

Chapter 3

Genealogy and Continuity: The Naturalisation of hierarchies and endurance of traditional politics in Brazil

*And they called it O'Brazil - the isle of the blest.
From year unto year, on the ocean blue rim
The beautiful spectre showed lovely and dim.
The golden clouds curtained the deep, where it lay,
And it looked like an Eden, away, far away.
Gerald Griffin (1803-1840)¹*

In this chapter I explain the fixation of hierarchies and also the functionality of certain mechanisms of power that assist the construction and repetition of a traditional power structure in Brazil. I present evidence of strong patterns of continuity in Brazilian politics by making reference to an extensive and relevant literature on this question.

In Brazil, politics is viewed as an evil and corrupt version of 'Democracy' in contrast with the 'goodness' of the social approach of populism. Thus, my first claim in this chapter is that such hierarchy of values - between the good society and evil politics - fix a certain authoritarian order since they give rise to conciliatory positions in Brazil society by allowing the co-existence of traditional and rationalist parallel codes in this society. The subjugation of difference to identity, error to truth, evil to good (i.e. the subjugation of *otherness* as a negative and corrupt version of the *same*) is at the root of continuity and distrust of liberal democracy in Brazil.² My second claim concerns the degree of change that political regimes are able to effect in Brazil. I argue that these are constrained by systems of domination such as *parentela*,³ *coronelism*⁴ and *clientelism*⁵ founded on control of material resources in a society characterised by deep economic inequality.

¹ This poem is mentioned in S. Buarque de Holanda, *Visões do Paraíso* (Rio de Janeiro, Companhia Editora Nacional, 1959) p. 167.

² These problems have been tackled by F.H. Cardoso, 'Autoritarismo e democratização' in A. Stephan (ed.), *Democratizing Brazil* (1989); L.W. Vianna (1989), *A Transição, da Constituinte à Sucessão Presidencial* (Rio de Janeiro, 1989); W.G. Santos, *Razões da Desordem* (Rio de Janeiro, 1992); F. Weffort (1992) *Qual democracia?* (São Paulo, 1992); B. Lamounier, *Perspectives on democratic consolidation: the Brazilian case* (1986); G. O'Donnel & P. Schmitter, *Transitions from authoritarian rule* (1986); M.L.N. Covre, *A cidadania que não temos*; C.N. Coutinho, *Cultura e sociedade no Brasil* (1990); J.A. Moisés, *Os brasileiros e a democracia* (1995); L.E. Soares, *et al.*, *Violência e Política no Rio de Janeiro* (1996), among others.

³ Pereira Queiróz (1969) understands the Brazilian 'parentela' as a kinship group formed by various nuclear

Two broad sections compose this chapter. In section one I analyse the constitution of political identities of subaltern groups as indifferent to politics, by submitting them to a *deconstructionist* critique. From a post-modern perspective, political identities are viewed as contingent and relational. Therefore, any condemnation of political inactivity from objective grounds disguises the oppositional nature of competing identities by denying their contingency and incompleteness.

To address the genealogy of political manichaeism, apathy and the conditions of possibility for the co-existence of traditional and rationalist parallel codes in Brazilian society, I have organised section one into four subsections.

First I look at the construction of an authoritarian-normative discourse in Brazilian society as given credence by several authors who have contributed to building a traditional identity as irrational and apathetic but also orderly, peaceful and harmonious until the early part of the 20th century. Second, I argue that while a tradition of hope and expectation of popular religious movements evolved in Brazil between 1817 and 1950, millenarist movements did not break with the repetition of an uneven traditional structure. I also mention that in the 1970s there was a rise of a new political culture in Brazil with the emergence of national social movements. Despite the existence of an efficient resistance against authoritarianism and *clientelism*, this grass-roots democracy could not subvert or change traditional patterns of domination in Brazil. Third, I expound the view that moral and manichaeist judgements in political discourse play an important part in the repetition of a subaltern popular identity in Brazil. Fourth, I explore Da Matta's theory

families and broad relatives who are economically independent. The main feature of this group is a complex internal structure, which can be either egalitarian or stratified. The egalitarian *parentela* presents strong horizontal solidarity. In the case of a hierarchical type of *parentela*, both vertical and horizontal kinds of solidarity join both individuals of the same category and individuals of different socio-economic levels. Parentela groups are the origin of the *coronelistic* structure. Source: Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiróz (1969), 'Estrutura de Poder e Economia', in *História Geral da Civilização Brasileira*, p. 165.

⁴ The name *coronel* is originally from a National Army rank that assumed a fundamental role since colonial times extending through the Brazilian monarchy. Since the 1889 Republic Proclamation, the *coronel* is defined by his political power measured in terms of the amount of voters he controls as a local or regional chief. Source: Maria Isaura Pereira Queiróz (1969), p. 157.

⁵ Clientelism refers to a voluntary, informal relation between patron-client characterised by a personalised and particularised connection based on the exchange of resources and expectation of reciprocity. Source: Edward B. Reeves, *The Hidden Government: Ritual, Clientelism and Legitimation in Northern Egypt*, (Salt Lake City, University of Utah Press, 1990) p. 159.

of political apathy as a result of *relational dynamics* that enables the displacement of identities by means of conciliation, implementing *conciliation* of formal and substantive rational systems.

In section two I highlight what prevents change in Brazil by explaining the construction and conservation of political structures along two subsections:

First, I introduce the notion of *parentela* through historical accounts by Levi (1987), Lewin (1987), Love (1971), Wirth (1977) and Hagopian (1996). Second, I explain the notion of coronelism according to investigations by Costa Porto (1951), Nunes Leal (1948) and Pereira de Queiroz (1969), Blondel (1957) and Love (1971). Third, I introduce the notion of clientelism through a classical study by Eli Diniz (1982) on machine-based forms of clientelism adopted by the opposition party, Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), in Rio de Janeiro during the military dictatorship. I also give an account of Goirant's (1994) research on clientelism and popular vote in Rio de Janeiro's slums at the beginning of the 1990s.

In the conclusion I argue that there are implications between the infrastructural logic of *iterability* and *supplementarity* that explain the survival of a traditional power structure in Brazil.

I argue that *parentela* and clientelism have been conditions of possibility for the progressive exclusion of politics from Brazilian society by a traditional elite. Currently, these traditional practices assume the form of catch-all cliques that depend on television as their new political machine, their new mechanism of power that is associated with the neo-liberal hegemony in Brazilian politics.

Section 1

The naturalisation of hierarchies in Brazil

Conflict, violence and antagonism exist in Brazil as in any other society. Yet there are many myths and social theories portraying Brazil as an idyllic country: 'the place where God planted his Earthly

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Paradise'.⁶ Brazil has been depicted as 'shaped in the form of a heart', 'the original site of the birth and existence of humanity until the universal deluge',⁷ populated by 'a weak, ease-loving race'⁸ who are 'harmonious... morally tolerant... open to fraternisation' and 'racially intermingled'.⁹

One could argue that in this 'evil-free land'¹⁰ an absence of negativity prevents social action, egalitarian individualism, subjugation of differences and the consequent primacy of the right over the good but also obstructs the development of *antagonism*. In the Laclauian sense, antagonism is a negation and disruption of an idealised (i.e. traditional) order.¹¹ But according to a number of studies on the absence of social action in Brazilian politics, the people have been marginalised from the fight for hegemony. J.M. Carvalho (1995) highlights the 'absence of a people', i.e. political apathy, corroborating the impressions of Aristides Lobo. This leading republican described the collaboration of the civilian element in the overthrow of the monarchy as almost nil: 'the people were like dumb beasts, astonished, surprised, unaware of what it signified. Many honestly believed they were watching a parade'.¹² Carvalho (1995) asserts that the priority of political, civil and social rights remains fragile in Brazil until the present. In the case of political rights, 'until 1984 there were no important popular movements in Brazil demanding the enlargement of electoral participation'.¹³ Regarding civil rights, in 1888 Brazil, 'was the last country in the Christian and Western world to free its slaves'.¹⁴ Likewise, the affirmation of the working class has been slow¹⁵

⁶ In the 17th century Catholic priests serving in the 'Companhia de Jesus' defended this theory about the tropical Eden. *Inter alia*, Father Simão Vasconcelos registered his ideas in 'Crônica da Companhia de Jesus' Vol.I, p. cviii, as mentioned by Buarque de Holanda, (1959), p. 134.

⁷ Mentioned by Dr. Antonio de Leon Pinelo, a geographer and historian from the Real Council of Castela. He devoted five manuscript books with 88 chapters and 838 pages (kept in the Real Library of Madrid) to prove that the real Eden was in the New World somewhere near the Amazon River which is in Brazil. See Buarque de Holanda, *op.cit.*, p. 135.

⁸ According to the American economist Ernest Ludlow Bogart (1913), see G. Freyre, *Casa Grande e Senzala. Formation of the Brazilian Family under a Regime of Patriarchal Economy*, (Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio Editora. [1933], 1987), p. 16.

⁹ Gilberto Freyre (1987) *op.cit.*, p. 54.

¹⁰ Buarque de Holanda, Sergio (1959). p. 137.

¹¹ The complete absence of antagonism and exclusion seems nonetheless impossible. As Laclau (1995) noted in 'Subject of Politics, Politics of the Subject' (p. 8), antagonism and exclusion are, 'constitutive of all identity. Without limits through which a (non-dialectical) negativity is constructed we would have an infinite dispersion of differences whose absence of systematic limits would make any differential identity impossible. But this very function of constituting differential identities through antagonistic limit is what, at the same time, destabilises and subverts those differences.'

¹² Aristides Lobo, letter to *Diario Popular* (São Paulo, November 18, 1889).

¹³ See J.M.Carvalho, *Desenvolvimento de la Ciudadania en Brasil*, (Mexico, Fondo de Cultura Economica, 1995), p. 32.

¹⁴ See J.M.Carvalho (1995), p. 36.

and frequently undermined by 'clientelism'. Social rights were not yet fully achieved by 1984 and the lack of a welfare state keeps open the door to paternalistic actions.

It is a fact that moments of crisis throughout Brazilian history have opened space for some radicalism and the constitution of new political identities, given the instability of the political terrain. Public character has gained strength during several brief periods of radicalism and bloodshed against the large land ownership such as the rural millenarian movement of Canudos (1893-7) and Contestado (1912-6). The *Federalists* insurrection (1891-3), a bitter civil conflict affecting Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil's southernmost state¹⁶ and the Naval Revolt (1893-4), an attempt to unseat the president Marshal Floriano Peixoto.¹⁷

An escalation of antagonism between oligarchies occurred from the 1920s onward. Internal conflicts in the army culminated in the *Tenentist* Revolution (July 1922)¹⁸ a republican reaction against the oligarch Arthur Bernardes.¹⁹ Further conflicts followed with the São Paulo bombing (1924-26),²⁰ the Revolution of 1923-24 in Rio Grande do Sul,²¹ the Prestes Column (1924-27),²²

¹⁶ With its agrarian background, the Brazilian working class has established itself as a social and political force only with the impulse of immigration. At the beginning of the 19th century, the working class began to develop a political consciousness influenced by European traditions such as anarchism, socialism and anarchic-syndicalism. These influences were present in the first Brazilian labour organisations such as the Brazilian Socialist Party (1902) and the Brazilian Labour Confederation (1908).

¹⁶ This civil conflict in Rio Grande do Sul was a reaction against federal intervention by the government of Marshal Deodoro da Fonseca who was later substituted by his vice-president Marshal Floriano Peixoto in 1891. For a full account see J. E. Hahner, *Civilian-Military Relations in Brazil 1889-1898*, (Columbia, South Carolina, University of South Carolina Press, 1969).

¹⁷ The Naval Revolt (1894-94) was a military uprising against the Floriano regime. The Revolt provided civilians the opportunity to end the years of direct military rule that followed the proclamation of the republic in 1889.

¹⁸ Middle class youngsters willing to fight the dominant oligarchy formed the *Tenentist* (Lieutenant) generation. They were conscious of the necessity for change. The July 5, 1922 Revolution was restricted to Rio de Janeiro and Mato Grosso and the rebels were dominated by federal forces.

¹⁹ Since 1921 the political crisis was not restricted to party groups and included the middle class desire to change the political situation dominated by the São Paulo and Minas Gerais oligarchies. Problems were aggravated during the dispute for presidential succession. Nilo Pecanha and J.J. Seabra were appointed as candidates running for the 'Republican Reaction' against Arthur Bernardes. For a full account see E. Carone, *Revoluções do Brasil Contemporâneo 1922-1938*, (São Paulo, Editora Atica, 1989).

²⁰ In 1924 revolutionary troops assaulted the barracks in São Paulo. The barracks were taken over but the governmental resistance (the *Legalists*) was immediately on the scene and the São Paulo streets became a battleground during the following ten days.

²¹ In 1924 a revolution began in Rio Grande do Sul after the Uruguaiiana, São Borja, São Luis and Santo Angelo troops supported by the Liberation Party (*Partido Libertador*) rebelled against the *legalist* troops of president Bernardes. The revolutionaries were defeated but the union between the São Paulo revolutionaries and the Rio Grande do Sul radicals gave rise to the *Coluna Prestes* (Prestes Column) which carried a long term campaign against the oligarchies throughout Brazil.

²² Radical revolutionaries fighting against Arthur Bernardes repression and censorship composed the Miguel Costa-Luis Carlos Prestes Column. They marched through several Brazilian states advancing 24,000 km and fighting the federal army in 53 battles.

the revolution of November, 1926 in Rio Grande do Sul,²³ the formation of the Communist Party in 1922²⁴ and the Revolution of 1930.²⁵ Getulio Vargas' provisional government confronted continued divisions of his bloc, the Liberal Alliance. Antagonism between lieutenants and oligarchs increased with the state interventionist politics controlled by the lieutenants. Oligarchic groups fought back against the lieutenants' hegemony beginning the Revolution of 1932²⁶ in São Paulo. Over the following years the newly created National Alliance for Liberation (*Aliança Nacional Libertadora*) struggled for state independence. It developed a program that encompassed the aspirations of all social classes and political parties, from democrats to nationalists and communists fighting against Vargas' 'fascism' and also against imperialism, unjust land ownership and constitutional liberties.²⁷ Further antagonism developed during the Communist Revolution of 1935²⁸ and the political unrest during the João Goulart's government (1961-4). However, a problem remains if one considers that these popular, non-conciliatory and anti-oligarchic actions remained on the periphery of the popular camp. Radical popular movements and liberal anti-oligarchic ideologies might have built *antagonisms* by means of their specific agendas. But they were never able to succeed in the struggle for *hegemony*.

The regional oligarchic elite and the military often succeeded in marginalising and eventually eliminating not only popular unrest but also liberal democratic ideology. This was made possible by

²³ This revolution was triggered by links between the Party of Liberation (Partido Libertador), military centres and exiled lieutenants. The original plan was to invade Rio Grande do Sul by lieutenants exiled in Uruguay and Argentina to provoke a division of the governmental forces persecuting the *Prestes Column*.

²⁴ The Brazilian Communist Party whose president was the ex-lieutenant Luis Carlos Prestes was only legal between 1922-7. Its main tactics when acting clandestinely consisted of actions aiming at bolstering the unions' strength.

²⁵ On the 3rd of October exploded the Revolution, which led Getulio Vargas to the executive post in Rio de Janeiro. This Revolution marked the end of the First Republic (1889-1930). Vargas was surrounded by distinct influences such as the manufacturing sector, those reflecting the nationalistic *tenente* (lieutenant) ideology - military officers, intellectuals, industrialists, and politicians from the less powerful states, all requesting direct action at the expense of the federal structure and commitment to orthodox economic liberalism.

²⁶ In July 1932 the bourgeoisie and middle class of São Paulo formed a unique alliance which fought for three months against Vargas' Provisional government. On the 29th September the revolutionary forces were dismantled and Vargas imprisoned Borges de Medeiros.

²⁷ These terms are used by Luis Carlos Prestes who trained in the Soviet Union and, in 1931, publicly embraced communism. Prestes published a manifesto on 5th July 1935 where he argued that in its five years of power, Vargas' government had betrayed the people. Moreover, Prestes considered that the Liberal Alliance (Aliança Liberal) carried on an amorphous programme leaving an open space for the expansion of imperialism. Given that a national unification was impossible under this tutelage, the people should fight against Vargas for a popular and anti-imperialist government.

²⁸ On November 23rd 1935, the Communist Revolution began in the northern state of Natal, and two days after in Recife. Over the following days, revolutionaries invaded the central barracks in Rio de Janeiro but government troops dominated the invasion forces, rendering the Revolution a total failure.

two strategies: (1) *conciliatory tactics*, which mobilised public opinion on the side of the elite. This was the case with Getulio Vargas' New State (*Estado Novo*) after the 1937 coup d'état.²⁹ The New State symbolised the break with the Old Republican era, and (2) *radical tactics*, such as the 1964 military coup that demolished João Goulart's era of popular liberation without any attempt at conciliation. One can argue the incorporation of liberal institutions remains incomplete while the liberal state in Brazil cannot circumscribe politics to the public sphere separating this from the private sphere. Brazilian politics resists being hermetically sealed and reduced to the economic and juridical realms. Rights and justice cannot be derived where hierarchical conceptions of the individual and the common good permeate the whole society. In order to clarify this question, my argument in the next lines concerns the formation of political identities in Brazil. I will argue that their formation undermines the basic principles of democratic-liberal agenda, while strengthening a traditionalist authoritarian ideology.

Social sciences and repetition: The construction of an authoritarian ideology in Brazil

A number of intellectuals strongly contributed to the construction of a conciliatory ideology by providing idyllic images of Brazil, and explanations for the 'irrationality' and generalised political apathy in its society. They portrayed Brazil as an idealised order: 'the place where God planted his Earthly Paradise', 'populated by 'a weak, easy loving, harmonious and morally tolerant race' on the one hand, whilst on the other hand producing racist theories, the latter showing society as uncivilised, immature, submissive, and exhibiting strange pathologies.

From the perspective offered here, these pathologies have been fixed throughout Brazilian history; a history that contained the conditions of possibility for their re-production, i.e. the

²⁹ In the midst of the presidential campaign of Armando Salles de Oliveira de Almeida and the Integralist Plinio Salgado (September 1937), Vargas' War Minister, Dutra, incited a wave of anti-communist repression followed by a coup d'état. On November 10th, 1937, Vargas cancelled the scheduled presidential elections, assumed dictatorial powers and announced a corporatist constitution of his *Estado Novo* (New State). From 1937-45 Vargas' experimented with new forms of national organisation consolidating his personal and conciliatory political power.

infrastructure of repeatability or *iterability*³⁰ of an original structure empirically allowing the systematic exclusion of political activism. In the Brazilian context this is clear from the fact that, despite the challenge of authoritarian discursive constructions by the avant-garde movement of anthropophagous modernism in the 1920s, 1960s and 1970s, the imputed pathologies tended to return. Such ordinary or empirical repetition of a national pathology goes back to the 19th century.

The genealogy of the so-called 'political inertia' in Brazil is the history of social identities as fixated through *discourses*³¹ on the political immaturity of the people. The consequence of this has been the almost total exclusion of the majority of society from the political arena. I will highlight a number of texts that systematically comment on the de-politicisation in Brazil during the past century, reproducing differently the idea that politics is something to be denied where conditions of poverty, intellectual backwardness and lack of civic sense predominate.

Until 1930, the question of statehood and the need to consolidate a strong government was a main subject of reflection for authoritarian intellectuals seeking a solution to the Brazilian crisis. In doing so, they crystallised a series of racist ideas to explain the innate weakness of the people, justifying the state's action in supplanting their inadequacies. Important examples are Oliveira Vianna, who analysed the psychological formation of the Brazilian people and Euclides da Cunha who also provided a psychological picture of the Brazilian soul, the people and the country in Os Sertões (1902). The same path was followed by Paulo Prado, who investigated the sadness of the Brazilian soul in Pictures of Brazil (1928), and Gilberto Freyre, who eulogised the slaveholding patriarchy in The Masters and the Slaves (1933).

Even before the proclamation of the republic, the claim for a centralised state was an issue shared by a number of Brazilian social scientists of which Silvio Romero and Oliveira Vianna are the most notable examples. The latter's The Evolution of the Brazilian People (1890) was clearly

For a full account see Robert M. Levine, The Vargas Regime: The Critical Years, 1934-1938, (Columbia University Press, New York and London, 1970).

³⁰ The possibility of repetition established by the infrastructure of *iterability* was discussed in chapter 1.

³¹ The notion of 'discourse' is a central aspect in the post-structuralist tradition of Laclau-Mouffe. 'Discourse' is a meaningful totality that transcends the distinction between the linguistic and the extra-linguistic. The impossibility of a closed totality unites the connection between signifier and signified. In that sense there is a proliferation of

influenced by Comtism, evolutionist Spencerianism and Haeckel's monism, ideas that became popular with the advent of Positivism. Vianna was also acquainted with the ideas of Le Play and Demolins, which became the bases of his social research in rural Brazil. As Cruz Costa (1964) notes, Vianna's ideas show three main aspects: the Sertão, which must be integrated with the rest of the country; the Aryanization of miscegenated groups; and political centralisation'.³² To these I add a fourth: Vianna's thesis about the non-existence of class struggle in Brazil:

We are a people who, by particular motives of our evolution, do not have a middle class as in Europe. None of the existent classes, popular or ruling, have the same coherence, integration or unity of the corresponding classes in the greatest civilised nations.³³

Vianna revealed his racial prejudices by advocating the domination of the Aryan group in any intermingling of the races;

The barbarian elements forming our people are being quickly reduced... The existence of this nucleus of Aryan reproducers, of pure *pedigree*, in the middle of our population, has been working as a powerful cause in the acceleration of our ethnic purification.³⁴

He also claimed that a centralised and rational form of government was required. However, the necessary moral strength to build the Brazilian nation should be searched among a superior race or a superior cast, able to 'admire' democratic customs. With his racist theories, Oliveira desired to prove the necessity for an aristocratic and centralising government in Brazil, especially after the instability provoked by the abolition of slavery.

Also in this period, Eduardo Prado, a member of the São Paulo aristocracy, defended the institution of monarchy and declared in The American Illusion (1893) that the frenetic imitation of the United States republican institutions was the origin of Latin America's failure and the source of its people's disgrace. Prado vehemently 'rejected' any criticism of the Latin Spirit, which was regarded by the United States as the cause of South America's violent societies. Instead of refuting

'floating signifiers' in society and political competition can be seen as attempts by rival political forces to partially fix those signifiers to particular signifying configurations.

³² Cruz Costa (1964) A History of Ideas in Brazil, (California, University of California Press) p. 268. Emphasis added.

³³ Oliveira Vianna (1890) Evolução do Povo Brasileiro, (Rio de Janeiro, Livraria José Olympio Editora, 1890) p. 42-3. Emphasis added.

³⁴ Idem., pp. 183-5. Emphasis added.

North American attacks on the traditional respect for human life and liberty in Brazilian society, Prado still saw the prevalence of an original 'bad spirit' in the society he was defending:

The American spirit is the spirit of violence; the Latin spirit, transmitted to Brazilians... is the one of the different mixtures of Iberianism, it is a spirit which comes, it is true, from bad character... but conserves respect for human life and liberty.³⁵

One of the most influential contributions to an understanding of the Brazilian apartheid between two distinctive groups, the coastal elite and the people of the hinterland, was provided by Euclides da Cunha, a positivist disciple of Auguste Comte. Da Cunha's *Os Sertões* (1902) considered 'the Bible of the Brazilian nationality'³⁶ was influenced by Gustave Le Bon's determinism, Friedrich Ratzel's racist anthropoid-geography and the racial theory of Ludwig Glumpowicz.³⁷ Da Cunha's main theory was concerned with the action of the environment in the initial phase of the formation of races. For him, the national pathology was concentrated in the North of the country where the apathy of central functions and lack of moral fortitude were caused by environmental unbalance:

It is undoubtedly true that such a climate tends to create a *sui generis* pathology throughout the whole of the northern coastal strip and a good part of the corresponding states, as far as Mato Grosso.

For Da Cunha, the mixture-laden heat of the Amazon region formed stunted organisms, in which all activity was subject to a permanent lack of balance between, 'the impulsive energies of the strongly excited peripheral functions and the apathy of the central functions'.³⁸ The author supported the theory of natural selection that in the Amazon environment was effected at the cost of grave compromise to the central functions of the brain. From this perspective, the inferior race, the crude savage, dominated some populations in league with the environment. The surroundings were assigned the ability to conquer the Brazilian people 'in formidable competition with malaria, hepatitis, debilitating fevers, the intense heat of the summer, and the ague-breeding swamps'.³⁹ Such detrimental actions did not occur, however, 'in a good part of central Brazil and throughout

³⁵ E. Prado, *A Ilusão Americana* (São Paulo, Brazil, Editora Brasiliense, [1893], 1958), p. 175.

³⁶ See S. Putnam's introduction to E. Cunha, *Rebellion in the Backlands* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, [1902], 1944), p. iii. Translation of Euclides da Cunha 'Os Sertões'.

³⁷ This is according to R. M. Levine (1992) *Vale of Tears-Revisiting the Canudos Massacre in Northeastern Brazil, 1893-1897*, (California, University of California Press, 1992), pp. 1-2.

the southern regions'.⁴⁰ For this reason, climatic determinism gave origin to two distinct societies, one more vigorous and the other completely amorphous and static:

In the south new tendencies were developing a greater division of labour, more vigour in a stock that was harder and more heterogeneous, more practical, and adventurous. All this stood in contrast to the agitated, at times more brilliant but always less productive life of the north: scattered and disunited captaincies, yoked to the same routine, amorphous and static.⁴¹

Da Cunha's prejudices certainly remained deeply rooted in south-eastern minds, nourishing a series of myths about the 'forgotten' populations of the *sertão*. His negative theories on the nature of the Brazilian population were reformulated by another important social scientist of this era - Paulo Prado. In his publications - *Paulística* (1925) and *Retrato do Brasil: Ensaio sobre a Tristeza Brasileira* (Portrait of Brazil: an Essay on Brazilian Melancholy) (1928) - he chose words like 'Lechery', 'Greed', 'Sadness' and 'Romanticism' to express his pessimism about the people. 'In a radiant country lives a *sad people*', the discoverers bequeathed them this melancholy.⁴² Prado thought that therapeutic remedies for the condition of the Brazilian people were exhausted and the only solution was a radical 'surgery'. Only war or revolution could prevent the dismembering and disappearance of the country:

Brazil sleeps. It still believes in the lullabies of the speechmakers. For all our semblance of civilisation, we live isolated, blind, and immobile in the mediocrity complacently accepted by the governors and the governed. In this rotting apathy everything will have to be razed to the ground before a complete renewal can be undertaken...⁴³

The repetition of the original Brazilian identity as impure and negative, according to the connotation ascribed by 'universal' intellectuals, was radically challenged by the modernist movement who regarded this interpretation as a limit preventing a national identity from being synthesised and emancipated. It was during 'The Week of Modern Art' (1922), that the *avant-garde* Anthropophagic movement erupted onto the scene and its 'Manifesto', written by Oswald de

³⁸ E. Cunha *Rebellion in the Backlands* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, [1902], 1944), p. 60. Translation of Euclides da Cunha, 'Os Sertões'.

³⁹ *Idem.*, pp. 60-1.

⁴⁰ *Idem.*

⁴¹ *Idem.*, p. 62.

⁴² P. Prado, *Retrato do Brasil: Ensaio sobre a Tristeza Brasileira*, (São Paulo, Brazil, IBRASA/Instituto Nacional do Livro, São Paulo, Brazil, [1928], 1981), p. 17. Emphasis added.

⁴³ *Idem.*, p. 151-3.

Andrade, introduced the most subversive theories of Brazilian Modernism and the first critical diagnosis of Brazil as a society traumatised by colonial repression. Oswald proposed a series of divergence from the traditional interpretations on the fields of history, culture, and aesthetics. These were inspired by the Tupy⁴⁴ rituals and simultaneously encouraged a dialectical movement for the repudiation of the colonial system and the negation of the patriarchal society, questioning the rhetoric of Brazilian intellectuals. He also advocated the creative digestion of as much of the European culture as possible in order to guarantee the conquest of Brazilian intellectual autonomy.

Oswald regarded sublimation and repression as the inheritances of Brazilian patriarchal society, which could only be overcome by the critical passage from nature to culture. Referring to Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1913), his solution was a cannibalistic 'Parricide' by the Brazilian culture. His advice to Brazil's 'rebellious sons' was to look to the past for happiness and discover what to preserve after the devouring of the tyrannical father. Despite the rhetorical appeal, this was not a proposal of rupture with the repeatability of a Brazilian conciliatory identity, actually, such nostalgia served to reinforce that identity. Thus, the modernist movement was fated to be absorbed by the Brazilian culture as another innovation that guarantees continuity of the same hierarchical order. In his *Anthropophagyte Manifesto* Oswald de Andrade declared that the original character of the Brazilian people was not political apathy, racial deformity, pathology, ugliness, painfulness, sadness, lechery, but instead happiness and anthropophagy, i.e. the ability to incorporate the other and yet remain the same. This ability to incorporate the other could be also interpreted as an acclamation of the repetitive and adaptive character of the Brazilian:

Only anthropophagy unites us socially, economically and philosophically. Tupy or not tupy, that is the question. The only things that interest me are those that are not mine... The reaction against the dressed men... We were never catechised. Instead we invented the carnival. We already had communism. We already had surrealist language. The golden age. Catiti Imara Natiá Notiá Imara Ipejú. Down with the antagonistic sublimation brought in caravels. It is necessary to start with a profound atheism in order to arrive at the idea of God. But the Carahiba did not need one because they had Guaracy. Before the Portuguese discovered Brazil, Brazil had discovered happiness...⁴⁵

⁴⁴ The Tupy were an indigenous tribe of warrior indians who were the subject matter for European writers such as Hans Staden, Montaigne and Lévi Strauss. The Tupy are known for devouring their captured enemies in cannibalistic rituals. These rituals were not however to feed their bodies but to transfer to themselves the spiritual and physical force of the other.

⁴⁵ This English version of Oswald de Andrade's *Manifesto* was published in *Art in Latin America*.

The main solutions proposed by Oswald in his Manifesto were very similar to solutions proposed by traditional intellectuals of his time. Oswald also idealised Brazilian society presupposing that there was a fundamental origin or a mythical past that could be a source to build the future against the repressed culture of the present. Even the liberation of the sublimated instincts of the Brazilian people should be attained by means of a return to a society with 'no moral prejudices', and the people should undergo a re-education of the senses through a return to the constructive innocence of primitive art.

It seems that the Modernist Movement was a moment of innovation in the long chain of intellectual repetition of negative images of Brazil, which emerged in a moment of instability of the political terrain during the Old Republic. The elite accepted the Modernist Movement however this was conceived as series of aesthetic claims rather than political ones. The same was not true in relation to Gilberto Freyre's theory that was functional to a conciliatory approach of racial prejudice in Brazil from 1930 onward.

Gilberto Freyre created a thesis that has dislocated the focus of intellectual production from the problem of political apathy calling attention to a positive side - the non-conflictive or conciliatory character of the patriarchal family in Brazil. Freyre maintained that given the democratic customs in the master's sugar mill, the life of the slave in patriarchal Brazil was superior to that of the European working classes at the beginning of the 19th century. In his main book, (Casa Grande e Senzala 1933), [published in English as] The Master and The Slaves: A Study in the Development of Brazilian Civilisation, Freyre differentiates racial inheritance from family inheritance arguing that miscegenation, widely practised in Brazil, corrected the social distance between classes. This thesis sustained that positive miscegenation contributed to racial fraternisation until the abolition of slavery, in 1888.

Undone in 1888 was the patriarchy that sustained the slaves, nourished them with abundance, supported them in old age and illness, enabling opportunities of social access for their children. The slave was now substituted by the pariah of the mill; the slave quarters on plantations were substituted

by 'mocambos' or beehives; the sugar mill masters were substituted by the sugar-mill owners or by the absent capitalists.⁴⁶

The so-called 'intellectual radicalism' of the 1930s had another exponent - Sérgio Buarque de Holanda who, in 1936, published Roots of Brazil (*Raízes do Brasil*). This work attempted to explain the discrediting of conventional liberalism by Brazilians and their search for new solutions such as Integralism and Communism, still picturing the Brazilian society as indolent. The author analyses the 'roots' of the 'traditional personalism', considered a result of institutional relaxation anarchism and a lack of social cohesion.⁴⁷

According to Buarque de Holanda, there was a lack of rationalisation about life in the Iberian nations, which was experienced very early in some Protestant countries. This was why governments there never represented the unifying principle.⁴⁸ In analysing the psychology of the Brazilian people, Buarque de Holanda has pointed out this fact as extremely relevant to understanding Brazil's dilemma of the invincible repulsion to the work ethic and anarchic individualism:

There dominates an old concept that idleness and leisure matter more than any business. Any productive activity is less valorous than love and contemplation.⁴⁹

There is only one alternative to the autarchy of the individual, to the extreme exaltation of personality, to the fundamental passion, which does not tolerate compromise: the renunciation of this personality for a greater ideal.⁵⁰

Getulio Vargas was probably the first statesman to propose an image of citizen in Brazil with political consequences in the period from the 1930 Revolution to the *Estado Novo* (1937-45). His main invention was the *national worker* (*trabalhadores do Brasil*). This identity was basically drawn from a return to the innate potential of people projected on the culture and character of the Brazilian. It was only with the event of Varguism that new links were forged between nature and

⁴⁶ G. Freyre, *Casa Grande e Senzala*, (Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio Editora, [1933], 1987), p. lxxxiv.

⁴⁷ See S. Buarque de Holanda, *Raízes do Brasil*, (Rio de Janeiro, José Olympio Editora, [1936], 1982), pp. 3-5.

⁴⁸ In the Iberian tradition since the XVII century, anarchic individualism entails a lack of distinction between the private and public spheres. This pattern is characteristic in patriarchal societies where the public sphere is an extension of the private sphere. See Max Weber, *Economy and Society*.

⁴⁹ *Idem.*, p. 10.

⁵⁰ *Idem.*, p. 11.

culture by the activation of the integrative and productive elements of the national work. Through his ideology of work, Vargas sought to relieve society from the pre-political conflict and inscribe citizens in a 'definitive history of political order'⁵¹ establishing the frontiers between anarchy and order. The problem is that anarchy was associated with political activism, which should remain outside the national power structure.

The 1930 and 1937 Vargasist revolutions symbolised a new beginning whereby the true national spirit located in the people's collective unconscious, would finally emerge from the ashes of the First Republic. However, the 'conceptual abstraction' of the national worker was undermined and the myth of the sovereign citizen transformed into a terrible reality: the miserable hungry individual without citizenship.

After a short period of the emergence of *active citizenship* between 1960-64, when Brazilian society organised itself relying on political parties and began to appeal for social reforms, the military repression came in 1964 with another project of national identity. The main objective of the military Revolution was to arrest the process of growing popular claims by eroding the basis of populism. In order to transform the economic and political concerns of the monopolist capital into official concerns of the state, the civilian-military coup d'état produced strong appeals for patriotism and national consciousness in the mass media. During the 1960s issues such as union, solidarity, security and faith in the country's future were spread throughout the country by the governmental department of communications and the mass media.

More recently, the absence of people's participation and the problem of political indifference in Brazil has also been explored by J.M. Carvalho (1987) through the concepts of *active* and *inactive citizen*. Carvalho analysed people's political unawareness and their reaction to the Proclamation of the Republic (1889) in the following way:

There was something in the popular behaviour that didn't match both the elite's and workers' reformist models and expectations. These models and expectations had in common the idea of active citizenship, someone conscious of its rights and duties, able to organise and act towards its interests.⁵²

⁵¹ A. Castro Gomes, (1988) *A Invenção do Trabalhismo*, (IUPERJ/Vertice, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), p. 208.

⁵² J. Carvalho, *Os Bestializados*, (Rio de Janeiro, Companhia das Letras, 1987), pp. 140-1.

From Carvalho's perspective, the *active citizen* was absent from the streets of the capital at the beginning of the Brazilian Republic, seeming that all attempts to mobilise and organise people according to liberal patterns or labour party organisations would fail.⁵³ The same *inactive citizen* who could not bother to vote or think about politics would, nonetheless, be highly active towards mutual help associations and traditional non-political festivities. More than that, although lacking a conception of the limits of the State's responsibilities, these *inactive citizens* knew precisely what the limits of the State intervention in their own lives were.

To conclude, the above examples confirm my thesis about the *iterability* of the conciliatory structure that effaces an original hierarchy of values preventing a national identity from being emancipated. Since monarchic times, certain authors like Oliveira Vianna and Eduardo Prado invoked the idealistic or metaphysical pure roots of Brazil as an earthly paradise, but populated by primitives. With their naturalistic and romantic views of Brazil they were able to efface an original submission in society showing 'concern' with lack of preparation of the people to cope with a republican form of government and a liberal democratic regime. Since then, the incapacity of the uncultured people has been repeated in several forms by different intellectual currents as the unsuitability of a Brazilian liberal democratic regime has been attributed to natural constraints such as the apathetic and uncivilised character of the people. As seen throughout this subsection, to every possibility of emancipation of subaltern groups there corresponded intellectual productions repeating and reinforcing, in diverse ways, hierarchical views and metaphysical conceptions concerning the lack of civilisation, action and intelligence of the Brazilian people.

The infrastructural movement of *iterability* gives an account of the play and repetition of the Brazilian character as non-self-sameness in its origin. It is the violence of the inscription at the origin and the reproduction of the same original hierarchy that supports a rigid system of differences in Brazilian society. It is important to note that the spacing, the conservation of a

⁵³ Reporting on Tocqueville's analysis of aristocratic communities, R. Da Matta, *Carnival, Rogues, and Heroes* (Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1991) p. 145, provides an additional explanation for the lack of

distance between dominant and subaltern is repeated under different types of argumentation showing that the infrastructure of iterability combines repetition and alteration.

The only intellectual attempt at breaking with the hierarchy of metaphysical values in Brazil was apparently made by members of the Modernist Movement of 1922. However, a series of statements in the Anthropophagyte Manifesto show that the demystification of Euro-centric constructions like, 'Before the Portuguese discovered Brazil, Brazil had discovered happiness,'⁵⁴ evokes a conciliatory satisfaction that repeats the same appeasing accounts of the Brazilian 'racial democracy' by Freyre. In this sense, the Anthropophagyte Manifesto was not meant to subvert the image of the coloniser, therefore, one could say that the rebellion against the coloniser and the upper classes was alive among subaltern groups who carried on millenarist movements in Brazil. However, as I will argue, this is not the case as most of these movements aimed at the restoration of earth instead of a break with repetition of an oppressive order.

Repetition, Millenarian Movements and the Politics of Grass-roots

Social Movements from the 1800s to the 1950s Conciliation and Millenarist Movements

The millenarist movements, such as Canudos and Contestado in Brazil at the beginning of this century, are examples of how popular imaginary pervaded by metaphysical notions of an absolute truth was unable break with the repetition of an uneven power structure sustained by dominant groups. These movements consisted of conciliatory attempts to convert the people rather than to subvert their subaltern identities. The political imaginary represented by Canudos attracted a massive process of identification, the convergence of millions of 'pilgrims' quickly gave rise to the second largest city of Bahia, in the north-east of Brazil. Patriarchal property owners were soon

voluntary associations in the Brazilian society. According to this view, this lack of association is not due so much to individualism as to the power and control exercised by people in higher positions surrounded by a vast clientele.

⁵⁴ O. Andrade, 'Anthropophagyte Manifesto', in Dawn Ades, *Art in Latin America*, (London, South Bank Centre, 1989)

alarmed by the spread of what they considered a dangerous unorthodox fringe and demanded immediate government intervention to *eliminate* the threat.

Yet, the millenarists at Canudos were not rejecting 'hierarchy and the unequal distribution of wealth per se. Rather they condemned the selfish, immoral acts of new (and threatening) kinds of patrons'.⁵⁵ As Levine (1992) noted, there was an ambiguity in the Canudos movement that sought massive and radical change but 'in accord with a pre-determined divine plan'.⁵⁶ This divine plan is similar to the pre-determined order conceived by conservative intellectuals, as both viewed the necessity of a ground explaining a series of problems in the Brazilian society. The millenarist leaders did not conceive the inversion of the order as something to be constructed by them. The expected change should emerge from a miracle, from God's will.

In spite of the conciliatory character of the millenarist claims, signs of social and racial oppression could be found in their discursive constructions. A good example was the Pedra Bonita revolt where the people believed that after the arrival of King Sebastião they would achieve an inversion of the world order whereby mulattos and blacks would be transformed into whites, and the poor would be granted wealth and eternal life.

The combination of radicalism and fundamentalism in millenarian movements gave rise to different interpretations of the rebellion. Right-wing writers, such as Euclides da Cunha, assumed that this religious community 'refused to accept the newly proclaimed republic because they feared progress'.⁵⁷ Left wing writers portrayed Canudos as a 'heroic cell of political resistance against oppression'⁵⁸ and used this episode to reaffirm the combativeness of rural workers in their fight for agrarian reform. Nevertheless, right-wing propaganda succeeded in strengthening regional oligarchies and building national unity around an oligarchic domination that lasted until 1930. This

⁵⁵ *Idem.*, p. 229.

⁵⁶ See Robert M. Levine's (1992) analysis, p. 7.

⁵⁷ *Idem.*, p. 7. Conservative and liberal parties have used a similar argument in the present day in order to attack the Worker's Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores - PT) emphasis on social development. This is considered as a refusal of modernity and economic development. The antinomy between tradition and modernity has been central to the interpretation of economic, political and cultural reality in Brazil and Latin America.

⁵⁸ *Idem.*, p. 8.

defended liberal values and the de-politicisation of the society with a rationalistic kind of argumentation.

Canudos was not an isolated event in the tradition of hope and expectation of popular religious movements and came toward the end of almost a century of millenarist movements in Brazil.⁵⁹ In fact, Brazilian society gave birth to many violent movements over a short span of time based mostly on communitarian utopian dreams of the salvation of the rural poor whose paternalistic relationship with the landowners was slowly being eroded. The crises in the foundations of their society encouraged the people to follow the messianic prophets, placing themselves in a position of servitude to the new leaders rather than movements of emancipation. This was given not only to the strong Catholic morality amidst the popular classes but also to the widespread image of the subaltern classes as inferior, disorganised and ignorant.

The rise and decline of social movements in the Post-war

According to a series of analyses on social movements in Brazil from the 1950s to the 1990s (Boshi, 1987; Dadigno, 1994; Doimo, 1995; Hellman, 1995; Scherer-Warren, 1993; Valladares & Prates Coelho, 1995), there was a great expectation and optimism among Brazilian social scientists that social movements would democratise Brazilian society. This optimism gave way to the pessimistic analyses of the 1990s when new forms of populism and corporative forms of social conflict emerged.

Despite the existence of a massive population ready to search for new forms of social organisation in large metropolitan areas, social movements in Brazil does not show the ability to amplify social solidarity. This is aggravated in conditions of weak economic performance and progressive social unevenness (Valladares & Coelho, 1995). Moreover, the relationship between social movements and the State is problematic since popular movements try to get excluded interests incorporated and represented in the political arena (Boshi, 1987:200-1). The problem lies

in the co-optation of social demands by the State. Once social claims become institutionalised, social movements lose their mobilising strength and democratic vitality. Boshi also questions the extent to which social movements encouraged the dissemination of democratic practices and the consolidation of these in political institutions. According to Boshi (1987), one of the main dilemmas of social movements in the 1970s and 1980s in Brazil was that they were suspicious of a system of interests that excluded them, but called for State regulatory action to encompass far excluded interests, with obvious risks of co-optation. In this sense, social movements in Brazil try to avoid control and dependence on the State and on electoral process, but have been forced into these areas. Social movements also confront difficulties in maintaining high levels of mobilisation and participation on a routine basis. A tendency towards bureaucratisation and factionalism within social movements has been observed within the movements themselves.

The democratic phase of the 1950s and 60s.

The Juscelino Kubitschek government (1956-1961) has been considered an exceptional case of political stability in contemporary Brazil (Benevides, 1979:23). From 1930 to 1964, Kubitschek was the only civilian President able to retain his mandate through constitutional mechanisms.

The first popular movements in Brazil, such as the *favelado* organisations and their middle class counterparts, emerged within this context. Middle class neighbourhood groups arose in the early 1950s (Boshi, 1987:187). Despite the great polarisation affecting national politics just before 1964, popular associations were more inclined to monitor policy than to make demands during Kubitschek's government. They exhibited a non-partisan character in their disengagement from larger ideological concerns. The *favelado* associations were, however, more structured and repressed during periods of deactivation and demobilisation in early 1962. During the initial period of a *desenvolvimentista* politics, left-wing groups led some social movements but these movements followed democratic procedures proposing a project of gradual social transformation.

⁵⁹ From the modern period of the Brazilian history, Levine (1992: pp. 217-25) identifies seven other millenarian movements in addition to Canudos: Rodeador (181-20), Pedra Bonita (1830-8), Cabanada (1832-5), Muckers

The discourse of autonomy in the 1970s: the heroic phase of social movements

During the 1970s, in the context of the military dictatorship and the Cuban Revolution, associations acquired a politicised character. They differed from the associations of the 1950s not only because of their supra-local level but also for their involvement in major political events. During this 'heroic phase' (Doimo, 1995), new social movements emerged to confront an authoritarian State. Social movements were no longer based on the belief in democracy, but rather on proposals of reform, revolution, socialism or fascism exciting armed confrontation with the State. Strategies of confrontation failed and a general disenchantment with socialism ensued towards the end of the 1970s. In sum, dictatorship created the conditions for the possible emergence of a new compromise of social movements with political democracy as an end in itself.

During the military regime, the strengthening of politico-religious bonds in base communities was the only possible way of creating a new political culture in Brazil, especially among subaltern groups. The politics of grass-roots democracy constituted during this period an efficient resistance against authoritarianism and *clientelism*. As Lowy (1996) notes:

Thanks to this new culture, CEBs activists, with the support of radical theologians and bishops, contributed to the building of the largest and the most radical mass (urban and rural) labour movement in the history of Brazil.⁶⁰

In the second half of the 1970s New Syndicalism emerged in defence of unions pluralism and also promoting a strong criticism against the authoritarian corporative structure the since the 1930s regulated labour relations in Brazil.

Social Movements in the 1980s: Re-discovering Civil Society.

Toward the beginning of the 1980s, the issue of a civil society and the articulation of citizenship as a political strategy both became important guiding lines for social movements in Brazil. Great emphasis was given to the construction of social identities and the articulation of a

(1868), (5) Padre Cícero (1850), (6) The Contestado, and (7) Caldeirão.

new political culture. Social movements began to articulate a discourse of autonomy in relation to the State. However, they had also started to adapt to democratic institutions, developing a new social contract and inventing a new democracy. Left wing currents underwent a change in relation to their acceptance of democracy.

From 1979 to 1981, coinciding with economic recession and relaxation of political repression, the expansion of social movements, particularly neighbourhood movements⁶¹ intensified. These movements could be related with the democratic opening allowed by the military that stimulated the increase of organised collective movements.⁶² The *abertura* eliminated institutional obstruction of free association and with time these movements were less demand-specific and more politicised. The main example of a shift from particular goals to a broader political role of social movements was the 1984 campaign for direct presidential elections. Social movements did make an impact in the campaign for democratisation of the regime (Boshi, 1987:205). Grass roots movements did play a role in the process of democratic consolidation during the campaign for the Constituent Assembly in 1985 that induced a broad spectrum of social movements to voice their demands. These movements were assisted the Church through the CNBB (National Conference of Bishops) and by the OAB, (Organisation of Brazilian Attorneys). Social movements like the supra-local Shanty Towns Associations of Rio de Janeiro (FAFERJ) and the middle class Neighbourhood Associations of Rio de Janeiro (FAMERJ) were also active during the New Republic, monitoring President Sarney's economic plan and the price freeze.

The decline of social movements in the 1990s

In the 1990s popular movements began to formulate a new discourse around the idea of a organised civil society experiencing a clear decline. Symptoms of this decline could be observed in

⁶⁰ Michael Lowy, (1996) - *The War of Gods*, p. 89.

⁶¹ In 1982 there were approximately 8,000 neighbourhood middle class associations and 350 associations from the *favelas* in Brazil. The organisation effort has extended to other groups such as feminists, blacks, ecological and anti-nuclear groups. There were also organised spontaneous land invasions and less structured riots and sacking of supermarkets (Boshi, 1987:180-1).

⁶² As I will describe in chapter 5, the democratic opening also encouraged an increase of political debate on television.

the academic community, which lost its theoretical optimism concerning social movements. A number of left-wing activists became involved in institutional politics, viewing social movements from the perspective of continuity (Hellman, 1995). Among the several factors contributing to this failure was the disintegration of networks supporting the ethical-political camp of social movements. The Church withdrew its support, and other sources like Charismatic Catholicism acquired significant influence. Moreover, non-governmental organisations (NGO) adopted new criteria of efficiency inaugurating a series of partnerships with governmental agencies and also with the World Bank, consequently establishing a relation of dependency to North-American credit. Another important factor for the deterioration of Brazilian social movements was the disintegration of the Soviet Union and the re-direction of European NGO funds from Brazil to Eastern Europe.

The Worker's Party in São Paulo attempted to imprint a participation model of direct democracy in which a large scale of autonomy and decision-making power were given to popular committees. However, this example and also the experience of the New Syndicalism, accentuated the limitations of social movements emerging in the 1970s. Democratic urban administrations succeeded in investing in the poorest sectors of the population but did not implement schemes of participation that were one of their main targets. Additionally, the corporatism of labour movements only helped deepening social segmentation and division within society. Melo and Reis (1995) have already highlighted the development of a *social hobbesianism* and *amoral familismo* that characterised Brazilian society at the beginning of the 1990s when a lack of identification and interest in politics among the population was observed.⁶³

Until the beginning of the 1990s syndicalist networks, political leaders, non-governmental organisations and the Catholic Church in Brazil were engaged in the construction of an ethical-political camp promoting the people as central actors in the political arena. All these actors were involved in transforming the community into the primary locus of activism. Popular movements were not autonomous and independent. Here the Church performed a hegemonic role, since it

⁶³ See W. Assies, 'Movimentos sociais, democracia e cultura política no Brasil', *Comunicação & Política* (Rio de Janeiro, Centro Brasileiro de Estudos Latino-Americanos, CEBELA, Vol.1, n.1, January-April, 1998), p. 223. This

provided a discursive space for grass-roots activism by creating the *ecclesiastic base communities* (Comunidades Eclesiaes de Base: CEBs). CEBs set up by small groups of neighbours, and based on regular prayer meetings and bible readings, gave rise to several social movements. Among these were the Movement against the High Cost of Living, the Movement against Unemployment, the Movement for Public Transportation, the Landless Peasant Movement, the Worker's Party (PT) and also revolutionary fronts during the military rule (1964-1984).

Political circumstances in Brazil from the 1960s to the 1990s have proven that Catholic religious activism can be a source of stable communal identity; a source of political activism, but not a real break with crystallised views in society. The Catholic movements could provide the basis for promising democratic strategies as exemplified by the ecclesiastic base communities but they lacked the necessary autonomy to disrupt and denaturalise sedimented identities. The communitarian life, based on fraternity, nevertheless presented an elective affinity with a substantial part of the Brazilian society. As Lowy (1996) concludes:

At any rate, several of the major struggles for democracy and social emancipation in Latin America in the last twenty-five years have only been possible thanks to the contribution of the CEBs and liberationist Christianity.⁶⁴

To understand the difficulties of prioritising individual freedom as the highest-order interest of moral life, as liberalism does, I wish to highlight the distinct ethics that overlap and combine in Brazil. There, justice as an agreement reached between individuals characterised as free and equal, merges with communitarian notions. Communitarian and liberal commitments towards the good are constitutive of the national identity but they also produce contradictory conceptions of politics in the popular common view, creating a resilient structure of moral beliefs.

lack of interest in politics among the Brazilian population is discussed in chapter 4 where I call attention to a conservative tendency among the working class.

⁶⁴ M. Lowy, *The War of Gods*, *op.cit.*, p. 50.

Democracy and Contradiction: The Language of Morality in Politics

The inter-fertilisation of liberal and Catholic moral beliefs has exerted a strong influence on the production of several negative conceptions of democracy in Brazilian history. This is because, in this society notions of the 'evil' and the 'good' do not exist independently as in the Manichaeic⁶⁵ tradition: one is not the negation of the other. As in the Christian project, 'evil' politics is a corruption of the 'good' society. In the Brazilian imaginary, 'evil' and 'good' are dependent but do not subvert each other. In sum, if in the Manichaeic tradition 'evil' and 'good' are like oil and water - they never mix and therefore never stop being different - in the Christian perspective there is only the 'good' and its corruption.⁶⁶ This dependent logic, good and evil, which excludes subversion, is the one that enables the opposition of classes in Brazil to be recomposed around conciliatory myths. The central mechanism enabled by this variation is the obstruction of new antagonisms, which require one pole as pure negativity whereas the other must be a pure positivity denying the identity of the first.

As a result, a conceptual contradiction affecting the notion of democracy in Brazil has been the source of much of the success populist discourse has enjoyed. Vargas, for example, created his own conception of democracy as a compound of Labourite social democracy. After the 1930s Revolution, the populist leader explained his notion in a very articulate manner, showing the complexity that the argument for the repetition of a hierarchic order has reached:

Revolution had integrated the country in the conception of a modern state, where the concern with political parties occupies a subaltern place. It is not through these word games, formulas and combinations of policies that one will be able to direct the Brazilian collectivity. It is not by agitating the spirits, awakening ambitions or promising the application of impossible methods that we will help the progress in our motherland ...⁶⁷

⁶⁵ An ancient religion named after its founder, the Persian sage Mani (c. 216-767). For a period of several centuries, it presented a major challenge to Christianity. Strongly influenced by Gnosticism, it is even classified as such. The fundamental doctrine of Manichaeism is its dualistic division of the universe into two, equally matched, and contending realms of good and evil: the realm of Light (spirit), ruled by God, and the realm of Darkness (matter), ruled by Satan.

⁶⁶ This particular idea became a core tenet of Christian doctrine and originated in St. Augustine's texts explicitly attempting to invalidate Manichaeic dualism. See Augustine's early works on the will, and especially his *On Free Choice of the Will*, (c. a.D. 387-95), Trans. A. Benjamin & L. Hackstaff (Indianapolis, New York, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1964).

⁶⁷ Getúlio Vargas' National Manifesto, published in 1934.

Vargas' doctrine of social harmony, guaranteed by the state, consisted of reconciliation between individualism and socialism through the transcendence of both. The New State defence of trade unions was a policy designed to make the state, rather than civil society, the site of hegemony. But the clash between populism and liberal order soon showed the difficulties of synthesising contradictory values in the political life so the meaning of democracy has been displaced towards other realms by the bureaucratic-administrative forces dominating the country since the military coup of 1964.

Since 1985, after the end of the military dictatorship, the Brazilian people have been provided with a concept of democracy as an instrument of power, a kind of tool to achieve power. This has spread widely a conservative authoritarian notion of the power of bureaucrats who only implement the decisions of others, obscuring the essentially political dimension, which constitutes power. As Weffort (1984) observed about this distortion, 'he perceives much better the dead power of the 'apparatus', of the 'machine', than the live and potentially transformative power of real political relations.'⁶⁸

This statement is very significant since it notes the emptiness of the concept of politics associated with the repetition of a conservative order in the 1980s. According to Vidal (1996), such distortion in conceptions of politics as administration or charity is vividly present in the popular imaginary. Such images arose in the urban areas when Vargas came to power and his government is still an essential reference in the political memory of the poor in the Northeast. The latter did not break with the repetitive chain of a traditional representation of politics. 'His name [Getulio Vargas] is associated with the attribution of social rights to the popular sectors, putting a definitive end to a situation identified with slavery.'⁶⁹

Not only in the North-eastern areas but also in the more developed South-east, Vargas is still seen as a positive and morally acceptable president who did something for the people: in their

⁶⁸ Weffort, Francisco, *O que é democracia ?*, (São Paulo, Brasiliense, 1984), p. 35.

favour, for their privilege, blocking the anarchical dark side of politics. In both areas, public opinion still associates politics with 'helping the poor' and solving material problems of the needy, not as mediation between different groups in the society. The good politician is the one who 'really works', is honest and fulfils his duties by always 'looking for the poor'.⁷⁰

Authoritarian and moralist conceptions of politics are still central among all social classes. Popular propositions pervaded by scepticism are generally favourable to the rationalisation of structures and not for their subversion.⁷¹

As seen in this subsection, moral judgements have played an important part in the repetition of a submissive popular identity that I now analyse in anthropological terms. The *iterability* of family patriarchy has been explained by Brazilian social scientists like Da Matta. This author views patriarchy as an outcome of 'the coexistence of two codes of interpretation and guides of conduct that are opposed and only valid for certain people, actions and situations'.⁷² This reinforces the idea that a unique ethical code was not established in Brazil during its transition to capitalism and in our view this stems from its infrastructure as *iterability* which 'ties heterogeneous threads together into 'one' law'.⁷³ In the following lines I explain the implications of Da Matta's (1987a) theory where he observes that these two ethics, collective and individual, 'can live perfectly well in the same society'⁷⁴ and that the interdependence between the public and the private is probably the best explanation of the Brazilian identity.

⁶⁹ See D. Vidal, 'La Politique au quartier. Respect, crise et citoyenneté à Brasília Teimosa, favela urbanisée de Recife (Brésil)' (Paris, PhD thesis, 1996) p. 277.

⁷⁰ *Idem.*, p. 278

⁷¹ I have collected evidence of popular scepticism in a series of random interviews conducted at a middle class club and the streets of Rio de Janeiro in April 1996.

⁷² See Roberto Da Matta (1987a) *A Casa e a Rua*, (Editora Guanabara, Brazil) p. 51.

⁷³ Gasché, R. (1986), p. 216.

⁷⁴ Da Matta (1987a), p. 51.

Conciliation and Relational Theory:

Roberto Da Matta's account of the conciliatory dynamics between formal and substantive rational systems in Brazilian society

The phenomena of *transformism* and repetition of an ambiguous order is the subject of Roberto Da Matta's 'relational theory', which explains the complementarity between traditional and universal structures in Brazil. The cultural incompatibility between traditional and universal structures is the main problem tackled in Da Matta (1991) who conjectures that, 'The passage from house to street is a very dramatic one...normally this passage marks the transition from person to individual.'⁷⁵ From this perspective, since Brazilian society is hierarchically structured around relations of a personal type, the domain of personal relationships and its formulas gives rise to a dissociation between personal and socio-economic defined positional levels, making passage from the traditional to the rational world of the economic and juridical orders difficult. This traumatic passage requires *mediators* who perform a central function in the process of manufacturing the individual who must submit to general rules. *Mediators* are functional to protect the person from violence and disrespectful treatment while becoming an anonymous subject of universal laws.

Da Matta argues that the tremendous gap between the traditional sphere of the house and the universal structures of the street is overcome in traditional societies, such as Brazil's, through the complementary personal relationships which operate as bridges between the community and the market. This complementarity of personal relationships could be thought of as 'the prevailing ideology' in the Brazilian social universe and also the very basis of populism. In this sense the language of mediation, or the space for human agreement above social rules, provides a social contract, which derives, not from the pre-social domain of law, but from the content of individual well being in the community which is his political society.

Da Matta's conception of *rites of passage*, as examples of how mediations are built in the Brazilian society through the protection from godparents, sponsors, patrons, influential supporters,

⁷⁵ Da Matta, *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes*, (University of Notre Dame, 1991) p. 190.

spiritual entities, and saints, exposes a very accurate view of a social contract. It acts against the conception of a contract between individuals, which is prior to society. 'Zones of passage' or 'zones of conversation' between the two complementary worlds of the house and the street exclude conflicts between the status of equality of the street and the hierarchy of the private world by observing the principle of *multiple differentiation*.⁷⁶ This principle creates zones of conversation where traditional and universalistic systems associate in Brazil, with the prevalence of the traditional. Such an alliance between convention and modernity shows the complexity of the Brazilian social structure, where according to Da Matta 'hierarchy is connected with social 'intimacy''.⁷⁷

The adoption of the *rites of passage* formula therefore discloses a social structure whereby social classes relate with each other through a system of *crosscutting ties*.⁷⁸ This explains why, instead of conflictive, some radical social differences, such as employer/ employee, can be dislocated from the economic dimension to the moral standpoint. Such compensation and complementarity characterises the *relational universe system which* transcends the basic economic dimension, where most of the inequalities are acute, in search of equality in other dimensions such as colour, intelligence, general attitude, morality. As Da Matta observes, it is in this very multiple differentiation that, 'We find a hierarchising attitude that allows the differentiation of equals and therefore prevents horizontal social solidarity.'⁷⁹

The result of the great complexity of the classificatory system in the Brazilian society is that everyone develops a web of personal and moral relationships, plays with all identities but conserves an ethics of vertical identity and loyalty. This awareness of a vertical social order is accompanied by disdain towards the horizontal ethics inaugurated with the advent of capitalism. A lack of that kind,

⁷⁶ Examples of patronage and hierarchy permeating popular expressions in Brazil are according to Da Matta: 'Do you know who you're talking to?', 'Who do you think you are?', 'Where do you think you are?', 'Aren't you ashamed of yourself?'. These express at the same time the value of personal links and the effort to re-establish a hierarchical order.

⁷⁷ Da Matta, (1991), p. 146.

⁷⁸ This concept is in Max Gluckman (1965), *Politics, Law, and Ritual in Tribal Society*, mentioned by Da Matta (1991) to explain the Brazilian social structure.

⁷⁹ Da Matta, (1991), p. 147.

pointed out by Da Matta, is similar to Faoro's (1925) perspective concerning the variation in the notion of citizenship in the public arena which,

Has to do with a mode of bureaucratic organisation, where the whole predominates over its parts and hierarchy is fundamental to the definition of the role and meaning of the individual.⁸⁰

Relations in Brazilian society are, thus, structural elements founded in the *intermediary* element that enables the difficult and dangerous transition from the traditional world of the house to the universal world of the street,

We are masters in equilibrate transitions and conciliation... but we have much to learn in the sense of making closer and more coherent these multiple visions of Brazil which enable so many arrangements and determine so much social and political mobility.⁸¹

The concentration on intermediary systems has been the origin of *zones of conversation* in this modern version of a slave society, where liberalism is merely a supplement. These intermediary structures enable the autonomy of the relationship with the function of conservation and reproduction of subservient integration between exclusive polar positions. The structure of favour, for instance, is an example of a mechanism that triggers the repetition of the same order insofar as it requires moral equivalence between different agents entering into this relationship of reciprocity. In this way a highly hierarchic society remains intact and traditional relations of the past are never abandoned.

The Brazilian 'national moderation' and conciliation is therefore characterised by the resolving of conflicts between parts through decisions taken on the level of the *links*. This 'allows the concealment of all sorts of effective violence, presenting in its place conjugations founded in the interest of the relation'.⁸²

The root problem according to this view is that Brazilian culture has not passed through a revolution of 'individualism' and its 'cordial' and 'relational' man has complex connotations with serious political implications. As Da Matta (1987a) explains, problems derive from an equation

⁸⁰ See Da Matta (1987b) 'The Quest for Citizenship in a Relational Universe' in J. Wirth; E. O. Nunes; T. Bogenschild, *State and Society in Brazil*, (Westview Press, US) p. 314.

⁸¹ Da Matta, (1987a) p. 22.

⁸² See Da Matta (1987a) p. 114.

formed by, 'a juridical and ideological superstructure, which is fully coherent and official, being interpreted by an infrastructure formed by a network of imperative personal relations'.⁸³ These relations modify the terms of the problem by inserting an additional element in the scheme, namely *the relation* between the master and the slave. These supplementary elements of the relation are the links of personal sympathy and universalising juridical formulations and in this concern Da Matta (1987a) sustains the hypothesis that, 'the dominance of formal aspects tends to conduce to authoritarianism, however the presentation of personal *relations* conduce to the softening of the laws.'⁸⁴

Section 2

Traditional Politics and Political Continuity

My focus in this section is in the mechanisms of power created by traditional discourse that, in a way, constitute strategies of mediation between heterogeneous instances of politics in Brazil. As explained in chapter 1, *deconstruction* is particularly useful to analyse the absence of change in Brazilian politics since it concentrates attention on the grounds of possibility of a particular system. Deconstruction shows that the starting point of a system of possibilities is not a natural, common sense given but a cultural construct. The cultural constructs that seem relevant to the study of continuity in Brazil are the phenomena of *parentela*, *coronelism* and *clientelism*. ✓

The repetition of the Brazilian hierarchical structure can be explained in terms of Laclau's theory since it refuses temporal and structural forms of closure as opposed to contingent *dislocation*. By highlighting an aspect of time as the rupture of space ('time always overcomes space'),⁸⁵ Laclau points out the mechanisms through which possibilities of change emerge, namely the building of new antagonisms or new cleavages. These changes stand in opposition to movements of constitution of a consensual structure by certain mechanisms of power, namely

⁸³ *Idem.*, p. 110.

⁸⁴ *Idem.*, p. 111.

parentela, *coronelism* and *clientelism* that I study here.

Traditional and Authoritarian Politics

As explained in chapter one, traditional politics is a system of political organisation that is authoritarian in the sense that 'political power is narrowly concentrated, access to decision making is restricted, channels of political representation are arranged hierarchically and political competition is strictly regulated' (Hagopian, 1996:16). Traditional politics has its own patterns of political representation, competition and recruitment that transform political parties into instruments of oligarchic control and interests. In authoritarian regimes, state elites might deny representation, extinguishing political parties or even use them for co-optation and re-socialisation.

Political parties under traditional oligarchic control function as channels of mediation between clients (voters) and patrons (politicians), producing a particular pattern of regionalist political representation. The nature of traditional politics is basically non-ideological. Traditional parties identify with personal cliques and are aligned along primary cleavages based on particularistic questions. Conversely, political recruitment in authoritarian politics is monopolised by the state whereas recruitment in traditional politics it is commanded by oligarchic families, i.e. membership or alliance with certain families is fundamental to the achievement of certain positions in the state.

The traditional political elite in Brazil does not occupy a single position in the productive structure and their power derives from the exercise of politics. Traditional politics today is not exclusively based on landholding as it was in the past. Economic modernisation and territorial integration caused a shift in the basis for traditional dominance from land to the control of material resources in the state. Currently, the client-population gives its support to traditional patron-politicians that exert considerable control over the state apparatus and are able to manipulate public resources, looking after the poor.

⁸⁵ *Idem.*, p. 43.

Parentela and Regional elite: The network of traditional dominance

The sources of the Brazilian integrative system are well explained by a nineteenth-century proverb in rural Paraíba: 'marry your daughter to your neighbour's son'.⁸⁶ This portrays the links between exogamous marriage and economic organisation. From the 19th century onwards, collective and individual rights in land have been some of the major targets of *parentela* as a corporate group in Brazil. Even if one accepts that family based system of politics has been weakened by the republican system, it is important to note that it has nevertheless endured. Indeed, it has endured longest in regions such as the undeveloped Northeast and Minas Gerais than in the Centre-South.

As Lewin (1987) observes, to understand the political functions of *parentela* we should distinguish between the family-based group and family-based network or 'panelinhas', which differentiate more in degree than in kind. This is because on a more complex level, politics of *parentela* refers to how politics is conducted by 'panelinhas', which engage in political and economic organisations in society. 'Panelinha' and *parentela* show complementary and overlapping political functions insofar as the first plays a 'key role in economic and political decision-making',⁸⁷ but lacks an institutional definition existing only in the informal discourse. Moreover, 'panelinhas' exist to provide a greater scope to groups that otherwise would be in the family-base groups. In this sense, if *parentelas* are a previous structural requisite for land owning and power extension, the 'panelinha's' heterogeneous membership included various segments of society serving a multiplicity of needs. These were paramount in states like São Paulo where, differently from Paraíba, a single family could not dominate entire municipal areas. The structure of *parentela* was stronger in underdeveloped states like Paraíba where there was a conservative adaptation to changes among families whereas in dynamic states like São Paulo the structure of *parentela* underwent differentiation.

⁸⁶ L. Lewin, *Politics and Parentela in Paraíba*, (Princeton, NJ, Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 127.

⁸⁷ This view is sustained by the sociologist Anthony Leeds in 'Brazilian Careers and Social Structure: A Case Study and Model', in *American Anthropologist* 66, (1964), pp. 1321-47.

In sum, *parentela* as a kinship-based group presents three joined aspects - the political, the economic and the familiar bonds- showing that the society in which this group survives has a non-differentiated socio-economic and political structure in its sectors of activity. However, this non-differentiation does not indicate a necessary harmony or equilibrium inside and outside the *parentelas*. On the contrary, homogeneity could indicate fragility as opposed to an affective solidarity. Inside and outside *parentelas* the relations held a character of alliances based on affective bonds and also in the similarity of economic and political interests. Thus, it is important to emphasise that because the *parentela* is an undifferentiated form, any collision in one sector could originate serious consequences in the others.

As Sílvia Romero (1910) notes in his book '*As oligarchias e sua classificação*'⁸⁸ political clans infested Brazil at the beginning of the 20th century and politics rooted in the family accounted for local struggles between political parties. Moreover, family politics was not a phenomenon restricted to the municipal level, politician's network based on *parentela* was at the origin of personal politics. A family-based group that organised and delivered votes for its candidate at the local level defended his partisan interests and served its chief as officeholders or bureaucratic appointees not only locally but also nationally.

The origins of this system can be traced back to the working of the monarchical period (1822-1889) when Brazilian politics was characterised by its preservation of the status quo through the maintenance of a highly stratified social structure. In the past, planter elite and their exporter allies dominated the scene and since then, equivalent configurations have been repeated. One of the most remarkable examples of preservation of the status quo was the 'moderating power' giving the Brazilian emperor the authority to nominate and dismiss ministers, senators, the parliament, to call for new elections, to sanction and to veto laws, to appoint provincial presidents and so on. These practices were feasible despite the Constitution of 1824, which sanctioned a modern form of government with a bicameral parliament and guaranteed freedoms. In Brazil, the Western European and North American models of government assumed the form of mere ritual practices since the

emperor's personal power enjoyed ascendance over the law. The fact that the monarchy was highly centralised meant that from 1822 to 1849, regional revolts against the central government caused problems in preserving national allegiance and territorial integrity.

The emergence of parentelas in the turn of the century

The emptiness created by the decline of monarchy in Brazil contributes to explaining the emergence of regional family oligarchies such as the Prados and the Monteiro de Barros (1840-1930) in São Paulo and the Pessoas in the state of Paraíba (1912-1930). During the Old Republic these families retained *de facto* power in Brazil. As Levin (1987) observes, the Prados dominant family tradition of conservatism was not only a predicament of sharp scepticism caused by the demonstration of Brazilian practices but also a reaction to official disdain for the needs of economic growth. For these reasons, the Prados of the baron's generation regarded family oligarchy as necessary 'to provide the political stability that seemed threatened during the First Empire, the Regency, and the early years of the Second Empire' (Levi, 1987:91). With its cosmopolitan international orientation, control of resources and desire for political power, the Prado *parentela* did play a leading role in the nation's politics from 1880 to 1930. Yet while their state became a governing force during the First Republic, the Prado power waned (Levi 1987:185). In Republican times political divergence tended to fragment family unity but there was also a weakening in the Prados' extended family. Factors deriving from economics, politics, geographic mobility, cultural interests, and also miscegenation discouraged existing family solidarity.

Lewin's (1987) case study of a family-based oligarchy in the Northeast⁸⁹ shows that, by the end of the last century, there was an increase in family co-operation in that region. There was an increase in desire for political power, which greatly differentiated that region from the patriarchal tradition of São Paulo based on its economic power. This strengthening of the family's network in the less economically developed region was expressed by the abandonment of consanguineous

⁸⁸ In Romero, S., (1910), *Provocações e debates*, (Livraria Chardron de Lello & Irmão, Porto, Portugal) pp. 401-16.

⁸⁹ Lewin has drawn his findings on the quasi-corporate character of the parentela from several branches of the Pessoa family, in Pernambuco and Paraíba, from the Lins family of Pilar, and from a number of parentelas

marriage and greater reliance on exogamous bonding. The power of *parentelas* in poor, underdeveloped and subordinate states is explained by the fact that with the end of Empire (1889) and beginning of the Old Republic, a conservative adaptation to changes among kinship organisation occurred. The President Epitácio Pessoa's⁹⁰ *parentela* network provides an example of the survival of oligarchic bases of power in state and national politics throughout the beginning of the 20th century. Paraíba e Pernambuco, Pessoa's power base, was among the smallest and most underdeveloped states of Brazil. This is also the case of Alagoas, the political basis from which President Collor de Mello (1989-1991) came. The same orientation along the lines of conservative interest group politics did not occur in the dynamic economies of the Centre-South undergoing urbanisation and economic differentiation.

Weaker than São Paulo in economic terms and more inefficient than Rio Grande do Sul in military terms, the Minas Gerais elite were more actively involved in politics than other regional elites. Because of its dependency on the union, the Minas Gerais elite played a central political role in national affairs since the beginning of Old Republic. Wirth (1977:181) and Hagopian (1996:45) have already given an account of this political influence of the Minas Gerais political elite and the underlying structures of their oligarchic hegemony laid during the Campos Salles government.

The Minas Gerais elite has proven to be highly efficient in the survival and adaptation of its old structures during the post-war democracy. In the post-war period, despite relatively open and competitive politics, modern political parties, growing cities and industry, and populist politicians committed to pro working-class platforms, the traditional oligarchy maintained its grasp on the state political system (Hagopian, 1996:37). The explanation for this persistence of traditional politics in the 1990s can be traced to the *café com leite* (*café au lait*) alliance between the coffee-producing São Paulo and the dairy-producing during the first years of the Old Republic when power was held by regional oligarchies of the strongest states.

belonging to the Nóbrega family that dominated the Paraíba interior.

⁹⁰ Epitácio Lindolfo da Silva Pessoa the chief of a *parentela* corporate group of Paraíba, became a federal deputy to the Constituent Congress in 1890 and then president of Brazil from 1919 to 1922, during the final decade of the Old Republic. As a fervent defender of constitutionalism and individualism, Epitácio Pessoa is considered one of the most important politicians of his generation that had made the transition from Empire to Republic.

From 1898 to 1930 the Minas and São Paulo elites rotated the federal executive for twenty-eight years despite the fact that the Minas Gerais economy was not sufficiently influential *per se*. The *Mineiro* production could not project its elite to national political prominence and to take leading role in the Brazilian union. However, Minas Gerais had a great political utility to the hegemonic Paulista coffee elite. Minas was the most populous state in the union, it counted with the largest delegation to the Chamber of Deputies, thirty-seven deputies, whereas São Paulo had only twenty-two delegates and this political capital was the cause of an unbreakable alliance São Paulo-Minas by President Campos Salles, sealed in 1898. Campos Salles offered Minas Gerais equal shared control of the national executive in exchange for support of the *Mineiro* congressional delegation for government's monetary policy. The final success of the *café com leite* alliance contributed to a significant concentration of power in the hands of these most powerful states and their elites.

With the *café com leite* alliance, the Minas Gerais elite gained access to 'self-perpetuating sources of power'. This included the highest leadership posts in Congress, presidency and majority leadership of the Chamber of Deputies, a significant presence on parliamentary commissions and considerably more frequent and longer positions as title holders in the Ministries of Finance, Justice and Public Works than the elite of any other state. Despite the growing economic weight of São Paulo, the broad access to federal patronage (Wirth, 1977:106) made the *Mineiro* elite the most successful in political terms.

According to Wirth (1977), the Minas Gerais oligarchy was predicated on its internal unity. Once dominant in state institutions, the non-competitive *Mineiro* elite was capable of suppressing dissent to consolidate its hegemony throughout the whole state of Minas Gerais. It constructed state-local linkages by imposing a fiscal and political dependence of municipal power on the state government.

In the Old Republic (1898-1930), collective and individual land rights were some of the major targets of *parentela* as a corporate group in Brazil. Since the Vargas revolution the basis for traditional dominance has shifted from land to the control of material state resources. The

traditional domination by the Minas Gerais elite, based on economic and state coercion, survived two decades of State centralisation and economic modernisation. Moreover, it resisted an expansion of political competition and participation after 1945. In the post-war period the Minas Gerais elites accompanied the growth of the public sector and politicians who had adhered to the Vargas New State were able to manufacture large-scale patronage operations. The regime changes of 1930 and 1945 failed to undermine the Mineiro politics that was able to shape the organisation of the state and national politics along traditional lines from the Old Republic to the 1964 coup d'état, planned by the elite of Minas Gerais allied to other traditional elites. The persistent influence of the Mineiro elite remained strong even after the end of the military regime. Through negotiated state and national political pacts, traditional elites secured their place in the New Republic bringing anti-democratic practices inherited from both military regime and its civilian predecessors into the new democracy (Hagopian, 1996:225).

To conclude, a patrimonial system of domination has endured and continues to spread today, manifesting itself in traditional forms of political domination. I describe in the evolution of patrimonial forms of domination in the two following sections clarifying the concepts of *coronelism* and *clientelism*.

The Basis of the *Coronelistic* Organisation

Coronelism has been considered the foundation of the traditional order in the Brazilian Old Republic (Reis, 1980). The patron-client relation has flourished on economic conditions of unequal distribution of land and other material resources. A combination of economic dependence and different status authorised local elites spread along several states of the Brazilian federation to constitute their political clientele. Local bosses, either the largest landowners in the municipality under their authority or successful professionals, dominated not only the land and social relations in the rural area but also controlled public employment and civil life. Classical descriptions of the coronelistic dynamics give an account of the *coronéis* as one of the pillars of the Old Republican society. They provided land to their dependants, released them from jail, aided them in illness and in

exchange for these favours the *coronel* received loyalty, services and participation in armed groups by his subservient clients. These favours and protection were even more substantial to family and friends that received money, public employment and help to evade taxes in exchange for political support. Before the 1930s, Brazilian *coronéis* held the greatest financial resources and also the highest authority in all areas, including the religious. They were taken as 'men of faith' and their attendance to religious ceremonies would give them official character (Carone, 1978: 253).

Since the 18th century, every 'coronel' (colonel) was a member of a *parentela* occupying an elevated position. Great colonels constituted supreme chiefs not only in their *parentela* group but also in relation to various allied *parentelas*. This political power could transpose local, regional or state boundaries presenting efficacy on a national level such as was the case with Pinheiro Machado. According to Costa Porto (1951) Pinheiro Machado was the best representative of a *coronel* as a national political chief.⁹¹

Studying the state of Rio Grande do Sul and its role in national politics during Brazil's Old Republic (1889-1930), Love comments that this period of a loose federal system and the absence of national political parties made the states exceptionally important. The study of the Rio Grande do Sul oligarchy provides some clarification concerning the end of the Old Republic and the emergence of Getulio Vargas to power. Vargas' career can be explained in regionalist terms since Caudilhismo had entered Brazil through Rio Grande do Sul. Senator Jose Gomes Pinheiro Machado, the first representative of Caudilhismo in Rio Grande do Sul, was the most powerful man, the 'barbarian' boss in senate in the years 1905-15. Vargas had simply 'taken up the torch from Pinheiro' (Love, 1971:4). The leadership of Castilhos shaped a modern party PRR (Partido Republicano do Riograndense) that held firm control of Rio Grande do Sul, being as authoritarian as the state government.

As party leader, Castilhos was 'regarded as a god by his followers' (Love, 1971:76) who reserved for himself all major and minor political decisions in his state. What made the *Gaúcho*

⁹¹ To this I add that along the military dictatorship other national *coronéis* were formed such as the case with Antonio Carlos Magalhães, a *coronel* from the Northern State Bahia who controls the conservative and also liberal

coronel unique was not the size of his land. *Gaúcho coronéis* were not necessarily the largest property holders, the most important indispensable qualification for a coronel to exercise local power in Rio Grande do Sul was the ability to accept decisions from above. Economic power and social prestige was not as important in Rio Grande as they were in other areas. Unlike political bosses from the Northern states, the *Gaúcho* boss was a bureaucratic *coronel*. The influence of bureaucratic *coronéis* was, however, directly related with the unique role they played within the party structure.

It was only in 1910 that the *Gaúchos* allied with the Army became leading competitors for national power. Between 1910 and 1930 three *Gaúcho* politicians attempted to gain control of the federal government taking advantage of eventual ruptures in the Paulista-Mineiro alliance. However, it was just when the states of São Paulo and Minas Gerais were no longer able to offer their industries financial support and some economic activities confronted serious collapse that state governments required the growth of a central government's authority. At this critical moment *Gaúchos* took over federal offices and Vargas took office as a dictator, leading *Gaúchos* to central power in 1930.

Inflexible *coronelismo*, as practised in São Paulo, Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul restricted political competition at all levels of the political but these limitations were even more accentuated in the *Mineiro* society. In Minas, the state oligarchy limited competition among *coronéis* to maintain unity among its supporters so as to preserve its national position (Hagopian, 1996:49). As defined by Nunes Leal (1948) in the classic *Coronelismo, Voto e Enxada*, *coronelism* was a form of adaptation between private power and a political regime characterised by an extensive representative basis. Nunes Leal (1948) argued that *coronelismo* had not only falsified political representation and discredited the democratic system in Brazil, but it also corresponded to a phase in the political development whereby poverty, intellectual backwardness and lack of civic sense were serious obstacles to democracy. The main characteristic of coronelism highlighted by Nunes Leal was that in the North of Brazil political colonels who had previously belonged to the

politicians in Brazil.

now extinct Brazilian National Guard remained in power. This term - *coronel* - stayed in the vocabulary of the rural population and is now used to identify any political leader or political boss of the region, therefore:

It is not possible to understand this phenomenon without reference to our agrarian structure, the basis on which are maintained those manifestations of private power still so much in evidence in Brazil...⁹²

While illuminated by the concept of *coronelism*, we can understand the Brazilian system as dominated by a relationship of compromise between a private power in decline and a much-strengthened public authority, but this same compromise presupposes a certain degree of weakness on both sides. This is because the condition of possibility for this agreement concerns superimposing a broadly based representative system on an inadequate economic and social structure, incorporating into the body of active citizens, 'a numerous contingent of electors incapable of carrying out their political duty with any sense of awareness'.⁹³ According to Nunes, *coronelism*, which falsified political representation, discredited the democratic system and encouraged 'the habitual use of force for and against government',⁹⁴ owes its survival to the continued ignorance of the rural population.

As Pereira de Queiróz (1969) notes, an important *coronel* constitutes a kind of 'socio-economic pole'⁹⁵ or point of reference according to which one could learn the distribution of individuals in the social space, being these their equals or inferiors on the hierarchical scale. *Coronelism* explains also the exclusive kind of political insertion in Brazil that maintains the poor in their position of social inferiority and does not provide the necessary means to the full exercise of citizenship. As Cintra (1979:128) observes, the *coronel* was an exclusive mediator in a vertically organised, hierarchical system of domination. He delivered votes to the state oligarchy by conducting his clientele to the polls on farm trucks instructing them whom to vote for. According to Goirand (1996), the patronage characterising the Brazilian *coronelism* is an ethos, a moral

⁹² V. Nunes Leal, *Coronelismo: The Municipality and Representative Government in Brazil*, (Cambridge University Press. UK, [1948] 1977), p.1.

⁹³ *Idem.*, p. 142.

⁹⁴ *Idem.*

⁹⁶ See Maria Isaura Pereira Queiróz (1969), 'Coronelismo numa Interpretação Sociológica' in *História Geral da*

atmosphere 'which sustains the whole system based on power asymmetry and vertical interpersonal relations'.⁹⁶

One of the main implications of *coronelism* in Brazilian society was in the 'politics of the governors' causing the disappearance of the empire's national parties and the exclusion of working classes from politics. This explains why, during the First Republic, the electorate never encompassed more than 3.5 percent of the population. According to Stepan (1969), if we focus solely on São Paulo, between 1886 and 1892 the suffrage expanded from 15,000 to 31,000. However by 1936, after the First Republic, the electorate was still 485,000 encompassing only 7 percent of the population.⁹⁷

In a more recent observation of *coronelism* in the state of Paraíba between the 1950 and 1960, Jean Blondel (1957) has observed that the multiplicity of *coronel's* role was an aspect of the originality of the political structure in Brazil during the first Republic. The *coronel* was a central actor for the imposition of order but he was also the inheritor of lands and plantations, presenting thus a multiplicity of aspects. It is this manifold character that *coronelism* gives to a political chief the capacity to dominate large electorates.

New Clientelism and Repetition of old Formulas

In this subsection I introduce the notion of clientelism and clientelism of State in which political parties assume the function of gathering the votes necessary for the political legitimation of the regime.

Modern clientelism in Brazil was an inheritance of the military regime. During the democratisation period in Rio de Janeiro, this type of political organisation assumed two consecutive forms: the electoral machine built by the *chaguista*⁹⁸ stream of MDB in the 1970s, and

Civilização Brasileira, p. 56.

⁹⁶ Goirand, Camille (1994) 'Prometem e depois somem...Clientelismo e voto popular no Rio de Janeiro', (Cambridge Papers, BRASA, September 1994).

⁹⁷ See Stepan, Alfred (1969) 'The Continuing Problem of Brazilian Integration' in *Latin American History: Select Problems: Identity, Integration, and Nationhood*, ed. Frederic B. Pike, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and World) p. 244.

⁹⁸ The MDB political machine was organised by Mayor Chagas Freitas of Rio de Janeiro.

the *brizolista*⁹⁹ populism in the 1990s. In both cases clientelism assumed the form of an urban 'political machine' (Wolfinger, 1972) as opposed to the traditional clientelistic scheme based on interpersonal bonds between patron and client, mostly practised in peripheral areas.

According to Diniz (1982), 'political machines' are more encompassing than traditional clientelistic practices since they involve both personal *clientelism*, rooted in the relation leader-followers and party *clientelism* that bolsters the identification of voters with party legend. In her classical study on machine-based forms adopted by the opposition party Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB), in Rio de Janeiro, during the military dictatorship, Diniz presented evidence that MDB's *clientelism* had serious consequences for the state of Guanabara under the leadership of governor Chagas Freitas (Diniz, 1982:23). *Clientelism* and the expansion of the MDB political machine provided the opposition's organisation in the state of Guanabara and, after 1975, of Rio de Janeiro, with a certain specificity that contrasts with other regional divisions of the party. This specificity was intrinsically related with clientelistic practices that were a pragmatic and flexible style of action in contrast with the national party guide lines, and the use of tactics to enlarge the bases of electoral support (Diniz, 1982:23).

Analysing the 1994 elections in two shantytowns of Rio de Janeiro, Goirand (1994:15) noted that electoral campaigns continued searching for support in the hierarchy of the slum's internal power. The *brizolista* clientelistic machine reinforced hierarchy in the slums since the structure of clientelistic exchange paralleled to the internal social differentiation in these communities.

From a conceptual point of view, 'political machines' have been considered as mere techniques of bribe, corruption, fraud, coercion and electoral manipulation (Wolfinger, 1982:387) and as stable political organisations with clearly defined internal hierarchies and disciplined membership (Gottfried, 1972:248-50). Further accounts stressed the integrative effects of the 'political machine' in dispersed and demobilised societies, contributing to the attenuation of conflicts of interests and ethic-religious fragmentation and giving voice to a wide variety of

⁹⁹ Leonel Brizola, mayor of Rio de Janeiro

demands (Gosnell, 1968). Finally, according to a functionalist version, 'political machines' have been characterised by the stability that emerges from the fact that they favour distinct interests of the population, satisfying certain necessities that otherwise would not be taken into account (Merton, 1965: 126-39).

From the perspective of its social functions, the modern 'political machine' is a centralised system that serves very diversified types of clientele. The new clientele that are co-opted by 'political machines' consist of broad urban groups given that the new *clientelism* address groups or categories that are favoured for example by means of new laws allowing certain advantages to these specific segments. There are, however, several points of convergence between 'political machines' and traditional clientelistic parties. Both consider voters not as abstractions, but as real beings with personal problems and concrete aspirations. Both depend on the control of strategic resources to deal with voters' immediate necessities and their interests in concrete life. In this sense traditional and modern *clientelism* function in the same way. Both transform private demands into concrete decisions. In other words, nobody loses in the clientelistic game because its effects are not perceived as harmful by non benefited actors. This enables the enlargement of the 'political machine' that is always able to diversify its action encompassing larger clientele, maintaining their interests segmented. *Clientelism* thus deviates from the most acute social tensions when it privatises the achievement of public goods, promoting a vertical mobilisation that consists in the strengthening of links between subordinated and their superiors, diluting thus horizontal bonds of solidarity between pairs.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have considered the relevance of conservative discursive constructions for the repetition of an original infrastructure of domination that has persisted despite 150 years of millenarist movements and 40 years of social movements in post war Brazil. The construction of identities in Brazil has been fundamentalist and idealist not only regarding the Euro-centric elitist argumentation but also with relation to the nationalist-populist, conciliatory, avant-garde,

millenarist, Socialist and social movement perspectives. Emancipation and the construction of new identities does not imply the development of antagonism as a negation and disruption of an image of Brazil but is always related with a return to an original scenario that is constructed by an hegemonic discourse.

This absence, disruption or subversion of traditional images explains not only phenomena of transformism and innovation involving the building of national identity but also phenomena of authoritarian coups and radical foundation of new identities. Conciliatory claims seem to carry the innovative energy for the repetition of a split identity in the uneven Brazilian society. This is because conciliatory discourse allows the hegemony of a 'modern developed' half that is able to describe the other 'subaltern' half, deepening even more socially segmented identities. As I have argued, Vargas was the first statesman to propose an image of citizen in Brazil with political consequences through his ideology of work. Yet Vargas also sought conciliation, i.e. the disguise of a basic antagonism. Vargas' ideology contributed to the repetition of a subaltern identity of the Brazilian people while inscribing citizens in a definitive history of political order.

The infrastructural movement of *iterability* gives an account of the repetition of the hierarchy civilisation-non-civilisation at the origin, i.e. an original non self-sameness as the main constraint to the emancipation of the Brazilian identity. This occurs since the 'civilised man' functions as the constitutive outside of the system of differences. The naturalisation of hierarchies in Brazil is based in conceptual contradictions between the civilised and the non-civilised universe, between the liberal and the traditional universe, between public and private ethics. Intermediate instances such as moral judgements in political discourse and clientelism in political practice play an important part in the repetition of such disparities by means of an attenuation of differences and dislocation of identities. Matta's notion of a *relational dynamic* that implements the *conciliation* of formal and substantive rational systems in Brazil is illuminating when considered in terms of Derrida's infrastructure of supplementarity that ties repetition to innovation. The conservative aspect of the infrastructure of supplementarity derives from the fact it provides the conditions of possibility for the attenuation of discrepancies between a traditional and a rational world.

Supplementation as *conciliation* guarantees the co-existence of traditional and rationalist parallel codes blurring the concept of the *individual* whose absence is a logic condition for the iterability of a traditional order. The lack of autonomy in relation to predetermined structures is a necessary requirement for repetition.

The survival of two controversial orders in Brazil extracts its energy from the infrastructure of iterability based on the operation of supplementary or conciliatory links. In my view, the two incommensurable meanings of iterability – repetition and alteration – are internally related through the infrastructural logic of supplementation. Repetition and alteration are re-conciliated by means of ‘mediators’. The conditions of possibility of a repetition of traditional identities in Brazilian society seem to be a derivation of moral or affective bonding that link together vertically disposed social strata. These moral, affective, religious links fill the gap between dissociated spaces of personal and socio-economic positional levels. Supplementation is thus a condition of possibility a synthesis of national identity since it allows the subjugation of difference to identity allowing the repetition of difference rather than negation and disruption of identities.

In historic and political terms, *parentela* and *clientelism* have been conditions of possibility for the progressive exclusion of politics from Brazilian society by an agrarian oligarchy, which overlaps with an elitist industrial class. These oligarchies still hold sway over local politics in Brazil but the struggle over what is now called ‘base eleitoral’ and which were formerly called ‘redutos’ or ‘currais’ underwent innovations with the emergence of a new forms of clientelism and the use of mass media as a form of co-optation. As political machines progressively lose room for smooth manoeuvring: trust is gone and money is not enough to buy poor communities’ support, neo-liberalism concentrates on new clientelistic strategies. Neo-liberalism gains terrain and even menaces social welfare-oriented alternatives to laissez-faire benefiting from new clientelistic strategies that are related with political communication.

Given the accommodations undergone by traditional politics it is possible to say that the clientelistic order is not being threatened. One of the best explanations for the endurance of traditional systems of domination dwells on the notion of *system* as conceived by Saussure and

Benveniste (1966). According to Saussure, the most essential notion explaining structure is that of a *system*.¹⁰⁰ Benveniste (1966) also sustains that the system predominates over its elements.

Two types of relations in language system explain the nature of changes or transition to higher articulations: relations between elements of the same level - *distributional relations*, and relations between elements of different levels- *integrative relations*.¹⁰¹ In my view, on one hand these *integrative relations* in the interior of the language system are analogous to the integration of different social levels in the interior of the stratified type *parentela* constituted by different socio-economic classes. On the other hand, *distributional relations* dominate *parentelas* of an egalitarian that experience strong horizontal solidarity. From this, we can derive some conclusions in relation to movements of variation and fixation of the traditional system of domination in Brazil. The *integrative relations* are those that give identity to elements in the interior of a determined unity, resolving tensions between the two levels while the *distributional relations* guarantee the reproduction of the system. This *integrative function*, which gives identity to elements and is considered to be interior of a determined unity, is according to my view the rational principle which governs *coronelismo* and *clientelism* as dynamics joining different social classes and economic regions in highly hierarchical kind of society. The distributional relations that guarantee the reproduction of the system could be characterised in terms of the web of influence and friendship inside horizontal power groups, such as nepotism, corruption and influence peddling.

It is not clear which of the two relations consists in the most important impediment to a democratic system. Notwithstanding, my claim is that the conjunction of the vertical *integrative system* and the horizontal *distributive system* in Brazilian history has involved the fixation of meaning and the creation of a highly ritualised symbolic order. It is questionable whether or not the weakening of this highly undifferentiated political structure requires the overcoming of discursive discrepancies that limit the self-legitimation of a democratic political the system by making a

¹⁰⁰ As E. Benveniste (1966) notes in his *Problemes de linguistique générale*, (Gallimard, France) p. 92.

We must remember Saussure's crucial formulations in *Cours de linguistique générale*: 'La langue est un système dont toutes les parties peuvent et doivent être considérées dans leur solidarité synchronique'. This means that the system has primacy over the elements composing it.

¹⁰¹ *Idem.*, p. 124-5.

necessary choice between a past-oriented oligarchic patronage system or a future-oriented modern politics. It is also debatable whether the dissolution of a nepotistic and corrupt distributive system *requires* the drawing of new frontiers in Brazilian society or whether it requires merely a simple dislocation of the integrative function of *coronelism* and *clientelism*.

As I have argued, the military failed in their project of fortifying and modernising the Brazilian State because of the existence of two contradictory forces in Brazilian politics: a past oriented oligarchic patronage system run by traditional elites and a future oriented modern politics such as the new union movement. I have explained the continuity of traditional politics and failure of the military project to modernise the Brazilian State in Derridean terms as related to underlying infrastructures such as *iterability*. This is because deconstruction accounts for the plurality of discursive discrepancies that limit the system in which a certain discourse seeks its self-legitimation. In this sense, these discrepancies or constitutive 'contradictions' in Brazilian politics limit the possibility of the construction of new totalising discourses about the Brazilian reality.

On the one hand, the infrastructure of *iterability* gives an account of the possibility of conflicting concepts or heterogeneous instances of discourse that lead to repetition because of the incommensurability of the possibilities. This repetition amounts to an essential incompleteness and inconsistency that characterises of the infrastructure of *iterability*. On the other, Laclau's deconstructionist approach to politics explains the absence of change as a lack of *dislocation* or repetition of the structure given the impossibility of drawing new clear-cut frontiers. *Dislocation* highlights an aspect of time¹⁰² as the rupture of space. The concept of *dislocation* as the denial of linear time produces logical consequences, which are the emergence of temporality and possibility

¹⁰² According to a post-Kantian conception, space and time are the objects of an exposition and therefore the conditions of possibility of objects as appearances. These *a priori* concepts or 'categories' provide unity for the synthesis of imagination. This is to say that different from objects of empirical intuition, objects of pure intuition such as time and space also depend on pure forms of sensibility but 'contain *a priori* the condition of the possibility of objects as appearances'. Synthesis in the Kantian philosophy is the visualisation of a given time and spaces by means of which diverse concepts are related to the object in general. This is different from schematism as an original act of imagination where the understanding has legislative power. See G. Deleuze, *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, (London, The Athlone, 1984), p. 74. In the Deleuzian view, the transmission of history as a set of rules and also the collective inertia against innovations are factors that abate the possibility of any radical change. History or temporality implies an original synthetic activity of man's logical and moral senses arising from an accord or dissension between the faculties of free imagination and indeterminate understanding.

of change. This is because temporality is the absence of determination. Logically previous to time, *dislocation* enables the refinement of a concept of history since it excludes *telos* or a design governing change. The pure form of temporality and the pure form of possibility that are intrinsic to the concept of *dislocation* entail an absence of predetermined direction of transformation. As opposed to sedimentation of a structure, the concept of time as *dislocation* illuminates the *possibility* of a radical democracy as variation in political articulations. The eruption of foundational events related with unevenness, irregularity or accidentally of power relations require the disarticulation of the integrative and distributive functions of a power structure and the overcoming of a traditional determination of politics.

From the above I conclude that traditional domination endures since temporality becomes the metamorphosis of a nucleus that undergoes repetition. Temporality in this case is an internal moment of the structure and the repetition of the patriarchal power structure depends on the entanglement between the integrative function of *coronelism* and *clientelism* and distributive political functions such as nepotism and corruption. Giving an account of the political influence of the *Mineiro* elite and the underlying structures of their oligarchic hegemony laid during the Campos Salles government, I have stressed that Minas Gerais elite gained access to self-perpetuating sources of power, given its internal unity and its role of political intermediation. The role played by the Minas Gerais elite as intermediate between old and new patterns in Brazilian politics suggests that the weakening or differentiation of the Brazilian structure does not require a necessary rupture but an internal rupture or differentiation of intermediary instances and distributive systems. In this sense, change in the Brazilian system requires differentiation of the elites.

The re-organisation of traditional elites interests around unifying mechanisms of power such clientelism of state, political machines and an elite dominated electronic media are clearly integrative. Their effects disperse and demobilise Brazilian society. New forms of clientelism contribute to the attenuation of conflicts of interests, giving voice or representing a wide variety of demands. The stability of the mechanisms of power emerge from the fact that they favour distinct interests of the population, satisfying certain necessities that otherwise would not be taken into

account. From the point of view of its social functions, the modern 'political machines' are centralised systems that serve very diversified types of clientele. They differ from the old *clientelism*, which was directed to individual actors.

As I will argue in the next chapters, the power of modern *clientelism* to mobilise the clientele through political communication strategies derives from abstract issues. These provide a certain symbolic integration among the community, promoting a vertical mobilisation that consists in the strengthening of links between the subordinated and their superiors that dilutes horizontal bonds of solidarity between pairs. New political machines universalise relations based on strong elements of inequality and power asymmetry based on symbolic rewards.