives evidence of the problem and clarifies some other issues of his work. I conclude this section with an appraisal of this book.

The first comes from the title itself — the *sociology* of indigenous Brazil. Cardoso does not call it anthropology because the object he chose to study is “sociological,” namely, the national society. In this book, the Indians are not conceived in their own terms, but rather as “a sociological indicator with which to study the national society, its expansionist process, and its struggle for development.”⁴²⁸

From French sociology comes the idea that the study of the “other” should reflect back to one’s own culture, and this is clearly perceived in Cardoso’s proposition: “I believe that studying the indigenist question one studies the national society through the certainly awkward presence of the tribal groups.”⁴²⁹ Implicit one finds here the idea that “sociology” studies the national society, whereas “anthropology” focuses on the Indians.

The second topic to which I want to call attention confirms the first point. The different articles collected in Cardoso’s book cover subjects such as the situation of the Tukuna, the Indians as a concept in the national ideology, the situation of the Indians in the Amazon, the notion of internal colonialism, and inter-ethnic

⁴²⁵ For a severe critique of the collaboration between the Museu Nacional and Harvard University, see Ribeiro, 1979.

⁴²⁶ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1978.

⁴²⁷ I.e., from 1960 to 1975.

⁴²⁸ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1978:12.

⁴²⁹ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1978:11.

friction. Speaking of indigenous policies, Cardoso distinguishes two different kinds of factors affecting the assimilation of Indians into the national society: those factors which work towards convergence, and those factors which work towards divergence in the process of assimilation. Amongst the first are the attraction the urban centers have for the Indians, the Military Service, the forms of inter-ethnic marriage, "compadrio," and the religious missions. Amongst the second, Cardoso notes physical traits, the lack of official documents, and the Indian Protection Service.⁴³⁰ My point here is that the national society is still the uninvited guest, since the integration of Indian groups is the basic question posed. In this context, the indigenist problem is "How to press the Government towards a policy which is compatible with the democratic ideals of a modern and mass society?"⁴³¹ a question not much different from Fernandes' on race relations.⁴³²

Indigenist policies and the integration of Indians into the national society are pervasive themes in the book, which Cardoso sees as written from his "sociological" perspective. This perspective should present the reader no problem if Cardoso did not want also to give the Indians the recognition their unique and distinct cultures deserve. It is at this point that Cardoso tries to unmask the ideological obstacles to a rational indigenism by showing that the Indian is a stereotyped and generic category in Brazilian thought.⁴³³ He distinguishes four types of "mentalities" which are obstacles to an understanding of the Indian situation: the statistical, the romantic, the bureaucratic, and the entrepreneurial.⁴³⁴ Here we see Cardoso trying to account for both the national ideology and the Indian reality in its own terms, thus oscillating between what he defines as "sociology" and "anthropology."

The fourth important point in the book relates to the inter-ethnic friction concept. I contend that it is here that Cardoso tried to solve the problem with which he had been struggling.

The approach he adopts is "sociological." He says that inter-ethnic friction "is the logical equivalent of what sociologists call 'class-struggle'"⁴³⁵ and wants to examine the structure of the inter-ethnic system in its dynamic aspects in order to evaluate "the potential of integration"⁴³⁶ of Indians into the national society. To

⁴³⁰ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1978 (Chapter 2).

⁴³¹ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1978:69.

⁴³² See Chapter Three.

⁴³³ See the insightful article by Roberto da Matta on the costs of being an Indian in Brazil. Da Matta, 1976b.

⁴³⁴ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1978:65-75.

⁴³⁵ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1978:85.

⁴³⁶ Cardoso de Oliveira, interview.

accomplish this task he looks at the different ways the Indians organize themselves, as much as at the different kinds of expansion frontiers — the different “faces” — by which the national society confronts the Indians. But the approach is also intentionally “anthropological,” since Cardoso conceives of the inter-ethnic friction perspective as a means for the investigator “to enter” the system of contact.

Where does sociology end and anthropology begin? “I did a sociology of contact. But, by doing so, I did simultaneously an anthropology. When I speak of anthropology, I am necessarily starting from within. I think the sociologist looks always from the outside.”⁴³⁷ He continues: “I created a space so as to see the dynamics of the relations of contact. In this case, the relation between the dominating and the dominated had to be critically evaluated. But I saw this relation in the same way Indians see it.”⁴³⁸

The issue is a delicate one. For some, it should not be a problem at all, since in many countries sociology and anthropology are hardly distinguished.⁴³⁹ I maintain that in Brazil the issue is important if one is interested in the developmental possibilities for a discipline such as anthropology. Sociology as the study of the national society — the “us” —, and anthropology as the study of the “others” are ideas which are strongly imbedded in the definition of the social sciences, and will not easily go away. Through the inter-ethnic friction concept, Cardoso was forced to confront those issues as well as the definition of anthropology itself. On the one hand, *the system of contact* should be the unit of analysis, and the investigator must enter the system. On the other hand, the elements within the system maintained a relationship of superiority and inferiority one towards the other. The national society dominated and oppressed the Indians.

Thus the situation of domination has ethical and political connotations for the investigator if he is a member of the national society. This means that the investigator is often led to denunciate the situation of oppression, and so “to enter” the system already taking sides.⁴⁴⁰ Between the situation of domination which he detects, and his desire to do away with the stereotyping of the Indian, the investigator oscillates between sociology and anthropology. It is my contention that this state of affairs, in which the Indian is seen as both “different” and “oppressed” accounts for the fact that the inter-ethnic friction approach never really solved the question of whether anthropology or sociology held its subject matter.

⁴³⁷ Cardoso de Oliveira, interview.

⁴³⁸ Cardoso de Oliveira, interview.

⁴³⁹ India is an example. See Madan, ms.

⁴⁴⁰ In a recent lecture at Harvard University (April, 1980), Anthony Seeger proposed that the contact between Indians and the national society in Brazil must be seen from the viewpoint of the Indians.

C. From Indians to the expansion frontiers

In summary, according to the German model which dominated the social sciences in Brazil during the thirties, academic anthropology meant the study of different aspects of Indian social life.⁴⁴¹ Even when the focus of analysis was the contact between Indians and the national society, the emphasis fell on the aspects of Indian culture which changed in the process.⁴⁴² Ribeiro refocused the interest of anthropology by bringing to the fore flesh-and-blood Indians and their destiny in terms of surviving contact. These views are intrinsic to his classification of Indian groups as characterized by states of isolation, intermittent contact, permanent contact, integration, and extinction. He also classified the national society in terms of the different “faces,” or fronts, with which it presents itself to the Indian groups. Cardoso again changed the picture, by trying to put forward a theoretical model for the contact situation. The “inter-ethnic friction” model was his answer to the problem.

My point here is that an important movement occurred, if one takes the three above mentioned perspectives as examples of three generational models. In brief, the interest on Indians as the object par excellence of anthropology progressively moved to an interest in the national society itself. In Cardoso both Indians and the national society are still part of the model, but in Otávio Velho’s work the change is complete.

Otávio Velho’s interest began with the study of expansion frontiers in an area where the Amazon, the Northeast and Central Brazil meet. This area had been reached in different historical moments by pastoral, extractive and agrarian fronts. The pastoral front predominated during the 18th century; rubber extraction during the turn of last century; nut collection during the thirties to fifties; and an agrarian front during the sixties. The Marabá region, this meeting place of the states of Maranhão, Pará and Goiás, was finally reached by the Trans-Amazon Road during the seventies.⁴⁴³

Velho’s study was initially part of a research project directed by Cardoso on the problems of “internal colonialism” in Brazil.⁴⁴⁴ His main purpose was to show that the geographical limits of the country, having been politically established for centuries, were still being socially demarcated. Many areas of Brazil, like the one

⁴⁴¹ Nimuendaju always rejected any teaching position partially because he did not believe that indigenist concerns could be considered “academic.”

⁴⁴² Schaden, 1969.

⁴⁴³ O. Velho, 1972.

⁴⁴⁴ O. Velho was Cardoso's assistant in the research project. See Cardoso de Oliveira, 1978:83.

he studied, followed a pattern of occupation in which the abandonment of the lands succeeded each different front. In Ribeiro's terms, Velho was focusing on the different "faces" with which Brazilian society advanced to the interior.⁴⁴⁵ His main question concerned the destiny of the peasants who participated in the fronts and he concluded that it would all depend on the mode of capitalist development Brazil adopted.⁴⁴⁶ This mode, he suggested, was characterized by the dominance of the political over the economic sphere, an interpretation attested to by the construction of the Trans-Amazon itself. The economic value of this road had been constantly put in doubt.⁴⁴⁷

The interesting point here, considering O. Velho one generation ahead of Ribeiro and Cardoso, is to observe that the Indian is discarded as object of study. Starting with the Indians at first, anthropology shifted towards the study of the contact between Indians and the national society, to finally neglect the Indians as an object of study. The nation-state thus came historically as a predominant focus of analysis.

Recent studies by Velho attest to this tendency. His present major interest is in expansion frontiers in the context of a model of "authoritarian capitalism." O. Velho argues that countries like Brazil which did not go through a political revolution directed by the bourgeoisie tended to adopt an authoritarian version of capitalism as one solution to the pressure towards integration into the international system.⁴⁴⁸ He focuses his attention on the peasantry as political class and/or corporation,⁴⁴⁹ and looks at the lag between the political dominance of the territory and its effective occupation. Interesting is to note here that when Velho takes the nation-state as an implicit unit of analysis he adopts a Marxist-oriented⁴⁵⁰ approach, and joins the sociologists in the debate over the nature of the bourgeois revolution in Brazil, contesting Fernandes' views on the subject.⁴⁵¹ He himself states that his work has moved in the direction of "political sociology,"⁴⁵² but that his anthropological perspective was maintained by the use of field material to illustrate the thesis he proposes, by his preoccupation with peasants, and by the use

⁴⁴⁵ Surprisingly enough, Ribeiro is not mentioned in Velho's book.

⁴⁴⁶ O. Velho, 1972:169.

⁴⁴⁷ O. Velho, 1972:170.

⁴⁴⁸ O. Velho, 1976a, 1976b.

⁴⁴⁹ O. Velho, 1976b (Chapter 13).

⁴⁵⁰ See O. Velho, 1976a.

⁴⁵¹ O. Velho, 1976a:17.

⁴⁵² O. Velho, 1976b:6.

of the comparative method.⁴⁵³ In his later book he compares the Brazilian case with the frontier movements in the United States and Eastern Europe.⁴⁵⁴

Here two issues deserve attention. The first refers to the fact that, if in Ribeiro's and Cardoso's work the study of the Indian brought up the problems of territorial and strata integration, territorial integration is now apparently the main focus. The basic question is subsumed under that of the relationship between political emancipation and territorial occupation. Within this context, the Indian as a social category is not considered. Actually, Velho never proposed to study Indians.

Given this situation, one may suspect that, disregarding the Indians in a situation of expansion frontiers, the issue of strata integration would vanish. This, however, is not the case, and one may wonder whether territorial integration can ever be dealt with, in terms of nationhood, without taking strata integration into account as well. The contrast of O.Velho's studies with previous ones remains at the level of *which sectors* of the society are considered. The change of the unit of analysis brought with it a change in the sectors included, rather than a dismissal of the issue of strata integration. With Velho, the difference is that Indians are replaced by the peasantry. "In this framework, the consolidation of the peasantry, especially in the frontier, will be an important element [in the determination] of the extent to which authoritarian capitalism is capable of containing all groups and classes whose articulation is necessary to its own development."⁴⁵⁵

Here the totality is the national society, and the peasantry, a sector within it. Also, nation-building is again the general parameter within which the social scientist is encapsulated. And in the context of the national society, the important element is not *with whom* the nation is confronted, but rather *who* confronts the "other" outside the nation. The study of peasants has recently become an institutional anthropological topic in Brazil, as attested to by the large research projects being carried out at the Museu Nacional.⁴⁵⁶ In the context of the Museu Nacional, Velho's line of study, which emphasized the different modes of integration of frontiers into the larger capitalistic system, contrasts with another line of study which also takes the peasants as object of study, but in which the peasant mode of production itself is the focus of analysis.⁴⁵⁷

⁴⁵³ O.Velho, 1976b:6.

⁴⁵⁴ O.Velho, 1976b.

⁴⁵⁵ O.Velho, 1976a:28.

⁴⁵⁶ See Palmeira et al., 1977. See also Leite Lopes, 1972; Machado da Silva, 1971; Palmeira, 1971; Sigaud, 1971.

⁴⁵⁷ The research project mentioned above (Palmeira, 1977) resulted in six Master's dissertations and six other reports. Because comparison is not a major preoccupation of this line of study, Velho's approach is considered more "anthropological" than Palmeira's. One may note that O.Velho got his degree in Manchester and Palmeira in France.

An essential assumption implicit in these conclusions leads to my second point. My argument is that, throughout the development of academic anthropology in Brazil, despite all efforts to incorporate the Indian theme into the discipline, the Indian remained always the “other” which is “different.” This is in marked contrast to the situation with the Blacks, for instance. Unlike the Indians, the Blacks were seen as part and parcel of the national society, and the change of approach was from a biological concern with “whitening” the Blacks, to the realization that, though Brazil was a multi-racial society, it was not a multi-racial democracy. The result was the attempt to look at Blacks as one of the “oppressed” groups of the society.

With the Indians, the same did not occur, despite all efforts to forestall and prevent a repetition of the Blacks’ fate. The premise of homogeneity, which is one of the basic tenets of Brazilian nation-building, did not catch on in relation to the Indians. Because they could not be incorporated as part of a national “us,” they were excluded, having maintained the role of the “different other.” This fact is confirmed by simply looking at the titles of two books written by Florestan Fernandes and Roberto Cardoso: the first, *O Negro no Mundo dos Brancos* (The Black *in* the White Man’s World) implies the inclusion of Blacks in the totality of the nation; the second, *O Índio e o Mundo dos Brancos* (The Indian *and* the White Man’s World) excludes the Indian as an outsider of a nation defined by “us.”⁴⁵⁸ Interestingly enough, the first is considered “sociology,” and the second, “anthropology.”

D. The recovery of the Indian

This study has shown one line by which anthropology developed in Brazil, namely, the neglect of the Indian as an object of study, and its replacement by the national society including its peasantry and frontiers of expansion. An argument can be made at this point to the partiality of the account, since only some research was considered. It is enough to point to the works by Melatti, Laraia, and Ramos, for instance, who were also of the first group of Cardoso’s students, to attest to the fact that for many Indians remained the object of study.⁴⁵⁹ I should emphasize again that this study is not intended as an exhaustive picture of anthropological works in Brazil, but aims simply at showing some tendencies and processes in its development.

⁴⁵⁸ See also the recent *Os Índios e Nós* (The Indians *and* Us) by Anthony Seeger (Seeger, 1980).

⁴⁵⁹ See Melatti, 1970; Laraia, 1972; Ramos, 1972, for example. It is interesting to note that Melatti, Laraia and Ramos all taught at the beginning of the program at the Universidade de Brasília (founded in 1972), which partially explains the image, held by the students of the Museu Nacional, that Brasília is the place to study if one is interested in Indians.

The purpose of this last section is a simple one. I here propose that, despite the fact that the Indian is no longer considered by all anthropologists as the discipline's true and genuine object of analysis, the concern with Indians did not disappear. In fact, even anthropologists studying the national society and urban topics are called to speak on Indian issues. I argue that it is in their role as "intellectuals" that anthropologists are concerned with Indian populations. To make this point I will briefly consider the issue of Indian emancipation.

The issue of Indian emancipation erupted with a new policy put forward by the Brazilian government which, given the priorities of national economic progress, intended to accelerate the process of integration of indigenous populations into the national society. "We think that the idea of preserving the Indian population in its own habitat is beautiful but illusory," said the Interior Minister in 1974.⁴⁶⁰ Following several years of debate, in which intellectuals in general tried to argue that economic progress should not take priority over the survival of Indians, the Government gradually abandoned this line of reasoning and substituted for it in 1977 the defence of the Indian's right to receive benefits equal to those offered to the rest of the citizens. In the Brazilian Civil Code the Indian would no longer be considered in the same category as minors — the Indian would be "emancipated" from the tutelage of the State. According to the decree, the lands of emancipated communities would revert to the State and only eventually be given back with clauses guaranteeing inalienable jurisdiction over them. Several Pro-Indian Commissions were created at that time to fight the emancipation decree.

Anthropologists, clerics, lawyers, indianists, and engineers, united and proclaimed their opposition in the press.

What was the response of anthropologists? They denounced the decree by showing that the intention of the Government was to alienate the Indians of both their protective rights and their lands. However, they could not avoid being caught in an awkward situation: having always proposed that the Indians should be respected for their competence and rationality vis-à-vis other groups, they had to publicly defend the idea that the Indian would be better off under the protection of the State. They used case studies in an attempt to show that emancipation would worsen a situation which was already bad enough.⁴⁶¹

One example is Cardoso's assertion: "I argued twenty years ago that it would be utopian to treat Indian societies as sovereign nations and regretted that this should be so, for I consider that such a position would be morally correct."⁴⁶² Clerics also

⁴⁶⁰ Cit. in *Cultural Survival*, 1970:20.

⁴⁶¹ For the background and reactions of different anthropologists to the issues of emancipation, see *Cultural Survival's* Special Report on Brazil, 1979:19-42. For a general picture of the problem of Indians vis-à-vis national development, see Davis, 1977. (Davis' book is reviewed in Silverwood- Cope, 1978.)

⁴⁶² Cardoso de Oliveira, 1979.

raised their voices, comparing Indian emancipation with the abolition of slavery: "Following abolition, Blacks were thrown into the street without indemnity. If the Government cannot promote the majority of marginalized Brazilian to the level of the lower middle-class, imagine what it will do with the Indians."⁴⁶³

The point to stress here is that the Government's reasoning was directed towards the deeper feelings of nation-building: to the rights of all members of the nation to citizenship, to the ability of the Indians to decide their own future. It was based on a formal and abstract argument, which had a democratic and equalitarian society as the implicit model, and focused on the problem of integration of all sectors of the society on equal grounds, under the aegis of the State. One wonders, however, to what extent the issue of strata integration, the main point of the Government's discourse, obscured the more central problem of territoriality.

Anthropologists were aware of this aspect of the question. "Land is a source of value as well as a capital good. The State cannot overlook the fact that it is Indian territory and regarded by its inhabitants as a place of origin, a sacred burial place, a privileged symbol of tribal identity."⁴⁶⁴ But the appeal was for the State to recognize cultural values of different groups and disregard economic interests which would take the Indians off their lands. Cardoso recently proposed that "cultural pluralism" should guide indianist policy in Brazil. He tried to fight the formalist reasoning of the Government with a substantivist proposition which established that 1) different life-styles be recognized as legitimate as those educated Brazilians who direct the whole process of development; and 2) autonomy and tutelage be equal and non-contradictory principles of indianist policy.⁴⁶⁵ He thus addressed "strata integration" as the main problem of Indian emancipation.

From the viewpoint of the State, however, strata and territorial integration are equally important points in their nation-building policy. I suggest that here territorial integration has precedence over strata integration, and what anthropologists call "Indian land," the State considers "occupied national territory." The appeal to nation-building is done by means of strata integration, but strata integration conceals territoriality. If anthropologists do not become aware of this dichotomy, they will pay the price of becoming submerged in the dilemmas to which the formal reasoning of the Government forces them.⁴⁶⁶

⁴⁶³ Dom Tomas Balduino, president of the Missionary Indianist Council, cit. in *Cultural Survival*, 1979:23.

⁴⁶⁴ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1979.

⁴⁶⁵ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1979.

⁴⁶⁶ On the issue of Indian's land and territoriality, see Seeger and Viveiros de Castro, 1979.

I noted before that anthropologists in general became involved in the issue of Indian emancipation regardless of their own area of academic interest. This fact is partially explained by the link in the public mind between anthropology and Indians. Ideologically the relationship is clear — anthropologists study Indians —, even when the academic situation is actually different. Anthropologists are citizens of a particular country, and they are held responsible for the rights of the populations they study. As such, anthropologists in Brazil act as a sort of mediator between the State and the Indians, or as consultants to the State representing the interests of the Indians.

This is the case in many countries, but not in all. The peculiarity here is that Brazilian anthropologists studying Indians are looking at part of their own country's population. It is not the case of anthropologists going abroad and later returning to their countries of origin. The anthropologist in Brazil is part of an elite which defines itself as the "intellectual" group of the country.

An academic affiliation is not intrinsic to the definition of an "intellectual" in Brazil, but all academics are "intellectuals." Intrinsic to this definition is a critical approach to Brazilian society. In his role as such, the anthropologist meets the writer, the liberal professional, and the artist. "I am an intellectual, conscious of my people. And I am also an anthropologist" — the way Ribeiro defined himself — acquires full meaning in this context.

It might be that Ribeiro's example of the Da Vincian intellectual who is at the same time an anthropologist, an educator, a writer and a politician is giving way to the academic specialist. Although this may be true in terms of professional status, it is not equally valid for the role of the academic as citizen. The anthropologist in Brazil, like the writer, "contributes and takes part in a historical process of national explanation."⁴⁶⁷ This contrasts with the European intellectual, for instance, for whom the commitment to national issues is not so emphasized. In Brazil, there is a sense that, by writing, one is contributing to the building of the nation.⁴⁶⁸ The writer, as much as any other type of intellectual, is, by definition, an engaged citizen. Sooner or later he will have to take political positions, and sooner or later he will be considered "progressive" or "reactionary." It is to this intellectual that the Indian becomes a topic of moral concern. It is to the anthropologist, in this context, to reclaim the Indian as his responsibility, even when he has neglected him as the true object of study.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁷ Candido, 1964:18.

⁴⁶⁸ Candido, 1964:18.

⁴⁶⁹ It may happen that the issue of "Indian emancipation" begins to echo in anthropological studies in Brazil, exemplifying the mutual influence of the social sciences, on the one hand, and the context in which they develop, on the other. Despite the fact that the study of tribal societies and inter-ethnic relations represented less than 25% of anthropological research projects being developed in 1977 (cf. O.Velho, 1980), a renewed intellectual space for the study of Indians seems possible. See, for instance, Seeger, 1980a, 1980b. See also Aquino, 1977; E.Barros, 1977; Oliveira, 1977; Bastos, 1978; Viveiros de

Castro, 1977, for some of the recent M.A. dissertations on Indian groups. For an updated bibliography see Melatti, 1980.

CHAPTER FIVE

Carnival and Literature: Two Symbols of Nationhood

A fundamental stage in overcoming dependency is the ability to develop works influenced not by foreign models, but by previous national examples. This means the establishment of an internal causality, which makes the borrowing from other cultures more fruitful.

Candido, 1972:346

By looking at the intellectual development of a sociologist such as Florestan Fernandes,⁴⁷⁰ and then to the way Indians were taken and afterwards partially discarded as the “genuine” object of study in anthropology,⁴⁷¹ one may wonder whether — by taking “Brazil-the-nation” as the ultimate totality — the social sciences partially freed themselves from foreign influence in Brazil. This chapter, among other things, intends to show how intrinsic foreign theoretical influence is to a nationally defined object of study.

Two social scientists will be the focus of this study. The first, Roberto da Matta (b. 1936) is an anthropologist who began his studies with Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira in 1960, in the first course he taught at the Museu Nacional. Da Matta can thus be placed, in generational terms, between Cardoso and O. Velho of the last chapter. With the second, Antonio Candido (b.1918), we return to the generation of Florestan Fernandes and Darcy Ribeiro, and close our survey of Brazilian social scientists. Trained at the Universidade de São Paulo, Antonio Candido taught sociology for sixteen years until he shifted to his real interest, which is literary criticism.

In this chapter I want to show how both developed a special kind of anthropological perspective, in which a conception of cultural relativity is a basic assumption, but in which, nonetheless, the nation persists as the central object of reference. I also want to show how they have chosen the cultural or ideological level as key to understanding Brazilian social reality. In both, a sociological

⁴⁷⁰ See Chapter Three.

⁴⁷¹ See Chapter Four. For a recent compilation of studies being carried out on Indians in Brazil, by Brazilians and foreigners, see Seeger and Viveiros de Castro, 1977 and Melatti, 1980.

perspective of Durkheimian inspiration persists, whether in Da Matta's study of national rituals, or in Candido's disguised anthropological version of literary criticism. By looking at two generations, I will show how similar problems are faced at different moments, thus again providing a historical or processual perspective to the development of anthropology in Brazil. In Da Matta's case, I am going to pay special attention to his study of Brazilian carnival and, in Candido's, to the way he approached the study of literature.

A. Carnival and nationhood

In contrast with the majority of the social scientists discussed so far, Roberto da Matta opted early on for anthropology: "In 1958 I decided I would be a social or cultural anthropologist. I was a student of History ... but was not pleased with the way human problems were dealt with by 'history.'"⁴⁷² For him, what he discovered in anthropology made it "one of my strongest reasons for living."⁴⁷³ In Da Matta, thus, one finds a decisive commitment to a certain view of anthropology, which he decided to make explicit in a recent book entitled *Relativizando: Uma Introdução à Antropologia Social*.⁴⁷⁴

The basic assumption of the book is that anthropology is a discipline which is not based on a search for "rules" or "certainties," thus being far from the commonplace stereotype of what science is. Rather, it is by changing places and looking at the many different "truths" the same phenomena offer that anthropology meets its goal. By changing places, or changing perspectives, one is able to "relativize." The process of relativizing has thus an implicit assumption, namely, the existence of an "other," which is seen as being socially or morally equal to the "us," or the "civilized." Actually, if the anthropologist studies tribal societies, his purpose is really to learn from them. "It is precisely this genuine human experience that is recovered by anthropology."⁴⁷⁵ In other words, it is the intellectual apprehension of our humanity in the "other" that allows us to see the "other's" humanity in ourselves.

The book discusses the nature of anthropology in the framework of the sciences in general; it discusses the relationship between anthropology and history, showing how "our" concept of time is historical, others being of a different nature; and finally it considers the role of fieldwork in anthropology, ending with an account of the personal motivations, experience, and theoretical context of two pieces of field research he carried out among Brazilian Indian groups.

⁴⁷² Da Matta, 1980b:142-3.

⁴⁷³ Da Matta, 1980b: iv-v.

⁴⁷⁴ Da Matta, 1980b. In English: *Relativizing: An Introduction to Social Anthropology*.

⁴⁷⁵ Da Matta, 1980b:ii.

A theoretical and internal analysis of Da Matta's "statement of faith" would clearly show the influence of the concept of "culture" developed by American anthropology, of the French "universalistic" approach in which the "other" reflects the "us" and vice-versa, of a phenomenological perspective (à la Geertz), in which anthropology is not a science, but a way of "reading" other cultures and societies, and so on. Without denying this, my purpose in using Da Matta's book as a starting point to this chapter is different. I have three goals: first, to link some aspects of the book to the issues discussed in the last chapter; second to put the book in the perspective of Da Matta's studies; and third and finally, to show that, despite the foreign influence in his approach, Da Matta is continuing a tradition which has existed for a long time in Brazil. The last point will lead to a consideration of another one of his works, namely, his analysis of carnival.

Relativizando offers a sort of "anthropological worldview" rarely seen in a typical manual. Its style is direct and frank. Two of the essays are important here as they exemplify the issues of national ideology discussed above. The first essay refers to the "Fable of the Three Races" (White, Black and Indian) or, what I have previously called, "the myth of national identity."⁴⁷⁶ The second is the account of how fieldwork made him an anthropologist.⁴⁷⁷

The "Fable of the Three Races" is seen by Da Matta as that powerful cultural force which allows the country to ideally think of itself as an integrated and individualized culture. It is an old fable, and Da Matta traces it back to Independence, when it was vital for the national elite to search for an identity to justify, rationalize and legitimize internal differences. However, this in itself has to be explained, since the three races actually populated other areas as well, as in other South American countries, or in the United States, without giving rise to the same ideology. Da Matta suggests that the Portuguese had a great influence in this, due to the fact that in Portugal the political system always dominated the economic sphere. Although at the time of the discovery, Portugal had developed a mercantile economy, it nonetheless was controlled by laws and decrees which prevented the "economic" from becoming the dominant activity. In that society, ethnic minorities like the Moors and the Jews were dealt with under the ideal of an integrated society, despite the violence directed against them. Similarly, then, the fable of the three races in Brazil covers with an integrative mantle the rigid hierarchical society which exists underneath. This myth attained its polished form in the period between Independence and the Proclamation of the Republic,⁴⁷⁸ which means that

"for a long time the myth of the three races has been providing the basis for a political and social project, 'whitening' being the

⁴⁷⁶ See Chapter Two.

⁴⁷⁷ Respectively, Da Matta, 1980b:36-60 and 191-199.

⁴⁷⁸ I.e, from 1922 to 1889.

wished-for goal.⁴⁷⁹ It has allowed the common man, the educated man and the ideologist to conceive of a society highly divided by hierarchy as an integrated totality... and, finally, has endorsed a view of our society as something unique — a specificity which is presented by the harmonious encounter of the three ‘races.’”⁴⁸⁰

The argument is followed by a comparison between the Brazilian and the American experience. The Brazilian version is presented in terms of a metaphorical triangle in which the upper part is the White race, and the other two corners represented by the Black and the Indian; the American version of “all equal before the law” distinguishes Whites, Blacks and Indians in terms of the relative distance of each “race” from the universal system of laws. Da Matta also looks at the *mulato* in Brazil and in the United States and reminds us how, in the former case, prejudice assumes the form of a “mark prejudice” and, in the latter, of “origin prejudice.”⁴⁸¹

For the purpose of this study, Da Matta’s analysis presents one striking feature, and that is that when dealing with specific illustrative cases for his cross-society comparisons, it is on the Blacks that attention is focused. This is the case in the discussion of the role of the *mulato*, racial prejudice, and the “whitening” theory. Little is said of the Indian in the same or in equivalent situations, and when the Indian does come to the fore, the treatment lacks the strength and vitality Da Matta offers to the subject of the Blacks. More often than not, the Indian only appears in the holist context in which the general ideology is discussed, or in the picture of the Fable as a specific global “myth.” Although this fact does not impoverish the argument,⁴⁸² it is significant if it is contrasted with the second essay mentioned above, on the making of the anthropologist through fieldwork. Because here, the Indian reappears in full light.

The researches Da Matta describes are, respectively, among the Gaviões Indians,⁴⁸³ and the Apinayé.⁴⁸⁴ Since the larger projects of which they were part have already been discussed (namely, the investigation of Areas of Inter-Ethnic Friction in Brazil and the Harvard Central Brazil Project), I want only to mention

⁴⁷⁹ See Chapter Two.

⁴⁸⁰ Da Matta, 1980b:46.

⁴⁸¹ Cf. the classical article by Nogueira, 1954. In the American system there is no color gradation. All “non-Whites” are “Blacks.” In the Brazilian system, “race” is neither dichotomous nor an exclusive element in social classification.

⁴⁸² Interestingly enough, like many Brazilian social scientists, Da Matta ends the essay with a wishful hope that when the ideology is known, then “the way lies open for the modification of social understanding” (Da Matta, 1980b:60).

⁴⁸³ Laraia and Da Matta, 1967.

⁴⁸⁴ Da Matta, 1976a.

that in the first study Da Matta's interest was focused on the relationship between the local population and the Indians, and in the second, he looked at the social organization of the Apinayé, as contrasted with other Gê tribes. I will return to these studies below.

Here the point to ask is: What is Da Matta's purpose in dealing with fieldwork in the book? First, he wants to show that it is fieldwork which allows the anthropologist to see and understand a different social system in its working totality and to discover the logic and the dignity which is intrinsic to different forms of social life. "To accomplish this task, or to get close to it, the ethnologist travels and does his fieldwork. Because it is there that he can experience, without intermediation, human diversity is its essence and dilemmas, problems and paradoxes."⁴⁸⁵ In other words, it is in the process of doing fieldwork that the anthropologist learns how to "relativize."

Second, how does he do this? By studying the different, the exotic, the strange, the "other." And here again we come to the issues discussed in the last two chapters,⁴⁸⁶ namely, the conceptualization of the Black and the Indian, one as part of the "us," the other as the "other," or, the Black as the "oppressed other" and the Indian as the "different other." In this analysis Da Matta confirms the suggestions made above. The overall ideological framework is so powerful and so deeply rooted that even Da Matta himself implicitly shows that Blacks and Indians are differently conceptualized in the discourse of anthropology as much as in the discourse of nationhood: Blacks are part of the nation, and one wishes for their integration; Indians are excluded from it and the ultimate goal here is intellectual⁴⁸⁷ — the Indian should be known and respected in his uniqueness. Furthermore, after the Apinayé research, Da Matta turned to the study of Brazilian national society, and the research involved in those studies *is not* included in his chapter on the anthropological learning process. This raises a new series of questions.

These questions lead to my second goal in dealing with Da Matta's work. Here the basic question to be answered can be put thus: why, even when a social scientist in Brazil defines himself exclusively as an anthropologist, does a similar pattern still emerge in which the study of the "other" inevitably leads to a focus on the national society? Is Florestan Fernandes' model to be repeated over and over again? Does anthropological research necessarily have to be done with the "exotic" and the "different?"

To reach an appropriate answer, one should look closely at the topics of study Da Matta has dealt with up until now in his career. We can discern three different

⁴⁸⁵ Da Matta, 1980b:120.

⁴⁸⁶ See Chapter Three and Four.

⁴⁸⁷ See Ramos, A. 1977 for a criticism of Da Matta's position and Da Matta's answer in Da Matta, 1980b.

subjects: first, under the influence of Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira, inter-ethnic friction was the main topic of interest; second, as a Harvard student, the social structure of the Apinayé Indians, one of the Central Brazilian Gê tribes; and finally, the study of different aspects of the national society, in terms of such topics as national rituals.⁴⁸⁸

Under Cardoso, Da Matta's study of the Gaviões focused on the contact between Indian groups with different expansion frontiers.⁴⁸⁹ The Gaviões, a Gê tribe, was compared to the Asurini,⁴⁹⁰ one of the last Tupi groups in Brazilian territory, both living at the Tocantins River and contacted by nut-collectors.

When studied by Da Matta in 1962, the Gaviões had been severely depopulated by their contact with the Whites six or seven years earlier. The fact that the group numbered only forty-one, plus the language barrier, made it difficult for Da Matta to get the Indian's interpretation of contact. However, through preliminary historical research⁴⁹¹ and four months of fieldwork, Da Matta was able to examine the stereotypes of the Indians held by regional populations and to show how the Indians used this negative stereotype to their own advantage.⁴⁹²

A different approach was used in the Apinayé research. Here the overall purpose of the Harvard Central Brazil, as mentioned before, was to explain the anomaly, found among the Gê, of highly complex social systems combined with rudimentary technology. The Apinayé were considered particularly "anomalous," since their prescriptive marriage system was based on four matrimonial groups formed by parallel descent.

The Apinayé had been in contact with the national society since the 18th century and, unlike the Gaviões, presented a double face to the outside world, the anthropologist included. An Apinayé could be submissive in front of a foreigner and, immediately after, reveal himself to be an authoritarian leader among others of his group. Da Matta's task was to "enter" the Apinayé social system.

In the twelve months of fieldwork, Da Matta wanted to discover three basic things: 1) the principles of the Apinayé social system (whether or not it was based on four matrimonial groups); 2) the extent to which the Apinayé differed from other Gê groups; 3) the way in which kinship and social organization were related

⁴⁸⁸ See Da Matta, 1963 and Laraia and Da Matta, 1967 for the first topic; Da Matta, 1970 and 1976a for the second; and Da Matta, 1973, 1979a, 1980a for the third.

⁴⁸⁹ Cardoso de Oliveira, 1962.

⁴⁹⁰ Laraia and Da Matta, 1967.

⁴⁹¹ All members of the project were required to carry out historical research on their respective groups.

⁴⁹² The Gaviões "pretended" wildness, savagery, brutality, and thus remained in the lands which legally no longer belonged to the group. Laraia and Da Matta, 1967.

to such things as mythology, political structure, and ritual.⁴⁹³ The end result was a dismissal of the “anomaly” of the Apinayé. Da Matta found neither the four matrimonial groups nor the parallel descent of which Nimuendaju had spoken. What he did find was a society based on ceremonial moities, with a kinship system of the Crow-Omaha type. This system, nonetheless, was not linked to any matri- or patrilineal lineage.⁴⁹⁴

I want here, in dealing with Da Matta’s Indian field research, to examine the locus of the idea of a social “totality.” To look at social systems as integrated wholes is, for Da Matta, the ultimate purpose of an anthropological perspective: “All that allows us to take any society, in any part of the globe, with any kind of technology, as a coherent whole of voices, gestures, reflexions, articulations and values.”⁴⁹⁵ He concludes: “It is the discovery of this internal coherence which makes life worth while for all, giving it the meaning which fieldwork, especially in another society, enables us to discover, to distinguish and, with a bit of luck, to theorize about.”⁴⁹⁶ In Da Matta’s various topics of research, it can be seen that the “totality” shifts from the situation of contact between Indians and Whites, to the tribal society itself, and recently, back to his own society.

Three familiar points must be re-made in Da Matta’s case: first, a doctoral dissertation, implying the strongest academic commitment to anthropology, is regarded by the student as a special moment in his intellectual development. At this moment the rules of academic work take priority over his own or eventual interests.⁴⁹⁷ Second, the doctoral dissertation generally leads the student to the analysis of the “other” in holistic terms. With research on Indians, Da Matta learned “to pursue relationships and relativizations.”⁴⁹⁸ And third, a return to the topics generated within the national society often occurs. For Da Matta, it was the vision of anthropology acquired with the Indians which, some years later, led him “irresistibly to study my own society.”⁴⁹⁹

When the movement is completed, namely, when the national society comes to the fore as a topic of analysis, a new cycle begins. Frequently, the pattern is to go from particularities such as a ritual, an expanding frontier, or race relations

⁴⁹³ Da Matta, 1976a, 1980b: 195-6.

⁴⁹⁴ Da Matta, 1976a:26-7.

⁴⁹⁵ Da Matta, 1980b:116.

⁴⁹⁶ Da Matta, 1980b:116.

⁴⁹⁷ See Chapter Three for Fernandes and Chapter Four for Cardoso de Oliveira.

⁴⁹⁸ Da Matta, 1980b:199. For anthropologists who were contemporaries of Da Matta and who also wrote their dissertations on Indian groups from a holistic viewpoint, see Melatti, 1970; Laraia, 1972; Ramos, 1972.

⁴⁹⁹ Da Matta, 1980b:199.

between Blacks and Whites,⁵⁰⁰ to the nation taken as a totality. Da Matta's work shows this pattern very clearly. Having left aside the study of Indian groups, he decided to look at carnival as a national ritual. From it, he became interested in the principles behind the notions of "individual" and "person" in Brazil, thus intending, in his own words, to make a contribution to the persistent quest for the knowledge of "what makes Brazil, Brazil."⁵⁰¹ The relative uneasiness which Da Matta felt on publishing his Ph.D. dissertation on the Apinayé is seen in the Introduction to the Portuguese edition: "Were this study about Brazilian economics, politics or history, no explanation would be necessary, since few doubt the relevance of that kind of study. But when it applies to other systems, to *Indians*, it seems logic to ask: for what purpose? What does it help to solve?"⁵⁰²

In 1976 one still had to explain an interest in the study of the "other" as "different." It is important to mention here that Da Matta's studies developed in the context of the Museu Nacional, where, by contrast, others were interested in the 1970's in the peasantry,⁵⁰³ while still others had chosen urban topics as object of study.⁵⁰⁴

Carnival is the final topic in Da Matta's work which will be examined in light of the national ideology. The book in which Da Matta develops his ideas⁵⁰⁵ focuses on the relationship between hierarchy and equality in Brazil through the concepts of the "individual" and the "person." He argues, following Dumont, that the notion of the "individual" is a Western conception of the abstract entity which is the center and focus of an egalitarian social universe. The "person,"⁵⁰⁶ on the other hand, forms part of an ideology in which complementarity and not equality is the major emphasis.⁵⁰⁷

⁵⁰⁰ See examples of Da Matta, O. Velho, and Fernandes, respectively. My own Master research was guided by a desire to find an isolated fishermen village in the Northeast of Brazil (Peirano, 1975).

⁵⁰¹ Da Matta, 1979a:14.

⁵⁰² Da Matta, 1976a:7.

⁵⁰³ See Chapter Four above. There has been a recent revival of interest on Indians at the Museu Nacional, partially triggered by the issue of "Indian emancipation." The work of Anthony Seeger (Seeger, 1980a) can be mentioned in relation to Indians, and that of Otávio Velho and Moacir Palmeira in relation to peasants (cf. Chapter Four).

⁵⁰⁴ As, for instance, the work of Gilberto Velho (G. Velho, 1973).

⁵⁰⁵ Da Matta, 1979a.

⁵⁰⁶ Da Matta gets his inspiration from Mauss, cf. Da Matta, 1979a:174.

⁵⁰⁷ In Brazil one finds complex relations between the "modern" ideology, egalitarian and individualistic, and the rules of social morality, which are better seen as hierarchical, complementary and holistic. The "person" deserves solidarity with others and differential treatment, while the "individual" is the subject of the law. As the Brazilian dictum says: "For my friends, all; for my enemies, the law." Da Matta, 1979a: 20.

The dialectical relationship between the “individual” and the “person” in Brazil underlies Da Matta’s entire project. He chose carnival as the empirical object in order to show how, in a society which defines time in historical terms, rituals make explicit certain frozen deep aspects which are considered part of a society’s “eternal” ideals.⁵⁰⁸

In the book, Carnival is contrasted with Independence Day. Da Matta shows the structural dichotomies which underlie both rituals: carnival as a Christian festivity held by the “civil” society, in which costumes help to uphold daily routines, and, on the other hand, Independence Day as an “historical” ritual in which the State organizes a parade of weapons and men in uniforms. On Independence Day, hierarchy is reinforced, whereas Carnival emphasizes the dissolution of roles and status. From there Da Matta goes on to clarify the elements (special situations, social groups, and attitudes) which are constantly manipulated in carnival, through mechanisms of inversion.⁵⁰⁹

Carnival in Brazil is then contrasted with Carnival in New Orleans,⁵¹⁰ to show how an hierarchical society, namely Brazil, develops a ritual which is predominantly egalitarian, whereas an egalitarian society, the United States, promotes an aristocratic and exclusive festival.

From Carnival Da Matta looks at the verbal expression “Do you know who you are talking to?” as a hierarchical ritual of social relations in which “individuals” transform themselves into “persons,” and at the American opposite “Who do you think you are?” The first ritual is the expression of a hierarchical society in which the user puts himself in a superior position through authoritarian means. The American phrase is, on the contrary, an egalitarian ritual, in that the user does not accept the hierarchy which is implied in the relationship.

Finally, Da Matta looks at two social types, Pedro Malasartes and Augusto Matraga, the first the hero of a popular story and the second the central character of a novel by a renowned Brazilian writer.⁵¹¹ The basic features of individualism and personhood are discussed in relation to the Brazilian “heroes” and Da Matta outlines an “anthropology of literature.”⁵¹² In sum, the book covers topics from national ritual to social types to colloquial expressions seen as verbal rituals. Da Matta suggests that Brazil falls neither under the model of an individualistic capitalist society nor under that of a hierarchical society, as would be the case

⁵⁰⁸ Da Matta, 1979a:24.

⁵⁰⁹ Da Matta, 1979a:67-118.

⁵¹⁰ Da Matta, 1979a:119-138.

⁵¹¹ Cf. “A Hora e a Vez de Augusto Matraga” by João Guimarães Rosa.

⁵¹² Da Matta, 1979a:237-244.

with India: “The suggestion is that Brazil stands in the middle: in between hierarchy and egalitarianism; in between individualism and the personal moral codes.”⁵¹³ He adds: “In fact, my suggestion is that both systems coexist in a relation of reflexivity.”⁵¹⁴

Da Matta sums up his basic question as that of “how capitalism develops in confrontation with different cultural values” and argues that the system which emphasizes universalism will be permeated by personal relations in many places, Brazil being one and Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Greece being others. In these places, personal relationships are permanent structural features and not merely survivals of a past that will disappear with modernization.⁵¹⁵

What are the peculiarities of the book, given the purposes of this investigation?

In general terms, we have here a study which places the “totality” at the ideological level. What interests Da Matta is the way Brazilians see themselves in social relationships, and whether hierarchical situations confront egalitarianism “modern” principles. Louis Dumont is clearly the theoretical inspiration throughout the book⁵¹⁶ and “universalistic” understanding the ultimate goal of anthropology. Da Matta’s purpose in *Carnavais* is, in his own words, “to make a contribution to a *universal* system of translation for all human systems.”⁵¹⁷ Given that hierarchy and egalitarianism are two universal principles found in every society, Da Matta looks at Brazilian rituals to show how the two principles are combined there.

Brazil is thus the unit of analysis. But what, for Da Matta, is the basic characteristic of this totality? For him, Brazil is a “complex society.”⁵¹⁸ His analysis of carnival attempts to elucidate the role and meaning of rituals in the context of a “complex society.” But, again, what is a “complex society?” Da Matta is not explicit on this but, given the anthropological framework adopted, the notion of “complex society” immediately suggests a contrast with “simple” or “tribal” society. This is confirmed by his emphasis on studying ritual as a crystalized and *a-historical* form of behavior in a *historical* society. Although he talks about the national, the regional, and the local levels, even to the point of classifying rituals according to the level at which they are oriented,⁵¹⁹ he does not go to the heart of the question

⁵¹³ Da Matta, 1979a:191.

⁵¹⁴ Da Matta, 1979a:192.

⁵¹⁵ Da Matta, 1979a:192.

⁵¹⁶ See Merquior, 1979 for a critique of Dumont's influence on Da Matta.

⁵¹⁷ Da Matta, 1979a:17; my emphasis.

⁵¹⁸ Da Matta, 1979a:41.

⁵¹⁹ Da Matta, 1979a:36.

by considering the peculiar “historicity” of Brazilian society and its formation as a nation-state. It is only in a short passage entitled “The Individual, the Person and Brazilian Society”⁵²⁰ that the social classification of groups within the national society receives attention. What are the consequences of this approach to Brazil as a “complex society?”

First of all, Da Matta contrasts with social scientists of previous generations, and of his generation as well, in that his approach, even if it takes Brazil as the unit of analysis, is not cast in Marxist terms.⁵²¹ Dependency, social classes, class struggle, and imperialism are not concepts found in his analysis.

Second, there is the element of a-historicity in his analysis which, if it does not invalidate, it does preclude him from confronting some important aspects of his topic.⁵²² Out of fear of falling into a historical account of carnival and Independence Day, Da Matta skips another level of historicity which, from my point of view, could have been included.

Put very simply, there are some occasions when Brazil comes together as a totality and as a communion of interests and expectations. Those are the occasions when “the country stops.” It stops at carnival, it stops during soccer championships, it stops during some religious holidays. On these occasions it is impossible to overlook the fact that something special is happening in the whole country, including even its most remote parts. During these periods one also finds a tendency for social differences — what Da Matta calls the hierarchical relations of Brazilian society — to dissolve in *communitas*.⁵²³ These are exactly Da Matta’s topics of study — carnival, religious processions, soccer, umbanda, etc. My point here is that Da Matta’s interpretation of those phenomena as “rituals of a complex society” obscures their importance as *rituals of nationhood enactment*. It is exactly at those ritual moments that Brazil pulse as an ideal nation-state, and it is exactly at those moments that the idealized egalitarianism of true citizenship is emphasized. It is a “play” Brazilians engage in, and in this play they come together and act as true equals. National feelings come to the fore and unite all members of the society. So, the study of nation-states as “complex societies” and with the concepts of “communitas” and “structure” (which were developed through the study of tribal societies) ignores some characteristics of the nation-state. It is as if anthropologists — who among the social scientists are most concerned with the bias commonly found in looking at different societies through the eyes of the most “developed” ones — here fall prey to the opposite error. This

⁵²⁰ Da Matta, 1979a:180-5.

⁵²¹ Cf. Fernandes, Ribeiro, O. Velho. See Chapters Three and Four.

⁵²² See Schwartzman, 1979b for questions on the role of social change in Da Matta’s perspective. Da Matta’s answer is in Da Matta, 1980a.

⁵²³ Da Matta, 1973:121-168. Here Da Matta follows Victor Turner in the use of the concepts *communitas* and *structure*.

error consists of looking at their own societies as operating on principles that guide “simple” societies, and thus losing sight of the variable structures implicit in different social formations.⁵²⁴

In my own view, in looking at carnival, Da Matta is looking at nation-building rituals, or at the symbols of nationhood.⁵²⁵ More than that, he is looking at the symbols which are actually effective, in contrast with “formal” symbols which fail to produce integration and participation in the totality of the nation. Da Matta thus contrasts “permanent” features of Brazilian society such as carnival, soccer, and samba schools, with “temporary” institutions such as the Constitution, political parties, the legal code, and the market,⁵²⁶ which are traditionally seen as the marks of Western nation-states. Ignoring this point prevents a full understanding of the implications of studying carnival as a ritual in Brazil, as well as prevents one from looking at the “historicity” of these “a-historical” rituals.

The question is not necessarily “What is the history of carnival in Brazil?”, a question which Da Matta has dismissed in the past, but rather “What preceded carnival in its role as a national symbol?” I propose that an analysis of the whole configuration of Brazilian ideology is necessary and that one should ask what phenomenon previously played carnival’s role in the definition of nationhood. As pointed out in Chapter Two, nationhood in the first half of the century was primarily defined by an educated elite which looked to literature as the yardstick of national development. Good nationally inspired writing meant the attainment of a country’s intellectual independence. If this is true, Roberto da Matta is now focusing the measure of internal integration “down” on popular topics and showing how they provide the necessary mechanisms for a nation to think of itself as a totality. I am thus suggesting that both literature, as a topic of study during the fifties and sixties, and carnival and samba schools, themes during the seventies are related to the question of national self-definition. An interesting question is whether this is a reflection of a new social integration, or only of fads in intellectual interest. I believe that the ideals of nationhood changed over time and, with them, the topics to which social scientists addressed themselves. From this perspective, I also suggest that there is a relationship between Roberto Da Matta’s work and that of previous social scientists, such as the historian Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda (b. 1902), interested in the “roots of Brazil” and the basic personality of the Brazilian,⁵²⁷ and, especially, of Antonio Candido (b. 1918), who studied literature in much the same way as would an anthropologist. Roberto Da Matta is thus the heir of a line of thought which, although not called anthropology, is not too different from the discipline of today. It is also

⁵²⁴ The same problem can be found in Sahlins, 1976.

⁵²⁵ Accordingly, one can see the inadequacy of a characterization of this kind of study as “urban anthropology”.

⁵²⁶ Da Matta, 1980a.

⁵²⁷ Buarque de Hollanda, 1955.

noteworthy that the above-mentioned authors share a “universalistic” perspective which focuses on the ideological level and takes Brazil-the nation as the larger unit of analysis. As Roberto Da Matta today studies carnival, Antonio Candido looked at literature; as Dumont is Da Matta’s inspiration, Durkheim was Candido’s greatest influence; and as Da Matta proposes an “anthropology of literature,” Candido defined himself as a literary critic. At different moments, there are different formulations but beneath them lie similar preoccupations.

Antonio Candido’s work will now be examined so that the development of anthropology and its relationship to nation-building may become clearer.

B. Antonio Candido, the hidden anthropologist

For sixteen years (1942-1958) Antonio Candido taught sociology at the Universidade de São Paulo, after having been educated there himself. He found sociology, however, to be totally uninspiring, and especially American sociology. “I found sociology, the social surveys, the urban researches, statistics, all that absolutely boring.” No less boring were the courses he taught: “I taught the courses without great enthusiasm. I repeated the same vocabulary over and over again, since they were introductory courses. Always method, social classes, social groups, etc.”⁵²⁸ Since his father was a medical doctor and had wanted him to follow the same career, it took Candido a long time to overcome his guilty conscience: “I always had a masochistic inclination not to teach what I knew and to teach what I did not know well and what I did not like.”⁵²⁹ What he really liked was literature and literary criticism. It took him sixteen years to decide to leave the Department of Sociology, during which time he also worked on literary criticism for newspapers, and in his leisure hours, on a book on Brazilian literature.⁵³⁰ During those sixteen years he also wrote his doctoral dissertation, *Os Parceiros do Rio Bonito*,⁵³¹ which is now considered a classic in the social sciences.

Literature and sociology were thus intermingled for Antonio Candido during most of his life, until he left the Universidade de São Paulo. This happened when, after defending his doctorate, the Faculty promoted him from assistant to full professor. He then decided that, although he could teach sociology, he was not a sociologist.⁵³² He was more interested in the qualitative aspects of social life and

⁵²⁸ Candido, interview.

⁵²⁹ Candido, interview.

⁵³⁰ Candido, 1964.

⁵³¹ Candido, 1975a.

⁵³² Candido, interview.

believed that this could be better understood through immersion in single cases: “I wanted to recover the poetic base of social life and I believed more in intuitions than in formal methods.”⁵³³

One may now ask: How did it happen that as fellow students, colleagues and friends, Fernandes and Candido had such diverse interests? Not only were Fernandes and Candido contemporaries at the Universidade de São Paulo as students, but they also taught in the same Department, in the two chairs of sociology, and conceived much of the structure of the Department together. Their youth was spent together, and in long conversations they discussed intellectual matters, political commitments, and institutional plans. References to each other’s work is often found in their writings, although great admiration did not prevent small disagreements from appearing.⁵³⁴ Candido says that what binds them is not a superficial friendship: “We don’t like each other, we love each other.”⁵³⁵ Within this mutual appreciation, they allow each other their differences and follow different paths in response to similar problems. “Our ideals are common, we both have socialist viewpoints. But I am skeptical and Florestan is a believer; I am prone to gradual transformations through daily struggles, Florestan wants revolutionary solutions.”⁵³⁶ Candido continues: “We are two diametrically opposed personalities; but two affectivities totally identified.” They shared the intellectual goal of wanting to overcome the static functionalist view of society: “I solved the problem my way, by writing about literature, and looking at how social life relates to aesthetic manifestations. Florestan achieved his goal by dealing with development, social classes, Latin America.”⁵³⁷ Of the two, he believes Fernandes, rather than he, will be historically vindicated. The “scientistic” bias of the generation of the fifties does not escape Candido: “Florestan is the greatest model of a social scientist I know. Florestan exhausts whatever he chooses to work on.”⁵³⁸ On the other hand, Candido sees himself as having a vocation closer to that of the essayist: “That means to try, to repeat, to reach a conclusion as soon as some coherence is shown in the data.”⁵³⁹ Although he is uncontested as a leading intellectual figure in Brazil, he suspects he is seen in the Department of Sociology at the USP as “a bucolic type of anthropological essayist.”⁵⁴⁰

⁵³³ Candido, interview.

⁵³⁴ See Fernandes, 1978a and the preface written by Candido for the same book.

⁵³⁵ Candido, interview.

⁵³⁶ Candido, interview.

⁵³⁷ Candido, interview.

⁵³⁸ Candido, interview.

⁵³⁹ Candido, interview.

⁵⁴⁰ Candido, interview.

The contrast between Fernandes and Candido shows that the same institution, in the same moment, may give rise to completely different lines of thought. Personality and biographical traits, of course, have to be taken into consideration;⁵⁴¹ however my point here is to show that different perspectives were present in the same moment at the Universidade de São Paulo, and that students of various intellectual combinations could arise from the elements provided by the professors. I now turn to the intellectual inspiration Candido received at the Universidade de São Paulo.

For Candido, the canon of the USP was a Durkheimian view of society, to which a “flexible Marxism” was added,⁵⁴² plus some readings of Boas’ and Lowie’ anthropology.⁵⁴³ Roger Bastide was the Durkheimian sociologist par excellence, and had a great influence on Candido and others of his generation. Another important factor in his education was philosophy. Philosophy had been practically nonexistent in the curriculum up until then; when it was first introduced, its purpose was not to train philosophers so much as to create an atmosphere which would foster the critical spirit and reflection on social and cultural issues.⁵⁴⁴

The pluralism that dominated the USP at that point led some students to attempt to define a line which would be considered exclusively “sociological;”⁵⁴⁵ others dedicated themselves to anthropology which at this time was dominated by the German perspective of Egon Schaden and Herbert Baldus; and still others tried to “apply sociology to other areas: art criticism, literature, theater, painting.”⁵⁴⁶ All this was done with the blessings of Roger Bastide, the French sociologist who lived in Brazil from 1934 to 1954. In his view the social scientist should “boom reality from several angles, each one according to taste, intuition, vocation and chosen area.”⁵⁴⁷ Later, says Candido, the teaching of philosophy and sociology became specialized, as was “inevitable and appropriate.”⁵⁴⁸ His generation, however, formed a bridge between the auto-didacticism of the previous period, and the specialization that marked the next decades. They kept the curiosity, the

⁵⁴¹ This includes, for example, the “traditional” background of Candido’s family versus the lower class origin of Fernandes.

⁵⁴² Jean Maugué was the most important figure in Candido’s time.

⁵⁴³ Boas and Lowie had been introduced by Lévi-Strauss. Candido, interview.

⁵⁴⁴ Candido, 1978:14.

⁵⁴⁵ For example, Fernandes.

⁵⁴⁶ Candido’s “group” was composed of Paulo Emilio Salles Gomes (cinema), Décio Almeida Prado (theater), Rui Coelho (literature and personality), and Gilda Mello e Souza (literature).

⁵⁴⁷ Candido, interview.

⁵⁴⁸ Candido, 1978:15.

dilettantism, and the humanistic essayistic approach so prevalent in Brazilian intellectual life.⁵⁴⁹

Os Parceiros do Rio Bonito,⁵⁵⁰ Candido's doctoral dissertation, is an example of the situation in which he found himself. The collection of the material to be used in the book started in 1947, although the book was not finished until 1954. During this time, as mentioned above, he was also writing *A Formação da Literatura Brasileira*.⁵⁵¹ "I was writing *Os Parceiros* with one hand, and *A Formação* with the other."⁵⁵²

Os Parceiros was originally planned as a study of a popular poetic form, the *cururu*, which is sung and danced in the interior of São Paulo. The *cururu* is sung by two individuals who challenge each other to follow the preceeding rhyme. The themes vary but the *cururu* generally follows a constant rhyming pattern. Candido wanted to show how the *cururu* had changed over time. The traditional *cururu* had a simple structure, limited aesthetic resource, a collective form of invention, and an obedience to certain religious norms. By contrast, the present *cururu* displayed increased individualism and secularization, with the social choreographical element giving way to strictly personal confrontations.⁵⁵³ Candido planned to show how urbanization led progressively to individualization.

The end product was quite different. *Os Parceiros do Rio Bonito* is a beautifully written study of the transformations of the life style of the rural lower classes of the interior of São Paulo, known as the *caipiras*. In the book, Candido adopts an approach which he describes as a compromise between sociology and anthropology; as a sociologist he sought out historical and statistical data and as an anthropologist, he went to the field to collect material from informants in a "relative homogenous society."⁵⁵⁴

Candido's overall purpose was to look at social change. He first set out the traditional *caipira* life style through historical sources from the 18th century on, looking primarily at the economy, food habits, housing conditions and forms of solidarity. He followed this description by presenting the contemporary situation in terms of work relations and food habits. These pictures of the past and of the present set the stage for the analysis of change, which Candido saw in terms of "persistences" and "alterations."⁵⁵⁵ In his view, social equilibrium presupposed

⁵⁴⁹ Candido, interview.

⁵⁵⁰ Candido, 1975a.

⁵⁵¹ Candido, 1964.

⁵⁵² Candido, interview.

⁵⁵³ Candido, 1975a:9.

⁵⁵⁴ Candido, 1975a:17-8.

⁵⁵⁵ Candido, 1975a:163.

these two aspects, and he examined the social relation and mental representations which changed over time. His major point was to show that “urbanization is not a simple and unique process of evolution”⁵⁵⁶ and, in fact, that traditional cultural aspects of the community he studied played a regulatory role in the process of change. “The situation I studied was not characterized by a mechanical substitution of old patterns, but one of redefinition of traditional ways in their adjustment to the new social context.”⁵⁵⁷ However, in the urban environment of the fifties, the *caipira* could not maintain a dignified style of life. “Today the *caipira* does not live in a precarious equilibrium, according to the immediate available resources and to the type of sociability proper of segregated groups. In face of the modern technological resources, he lives in plain economic disequilibrium.”⁵⁵⁸ The recent development in São Paulo of an economy based on the exportation of tropical goods emphasized the economic differential between the rural and urban populations, and produced “strong class and cultural distinctions.”⁵⁵⁹ An appeal to planners to take into account cultural variables closes the book.

Os Parceiros do Rio Bonito was Candido’s dissertation, approved in 1954 for a degree in Sociology. It is interesting to note that Roger Bastide, who was Candido’s advisor, felt uncomfortable about giving Candido the highest mark for the dissertation. Despite the Durkheimian and anthropological perspectives which characterized his own work and teaching, Bastide felt that *Os Parceiros do Rio Bonito* fell short because it was not pure sociology. It is a fact that Malinowski, Firth, Audrey Richards, and Redfield were some of the theoretical sources of Candido’s work, together with what Candido considered his Marxist perspective, namely, that subsistence activities are basically social activities.⁵⁶⁰ Two other factors, however, must be taken into account: first, that at this time Fernandes was already in the process of intellectually and institutionally defining what sociology in Brazil should be, and was collaborating with Bastide himself in the study on race relations.⁵⁶¹ Fernandes was coming out so forcefully in defense of a theoretically defined sociology that *Os Parceiros* might have actually appeared as more descriptive than analytical. The book has been “rediscovered” in recent years, and interpreted in many different ways,⁵⁶² a fact which surprises Candido, for whom “the book is so easy to read, so simple, that perhaps it lacks that

⁵⁵⁶ Candido, 1975a:200.

⁵⁵⁷ Candido, 1975a:200.

⁵⁵⁸ Candido, 1975a:223.

⁵⁵⁹ Candido, 1975a:223.

⁵⁶⁰ Candido, 1975a:24.

⁵⁶¹ See Chapter Three.

⁵⁶² See Pereira de Queiroz, 1976; Candido, 1975c:46.

minimum of complication which gives academic works dignity...”⁵⁶³ The subtle irony of this statement is confirmed when he adds that “perhaps to be too clear in academic life is counterproductive.”⁵⁶⁴

Secondly, it should be remembered that *Os Parceiros* did not follow Candido’s original plan. He decided not to write a dissertation on the *cururu* after the realization that he would need musical training in order to understand the phenomenon completely. Since he had taken all his notes by hand — there was no tape recorder at the time —, he could only analyze the verbal part of the *cururu*. As it is now, *Os Parceiros do Rio Bonito* is the expanded and analyzed version of the thirty pages with which Candido had planned to introduce the study of the *cururu*.⁵⁶⁵

How much did this bother Candido? Not very much, he says. There was after all the compensation of having written a book on the “oppressed” people of the interior⁵⁶⁶ and of having been faithful to his socialist viewpoints. His interest in the conditions of social inequality contributed towards a change in the prevailing mode, where the main objects of sociological analysis were the dominant classes.⁵⁶⁷ When today’s critics focus on the “aristocratic” intellectual roots of his work,⁵⁶⁸ he considers them unfair in that they fail to take account of the historical context in which he and his generation worked.⁵⁶⁹

These facts of Antonio Candido’s life raise some questions: why did he decide to pursue a doctorate in sociology when he actually disliked the subject? What led him to dedicate himself to the study of literature with such a guilty conscience? Why did he not consider studying anthropology, especially when anthropology stressed the qualitative elements of social life which had such an appeal for him?

One first has to consider two opposing tendencies at the Universidade de São Paulo during the late forties and fifties. First is the above-mentioned pluralism of professors such as Roger Bastide. As Candido puts it: “In the chair of sociology we tended very much towards anthropology, since Durkheim and the study of primitive peoples were quite alive in our basic education.”⁵⁷⁰ The same ideas were

⁵⁶³ Candido, interview.

⁵⁶⁴ Candido, interview.

⁵⁶⁵ Candido, interview.

⁵⁶⁶ Candido, interview.

⁵⁶⁷ For instance, Gilberto Freyre's and Oliveira Viana's studies. Candido, interview.

⁵⁶⁸ See Bosi, 1978.

⁵⁶⁹ Candido, interview.

⁵⁷⁰ Candido, interview.

absorbed differently by him and Fernandes, with Fernandes being able to see anthropology from a sociological perspective. “But not me. I did not even want to. I used to bring anthropology together with the study of the philosophical, the aesthetical, the literary.” He adds: “I believed strongly in my intuitions.”⁵⁷¹ Yet, to this overall pluralism and eclecticism, the need to distinguish between different disciplines was beginning to be seen as a necessity. Candido again recalls that at the time they held long debates on whether one piece of work was sociology or anthropology; pure cinema or theatrical cinema; sociology or literary account, etc. The “desirable and appropriate” moment for definitions had arrived. On the other hand, it should be remembered that institutional anthropological studies were defined in terms laid down by the German school of Herbert Baldus and Egon Schaden, for whom the Indians were the primary subject of study and analysis. Thus, while Antonio Candido did not fit well in the Sociology Department, his interests conformed even less with those of the Anthropology Department, either at the Universidade de São Paulo or at the Escola de Sociologia e Política.

Antonio Candido thus illustrates the typical case where a respected intellectual does not fit into the institutional framework of his time. It is worth noting Fernandes’ remark that, even as a student, Candido already “fulfilled the same function among us that Mário de Andrade had played in the Week of Modern Art.”⁵⁷² Had he been educated twenty years later, Candido would have had different institutional options. Yet despite all the uncertainties of this time, anthropology readings left a deep and enduring mark on him, especially that aspect which he calls “the strong poetic basis of anthropology.”⁵⁷³ I now turn to some of the essays presented in *Literatura e Sociedade*⁵⁷⁴ to show how anthropological ideas pervade Candido’s view of literature and other artistic manifestations. For him, they are “coextensive with social life proper,”⁵⁷⁵ and thus approachable as social and expressive phenomena, and are integrated — in the same way as economic, political, kinship and magico-religious phenomena — into the complex of relations and institutions designated as “society.”⁵⁷⁶

There are two major themes in *Literatura e Sociedade* which are related to the purpose of this chapter: the first is Candido’s definition of literary criticism as opposed both to a sociology of literature and to a formal approach to the text; the

⁵⁷¹ Candido, interview.

⁵⁷² Fernandes, 1977:164.

⁵⁷³ Candido, interview.

⁵⁷⁴ Candido, 1976.

⁵⁷⁵ Candido, 1976:70.

⁵⁷⁶ Candido, 1976:70.

second is his appraisal of artistic manifestations in different societies. It is these two points at which one can see the disguised anthropologist at work.⁵⁷⁷

Candido wants first of all to make it clear that his goal is a critique of literary texts. By this he means that he wants to transcend the traditional dichotomy between what are considered external and internal factors in the analysis of a literary text. Where literary criticism once saw the value and meaning of a text as dependent upon how well it expressed certain aspects of reality, it later saw the importance of a text as resting in its formal structure independent of the social conditions in which it was conceived. Both approaches are rejected by Candido, as is the Marxist variant which attempts to show how works are socially conditioned. "I do it differently. I see a literary text as an aesthetic reality." He adds: "I am not saying that Marxism was not influential in my formation. On the contrary. But there is a difference in being influenced by Marxism and being a Marxist."⁵⁷⁸

Candido believes it is necessary to fuse text and context, so that *external* social factors are important neither in a causal way nor in meaning, but rather as elements which have a specific role in the building of a structure, thus becoming *internal*.⁵⁷⁹ When the external becomes internal there is not sociological critique, but simply critique. "The social element is one of the many which interfere in the creation of a book, along with the psychological, religious, linguistic and others."⁵⁸⁰ In this analysis, structure becomes the reference point.⁵⁸¹

But what does Candido mean by structure? To understand this one has to look at his view of literature. First, he observes that artistic work has an arbitrary and distorted relation with reality, even when its purpose is to observe and copy it rigorously.⁵⁸² This freedom is the degree of fantasy necessary to an artistic manifestation even when the intention is to make a truly expressive picture of the world. "This paradox is at the center of the literary work and guarantees its efficacy as a representation of reality."⁵⁸³ Second, since it is an expressive form of communication, art presupposes something different from and larger than the simple experiences of the author. The focus is on the interrelationship between artist, work and public. "To the extent that art is a symbolic system of human

⁵⁷⁷ Candido's major works on Brazilian literature will not be dealt with here. See, for example, his *Formação da Literatura Brasileira* (Candido, 1964).

⁵⁷⁸ Candido, interview. See his above self-definition as a socialist.

⁵⁷⁹ Candido, 1976:3-15.

⁵⁸⁰ Candido, 1976:7.

⁵⁸¹ Candido, 1976:3-15.

⁵⁸² Candido, 1976:12.

⁵⁸³ Candido, 1976:13.

communication, it presupposes the permanent interplay of relationships between artist, work and public, which together form an indissoluble triad.”⁵⁸⁴

This is reminiscent of the way an anthropologist looks at symbolic phenomena such as rituals, myth, and taboos. Candido’s appraisal of the artistic manifestations in different societies is even more familiar. It is familiar not only because he uses much material collected by anthropologists,⁵⁸⁵ but because he oftentimes goes beyond those whose data he uses.

Candido wants to show that different societies produce different forms of art, and that although it is improper to put a value judgment on them, it is not impossible to link different styles to different social contexts.

First, he outlines the problem in terms of two extreme poles; on the one hand there is the anthropocentric view in which the “other’s” reality is reduced to that of the observer. Others exaggerate differences between individuals, groups and cultures. Here Lévy-Bruhl and Malinowski are contrasted,⁵⁸⁶ the pre-logical mentality theory of the first dismissed equally with the latter’s belief that “the savage is just like ourselves.” In Candido’s view, both are anthropocentric, although their fallacies are of different orders. He sees both as disregarding the singularities of different cultures. “The recognition of the relativity of cultures lead us to think about these singularities which should be explained, not by ontological differences, but by the peculiar way in which each general context interferes in particular features and vice-versa, thus determining different configurations.”⁵⁸⁷

Since human mentality is basically the same and the differences are mainly of its manifestations, the latter should be related to social and cultural conditions. This explains why the behavior, the solutions and the creative processes vary in the “primitive” and in the “civilized,” and one does not have to accept the idea of a pre-logical mentality to make sense of the differences.⁵⁸⁸ The goal should thus be to depict the total configuration in which a specific art manifestation appears and to study its role in society.

Following this framework, Candido looks at the triad artist-work-public as playing different roles in different societies.⁵⁸⁹ For instance, he looks at the function

⁵⁸⁴ Candido, 1976:38.

⁵⁸⁵ See examples taken from the writings of Evans-Pritchard, Malinowski, and Raymond Firth in Candido, 1976 (Chapters 2 and 3).

⁵⁸⁶ Candido, 1976:41-44.

⁵⁸⁷ Candido, 1976:43.

⁵⁸⁸ Candido, 1976:44.

⁵⁸⁹ Candido, 1976:17-39.

of the artist among the Bantu, the Trobrianders, and the Chinese; the configuration of the work (including poetry, music and spells) among the Eskimo, and in medieval Europe; and the public, whether in the case of the *caipira* or of an educated musical audience. Following the idea that the relativity of the cultural context has to be taken into account in order for an artistic manifestation to be understood, Candido proceeds to show that literature, folklore, and mythology, because they are different forms of verbal communication appearing in different “types” of societies, must necessarily be studied from different perspectives. He thus dismisses Herskovits, who insisted that folklore should be studied in the same way as literature, and adopts a Malinowskian perspective, in the belief that to understand the complexity of the literary act one has to take into account the wholeness of the social situation.⁵⁹⁰

For Candido, literary analysis itself is a product of industrial societies, and is not always appropriate for the study of other literary traditions. For the study of “primitive” societies Candido proposes a combination of folklore analysis, sociology and literary analysis. To test his proposition, Candido looks at how the theme of food and nutrition appears in the art of different societies, such as among the Nuer, in French and German poetry, and in some Brazilian classic novels.⁵⁹¹ Being one of the fundamental necessities, the act of eating is a good example to show how manifestations of emotion and aesthetic elaboration must be understood in reference to their social context.

Among the “primitive” eating can have magical connotations. Candido uses data from the work of Audrey Richards, Evans-Pritchard, and Boas to make the point that the sacralization of food is common in these societies. He analyzes a Nuer song to show how cattle, so important to the Nuer, are used to express their discomfort at the presence of the British.⁵⁹² Among the “civilized,” however, the picture is different. Poems by Hugo, Shelley and Rilke⁵⁹³ exemplify how the poetic associations related to food and nutrition are diluted to the point where they virtually disappear. These poems show no vestige of the physiological dimension, thus contrasting with the “primitive” form, which shows freely and directly the organic basis of nutrition and its links to the realm of art.

⁵⁹⁰ Candido, 1976:53.

⁵⁹¹ This includes the work of Antonio Celestino, Coelho Neto, and Graciliano Ramos. Candido, 1976:56-70.

⁵⁹² Candido, 1976:58-60. In Evans-Pritchard's translation, the text is the following: "The wind blows *wirawiva*; Where does it blow to?/It blows to the river./ The shorthorn carries its full udder to the pastures;/ Let her be milked by Nyagaak;/ My belly will be filled with milk./ Thou pride of Nyawal, / Ever-quarreling Rolnyang./ This country is overrun by strangers;/ They throw our ornaments into the river/ They draw their water from the bank./ Blackhair my sister,/ I am bewildered./ We are perplexed;/ We gaze at the stars of God".

⁵⁹³ Candido, 1976:61-66.

Candido is a social scientist who, like Roberto Da Matta, stresses the relativity of different social contexts. Candido differs from Da Matta, however, in one important way: he looks at the relative weight one phenomenon has in a total social configuration as a fundamental element for understanding it, as well as at temporal changes in this social configuration. He postulates, in a Durkheimian vein, that in “primitive” societies social context is more visibly reflected in art forms. The organic emotion of nutrition, for instance, does not undergo the numerous mediations as among the “civilized.” Da Matta, however, sees relativity in a slightly different way. He is more synchronic and structurally oriented than Candido, a fact which can be seen clearly in his analysis of the Brazilian definition of “individual” and “person.” Candido, on the other hand, emphatically wants to link structure to history or, in his words, “to fuse text and context.”⁵⁹⁴ He thus makes relativism both spatial and temporal. As a final example of what I call Candido's anthropological perspective, I will now focus on his study of the 18th century poem *Caramuru*.⁵⁹⁵

An epic poem, *Caramuru* was published in 1781, but was little known or accepted until the 1830's, when it was rediscovered by the Brazilian Romanticists and adopted as one of the banners of their movement. The theme of the poem is the Portuguese Diogo who, spared from sacrifice by the 16th century Tupinambá, became Caramuru, one of the chief members of the tribe and, as such, as intermediary between the Indians and the Portuguese. The poem outlines the hero's transformation from Diogo to Caramuru, and, in a parallel and inverted way, the change which occurred in the Indian Paraguaçu, who was transformed into Catarina and later baptized in France and married to Caramuru.

Candido's major task is to explain why the poem took half a century to be discovered. He suggest that the historical or social function of a specific work rests on its literary structure. This structure rests, in turn, on the organization of certain mental representations, which are conditioned by the society in which the work is conceived, and thus historically variable.

As a literary epic, *Caramuru* was built around three themes which Candido depicts as: the celebration of the Portuguese colonization of Brazil; the grandiose and euphoric vision of the country; and the Indian as the natural, pure and perfect element of a Renaissance European worldview. However, these three themes were organized around the fundamental expressive element of ambiguity.

“Indeed, colonization is initiated by the Portuguese — but represents, at the same time, a justification of the Brazilian, the

⁵⁹⁴ By adopting this perspective, Candido suggested in another study a link between literature and the social sciences in Brazil (Candido, 1976:109-138) and, yet in another, examined the relationship between literature and the historical development of São Paulo (Candido, 1976:139-168).

⁵⁹⁵ Candido, 1976:170-192.

beginning of his individual consciousness. Nature is treated as a 'vision of paradise' — but from an angle which is valid only for some exceptional segments of the landscape. Finally, the Indian presents traits of a 'natural goodness' and a rational social organization — but on the other hand is a cannibal and a barbarian, deprived of the light of grace, and thus not perfectly happy."⁵⁹⁶

Religion solves the ambiguities, and in the poem "the catholic faith operates as justification for colonization, the unusual grandiosity of the country is the scene of religious struggles, and the seeds of the Indian's enlightenment will come to full flower with religious conversion."⁵⁹⁷ In sum, "the local and the universal are combined in the superior expressive and ideological unity of catholicism."⁵⁹⁸

Caramuru meshed well with the genealogical and historical needs of the Brazilian Romanticists of the 19th century. In the process of self-identification Brazil immersed itself in after Independence, literature was seen as a mark of national autonomy. It was absolutely necessary that Brazil distinguish itself from Portugal. However, the way Caramuru was adopted by Romanticism differed in two important respects from its original formulation: first, rather than the epic poem, a French version in prose form was preferred. "The passage from verse to prose was an important way of projecting the novelistic element of the story, breaking the meanings attached to the metric structure."⁵⁹⁹ The French version had a style intermediate between poem and novel, and prepared the ground for the Indianist fiction so characteristic of middle-century Brazilian literature. Second, the Romantics looked at Caramuru in a search for its Brazilian features and, in the process, the ambiguities of the character Diogo-Caramuru⁶⁰⁰ gave away to Indianist and nationalistic feelings. In sum, given a poem which had ambiguous features both in its structure and in the configuration of its main character, the Brazilian Romantics perceived it with a double distortion — one, ideological, and the other, aesthetic. In Candido's words:

"Faced with a poem which could be taken either as a celebration of Portuguese colonization or as the nativistic affirmation of local peculiarities, they opted for the second aspect, looking at Caramuru as an Indianist and *Brazilian* epic. On the other hand,

⁵⁹⁶ Candido, 1976:179.

⁵⁹⁷ Candido, 1976:179.

⁵⁹⁸ Candido, 1976:179.

⁵⁹⁹ Candido, 1976:186.

⁶⁰⁰ "When we search for Diogo, we find Caramuru; when we look for Caramuru, we find Diogo". Candido, 1976:180.

from the aesthetic viewpoint, they took the novelistic element and the exotic touch as a precursor of the Indianist novel.”⁶⁰¹

Looking at literature as a cultural phenomenon, what I call Candido’s “anthropological perspective” is here exemplified by his attempt to link a structural to a historical analysis; he concludes that the study of the “literary-historical function of a work only acquires full meaning when intimately referred to its structure.”⁶⁰² In contrast with Da Matta’s study of rituals, Candido incorporate a historical viewpoint. This simple fact results in his looking at the total configuration of a social-historical phenomenon. Within this configuration, the national formation being one of them, the writer chooses and treats, in a particular way, specific literary themes. For him, then, history and aesthetics must always be combined, since history is the unfolding over time of different mental representations. Da Matta, however, is more interested in the “permanent” and enduring structural relations which link a configuration conceived “above” time. But if it is true that Candido in many ways preceded Da Matta in his line of study or, in other words, that the anthropological studies of Roberto da Matta have a fundamental link to the previous literary criticism of Antonio Candido, it is not surprising that the former is oftentimes called to account for his a-historical perspective.⁶⁰³ It is also not surprising given the fact that history was one of the first disciplines to develop in the 19th century in close and clear relationship to nation-building in Brazil. However different the approaches of Candido and Da Matta are in relation to the historical perspective, both share one basic characteristic — the search for the universal in the particular —, a point with which I close this chapter.

C. The search for the universal

In this chapter Da Matta’s and Candido’s topics of study and approaches were compared in several different ways. It was suggested that each found topics — one in literature and the other in national rituals — which, at different moments, defined Brazil as a nation. Although they looked at different subjects, their studies were linked by their examination of national ideological symbols. It was also suggested that the fact that Candido’s work was labelled literary criticism and Da Matta’s analysis, anthropology, does not deny the relationship which exists between them; rather this simply attests to differences over time in the conceptualization of what anthropology, literary criticism, or sociology should

⁶⁰¹ Candido, 1976:191-2.

⁶⁰² Candido, 1976:192.

⁶⁰³ Schwartzman, 1979b and Da Matta, 1980a.

be.⁶⁰⁴ Further proof of this is found in the fact that Da Matta today proposes to found “an anthropology of literature.”⁶⁰⁵

Another important link between the two is in their approach to social and cultural relativity, and in their search for the universal through the particular. For Da Matta, the definition of the anthropological *métier* already implies that “a universal system of translation”⁶⁰⁶ is at stake. For this purpose, the anthropologist proceeds to an encounter with the “other,” “the different,” and “the strange,” in order to reach the level of relativity which will lead him to a universal apperception. It is by transcending the different “particulars” that the universal is reached. For Candido, all literature is directed to universal values, and it is by immersing oneself in the particular, in cases, that the universal is reached.⁶⁰⁷

Interestingly enough, for both men Brazil becomes this “particular” in many senses, a particular which Da Matta could perceive as a totality after his personal confrontation with Indian societies, and which Candido saw by comparison with different social and literary formations. Both look at ideology, or mental representations, in their study of the particular-universal. The French influence is clear in both — in Candido’s inspiration from Durkheim, via Roger Bastide, and Da Matta’s incorporation of Louis Dumont’s propositions. Does this in any sense mean they are less “Brazilian” than Fernandes or Ribeiro, for instance?

I bring this question up simply to emphasize that external and foreign influence is intrinsic to the social sciences everywhere,⁶⁰⁸ and Brazil is no exception. Nevertheless, one can hardly speak of a simple process of “borrowing” or “copying.” The external influences are part and parcel of the make up of the social sciences, but they also respond to certain basic problems which limit the borrowing and creates internal developments of its own. France, for instance, has for two centuries inspired Brazilian intellectual life, whether in philosophy, literature, or the social sciences.⁶⁰⁹ But before influencing Brazil directly, France had already been the intellectual center for Portugal. The important point here is that, in the social science’s struggle to develop, foreign influences were assimilated within the context of nation-building. In Brazil the process of nation-building has, more often than not, delimited the parameters within which the social sciences have developed. I am thus arguing against those who propose that

⁶⁰⁴ The fact that continuity in the name of a discipline necessarily does not imply cognitive or institutional identity was noted by Lepenies, 1977.

⁶⁰⁵ Da Matta, 1979a:237-244.

⁶⁰⁶ Da Matta, 1979a:17.

⁶⁰⁷ Candido, interview.

⁶⁰⁸ See Anderson, 1968 for British social sciences.

⁶⁰⁹ See Chapter Two.

the social sciences be purified of foreign influences.⁶¹⁰ But I also see a certain amount of reductionism in the alternative formulation which states that the dialectic of “cosmopolitanism” and “localism” has and will always inform Brazilian intellectual life.⁶¹¹ If the first is too restrictive, the second is overtly general. I propose that by looking both at the universal and at the historically specific processes of nation-building, one arrives at a clearer picture of the role anthropology may or may not play in different social contexts, and the topics and approaches by which it will define itself in relation to the other social sciences. In Candido’s and Da Matta’s formulations, the issue of strata and territorial integration is partially suspended, so that their attention may be fully focused on “ideological integration.”

⁶¹⁰ An example would be Ribeiro's position. See Chapter Four.

⁶¹¹ This is the position of Sergio Buarque de Holanda and Antonio Candido (Candido, 1976:109-111).

CHAPTER SIX

Anthropology and the Ideology of Nationhood

One may explain the weakness of the scientific community in the social sciences as a result of their own character. It is of their nature, in fact, to be the most immediately exposed to the surrounding ideology.

Dumont, 1978:84

My goals in this last chapter are three: first, to discuss, in the light of the Brazilian case, the extent to which anthropology can be defined by a hierarchy between the values of universalism and holism; second, to present some propositions about the historical development of social thought in the periods pre- and post- 1930 in Brazil; and third, to show the relationship between nation-building and anthropology in Brazil.

The preceeding chapters may be briefly summarized as follows: after a discussion of the reversibility of anthropological knowledge in the first chapter, I looked at the sociogenetic moment when the social sciences were institutionalized in Brazil, discussing particularly the relationship between education and politics. The focus was mainly on the questions which the social sciences were created to answer. The three central chapters examine the work of six social scientists. Chapter Three dealt with the intellectual career and the writings of Florestan Fernandes, in order to understand why his studies of the Tupinambá Indians were not followed up by others in Brazil. Indians were the topic of Chapter Four, and I examined the struggle anthropologists faced in defining their object of study. It was shown that the focus on Indians was “replaced” by a focus on the peasantry. Finally, Chapter Five looked at the “universalistic” approach to the study of human societies via the study of carnival and other national rituals, and in literature.

One major point to stress again is that the social sciences as a whole served as the background of this inquiry. This choice derived from the fact that the disciplines were first institutionalized in an attempt to serve as impulse to nationality. From and against this background the works of Florestan Fernandes, Darcy Ribeiro and Antonio Candido were examined, in order to understand in what ways they differed and in what senses they were answering basically similiar questions. I then proceeded to a later generation, looking at the ideas of Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira, and his attempt to give a scientific and institutional status to anthropology in Brazil. Finally, I explored the works of Roberto da Matta and Otávio Velho, as examples of how the younger generation developed and re-

oriented the place anthropology was to have in the total configuration of the social sciences.

A second major point of this thesis is its stress on the embeddedness of the social sciences in the ideology of nationhood in Brazil. Special attention was given to the relationship of the social sciences to the nation-building processes of strata and territorial integration and it was shown that, implicitly or explicitly, the nation was the central unit of analysis for most of the authors considered. Examples run from the notorious absence of the concept in Fernandes' writings, to indirect allusion to it in Roberto Cardoso's work, to its explicit statement in Darcy Ribeiro's. The concept of nation emerged also in terms of symbols of nationhood in Roberto da Matta's and Antonio Candido's writings, and by looking at the integration of peasants into the capitalist mode of production, Otávio Velho exemplifies the same tendency.

As eminent historians and political scientists have recognized that the nation is one of the most puzzling concepts in the political lexicon,⁶¹² it is not my intention to attempt to theorize about it. It is sufficient to note that nation-states are specific types of social formation, with unique characteristics when compared with other kinds of social formations such as tribal societies or feudal estates. Nation-states are an international phenomena but they are also historically specific,⁶¹³ and this has become the background for many anthropological studies in recent years, especially in the context of the study of religion.⁶¹⁴ The nation became an issue for Brazilian social scientists in their inquiry into *their own society*, and in terms of the social and political responsibilities they hold as citizens.

In sum, strata integration, as the process by which a nation assimilates all its different groups and sectors under a unifying ideology of participation, and territorial integration, as the process by which the nation conceives of itself as a geographical unit, informed and served as parameters for the thinking of social scientist in general after the forties in Brazil, leaving little space for and less validity to topics and approaches which did not fall into this overall scheme.

Finally, a note must be made regarding regional differences in Brazil. It is clear that the views of social scientists from São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, or the Northeast will differ on the subject of the ideology of nationhood, given the existence of

⁶¹² Tilly, 1975:6.

⁶¹³ Tilly, 1974.

⁶¹⁴ See Tambiah, 1971, 1977 on Theravada Buddhism in Thailand, Burma and SriLanka; Geertz, 1975 on Islam in Morocco and Indonesia; Mendelson, 1975 on Buddhism in Burma; and Fischer, 1980 on Islam in Iran. All those studies deal with religion in the context of specific national historical experiences. (For a critique of the concept of "complex society" in relation to nation-states, see Chapter Five).

regional political differences in Brazil.⁶¹⁵ However important these differences might be, they were deemed not to affect the main argument of this dissertation.

A. Universalism and holism in anthropology

In this section I will develop some ideas on the relationship between anthropology and the ideology of nationhood in order to make two points: one, that this relationship can be seen in both Western and non-Western countries, whenever anthropology was accepted as an academic discipline; and, two, that the relationship takes on different configurations depending on the nature of the historical experiences of the formation of the nation-state at hand. Given the limitations of this study, comparative examples will be brought in only to the extent that they aid in answering the questions posed in Chapter One.

It has become a truism to state that the human sciences are, by nature, different from the natural sciences.⁶¹⁶ But it is worth remembering that one of the particular features of the human sciences is that they carry within them a definition of what “man” and “society” are, and how they should be studied.⁶¹⁷ It is for this reason that the anthropological community is, by its very nature, naturally exposed to the surrounding ideology.⁶¹⁸ And it is also true that the anthropologist must operate in two roles: one as a scientist and the other as a citizen of a particular country.

If we postulate a relationship between the development of the social sciences in a particular country and the ideology of nationhood, as I have done for Brazil, and if we assume some universal features to this process, then it follows that the relationship between the anthropologist’s responsibility as a citizen and as a scientist will inevitably vary from place to place. Moreover, given a relationship between the two spheres, the ideology of nationhood would be more likely to delimit the range of questions which the social sciences should ask, rather than the other way around. In other words, there is a hierarchical relationship between the ideology of nationhood and the social sciences, including anthropology, and in this relationship, the whole encompasses its parts.

Returning to the propositions of Louis Dumont, referred to at the beginning of this dissertation, we may re-examine the idea that there is a necessary hierarchical relation between the values of universalism and holism in the definition of anthropology:

⁶¹⁵ See Schwartzman, 1975.

⁶¹⁶ See Whitley, 1977; Foucault, 1971; Dumont, 1978; Elias, 1978a.

⁶¹⁷ See Anderson, 1968.

⁶¹⁸ Dumont, 1978.

“At a first level, or the global level, we profess of necessity universalism. We do not want to see the human species as an entity devoid of all that is particular to some or other societies, but as the sum integral of all those social particularities — a totality that we postulate to be real and coherent. ... In a second level, when we consider one kind of society or a given culture, the primacy changes necessarily, and holism imposes itself. ... To characterize this approach, the watchword is ‘society as concrete universal.’”⁶¹⁹

The important point here is that the two levels are not interchangeable or, again in Dumont’s own words, that “it is impossible to attach a different relative value to the two principles; it is impossible *to subordinate universalism without destroying anthropology*.”⁶²⁰

This definition implies a hierarchical relationship between universalism and holism, the first encompassing the second. However, if the conclusions of this dissertation are valid, namely, that what I call an ideology of nationhood encompasses the development of the social sciences — a point which Dumont is the first to acknowledge⁶²¹ — then we are faced with two logical conclusions: one, that only the French version of anthropology can be accepted as “true” anthropology; or else, that Dumont, as a French scholar, provides the basis for disproving his own thesis.

What is peculiar to the French case? In brief, in France universalism encompasses holism and this value arises out of the French “national” ideology itself as a historical outcome of the development of the social sciences after the French Revolution. It was in this period, as Dumont himself clearly points out, that sociology arose “as a reaction to the disillusionment brought about by the experience of Revolutionary dogmas and as an implication of the socialist programme of substituting deliberate organization for the arbitrariness of economic laws.”⁶²² Dumont also compares Durkheim, who placed collective representations at the center of his theory, and Weber, who founded his theory on the individual actor, to show that the theories of both founders of sociology were in an inverse relation to their “predominant national traditions.”⁶²³ It is my belief that the “inversion” of which Dumont speaks only attests to the relationship I am pointing out. Whether it is direct or inverted, the relationship between “predominant national traditions” and the social sciences is a matter of fact.

⁶¹⁹ Dumont, 1978:92.

⁶²⁰ Dumont, 1978:92; my emphasis.

⁶²¹ Dumont, 1978:84.

⁶²² Dumont, 1974:10.

⁶²³ Dumont, 1978:90-1.

Furthermore, it was also Dumont who suggested that, for the French, the concept of the “nation” refers to a society whose members are not aware of themselves as essentially social beings, but only as so many equivalent embodiments of man in the abstract. This is because the French conceive of the individual in the abstract, as a citizen of the world, and thus the state — or, for that matter, the nation — is for them the empirical manifestation of mankind.⁶²⁴

In short, a major problem arises from Dumont’s propositions: at the same time that he brings historical data to his theories of anthropology and of the community of anthropologists, his analysis itself is devoid of historicity. It suffers from the same impairment he foresees for the model of “universalism-holism” in relation to history.

Dumont is unsure about whether “the future and its law are the same for all societies ... or if each social type has its own development.”⁶²⁵ He avoids committing himself to one or another position, and prefers to leave the question open.⁶²⁶ But given the fact that Dumont bases his model on that of Leibniz and tries to replace the Victorian model of unilinear evolution by emphasizing differences over a supposed continuity, one may surmise that Dumont’s heart lies with the second position. It follows then that there is an important paradox in his work, for he himself obstinately refuses to take the historical dimension into account, as seen in his acceptance of the definition of anthropology as set once and for all by Marcel Mauss,⁶²⁷ in his denial of the possibility of different traditions in anthropology,⁶²⁸ or in relation to variations in the distinction between the “sociologist” and the “reformer.”⁶²⁹

This last point relates directly to my early proposition that a historically specific relationship obtains between social science and the ideology of nationhood. It is exactly because Dumont does not make this connection in historical terms that he ignores the fact that the anthropologist is also a citizen of a particular country, and thus under the constraints of citizenship as ideologically defined by the social context in which he lives. When the French propose that “it is far better to realize that [in the sociologist and the reformer] we have to separate opposed and necessary vocations each of which is all the better if it is kept distinct from the other,”⁶³⁰ or when the German scholar states that sociology and ideology have

⁶²⁴ Dumont, 1971.

⁶²⁵ Dumont, 1978:94.

⁶²⁶ Dumont, 1978:94.

⁶²⁷ Dumont, 1978.

⁶²⁸ Ibid.

⁶²⁹ Dumont, 1970:18 and 1978:85.

⁶³⁰ Dumont, 1970:18.

quite different functions, so that the task of sociological research is to make “the blind, uncontrolled processes more accessible to human understanding by explaining them, and [thus enabling] people to orientate themselves within the interwoven social web,”⁶³¹ it is evident that their views are peculiar to their particular cultural backgrounds.

Two main points are clear: first, nation-building processes, including especially strata integration, were important parameters within which the social sciences developed in Brazil. These processes were determining to the point of defining fields and the relative significance of different disciplines such as sociology and anthropology.⁶³² Second, given this context, the definition of an “intellectual” in Brazil includes a commitment to political problems in terms of the ideology of nationhood. The intellectual in Brazil has, by definition, a political function, if we take politics in its broadest sense. Topics of research and approaches are evaluated by more than their academic excellence and are subjected to political assessment. There in fact seems to be a positive relationship between a more visible emphasis on nationhood and foreign theoretical sources. Examples are Roberto da Matta’s national ritual analysis and the French theoretical influence on his work,⁶³³ and Florestan Fernandes’ dependency theory and his denial of the “nation” as object of analysis.⁶³⁴

In sum, my point here is that Dumont’s proposition that anthropology must entail a hierarchical relationship between universalism and holism, in which the first encompasses the second, suffers from the limitations of his own background. His ideas (as much as, for instance, the French concept of “civilization” itself) downplay national differences between peoples and emphasize what is common to all human beings.⁶³⁵ More importantly, his theory expresses the self-assurance of peoples whose national boundaries and national identity have for centuries been so fully established that they have ceased to be the subject of any particular discussion. It is only when the ideology of nationhood is universalistic that anthropology can follow Dumont’s model. His is a unique model, specific to a particular context and a particular moment.

The model does not even allow one to understand, for instance, French experience as a historical process. In France, the institutionalization of the social sciences during the late 18th century represented an attempt to scientifically contribute to the solution of the problems of the nation and, at that moment, nation-building guided sociology. This project was discontinued with the suppression of the

⁶³¹ Elias, 1978b:153.

⁶³² This point will be further developed in section C below.

⁶³³ See Chapter Five.

⁶³⁴ See Chapter Three.

⁶³⁵ Elias, 1978a:5.

Classe des Sciences Morales et Politiques of the Institut National in 1803 by Napoleon, and from then on, the Institut no longer served as a central clearing house for the design of national education and for the direction of national life.⁶³⁶ My point here is that Dumont's model is not only French, but is more particularly a representative of 20th century French anthropological thought.

I will continue to develop many of these issues below, but the question now is: Is there an alternative?

Here Dumont and Elias are united in the view that the German model, represented by the concept of *Kultur*, would have an inevitable appeal to peoples who feel threatened by "modern universalistic culture."⁶³⁷ The concept of *Kultur*, placing special stress on national differences and on the particular identity of groups, would be suitable to cases where a people arrived very late, by Western standards, at political unification and consolidation.⁶³⁸ Dumont develops the same argument and reaches the conclusion that an hypothetical generalization could be made to other situations in the present and in the future, and mentions Herder's influence in the emergence of nationalism in Eastern-European countries. He sees a similar process now occurring in India.⁶³⁹

If we look at Brazil, however, the whole model must again be made contingent. It is true that for a short period in the twenties and thirties, when Brazil was dominated by the ideology of the "new country," the concept of "culture" played an important role in sociological studies. However, this phase was superceded by one in which the notion of the "underdeveloped country" predominated⁶⁴⁰ and, in that context, it was not the richness of Brazil, but its inequality vis-à-vis other countries which became the most important issue in the national ideology. Retrospectively, the first phase was characterized by a mild "consciousness of retardation," in which national identity was the primary concern, while the second phase involved a consciousness of retardation which was "catastrophic."⁶⁴¹ It was when the totality of Brazil was first able to be taken for granted that the focus could move towards the relationship between Brazil and other nations. The concepts of underdevelopment and dependency, advanced by sociologists during the fifties and sixties, came to full flower.

⁶³⁶ Becker, 1971.

⁶³⁷ Dumont, 1978:89.

⁶³⁸ Elias, 1978a:5.

⁶³⁹ Dumont, 1978:89.

⁶⁴⁰ Candido, 1972.

⁶⁴¹ Ibid.

The same consciousness of “historical retardation” has become dominant in many “third world countries”⁶⁴² and, in the context, it is not surprising that the concept of culture, stressing as it does the holism of a given society, is considered by many to be inappropriate for dealing with international power relations. Culture, transformed into “culturalism,”⁶⁴³ is seen as leading to political conservatism, and looked upon as an “ideological,” as contrasted to “scientific,” concept. We thus come to the conclusion that one cannot expect that either a pure French or a pure German model could be accepted in its original formulation in Brazil, or in any other country for that matter. This is so because the basic assumptions of nation-building have changed since the time those models were developed.⁶⁴⁴

Here I return to Tilly’s remarks on state-formation, which for my purposes, I extend to nation-building. He makes the point that the processes which direct state-formation are international and historically specific: they are international because after the 16th century national states supplanted churches, clans, empires, cities, federations, tribes, and many other kinds of grouping as the dominant organizations throughout the world. They are historically specific, because they are not directional and are not, in any simple sense of the word, a displacement of the “traditional” by the “modern.”⁶⁴⁵ For these reasons, the Portuguese experience inherited by Brazil is very interesting because Portugal was one of the first states to develop in Europe. Many regard this fact alone to have had enormous importance in the Portuguese world expansion during the 15th and 16th centuries.⁶⁴⁶ However, despite its early centralization, Portugal did not develop a tradition of human sciences, or what we today call sociology or anthropology, but rather allowed literature to flourish on a grand scale. Whether Portugal was a “premature” modern state, or a still relatively feudal structure, is an important point, but not the concern of this study. The point to stress here is that, even if one posits a relationship between the development of the social sciences and nation-building processes, specific historical circumstances must be taken into consideration.⁶⁴⁷

In Brazil, the dominant tendency in the social sciences has been for holism to encompass universalism, but this does not mean that universalism was absent from, or insignificant in, Brazilian social thought. The strong French influence was always part and parcel of Brazilian intellectual life. Roberto da Matta can here again be an example for, despite the French-universalistic influence on his

⁶⁴² Laroui, 1976:129.

⁶⁴³ Laroui, 1976:63.

⁶⁴⁴ I believe that the concept of “culture” will become even less suitable over time for the purposes of nation-building, given the international system of today.

⁶⁴⁵ Tilly, 1974.

⁶⁴⁶ Modelski, 1978.

⁶⁴⁷ On the “generability” of historical events, see Skocpol, 1979:284-293.

work, he defines his project as an attempt to understand “what makes Brazil, Brazil.”⁶⁴⁸ Another example is in fieldwork with Indians.

Brazilian anthropologists at one time accepted Indians as the true anthropological object of study, but redefined the approach inherited from German scholars in terms of inter-ethnic conflict. Still later, they shifted their interest from Indian to peasants. Here it may be argued that Indians were only temporarily the typical object of anthropology in any country. However, the point made in this study is that the change occurred due not to purely external influences, but due to an internal mechanism by which the nation as totality assumed priority over ideologically-defined “external” objects of study.⁶⁴⁹ On the other hand, when Brazilian anthropologists looked at Indians as a totality in their own terms, since the Indians were never fully seen as part of the “us,” fieldwork was conceived of less as a process of apprehension and knowledge of the “other,” and more as “training,” or practice for the later confrontation with the totality of the nation.⁶⁵⁰ I believe that it is only where the basic problems of nation-building are ideologically solved that intellectuals can afford to look, without an attached hierarchical value judgment, at the “other” as “different.” Otherwise the “other” tends to be either an “oppressor” or an “oppressed.” In Brazil, the basic tendency has been for Blacks, Indians and peasants to be seen as the “oppressed” sectors, and the nation as a whole to be viewed as “dependent” on the central capitalist societies.⁶⁵¹ In none of the above cases has the “other,” as object of study, been accepted as simply the “different other.”

The point I arrive at is that if it is true that the ideal image of a social totality has been a paradigmatic model for the social sciences in this century,⁶⁵² then the nation has in many cases fulfilled this role. England serves as an apparent counter-example, since it has never produced a classical sociology or a national Marxism. Anderson develops this idea by arguing that British social sciences never examined their own society, a fact he explains by the absence of a revolutionary confrontation between the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy,⁶⁵³ and by

⁶⁴⁸ Da Matta, 1979a:14-15. In a more eloquent passage, Da Matta states that “beyond all disagreements, different interpretations, methodologies and perspectives, there is Brazil, which is bigger than everything” (Da Matta, 1979a:24).

⁶⁴⁹ See Chapter Four.

⁶⁵⁰ See Chapter Five.

⁶⁵¹ See Chapter Three and Four. It may be that in the future Indians will be studied as “the different” who are “part of an ‘us’”, both following and influencing a new form of nation-building process and ideology in Brazil.

⁶⁵² Anderson, 1968; Elias, 1978a.

⁶⁵³ Anderson, 1968.

the wave of White Immigration at the beginning of the century.⁶⁵⁴ Both factors led to the development of a social science which accepted the image of a national society as coherent and persisting through time.⁶⁵⁵ However, Anderson argues, the idea of a social whole could not be banned, and British social scientists “exported” its totalizations via anthropology into its subject peoples.⁶⁵⁶ In his words, “‘primitive’ societies became the surrogate object of the theory proscribed at home.”⁶⁵⁷ The sociology England did not develop resulted in a flourishing anthropology.

Anderson’s argument implies that the notion of totality cannot be banished in any advanced industrial society. My point is that this is so mainly due to the nature of ideologies characteristic of nation-states. Elias corroborates this view point in his analysis of the concept of “social system.”

Elias look at the concept of “social system” through the writings of Talcott Parsons, as a typical Western sociological theorist of the twentieth century. He shows how “social system” implies the idea of a society in equilibrium, and how the concept of “society” itself changed from the 18th and 19th century. From the idea of a “human society” beyond the state, it became, in contemporary sociological theory, an increasingly diluted ideal image of a nation-state. At present, a society is thought of as normally in a state of rest: all its parts are normally harmoniously attuned to one another, all individuals belonging to it are normally attuned by the same kind of socialization to the same norms; all are normally well-integrated, respect the same values in their actions, and fulfill their prescribed roles. In short, “the image of society represented theoretically by this concept of the social system reveals itself on closer inspection to be the ideal image of a nation.”⁶⁵⁸ Elias concludes: “Such a system is therefore a construction abstracted from a democratically conceived nation-state.”⁶⁵⁹

My intention here is neither to question the validity of Western sociological theories, nor to assess its scientificity. It should be noted that Parsons is not only a Western sociological theorist of the 20th century, but, more specifically, an American sociologist. For the sake of his argument, Elias does not take the issue of national intellectual backgrounds into consideration, as he has done

⁶⁵⁴ Wittgenstein in philosophy, Malinowski in anthropology, Popper in social theory, Berlin in political theory, Gombrich in aesthetics, and Melanie Klein in psychoanalysis are some of the formative influences in British intellectual life whose works Anderson discusses. See Anderson, 1968.

⁶⁵⁵ See also Morse, 1978.

⁶⁵⁶ Anderson, 1968:47.

⁶⁵⁷ Anderson, 1968:47.

⁶⁵⁸ Elias, 1978a:243.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid.

elsewhere,⁶⁶⁰ nor, for that matter, does he address his own German origins. His remarks have to be understood as a theoretical confrontation with Parsons' social theory, and this explains the tone of his criticisms:

“One need only raise the question of whether and how far such sociological theories — derived primarily from present-day more or less democratic nation-state societies which presuppose a high degree of integration of peoples into the ‘social system’ as something both self-evident and desirable, and which therefore imply a relatively advanced state of social democratization — are applicable to societies at different stages of development, and which are less centralized and democratized.”⁶⁶¹

In pointing to Elias' criticisms of Parsons, my intention is simply to show that the constraints of the ideologies of nation-state building do not escape social scientists anywhere, and that it is only by acknowledging such facts that one may attempt to go beyond them. Long-term historical processes must become a theoretical and an empirical topic of inquiry, as must the links between fields which are academically often classified under different headings. The link between parochial findings and larger issues, the proper domain of anthropology, can suggest new perspectives.

B. State ideology and nation-building in Brazil

In recent years a new interest seems to have arisen about the character of social thought at different moments of Brazilian history. On the one hand, several accounts try to depict the institutional basis, the class orientation, or the content of the thinking generated by the social sciences after the 1930's.⁶⁶² On the other hand, some have begun to pay attention to political thought prior to the thirties.⁶⁶³ The tendency has been, in both cases, implicitly or explicitly to accept the thirties as a dividing line, a fact which can be seen in the extreme caution exercised when speaking together of pre- and post-1930's thinkers.⁶⁶⁴ Given that this dissertation

⁶⁶⁰ See Elias, 1978a:1-50.

⁶⁶¹ Elias, 1978a:243-4.

⁶⁶² W. G. Santos, 1967 provides a list of references and an analysis of the assumptions which most frequently underlie the division between the periods pre- and post-1930 in terms of scientific accomplishments. For a recent study from a Marxist perspective, see Mota, 1978.

⁶⁶³ Lamounier, 1977 presents four models which have guided the analysis of pre-1930 social thinkers: the scientific, the historicist-nationalist, the class model, and the "Enlightened"-authoritarian.

⁶⁶⁴ See Lamounier, 1977, for instance.

is not intended as either a historiography of the social sciences, or as political science, the remarks that follow are merely suggestive of potential lines of inquiry. Their main value lies in seeing pre- and post-1930 social thought as continuous, and in relationship with the dominant national ideology. In proceeding this way, I want to de-emphasize the discontinuities which are often presented as the dominant features of the development of the social sciences,⁶⁶⁵ and emphasize the continuity of problems and relationships, albeit differently conceptualized at various historical moments. A recent polemic between W.G. Santos⁶⁶⁶ and Lamounier⁶⁶⁷ regarding the authoritarian and the liberal ideologies in Brazilian political thought will serve to present my viewpoint.

Lamounier describes as “authoritarian” the underlying, deeper conceptual organization of Brazilian intellectual culture.⁶⁶⁸ Initially developed in the first decades of this century, the authoritarian ideology attained its full expression in the Revolution of 1930, and persists up until today, despite nineteen years (1946-1964) of political democracy. Two distinctive features stand out in Brazilian authoritarian ideology: its statist and its “objectivist” character.⁶⁶⁹

Lamounier examines the statist dimension of the Brazilian case in relation to the two major matrices of Western European development: 1) the competitive, “market” model which, although accepted as a matter of common sense among social scientists, has never been more than a “model,” and 2) the normative concept of the State. On one level the State matrix has a measure of unity imparted to it by a distinctive historical configuration, namely, that of late unification, late industrialization, and peripheral or dependent capitalist development. On another level, unlike the original liberal European pattern, industrialization developed contemporaneously with the interventionist concept of the State.⁶⁷⁰

Lamounier is well aware that, depending on the features stressed, the model may apply equally to Germany, Italy, Spain, and other countries. But Brazil is a singular case given the way in which unification proceeded, which was primarily a matter of retaining control of empty territory already unified under a formal national sovereignty.⁶⁷¹

⁶⁶⁵ See Mota, 1978.

⁶⁶⁶ W.G. Santos, 1967, 1970, 1978.

⁶⁶⁷ Lamounier, 1974, 1977.

⁶⁶⁸ Lamounier, 1974:326.

⁶⁶⁹ Lamounier, 1974:326.

⁶⁷⁰ Lamounier, 1974:298-305.

⁶⁷¹ Lamounier, 1974:300.

Against this background, Lamounier defines State ideology as a corpus of ideas in which participatory elements are absent. Or quoting Lamounier himself:

“Authoritarian regimes, and Brazil in particular, are power structures organized on a bureaucratic, non-mobilizational pattern. ... Since no useful purpose can be served by making it coextensive with the non-market category, I would thus restrict the term State ideology to a subclass in which participatory elements are absent.”⁶⁷²

The Revolution of 1930 was an ideology-producing event: it benefited from, and gave subsequent impetus to, a significant intellectual transformation, the main thrust of which was to justify the foundation of a centralized, tutelary State:

“Victorious among the key intellectual groups, this doctrine of the State became dominant in practice, providing legitimation as well as operative policy criteria during at least the first 15 years of Vargas’ prominence in Brazilian life. With the advent of the Estado Novo (1937), its core vocabulary began to appear in an unbroken line from the more respectable to the purely propagandistic governmental publications.”⁶⁷³

Apparently receding during the period of 1946 to 1964, it reappears, Lamounier argues, in the ideology of the military regime of present days.

The second dimension of the ideology of Brazilian authoritarianism is its “objectivism,” a term which Lamounier coins as broader than “positivism.”⁶⁷⁴ By objectivism he understands the orientation which resulted from the belief that there was a “legal” and a “real” Brazil. Although World War I had helped launch industrialization as a substitute for imports, and although urban growth had increased considerably, the dominant perception was that social relations remained unchanged.⁶⁷⁵

These feelings of maladaptation expressed themselves in an intense search for “Brazilian reality,” an expression which became the fundamental concept of the first decades of the century and which is common even today. The coming to terms with “reality” implied that Brazilian history might exclude the possibility of a liberal, decentralized State, or even of the autonomous organization of interests in an open, pluralistic way. Lamounier suggests that this attitude derived from a

⁶⁷² Lamounier, 1974:301.

⁶⁷³ Lamounier, 1974:294.

⁶⁷⁴ Lamounier, 1974:334.

⁶⁷⁵ Lamounier, 1974:307.

feeling of estrangement of the Europeanized upper class who were incapable of identifying with their society as it then existed:

“The novelists expressed these feelings in so many words; the young military officers who had been revolting through-out the period, in the positivism of Auguste Comte, largely diffused in the academias and engineering schools; the lawyers, in the sociological critique of existing law.”⁶⁷⁶

The objectivist character of the ideology reflected the two aspects of the concept of “reality” as mentioned above: one, the estrangement of the elite, and concerns about territory, natural resources legal codes, and social and political institutions. Second is the assumption that a homologous correlation exists between the “reality” as seen from the positivistic perspective and an “appropriate” institutional form. In this sense, “the political sphere is thus conceptualized, not as matter of social choice, but rather, to recall a decisive phrase of our political vocabulary, of ‘adaptation to Brazilian reality’.”

W.G. Santos adopts a different viewpoint and disagrees with Lamounier on two grounds. First, he argues that the concept of State ideology is obscure, since it leaves open the question of whether political ideologies may ever occur devoid of the notion of State. Second, he faults Lamounier of determinism, since implicit in his model is the idea that State ideologies mirror the society and its conflicts.⁶⁷⁷ Disputing Lamounier, W.G. Santos emphasizes that manifest content cannot be the only criterion for ordering and finding a rationale for the development of social ideas. For him,

“Every social act — and the production of an idea is a social act — falls short and goes beyond the intentions of whoever practices it.”⁶⁷⁸

From this perspective, W.G. Santos’ propositions oppose Lamounier’s, for he states that the predominant theoretical and practical problem for the political and intellectual elites in Brazil has been but one, from Independence on — how to implement and how to guarantee a liberal bourgeois order in the country.⁶⁷⁹

W.G. Santos argues that remaining at the level of empirical evidence is unsatisfactory because only themes are considered important. He exemplifies the problem as follows: after independence, two themes acquired predominance for

⁶⁷⁶ Lamounier, 1974:309.

⁶⁷⁷ W.G. Santos, 1978:32-3.

⁶⁷⁸ W.G. Santos, 1978:34.

⁶⁷⁹ W.G. Santos, 1978:50.

Brazilian intellectuals. The first was how to organize the new State, the second, how to politically order the social groups that were being formed. At the turn of the century, concern shifted to a debate over centralization vs. decentralization. This debate was made both clearer and more radical through the Republican question and the polemic over slavery. The themes of the twenties were the historical formation of the country, the interrelations between the socio-economic and the political structures, the racial question and potential for conflict, the role of the State, the limits to be placed on private interest and the legitimacy of the central power. Writers in the thirties again took up the question of centralization, and intellectuals looked at the origins of the crisis in modern societies, at the impact of developed societies on underdeveloped ones, and so on.

Important as it may be to consider the unfolding of themes, W.G. Santos argues that it prevents a deeper understanding of Brazilian intellectual life in terms of the long-term liberal project which has been the paradigm for politicians and intellectuals. It is this proposition which leads him to explain the controversial period of the 1930's differently from Lamounier. For W.G. Santos,

“despite the naturalism and functionalism of the ‘authoritarians’ of the 1930’s, they agreed that the public power had an important role to carry out — that of removing the obstacles to the full flourishing of the authentic Brazilian society.”⁶⁸⁰

Authoritarianism was conceived by those thinkers as a temporary means to a long-term goal and, like the conservative politicians of the 19th century, they considered the parliamentary and multiparty institutions which had been necessary in Europe for the emergence of the bourgeois order to be dispensable in Brazil. In Brazil the public sector had to be powerful because they were creating, rather than maintaining (in which case they could afford to be mild), a bourgeois order. They operated in a context in which oligarchical privaticism had been, and would otherwise continue to be, the paramount principle.⁶⁸¹

W.G. Santos concludes: “Ironically, but understandably, it was within the bourgeois order as paradigm that the 1930’s ‘authoritarians’ were opposed to the liberal institutions.”⁶⁸² This same paradigm would later serve as the conceptual background for the democratic and nationalistic ideas of the fifties. At that moment, W.G. Santos argues, the objective was to stimulate the bourgeois order, but this order now would incorporate the *national* dimension⁶⁸³.

⁶⁸⁰ W.G. Santos, 1978:53.

⁶⁸¹ W.G. Santos, 1978:54.

⁶⁸² W.G. Santos, 1978:53.

⁶⁸³ W.G. Santos, 1978:55.

It is not my intention to take sides with either Lamounier or W.G. Santos as to whether the thinkers of the thirties were guided by a State ideology or whether this same ideology was conceived of as a temporary means to a long-term liberal end. Rather I want simply to place in perspective the work of the social scientists I have examined in the previous chapters. Beyond their incompatible viewpoints, I see different levels of analysis at which both are looking for a single rationale to explain the development of Brazilian social thought. Interestingly, both W.G. Santos and Lamounier left open the possibility that their analysis may be applied to the social sciences after the thirties, although neither of them systematically developed this topic.⁶⁸⁴

The first factor to consider is the realization of discontinuities in social thinking before and after the thirties. With Lamounier, I take the Revolution of 1930 to have been a major ideology-producing event, although it is irrelevant and inappropriate, as W.G. Santos has argued, to ask whether the institutionalization of the social sciences, which occurred in this period, marked a shift from a “pre-scientific” to a “scientific” phase of studies.⁶⁸⁵

Second, I disagree with both Lamounier and W.G. Santos on one important point, namely, on the roles of the social scientist and the politician. To say, as I have above, that the Brazilian intellectual has specific political responsibilities does not mean that the roles of the intellectual and the politician, as two social categories, are undifferentiated. Because he makes no distinction between them, W.G. Santos is not able to explore in more detail the implications of the ideas held by the “authoritarians” of the thirties and the “educated men” of the sixties.⁶⁸⁶ Lamounier is caught in the dilemma by postulating a sort of identity between the emergence of a State ideology in Brazil and the institutionalization of the social sciences in the academic curricula. For Lamounier, both State ideology and the social sciences resulted from opposition to the liberal constitution of the First Republic (1889-1930) and from the critique of legal formalism.⁶⁸⁷

In this dissertation, in contrast with W.G. Santos and Lamounier, I have stressed that the founding of the universities during the thirties was the result, in the first place, of the liberal tendencies of part of the elite of São Paulo. Second, I have emphasized that it also promoted increased specialization among intellectuals, namely, among novelists, politicians and social scientists.⁶⁸⁸ Specialization, of which the “educators” had already given evidence during the twenties, rapidly spread during the next decades, despite the persistence of the category of the

⁶⁸⁴ W.G. Santos, 1967, 1970.

⁶⁸⁵ W.G. Santos, 1967.

⁶⁸⁶ W.G. Santos, 1970 and 1978.

⁶⁸⁷ Lamounier, 1974:296.

⁶⁸⁸ Candido, 1976:129-138. See Chapter Two.

“intellectual” and, on a minor scale, of “social scientist.” Furthermore, in their institutional setting, social scientists had special privileges and immunities. The Universidade de São Paulo, for instance, wanted to create an intellectual elite to guide and plan for the future of the nation, but produced intellectuals with more radical, democratic, and socialist views than the founders themselves. Fernandes, Ribeiro, and Candido all explain their works and define themselves as committed socialists.⁶⁸⁹ It is my belief that it was in the institutional context of the university that social scientists could challenge the dominant State ideology which Lamounier describes, and which was primarily put forward and implemented by the politicians of the time.

I propose that to fully understand the development of the social sciences in Brazil two points must be taken into account: one, a distinction has to be made between the social roles of the politician and of the social scientist — a sociological dimension I miss in both W.G. Santos’ and Lamounier’s writings. Second, the relation between the social roles must be examined. In other words, if it is true that the political domain is dominant in Brazilian social structure and ideology, as many have recently argued,⁶⁹⁰ then social science in Brazil is not “neutral science,” but rather is embedded in larger national political issues.

In Brazil, there are many different views of possible variations in the way the roles of the “scientist” and “citizen” are combined. For Fernandes, for instance, science should incorporate politics; for Ribeiro, science could be sacrificed to politics; and Da Matta believes they should be kept distinct.⁶⁹¹ In recent years, social scientists have actually fought in the public sphere as politicians.⁶⁹² Different persuasions aside, the fact is that the political dimension implied in the role of the intellectual leads the social scientist, the novelist, the artist, and the painter to accept that while writing, painting, or acting, they are contributing to the building of the nation in a very direct way.⁶⁹³ The discussion in the preceding chapters on the disengagement of anthropology from the social sciences corresponds to a further process of differentiation of social scientists into sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists, and historians.

In sum, I propose that, in contrast with the social thinkers of the thirties who worked within the framework of a State ideology, later social scientists developed their theories from the perspective of nation-building. This is not meant to imply

⁶⁸⁹ See Chapter Three, Four and Five.

⁶⁹⁰ See Maybury-Lewis, 1968; O. Velho, 1976a; Fernandes, 1976; Schwartzman, 1975; Pereira-Reis, 1979.

⁶⁹¹ See Chapters Three, Four and Five, respectively.

⁶⁹² An example is Fernando Henrique Cardoso's candidacy for the senate in the elections of 1978. F.H. Cardoso is a former student of Fernandes and is considered one of the leading theoreticians of the "dependency school".

⁶⁹³ Candido, 1972 develops this argument for literature.

that the social sciences are not granted relative autonomy from larger social processes, within which the issue of validity and scientificity may be debated. I simply want to stress that social scientists, accompanying or reacting to a general trend in the national political ideology, developed their inquiries in terms of nation-building, understood as the development of national consciousness, participation and commitment.⁶⁹⁴ While open to Lamounier's suggestion that the statist premise of centralized power impregnates much of Brazilian social thinking, I argue that nation-building processes of strata integration, with its democratic connotations, have been a more important framework for social scientists. Territorial integration, the other nation-building process recognized by Elias,⁶⁹⁵ has been more the concern of the central government, in its bureaucratic and non-mobilizational functions.⁶⁹⁶ Social scientists in this context examined what I call the myths of national identity as a precondition for the understanding of the "reality" of Brazil. However, in doing so, both anthropologists and sociologists were caught in the "mirror image" dilemma⁶⁹⁷ and were forced to develop alternative propositions on what Brazilian reality *ought to be*. Interestingly enough, when looking at the "symbols of nationhood," anthropologists proposed, instead of trying to demystify them, as was the sociologists' tendency,⁶⁹⁸ to explain by which mechanisms they operate.⁶⁹⁹ There is thus a final contrast with the American sociological tradition. In Elias' analysis of Talcott Parsons' work, the model of an *accomplished* nation is seen to underlie the central concept of a "social system" which was static, eternal, and immutable in its essential features, and in equilibrium. Where the *building* of a nation is at stake, social science models must necessarily include the factors of development and change.

C. Conclusions

One point must be re-emphasized; in proposing that in Brazil, as elsewhere, social sciences develop within the framework of the ideology of nation-building, I am not implying anything about their validity or scientificity. This issue was dismissed at the start as not affecting the results of this study, as I have simply been looking at the context in which the social sciences were institutionalized in a given nation-state.

⁶⁹⁴ Tilly, 1975:70.

⁶⁹⁵ Elias, 1972a.

⁶⁹⁶ "Integrar para não entregar", the Projeto Rondon's slogan, has a definite territorial connotation.

⁶⁹⁷ I borrow this expression from Skocpol, 1977, who uses it for similar purposes.

⁶⁹⁸ As attested by Fernandes' work, cf. Chapter Three.

⁶⁹⁹ See Chapter Five.

I stress this point because the only conclusions reached on this subject are that the status of scientificity in the social sciences is attained *despite* or *within* national ideologies. For example, Dumont's and Elias' studies on, respectively, the concept of nation and the concepts of civilization and culture, arrive at similar conclusions even if they start from different viewpoints.⁷⁰⁰ In relation to Brazil, I have described the values attached to the scientific enterprise and compared them to the statist and liberal ideologies which prevail in the wider community. I have examined how they differ from, and relate to, the values characteristic of social and political ideologies.⁷⁰¹

The conclusions I arrived at are only tentative, but I believe the issues to be central to the understanding of the nature of the social sciences and in need of further research. Equally necessary are studies evaluating the degree of autonomy of the social sciences in relation to short-term fluctuations in a society's development. This relative autonomy could allow them to become self-perpetuating and, perhaps as a consequence, more scientific.⁷⁰²

This point being made clear, I will now explore the Brazilian case in more detail. The question here is the following: if the French could conceive a model for anthropology in the framework of universalistic values encompassing the holism of a given studied society, what happens in a nation-state characterized (by European standards) by late industrialization, and by peripheral or dependent capitalism? What happens when the ideology of nation-building is contaminated by the notion of "historical retardation?"⁷⁰³

In contrast with the Dumontian model which denies the possibility of the reversibility of anthropological knowledge, I see the Brazilian case as dominated by two ambivalent tendencies, which result in a distinction between two different types of "others." On the one hand, intellectuals are mainly drawn from the urban middle-classes, and this elite has an umbilical relationship with "modern" intellectual centers, such as France, Germany, or more recently, the United States. These are the first "others" Brazilian intellectuals face. Furthermore, given the historical relationship between Brazil and the European countries, the intellectual elite see themselves as part of the Western world, and thus relate to, and absorb, the value of "universalism." At the same time, however, inequality and dispossession are dominant features of the relationship, and often result in feelings of "anomaly,"⁷⁰⁴ "estrangement,"⁷⁰⁵ or the sense of being "desterrados em sua própria terra" (exiled in their own land).⁷⁰⁶

⁷⁰⁰ See Chapter One.

⁷⁰¹ See section B above.

⁷⁰² See Elias, 1971 on the notion of "relative autonomy".

⁷⁰³ See Laroui, 1976.

⁷⁰⁴ Skidmore, 1974:3.

The second kind of “other” is the dispossessed or “oppressed” *within* Brazilian society, over whom the intellectuals hold a privileged position. Here the relationship of inequality vis-à-vis the international centers is inverted, with the intellectuals being an elite within their own society. It is in this context that the ideology of nation-building is oriented towards national integration, and the “other” becomes the Indian, the peasant, the black, the *caipira*, and the lower urban classes.

The result is the anguish of the intellectual, caught in a situation in which “speaking an European language, professing a religion which is Euro-Asiatic, being a cultural extension of Europe, we are nevertheless Brazilians.”⁷⁰⁷ It is here that universal values are sought and incorporated, even if “for us the universal is mediated by Europe. Europe, for us, is already the universal.”⁷⁰⁸

I believe that variations are possible in terms of the relative dominance of the external or the internal pole over the other. It is important to stress, however, that structurally there are two kinds of relationships at stake: one is the link of the Brazilian intellectual with foreign centers, from which the values of universalism come; and second is their link with the internal sectors of the society which is the “holistic” unit of analysis. This contrasts with the Dumontian model in which the investigator sits at the universalistic end of the pole as “a citizen of the world,” while holism is reserved for other societies.⁷⁰⁹ In Brazil, the anthropologist is both inside and outside the holism of his own society, conceived in terms of nation-building: he is part of the investigated society, and he debates his findings not only with Brazilian intellectuals but also with Europeans and Americans.

The a-historicity so common in anthropological traditions of the more developed countries points out the inadequacy of a single model for anthropology. On the other hand, it also suggests that the idea that cultures which have been the objects of inquiries “will develop anthropological traditions of their own ... and will make us the object of their speculation”⁷¹⁰ is problematic. If and when this happens, the relationship between investigator and investigated will be different and will involve different assumptions about the research.

⁷⁰⁵ Lamounier, 1974:308.

⁷⁰⁶ Buarque de Holanda, 1955:Introduction.

⁷⁰⁷ Candido, interview.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁹ It might be argued that holism (or the idea of totality) is unavoidable (cf. Anderson, 1968). In this case, the French placed it on the level of ideology, as seen in the case of the French structuralists.

⁷¹⁰ Crick, 1976:167.

Further comparisons would enlarge the scope of these suggestions. In India, for example, one would expect a different model to emerge. Unlike Brazil, it never considered itself *part* of the Western world. Having a non-Western tradition to preserve, it is expected that a different kind of tension might exist between the European and the Indian anthropologist. At the “holistic” pole, the Western-trained Indian social scientist living in a caste system must have different assumptions about “oppression” than in the Brazilian case.

The issue of oppression brings us again to the theme of “historical retardation,” a pervasive problem for Brazilian social scientists. It also brings up the question of whether Marxism can ever *not* be an important mode of sociological thinking when inequalities are perceived within or between societies.

It should be made clear that Marxism *is* a major language of intellectual discourse in Brazil. It has been taken up more by sociologists, however, than by anthropologists. Take, for instance, the case of Fernandes. Despite his adherence to socialist viewpoints throughout his life, it was only when he decided to leave the Tupinambá topic and to “confront society” that he included Marxist concepts in his analysis. In other words, it was only when Fernandes became a sociologist that he adopted a Marxist perspective in his studies.⁷¹¹ Similarly, Darcy Ribeiro — a committed socialist — studied Indian mythology and plumage without a trace of Marxism in his analysis. It was only when he decided to examine the whole spectrum of the civilizing process that he acknowledged his indebtedness to Engels and Marx.⁷¹² The case of Antonio Candido was different. Candido also defined himself as a socialist, but never used a Marxist perspective in his literary criticism.⁷¹³ Among the younger generations of the surveyed social scientists, we saw Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira incorporating a Marxist approach in the definition of interethnic friction as equivalent to class-struggle,⁷¹⁴ and, recently, Otávio Velho examining the peasantry as a political class in authoritarian capitalist social formations.⁷¹⁵ Interestingly enough, while Cardoso never saw much difference between sociology and anthropology, Velho states that his analysis is getting closer to a political sociology.⁷¹⁶ Roberto da Matta, affirming the anthropological nature of his perspective, was never tempted by Marxist concepts.

⁷¹¹ See Chapter Three.

⁷¹² See Chapter Four.

⁷¹³ See Chapter Five.

⁷¹⁴ See Chapter Four.

⁷¹⁵ See Chapter Four.

⁷¹⁶ See Chapter Four.

My point is that anthropologists in Brazil, despite and in contrast to those sociologists who followed Florestan Fernandes,⁷¹⁷ developed a Marxist perspective only very timidly, or not at all. This raises several questions, given that Marxist perspective has spread more or less all over the world. With few exceptions,⁷¹⁸ however, it has never really “caught on” in anthropology. Does this result from the nature of the “anthropological object” itself, with its implicit sense of “otherness?” Is it a consequence of the social background of anthropologists as compared to other social scientists? Or is it because anthropologists already tend to be “strangers” and “marginal” in their own societies? Or, finally, is it inevitable that, studying “others,” anthropologists are predisposed to a lesser degree of involvement in the nation-building processes of their own societies?

The Brazilian case casts doubt on the latter hypothesis. First, in Brazil nation-building was conducive, in the long run, to the integration of the social sciences as a whole in which the different disciplines were only relatively distinguished among themselves. Second, the differentiation between sociology and anthropology went hand in hand with different aspects of nation-building: anthropology took as its topic of analysis the *internal* “other”, namely, the Indian, Black, peasant, and lower urban classes. Anthropologists sometimes emphasized the issues of integration (as in the study of peasants)⁷¹⁹, and sometimes looked at the “other” in order to understand themselves (as in the study of urban groups)⁷²⁰. Up until recently, Indians, having maintained the character of the “different others,” have always been an ambiguous object of analysis for Brazilians.⁷²¹ As the study of peasants illustrates, Marxism has been influential whenever social integration, which raises problems of oppression and domination, becomes a dominant issue.

By contrast, sociology looked at the *external* “other” or the relationship between Brazil as a nation-state and other nations. With the nation as an either implicit or explicit object of study, sociologists examined under-development and dependency in Brazil and other “third world” countries, while at the same time looking at the different social classes under the system of dependent capitalism. In the Paulista school of sociology and in others, Marxism became the dominant mode of intellectual discourse. From the forties on, despite efforts to develop a sociology “*feita no Brasil*” (made in Brazil), several fashionable tendencies

⁷¹⁷ Among Fernandes' best known students are Fernando Henrique Cardoso, Otávio Ianni, Luiz Pereira, Francisco Weffort, José de Souza Martins, Gabriel Cohn, Marialice Foracchi, Maria Sylvia Carvalho Franco, and José Cesar Gnaccarini.

⁷¹⁸ See, for example, the writings of Godelier, Terray, and Balandier in France and of Peter Worsley in England.

⁷¹⁹ See Chapter Four.

⁷²⁰ See Chapter Fiver.

⁷²¹ See Chapter Four.

succeeded one another; for instance, Lukács was replaced by Sartre, Sartre by Goldman, Goldman by Althusser,⁷²² Althusser by Gramsci.

Different forms of Marxisms aside, the important point to stress is that sociology, even while looking at the external “other,” did not define it as an unrelated object of study to Brazilian concerns. One does not find here the characteristic distancing which marked the traditional version of anthropology, in which the “other” was cut off from the investigator’s society. Furthermore, in this situation, it is not the “other” itself which matters, but the relationship it has with Brazil as a nation-state or with its various social classes.

In sum, there is an apparent paradox in the way anthropology and sociology developed in Brazil, in contrast to more advanced industrialized societies. In Europe and the United States, for example, the anthropologist has often studied societies other than his own, whereas the sociologist has mainly been identified with the problems of his own society. In Brazil, the opposite relationship developed — whereas anthropology looked at the internal “other,” sociology took as its main concern external relations with the more advanced societies. What does this say about the ideal of a universal anthropology?

There is a widespread belief in the Western developed countries that in the more or less distant future a “common modern culture” will cover the entire world, with only differences in the degree of modernization attained by each country. Some define modernization primarily as a process of growth in the political and economic spheres; for others, modernization also implies concomitant cultural changes; and still others associate modernization with the development of democratic political systems.

The idea of modernization has not been confined, of course, to the lay public, but has been embraced in some academic circles as well, in what became known as “modernization theory.” This paradigm, which gained a significant following during the fifties, later came under attack by structuralists and Marxists, among others. Structuralists focused on the relationship between the elements of the ideological structures of different societies and showed that “primitive” and “civilized” people think in similar, or at least comparable terms. By implication, they also showed that “modernization” has nothing to do with the innate capabilities of human beings. Marxists, on the other hand, dismissed the assumptions of modernization theorists by emphasizing the structures of domination among social classes and nation-states. A by-product of their analysis was to show that the future of underdeveloped countries would not necessarily mirror the present of existing industrialized societies.

Without dismissing the valid contributions which structuralism and Marxism have brought to this question, this dissertation has followed a different path. It was born with the ambitious intention of looking at one place where ideas about man

⁷²² Fernandes, 1978a:158.

and society were generated, in order to show that social knowledge is culturally and historically defined. In the modern world there is constant borrowing and lending of ideas, which may — but does not always — reflect the structure of economic and political domination. Borrowing occurs, however, within the historical constraints of internal development for each specific case. I believe that the task of identifying the social, cultural, and historical differences between modern societies, without freezing them, is a challenge for contemporary anthropology. This investigation is a step in that direction. Although it raised more questions than it was able to answer, I believe that this justifies my having undertaken it.

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