

People *versus* power block: elements for a dialogical analysis of the national identity

Povo versus bloco de poder: elementos para análise dialógica da identidade nacional

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ABSTRACT

This text aims at presenting, based on Stuart Hall, cognitive tools able not only to comprehend the ontological dimension of the Brazilian nationalist manifestations but also to focus them according to a dialogical or discursive analysis. Far from wanting to fix his thought, sometimes delimiting it in a school (Cultural Studies), sometimes restricting its application to the media sphere, what is sought here is an interpretative possibility of its concepts to a scope of themes related to the question of national identity.

Keywords: Nationalism, polyphony, dialogism, 2013 protests in Brazil

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RESUMO

O objetivo deste texto é apresentar, a partir de Stuart Hall, ferramentas cognitivas capazes não só de compreender a dimensão ontológica das manifestações nacionalistas brasileiras, como também de enfocá-las segundo uma análise dialógica ou discursiva. Longe de querer fixar seu pensamento, ora delimitando-o em uma escola (Estudos Culturais), ora restringindo sua aplicação à esfera do midiático, o que se procura aqui é a possibilidade interpretativa de seus conceitos a uma abrangência de temas relacionados à questão da identidade nacional.

Palavras-chave: Nacionalismo, polifonia, dialogia, protestos de 2013 no Brasil

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1. Original: "Or l'essence d'une nation est que tous les individus aient beaucoup de choses en commun, et aussi que tous aient oublié bien des choses". Esta e demais traduções do autor.

2. Following Anderson's literary review (2008: 20), we can mention *Nations before nationalism* (John A. Armstrong, 1982), *Nationalism and state* (John Breuilly, 1982), *Nations and nationalism* (Ernest Gellner, 1983), *Social preconditions of national revival in Europe* (Miroslav Hroch, 1985), *The ethnic origins of nations* (Anthony Smith, 1986), *Nationalist thought and the colonial world* (Partha Chatterjee, 1986) and *Nations and nationalism since 1788* (Eric Hobsbawm, 1990). According to Anderson (2008:20), these works "made largely obsolete the traditional literature on the subject." Hobsbawm's review (2004: 13) supports Anderson's observation: "the number of works genuinely illuminating the question of what nations and national movements are and what role in historical development they play is larger in the period 1968-88 than for any earlier period of twice that length."

3. The reference to this approach is tributary of the text "Cultural studies and its theoretical legacies." There, Hall (2003: 199) registers "tension between a refusal to close the field [cultural studies], to police it and, at the same time, a determination to stake out some positions within it and argue for them." This "tension", according to Hall (2003: 201), is the "dialogic approach to theory"; it is the guaranty of a theory

The essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things.¹

Ernest Renan (2010: 38)

THE IMAGINATED COMMUNITY OF STUART HALL

IN THE LAST few years, the question of Brazilian identity has occupied a prominent place, being at the core of important political events. Only mentioning a phenomenon relatively recent, we had a wave of protests in 2013, in the main country's capitals, where we observed a myriad of problematic objects: the acknowledgment of a Brazilian national popular identity (which reverberated on media and social network as the giant awoke), the claim to the right to citizenship by minorities that feel forgotten by the nation (*#SomostodosGuaraniKaiowa*, *#Pare-BeloMonte* etc.), the contrast between a patriotic fervor and its violent reactions at symbolic celebrations (in special the interventions of the black blocs at September 7 parades and during the Confederations Cup, both in 2013). One also adds the hate speeches in relation to the Northeast people that head to other regions (especially Southeast and South), and the speeches of separatism between North and South, for occasion of the presidential reelection in 2014.

This nationalist revival – Stuart Hall's expression for certain culture totalitarian updating –, although nowadays starred by youths and regimented by the media and social network, is not a new object to social sciences. In the 1980s, time of interruption of important works on the national identity², the debate on the question has already settled and developed in the West in high level of theoretical sophistication, according to Benedict Anderson (2008: 20), due to the surprisingly high quantity and quality of historical, literary, anthropological, sociological and feminist studies. However, what suggests a singular approach of this phenomenon in the current days is the conjunctural and dialogical focus³, presents in Hall's thought, while construct to the communicational researches.

Thus, the objective of this text is to present, from this author, cognitive tools able not only to comprehend the ontological dimension of this revival but also to focus it according to a discursive analysis⁴. Far from wanting to fix his thought, sometimes delimiting it in a school (as some prefer, of culture), sometimes restricting its application to the media sphere, what is sought here is the interpretative possibility of its concepts (or better, of its significations) to a themes scope related to the question of national identity.

The title of this section, in fact, should be read according to such delineation. The interpretation of a community meaning in Hall derives from the verification of a constant presence in his speech, the *différance* (Derrida), while ground from where comes the abundance that he defends (the difference); it is as if we could

consider the structural empty of the language displacement (the a of *différance*) as a common place that Hall shares with other difference thinkers. It is this common, while movable place in the language, which postpones indefinitely the significance, extending the closing of the meaning, which is in the basis of its *dialogical* – way that incorporates the social and the historical into the originary substances –, keystone of his theoretical architecture on the identity.

The idea of a common as difference, and of the community as sensitive partition of this common – if we follow the interpretation of Jacques Rancière (2005) –, imposes today the semantic and political challenge of realizing the difference as instance originated from community, outdated the presupposition of the representational philosophies of an always pacific and unitary beginning, coincident in itself, incorporating the flow of social changes – then the strategy to conceive it under erasure⁵, that is, in the corrective and deliberate writing of its natural meaning.

It is this notion of community that exposes Hall's political direction in relation to the theory and makes him to find himself in a singular collective, that is, in a community that shares a same originary ground in perpetual becoming. We consider, for that, the qualificative *imagined*, that indicates, besides enunciative reconstruction, acceded illusion and shared sensibility.

As observed the anthropologist Lilia Schwarcz (2008: 10), it is necessary to understand this *imagined* as *meaning*, or, more precisely, as “what makes sense for the ‘soul’ and constitutes objects of desire and projections.” Such imagined character – verified by Hall himself, regarding the impasse of the ideological question between the social discourses, the position of the subject and the voluntary occupation of this place – points to a affective vector from which not even he has escaped, being revealed in his engagement with Africa: it is not enough to acknowledge the fiction originated from all nationalism or community or the social functioning of language, not even examine carefully this obscure zone of the psyche and undecidability. It is necessary to differentiate: to expose the powers that intersect and make the substance that proclaim itself to be there since always to emerge, but also to find imaginative ways of collectivization of the social forces able to break with the substance immediately placed.

COMMUNITY AS DISCURSIVE DISPOSITIVE

But why should we resume today a concept as anachronic as the one of the community to discuss the question of national identity? And, more importantly, why from Hall, to whose writings little (or no) importance he had given.

Unlike European countries – Germany, for instance, whose fear of the word *community* (*Gemeinschaft*) is justified by the trauma of a totalitarian political ex-

policy whose effect is observed in an “arbitrary closure” (Ibid.: 202).

4. One intends, in this case, to amplify the question of national identity, started in the text *The Question of Cultural Identity* (Hall, 2006), both in direction to its theoretical reconstruction, seeking its basis in an ontology of difference, and its operational unfoldment, that is, its application to specific cases..

5. The erasure, applied to the concept of community, is used here for two reasons: due to the idea of common that it carries and for the impossibility to imagine other designative concept of a human collectivity. Thus, according to Hall, the erasure allows reconstructing the community in another paradigm (in our case, in post structuralism), from a common element that is the difference: “[...] the deconstructive approach puts key concepts ‘under erasure’. This indicates that they are no longer serviceable – ‘good to think with’ – in their originary and unreconstructed form. But since they have not been superseded dialectically, and there are no other, entirely different concepts with which to replace them, there is nothing to do but continue to think with them - albeit now in their detotalized or deconstructed forms, and no longer operating in the paradigm in which they were originally generated” (Hall, 2000: 104).



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perience –, in Brazil, its abandonment or replacement by the expression *social network*, is associated with both the conceptual redesign (for the understanding of cultural phenomena linked to the use of communication movable devices) and the mark of social distinction by the consumption of technologies (more refined way of participation on digital sociability networks).

However, in the context of the Brazilian communicational researches, this word has the meaning of a social consensus regarding a common and, in its recent memory, the counter-hegemonic praxis of popular movements. The resumption *under erasure* of the community, conceived from the *différance*, would repoliticize it by recovering the tradition of social struggles that the concept historically created, but amplified according to another definition of the common: that of public.

According to Richard Sennet (1995: 30-31), we can read this word not only by the English meaning – of what is “open to the scrutiny of anyone” – but also by the French one – “not only a region of social life located apart from the realm of family and close friends, but also that this public realm of acquaintances and strangers included a relatively wide diversity of people.” Thinking about the community from the public implies to imagine a common place of housing and active participation of the differences, strategy that would remove the ordinary temptation to privatize it around certain hegemonic values.

It is precisely here that Hall has relevance. He allows a theoretical input for the ontological deepening of the common (however, a common *public*, heterogeneous), but also an operative input, that is, for the conjunctural observation of a battle that occurs in the context of culture. One visualizes, from there, an articulation of social forces arising from the non-integrable remains of globalization or from the mass democracy hegemonic policy.

In the case of the theoretical input, it is opened in an introductory text about the identity condition of culture in late modernity, in which the author presents his perspective in dealing with the question of community conceived, in a generic way, as national culture.

Instead of thinking of national cultures as unified, we should think of them as constituting a discursive device which represents difference as unity or identity. They are cross-cut by deep internal divisions and differences, and “unified” only through the exercise of different forms of cultural power. Yet – as in the fantasies of the “whole” self of which Lacanian psychoanalysis speaks – national identities continue to be represented as unified (Hall, 2006: 61-62)

One observes, in this enunciation, the difference as common constituent arising from the *unified* substances. Two paths can be trodden with the author for

the legitimation and deepening of this topic, whatever they may be, through social dialectics of the postmodern subject or via ontology of identification (complex process of constitution of identities).

In the mentioned text, Hall starts its theoretical explanation on the directions of the national culture crossed by globalization, which intensifies from 1950, with the presentation of three distinct ways of the subject's existence: the Enlightenment subject, the sociological subject and the post-modern subject. The latter – conceptualized as “having no fixed, essential or permanent identity” (Ibid.: 12); that is constituted as “a ‘moveable feast’: formed and transformed continuously in relation to the ways we are represented or addressed in the cultural systems which surround us” (Ibid.: 13) – assumes that his/her identity is achieved in relation to other identities (subjects, cultural structures etc.), being, in this movement, a social fabric contradictorily unstable, since there would be nothing in common (besides the difference) that gathered them as social. This way of existence would be, at the limit, a community of pure difference, an impossible community in a disciplinary point of view.

This community ontology can also be accessed via other text (Hall, 2000), which preserves, however, similar critical content, that is, the unveiling of an ordinary division. The path here is the genealogy of identification – concept that the author proposes as differentiation of identity and, at the same time, description of its constitutor process. About the identification, Hall says (2000: 106):

There is always “too much” or “too little” – an over-determination or a lack, but never a proper fit, a totality. Like all signifying practices, it is subject to the “play”, of *différance*. It obeys the logic of more-than-one [...] it entails discursive work, the binding and marking of symbolic boundaries, the production of ‘frontiers effects’. To consolidate the process, it requires what is left outside, its constitutive outside, to consolidate the process.

In this genealogy, Hall divides the discourse about the identity into an essentialist (or naturalist) branch and another non-essentialist one, which obliges him to nominate the latter to make it intelligible (too much, too little, lack, more-than-one, outside, exterior). The nominative action brings, in fact, the differentiation of the two forces that operate in this process: the homogenization – which, subjective, effects and substantiates the discursive material, seeking its unity and indivisibility – and the multiplicity – that unessentializes, carries the symbolic systems to the indeterminacy and destroys the disciplinary devices of representation, singularizing the substance. We reached the unstable social fabric of post-modern subjects.



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An operational gain can be realized in this division suggested by the author, since it organizes a plan of composition of forces, of a multiple and diffuse beginning for a dialogical situation. This gain is the very design of this plan, which, by transposing the sociocultural field, reveals, from its effects, the agents and the policy (what is at stake) in that dispute.

Conceiving a cultural identity as a discursive device, as indicated by Hall, either to the problem of nationalism or of new genesis of culture (local, transcultural etc.), does not mean to simplify the complexity of the variants that interact in the constitution of social phenomena, but, conversely, extend the field of analysis for verification of the agents that gather the phenomenon.

Sometimes, the duality of forces here drawn may coincide with known dichotomies, such as social class, but this class may not integrate these forces – what would figure nonsense to a composition based on *différance*. These forces are dynamic, dragging large sets of social minorities and, therefore, present themselves in a variety of compositions at each moment. Hence the dilemma in which many groups and movements stand: the cohesion and the organicity achieved historically generate enormous obstacles to internal criticism and care of themselves (Foucault, 2010), many times resulting in depoliticization of these groups and, in extreme cases, in totalitarian violence.

Realizing the axes of power that act on the common substances, their segmentations, hierarchies, exclusions, their points of dissent or consent – or as Hall would inquire: what is at stake in their criticism or saturation? – constitutes a major tool for the themes covered in the question of cultural identity.

DIALOGISM AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

The attempts to systematize a theme as extensive and complex as the Brazilian identity touch, obviously, in eventual historical and cultural simplifications. The risk of omissions, however, may be compensated by the presentation of discursive regularities in a wide range of questions, problems and perspectives present in many papers on the subject. “Essays on the national and the popular in Brazilian culture”⁶ has assumed this risk in the early 1990s, when trying to answer the question of national identity through an ideology analysis of his works produced up to that time.

The introduction of the work, written by Michel Debrun (1990), shows an overview of the studies on the Brazilian identity held since the end of the 19th century. This panorama, highly fragmented, exposed the different angles of the problem of national identity before economic pressures and policies

6. Essay coordinated by Marilena Chauí (Debrun, 1990). The full version may be referred to at the Logic Center of the Universidade Estadual de Campinas [State University of Campinas] (Unicamp).

(national and international) that fell upon the unitary and multiple configuration of Brazilian culture.

There are those who purely and simply exclude the existence of a Brazilian national identity [...] Others, however, think that the complaint of the lack of national identity is insufficient. Because there is no denying that the discourse of the Nation – whether existing as discourse about the Nation, for the Nation or of the Nation itself – is flourishing in particular in the press. We read constantly phrases of the following type: “The Nation watches astonished and outraged such event.” And, in its track, the Brazilians, or many of them, imagine themselves carrying a national identity. We must, therefore, explain this apparent contradiction: how to understand that the reference to the Brazilian nation and to national identity is currency, if this reference does not correspond to anything real? (Debrun, 1990: 40)

The hypothesis of the existence of a national identity is evaluated by Debrun with works that argue in favor of a concept of a national-popular not intrinsically empty or contradictory. There was, according to him, popular consensus around national values and cultural identities of those who participated of this consensus. The very success of the nationalist discourses and the evidence of political communities around elaboration of culture affirmed a not empty national-popular: it is the case of the passionate communities observed by José Miguel Wisnik in objection to the spreading of an orpheonic choir (however disciplinary) proposed by Villa-Lobos during the *Estado Novo*; it is also the case of the carnival communities, in Roberto da Matta, as cultural forms of protest before the exclusion of popular groups from Brazilian political life (Ibid.: 44).

In this way, instead of reading the national identity in a purely political key, such as the construction of a self-conscious historical subject, Debrun conceives it in the dynamic and unfinished interaction of social agents involved in the historical process:

There are not, as in other places, two cultures, one for the people, another for the elites, although they may develop intonations in one way or another; each Brazilian would be a carrier, at least in potential, of the same duality – which, incidentally, has been explored, at self-referential level, by works such as those of Mario and Oswald de Andrade, and by *Tropicalismo*. It is in this tense equality that the Brazilian national cultural identity would live – and with no prospect of overcoming in the short and medium term. There is also the possibility of a generalized interaction between regions, ethnicities, classes. And this is of interest to both the community aspect and the difference of cultural identity aspect. There is no more generalization only of the



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Carnival, of samba, of football – by juxtaposition, for example, of many micro carnivals through the Brazilian enormity – but the transformation, mediated by TV, of Brazil into immense self-performance. (Ibid.: 45)

The systematization of works on identity and national culture reveals, according Debrun, three fundamental theses:

1. The national identity in Brazil is not only one. However, the dimensions of political and cultural life have not been walking together. Unlike what Gilberto Freyre has argued, that the existing tolerance in Brazilian socio-cultural relationships would reflect in political relations, Debrun observes that, in Brazil, there is “a political form of conciliation, but this, far from being set by mutual tolerance, rests on the more or less forced cooptation of the less strong by the stronger one” (Ibid.: 46).
2. The emergence of a united national identity was blocked since the origins. In the absence of such consent, “pseudo identities” flourished, some granted by dominant groups, by the church, by the army and the State; other arising from accommodation or revolt of social subjects about the structures of domination. Debrun observes that an action historically inconsistent of these subjects resulted from there, but also the future possibility of new recompositions.
3. Within sociocultural scope, one registers an impeller – the black subject – who, although has been marginalized with “persecution of the samba from the hill and at the *Candomblé* houses”, responded positively to his/her “exclusion of effective (when not theoretical) civic political identity” (Ibid.: 46-47). However, Debrun says that such affirmation, even extolled, was “simultaneously folklorized and at the limit touristificated by the ones from above, for being only cultural and polarized around values of Afro-Brazilian origin” (Ibid.: 47).

In the same line of ideological observation of researches on identity and national culture, Renato Ortiz (1994) records how, historically, the definition of a Brazilian identity was both object and purpose of the power.

Starting from the same reflective place of Debrun (the assumption of a connection between national identity and popular culture), Ortiz (1994: 138) emphasizes the fragmentation of national culture, not as a weakness of the popular, but as “diversity of social groups that are carriers of differentiated memories”. The question, according to him, would not be in evidencing whether the identity and the national memory apprehend the true values in Brazil, “but who is the author of this identity and of this memory which want themselves national? To which social groups they are bound and to which interests they attend?” (Ibid.: 139).

In his epistemological historicization of culture, Ortiz describes the discursive action of important Brazilian intellectuals committed to the task of evidencing the national identity. Since the transition from one anthropological thought, founded in the biological concept of race, to the culturalist prospect, passing by authors who have excluded black people from Brazil's social composition (Gonçalves Dias and José de Alencar), even those who used ideas as the racial mix and the syncretism to occult intolerance and suggest a racial democracy that in fact is nonexistent, Ortiz realizes the primacy of power in the constitution of identity, that is, as a symbolic narrative raider of abolition of social differences.

Nothing unites a *candomblé*, a *reisado*, a *folia de reis*, a *cavallhada*, unless a discourse that overlaps the social reality. National memory and national identity are constructions of second order that dissolve the heterogeneity of popular culture in the univocity of the ideological discourse. (Ibid.: 138)

This is due to the fact it is in the context of symbolic mediation promoted by intellectuals, guaranteed by the place of authority of their discourse, that the cultural manifestations of a private sphere shall transcend to a whole – the national identity. Major institutions, such as the *Escola Paulista de Sociologia* [Paulista School of Sociology] and the *Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros* [Superior Institute of Brazilian Studies] (Iseb), motivated by a critical delineator, undertook, in the 1960s, a dispute for the identity narrative according to the same artifices.

The popular movements do not coincide with the popular expressions. In fact, they act as a filter, privileging some aspects of culture but forgetting others. The culture as a phenomenon of language is always subject to interpretation, but ultimately the interests define social groups that decide on the meaning of symbolic re-elaboration of this or that expression. The intellectuals have in this process a relevant role, because they are the architects of this play of symbolic construction. (Ibid.: 142)

Recent studies on the Brazilian culture have developed important themes and reflections on the character of the discursive identity and national culture. The work on the whiteness performed by Liv Sovik (2004), for example, describes both the “sociological construction” that is the mulatto, “an epistemological obstacle” in social science, and the media manifestations of a white aesthetics hegemony in Brazil.

In the context of the analyses on the social forces that interact in the constitution of identity in Brazil, we highlight the dialogical device, an analytical proposition to the study of phenomena of identity as those observed in the be-

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ginning of this text. As we said, such operation consists in observing the compositional plan of sociocultural forces in the constitution of identity. The analytical device may be also called discourse to the extent that, similarly to the “discursive formations” (Foucault, 2001), the heterogeneous relationships then projected delimit positional structures and temporary dissymmetry: agents, power relations, objects in dispute.

The first step of the dialogical operation consists in splitting the stable surface of the established, search for the forces and agents that shape a substance (object in dispute). The strategy of the erasure⁷, whatever it is, the positioning on the cusp of a substance (identity, culture, community), between the essence given and what makes it different, is indispensable not only for the perception of hegemony as provision of a settlement of power, but to check the inside folds of the substance, the micro physical agents and the processes of different durations that interact with each other.

The next step is the uncovering of social forces that are poured on the substance. The extraction of the people, performed by Hall, from the interior of the vulgarized popular culture, is exemplary in the sense it reveals, since the heterogeneity of forces supposed in the popular, the polarized character which is activated in the dispute by its meaning.

The people vs. the power-block: this, rather than “class-against-class”, is the central line of contradiction around which the terrain of culture is *polarized* [...]. The people are not always back there, where they have always been, their culture untouched, their liberty and their instincts intact, still struggling on against the Norman yoke or whatever; as if we can “discover” them and bring them back on stage, they will always stand up in the right appointed place and be counted. The capacity to constitute classes and individuals as a popular force – that is the nature of political and cultural struggle: to make the divided classes and the separated peoples – divided and separated by culture as much as by other factors – into a popular-democratic cultural force. (Hall, 2003: 262-263, our emphasis)

Thus, one moves on to the description of the social agents formed in the production process of a common substance, the desire of truth expressed in its sedimentation, in addition to the critical actions that seek to overcome it. The agents, who for Hall materialize themselves into classes and individuals in the popular substance, here extend to the

7. On the impossibility of determining the undetermined, one still observes the structure, within the determined. This condition is given by the post-structuralist paradigm in whose ground one makes these comments. Refer to footnote 5.

most varied human groups, to the individual or collective subjects. The important is not the manner these subjects are convoked, but how they orient themselves in relation to the established and what is produced in terms of engagement.

POWER BLOCK VERSUS PEOPLE

The Kilburn Manifesto, a set of reflections released by Hall and intellectuals such as Doreen Massey and Michael Rustin, may help us to understand aspects of the current Brazilian identity narrative in a conjunctural and dialogical approach. In the Manifesto, the authors define neoliberalism as a new common sense. Events apparently punctual, in several countries, such as mass migration, environmental degradation, depreciation of public space, militarization, among others, are related to the systemic crisis of this way of production of the capital which has been consolidated hegemonically in the world. The key to the reading proposed by the authors is to think the neoliberalism not exclusively as an economic theory, but, above all, as a contemporary ethical-aesthetic meaning, founded on values such as individualism, competition and efficiency.

Motivated by the fetish of growth, technology and infinite production, this new common sense has found little political resistance from groups and few alternatives of rupture in the countries where it has installed. Hall says (2013) that, as a matter of fact, the economic crisis that these countries experience has been used to strengthen this community feeling, structuring, through the media, a new cultural ethos .

The victory of neoliberalism has been dependent on global capital, audacity and ambition, due to the confidence that it may now govern not only the economy but the whole of social life. Behind a renewed political theory and liberal economic strategy, their leaders build a vision and a new common sense that permeates the society. Market forces began to shape the institutional life and press deeply our private lives, as well as dominating the political discourse. They constituted a popular culture that exalts the celebrity and the success, promoting values of private gain and the possessive individualism. They completely undermined the consensus of equal distributive that supported the state of social welfare,



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with painful consequences for the socially vulnerable groups, such as women, elderly, young people and ethnic minorities. (Ibid.)

Although the authors enunciate the Manifesto in the United Kingdom's historical context, the crisis, being systemic, produces different effects in various places (Ibid.). In Brazil, this neoliberal community effect has been presented in the provision of groups that, in some measure, take these values in their discursive practice and perform it on behalf of the nation. We will call all these groups of power block, to the extent that one verifies their hegemonic condition for the circulation of their discourses. It appears, however, in the midst of a multiplicity of sociocultural forms that resist the totalizer harassment of this block: the people. Both forces, as talks Ortiz, through their agents and intellectuals, have been disputing the narrative of identity and of national culture.

The event known as the *giant awoke*, in 2013, brought to the Brazilian political and cultural scene some characters that may be read in the light of a dialogical configuration. The *Movimento Brasil Livre* [Free Brazil Movement] (MBL), for example, composed by young users of digital social networks, is defined, as the self-description in its Facebook account, as “nonprofit entity which seeks to mobilize citizens in favor of a freer, fair and prosperous society”, defending the Democracy, the Republic, the Freedom of Expression and Freedom of the Press, Free Market and the Reduction of the State and Bureaucracy⁸.

According to the leader of the MBL, Kim Kataguri, the freedom sought by the group aims at self-regulation of the market in Brazil, which would be supposedly imprisoned by President Dilma Rousseff, considered the “nemesis of freedom and democracy” (Sandy, 2015). Kataguri, elected by Time Magazine (The 30 most..., 2015) as one of the 30 most influential youths in the world (for taking to São Paulo's streets 200 thousand protesters during the protests of 2015), has as intellectual references Milton Friedman, Ludwig von Mises, Winston Churchill and Margaret Thatcher (Ibid.).

The growing number of the group's followers on social networks, plus other movements which aim to dismantle the social policies for vulnerable groups, under the pretext of combating corruption within the government, indicates the renewal of a New Right in Brazil with well-defined ethical contours: individualism, punitive austerity, indifference to the social minorities.

8. Available from:
<https://www.facebook.com/mblivre/info/?tab=page_info>.

Access on Mai 10. 2016.

However, it is in the aesthetic dimension that aspects of this common sense appear. In an interview to the newspaper *El País*, one of the members of the group, Renan Santos, affirmed the main MBL's goal: "to change the language associated to the right", renew it through cultural references in videos for the Internet: "The left appropriated the culture, art, music, what is considered cool or modern. Hipster. Our artist friends can not reveal their ideology because they suffer cultural repression if they are not on the left" (Martín, 2014).

This symbolic field of the modern that is claimed (of the cool and hipster) constitutes, according to Kelsey Henke (2013: 118), a contradictory but hegemonic place: the "'hipster' shares appearances and liberal viewpoints of real nonconformists, but is motivated by the desire to create a fashionably rebellious image rather than by genuine radicalism."

Charismatic leaders that gather big audiences (musicians, actors, comedians, journalists and philosophers) also follow this ethical and aesthetics field, as well as agents of ethnic segregation. As Debrun (1990) observed, the cooptation of the "strongest ones" in the way of ethnic conciliation hides hierarchies and dominant values. However, it is in times of social turbulence, such as in the giant's awakening, that this silence is broken, exposing such dissymmetry under the neoliberal aegis of the political and economic efficiency. In 2014, after the reelection of Dilma Rousseff, Twitter and Facebook were used by protesters to condemn those votes from the country's North and Northeast, suggesting, according to the newspaper *Folha de S. Paulo* dated November 3, 2014, that the "Northeast people" are responsible for the economic crisis in the country. The article brings posts like: "Bunch of son of a... who destroyed our country and the economy in exchange for crumbs! I hope they suffer from malnutrition" (Odila; Motta, 2014). Another newspaper, *O Estado de S. Paulo*, on 26 October, 2014, brings a compilation of posts and tweets that show an aesthetic dichotomy between Brazil's North and South. "The Northeastern people are fucking dumb too, bolsa família increases but inflation increases twice. Go to study, you sab"; "the Northeast people's *bolsa farofa* is guaranteed."

In the indignation expressed by such comments, one verifies the opposition to public policies of income redistribution, in particular to the *Bolsa Família Program*. The neoliberal ethical and aesthetic ideal connects with the racism implicit in the culture, presenting attributes to the alleged beneficiaries of the program (*lazy, layabout, dumb* etc.),



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whose significance is revealed, in the article, in opposition to the values promoted by that common sense (fighter, rich etc.). When the user @brupenteaado tries to pacify the mood of the participants, reveals the meaning cultural matrix agreed between them: “not every Northeastern person is poor and dumb, not every person from São Paulo is rich and smart” (After..., 2014).

But in the field of composition of forces that compete for the leadership of the national identity narrative there is also room for other discursiveness. The people, as an undifferentiated and indeterminate force, constitute the core of the stimulus of the field, of articulation of forces and, therefore, identity diversification. It is important to think about it, according to Hall, not as a static category as the class or figured in specific groups or institutionalized, but while “capacity to constitute classes and individuals as a popular force [...] to make the divided classes and the separate peoples into a popular-democratic cultural force” (Hall, 2003: 263).

The traction of this cultural force which Hall speaks of is today on networks and streets, also in different degrees, in the agents that seek to revitalize the space and the public values, who insist on cooperation even in competitive circumstances, but also in those who address us the care, revealing all their weakness before dominant values.

For example, movements such as the *Passe Livre* [Free Pass], that claim the improvement in urban mobility for all social classes and groups, that criticize the urban architecture built for real estate speculation and the fosterage of the automotive industry. But they are also those agents that call our attention to the problem of excessive consumption and environmental degradation, the abandonment of ethnic and sexual minorities and the peripheral population that is victim of police violence.

Over the last years, the advancement of these minorities to the spaces of public visibility (media, digital social networks, streets etc.) has encountered resistance in the power block via interdiction to the circulation of their discourses. When the *El País*'s reporter asked the opinion of the MBL on the statement made by federal deputy Jair Bolsonaro, that he would not rape deputy Maria do Rosário because she did not deserve it, the group says that this comment was “unhappy”, but that it would “worth remembering the allegations” of the deputy (Martín, 2014). On the criminalization of homophobia, the response of the group was: “we have to criminalize any kind of violence.” Finally, on the

final report of the *Comissão da Verdade* [Truth Commission] (which investigates crimes committed during the military dictatorship), Katagiri says that this document will be of the “half-truth”, that dealing with the past is to hurt the democracy, serving as a tool for the left to victimize itself: “They are always beating enemies that no longer exist and continue putting themselves as victims of something that finished 30 years ago” (Ibid.).

The construction of “a popular-democratic cultural force” (Hall, 2003: 263) depends, obviously, on the circulation of these minor discourses and on their public visibility. However, what seems to be crucial in this construction is the compositional capacity of, from the difference or uniqueness of each minority, structuring an irruptive force against the power block.

CONCLUSION

The pictures of protesters assaulted by police, the reports of the Guarani-Kaiowas on violence committed by farmers, the neglect from government in relation to the destruction of indigenous culture before the construction of the Belo Monte Dam (Altamira, PA, Brazil) and the campaign for the investigation of the disappearance of the hodman Amarildo de Souza were events that, in this second decade of the 21st century, gained media visibility in Brazil, generating a sort of community public sentiment.

The adhesion of people to minority causes or simple gestures (though symbolic), such as putting the last name Guarani-Kaiowa on Facebook profile, shows the existence, even if diffuse, of a community with values ampler than that one stimulated by neoliberal common sense: of the competition, of the individual exit and of the private happiness.

In the beginning of the protests, a popular-democratic cultural force went to the streets demanding that the World Cup in Brazil were canceled and that the investments in stadiums were converted into public systems, which are precarious (hospitals, schools, security in the suburbs). Other times, it presented with more strength against the violence of the State, military police and symbols of neoliberalism (fast foods, banks, car dealers etc.). They are evidences that indicate, as Massey (2013) stressed, the system is never closed – that there is resistance, although in multiple directions.



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To keep the system open is fundamental for the multiple cultures to manifest themselves democratically in the composition of the national identity. However, the rupture with this new common sense seems to require other conditions: narrative capacity to compose communities from the dispersive forces in the market, imaginative capacity to recover the senses of civility and public values, but, above all, sensibility to bring back the human of this hegemonic mode of social production. ■

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