

Overturing Brazil. The Brazilian political and social crisis.

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September 2017

I'm not a English speaker but I would try to draft some notes about my country in these times of political violence and ascension of ignorance and fascism.

As so, I present myself: I'm professor at Federal University of Pará, in Belém, (Amazon, Brazil), attached to two postgraduates programs: Sustainable Development of Humid Tropic, at the Nucleus for High Amazonian Studies (NAEA) and Communication, Culture and Amazon. I have a PhD on Sociology by University of Paris V (Sorbonne-Descartes), France, and a post-doctorate studies at Montreal University, in Canada. I work with sociology and ethnography of Amazonian populations and, in my civil life, I'm a very critical member of the Partido dos Trabalhadores (PT), or Labour Party, if you prefer, trying to understand what's going on my country.

Finally I must say I'm very worried, really uneasy, with the ongoing process of putsch in the Brazilian democracy. A strange and unused, but real coup d'État. And this blog is about that. Let's move on.

What is happening in Brazil?

In historical and sociological terms, what is happening is the rupture of a pact of governance between the oligarchies and the political parties that represented the popular strata and left thinking.

In political and immediate terms, there is a process of usurpation of the state by these oligarchies. And this is accompanied by a dynamics of social subjectivity based on the hate against the popular classes and, mainly, against the PT – which represented them, politically, in the last decades. A hate often irrational and fuelled by false news and post-truths. A hatred that has been generating a pattern of behaviour similar to fascism.

But the most interesting thing, in my view, is to perceive the intersubjective dimension that involves this historical moment and the political life of Brazil – and this, because of my professional competences – is what I would like to talk about in this blog, focusing on exploring the Brazilian intersubjectivity.

In a way, I have the impression that, with the ongoing political, economic and social crisis, Brazil is, effectively and perhaps on the poorest way, rediscovering itself: rediscovering its past, history and updating its conservative and prejudiced essence. The country is meeting again its founding violence and exposing, in a clear way, the class hatred that, albeit concealed, has nourished its social formation.

A unique moment, therefore, propitious to understand what Brazil really is and the reasons why we have always tried to hide our historical conflicts.

Above all, I find it interesting that, with the experience of the present, all the great myths that guided the idea of Brazil, or rather the formal and agreed discourse on the "national" identity, are overturned. It is as if the extreme violence of slavery returned, to deny, on the one hand, the erudite markers of Brazilian identity – the theses of patriarchalism, cordial man, anthropophagy, cultural synthesis, the union between house and street, patrimonialism – as well as the popular and banal markers of this identity – the themes of "jeitinho", the praise of miscegenation, the ideas of harmony, generosity, eroticism.

All these markers, between scholars and popular, as a whole, were always at the service of the dissimulation of founding violence in Brazilian society. The always present and generative violence. Generative in the sense that it re-does, it reproduces, as a negative dialectic, though concealed in the obscurity of its veils of representation, throughout history.

What is happening is, in short, the unveiling of the profound violence of our social formation, as if the country were stripped of its conventional and misguided garments taken by the pulsion to retrieve its essences.

The verb undo is not without purpose. Apparently, Brazil is undoing itself.

But maybe that's not it at all. Maybe he's just meeting up again. Revealing itself, overcoming itself.

Offering a opportunity to be accountable with the past.

When a corrupt president is abrogated by the Parliament

What to say about a parliament that refuses a hard-hitting report of corruption, drawn up by the Public Prosecutor's Office, and decides to

prevent further investigation of a President who, moreover, is dismantling the country?

This is what happened this week in Brazil. And this is just one more episode in a long list started when this parliament, with cynicism and dissimulation, impeached the president Dilma Rousseff, a unblemished and honest person.

But let's go to the recent case. In mid-July, the Attorney General accused President Michel Temer of having committed a crime of passive corruption. Its denunciation states that, between March and April 2017, by its own will, the President received, through the Federal Deputy, Rocha Loures, the sum of R\$ 500,000 (circa US\$ 160,000) offered by the JBS business group.

In addition, the Public Prosecutor's Office affirms that the president accepted the promise of undue advantage in the amount of R\$ 38 million (circa US\$ 12 millions to act in defense of the interests of that company - amounts that would be paid in the sum of R\$ 1 million per week for 38 weeks.

The prosecution has reconstituted this process in detail: since the dialogue held on March 7, 2017, recorded with the authorization of the Public Prosecutor's Office, between President Temer and the owner of the JBS company, up to the delivery of a suitcase with R\$ 500,000 (circa US\$ 160,000) to Deputy Rocha Loures, Temer's right-hand man, on April 28.

Under Brazilian law, the president can only be inquired by the Supreme Court, but for that to happen, the complaint must be accepted by the Chamber of Deputies.

Well, at yesterday's session the Chamber of Deputies refused the complaint and prevented the investigation from continuing.

What justifies that? The "pressure" of the government on the deputies. Pressure? Well, the pressure was as follows: R\$ 2 billion (US\$ 642 million) in parliamentary amendments + R\$ 19 billion (US\$ 6 billion) in public lands ceded to congressmen related to agribusiness lobby + R\$ 11 billion (US\$ 3,5 billion) in tax increases + R\$ 26 billion (US\$ 8,5 billion) passed by a provisional measure constituting a Rural Fund to support the interests of the agribusiness lobby + R\$ 220 billion (US\$ 70 billion) in debt forgiveness granted to tax-evading companies with interest to congressmen. Total invoice: R\$ 278 billion (US\$ 90 billion).

Maybe Brazil is experiencing the closing of a historical cycle

Apparently we are experiencing the closing of a cycle in Brazilian history: the cycle initiated with the "political opening" in 1979 and which resulted in the closing of the military period in 1985. This cycle was marked by the clash between the traditional economic and political oligarchies and civil society, with important achievements in terms of democracy and citizenship but which, strictly speaking, did not result in marked ruptures in the Brazilian historical class divorce. Indeed, the dominant political vector throughout these periods has been the hegemony of some kind of conservative pact.

I say this without losing sight of the role of the PT – Labour Party – and particularly of the Lula governments in the relaxation of this conservative pact, a historical role that, without constructing major ruptures, sought ways for a national understanding through which one could guarantee some social achievements yielding to the Preservation of rentier structures of the oligarchies.

This is a complex period marked by the narrative marker of the last years of the military dictatorship: the idea of a "slow, gradual and progressive opening". It is as if the whole New Republic – the republican period initiated with the 1988 Constitution – continues to follow this order, endorsed even by the PT, always seeking a national agreement.

What you see now is the rupture of this agreement. A rupture provoked by the political right, by the conservative thought and above all by the oligarchies that had broken with the pact considering that the concessions made to the popular classes were excessive.

Ultimately, the *coup* was not only given by the oligarchies on the PT government, it was given against the state, against the model agreed with the 1988 Constitution and that had begun to be constructed with the political opening, even if "slowly, gradual and progressive", in 1979.

But, if this historical moment was dominated by the right, what explains such a long domain of the PT?

The notion of hegemony exists to understand that to exercise the power it is not fundamental to occupy, physically, the structure of the government. I think that the period we are talking about, which goes from 1979 to the current coup, is marked by a political hegemony of the ruling classes, even though we have had leftist governments, important social achievements and important social pressure for citizenship and social inclusion.

Despite these achievements, the oligarchies maintained their control over economic power and, more than that, progressed, both in the control of the means of production and in the ideological devices of support of their

conservatism. Another important element is the fact that this hegemonic construction allowed the production of

devices for the circulation of elites and for the consequent co-optation of a part of these elites to their power project.