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BRAZIL: TRADITION VERSUS MODERNITY, A SOCIO-CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL PROBLEM(* **)

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1. Introduction

This paper is concerned with problems related with culture and social changes in Brazil and how they have been affected by deeply held beliefs which have acted as barriers against social and economic development.

The aim will not be one of analyzing the problem chiefly in a formal institutional approach. Rather it will to a great extent be looked on and interpreted through a cultural prism, i.e., how historically individuals and group values affected the national social structure. In other words, how their intentions, will, conduct and prejudices, derived from their historical and cultural origin constituted a strong sedimentation in the Brazilian social life.

In fact, institutional efforts toward promoting social and educational welfare have been innumerable. Abundant literature, both national and international have exhaustively analyzed this matter.

Attempts at passing legislation to promote social-educational changes have been inspired either as a kind of self-consciousness on the part of the Brazilian government or via the emulation of legal procedures adapted or simply borrowed foreign countries or even international rules.

The broadest and deepest experiment in terms of adopting an international legislation was the introduction or adaptation of certain principles inspired by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was signed in 1948 by no less than 120 countries throughout the world.

Difficulties in implementing such a legislation were common to all countries, but particularly in the case of the non-developed ones, among which Brazil, under certain aspects, could be classified. It is clear that such a legislation had some indirect legal effects upon the nations which subscribed to it. However, it cannot be seen as a superjurisdiction power binding on the nations and their legislations. These rights, which extend to every member-State – on the grounds of certain political and moral international and national pressures – were not created by the State itself, or through the formal approval of its citizens. Neither are they bestowed with legal penalties on the hypothesis they come to be broken. To what extent then the individuals themselves really accept, believe and are committed to them is something that remains obscure. Moreover, resistances from authoritarian governments to implement such rights are very common because they see the claim of those rights by certain social groups or individuals themselves as an ideological strategy to weaken a centralized dictatorial military control upon society.

All these implications, therefore, transcend the pure institutional interpretation of a society and seem, sometimes, to sink more deeply in the own historical and cultural traditions of a nation, to the deep roots that underlie its inner life and its original social relationships. So if one wants to understand them better one should go beyond their formal and institutional delineations to investigate historically and analytically such roots.

A rather complicated matter that is connected with the problem is the very concept of social change which is not an easy idea to convey. It may imply and be related to variations and diversifications in physical conditions or, as seems to be more important, to human intentional or even unconscious actions as well. Ecological, including demographic changes, technological changes and political changes form a complex comprising the most important causes of general social change.

Although a formal analysis of the concept of social change is not within the limitations of this paper it seems pertinent to call attention

to such complexities when one is studying a country like Brazil. Its intricate problems related to ecology, technological development and political control – as one shall briefly see – sometimes appear unsuitable to be explained by conventional theories and analysis, especially those elaborated in and applied to developed countries.

2. The Background Of The Problem

Brazil has been undergoing dramatic challenges to promote social reforms on the above tri-dimensional spheres.

A brief introductory sketch comprising geographical, demographical, racial and socio-political information, would help as a preliminary approach to one not familiar with the country, as a first perspective of its potentialities and difficulties.

Being the world's fifth largest country in area, it covers nearly half of the South American continent. It is larger than the United States and one of the most wealthy in natural resources in the western hemisphere. Yet, it is one of the poorest in the world in per-capita income, even though the wealth represented by those natural resources is still considerably unexploited. The range of climates varies from equatorial to temperate. With a long coast-line of 4.604 miles on the Atlantic side, the country displays enormous contrasts between humid jungles and dry plains and mountains. The South an South-East, with only 18% of the land, concentrate 60% of the hundred and forty millions of inhabitants, while on the 42% of the land located on the North the population rate goes only to 5%.

The Brazilian population was originally composed of Portughese, Indians and Africans. Nevertheless none of these elementary groups was ethnically homogeneous during the first century of the Portuguese colonization. This is not only a peculiar kind of race integration, but mainly the amalgamation of a new culture with own psychological and social behavioral implications. As Viana observed:

> *Within each of these original races their representatives failed to show either morphological or mental unity; on the contrary they varied more or less observably in the one or the other sense, the black and the red races presenting types of such accentuated somatic and psychological*

> *diversity, that one might say the members of each group come from races entirely distinct and dissimilar.*[1]

In terms of the geographical distribution of social groups it is not infrequent, still today, that one can find in Brazil a patriarchal-like way of living, coexisting in close proximity with industrialized centers. By the same token, one can also see slums enclaved in the core of luxurious urban areas, plenty of traditional mansions and sophisticated buildings. Contrasts which seem, not rarely, to the eyes of the foreigners, very unusual or even exotic. Such contrasts have often suggested to some visiting social scientists who studied Brazil that they designate it as a land of contrasts or similar epithets which spotlight these contradictions.

The social plasticity or elasticity of the country in living together or in contiguity with different racial, social and economic groups; the possibility of society's absorbing the tensions and pressures of this "social conviviability"-despite today's crescendo level of antagonisms and social conflicts; finally, a still existing tolerance and fusion of races both in sexual relation and economic cooperation (in spite of the existing implicit or explicit ranges of personal and social discriminations) constitute a special trait of the nation, even within the Latin American context. These are special conditions that are explained by some intellectuals as a reminiscence of cultural patterns whose origins go back to the colonial and post-colonial Brazil. Among them Gilberto Freyre – whose ideas we will soon examine – had a pivotal role in explaining these historical cultural patterns and their contrast in Brazilian society since the already mentioned colonial and post colonial epochs. As the titles of his books suggest: *The Masters and the Slaves*, *The Mansions and the Shanties*, *Order and Progress*, these social categories found a common denominator within the Brazilian culture, a kind of living and conviviability within a spatial contiguity and so, they became a part of the eidos of Brazilian nationality.

There is no strong democratic tradition in Brazil in political terms. Since the outset of independence the political history of the

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1 Oliveira Viana in Havighurst,J. Roberto & J. Roberto Moreira. *Society and Education in Brazil.* Univ. of Pittsburgh Press 1965, p. 24.

country has been marked by military interventions, *coups d'Etat*, etc.; institutional stability being only exceptional moments of the Brazilian political chronicle. Authoritarianism was a diffused phenomenon in the nation. Schools, as a social institution, obviously suffer the impact of the cultural forces and tend to reflect such contradictions and distinct values.

3. Some Methodological Considerations

In the development of this study one can observe that both historical and systematic approaches have been used. Sometimes they appear almost simultaneously, interlacing ethnographical interpretations with philosophical and sociological theories and conceptions. The aim of applying a more broad and pluralistic methodology has two main reasons:

a) the conviction that it enriches the comprehension of the socio-cultural phenomena, putting flesh and blood on the skeleton of some positivistic conceptions. The inspiration for such more open methodological perspective could be found in the works of such pragmatic philosophers as James and Dewey, in the Popperian criticism of historism, in some educational comparativists as Mallinson and Brian Holmes and on the foundations of the American Anthropology in which Franz Boas, as we will see in a moment, has an undisputed academic leadership;

b) to give coherence to the analytical ethnographical historical approach of the Brazilian culture as developed in this paper, through the ideas of Gilberto Freyre.

Some considerations on this methodology should be preliminarily presented.

Freyre thought that the analysis of such cultural complexities go beyond the standards of the pure methodological and epistemological apparatus of the conventional scientific and social theories. Rather, in order to study a phenomenon like the Brazilian culture, it would be necessary to contrast the scientific laws resulting from theories and models of modern sciences with the incertitudes which come out of the complex cultural realities.

This relationship is by all means necessary, albeit momentarily, to activate the development and the progress of the social sciences

and the knowledge (a kind of Deweyan wisdom) of the human nature.

In this connection, Freyre proposed a multidisciplinary approach, a pluralistic interpretation of the Brazilian man and culture. This implied using, simultaneously, both the existing scientific tools and conceptions so far formally developed and the available contributions as they would come from historical, institutional, ethical and aesthetical resources. Only such approach would allow a better understanding of the nature, the character and the sentimentality of the Brazilian man and of the ingredients with which the nation was generated and historically created.

> *Human only can be explained through the human, even if one has to open a space to doubt and even to mystery, even though conditionally.*[2]

Gilberto Freyre's ideas also seem to find some roots in the foundation of Franz Boas' anthropology. Freyre was a former student of Boas at Columbia University. At that time, the Boasian conceptions were reaching their apogee and Freyre became influenced by them.

Although he himself has emphasized the originality of his work, the importance he gave to the ethnographic general approach fully supported by scientific and historical particular contributions of each culture, allow little doubts against the weight of such an influence.

Symptomatic, as well, is Freyre's own references to his former professor and the fundamental stimulations he provided to his academic work. As he had pointed out in the Preface to *Master and Slaves*:

> *Professor Boas is the model of Master who left upon me the greatest impression (...) I believe that no Russian student was as concerned about the destiny of Russia as I was concerned about the Brazilian future. It was as if all was depending upon me, upon our generation, searching for our ways of solving secular questions.*[3]

The attempt at reconciling scientific methods and theories with

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2 Freyre, Gilberto. *Sobrados e Mucambos*. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 1961, p. 351.

3 Freyre, Gilberto: *Casa-Grande y Senzala*.Venezuela: Biblioteca Ayacucho, 1977, p. 6.

the historical method of understanding, operated in Boas' conceptions as a corrective to go beyond the traditional uses of deductions and generalizations of laws from the phenomena.

This was one of Boas' great contributions to the Anthropological studies. Different from British Anthropology that moved in the direction of science and positivistic bias, the Boasian Anthropology was "both in origin and discovery a historical more than a logical problem. It could only be accomplished by getting behind appearances, transcending the point of view of the observer, and untangling the historical complexity of the process affecting human life to arrive at categories that were not found in the mind of the student but were somehow derived from, consistent with and in a sense internal to the phenomena themselves".[4]

These ideas seem to be profoundly stamped on Freyre's work. So, it was within this theoretical and methodological framework that he carried out an Anthropological study that attempted to make up an original historical and cultural contour for the formation of the Brazilian society. A systematic, criterous, exhaustive and careful description of the Brazilian cultural models, as Darcy Ribeiro observed, but in principle uninterested in theoretical generalizations.[5]

4. The Brazilian man's culture and social structural problems some interpretations

J. B. Gitler in analyzing the problem of human nature[6] makes a very important distinction between human social nature and human cultural nature. The former being derived from experiences in primary groups, i.e., those inner traits of human personality which result from man's more natural and spontaneous interactions with his fellows and his environment; the latter being originated from experiences developed

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4 Stocking, George W. Jr. *A Franz Boas Reader: The Shaping of an American Anthropology 1883-1911.* The Univ. of Chicago Press 1982.

5 Ribeiro 1977 in Freyre 1977 op. cit., p. XX.

6 Bottomore, T. B.*Sociology.* George Allen & Winwind, London 1971, p. 290-310. Gitler's terminology, as presented above, seems to be apparently opposite to the use of the term culture as it is employed in the present analysis. However it is only a nominalistic problem. in Gitler's sense, social nature is spontaneous, instinctively institutionalized, forms of life not rationally organized, while cultural nature abridges social interactions which are instituitionally and bureaucratically organized as a result of a process of civilization. So, in meaning and contents the distinction is compatible with and serves the purpose of this study.

in secondary groups, namely, those already socially institutionalized.

Connected to this distinction it is important to observe in the history of the Brazilian traditional society that, since the advent of the colonial era, due to the size of the Brazilian territory and the scarcity of the colonizer's population, there occurred a practical impossibility of establishing effective forms of territorial and social control and easy communication.

The development of isolated communities started having mainly the family as the nuclear pattern of social, political and economic organization. As social groups these communities were economically organized on the basis of extensive monocultures, having sugar-and later coffee as their economic basis, the landlord being, within this system, the absolute authority. In fact, they were the *"longa manus"* of the Portuguese State exercising the social control and establishing the basis upon which the incipient Brazilian social structure was forged.

Laws and rules of behaving and the status and roles developed by the racial groups involved in these interactions were all under control and arbitration of the *"pater familias"* and later historically reproduced through other similar individual and familiar structures of power.

It was this historical way of settling the Brazilian social groups, with weak ties with the formal social structure of the Portuguese government, which by conjunctural reasons left in the hands of individual citizens the economic and territorial control of the colony. It was at that moment as well, that the primitive individual and social ways of thinking, valuing and behaving seem to have been delineated.

The length of time, the historical and cultural duration of these primitive cultural patterns seem to constitute one of the first problems related to the slowness with the pathways of the cultural evolution from original to institutional forms of social life.

When the civilization process was progressively introduced with the civilization of the formal Monarchic and later the Republican State, when new forms of acculturation were then incorporated to such structure, one had a kind of interpolated superstructure which at the same time, as we will soon see, interacted and conflicted with those primordial segments.

The social life of Brazil, its peculiarities and dilemmas have been interpreted both in their etiology and early cultural developments through historical and anthropological analysis as that elaborated by Gilberto Freyre.

Other systematic and modern formulations have tried to explain the Brazilian social problems and develop new models to transform the existing reality. These latter theoretical constructs are supported by the premises on which the coherence and applicability of them depend upon. So, deductions from these premises are necessary conditions to the logicality and practicability of those conceptions. Relations in the way of producing (economy) as those concerned with thecnical and scientific modernization of society, for instance, constitute some of these essential premises. Modification in those relations, therefore, will affect the social structure and promote the desired social changes they aim to fulfill.

In this study, Freyre's model, particularly as related to the cultural ingredients he identifies in the origin and early evolution of Brazilian society (raw elements) will be contrasted with those already elaborated in the institutional fabric of the existing social structure and the constituents of the civilization process (cooked elements)[7]. In these circumstances it seems to be possible to compare those particular explanations of the Brazilian social problems and see which of them, in part or as a whole, would explain better these problems and which obstacles have acted as barriers against social changes. It seems to be possible as well to shed some light on the theoretical and social legitimacy of those particular explanations of the Brazilian social problems and see which of them, in part or as a whole, would explain better these problems and which obstacles have acted as barriers against social changes. It seems to be possible as well to shed some light on the theoretical and social legitimacy of those models under analysis.

These interpretations, as well as the ideological commitments imbricated in some of them, will next be briefly presented and discussed.

1. Gilberto Freyre described and interpreted Brazilian society as a peculiar model of social integration and an example of ethnical and cultural pluralism.

He saw the mixed Brazilian culture, fusing Europeans, Africans and Indians, as a positive and most distinctive aspect of the Brazilian man and culture. He believed that the cultural problem could not be properly explained as a product of races and hereditary reasons. It is

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7 *Raw* and *cooked* are terms used in a cultural sense by Lévi-Strauss in his study of the *Bororo Indians in Brazil*.

rather a synthesis of environmental and cultural legacies, historical and psychological components which were in the background of the Brazilian colonization and that played a fundamental role in the determination of the nation's culture and personality.

Cultural crisis would occur when tradition no longer conforms to values and practices of scientific and technological progress. The accommodation of some essentials of the Brazilian culture to them, therefore, no matter how far the country is to be engaged in modernization and development, would be necessary to allow the continuity of a functional "devenir" of the nation.

In explaining the causes that are at the bottom of the Portuguese colonization, Freyre, among others, emphasized that the military and technical domination of Indians and Negroes by the Portuguese Europeans encouraged the latter to tolerate and make concessions to the former in terms of sexual, labor and social relationships. The lack of white women, for instance, among the Portuguese Europeans themselves, opened space to more easy and natural intercourse between dominant and dominated people.

> *The sexual relationships between white man and women from the other races, notwithstanding being, in the majority of the cases, one of the superiors with inferiors, one of despotic sadistic Lords with passive Slaves, were mitigated due to the colonizer's need of constituting within such circumstances and basis.*[8]

The catholic doctrine and the conditions upon which it was historically developed, assimilated, interpreted and translated into the Portuguese nation and culture was another fundamental element to the understanding of the Brazilian colonization.

A kind of religious syncretism had emerged in Portugal, revious to the Brazilian colonization, from the interweaving of Roman Catholicism and Mohammedanism, the consequence being, in religious and social terms, the assimilation of certain mystical traits of the moslem religion and culture by the existing Catholicism.

Effects of this interlacing were also felt, on the other hand, in

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8 Freyre 1977, op. cit., p. 8.

the moslem's pragmatical nature of dealing with business and agricultural techniques, as well as in language, customs, and particularly in the slavery system which was a domestic rather than an industrial one. Reproduction of this syncretism was portrayed in the Portuguese colonization in Brasil. As Freyre himself explained the roots of the slavery system in Brazil:

> *it was different from the Anglo-American, the Dutch and even the French and the Spanish systems of modern slavery. It was an extension of the Portuguese system just as the Portuguese system was an extension of the Moorish or Arab or Mohammedan system of domestic rather than industrial slavery. (...) we know that the Portuguese, though intensely Christian and, more than that champions of the cause of Christianity against the cause of Islam, imitated Arabs, the Moors and the Mohammedans in a number of thecniques and customs, and assimilated from them a number of cultural values. The Mohammedan conception of Slavery, as a domestic system linked to family organization as a whole and including economic activity without being entirely dominated by an economic industrial purpose, was one of the Moorish values that the Portuguese applied to their christian colonization to Brazil.[9]*

He concluded affirming that the Mohammedans had for centuries been superior to the Europeans and Christians in their methods of assimilating African groups and cultures into their civilization. And, to give substance to his argument he quoted Professor Fox Pitt-Rivers, a British Anthropologist who supported that "Orient slavery is something quite different, nobler and less degrading than it was in Europe and the United States."[10]

Mohammedan education also left, according to Freyre, some of its traits in the Brazilian culture. The way children in the 19th century recited in concert the multiplication table and their spelling lessons reminded him of Mohammedan schools.[11]

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9 Freyre, Gilberto. *New World in the Tropics* (The Culture of Modern Brazil). New York: Vintage Books, 1963, p. 197-198.

10 Freyre 1963, op. cit., p. 199

11 Freyre 1977, op. cit., p. 218..

In religious terms, one could observe later in Brazil the amalgamation of Negro sects and culture with the official Catholicism.[12]

Integration of different patterns of culture equally happened between Christians and Jews, bringing about remarkable influences in the formation of the Portuguese culture. Influences that were reflected in the area of commerce, in the tendency toward financial speculations aiming at high profits, as well as in the administration and the development of scientific and technological knowledge.

Another important effect of this cultural interaction which underlies the Portuguese mercantilist and slavery character – lately also leaving in the Brazilian colonial and post colonial periods a profound impact – was the antipathy towards all kinds of manual work and the fascination for diplomas, bachelorship, legalism and juridical mysticism.

Intermarriages between Portuguese and Jews were not uncommon, binding together – no matter what the blood origins may have been – families, many of them influential both in economic and political terms.

All these socio-cultural events, despite their relevancies and weaknesses, operated within the Portuguese culture and society with a singular functionality. So, in relation to this unique social phenomenon of Jew and Portuguese's easier racial integration some analysts have observed, for instance, that while the Jews, everywhere, developed a consciousness of race, this however was not true in Portugal. There, Jews became more integrated to the social system and culture. Catholicism in Portugal – they explained – was not properly concerned with the purity and the preservation of race as other Europeans conquerors were. Rather, the Portuguese were much more worried over the purity of faith.

Analogously to what was earlier stated, one could observe that as a result of these symbiotic interrelations, economic and political interests as well as religious aims, were deeply interlaced in Portugal, finding here confluences, there conflicts but always new ways of conviviality. The intense and long contact of Portuguese with the Arabs, the Moors, and the Jews was an "integration or balance, of contending elements rather than segregation or sharp differentiation of any of them or violent conflict between them" and, as Freyre pointed out, the impact

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12 One can find an illustration of this form of religious syncretism in the State of Bahia which remains as the best sample of Brazilian African heritage in the country.

of the crashing among these distinct cultural forces in the Portuguese life and its colonial enterprises was decisive since:

> *For the preservation of such healthy differences or antagonism, it was a good thing that the forces for uniformity did not always act together, but were sometimes competitive and antagonistic: the Crown, against the Church, for instance, the Society of Jesus against the Inquisition. There was a period when the Jews themselves had the Jesuits as their protector against the powerful Inquisition.* [13]

In educational terms, the bases of the Brazilian colonial instruction were decisively set up and conducted by the Portuguese Jesuit order. (The Jesuits were officially and really responsible for the whole Brazilian education for more than two centuries). Their humanistic trends, their taste for manner of discussing and solving problems, their taste for literary, memorialistic and pure intellectualistic studies were considered by Freyre as too formal and, therefore, to a great extent, not compatible with the psychology and interests of the aborigines." [14]

Freyre thought that the Franciscans would have been a better option for the Brazilian men and environment. They possessed much more things in common with the aborigines:

"Their inclination toward manual tasks, their repugnance for any considerable amount of book-learning. The Brazilian aborigine was precisely the type of neophyte or catechumen who, once the light of the catechism had dawned upon him was not a good prospect for Jesuit ideology." Rather, the Franciscan "as enemy of intellectualism and mercantilism, lyrical in his simplicity, a friend of manual arts and of small industry, and almost animistic and totemistic in his relation to nature, to animal and vegetal life" would be more realistic and better synchronized with the cultural nature of Brazil and "with the spirit of the coming ages." [15]

> *The Franciscans were, above all concerned with turning the natives into artisans and technicians: they avoided*

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13 Freyre 1963, op. cit., p. 45.
14 Freyre 1977, op. cit., p. 154, 156.
15 Freyre 1977, op. cit., p. 159.

> *overburdening them with that mental exertion which the Indians hated more than manual labor*

while the Jesuits

> *came here without any purpose of developing technical or artistic activities among savages, but rather those of a literary and academic nature.* [16]

However, it is in the phenomenon of the Brazilian racial miscegenation that Freyre found out one of the positive values which influenced the development of the colonial education. He illustrated this assertion stating that:

> *Not only were black and mulattoes in Brazil the companions of white lads in the Big Houses, schoolrooms and in colleges, there were also white boys who learned to read with Negro teachers.* [17]

If one looks at Freyre's ethnographical theory as it has been presented so far it is possible to derive a special focus on education. This focus is not properly centered on organized education as it developed in modern societies but more as a natural and pragmatic process which intersperses in every day life its values.This kind of education would be able to allow the transformative encounter between the old and the new on the line of an organic social evolution itself.

2. Modernizational interpretations also have tried more recently to explain Brazilian society as a retarded one in relation to the benefits of technological and industrial developments.To promote social changes, they believed, it would be essential to precipitate and stimulate faster development and modernization of the social structure.The consequences of these effective changes would be the appearing of a new model of society and man adapted to the new time. This could be materialized through an integration and adaptation of economy and education to the requirements and socio-educational conceptions of developed and industrialized countries. The effects of this

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16 Freyre 1977, op. cit., p. 159, 160.
17 Freyre 1977, op. cit., p. 409.

modernizational policy must reproduce their healthy results, both endogenously and exogenously, in backward countries that implement these policies and strategies. As a consequence, naturally, an overall process of social change would evolve, leading to social economic and political development.

After the end of the second World War and mainly in the sixties, attempts in this direction have been more systematically and fully encouraged and implemented, its most recent institutional experiment being the 1964's military revolution, which will be later object of the present study within this model. [18]

The model of man designed by the functionalistic modernizational conception, as it was developed in Brazil, came to be that of a technocrat. A person vested with the necessary knowledge and competence to operate the complex machinery of bureaucracy and modern production. That power, obviously, taken in the higher steps of the technocracy – mainly the governmental one – could also be translated into political terms, to the extent that their suggestions, increasingly, albeit indirectly, control the political process.

Reaction in the country at large coming from the population against this image and the role of a modern technocratic man were enormously negative, on the assumption that a technician's view of his fellow human beings is cold, utilitarian or even philistine.

Education as related with the modernizational conception, would be, naturally, one in which it could operate as an instrument for promoting technical and professional formation. The emphasis on education rests upon modern sciences, particularly experimental sciences. Exception made to economy, a powerful weapon for technocrats, history, philosophy and humanities in general are almost entirely relinquished, and what still remains in the curricula is relegated to a secondary status. The student then, must be trained to cope with the functional activities of the modern technological State. Using Isaac

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18 In fact, it seems to be convenient to advance that politically, this military movement started – as Fernando Henrique Cardoso had observed – looking for conservative alliances such as those with the most traditional sectors of middle and upper classes organized within the Church and political parties as well as with rural landlords. Groups that naturally represented what remained as archetypes in terms of Brazil's social structure and ideals. Nevertheless, these groups were progressively jettisoned from power to give place to modern enterprise groups and more advanced sectors of the midle class, intellectually eager to furnish technical support to the new entrepreneurial State. While the high interests of the enterprises and foreign capital prevailed, the military, as impeccable guardian of the State, took it as their responsibility to promote the social order and the capitalistic development of Brazil.

Kandel's ironical aphorism: education is much more concerned with the idea of progress than with the progress of ideas.

3. A more radical and leftist interpretation could be drawn from the so-called dependence theories. They have been mainly applied to Latin American and Third World countries, but subsidiary to all developed countries as well.

The origin of dependence theories is essentially connected with the crisis and failures of modernizational conceptions and practices. They have their theoretical roots in the Marxist view of man and society and its inherent criticism of the capitalistic model.

Dependence theories confute the modernizational approach on the grounds of its supposed false assumptions according to which the diffusional model assumes that it is possible progressively to move technology and capital from developed to underdeveloped countries and from cities to countryside in such way that these policies and procedures will bring to the former a real economic and social development as well as, politically, promote a more liberal democratic system for the latter.

Dependence theories advocate a quite opposite view. According to them, Latin American as well as Third World countries cannot be seen in an underdeveloped stage running linearly toward progress at the expense of modernizational procedures. Rather, they are stagnated and inevitably going backwards, once underdevelopment is just an effect caused by the development of central industrialized countries and their capitalistic policies and strategies of economic exploitation.

No comparison is then possible between such peripheral and central nations (dependent and dominant ones) since the difference between them is qualitative an not a quantitative one. It will be even less possible to relate the capitalistic transition of Western European countries with the Third World ones. Historically, those European countries prospered economically and became solid nations thanks to their policy of building overseas empires for economic exploitation and political domination.

The consequence is that, while for the modernizational theory a large amount of capital is required and must be invested in underdeveloped countries to promote their development (capitals

mostly coming from foreign industrialized countries), the dependence theories, on the other hand, extol a rupture with capitalism and foreign investments as a prerequisite of social political and educational independence and economic progress.

Dependence theories are fundamentally economic and political in nature, despite having been applied to all other areas of human and social sciences, like education, culture, literature, arts, etc. Areas, according to them, that are directly affected by the mechanisms of reproduction and, therefore, do not have their own autonomy and identity but are, in the last analysis the result of a unique "vera causa", namely, the economic expansion of the dominant countries. As Theotonio dos Santos pointed out:

> *dependence is a conditioning situation in which the economics of a group of countries are conditioned by the development and expansion of others. They can only expand as a reflection of the expansion of the dominant countries.*[19]

In analyzing the evolution of Brazil as a peripheral society, the dependence theorists periodize it from its chronic initial dependence of capitalism on its critical cycle. They see the phase of the overthrow of the monarchic regime and the beginning of the decline of the rural aristocraticy with the consequent advent of the Republican State as an oligarchic period comprising an accommodation of the rural capitalistic structure, based at that moment in the coffee plantation and the emergence of the capitalistic production in urban areas. This primitive form of capitalism was much more dependent on foreign imperialism than the development of an internal capitalism. So, its compromises were substantially divided between the coffee interests of exportation and foreign capitals. There was no possibility, therefore, of developing, at that stage, an internal industrial growth.

The Bonapartist State which follows the preceding one is characterized by the initiation of the national industrialization and the instalment of a very strong institutional control. At this moment, the traditional regional alliances start to be broken to consolidate the national industrial internal market.

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19 Santos, Theotonio in Munck, Ronaldo. *Politics and Dependence in the Third World: The Case of Latin America*. London: Zed Books Ltd., 1985, p. 8.

Finally, they see a third stage corresponding to the appearance of the Military State. Here, the government is no longer ruled charismatically but embodies a system in which a new re-accommodation of social forces took place, concentrating exclusively and shifting decisively towards the capital interest. At that time, however, an autonomous techno-bureaucratic group which increasingly become an influential part of the new ruling class organizes the State itself as one of the most important agencies in the process of capitalistic exploitation.

Dependence theorists interpret the intervention of the State in the national economy as an imperative of the government due to the aggravation of the internal social and economic crisis. Quoting Engels:

> *the more the state proceeds to taking over of productive forces, the more does it actually become the national capitalist, the more citizens does it exploit. The workers remain wage-workers – proletarians. The capitalistic relation is not done away with. It is rather brought to a head.* [20]

The image drawn of a man who emerges from dependence theories is one of a political being, a revolutionary who must be aware of his own exploitation (deanaliated) and who wants and is ready to fight against the existing social order and to break with the contradictions and evils of capitalistic domination, using – even if necessary – violent means to fulfill such objectives.

Cultural implications could also be developed from dependence theories. So, for some of these theorists it is possible and even necessary to provide a better understanding of the existing culture as a superstructure determined by the material conditions of life and which obstructs an integrated economic development and social and political emancipation, since it is founded in capitalistic basis. This understanding would become fundamental to transform the existing society. Education here would be, without doubt, a decisive force to provoke the desired rupture with the status quo and its cultural industry imported from capitalistic nations. The elaboration of a pedagogical

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20 F. Engels in Munck 1985, op. cit., p. 208.

program on the basis of the conscientization of the people would be an important strategy to give rise to the awareness of man's exploitation and cultural alienation, although it would not alone be the last step toward individual and nation's liberation.

5. Some Critical Comments

Social studies, including education, dealing with Third World countries, have been in recent years closely related with theories of dependency, either advocating or criticizing them, while modernizational theories have been largely used, particularly and more systematically during the sixties, but have suffered a strong negative impact due to their historical failures in conceptual terms as well as in their attempts at practical implementation.

Gilberto Freyre's theory is based on an analysis of the tradition and cultural heritage of the nation. As an ethnological interpretation of the Brazilian man and culture it has been widely characterized by its originality and genuineness. Man emerges from this interpretation as a result of a melting pot of races and cultures which produced new forms and manifestations of life. Included in them there is a kind of emotional democratic-like social behaviour,[21] developed within a very paternalistic and authoritarian social structure. Although Freyre's interpretation could be considered really – as it was mentioned – a first original and autentic Brazilian Anthropological definition of the national cultural complexities, it has been blamed by some social scientists as too romantic and by others as too conservative.

Modernizational theories, apart from the difficulties derived from their functionalistic postulate, have been accused of developing a misleading image of social integration and cohesion. Besides, they traced an image of man vested with a shied of a cold rationality and a linear view of economic and social progress. This seems to be a deterministic aspect in general but especially when it is considered in relation to the Brazilian people and their emotional, sentimental or Dyonisiac character and ways of interpreting life and its practical consequences.

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21 Freyre used to employ the expression "emotional democracy" to define this relation.

Special derivations of dependence theories which intend to use a theoretical basis from the Marxist doctrine could be criticized on the grounds that they develop a kind of circular argument to explain conflicts. They are limited to a view of capital accumulation and economic exploitation of underdeveloped countries. In this sense they even fail in performing a complete and coherent Marxist premise of the struggle of classes. By reducing the bulk of the social conflicts predominantly to the interests of the national competitive capital against the multinational ones, they become, in the last analysis, almost an apology for nationalism.

Modernizational theories fall within similar pools of fragilities and incompletenesses to the former ones. Despite the antagonistic positions and radical quarrels between them, they seem to keep some parental relationships. For instance, the dependence theories dealing with the vicious circle of dependent versus autonomous, or central versus peripheral dichotomics, modernizational theories tied to the circular scheme of tradition versus modernization. Using different concepts with meanings that radically exclude each other, both theories exhibit the same aporetical dilemma.

Incidentally, Cardoso, in analysing the theoretical consistency of the dependence approach has perceived these difficulties. So, notwithstanding, he recognized the existence of a dependent development, he admitted that the phenomenon of dependence cannot be only explained from the angle of geographical and spatial relations of domination. One must take into consideration as well the forms and phases of dependence and the specific class alliances springing from them. It is fundamental – he proceeded – to pay attention, on one side, to the relationship between external and internal forces in a complex whole, rooted in coincidences of interests between local dominant classes and international ones, and, on the other, how they are perceived and could be challenged by local dominated groups or classes. These psycho-social aspects immanent in a dependent social structure need to be more explored. So, it is necessary – he recommended – to give continuity to the existing studies covering that area and deepen the research, specifically on the investigation of the forms of articulation between the social and the productive structures. An accurate analysis of the transition in underdeveloped countries from a predominant rural economy to industrialization requires a great amount of enquiring and

needs a more clear definition of tradition and how it reacts against modernization. Only then it will be possible to evaluate more precisely to what extent the transition from one to another would be possible.

Cardoso, in summary, assumed that, while precise and functional concepts dealing with these problems were not properly developed the relationship between industrialization and social and political changes in underdeveloped countries will remain rather obscure. Neither will it help substantially the political explanation for the resistances to change on the basis of arguments as the labor conservatism or the phenomenon of social marginality and other similar ones. They only could represent half truths, since they have a low level of theoretical and practical efficacy to explain the phenomenon in its broad and deep dimensions and implications.

> *Especially in the case of contemporary forms of dependence with industrialization, it is necessary to investigate, in each specific situation, oppositions and conciliations between interests and the different views of the world which the dependent development-associated generates when it has under the State the basic principle of regulation of the economic and political life (...) it is necessary to verify if there do not exist contradictions which denote in the national popular ideology sentiments which being anti-imperialistic are, at the same time, anti-establishment in local terms.* [22]

6. The Three Models Under A Comparative View

The aim of this study is – as it was referred to earlier – an analysis of the models of the Brazilian culture and the resistances one can observe in carryng out social changes springing from them.

Three theoretical interpretations were developed. Freyre's let us call it ethnographical approach, the modernizational and dependence theories.

From the hypothesis derived from those conceptions, which of them fits better and bring to reality essential traits of the Brazilian man

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22 Cardoso, Fernando Henrique. *Notas sobre Estado e Dependência*. Caderno 11, Cebrap, S. Paulo 1973, p. 66-72.

and culture is the first step of this analysis. Next, would be if these characterizations of society culture and personality respond in a rigid or flexible manner concerning tradition and change.

The first proceedings in the comparative analysis of the models shaped by the three mentioned interpretations would be to establish some distinctions related to certain theoretical implications among them.

The modernizational theory – as it was described – considers history and cultural tradition as barriers against the new model of society it aims to implement. It intends, in other words, to establish a hiatus with habits and customs which grew out of the national cultural heritage, replacing them by individual and institutional behaviours and techniques imported from another culture and which must be reproduced in the national environment.

The attempt at such an abrupt rupture not only seems to open the gap between capitalistic industrialized societies and underdeveloped ones but fragments the life and values of the individuals and the community spreading alienation and widening social conflicts.

Dependence theory uses a more sophisticated argument to deal with cultural problems. It proposes not exactly the extirpation of the past but the overstepping of it. Here, the Hegelian term "aufheben" would more adequately convey the meaning of this conception of overstepping or surpassing.

It implies, on the one hand, to erase or annul historical elements out of each set of existing conflicting values and, on the other, to preserve some essentials of them which are not simply a quantitative accommodation of residuals of the former; finally, it is a qualitative ladder or upgrade toward both new and more development.

A distinctive connotation of both modernizational and dependence conceptions is that they keep, behind their theoretical and methodological implications, necessarily, an implicit ethics, a value-oriented social action toward individual and community self-realization. This prospective character – no matter what the ideological opposition between those conceptions may be – leads them to admit a junction between their deterministic historical interpretation of the world and the world of values, even though, they advocate an objective and scientific character to their approach.

In practical terms, these ethical implications could be briefly described as follows:

a) for modernizational theorists the increase of open markets, foreign capital, individual competition, a technical and professional education, high performance in bureaucracy and labor's efficient productivity will – on the basis of differentiation and divisions of the social labor – necessarily promote a better life for all. All this, naturally, supposing the control and coordination of a functional and omnipotent State.

b) for dependency theorists, on the other hand, being free from capitalistic dependence by changing society's relations of production first or by doing this through a cultural action as well, would not only make it possible to determine the course of the history but to channel the optimum of the human and natural resources and production to the benefit of the whole society. The implementation of their proposals, in contrast to those of the modernizational view, will not only dealianate man, but as a consequence, promote a full development of his human potentialities and an equal share in the participation of the community welfare.

Freyre's basic argument is that the underpinning principles which supported the Brazilian social organization in the colonial and post-colonial period, had their origin in the early patriarchalist system established for the nation, economically subordinated to slavery and subsisting on the basis of an interweave of races and cultures.

What Freyre aimed at was just to draw, from the Brazilian cultural complex, a picture comprising an interpretative model, a universe of values, a set of cultural patterns which marked distinctively and deeply the national ethos and created a special cultural space of conviviality and permanence for it. Those patterns corresponding to the eidos, the essence of the Brazilian culture and society – although being derived from an amalgamation of different races and cultures – had their own orginality, their uniqueness. No overall generalizations, or value – oriented proposals were suggested by Freyre. His work is not precisely directed toward individual or social meliorativism. It is rather a descriptive and interpretative study of the Brazilian culture.

Freyre's work was, and still is today, criticized by some academics as a unilateral and partial historical interpretation of Brazil; for assigning much emphasis on the familiar and sexual element and the influence of the environment in the formation of the Brazilian culture; it has been also blamed for being contaminated with much intuitionism

and creativity failing, therefore, to pay attention – as was early mentioned – to the scientific and methodological rigors of the modern theoretical conceptions; finally, some radicals see Freyre's work as a stagnated and conservative view of the Brazilian man and culture which reflects Freyre's personal and familiar psychological and social roots with his own patriarchal style of life. However, the majority of his critics unanimously recognized that his work is the first real original interpretation of Brazil which transcended linear sociologies and official histories which usually highlight official heroes and famous public personages. By contrast, it goes deeply into the everyday man, be he Patriarch, Indian or Slave, men who forged the real history of the nation's colonization. Besides it is a work that disregards the formal linguistic conventionalism of traditional sociological studies to incorporate in both scientific and literary ways words and meanings which enriched and facilitated Brazilian culture.

As the Brazilian anthropologist Darcy Ribeiro pointed out, Gilberto Freyre could go beyond himself and enter in the hearts and souls of others in order to see that world through their eyes.[23]

What seems to be important, however, for the purpose of this study again is that its analytical approach is an attempt to bring knowledge and clarification of interrelated cultural and social phenomena as they were originated and developed in the formation of the Brazilian nation; but it is not concerned specifically with value reference or morality which may derive from it and less, it seems not to be the intention of the author to impose his own values and prejudices upon his interpretative task. On the other hand, as it was demonstrated, all these ethical implications seem to be, afterwards, characterized in the modernizational and dependence theories. Certainly, the unarguable values and merits of an equality conception of man as a person and a social being and the preservation of human dignity and equity in economic and social affairs are principles which one is naturally inclined to agree with. And, under these circumstances, dependence theories seem to have special strong ties with a humanistic view. However, the point under discussion here is that they go beyond the frontiers of an interpretative analysis to enter into a prescriptive one, or to penetrate largely and deeply into the realm of values.

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23 Ribeiro 1977 in Freyre 1977 op. cit., p. XVII.

Ci. & Tróp., Recife, v. 27, n. 1, p. 87-131, jan./jun., 1999

7. A Final Remark

There is no intention here of excluding values from any kind of scientific analysis. This study, for instance, deals specifically with a content whose substance comes out of a universe of values and how they relate concerning tradition and social change.

Values are as well essential to the investigator's selection of the problem to be examined and understood. They act, in this case, as flashlights illuminating, inspiring and motivating the scientist to pursue his research. What is difficult to accept is the projection of values into theoretical constructs in such a way that they become simultaneously logical and teleological premises.

It also seems not to be scientifically fit mixing up the truth or falsity of theoretical evidence with discernibly empirical knowledge with ethical or moral commitments one intends – and some times even forces – to deduce from them. As Max Weber stated: "academic prophecy will create only fanatical sects ... but never a genuine community". [24]

To clarify a little more the issue it would be appropriate, for instance, to observe one of the fundamental theoretical mistakes of dependence theory, which seems to be a reproductive effect of its Marxist basis. It is just the speed with which it crosses the highway between the individual and the national community (in the same way that Marxism goes from the individual to the abstraction of class).

The concrete man, his humanity, values, sentimentalities, idiosyncrasies is diluted – as Sartre pointed out – in a bath of sulfuric acid.

> *The existence, which would explain the consciousness – inclusively presupposing it since the latter is an essential ingredient of the former due the fact of it being a human existence – was emptied of all its richness to circumscribe itself as an equivocal and badly elaborated concept of relations of productions.*[25]

Independent, however, of their theoretical failures and methodological incompletenesses, dependence theories provide some

24 Max Weber in Coser, Lewis A. *Masters of Sociological Thought*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc., 1977, p. 222.
25 Paim, Antonio. *História das Ideas Filosóficas no Brazil*. S. Paulo: Editorial Grisalbo, 1966, p. 115.

important elements and critical tools which are fundamental to the analysis of capitalistic and modernizational conceptions both in their scientific and moral vulnerabilities.

Freyre's work being an analytical study which is not specifically involved with value judgments is more concentrated on culture coming out of historical concrete behaviours through their actors. In this sense, it represents a more visible understanding (verstehen) of the problem and opens more transitional avenues to the knowledge of the Brazilian culture and the specific proposals of the present study.

8. Implications Historically Derived From The Cultural Brazilian Pattern For Social Structure

In this attempt at studying and analyzing the problems connected with the cultural identity of the Brazilian man and culture, we had gone back to the colonial period to find, particularly in Freyre's model, certain historical causes that seem to be relevant to explain some socio-political and educational events which are constantly appearing in the life and development of the nation and have represented obstacles to effective social changes and real progress.

It might be pertinent to start developing this interpretation by making an almost already classical distinction between the real cultural values and the proclaimed ones and their meanings for the socio-cultural context of Brazil. [26]

Real values being those generated and emerging from the historical and cultural components which rested in the formation of the Brazilian nation; proclaimed values corresponding to certain ideal models mainly inspired in foreign social contexts, which intellectuals and educators try to implement – particularly those have occupied higher ranks of governmental decisions – whose intentions and actions search for imitations and copies of those models, through general laws.

These attitudes which stimulated a divorce between the proclaimed values and reality appear to be result of a psycho-social conflict, still today not solved, which has its origins in the colonial times. They are expressed in a kind of sentimental duality, an incertitude between like unconscious desires of following metropolitan European

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26 Teixeira, Anísio. *Educação no Brasil*. S. Paulo: Cia. Editora Nacional, 1969, p. 263-284.

models of man and culture and the romantic impulses and inclinations toward one's own national culture and personality.

The diagnosis coming out of this conflict is a kind of cultural schizopherenia. A contrast between the attempts to introduce alien models into the social structure which are rejected by the national culture itself and contradictorily, through the practices used for implementing these institutional acts being strongly determined by certain behaviours which seem to be a survival of that same culture. So, what frequently happens is the strange interlacing of authoritarian and dictatorial forms of introducing social changes within contents which are democratic in essence, or vice-versa. These attempts are incompatible between themselves, making it therefore impossible to promote a rational integration of the broken chains of the Brazilian cultural heritage with a modern social structure. In other words, they cannot integrate organically and mentally psychological and social values and interests.

Putting the problem in other words in order to throw more light and concreteness on this kind of cultural deformity, one could say that the original colonial structure of oppression between Patriarchs and Slaves (the sadism of the former finding a fertile soil in the passivity and submission of the latter masochism) seems to be reproduced in a mimetical manner and in an institutional macro- perspective. The consequences being that, attempts at dealing with the State affairs and classes interests against the background of the tendencies and pressures coming from the national culture found symbiotic formulas which in the long run aggravate instead of pushing the social conflicts down.

In such circumstances it is possible to observe historically within the institutional structure of the country, formal compromises with democratizàtion and promotion of increasing equality on the distribution of the national income together and contradictorily with sharp educational and political distinctions and discriminations among social classes generated within the institutional apparatus of the State itself; elections and increasing people's participation in institutional policies followed by authoritarian and even anti-popular governmental decisions. Anti-popular decisions which, nevertheless, could be even admired by some reactionary sectors of the population – including some critics of the own government. Admired psychologically by their machist character, which could in certain instances be interpreted as a

manifestation of courage and power in dealing with conflicts and problematic situations.

Here, for instance, the immemorial image of the old colonial *paterfamilias* could be evoked, unconsciously reproduced and related with these modern tendencies toward *mandonismo** developed in the Brazilian social and political institutions.

Rejection by the national culture of official interventions of the State could, as well, find further explanations. They might be symbolically interpreted as reminiscences of an old Brazilian tradition. The radical liberalism carried out in Brazil at the colonial time by the Portuguese government, for strategical reasons, had left – as one had seen – in the hands of private citizens the administration of the nation. It seems that unconsciously there still remains today a resistance in accepting and acknowledging a different social structure which adopts more institutional and rational forms of public administration. The government, on the other hand, is itself represented through individuals who belong to the same nationality and are affectd by the same culture. It seems psychologically divided into two antagonistic pressures. The individuals who held governmental positions tend, either to act as individuals investid with personal power to control the social relationships; or as an institution committed to collective values derived from modern political democracy.

Combinations of these contradictory drives could be responsible both for long lasting periods of authoritarianism or ephemeral experiences in building up an entire rational social structure. It appears curious how some of these hybrid political experiments have, contradictorily but effectively, contributed to promote under authoritarian forms modernizational contents. However, the conservative and reactionary way through which those governments implemented some social changes was unable to provide the necessary coherence, acceptance and balance between the national heritage and the attempts at setting up a modern social structure and provide continuity to a real social and economic welfare.

Some historical educational reason could also clarify these problems. In the Patriarchal times, it was very common to educate children at home. This kind of education naturally developed reactions

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* pushing around, urging.

against any modern form which implied changes in the social structure and consequently, created difficulties to adapt the individual to the institutional and social mechanisms out of the familiar environment.

In fact, only when part of the elite was sent to study in Portugal or when the first institutions of higher education started in Brazil, in the begginning of the XIX century (The Schools of Law in Pernambuco and S. Paulo) one did have the development of more independent personalities.

However, as Buarque de Holanda pointed out, the previous education they received under familiar and personalistic basis still had a strong impact over their behaviour and values. So, these more independent experiences out of the familiar context were, sometimes, insufficient to break with the Patriarchal model. Rather, the effects of such distinct influences were reflected in the instability with which personal attitudes oscillated between individualism and more open democratic postures.[27]

Connected to and derived more particularly from these historical antecedents is again the weight of individualism and personalism which rests on the origin of the Brazilian cultural heritage and have spread throughout the nation's individual and institutional ethos. Some mechanism which provide the maintenance of personal prestige, for instance, can be here mentioned to demonstrate how they could, as a cultural force, interfere against a more salutary socio-institutional development of the country.

So it was in the case of the role of the traditional personage of the rural *Coronel* (Colonel). *Coronéis* were powerful landlords existing in rural towns of Brazil, specially in the Northeast, who exercised a strong political power within rural communities or even regions. Informally but actually, they became the source of justice, police and political decisions within their feudal-like areas.

The colonelship model basically developed in the last century but were still very influential during the advent of the Oligarchic and Napoleonic stages of the Republican Brazilian State. The *Coronel* was literally an almighty person in those times. He could manipulate the economic and social life of the area under his control but he was

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27 Cf. Buarque de Holanda, Sérgio. *Raízes do Brasil*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. José Olympio, 1976, p.103.

especially influential in political affairs. He manipulated the voters and the votes of the community leading them directly and exclusively toward his personal, familiar and social class interests. He was able to establish alliances with regional and national political leaders and parties. The conditions of such alliances, of course, implied exchanges of personal political supports and favors. On the basis of these negotiations the Coronel could enjoy political prestige and get official administrative and political designations for he himself and his proteges (*Afilhadismo*), within the structure of the State.

A special result of these procedures was the overt practice of nepotism and expediency which – still today – are largely and cynically developed in the country blending within the Brazilian structure of power and in all hierarchical ladders of the government, people who are benefited by this expediency independently of their political affiliations or ideological commitments.

Another more modern version of these correlations could be found in administrative and political governmental postures which suggest even more detailed psychological or psychoanalytical exegesis.

So, it is common among some official authorities who, by force of their positions with a large amount of social and institutional responsibilities, develop a kind of Narcissistic image of themselves. As a consequence they felt and acted as if they were great heroes of the nation who are the most sacrificed, the most abnegated, a kind of national scapegoat.

For compensating their renunciations and suffering for being in their own conception such dedicated and zealous servants of the State they think they must be bestowed with special privileges, not tangible to the regular citizens. So they can arrange and justify legal exceptionalities for themselves or their families or special privileges they forge through their administrative or political positions and influences.[28] This is also true in relation to the majority of exiled political people who have suffered violence and constraints from dictatorial or military governments. As soon as a new period of democratization arrive and amnesty war conceded, they would return

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28 It is known that a Minister in Brazil gave an order to the pilot of a regular Commercial flight to deviate from the route, going straight to Brasília, instead of Rio de Janeiro, as it was previously scheduled, on the grounds that he had very important national matters to solve in the capital.

to the country to soon occupy new political positions and apply to themselves the already referred practices of the scapegoat and their corresponding justifications of personal privileges.[29]

In analyzing this problem Buarque de Holanda affirms that in Brazil:

> *It was not easy to those occupyng public positions of great responsibility educated in such environment, to understand the fundamental distinction between areas of public and private matters. So they characterized themselves just as Max Weber separeted the patrimonial from the pure bureaucratic public servant. For the patrimonial one the public administration is a subject of private interests; the functions, jobs and benefits which come from his position are related to his personal rights and not to the objective interests of the State as it happens in the bureaucratic State in which prevails the specialization of functions toward the assurance of juridical guarantees to the citizens.[30]*

All the above illustrations and their resulting antagonisms between historical cultural patterns on one side (based on individual and family values and personal prestige) and attempts on the other, to create a modern State (which had to be vested with impartiality in order to implement a legal and rational social system) could account for the regularity with which new isomorphical ways of accommodating interests and slowing down conflicting social streams have been developed. On the basis of these observations it seems to be possible then, to understand better why in the Brazilian Republican period one can sometimes find a simultaneous development of authoritarian models of government such as caudillism, associated with populism as happened in Varga's era (1937-1945)[31] or a military government

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29 Some of them are Governors, Ministers, Federal Deputies or Senators of the Republic.

30 Buarque de Holanda 1976, op. cit., p. 105.

31 Getúlio Vargas was one of the most important leaders of the liberal revolutionary movement of 1930 called Licutenantism (it was led by a group of young Lieutenants). He was a provisory Chief of State in charge of promoting the transition to a new democratic government. However, he was able to manipulate the existing political forces and in 1937 he became the Dictator of the so called New State (Estado Novo). His dictatorial period lasted until 1945 when Vargas's government was overthrown. Later, on the 50's Vargas was elected democratically by the Brazilian people but due to the pressures of opponents who accused his government of being involved in corruption he committed suicide. Not without first outing responsibility on what he called some occult forces which were anxious to push the country in the hands of foreign investors and capitalistic interests. Since then he became a symbol of the Brazilian nationalism and a national hero.

supported by capitalistic foreign and internal private interests promoting an increasing socialization of the means of production at the expense of the State, as in the 1964's military government.

Once these symbiotic manners of accommodating antagonism persisted with certain regularity, only short and episodical attempts at introducing more rational strategies and democratic pratices were developed (as the 1946's democratizational period). However, such attempts have not been durable or strong enough to break with the resistances of the conservationists forces. The result is the aggravation of the national crisis while the general social structure of the country tends to become more and more fragile.

9. Two Historical Attempts At Modernization

Two specific historical events or periods of the national institutional life will be here synthetically described and analyzed. They enter in the context of this paper just to spotlight some important moments of Brazilian history in which conflicts between tradition and modernization rose up more intensively. Our intention is only to illustrate with some, among many historical examples, the resistances against social changes and their cultural components.

In 1989 the Monarchic regime was abolished to give birth to the Brazilian Republican State. Philosophically, the created new Federalist State was under a strong influence of the positivistic ideas. At that time, the economic structure of the country was still dependent on and to a great extent controlled by rural landlords in monocultural basis, the cycle of coffee being the nascent strong support of the economy, together with the already decaying sugar cane one. However, parallel, one could as well observe the development of a more conscious and organized middle class, which mainly through its intellectual and military segments were involved in recent political disputes concerned with the extinction of the Slavery and the role of religion in the social and political national life, in relation to which they hold a liberal posture.

The young Republican State considered, as one of its major concerns on the one hand, extinguishing the existing conflicts between conservatives and liberals and on the other, to legitimate immediately and efficiently the new political system. It would be fundamental, in

other words, to find the way out through which habits and customs generated in the old tradition, as they still were embodied by a rural semi-feudal aristocracy and the needs of the modern State could be practically integrated and solved under the official control and authority of the government.

It was equally a government's imperative, derived from one of its essential postulates, to introduce modernization via scientification of society, because it would be, it believed, the only possible way to promote economic growth and social welfare in the country.

Compromised with the idea of order as synonymous of progress and abhorring anarchy which symbolizes chaos, the Positivistic State attempted to clarify how the conception of freedom should be individually and socially understood and which would be its limitations if one wants to make it compatible with order.

As Gabriel Barreda, a famous Mexican thinker had put the question.

> *Freedom is commonly interpreted as a human faculty of will and doing anything, without being submitted to the law or any kind of force that controls such a freedom; if such a freedom could exist it would be both immoral and absurd, because it would make impossible any discipline, and, consequently, any order. Far from being incompatible with order freedom consists in all phenomena, organic and inorganic, on being submitted in this entirely plenitude to the laws that regulate it.* [32]

From this statement one can suppose the level of compulsion with the Positivistic Philosophy not only in Brazil but in the whole Latin America was introduced into the government and the strongness of the idea of order which was in its background.

It was through an educational Reform under the leadership of Benjamim Constant – the Ministry of the Public Instruction – that the Republican government, in 1981, introduced the essentials of what would be the Brazilian Positivistic Philosophy.

One of the main aims of this Reform was to change the literary

32 Weinmerg, Gregorio. Una perspectiva Historica de la Educación Latino Americana. *Revista de la Cepal* n° 21, 1981, p. 51.

and bookish erudite tradition of the national education by incorporating into it scientific methods and contents in the whole Brazilian curricula.

It is important to point out here that Positivism in Brazil found a peculiar expression which made it in certain ways considerably distinct from the manner it was assimilated, interpreted and criticized in developed countries. The political and educational consequences of introducing the Positivistic Philosophy and its scientific compromises into Brazilian society developed, considerably, much more in direction of the reinforcement of authoritarianism rather than by influencing scientific and technological advancements or economic and social progress.

As Antonio Paim observed:

> *The doctrine of the three stages and the political ideals of August Comte constitute a consequent attempt of ascribing to the historical process a rigidity analogous to that which the science of the XIX century supposed to exist in the realm of nature. Through simple logical inference some ideologists could make previews, with the necessary scientific rigor, of the ultimate course of the social evolution. And, since it would not be a privilege of all to have access to such intuitions with the necessary requisites of a rational evidence, those who thanks to their familiarity with science, would be placed in a superior level of the real process itself, in a such way that they think they could contemplate it at a distance and automatically, they would be authorized to command it without paying attention to determined metaphysical ideas' popularized by the French Revolution. They would march toward the establishment of a dictatorship.[33]*

While in certain European countries and in the United States the scientific influence brought about the development of scientific research and its technological consequences and represented, at the same time, a condition and a consequence of their industrialization and economic progress, in Brazil the contribution of Positivism toward a real and functional application of scientific knowledge, as it was

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33 Paim 1966, op. cit., p. 187-188.

earlier referred to, was sparse and irrelevant to provoke a real development and a required application of scientific knowledge.

Rather:

> *positivism penetrated in the country not as a method of investigation, but a way of thinking which one could call scientific or even empirical, and mainly interpreted and used as a social political and religious philosophy which had, and still have today, its adepts.*[34]

Despite some constitutional Amendments incorporated in the 1891's Brazilian legislation which endowed autonomy to the states of the national federation, allowing, as a result, the social and economic expansion of some regions, the Brazilian Positivistic government, on the other hand, could not avoid the continuation of political oligarchies, at that time, installed within some state members.

The power of these oligarchies was exercised again through the hands of influential families, giving continuity, in this way, under new circumstances, to what had happened in previous times.

Although the formal political Positivistic experience in Brazil was short in time it was intense in transmitting historically some of its fundamental traits, the authoritarianism being, among others, a reflection of the conservationists branch of the military positivism, whose heritage goes back to de Castilho government in Rio Grande do Sul and later is projected in the Getúlio Vargas dictatorshisp (Estado Novo) in 1937.

A more recent sophisticated and durable attempt at promoting changes in the Brazilian State was carried out by the military revolution of 1964.

Supported by some sectors of the middle class and fully welcomed by the upper one, this movement started with a strong commitment to economic and social progress and national security. A fascination that reached the minds of the authorities as a paranoia. One can say that they were fanaticized by the idea that they were the saviors of the country vested with a kind of Messianic illumination.

Lacking more substantial popular support the movement nevertheless, was initially successful in controlling inflation and

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34 Paim 1966, op. cit., p. 197-198.

promoting some national development, however, this was possible at the expense of an increasing impoverishment of the lower classes and the consequent techniques of violence and repression.

The Doctrine of the National Security, which played a crucial role in the military movement of 1964, historically, started to be formally developed in Brazil since the end of Second world war. Its philosophical inspirations came from the National War College of the United States which gave technical and intellectual assistance to Brazil, including for creating its own School, the so-called Brazilian Superior School of War.

The aims of the Brazilian Doctrine of National Security were to reconcile the national ideals of the Brazilian people with a modern State that could ensure social and economic development, within certain parameters of internal and external security. According to the Minister of Security, General Golbery do Couto e Silva:

> *What the social security mainly requires, in a country like ours is, primarily, the wideness of our economic infrastructure, the reduction of the obstacles of our disorganized economy.*

but

> *there is no way of escaping from the necessity of sacrificing the welfare for the benefit of the Security, since it be really threatened. The People who have neglected to admit this, learned, in the dust of the defeat, the required lesson.*[35]

In such circumstances, the State became the "Bed of Procrustes" in which the national character and the aspirations of the people must be molded.

> *The amalgamation of the State- Nation so formed is taken as an absolute entity, a transcendent one (...) The State is the exclusive authentic interpreter of the permanent objectives of the nation, in which security takes the first rank.*

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35 Oliveira, Eliezer R. *As forças Armadas: Política e Ideologia no Brasil.* Vozes, 1978, p.44.

As a consequence,

> *it is the absolute imperative of security which gives foundation to the State legitimacy. (...) The State is, in this way, the expression of the general will which will be translated in the definition of the national objectives.*[36]

In practical terms, what really happened in the country at this time was not only the correlation between periodical phases of economic development and a permanent and systematic implementation of the national but, curiously, just in the moments in which economy prospered violence and governmental repressions increased to paroxistic levels.

Industrialization improved due to international investments, but with it, the need foreign investments. Internally, a kind of consuming society had started to developed. In these conditions the middle class naturally received some shares and the upper one concentrates a great amount of income in its hands. Meanwhile, the government created rigid policies of salaries restraints, which affected essentially the working class. In fact, the whole lower class continued marginalized as ever, paying, in last analysis, the tribute of an unbalanced distribution of the national welfare.

In order to put into practice its ideas the government was served by a team of technocrats, mainly handled by competent economists, who helped the government to be developed what Cardoso called "an associated-dependent development."

The educational policy developed by the military State was based on a technicistic conception of knowledge whose inspiration could be found in the theory of the human capital. It worked for promoting a real educational boom and reshaping the educational system in accordance with the economic and political aims of its modernizational project. Here, the objective was basically to prepare the Brazilian man for becoming an efficient agent within the productive system, but not properly a citizen.

The massified educational policy the military government

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36 Oliveira 1978, op. cit., p.45.

developed, both for populistic reasons and to avoid student arrests, eventually became inefficient for transmitting the technical-professional abilities it aimed at. However, the bulk of the criticism against this educational policy rested upon the fact that it relegated to a secondary level the humanistic, philosophical, social and literary subjects that were, traditionally, a feature of the Brazilian curricula. References made to such studies were, according to the critics, only formally presented in official discourses and with the intention of masquerading the real exclusionary technocratic purposes. If the criticism is pertinent, one has now the already mentioned proclaimed values conveying another new meaning or connotation. They not simply represent a divorce between the governmental proposals and the existing cultural and pressures of society. They are, in this case, used as instrument to transmit to the society an illusionistic view which does not correspond to the intentions which were behind the official discourse itself.

10. Cultural Dependence: A Special Critical Angle Of The Military Technocracy Of 1964

A distinct view of the problem under a more theoretical basis is related to the criticism – dependence theorists developed of the malignant effects of massification and technocratic education to the alienation of Brazilian man after the 1964's military revolution.

In trying to erase from the people their national values and cultural circumstances, the military government alienate them from their own economic and political exploitation, its objective being to train people – like animals – to be domesticated, not educated. It was through the work of Paulo Freire that this criticism was systematically and fundamentally developed.

Freire made a distinction between cultural invasion and a historical cultural synthesis. Cultural invasion being an action through which the invaders impose their values and ideology on the world of those they invade; historical action being, on the other hand, one that does not suppose spectators but actors, one that helps men to transform reality. In this own words:

Cultural action, as historical action, is an instrument for

> *superseding the dominant alienated and alienating culture. In this sense, every authentic revolution is a cultural revolution.*[37]

Freire's work is not limited by criticism and new conceptualizations of oppressive systems. He goes beyond to propose a new methodology for dealing practically with such problems. He suggests a new strategy through which the Brazilian man could transcend some magical and mythical elements of his cultural environment which contributed to his allienation and exploitation, a strategy which could provide him with a critical and constructive outlook for understanding and transforming reality.

This methodology he calls dialogical or horizontal method which is opposed to the monological one, characterized by vertical and authoritarian procedures. He proposes not only a change in the contents to be transmitted to the learner (from ideal and abstract subjects to real and existential ones dealing with man's environment and the economic and social conditions that surrounds him) but the techniques of reduction and encoding of the vocabulary universe, which must equally come from the existential situation of the individual.[38]

Freire's theory and methods, exception made to some incomplete micro-experiences, have not been empirically tested in a broad spectrum. Applications of Freire's model, as those of dependence theories, seem to be, therefore, up to the present moment, still not empirically sufficiently tested.

This does not imply that part of their analysis and criticisms – as was stated earlier – (despite their comprehensible but not scientifically accepted ideological, teleological and even Messianic commitments) is not only pertinent but also relevant to enlarging the understanding of the Brazilian social, economic and educational problems. However, only as a theoretical illumination which, in terms of concrete evidence, has nothing to offer to confute what Freire considers traditional conservative approaches.

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37 Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. New York: Seabury Press, 1973, p. 182.
38 Freire, Paulo. *Educação como Prática da Liberdade*. Rio de Janeiro: Ed. Paz e Terra, 1975, p. 107-108.

11. A Conclusive Critical Appraisal

In trying to illustrate cultural resistances to social changes in the Brazilian case one can observe that both Gilberto Freyre and dependence theorists agree that the foundations of the Brazilian authoritarianism on one side and submission on the other, have historical basis.

Freyre's cultural views, however, interpreted social changes through the light of an informal process and not properly through the role of new ideologies. Transformation of society, even when he relates to educational problems, requires a coordination, a balance of institutional attempts at change and the natural cultural mechanisms and drives of socialization. Intentions of changes in Brazilian society which do not try to understand or take into due consideration its historical values, but radically try to promote abrupt ruptures with tradition, would certainly fail. So, it would be necessary to find more intelligent pragmatic and spontaneous ways of reconciling past and present if one wants to carry out workable social changes for the future.

Freyre's interpretation of culture, therefore, is a dynamic one, in the sense that his theoretical elaboration allows the concurrence of a multiplicity of factors which, at determined historical moments and circumstances, could, together, through interactions and conflicts, spring up in new forms and manifestations of culture, not pre-existent but whose seeds were in those interactive and conflicting elements. In so doing, he left opened the cultural space for inconceivable possibilities of renewed and new cultural forms and expressions through the concourse both of the unpalpable and intangible national historical forces and the intelligence and creativity of man.

In synthesis, Freyre's techniques of striking off the diversified forms of the Brazilian culture and clarifying relationships between tradition and modern society offer important clues to the understanding of the role new ideologies have played in the country.

Dependence theory, although being as well a dynamic historical interpretation of the socio-cultural phenomena of Brazilian dependence is, nevertheless, a reductionistic, unidirectional, monocausal and deterministic view of the problem. It deals with the complexities of the cultural reality oversimplifyng it and establishing previously for it not only its cause but also its consequences. The economic element is

taken as a first motor (from which causally cultural intellectual, ethical and aesthetic manifestations derived) and will, necessarily, soon or later, redirect the course of history toward socialism and consequently destroy the basis of the capitalistic oppression and exploitation. Intelligent actions and social political strategies could only accelerate the process but never turn aside the inexorable course of history and its economic determinants.

Dependence theories analyses seem to fail in being, on one hand, much driven by economic and cultural determinism and on the other, simultaneously and contradictorily by tracing, optimistically, a new cultural model of a free man liberated from the oppressive forces of capitalism.

Explanations on the basis of historical determinism lead one to interpret men almost as objects manipulated by forces they are impotent to remove and understand. This reproductive conception not only closes to man the possibility of a self-cultural evolution out of the external and internal forces of the capital but binds him to them without enough consideration for the own national potentialities, as well as the weight of the forces which rest in the tradition and historical circumstances which amalgamated the national ethos. As Noah and Eckstein asserted in their excellent study on Dependence theory:

> *Cultural forms, (including education) are clearly much stronger than dependence theory assumes. The resilience and vigor of nationalism, local and national languages and national culture and historical traditions continue to mock all forecasts about growth of a global culture.*[39]

Views, like that of Paulo Freire's educational theory fail as well not specifically through its emphasis on economic determinism. (Although it is also committed to it) what characterizes it, however, is that it seems to be too optimistic in supposing that educational strategies dealing with what he called dealienation are, by themselves, powerful enough to make the awareness of people; to break with alienation and the undesirable cultural elements of tradition and lead men to the

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39 Noah & Eckstein in Schriewer, J. & Holmes, B. (d.). *Theories and Methods in Comparative Education.* Peter Lang, Franckfurt 1988, p. 186.

necessary revolution which will eradicate their exploitation and oppression. [40]

Paulo Freire intends, through his special educational method, which he categorically reputes as an operational one, to use – in an informal way and particularly reflected in special political and economic perspectives – the environmental conditions, in order to stimulate the emergence of a cultural consciousness and to provoke radical changes of the social system. In this sense, his ideas differ from those of Gilberto Freyre both in political and methodological ways. Politically, culture, for Freyre, does not need indoctrination, because the models of future people can find in the structure of the culture itself, and he believes that people are wise enough to unveil their own potentialities and power. In a methodological sense, Freyre's theory is descriptive and open to empirical evidence. So in using Freyre's method one would be able to define Freyre himself as a participant observer of the cultural evolution and his analysis will provide an enlightenment of the process of transformation and its conditions themselves.

Here, again, but in a reversible manner, the weight of the national cultural patterns and their historical resistances to change are not taken in Paulo Freire's view in their real relevance. The power of transforming society through educational indoctrination which Paulo Freire supposes could be mobilized, has no substantive empirical evidence which allows the verifiability of such hypotheses which remain in the terrain of fantasy; fantasy as the meeting point in man's imagination between what the reality is and what one thinks or aims it ought to be.

Gilberto Freyre's analytical interpretation of Brazilian history

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40 An additional clarification seems to be here necessary. Paulo Freire's theory is considered too optimistic in the sense that its valuable elements go beyond those contained in the theories of strict economic determinism. Freire amplifies his theoretical framework by incorporating into it education as an intervening force which is able to transform the existing reality. Naturally, the formal and systematic education as it comes from the institutional and social structure is not the one that promotes the cultural revolution he intends to deflagrate through his method. Rather, he aims at an informal and more spontaneous pedagogy whose bases – he believes – are hidden in the daily life experiences of individuals. The process of uncovering and revealing the authentic educative experiences out of those which have been responsible for oppression, alienation, dependency and exploitation of the people is the essence of Freire's method. Explanations of dependency which are more theoretically centered in economic determinism tend to consider cultural actions fundamentally as derived from the material conditions of life, or to use the Marxist category, as an epiphenomenon of those conditions. In such circumstances, the latter are more closed and less pluralistic than the former one.

and culture, in a brief recapitulation, has proven to be much more able to provide substantial elements to the understanding of the cultural patterns of the country and how they have been metamorphosed into different moments of the political and social-educational life of the nation.

The roots of the Brazilian tropical feudalism have, to a considerable extent, interfered in the modernization of life, culture and the setting of a new social structure to the country. Fragments and survival of a colonial past – as it was demonstrated – paradoxically but existentially synthesized aristocratic, democratic and anarchistic cultural trends, unfolding historically renewed tendencies of authoritarianism individualism, paternalism, as reminiscences of familiar structures, sexuality, compulsion toward punishment and passive acceptance of it.

All these elements together with the apple of the modern life and civilization seem to be interlaced culturally and institutionally, in a kind of alchemy, interacting past and present and even today representing formidable barriers against social changes.

A final special remark about these traditional forces in Brazilian society should be included here. Social evolution and modern institutionalized urban values have practically dissolved a great part of those oligarchic and rural aristocratic organizational models of colonial and monarchic Brazil. This dissolution started – as it was seem – with the abolition of slavery. The Republican period and the increasing of urbanization and modern industrialization were progressively replacing Patriarchalism by a kind of Plutocracy and destroying the old structure without being successful in building up a new one.

However, these forces, no longer materially translated into real and palpable social institutions, spiritually continue to act and to a considerable extent to determine the pathways of the nationality.[41] As Buarque de Holanda affirmed: "The Brazilian State preserves as respectable relics some of the exterior forms of the traditional system,

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[41] "the decisive effects of the incontestable absorbent of the nuclear family – a sphere of those called primary contacts, laces of blood and heart – responsible for the relations created in the domestic life, always provided an obligatory model of any social composition among us. This happens even where democratic institutions, based on neutral and abstract principles, intend to set up society in anti-particularistic rules." Buarque de Holanda, Sérgio. *Raízes do Brazil* Rio de Janeiro: Editora José Olympio, 1976, p. 106.

after the basis upon which they were sustained had disappeared: a periphery without a center."

The precious development and the tumultuous climate with which international changes were carried out in Brazil; the anxiety of the political leaders in introducing new ideas and systems without the necessary evaluation of their effects upon the society; the legal formalism of the national institutions, would be sufficient to synthesize the social and political components which favored the perpetuity of those relics.

Unless, it would be possible to extract from these historical experiences a more broad and wise philosophical lesson: changes in themselves are blind and empty of rationality. The eagerness for the new, for intentional changes, moved only by emotional and enthusiastic impulses, frequently does not produce the workable and everlasting effects one expects to obtain. Only those experiences which are anticipated by a reflective analysis seem to have considerable probabilities of releasing durable and valuable results.

It seems to be important, before concluding this work, to explain that the analysis of and the emphasis on the ideas of authoritarianism, submission, individualism, personalism and so on, as they were developed so far, aim to explore one dimension (an essential one) of the history and culture of the Brazilian people and society. Naturally, personal and collective resistances to this authoritarianism, historical instances in which autonomy was strongly revindicated and organized rebellions against submission and dependence also occurred. Contests which have been sometimes violent. Fightings in these directions started even in colonial times and have been periodically developed throughout the Republican period in more broad and organized social forms. Confrontations frequently resulting from anti-democratic, oppressive and arbitrary attitudes of the government. They demonstrate clearly that there are emancipatory and libertarian tendencies and forces within the Brazilian society. To omit existences of such forces and some economic and social reasons that have generated them has no excuse. Equally, it would be unpardonable to fail to admit that, once these forces become properly ideologically organized, they be able to transform the existing status quo. The lack of recognition of these social movements as potential trends toward social changes would imply the acceptance of a cultural determinism in the same way that economy,

technological modernization or national security have been so interpreted in this study.

Up to the present, however, it was already demonstrated that a comparison of the contrasting forces of conservatism and change tends to lead to one's acknowledgment that there is a propensity or even a predominance of tradition over the latter. If things had not happened in this way one would have a different society and probably a different nature of problems.

It is on the direction of these latent transformative forces, existing in the Brazilian society, as in all underdeveloped and economically dependent countries, that the academic effort of Paulo Freire has been directed and his pedagogical methodology justified. It is an attempt at revitalizing and reproducing potentially those libertarian and emancipatory trends as they have actually and periodically been manifested more or less intensively in the history of these countries. However, the question of how these forces could be effectively organized and mobilized still persists unsolved.

This analysis could, nevertheless, be a contribution for further investigations and a methodological pre-condition for the development of more effective models concerning the problems of social change in Brazil.

As Freyre himself pointed out in advocating his methodological approach,

> *they (those cultural survivals) are values and symbols of the past which seem to allow a better comprehension of new facts and of a new epoch. These psychological and sociological aspects of the historical interpretation, not only reconstitute the past but makes it difficult to separate the injunctions, the influences and the interpretations of causes between the actual and the historical.*[42]

Attempts to explain, therefore, how these cultural differentiations and contrasts could be categorized and analyzed in order to provide a basis for new theories and comparative analysis, transcend the limitations of this paper and would have to be the object of further studies.

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42 Freyre, Gilberto. *Ordem e Progresso*. Brasília: Instituto Nacional do Livro, I. Tomo, Mec 1974, p. IV.

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