

From the imigrantist project to the national project: assimilation and crisis in the construction of Brazil

Abstract

This paper aims to present a brief history of immigrants' project in Brazil and its attempt to weed out the considered Brazilian racial problem. To better understand the entire foreign insertion process and immigration policy support, this work will focus on briefly the immigrants' design and construction of the idea of nation/Brazilianness and citizenship, linked to imigrantism, published and defended a project assimilation and welding. From this rapid history, I will consider the occupation and the integration of foreigners in the country and the difficulty of assimilation, the issue of eugenics and finally as the nationalizing policy of the Estado Novo and the regime's concern with the problem of ethnic, linguistic and cultural that had settled in the country. Thus, the work deals with the period from the empire to Brazil 30 years of the twentieth century, with the method a qualitative analysis of secondary sources.

Keywords: imigrantista project, national project, foreigners, race

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Brief history on the incentive to immigration in Brazil

Even before the immigrant project was put into practice in 1840, some German immigrants had settled in the country. From 1824, when the first Germans settled here and founded the Colony of St. Leopold in Rio Grande do Sul, groups of immigrants, usually Swiss and German, did not stop arriving in Brazil. The first groups came on the initiative of the General Government, which organized the foundation of colonies for the production of basic necessities and for the supply of cities and towns. Already in the United Kingdom, D. João VI contracted missions from other countries to found foreign, scientific and artistic institutions in the country and employed liberal intellectuals to sell the image of Brazil to immigrants. However, the image was disseminated in Europe and North America by famous travelers, such as Louis Agassiz and Richard Burton.¹ In 1840, the sense of immigration changed thanks to the abolitionist movement and its projects, to the constant external pressures against the slave trade and to the emancipatory and liberal revolts of all America. However, it is important to highlight the successive internal pressures, the participation of the blacks, the mass escapes of slaves, the struggle of the blacks inside the slave quarters, and finally the mobilization work that has been the focus of historiography. At the time of the growth of abolitionism, imigrantism, one of the most important projects in its interior, begins to be articulated and to absorb so many leaders of the movement as conservative sectors of society. Imigrantism arises not only from the need to think of an alternative to slave labor, but also as an answer to an essential question that is posed to the Brazilian intellectual and political elite: the construction of our idea of a nation.

The Immigrant project dealt with the issues of labor replacement, abolitionism and nationality formation with the encouragement of immigration. The interest and encouragement of the coming of foreign peoples does not happen by chance. The immigration project is not characterized as exclusivity of Brazil. In the abolitionist processes of the whole of Latin America, immigration is one of the most widespread solutions of labor replacement. But it is the way our elite rework this project that ultimately determines fundamental aspects in the construction of our nationality. At the time of the abolitionist struggles, the Brazilian intelligentsia was in tune with European thought. The abolitionist movement itself emerges from the liberal

ideals of nineteenth-century Europe, as Skidmore puts it² "In Brazil, however, liberalism arose as a result of intellectual tendencies rather than any profound economic change."

As with liberalism, the ideas and ideals of the Brazilian intellectual elites are also influenced by the European philosophical-scientific currents: determinism, Darwinism and positivism, which underpinned the projects and discourses of the reformers.¹

As we saw earlier, all these currents of thought pointed to an unavoidable Brazilian unfeasibility. The non-existence of a people, socio-racial heterogeneity and *mestizaje* were conditions of our state of inferiority and Brazilian incivility before the white and civilized European world. The formation of a homogeneous identity was the main barrier to be transposed by abolitionists who believed in the viability of the country, but at the same time believed in European "scientific prophecies".² Two fundamental points were considered as part of the formation of nationality: the projects of identity construction and the importance of ethnicity forged by the immigrant project. By incorporating the racial inferiority theory of a large part of the Brazilian population, the reforming elite began to think about the transition to free labor by the immigration route. The immigrant should "infect" the Brazilian people with their civilization, with their energy-confused with race - for work, whether through sociocultural integration, called assimilation, or through interracial relations, or *caldeamento*. The result would be, second part of this reforming elite, not only the laundering of the "Brazilian race", but its consequent improvement and evolution.³ The evaluation made by the abolitionist leader Joaquim Nabuco, in the 1880 manifesto, leaves the intention of the project transparent: While slave labor, a nation only progresses through the forced labor of an outlaw caste, it is only an independent and autonomous state rehearsal. While a race can only develop at any latitude, making another work to sustain it, the experience of acclimatization even of this race remains to be done.⁴

As seen above, the substitution of slave labor for free was considered a condition for the Republic, and concern about the immigrant's adaptation/acclimatization was part of the transition

¹Since monogenism is the anthropological doctrine which considers all human races from a single primitive type, that is, from a single trunk or origin, Romero had to discriminate part of his whitening theory even though it was also based on those scientific theories, or would contradict.

process. But in order for the assimilation and settlement project to be positive (in the sense that social Darwinism propagated), a whole immigration policy was devised. In order to promote “quality” immigration, a decree of June 28, 1890, determined that entry into the ports of the Republic would only be allowed to persons fit for work and not subject to criminal action in their country of origin. To complete, the law said: “Except for the Indians of Asia or Africa, who only with the authorization of the National Congress can be admitted according to the stipulated conditions”.⁵ For these theorists, free labor of the immigrant, besides the economic aspect, had a political character and would aid in the process of laundering of the country, fundamental for the “physiological” and “cultural” progress of the nation. On this, Nabuco makes a statement on the thought of the movement in 1883. According to him, the abolitionists wanted with his project: A country where, attracted by the frankness of our institutions and by the freedom of our regime, European immigration brings without ceasing a stream of Caucasian blood, vivacious, energetic and healthy, which we can safely absorb.⁵

It is noteworthy that, if in the above quotation some representatives of the chains of abolitionism, assumed the Brazilian racial inferiority, fruit of the black presences, indigenous, mestizo and “weak” Lusitanian blood in front of the Northern European, at the same time did not recognize racial prejudice in Brazilian society. For the ideologists of Brazilian abolitionist thought, the country lived in racial harmony. For them, in Brazil, blacks and mestizos held positions everywhere in society alongside the whites. The cases of José do Patrocínio and André Rebouças would serve as an illustration of this assertion.² For them, there was no resentment among races and the Portuguese mixed up the Negroes early on. Unlike in North American bi-racial society, Brazilian society was already multiracial at the time, which even facilitated and reinforced the Chaldean theory.²

The idea of a racially harmonic society comes into conflict and is obviously at odds with the ideal of money laundering, while at the same time justifying and enabling the immigrant project. The logic that credited Brazil, a racially harmonious society, comes from the comparison with American society, where *mestizaje* and interracial relations suffered and still suffer a more explicit type of discrimination and with more violent consequences, whereas in the Brazil, these relations have always been seen as mild.

Exactly because they affirm the possibility of “harmonic” interracial relations, the ideal of bleaching is considered and explained as a solution both for the homogenization of the “Brazilian race” and for its improvement.³ At the same time, these plans did not exclude the importance of the black element for socio-climatic adaptation - another aspect of determinism - of the white element.² Even with the end of the Empire, Brazilian advertising efforts to attract European immigrants continued. At this turning point of the century, what Europe knew about Brazil was that there were “blacks and monkeys - and half a dozen whites of dubious color.” Besides, the weather was not auspicious and the yellow fever spread. Against all this negative

²André Pinto Rebouças was a self-taught lawyer, deputy and advisor to D. Pedro II (1840-1889). Born in Bahia, he was the son of a freed slave and a Portuguese tailor. It gained fame in Rio de Janeiro, capital of the Empire, when solving the problem of water supply of the city. José Carlos do Patrocínio was a pharmacist, journalist, writer, orator and political activist. He also devised the black guard made up of blacks and former slaves. The two, Rebouças and Patrocínio were black and important abolitionists.

³The term “Brazilian race” is suggested during the pseudoscientific studies, but it appears in this way defined in the works of Azevedo Amaral, in the *Estado Novo*.

propaganda, names such as: Afrânio Peixoto, Gil Vidal, Serzedelo Correia and Caio de Menezes, the latter asked that Brazil welcomed mainly the German immigrant.⁴

As an ethnic coefficient of the first magnitude, no people need the influence of advanced peoples in the formation of a race type than the Brazilian, especially in the historical moment in which the percentage of the African race begins to diminish and must disappear dissolved by the whirlwind of the white race ... The ethnic preponderance of the foreigner will only bring wonderful results for the formation of our race (Menezes, apud Skidmore).² The Rio de Janeiro redevelopment works in 1902/1906 and the eradication of yellow fever were also used in the campaign for the image of Brazil abroad. In 1902, the Baron of Rio Branco, minister of Foreign Affairs, was another great propagandist committed to spreading a “civilized” image of the country. One of his attitudes in the ministry was to put sophisticated-looking white men in top diplomatic positions. And he did not just spread the image of the country in Europe alone. It also started - with less commitment - an advertisement by the United States of America.

The expectation about interracial relations, between blacks and immigrants, mestizos and immigrants, and the re-creation of a “Brazilian race”, were, undoubtedly, some of the most important objectives drawn for the elaboration of an ethnic-social identity of the nationality at this time in our history. To this end, not only immigrantists, but part of the national intelligentsia, were engaged in the dissemination and publicity of the “wonders of Brazil” and the “racial paradise” on the European continent. With this campaign and with the reinforcement of governmental investments, from 1880, the Italians arrived, the Germans and later the Asians. Despite all the national initiative, the number of immigrants in Brazil was lower than in some countries in Latin America, such as Argentina and Mexico. In 1914, the number in the country reached 2,700 thousand, with more than half going to São Paulo, thanks to the coffee expansion to the west. Of these migrants, the largest contingent was of Italians, then Portuguese and Spanish, and fourth, Germans.² The new nationalism of the twentieth century followed the same line as that of the late nineteenth century. Only the defeat of Germany in the First World War discouraged the preachers of German racial superiority. But only for a year, when they regained confidence in that people.

Immigrants and whitening theorists did not say that the process of European colonization was not so harmonious, and that the conflicts between immigrants of different generations, among themselves, with the Portuguese, the Indians, and the Negroes, were a barrier to assimilation and interaction. The answer to this refusal of assimilation and the complex of national inferiority begins to be delineated with the Revolution of 30 and is established with the coup of 37, with Getúlio Vargas and the National State. The advance of social thought in the nineteenth century and the national perspectives based on the racial criteria put there, eugenicist thought emerged in the country in the 1920s and the policies developed by New State theorists, among them Francisco Campos - ideologue of the State New - serve to demonstrate, as the European immigrant passes from desired to “alien” to a Brazil, whose racial question is both identity and problem.⁵

⁴Afrânio Peixoto, important figure in the literature of the Belle Époque; Gil Vidal (The columnist of the *Correio da Manhã*, defender of a more intense propaganda of the image of Brazil in Europe and against the immigration of the “yellows”).

⁵Alien is the term used in the official documentation of the DOPS (Political and Social Order Department), the Brazilian Political Police, which was in existence throughout most of the 20th century, to designate groups of foreigners.

From Brazilian social thought eugenicist ideals in Brazil

The Proclamation of the Republic in 1889 produced some very timid changes, especially with regard to access to participation and citizenship. Thus, these two great events of the late nineteenth century bequeathed the country of the twentieth century a central problem for the Brazilian intelligentsia: What would define the national identity? In the last three decades of the nineteenth century, the theory of racial inequalities that were diffused in Brazil, along with naturalist, scientific, positivist and evolutionist ideas, influenced all Brazilian thinking, and the social issues of the country were based on conceptions European countries. Just as the theory of racial inequalities pointed to the racial problem, geographical determinism pointed to the influence of the environment as responsible for the adequacy of man to work and civilization. The black African enslavement confirmed the Darwinian social theory, especially when arguments reinforced "black passivity." Rarely, the African uprisings, their participation in the Brazilian revolutions abroad, their intellectual activities were considered.

On the contrary, they were grounds for discrimination and marginalization. On the legal side, there was the possibility of obtaining his manumission, but the meanders of justice had a very complex negotiating space. According to Campos,⁶ in his study on the requests for manumission in the courts of Espírito Santo, we see that: In addition to the legal dimension, manumission and emptiness shared an important aspect as an instrument of negotiation between masters and slaves. To gain freedom, the captive had to match the loyalty expected by his master. In the records of ninety-two letters of freedom, housed in the Office of the Second Office of Victory, we find frequent appeal to the Institute of Peculio. In these documents it can be seen that the slave, in order to obtain the sums necessary to purchase his freedom, was strictly bound to his masters. The reason was simple. Through this approach, the captive was able to perform tasks involving monetary income. At other times, the slave sought a free man, his relations, who could advance him, the required value, putting himself in exchange under the "protection" of that person.

The Negro until the law of abolition of 1888, had to negotiate, before the legal plane, in the social plan, in order to obtain what would be his legal rights. Thus, the margin of society, living as a slave, or even free, was the model that fostered the dissemination of racist theories of the nineteenth century, based mainly on Darwinism.

The propagation of such theories served not only to legitimize the conception of European racial superiority but also to justify a new imperialism perceived by some thinkers such as Araripe Júnior and Maciel Bonfim. The critical perspective of these thinkers became the subject of controversy with Silvio Romero, one of the great proponents of the scientific character of racist theories and the purpose of immigrant projects. The racial question took on a clearly racist outline, but it pointed to the main element of our discussion, and that was constant in the Brazilian cultural definition: the problem of national identity. In a country that had already recognized itself as a mestizo since the mid-nineteenth century, admitting the relevance of such scientific theories, was a singular influence for the Brazilian society, the extent to which it admitted the inferiority of the national man against the immigrant European center.

Already in the 19th century Gonçalves Dias and José de Alencar had inaugurated the construction of a given cultural identity-within romantic literary thinking-defined from our racial constitution, highlighting the white and Indian elements and relegating the black element to a position of marginality in cultural participation. During

that century and especially in the abolition debate, the discussion of the identity defined according to the racial element is strengthened and is carried until the 20th century, where the immigrant always plays a prominent role.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, despite a picture of the disbelief in the viability of progress determined by Brazilian ethnic composition and its geographical environment, a small chauvinist movement, represented by literary critic Sousa Bandeira, stands out in 1901. He defends the Brazilian land and is indignant with the ingratitude of the people and the elites with what he considered a rich and blessed country. In keeping with his thoughts, one of the most famous expressions of belief in the country recognized in a compendium of Afonso Celso, "because I am proud of my country", is published this year, describing the geographic paradise we have received as a nation, highlighting the nobility of the races that formed it.⁷ These thoughts, however, were far from firm at this time in the history of the country. The adverse political conditions and the constant crises of the Old Republic did not allow us to imagine positive aspects in the social structure of Brazil. The precursors of the social sciences in Brazil, Silvio Romero, Nina Rodrigues and Euclides da Cunha, resumed the discussion and pointed to an overcoming of romantic thought using as base the theoretical production of the time: Comte's positivism, social Darwinism and the evolutionism of Spencer.⁴ The appeal to the scientific base, however, did not serve to reduce tensions or to minimize racial roles in Brazilian society, but only to try to overcome the barriers imposed by racial limitation and to discover a formula for moving towards order and progress. Scientific theories were clear. They posited the evolution of the "simple" (primitive peoples) to the "complex" (Western societies), which, in other words, advocated that the European, in this case, the European center immigrants, because they are more scientifically and technologically evolved, result of their racial superiority, should be the drivers of humanity towards progress, order, and science.

The importation of these European scientific theories into a society such as the Brazilian one, racially and geographically different from Europe, not only re-dimensioned the racial problem in Brazil, but legitimized an already transparent racist stance in romantic thought by pointing to the fact that racial mixing and the quality of soil and climate were the major obstacles to development and civilization in the country. These theories eventually define the major determinants of our national identity: race and the environment. The understanding of nature, of geographical accidents, thus clarified the very economic and political phenomena of the country. In this way, it was possible to consider the environment as the main factor that would have influenced industrial legislation and the tax system, or that would have been a determining factor in the creation of a slave economy. Combined with the effects of race, the interpretation is complete. The neurasthenia of the mulatto of the coast is thus opposed to the rigidity of the mestizo of the interior (Euclides da Cunha); the apathy of the Amazonian mameluco reveals the traces of a tropical climate that would render it incapable of provident and rational acts (Nina Rodrigues).^{6,7}

⁶Euclides da Cunha, in "Os Sertões", analyzed two determinist factors as the major issues in Brazil: race and climate. In addition to giving a detailed description of the Brazilian backlands, Euclides discusses the problem of race by praising the mixture of white and Indian and condemning the mulatto, since the African blood for the author was not a positive factor. The author believed in the hierarchy of races and in the distinction between the three: white, Indian and black and favored their reproduction in isolation. For him the great Brazilian problem was in excessive miscegenation. The mixing of races produced weak and unstable individuals who were weak for work. This was the greatest national challenge.

Based on these evaluations, Brazil could not resort to a glorious past to build its national identity, nor could it be proud of its multiracial formation to define itself. Language was not an issue, since it was practically defined at the time of colonization. Thus, in the absence of a past to create a more pleasant gift, as happened with most of the construction of European nations, the solution in the Brazilian case was to try to modify the future. Therefore, although national intellectuals do not admit the transposition of external models, they defended the idea that the medium and race would be the “internal factors” for the definition of the Brazilian reality, determining from them the national and the popular.

Even sympathetic to European ideas, Romero, Nina Rodrigues and Euclides da Cunha considered the racial question more important than the middle one, and it came to be seen as “the fundamental basis of all history, of all politics, of all social structure, of all the aesthetic and moral life of the nations, “contrary to for example the thought of the English historian Buckle, who totally blamed the climate for the” backwardness “of the country.⁸ National thinkers have downplayed climate responsibility, but have kept race as the central focus of the problem. The difference between romantic thinking and the latter is that the former constructed the national identity not taking into account the presence of the black. These social scientists, however, within Silvio Romero’s pro-abolitionist perspective, had to re-evaluate the presence of the black in society, thanks also to the advent of abolition and its transformation into a free worker, part of Brazilian social and economic life.

While Romero turned to the contribution of peoples and races to the formation of folklore and literature, Nina Rodrigues sought to delimit an object, black or African, in order to constitute a discipline that dealt with its presence in Brazil: Afro-Brazilian ethnology. Bahia physician and ethnologist Nina Rodrigues was Professor of Legal Medicine at the Faculty of Medicine in Bahia from 1891 to 1906, and wrote works such as *The Fetishist Animism of the Bahian Negroes* (1896) and *The Africans in Brazil* (1932). Interest in the black race, which dominated the country because of the abolitionist campaign, should not prevent the science from approaching, in a free and impartial manner, the ethnic issue. In spite of the “lively sympathy” that the Brazilian Negro inspires, he proclaims the “scientific evidence” of his inferiority - evidence which, in his opinion, would have nothing in common with the “revolting exploitation” carried out by the slaveowners.⁷ With the abolition, when the negro begins to enter as a part of the national society, no longer as marginal, as in the romantic period, that becomes common the assertion that the country consisted of the fusion of the three main races: white, black and the Indian, and the framework of social interpretation placed the white race in a position of superiority in the construction of Brazilian civilization.⁸ Romero, for example, constructed a hierarchical theory, in which white was at the apex of the pyramid, the black in the middle, and the Indian at the bottom. He also adopted the Arian point of view, which advocated distinctions within the white race, where the Celts and the Latins were in a state of decadence, and the Germans, Slavs, and Saxons were on their way to progress.

Within this characterization, being a people of Latin origin, the Portuguese also was incapacitated for the civilization, although in a way less accentuated than the blacks and the natives. Portuguese, although European, was also seen as inferior, resulting from the crossing of Iberians and Latinos. By this ethnographic conception cultural dependence is explained as a “tendency of character and psychological impulse”, a result of the mixture of inferior races: “the servility of the Negro, the laziness of the Indian, and the authoritarian

and narrow-minded genius of the Portuguese produced a fecund and original qualities.⁷ In short, the intellectuals point out as our factor of national differentiation the mestizo, element resulting from the mixture of these three inferior races. Being product of this. In crossbreeding, in the view of these authors, the mestizo has all the defects and defects transmitted by the biological inheritance and indicate: apathy, impvidence, moral and intellectual imbalance and inconsistency as natural qualities of the Brazilian element resulting from this mixture. The positive biological inheritance was not even considered, given the “inferiority” of these races and the Brazilian socio-political context vis-à-vis the European countries. National identity emerges, therefore, from a racial inferiority consubstantiated in the figure of the mestizo, and the national ideal points not to the past, as the construction of the national identity of the European peoples, but for the future, to the ideal of whitening of the Brazilian society, which is nothing more than a theory of *mestizaje*.⁷

The theory of miscegenation and laundering, espoused by Romero, starts from a series of racist and evolutionary assumptions where the “existence of innate ethnic differences” is overcome by “the law of vital competition and the predominance of the fittest”.⁷ Thus, the result of the application of this theory would be the total bleaching of the Brazilian population in three or four centuries. In his appreciation of *mestizaje* as a factor of differentiation, Romero countered Aryanist views about hybridism and the degeneration of the mestizo as to the evolutionist theses that preached monogenism.⁷ However, the miscegenation sought was not with the white Latin or Portuguese subject, since these had been condemned by the scientific theories. The desired mestization was to bring the vigor and purity of the higher races: the Aryans and the Slavs. In this sense, the twentieth century saw another racist proposal flourish in Brazil: eugenics.

Eugenia? in Brazil?

Eugenics entered Brazil in the early twentieth century with a concern that ended the slavery in the country and the black’s entry into Brazilian society. Created in the 19th century by Francis Galton, eugenics means “a set of ideas and practices relating to an” enhancement of the human race, “or” enhancement of the human race for selection of parents based on the study of heredity”.^{7,9} Again, these assumptions are gaining ground in the country, for providing an explanation for the “backwardness” of the country and, also, it appeared as a possibility of overcoming this path. According to Santos,¹⁰ eugenics came to Brazil through books and articles produced in Europe and the United States. In Brazil, the eugenic movement made an association between sterilization, sanitation and education, having as its precursor and “father of eugenics”, the physician Renato Kehl. Still, according to Santos,¹⁰ one of the main concerns of the movement was the control of the population of ex-slaves who were in the process of proletarianization.

In fact, the actors of the eugenic field, the intellectuals who produced their works between the frontiers of the First Republic and the Estado Novo (1889-1945), especially the sanitarians, contrary to the adepts of scientific racism, considered and worked to make Brazil viable and Brazilian beings capable and productive.¹⁰

The great preoccupation of eugenics, that of improving the race, found reinforcement in the ideas that were already under discussion by Brazilian social thinkers. However, the claim of the eugenics

⁷The Brazilian eugenicist movement featured prominent names in medicine, politics, and national societies. Here, just to highlight, we will present some names of the Brazilian League of Mental Hygiene (LBHM), founded in 1920. Its members include: Carlos Chagas, Miguel Couto, Roquete Pinto, Henrique Roxo and Afrânio Peixoto.

was, so to speak, more radical. It is important to remember that the social thought, attributed the degeneration of Brazil to miscegenation resulting from promiscuity and sexual freedom in racial crosses that eventually produced hybrids without qualities. As, according to eugenic presuppositions, heredity would determine the destiny of the individual, that is, the conditions of his life would already be given beforehand, and his future drawn at birth according to the classification of certain criteria that placed him in a category “inferior” or “higher”. The conditions of life were thus justified by biological conditions, which is to say that the poor were poor because they were inferior, being predestined to poverty. In this way, there would be no escape, inferiority and superiority were given a priori, determined by nature.⁹ Measures to control the advancement of the underprivileged population required quite controversial sanitation policies. The doctor Renato Kehl, who in Santos¹⁰ was considered a radical eugenista, had a sympathy for Germany and especially for the sterilization law, defending these measures for the country, as an “eugenic control”. Kehl states,⁹ “the sterilization of degenerates and criminals is one of the complementary measures of eugenic policy.”⁸ According to Stepan,¹¹ “one of the reasons for eugenics ideas in Renato Kehl, and the growth of so-called “racial hygiene” in the 1920s and 1930s.

Again, we see reproduce in Brazil a proposal that valued the European, more precisely the Aryan. Thus, the Brazilian racial problem was still seen on the immigration project. Mestizaje for Kehl, as a factor of the degeneration of the Brazilian people, would be solved through the laundering of the population, with racial warfare and assimilation. To be consistent with its proposal, immigration was also the target of eugenics policy. In this sense, Kehl proposes a “qualitative selection of the immigrant”, with the exclusion of the inferior races. Citing a passage from the Medical Archive, present in Maciel,⁹ among the difficulties of applying eugenics, they present the “ethnological question”: We do not have a definite race, we do not have an integrated top, and we already have offspring of subraces that fragment the race. [...]. To combat evil, we must pay attention to an entire complicated ethnological tree, in which the black graft, the Aboriginal graft, the Arabian graft, the Teutonic graft, the Italian graft overloads and modifies the old yet sturdy Portuguese trunk in the force of its two qualities and in the strength of its defects, due to the diffuse root of its origins.

On this point, eugenicists emphasize the need to curb the entry of blacks and Asians into Brazil.⁹ In the first Brazilian Congress of Eugenia in 1929, among the main topics on eugenic practices were those related to immigration. It is necessary to emphasize that the eugenic measures in Brazil were part of a group formed by the sterilization, hygienic education, and fight against the diseases for the formation of an educated, hygienic and strong people. The main eugenics measures in the country included preventive eugenics (control of the disgenic factors by environmental sanitation), eugenics positive and eugenics negative. The positive, consisted of education, inventiveness and regulation of the procreation of the capable and the last and negative, in avoiding the procreation of those considered incapable.¹⁰

From 1930, the Brazilian policy followed the direction of the international. With the rise of Getúlio Vargas to power, the racial and national question, begin to be confused in the search for the realization of an identity. Thus, the participation of ideologists in the

⁸This measure was also used in the USA, Switzerland (canton Vaud in 1928), Denmark (1929), Sweden, Norway.⁹

⁹The eugenicists preferred to ignore the fact that African blacks did not migrate voluntarily to Brazil.

state project was fundamental. Taking into account that immigration had declined since the late 1920s, the earlier conception of mestizaje was threatened, along with the perception of national identity based on this criterion.¹¹ Since 1937, two of them stand out as processors: Azevedo Amaral and Francisco Campos. The latter, defining the legal aspects of the project and therefore the object of this analysis. Azevedo Amaral, for example, in his thesis entitled “The Eugenic Problem of Immigration” presents his racist theories:⁹Our concern has to be the formation of a superior race not only that which is physically healthy and muscular robust but which possesses the intellectual attributes necessary for the assimilation and development of culture on which the material progress of civilization depends, the moral stability of society and the political security of the state.

In that first Brazilian Congress of Eugenia, one of the points discussed, the number 10, said: “The first Brazilian Congress of Eugenia, advises the exclusion of all immigrant currents that are not white.” This point, however, was rejected by the group represented by Roquette-Pinto, by 20 to 17 votes. This narrow margin would point to the direction of immigration control, of the national-racial project that would come in the 1930s, with Campos.

Francisco campos and the national project

The participation of the intellectuals in the construction of Brazilianism was one of the hallmarks of the Vargas period. The political activities of the intellectuals concerned with the national question began even in the nineteenth century, had a prominent place in the twenties of the twentieth century and during the period Vargas acquired a status including professional. The idea was that intellectuals as elite could foster social development, from their knowledge and observation of the practice of authentically “superior” cultural manifestations. For this reason, Vargas’ cultural policy “involved the appointment of intellectuals to prominent positions and the creation of various organs capable of attracting them to the government.”

During the Estado Novo, this social group had relevance both for the legitimation of the Vargas dictatorship and for the very conception of the regime that was founded. Among the intellectuals who participated in this period, I will highlight the work of the Estado Novo ideologue, Francisco Campos.¹⁰ More before starting the analysis, I consider it interesting to present a differentiation made by Norberto Bobbio, who distinguishes ideologists from experts.

The former are governed by the ethics of beliefs (the intelligenti), the latter by that of the responsibilities (the intellectuals), although these terms must be taken with reservations, since the intelligenti are also responsible - for their projects and organizations and, for their lives - while intellectuals often react to convictions and take the consequences of their actions. By the definition of Bobbio we could also consider the ideologues of the New State as intellectuals because they were called to the theoretical elaboration of the regime and offer an official formulation and explanation of the *raison d’être* of the National State without, however, leaving aside their convictions personal. These intellectuals were concerned with the problem of national identity and, playing a political role, proposed to “civilize over”.¹²

We return, therefore, to the qualifications claimed by the intellectuals. They had a leading vocation because they were able,

¹⁰Part of the biography of Campos, was searched in the Brazilian Biographical History Dictionary. Rio de Janeiro: CPDOC / FGV. Vol.3.p.50.

better than any other elite, to grasp and interpret the signs which showed that there already existed a nation inscribed in reality, even if still devoid of cultural and political expression: from the implicit, bragged to produce the explicit.¹²

As one of the main intellectuals of the Getúlio Vargas government, Francisco Campos, began his political life in 1919, as a state deputy elected in Minas Gerais by the legend of the Republican Mining Party (PRM). In 1920, he became a federal deputy and was reelected in 1924. From the beginning of his political career, he was distinguished by his anti-liberal position, which marked his public life until the 1950s, when he started to defend liberal and agrarian economic policies. During the decade of 20, in Minas Gerais, Francisco Campos assumed the Secretary of the Interior of that state in the government of Antônio Carlos. At this time, it promoted a reform in education, following the postulates of the New School. In 1929, dissatisfied with the preference of a Paulista for the post of president, he joined the opposition, led by the Gaucho forces, and with the defeat of his representative, Getúlio Vargas, participated in the articulations of the armed movement of October of that year that led to the end of the Old Republic. In 1930, with Vargas in the presidency, Francisco Campos took over the newly created Ministry of Education and Health. In this ministry, he promoted the reform of secondary and university education in the country. Campos leaves the ministry in 1932, is candidate to Constituent National Assembly by Minas Gerais like single candidate, but is defeated. He returned to Rio de Janeiro and was appointed general consultant to the Republic in 1933. Two years later, the mayor of Guanabara, Pedro Ernesto, named Francisco Campos as Secretary of Education in place of Anísio Teixeira, accused of involvement in the armed uprising promoted by National Renewal Alliance (ANL).

In 1937, with his career as a right-wing ideologue, Campos was appointed Justice Minister shortly before the coup d'état and is invited to draft the country's new constitution, which will be marked by corporate characteristics and the concentration of executive powers, detriment of the Legislative and Judiciary. In 1941, the ideologue leaves the ministry for health problems, being prevented from returning the following year by the growth of a movement for the democratization of the country. Francisco Campos returns to politics in 1943, named Brazilian representative in the Inter-American Juridical Committee, where he remained until 1955. Throughout history, he was remembered as a mentor of the 1937 Constitution and of the national project that idealized the Estado Novo. As Minister of Justice, he drafted Decree-Law 3,175 / 41, which had a menu that "restricts immigration and other measures and was inspired by American eugenics thinking".¹³ It was in this context that the legal institutions (code of criminal and civil procedure, penal code) and the implementation of political centralization, through decree-law 1,202 (8.4.1939), that governed the administration of states and municipalities and organized the system of auditors. It was specifically in this context that he took care of the legislation related to the decree-law 3,175 / 41: the nationality laws (including naturalization), repression of the political activity of foreigners, expulsion and extradition that he described in his 1940 book, *National (...)*¹³

In his work on the National State, Campos described that the myth of the nation became the central dogma of contemporary politics, and next to it came another myth, that of personality.⁶ In this sense, Campos will build, together with other intellectuals, a project of nation beyond the ideological, legal.

The proposal for the construction of the National State was based

on the legitimacy of the binomial "nation and people", as a way to end the decentralization and to concretize a national project through a dictatorship. In this context, the issue of the assimilation and the caldeamento of the foreigners in the country became one of the central concerns of the government getulista, which sought to define what was called the "Brazilian race", in an attempt to produce an ethnic model for the nation.

Other elements, such as the valorization of the leader's figure, intellectual participation, the attack on the so-called "alien ideologies" and the concern with the fixation of language and culture, were the basis of all structure of this project and, without a doubt, elements of convergence between the two conflicting projects, the national and the immigrant. The Corporatist State also presented itself as an instrument to dissolve disputes between capital and labor, creating a strong state to control the entire national economy. The party was identified with the nation, and the force of the state was fixed on the figure of the political leader. One of the proposals, that of "Brazilian race," worked as an attempt to produce an ethnic model for the nation, using political measures. The idea was to concretize the desired unity around a chief - with the end of political party functioning - and to promote ethnic and cultural unity, redefining the measures suggested at the end of the 19th century in Brazil. Brazilian nationalism emphasized the need for unification based on ethnic and cultural homogenization, favoring miscegenation and cultural assimilation, which would create a "Brazilian race". The national imperative emerges as a response to the political projects of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that pointed to the unfeasibility of the nation, especially because of its ethnic-racial formation. Already inserted in the debates of the Constituent

Assembly of 1933-34, a year later, in 1935: Francisco Campos, who was then Secretary of Education of the Federal District, visited the School of Physical Education of the Army (EsEFEX), "(...) because, being truly interested in everything he attended during his visit to EsEFEX, he competed to make physical education compulsory [sic] in secondary schools, according to the French method, used in school. The visit took place during the first phase of the school which, at the time, was imbued with "(...) a search for the Eugenia of the Brazilian people, aiming to make an ugly and sad race into a strong race (...).¹⁴ The state project novista presented a novelty. Unlike the racial assumptions of the nineteenth century, which undermined Brazilian racial formation, in the conception of the United States there is a defense of this "race" and the appreciation of the presence of the three founding races as a factor of Brazilianness. Moreover, he admits this heterogeneity in the formation of the so-called "new man", in a positive way, as long as he maintains the racial caldeamento. The heterogeneity defended is that which promotes miscegenation. According to Stepan,¹¹ "the variant of eugenics identified as public hygiene and compatible with racial miscegenation and the myth of racial democracy gained support, extreme reproductive eugenics, Nazi-style racial hygiene, no." The role of the intellectual Campos in racial politics was to emphasize the need for the formation of a "Brazilian race", based on the myth of the three founding races, through a foreign legislation to follow:

Measures taken in relation to foreigners in the 1937 constitution

1. Limit of up to 2% of the quotas of aliens of each immigration chain;
2. Selection of the elements in the quotas to be admitted;

3. Impediment to the exit of Brazilian children descendants of foreigners;
4. Dosing of capital, managers and foreign workers in companies;
5. Full nationalization of banks and insurance companies;
6. Idem in the liberal professions;
7. Progressive nationalization of utility concessionaires;
8. Same as exploration of mines, hydroelectric power and basic industries;
9. Limitation and, finally, prohibition of the publication of newspapers in a foreign language
10. Prohibition of foreign schools;
11. Demand that the new colonies organize themselves with at least 30% of national elements and distribute the foreigners in such a way that no more than 25% of the racial currents that were established therein would fit.
12. In the border areas, on grounds of national security, the constitution and the supplementary laws further aggravated these requirements. **AN - SPE - IJI 1370**

The unity sought was more than unity around a chief (with the end of the parties), it was an ethnic and cultural unity, recovering the measures suggested at the end of the nineteenth century in Brazil and in the world nationalist movements (despite the criticisms of Azevedo Amaral to nineteenth century nationalism). Brazilian nationalism highlighted the need for unification based on ethnic and cultural homogenization. For this, he privileged miscegenation and assimilation, creating even a “Brazilian race”. The defense of this “race” admits the heterogeneity in the formation of the “new man”, but in a positive way. One of Campos’s policies, which suggest an approximation with eugenics, appears in 1938, when the National Youth organization, in which the ideologue refers to eugenic policy: “(...) social assistance and physical health by through the establishment of health centers and eugenic advertising and relief boxes that distribute resources to those most in need.”¹⁴

In this sense, the proposal of the ideologist Francisco Campos for the viability of the Brazilian race, will resort to a project present in the eugenista proposal that was of the control of the aliens already migrated. With the closure of schools, prohibition of cults in the mother tongue and political persecution, as an example, in the case of Nazi Germans. Koifman¹³ reports that: “Campos asserted that the nations that exercise control over immigration take into account as the main element the ethnic and cultural characteristics of the immigrant.” Thus, among the works of Francisco Campos that stand out, is the legislation of foreigners, which also suggests a perspective of eugenics. To conclude, these ideologues make this positive characterization using the same racist arguments that previously negativized the Brazilian people. According to them, precisely because we are the result of a mixture of races, we possess positive characteristics of all of them, which gives the Brazilian people unity and originality. It is worth mentioning that, while on the one hand there were the supporters of eugenics, it is at the moment of the Vargas National State that, As Kehl and some of his colleagues associated with him turned in admiration for Nazi racial eugenics (without abdicating their neo-Lamarckism), other Brazilian intellectuals were beginning to discover ‘the Negro’ and to move away from biological racism, to the more socially and culturally oriented explanations of society in which

eugenics still found its place. The Brazilian Manifesto of Intellectuals against Racism, signed (among others) by Roquette Pinto, Freyre and the anthropologist Artur Ramos, represented the public manifestation of the anti-racism of Brazilian scientists of the 1930s.

As a conclusion, the policies elaborated by the ideologues of the National State or Estado Novo of President Getúlio Vargas, presented the need to civilize on top. The proposals suggest, sometimes an approximation with the eugenic movement and the scientific theories of the nineteenth century, or the distance of them. It is important to realize that, for the effectiveness of the modern nation, the idea of national homogenization was fundamental. Since Brazil, since the nineteenth century, considered mestizo, the consolidation of the idea of racial democracy has been expanding and has become a myth.

Final considerations

The participation of the intellectuals in the construction of Brazilianism was one of the hallmarks of the Vargas period. The political activities of the intellectuals concerned with the national question began even in the nineteenth century, had a prominent place in the twenties of the twentieth century and during the period Vargas acquired a status including professional. The idea was that intellectuals as elite could foster social development, from their knowledge and observation of the practice of authentically “superior” cultural manifestations. For this reason, Vargas’ cultural policy “involved the appointment of intellectuals to prominent positions and the creation of various organs capable of attracting them to the government.” Francisco Campos was concerned with the problem of national identity and, exercising a political role, proposed to “civilize over”.¹² The idea of “civilizing on top” goes beyond a political state project, but from entering into modernity from racial and social sanitation. In this sense, although the government has surrounded itself with intellectuals to develop and legitimize its proposal of nation, I emphasize that no social realization is made without the participation of the society. In order to observe this aspect of popular participation and recall Campos’ propositions on popular aspirations, I would like to emphasize the following statement by Pécarr:

We return, therefore, to the qualifications claimed by the intellectuals. They had a leading vocation because they were able, better than any other elite, to grasp and interpret the signs which showed that there already existed a nation inscribed in reality, even if still devoid of cultural and political expression: from the implicit, braggad to produce the explicit. Thus, national-statism built a nation-wide project based on elements present in society: soccer, samba and mestizaje, cultural manifestations and social practices (interracial sexual intercourse, for example) of integrated and excluded social groups, which were appropriated and organized into a political project that had intellectuals in all sectors. It is widely known that the nation, as a cultural construct, is always the collective work of many. Literate and illiterate communities, dominant and dominated groups, nationally integrated or excluded, all contribute with different intensity, in different ways and at different times, to the production of this dynamic and changeable cultural “broth” to which nationalism is usually identified.¹⁵ In a conjunction of conservative conceptions that emerged in the 1930s, Estado Novo ideologues constructed their state proposal, which aimed at the *abrasileiramento*. This “*abrasileiramento*” of social components was based on the support of the regime and symbol of the Brazilian citizen, the national worker. As far as culture is concerned, the Estado Novo dictatorship did not ignore the importance of popular demonstrations and took responsibility for

conducting them, either by promoting those considered of national character or prohibiting those classified as non-national - the foreign expressions, considered “ethnic cysts”. Finally, the participation of the intellectuals in the national project Vargas, produced works legitimizing the proposal of homogenization, unity of the people, and elevation of the so-called “Brazilian race,” from the premise that this project would only be possible through the dictatorial intervention of the State.¹⁶⁻²³

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Conflicts of interest

Author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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