WHAT IS BRAZIL EMERGING FROM AND TO WHERE IS IT RISING?

The future as a prophecy

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I examine past and ongoing interpretations of the fulfillment of Brazilian prophecy of the future. In the first part of the paper, I revisit the notion of 'future' and the prophetic nature of progress in Brazilian historical narrative. I contrast Reinhart Koselleck's conceptualization of progress as the opening to infinite future possibilities with the concept of progress as a future yet to come from a Brazilian standpoint. The subsequent section is dedicated to the examination of the discourses of modernization and development that emerged after the Second World War. Next, I discuss the Brazilian rise to the global stage and the conditions for the realization of Brazilian 'future'. I argue that the contemporary attempt to resolve the disjunction between the time of Brazilian society and the time of Brazilian political economy was the condition for Brazil's increasing bargaining power, which is heavily dependent on the ongoing acceleration of time for Brazilian society.

Keywords
Brazil - Development - Progress - Future - Prophecy

RESUMO

Neste artigo, eu examino interpretações históricas e contemporâneas sobre a realização da profecia do futuro brasileiro. Na primeira parte do artigo, eu revisitio a noção de futuro e a natureza profética de progresso na narrativa histórica brasileira. Eu destaco o contraste entre a conceptualização moderna de progresso de Reinhart Koselleck como abertura à infinitas possibilidades com o conceito de progresso como futuro ainda por vir do ponto de vista brasileiro. Na seção subseqüente, exponho uma discussão sobre os discursos de modernização e desenvolvimento que emergiu no contexto do pós II Guerra Mundial. Então, eu discuto a visibilidade recente do Brasil como ator global e as condições para a realização do tão sonhado 'futuro' brasileiro. Eu argumento que os esforços recentes de resolver a disjunção entre o tempo da sociedade brasileira e o tempo da política econômica brasileira foi a condição para o crescimento do poder de barganha do país, que é bastante dependente da atual política de aceleração do tempo para a sociedade brasileira.

Palavras-chave
Brasil - Desenvolvimento - Progresso - Futuro - Profecia
INTRODUCTION

Brazil emerges as a global player, but it is not defined as a developed country. It is not exactly a country of the Third World, but it is not part of the First World. The last few years are marked by an intensification of Brazilian schizophrenia. Brazilian political identity is somewhere in-between the categories that divide the world into developed and developing states, or in a more recent language into global powers and the emerging powers of the global South. However, Brazil, known as 'the country of the future' for so long, seems to be finally close to being in the future. The guiding questions of this paper are: what is Brazil emerging from and to where is it rising? How are future, present and past articulated in the perception of the emergence of Brazil as a global player? In these representations of Brazil as an emerging, rising or developing State, it is implied that Brazil is still an incomplete entity in the process of 'becoming' instead of 'being'. But by the same token, the transition is said to be close to completion.

As Brazil finally climbs to the future, it seems to leave its own past behind. In this paper, I examine past and ongoing interpretations of the fulfillment of Brazilian prophecy of the future. In the first part of the paper, I revisit the notion of 'future' and the prophetic nature of progress in Brazilian historical narrative. I contrast Koselleck's conceptualization of progress as the opening to infinite future possibilities with the concept of progress as a future yet to come from a Brazilian standpoint. The subsequent section is dedicated to the examination of the discourses of modernization and development that emerged after the Second World War and disseminated the perception of a path for economic growth allegedly detached from the particularities of a specific society. Next, I discuss the Brazilian rise to the global stage and the conditions for the realization of Brazilian 'future'.

I argue that Brazil's increasing bargaining power and the realization of its future is heavily dependent on the ongoing acceleration of time for Brazilian society and relies on the the contemporary attempt to resolve the disjunction between the time of Brazilian society and the time of Brazilian foreign policy.

1 PROGRESS, AS UNCERTAINTY AND AS PROPHECY

1.1 MODERNITY AND THE COLLAPSE OF THE FUTURE INTO THE PRESENT

Reinhart Koselleck's investigation of the concept of historical time is guided by the question: "how, in a given present, are the temporal dimensions of past and future related?".

He argues, "historical time is bound up with social and political actions, with concretely acting and suffering human beings and their institutions and organizations"\(^2\). In order to answer this question, Koselleck explores the articulation of the temporal dimensions of past and future in social-political experience from the Christianity to modernity to illustrate the process of temporalization of history and the acceleration of time that characterizes modernity\(^3\).

Until the sixteenth century, past and present were a function of the future. The End of the World was at the future, and from that certainty, the history of Christianity is about constant anticipation, deferment and expectation\(^4\). In this context, the study of the past was driven by an anxiety to analyze how the course of events, organized in an unified timeline, was leading to the fulfillment of the final prophecy. The past helped one to situate the present in relation to the future, which was known and revealed by God.

The persecution of prophets and the opening of the future marked the period that follows the initial movements towards secularization. Modern historical time eliminated the notion of future as taken for granted. The future became "the domain of finite possibilities, arranged according to their greater or lesser probability"\(^5\). Prognosis replaced prophecy while it also introduced the past into the future. The future could be predicted and to some degree, taught by the past. This new understanding of time still limited the future to what one can predict based on the observation of the regularities of the past. The future is "trapped within a temporal structure"\(^6\) that encloses a beginning with the means and the ends.

The acceleration of time mainly since the nineteenth century enabled by, among other things, the introduction of new technologies and scientific discoveries created the conditions for the emergence of the notion of progress, which opened up the future and is characterized by: "first, the increasing speed with which it approaches us, and second, its unknown quality"\(^7\). The past and present become future possibilities for an unknown and increasingly 'immediate' future.

Koselleck acknowledges that to a greater of lesser extent, future reality can be predicted. Historical experience, some degree of regularity and probability are not completely left aside with progress. Experience would still function as a site of "possibilities that individually or collectively indicate various chances for their realization. Accordingly, there must be an art of prognosis that contains at least minimal rules for its success"\(^8\).

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\(^2\) Ibid, p. 2.
\(^3\) Ibid, p. 11.
\(^4\) Ibid, p. 11-12.
\(^5\) Ibid, p. 18.
\(^6\) Ibid, p. 22.
\(^7\) Idem.
What must be clear regarding the 'future' in modern temporality is that even though it might be to some extent predicted, once one is able to plan and establish causal relationships between means and ends, the future is much "less of a retrospective notion because it has arisen from the present, which is opening out toward the future. The future of modern time is thought to be open and without boundaries [and] totally different from all that has passed before".

In Koselleck's account of this modern conception of 'future', it seems that the future and the present time almost 'touch' each other, quickly becoming past. The acceleration that results from scientific inventions shrank time and became the new indicator of change in historical time, replacing the notion of improvement. Acceleration is identified in everyday experience, in the perception of novelty and the immediacy of the future, rather than in the expectation of better historical conditions yet to come.

1.2 THE FUTURE AS PROPHECY

Brazilian experience of progress cannot be explained as the opening up of the future. In Brazilian historical narrative, progress has been represented as the final prophecy. The study of the past in Brazil situates the present in relation to the future and has often been driven by an anxiety to analyze how the course of events is leading Brazil the fulfillment of this prophecy. Adapting the language of prophecy to this context, I argue that in Brazilian conceptualization of progress, the future has been known, revealed by socio-economic indicators and interpreted by economists and politicians.

The motto in the Brazilian flag, 'Ordem e Progresso' (which means Order and Progress in Portuguese), was adopted in 1889 by the Brazilian philosopher Raimundo Teixeira Mendes, and is a shortened version inspired by the positivist ideals of Auguste Comte, who proclaimed "Love as principle, order as basis, progress as end". According to Auguste Comte, progress is the single path to the evolution of humankind, through the improvement of its material, intellectual and moral foundations. The achievement of the goal - progress - depends on the development of specific social arrangements, which Comte classified into different stages of evolution.

An ideal of progress has always been part of Brazilian political identity. Past and present are usually defined in relation to the certainty of a future since the successful creation of a Brazilian nation. In 1908, Brazilian ambassador Joaquim Nabuco delivered a

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9 Ibid, p. 120.
10 KOSELLECK, Futures Past, p. 269-270.
speech before the Spanish club of Yale University entitled *The spirit of Nationality in the History of Brazil*. In this occasion, he asserted, "Brazil has always been conscious of its size and has been governed by a prophetic sentiment with regard to its future"\(^{12}\).

The continental size of the country, the stability in relation to its borders since the independence in 1822, the use of a single language and the remoteness from points of tension in the international scene are all elements that justify the interpretation of Brazil as having an incredible potential that was never fully realized. In Brazilian historical narrative, there is a degree of certainty and anxiety about the future. The State has been closer and farther from its realization, but the future is yet to come.

In 1840, Januário da Cunha Barbosa argued that history, in making present the experience of past centuries, "illuminates the course to be taken, the shoals to be avoided, and the secure port into which a wise maneuver can felicitously guide the ship of State"\(^{13}\). He acknowledged that politics and civilization demanded that we apply ourselves to saving from the veracity of the centuries those facts that have conducted us to our present state and that will, in future times, serve as a point of comparison for our progress after our establishment as an independent nation. History is described as "witness of the times, light of truth, she abounds with elements necessary to our civilization and the prosperity of the State; as instructress of life, she offers examples of heroic deeds for those who prize the honor of serving the fatherland"\(^{14}\).

In 1838, Brazilian Empire founded the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute (IHGB) aiming at the creation of a Brazilian nation. Francisco Adolfo de Varnhagem, who wrote *Historia Geral do Brazil* is finally recognized by this institute by the end of his life and had his work consecrated. The creation of a Brazilian history becomes a turn to the past to the creation of the present while dreaming about the future. About the study of the nation's history, Varnhagem wrote:

> Your Imperial Majesty, my Lord, had recognized the importance and sanctioned the study of the Nation's History, as much to contribute to her greater splendor among foreigners as to provide facts useful in the administration of the State; and also to strengthen the ties of national unity, enliven and exalt patriotism, ennoble public spirit, and augment faith in our future\(^{15}\).

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\(^{13}\) BARBOSA, Januário da C. Relatorio do Secretario Perpetuo, in *Journal do Instituto Historico e Geographico Brasileiro*, tome II, 2 ed. 1858, p. 103.

\(^{14}\) Ibid, p. 573.

In his book, Varnhagem invented a Brazilian nation through the invention of its history\textsuperscript{16}. He created the sequence of historical events that justified and explained the pacific transition from the colony to the Empire. Doubtless relevant to unite people through a common myth of origin, it was economy, not the invented past, that finally integrated the population towards a common fate. Luís Carlos Soares explained that:

With the beginning of the current century [nineteenth century], the accelerated reproduction of capital was already taking place, integrating all of these areas into a single worldwide productive and mercantile circuit. From this profound “revolution”, caused by capitalism’s expansion, there at last emerged, in truth, a worldwide social and economic formation in which the areas corresponding to the old defunct precapitalist formations were transformed into mere parts or regions of a larger whole\textsuperscript{17}.

Toward the middle of the twentieth century, he observes, “the inhabitants of the most different and far-flung parts of the country had come to think of themselves as, and therefore actually to be, ‘Brazilians’. Thus, due to the development of imperialistic capitalism, ‘national integration’ was finally brought about\textsuperscript{18}.

The economic integration did not mean the realization of the ‘future’ for Brazil. At this point, it meant to be at the road, moved by the faith in the ‘future’. As the prophecy about the future is reinvented, so is the past and present, but what remains a constant in Brazilian historical narrative is the notion of a future yet to come, whose terms are defined and translated by the metropolis, or the ‘powerful’ nations ‘of the time’.

\textbf{2 WRITING AND READING THE FUTURE}

The notion of conceptual history (\textit{Begriffsgeschichte}) developed by Koselleck suggests that history can only be understood within a conceptual framework that enables the practice of historicizing. He shows that in order to make sense of the past and the future, one cannot escape explaining it according to the available structure of language or sociopolitical experience that is both contextually and temporally specific.

The theory of history and historiography developed by Koselleck calls for the investigation of the ruptures and continuities in the systems of meanings through which we understand the ‘world’ and the relation between past, present and future. This endeavor also demands the denaturalization of the positivistic recording of concepts, meanings and


\textsuperscript{17} SOARES, Luís C. From slavery to Dependence, in GRAHAM, Richard (org.) \textit{Brazil and the World System}, Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1991, p. 105.

\textsuperscript{18} Ibid, p. 106.
events.  

On the one side, the future is greatly defined by the present. On the other side, as cosmopolitan beings, contingences no longer are said to define the direction of the historical movement. Instead, we are bounded to a future-oriented perspective. As the future is unknown, one must plan for the empirical inexperience. For the developed countries, future and present are much closer than for developing countries, as they experience the acceleration of time in a different way.

Conceptual history sheds light on the intersubjectivism of concepts and the connection of historical narratives to the sets of meanings available at a given time and space. Progress opened up the future from fate, but for a few entitled to define ‘future’, while they also write, translate and interpreted the 'World History'. A postcolonial analysis may start from his contribution on the denaturalization of concepts and the implications of time as a collective single space - through which humanity must pass towards an unknown future - to question the relations of power that defines the ability of one to write its own history.

Progress not always referred to an entire social process. Koselleck argues that progress, a term first put forth by Kant gradually became "a word that neatly and deftly brought the manifold of scientific, technological, and industrial meanings of progress, and finally also those meanings involving social morality and even the totality of history, under a common concept". Progress became a collective singular. From a position of referential subject, 'humanity' became the object in the course of the universalization of progress. Koselleck argues that "the subjective genitive turns into the objective genitive: In the expression 'the progress of time' or 'the progress of history', progress assumes the leading role. Progress itself became the historical agent. In this sense, historical time became relatively independent from human being's actions, institutions, and organizations.

For Koselleck, only the modern time has "genuinely a historical meaning, distinct form mythical, theological, or natural chronological origins". He adds that as part of the Enlightenment program, "people begin to organize history according to generalized aspects of politics, and later of economics, or of a history of societies relating to the churches or peoples".

The progressive interpretation of the future opened up the space for questions about
cultural achievements as the criterion for a historically immanent structure. Koselleck affirms that since then "past and future differentiate themselves qualitatively from one another and, to this extent, a genuinely historical time is discovered that is finally encapsulated in the term progress."

The art of organizing and narrating sequences of events in a coherent way became possible with this temporalization of time. While history remains "the linguistic organization of temporal experience wherever this surfaces in past reality", any total history is always the product of a necessary perspective. But who speaks on behalf of humanity? Progress, as the new prophecy of modern 'world history' will be experienced differently geographically, what allows the categorization of societies according to a certain level of fulfillment of this 'prophecy'.

2.1 WRITING THE FUTURE

Timothy Luke explains that throughout history, a number of different categories and scales have been used to classify societies. Systems have been categorized as hunting and gathering, agrarian, manufacturing, and industrial, among others. Societies were also categorized along "racial, cultural, geographical, and religious, political, economic, or evolutionary scales of comparison", but it was only "after 1945 that the chronological classifications of the modernizatiots gained wide acceptance. Using this metaphorical language, based on time, societies are seen as premodern, or nonmodern".

In this new chronological classification, the developed nation is seen as having "attained a certain perfection of improvement in its social structures and cultural processes, whereas a developing nation [...] displays a positive commitment for applying its potential in adopting the existing "developed" forms and states of being".

The premodern is automatically defined as wanting modernization or as willing to be forced into modernity as it evolved in the 'modernized' regions, as "to be premodern, in this discourse, is to participate in another less complex social totality". Modernization involves the diffusion of what one might call "world culture" - "based on advanced technology and the spirit of science, on a rational view of life, a secular approach to social relations, a feeling for

27 Koselleck, Futures Past, p. 4.
28 Ibid, p. 117.
29 Ibid, p. 234.
31 Idem.
32 Ibid, p. 221.
33 Ibid, p. 220.
justice in public affairs and, above else, on the acceptance in the political realm of belief that the prime unit of polity should be the nation-state.\footnote{PYE, Lucian W. Aspects of political development: an analytic study. Boston: Little, 1966, p. 8.}

In terms of this discursive framework, modernity means, "gaining rational control of the physical and social environment, building a liberal democratic state, participating in world culture, and joining the scientific revolution.\footnote{LUKE, Social theory and modernity, p. 212.} In contrast to the notion of 'Westernization', the entire conceptual program of modernization and development doctrines since 1945 presented itself as culturally unbiased, while it embodied the cultural assumptions, political premises, and economic values of the United States.\footnote{Ibid, p. 213.} The metaphor of modernity "collapses technological, economic, and political measures into a single indicator without raising the problems of race, region, religion, or culture, as did the "Westernization" model.\footnote{Ibid, p. 220.}

Timothy Luke argues that

\begin{quote}
What has been labeled "development" in the Third and Fourth Worlds since 1945 has meant the 'corification' or the 'metropolization' of certain classes, industries, and institutions there in order to integrate certain key sectors of their economies into the larger transnational economic system constructed by major transnational banks and corporations and the OECD states, under American leadership.\footnote{Ibid, p. 214.}
\end{quote}

The allegedly neutral doctrine of modernization that "plainly places upon the rational control of the environment, the technological view of life, and the secular approach to social relations engendered by the scientific revolution reveals a substrata of assumptions, beliefs, and intentions deeply rooted in everyday American life.\footnote{Ibid, p. 217.} Luke argues, "as the periphery bureaucratizes, industrializes, mechanizes, mobilizes, rationalizes, secularizes, and urbanizes, it also disorganizes, deagriculturalizes, dehumanizes, desolidarizes, deanimates, desacralizes, and deruralizes.\footnote{Ibid, p. 229.}

The core writes the periphery's future while it writes its own present. The dichotomies tradition/modernity, developed/developing or even global/local define contemporary and modern states of being, but the second is always rendered "inferior contemporaneousness that is shared by 'men of the past', whereas 'modernity' represents the superior contemporaneousness that is collectively advanced by 'men of the present' who are truly 'of their time', not merely 'in their time', like the 'men of the past'.\footnote{Ibid, p. 233.}

Ashis Nandy observes, "nothing succeeds like success. It is more difficult to admit that all criteria, except the ones handed down to us by dominant global conscience, are being
either pre-empted or rendered obsolete. Any state of being that is not evolved to its full capacity is defined as incomplete. There is no full existence or hope for success if not through adherence to the accelerated time of modernity and globalization, but "modernity has a meaning only when connected to the concrete contemporary practices of the core".

The problem is that "the historiography of the modernized becomes the futurology of the modernizing", and even through adherence to the dominant time, the future escapes the modernizing or developing states of being. It is possible to argue then that the future for a developing country as Brazil, which was always translated into the language of progress, is a prophecy of a future that is known and written by the 'men of the present'. It becomes unachievable to the degree the present is never stabilized by these men. It is not that the core reached the ultimate end, but this infinite continuum towards indefinite future is dictated by the man of the present, the cultures of the present.

The 'men of the present' not only define the future, but also creates the past, the backward, and the 'local', in contrast to the contemporary modern and global state of being. In this respect, decolonization in terms of sovereignty, autonomy and economic growth, expressed in the discourses of development of Brazil in the context of the emergence of the global South leads to the colonization of the everyday lifeworld.

Nandy points out that one of the consequences of the logic of the increasingly global culture of the metropolitan city, and its spirited denial of what slums and ghettos stand for is that it "force many Southern cities to attempt a surgical bypass even when the major coronary arteries - those connecting the city to the village through slums and ghettos - are open and functioning. It is thus that these cities push the contemporary and the immediate into the past and into history".

He contends that,

Some societies have got rid of parts of their past and present, and rewritten the rest from the point of view of their borrowed futures. Their journey from the past to the present now reads remarkably like similar journeys undertaken by other - usually West European - societies during the last three hundred years. They are success stories within global civilization today; they can be called the new historical societies.

As a consequence, "domination today is rarely justified through oracles, ritual superiority, or claims to birthright; domination is now more frequently justified in terms of

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43 LUKE, Social theory and modernity, p. 230.
44 Ibid, p. 221.
46 Nandy, Time Treks, p. 160.
better acquaintance with universal knowledge or better access to universal modes of acquiring knowledge.  

2.2 READING THE FUTURE

In his visit to Brazil in 2011, Barack Obama told a cheering audience in Rio de Janeiro:

"For so long, Brazil was a nation brimming with potential but held back by politics, both at home and abroad. For so long, you were called a country of the future, told to wait for a better day that was always just around the corner. / Meus amigos, that day has finally come. And this is a country of the future no more. The people of Brazil should know that the future has arrived. It is here now. And it’s time to seize it. / Now, our countries have not always agreed on everything. And just like many nations, we’re going to have our differences of opinion going forward. But I’m here to tell you that the American people don’t just recognize Brazil’s success — we root for Brazil’s success. As you confront the many challenges you still face at home as well as abroad, let us stand together — not as senior and junior partners, but as equal partners, joined in a spirit of mutual interest and mutual respect, committed to the progress that I know that we can make together. (Applause.) I’m confident we can do it."

Barack Obama told Brazilian people that the future is right there at the corner. What is at stake in the fulfillment of this prophecy? Why did Brazilian people need the United States to "recognize Brazil's success"? How does the successful achievement of the future look like? Brazil does not only have its future written from the outside, as it is also read from the outside.

In 2012, there are a number of publications in newspapers and economic reports revisiting the definition of Brazil as 'the country of the future'. Andrés Velasco, former finance minister of Chile and visiting professor at Columbia University’s School of International and Public Affairs, wrote an article to project-syndicate.org entitled Brazil, Country of the Future No more? in which he analyze Obama's declaration.

His interpretation is that there are some facts to support the notion of Brazilian realization of the future. Looking back at the past events, he identified the democratic government, Brazilian participation at much-publicized BRICS Summits, the fast recovery of Brazilian economy during the last financial crisis, the attractiveness of capital, and stable

48 Ibid, p. 183.
macroeconomic situation. On the other hand, Velasco understands that Brazil has to deal with the questions of how much, how fast and for how long Brazilian economy can grow. He contends that there are still reforms to be made, such as freeing up resources for public investment, and 'progress' has been slow. He argues that Brazil must build new roads, ports, and airports, create new exports and higher-paying jobs. At the end, he affirms, "Brazil will be the country of the present and the future", if successfully implementing these reforms to further modernization.

At the end of the same year, D.K. publishes an article at The Economist entitled "Will Brazil remain the country of the future?"51. In this article, Brazilian and Mexican economies are compared. Future is again defined by productive capacity and the answer to the question in the title of the article is: it depends on how Brazil can grow economically. It is worth noting that economic growth is split into three categories: human capital, physical capital, and total factor productivity, suggesting a condition for progress that necessarily involves the transformation of societies in a productive mass.

BBC News also featured an article entitled Brazil: No longer 'country of the future'52, written by Silvia Salek. She highlights the fact that Brazil overtook UK as the sixth-biggest economy in the world. Brazilian resilience against the financial crisis is interpreted as Brazilian 'good fortune'. She asserts that despite its 'lower-than-expected' economic growth since 2011, the old tag of "country of the future - and always will be" is "starting to sound less of a joke and more like a promise to be fulfilled"53.

According to her, some signs that Brazil is closer to the fulfillment of the promise are: Brazilian consolidation as an agricultural superpower, the payment of its debt to IMF, the discovery of massive oil reserves in the Atlantic and the more assertive diplomacy. With Brazilian confidence reconstructed through its economic development, Brazil "start to break through the stereotypical image when it was often seen by others as only being the land of football and samba"54.

There are a lot of assumptions in these articles that can only be identified through the destabilization and de-naturalization of the meanings ascribed to the concepts that constitute these analyses. Economists embody the role of fortunetellers, as they know the future, they know how the approaching of the future looks like, and they are able to tell if these emerging economies are closer or farther from the future by looking at specific signs.

I have argued in this paper that Brazil has its future written and read in the language

53 Idem.
54 Idem.
of global capitalism and in relation to dominant political and economic 'cultures'. The most recent 'readings' or 'prophecies' have to some extent nourished the faith in the future that is closer. In the next section, I present Brazilian contemporary discourse of development, and the explanation the new economic doctrine offers for the recent successful achievement of unprecedented economic growth accompanied with domestic stability and an increasing bargaining power internationally.

For Ashis Nandy, development has split into two: conventional development and 'another' development. This latter has many aliases; it is often called alternative development, sustainable development, ecodevelopment, or indigenous development, but most of the efforts, as my analysis of Brazilian development will elucidate, "are also products of the same worldview which had produced the mainstream concepts of science, liberation and development"\(^{55}\). Brazil is getting closer to the future, but this may not be a future of its own creation.

### 3 BRAZIL AS A GLOBAL PLAYER

Brazilian recent discourse of development, while based upon different demands from the global south, relies on the recognition of a set of 'universally recognized norms' and the adoption of a discourse of modernization that engages societies all around the globe in a process of 'metropolitanization', expressed by the importance given to science, technology and urbanization in its vision of future. The periphery's attempt to emancipate from the core has been translated into their commitment to a series of transformations that bring societies to the future.

Brazilian New Developmentalism offers an explanation to Brazilian successful economic growth of this decade. Luis Carlos Bresser Pereira associates the current economic success with the ability of the state to coordinate economy. In comparison to the 1980s, he contends that

The great challenge Latin American countries faced in the 1980s was to reestablish democracy; in the meantime, they failed to rediscover the road to development. They failed because they chose to reform the state without taking the nation into account; because, in the necessary process of giving the market more space in the coordination of the economy, they ended up weakening the state. In the 2000s, the great challenge facing Brazil is rebuilding its nation; only then can it conclude the state's reform; rely on a strong, democratic state; and compete successfully within the framework of global capitalism\(^{56}\).

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A very important task in the challenge of rebuilding the nation includes the construction of society of mass consumption. According to Pereira, this idea has been in Brazilian economic thinking since the 1970s, when some economists criticized the income-concentrating model that the military regime adopted and claimed that the alternative to this 'industrialized underdevelopment model' is "an economy at once export-led and oriented toward mass consumption and, therefore, toward a gradual deconcentration of income"\(^{57}\).

Pereira, in his discussion on why Brazilian economy performed so poorly in the 1990s and became so competitive in the 2000s, concluded, "what really causes a country to grow, to change its economic and social structure, to improve living standards, and to make institutions themselves more legitimate, is a national development strategy"\(^{58}\). He explains that accelerated economic development "can take place only in institutional environments where talents and resources are channeled toward wealth production, rather than predatory activities that appropriate whatever wealth is produced"\(^{59}\).

In the field of education, for instance, the government has direct a lot of its efforts to science and technology, especially after the implementation of the program "borderless sciences", that aims at funding Brazilian students in competitive academic centers abroad. Brazilian government has established partnerships with Harvard and MIT, among other universities, and offers a number of full-scholarships for students in health sciences, technologies and engineering. Pereira argues that in the future

The age of global capitalism is a period in time when empires have lost their purpose and legitimacy, and nation-states span the entire globe. It is a period in which the basic community unit is still the family, but the basic unit of the world political system has become the nation-state or country. Under globalization, therefore, nation-states although more interdependent, became much more economically strategic\(^{61}\).

Brazil is in the saga for the pot of Gold for centuries, but the State and the Nation have been living in different times. While the former lives the time of the international, the latter lived their own time. Globalization, meaning the intensification of the transnational flows of goods and services, has synchronized the political, the economical and the social time, possibly at the expense of the complexity, the ambiguity and hybridity that has always defined or prevented the definition of 'Brazilian' society.

Time is not homogeneous and objective, but heterogeneous, intersubjective and political. According to this understanding, temporality is defined as "intimately involved with

\(^{57}\) Ibid, p. 262.
\(^{58}\) Ibid, p. 260.
\(^{59}\) Ibid, p. 261.
\(^{61}\) PEREIRA, Developing Brazil, p. 260-261.
the acts of ‘writing’ and narration, which are the processes by which ‘events’ and ‘facts’ become meaningful in the first place. Ashis Nandy indicates that a possible counterpoint to this colonization of time is the dehistoricization of the modern metropolis vision in this age where any other vision is constantly historicized.

The pot of Gold in the future may be shiny, but from this distance, it is not possible to say if it is real yet. The necessary disenchantment of Brazilian society in the name of State's productive capacity suggests that this pot of Gold may be full of fool's gold.

CONCLUSION

This paper is part of a larger project that seeks to understand the consequences of the synchronization of time brought about by contemporary globalization for the social complexity and the cultural diversity in the global south. My aim with this paper was to start a discussion about the implications for Brazilian society of the emergence of the country as an important economic and political player in the internation arena. I argued that the fulfillment of the prophecy of the future for Brazil depended on the re-invention of the nation in its history and it depends on its reinvention in the contemporaneity.

My criticism is not addressed to the historical and cultural transformations of Brazilian society driven by Brazilian economic development, but to the demand for the organization and the transformation of societies for the sake of the ‘healthy’ operationalization of global markets. The future weighs on the shoulders of society which becomes the engine of sustainable growth. The present becomes sacred and it does not forgive those who do not live in time, in favor of time.

Decolonization requires an effort to destabilize the dichotomies developed/developing, global/local, modern/tradition etc., examining the way these categories are loosely fixed in time. Accepting difference in non-spatialized time requires an honest acceptance that the concepts of progress, development, and 'modernization' are not superior signifiers at any level. In other worlds, it means to surrender the future of the others and embracing its own time.

63 NANDY, Time Treks, p. 161.
Bibliography


