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The Social Sciences and possible horizons in the rural latifundia: The threatened reproduction of the peasantry in the theories of Antônio Candido and Afrânio Garcia Jr.

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ABSTRACT

The article analyses the development of rural studies in Brazil as a subfield of the Social Sciences, arguing that its specificities must be understood within the institutional and social contexts in which it was produced. Demonstrating that scientific knowledge about rural Brazil cannot be dissociated from the historical structures of agrarian domination nor from the international circulation of the social sciences, the study examines the contributions of two theses: Antonio Candido's thesis defended in the graduate program of Sociology at the University of São Paulo (USP) in 1954, and Afrânio Garcia Jr.'s thesis, defended in the Graduate Program of Social Anthropology at the National Museum, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, in 1983. Both works address, each in their own way, the challenging issue of the social reproduction of Brazilian peasants in areas marked either by the decline or the peak of plantation estate. Based on the analytical content of *Os parceiros do Rio Bonito* (1954) and *O Sul: caminho do roçado* (1989), we argue that these contributions remain fundamental as critical analytical references for interpreting continuities and transformations in current agrarian and urban areas reconfigurations, as well as for understanding new forms of social resistance emerging in territories once dominated by estates and sugar mills.

Keywords: rural sociology, peasantry, agrarian domination, Brazil.

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Introduction

This article offers readers significant examples of social sciences research on "Brazilian rural areas," which, for both their content and the way they constructed knowledge through careful observation of rural realities, may encourage new research. There are many possible – and necessary – ways to examine academic production on rural studies: contextualization and analytical bibliographic reviews; synopsis of the central themes, constitution of professional associations, academic meetings, high-impact journals, grant awards, funding and calls for research proposals in this research area; among others. I have purposely chosen a different path to demonstrate how the academy, at different times – even during periods of political crisis and dictatorship in Brazil –, concerned with the intense transformations resulting from the rapid industrialization and urbanization of Brazilian society, produced high-quality works focused on social subjects "forgotten" by the academic field of their times. Concurrently, I will also show how those works responded to social scientists' aspirations for professional recognition through institutionalisation of Social Sciences undergraduate programs and Sociology graduate programs, in the 1940s and 1950s, and through creation and consolidation of the country's first graduate program in Anthropology in the 1960s.

To this end, I will draw on two significant studies on Brazilian rural settings, both grounded in historically situated empirical data and characterized by rigorous scientific approach and a healthy dose of "sociological imagination" (Mills, 1972). Both were originally written as doctoral theses and published as books a few years after completed. The first, titled *Os parceiros do Rio Bonito: estudo sobre o caipira paulista e a transformação dos seus meios de vida* (Partners of Rio Bonito: A study of the São Paulo country folks and the transformation of their livelihoods), was writen by Antônio Candido for his doctoral degree in the Sociology Graduate Program at the University of São Paulo (USP) in 1954 and published as a book ten years later. The second was the first doctoral thesis completed in the Graduate Program in Social Anthropology (PPGAS) of the National Museum (MN) at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), in 1983, written by Afrânio Garcia Jr. and titled *O Sul: o caminho do roçado: estratégias de reprodução camponesa e transformação social* (The

South: The path towards the farmland: strategies of peasant reproduction and social transformation). It was published as a book in Brazil and France in 1989, after Garcia Jr. having completed a postdoctoral fellowship under the supervision of Pierre Bourdieu, from 1983 to 1986 (Garcia Jr., 2005). Although separated by nearly thirty years, these works share a common concern, as I will show: to introduce concrete situations of the historically threatened social reproduction of the Brazilian peasantry into discussions.

Reflecting on the development of 'rural studies' from a perspective that goes beyond major works and articles published in this area while avoiding both doing injustice to and duplicating work already done by other researchers (Wanderley, 2012; Brumer & Santos, 2006; Garcia Jr., 2003; Santos, 1991; Candido, 1954/2010) is an arduous task of contextualization that challenges the knowledge produced. To this end, I will pay special attention to the historical and institutional context of the social sciences in Brazil, as well as to the transnational dimension of their history and the way they were incorporated into analyses of Brazilian realities. In a colonized country like Brazil – where plantations characterized the society that emerged after the Portuguese arrival carrying enslavement of Black people and decimation of Indigenous ethnic groups –, thinking about rural reality has always meant understanding the peripheral and subordinate position of the colony and the social reproduction of separation between masters and slaves. This inequality continues to be reproduced – albeit in new guises – in social categories that remain on the margins of the Brazilian latifundium.[1]

As I will show, Candido – in an attempt to account for the cultural transformations among *caipiras* following the decline of São Paulo's coffee latifundium with the 1920s crisis – examined the occurred changes by analysing the social category known as *aforante*, one of the possible forms of partnership (a sort of "moral partnership" in which land is provided in exchange for a share of the harvest, a practice widespread in the region). Afrânio Garcia Jr., in turn, more than two decades later, in northeastern Brazil, would observe, at the height of the sugar and ethanol agroindustry, the decline of the traditional personalized domination in a highly hierarchical

[1] The latter category, for example, includes both Antônio Candido's study on the *aforantes* – here analyzed – and the research conducted in Pernambuco by Afrânio Garcia Jr. (1983) and Beatriz Heredia (1979), which reinforce Palmeira's thesis (1989, p. 105) that "transformations that took place in the countryside exceeded modernization" and, in this sense, the arena of struggle is far "broader than the simple opposition between peasants and large landowners" (Palmeira, 1989, p. 104).

world – a shift that transformed the reality of small farmers in the Northeast, a central category in the author's work.

To address the proposed objectives – intending to offer a brief sociological analysis of the social conditions of academic production on the Brazilian rural – I will show, for each author considered emblematic to this discussion, the foreign influences that shaped, within historically circumscribed contexts, not only the hierarchy of objects but also that of the knowledge-producing subjects (Bourdieu, 2019).[2] To this end, I will draw on an analysis of their trajectories – albeit not exhaustive – and on how they constructed their research objects and main scientific contributions. First, however, a few observations about the emergence of rural sociology as a discipline in Brazilian academia are worth to highlight its pragmatic nature, which differs from the approach of the two selected works to constructing their objects and conducting research.

Toward a sociology of the rural

Reflecting on the development of rural studies in Brazil within the social sciences is no easy task, given the regional diversity and the resulting variation in the social categories that make up the agrarian landscape. In terms of rural issues, Sociology, Anthropology and Political Science have, at various times, been partners in this endeavour, fostering a fruitful dialogue to help us understand our reality. In this sense, it does not seem particularly appropriate to break down this body of work by specific area of the social sciences. Furthermore, while separating rural sociology as a distinct field from sociology is a difficult and unproductive task, I believe that, from a heuristic perspective, we can consider the rural to be a subfield.[3]

[2] The position that each discipline occupies within the academic field is not static. Furthermore, the hierarchy of a discipline is shaped not only by the inherent hierarchies of the scientific field itself, but also by its relationships with the field of power that governs its functioning and practices. Michel Pollak (1976) provided a thorough analysis of this situation in relation to French sociology.

[3] This topic has historically occupied a relatively subordinate position in symbolic struggles within sociology in both the United States and France – a fact mirrored in our own country (Sigaud, 1992). As Rios (1979) writes, the establishment of the American Society for Rural Sociology in 1935 was primarily motivated by a sense of 'marginalisation' experienced by researchers within the discipline's founding community. In *Sketch for a Self-Analysis*, Pierre Bourdieu (2005) describes how abandoning philosophy and turning to sociology – through his early-career studies on the resettlement of Algerians during their country's War of Independence, and in his native village in France – was a symbolic demotion within the academic field. He asserts that rural research was the least prestigious speciality in sociology.

This is because confining research to so-called rural sociology would lead to certain errors. Not only would it restrict the field of study to a specific geographic region, but it would also turn those who practise it into a sort of 'rural specialists' with nothing to contribute to other, more highly valued theoretical and methodological issues (Sigaud, 1992). It would also involve a relevant discussion about the initial construction and underlying intentions of a discipline focused on rural studies in the country.

In Brazil, the emergence of this discipline was linked to U.S. policies aimed at creating an 'ideal' type of farmer who would serve U.S. economic and political interests.[4] José Arthur Rios (1979), a graduate of the first sociology classes at the National School of Philosophy – now the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro – wrote one of the few articles available on the emergence of rural sociology, which was published in the 1970s. Inspired by post-war American sociology and particularly by T. Lynn Smith – his advisor during his Master's programme in Rural Sociology at Louisiana State University shortly after the war – Rios strove to implement reformist principles within Brazilian government agencies. He advocated the "need to expand the professional scope of social scientists beyond universities" (Lopes & Maio, 2017, p. 10). Smith had been travelling to Brazil since the 1940s as part of the Good Neighbour Policy championed by the Franklin Roosevelt administration. This policy was one of the initiatives carried out by the Office of Foreign Agricultural Relations (OFAR), an office within the United States Department of Agriculture whose mission is to address international issues of interest to the United States by gathering information on production and establishing trade agreements regarding the export and import of commodities (Lopes & Maio, 2022).

Rural sociologists played a part in a policy of diplomatic rapprochement, which included academic cooperation, made possible by the threat of Nazism and Fascism in the Americas. Building on their experience with New Deal programmes, which aimed to mitigate the consequences of the Great Depression begun in 1929, their tasks included guiding the model for rural assistance and extension in Latin American rural areas. To achieve this, it was necessary to invest in an international network of partners

[4] Perhaps for this reason, José de Souza Martins spoke of the disenchantment with rural sociology in Brazil during his lecture at the closing session of the 10th World Congress of Rural Sociology, held in Rio de Janeiro on August 4, 2000. According to him, the discipline had placed the interests of the market and the state above the necessary scientific neutrality (Martins, 2001).

and in the education and training of new personnel to work in the field, focusing on rural extension. Research was also conducted to improve understanding of Latin American rural realities. In a sort of "hegemony exercise that prioritized, instead of the old tactics of military intervention, the construction of a positive and prestigious image of the country as a political and technical-scientific leader in the Americas" (Lopes & Maio, 2022, p. 2), rural sociology was transnationalised from North to South America. This practical, reform-oriented approach would be transferred to Brazil in 1937 alongside undergraduate programmes in agronomy, when the American professor John B. Griffing held the first chair in sociology at the College of Agronomy and Veterinary Medicine (ESAV), founded in the 1920s and known today as the Federal University of Viçosa. In 1939, it was at this university that the first course in a discipline titled 'Rural Sociology' was taught by that foreign faculty member (Lopes & Maio, 2022). The chair was later taken over by Edgard Vasconcelos de Barros, a native of the state of Minas Gerais, who had earned a bachelor's degree in legal and social sciences in Rio de Janeiro and a master's degree in Rural Sociology from the University of Wisconsin in 1955.

In the 1960s, following the same 'modernising' logic, many agreements were signed between the Brazilian Ministry of Education (MEC) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (Ribeiro, 2009). In the early stages of this relationship between the U.S. and Brazil, the first graduate programme specifically focused on rural issues in the field of sociology was established in 1963, based on a model proposed by the Americans. Consequently, the Graduate Programme in Rural Sociology was launched at the Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul (UFRGS). For example, in 1973, Professor Alzemiro E. Sturn, affiliated with that university, translated the USAID-funded anthology *Rural Sociology: An analysis of contemporary rural life*, edited by Alvin Bertrand from Louisiana State University. In this anthology, American sociologists expressed concern about "the special demands of courses in this discipline" (Bertrand, 1973, p. 11) aiming to train new researchers who are aware of "today's American rural society as it is – dynamic and in transition" (Bertrand, 1973, p. 11).

In short, it is worth emphasising that the institutional context in which Brazilian social science scholarship emerged – without neglecting studies on rural areas, the central focus of this article – was strongly shaped by

the influx of American researchers, and, as will be demonstrated in the case of USP, by the arrival of French scholars in Brazil. By means of a historical sociology of the social sciences, Peixoto (2001) classifies these relationships according to their emphasis on research or teaching and the duration of the researchers' stay in Brazil. He also highlights the central role of funding during the period from 1930 to 1960, showing us the more empirical nature of the emergence of American sociology, which became institutionalised more rapidly than its main competitor, French sociology.[5] The abundant resources made available for research on the American side through exchanges during that period[6] contrasted with the limited funding invested by the French side, which ultimately curtailed their teaching presence in the country. At USP,[7] scientific missions organised through the mediation of Georges Dumas, a follower of Émile Durkheim's[8] sociology, brought French professors to teach there.

Therefore, we can conclude that two distinct lines of research on rural issues, differing significantly in their objectives, emerged during the same period. While American rural sociology, "[...] conceived as a discipline intended to accelerate integration of the rural world into the urban one" (Queiroz, 1969, p. 8), placed emphasis on rural extension to disseminate new techniques and values to rural populations, the French approach, conversely, was rather concerned with "uncovering the actual directions of the ongoing processes" (p. 8). This concern with understanding rural

[5] This fact is attested to by the University of Chicago, which was founded in the 19th century (in 1892) and reached its peak in the 1920s and 1930s by combining theoretical discussion with empirical research. The aim was to address the intense transformations in Chicago's urban environment (Eufrásio, 1999). At USP, this school of thought found significant resonance in the studies conducted by Florestan Fernandes, for whom Candido expresses unquestionable admiration, both for the bonds they forged and for the substance of his work.

[6] The only exception cited by Peixoto (2001) is that of Métraux, a Swiss national who acquired U.S. citizenship and went to serve at Unesco in Paris, and from there to Brazil with external institutional support.

[7] At the Free School of Sociology and Politics (now the São Paulo School of Sociology and Politics Foundation), a school with fewer faculty members who had served on missions, Donald Pierson's arrival was especially notable. He first visited Brazil in 1935–1937 to collect data for his thesis, before arriving as a researcher and professor in 1939. A follower of the Chicago School's theory and community studies, where he earned his master's and doctoral degrees, Pierson was a notable example of a long-term presence. According to Peixoto (2001, p. 526), he was rather a "producer of events" than a producer of knowledge, given his central role in training researchers, publishing the field's first journal (Sociologia), organising the Social Sciences Library, and securing funding for projects. During this period, however, their shared interest in Bahia as a "natural laboratory for the study of human society" was what united them.

[8] Although it helped bring in researchers who opposed this school of thought, such as Lévi-Strauss (Peixoto, 2001).

reality as it actually was, rather than as we might wish it to be based on our ideological stance, was pioneered by Antônio Candido in his study of the transformation of traditional *caipira* culture, in São Paulo state, and, years later, by Afrânio Garcia Jr. among freed family farmers in Brejo da Paraíba. Now, I proceed to describe these influences and authors, along with selected works from their portfolios.

A text in its context: the social sciences at the University of São Paulo and Candido's place

The Free School of Political Sociology[9] was inaugurated in São Paulo in 1933, and the Faculty of Philosophy, Sciences and Arts at the University of São Paulo (USP) was established the following year. It was there that Antônio Candido would enrol, five years later. Despite his father's dissatisfaction, he began there his undergraduate studies in social sciences in 1939. Thus, Candido became part of sociology's emergence as a professional training field in Brazil, as the first institutions for teaching social sciences were then being established. For context, Candido's school awarded 150 social science degrees between 1936 and 1955 (Miceli, 1987), including Candido's own in 1942.[10]

Although most intellectual professions require academic degrees, sociology, in Brazil, was initially taught at secondary schools and teacher training colleges in Brazil. Only later it became established as a bachelor's degree programme affiliated with the Law School, which "at that time, was the main source of political and institutional personnel, producing important political leaders, renowned professionals and literary writers" (Miceli, 1987, p. 9). The institutionalisation of the area in the Rio de Janeiro–São Paulo axis was closely linked to political demands in both the public and private spheres. According to Miceli (1987), the form it took was shaped by recognised figures in the new field of knowledge and intellectual power.

It is worth noting that, although having written one of the most important works in the field of rural sociology in Brazil, Antônio Candido established

[9] "One of the figures who helped to break with tradition was Donald Pierson, who, at the Free School of Sociology and Politics, trained new generations and organised the country's first master's programme" (Oliveira, 1998).

[10] However, Candido does not fit the dominant profile of social science students of the time, as described by Miceli (1987) – women and Jews, who would likely lack the opportunity to pursue higher education had this new career path not opened up.

his career in literature. Born in 1918 in Rio de Janeiro, Candido lived in various towns in Minas Gerais, before settling in São Paulo, in 1930. There, shortly before entering university in 1936, he attended high school at Colégio Universitário, which belonged to USP and was attended by students from the more affluent social classes. At this school, he gained access to works on sociology by various authors, ranging from Fernando Azevedo to Émile Durkheim.[11] The city was experiencing an intense period of cultural activity spearheaded by Mário de Andrade, who was committed to spreading culture among the general public through the Department of Culture.[12] This enabled the young student to attend extracurricular courses offered by French faculty members at the university, in addition to his regular classes (Pontes, 2001).[13] At the same time, he studied law at the Law School at his father's[14] request; his father wanted Candido to become a doctor, just as he himself, Candido's maternal grandfather and several uncles and great-uncles had done. He remained in the Law School also due to "fears regarding the professional prospects of graduates from the new programme' (Pontes, 2001, p. 13)[15], even though his engagement with literature had been constant since his high school days. In 1941, while studying for a degree in Social Sciences, he founded Revista Clima with some friends – a project that would mark the beginning of his unexpected career as a literary critic. From the outset, he took on the book section, a role for which he would be recognised and celebrated until his death in 2017.

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[11] Then his contact with works in the social sciences begins. As he recalls, he read, among other works: *Princípios de sociologia* by Fernando de Azevedo; *Éléments de sociologie* by Bouglé and Raffault; *The Rules of Sociological Method* by Durkheim; and *Introduction à la Sociologie* by Armand Cuvillier (Pontes, 2001, p. 12).

[12] According to Candido (p. 20), Mário de Andrade was close to "Lévi-Strauss and his wife, Dina. Together, they founded and led the Society of Ethnography and Folklore, an important research centre that published its findings in the Revista do Arquivo Municipal, edited, if I'm not mistaken, by Sérgio Milliet, in the Department.

[13] Antônio Candido made these remarks on 19 August 1987 during an interview conducted by Heloísa Pontes. The author revised the interview in 2001, when it was finally published.

[14] Encouraged by his father, a doctor at the Rio de Janeiro School of Medicine, he began reading at a very young age. His father would bring home newly published books, such as those from the Brasiliana series, with their "eye-catching covers", which caught young Candido's attention. He says that, at just under 14 years old, he began his "process of initiation into Brazil" through Saint-Hilaire's work, *A segunda viagem ao Rio de Janeiro e à província de Minas Gerais*, which would later form the basis of a critical dialogue in his doctoral dissertation.

[15] Interestingly, at the same time, some law students saw the new bachelor's degree programme in social sciences as an opportunity to supplement their income by teaching in high school, given that nearly one-third of all secondary schools were located in São Paulo (Miceli, 1987).

The author was a pioneer in the scientific study of rural settings as established through university courses. It does not mean that others had not before devoted themselves to the arduous task of deciphering the complexities of a colonised country like Brazil. As Candido himself explains (1959/2006, p. 271),[16] studies on Brazilian rural have existed since the late nineteenth century. However, these were produced "by non-specialised intellectuals, primarily interested in formulating theoretical principles or offering broad interpretations of Brazilian society". Examples include the works of Euclides da Cunha, Alberto Torres, Oliveira Viana, Gilberto Freyre, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda and Caio Prado Junior, who straddled the fields of sociology and history, and whose works were published between 1880 and 1930. In any case, these authors played a significant role in Candido's intellectual life. As someone closely connected to the traditional rural culture that extended throughout an area known as Paulistânia, which also encompassed the states of Minas Gerais, Goiás and Mato Grosso at the time, he says to have perceived racial mixing as something close to himself and his people after reading Gilberto Freyre's *Casa Grande e Senzala*, when he realised that "we, who came from old families, formed at a time when sexual relations between masters and slave women were intense. We began to feel that somewhere in our ancestry, whether closer or farther back, there might be a black ancestor" (Pontes, 2001, p. 7).

The shift from a "sociological perspective" to a "sociological science" followed the creation of the social sciences programme at USP. The participation of foreign professors was fundamental in this process; they were responsible for disseminating theories and research methods, as well as a new, more scientific and professional, and less literary. 'spirit'[17] "In the 1940s and 1950s, teaching and research – shaped by the new direction brought by foreign professors – consolidated sociology as a distinct scientific discipline" (Jackson, 2001, p. 136). Candido was one of the pioneers in the academic study of what were then referred to as 'rustic societies.' At that

[16] This text was written in 1956 for the Delta-Larousse encyclopaedia and republished without changes in 2006.

[17] It is worth noting that then, a period of repressive dictatorship in the country, political discussions did not take place at the School of Philosophy. The faculty mainly consisted of foreigners, who were not permitted to express opinions on local political issues. Although most of the Italian professors were fascists, they exercised great discretion. "The French were divided, but we only learned of their ideological positions indirectly" (Candido in Pontes, 2001, p. 21).

time, 'rustic' was not synonymous with 'rural' as a specific location but rather expressed the ethical and cultural modalities of interactions between Portuguese (white) people and other ethnic groups – that is, as a traditional culture of rural settings. According to Candido, this concept did not include large landowners, but rather represented the typical peasant: "free, whether a landowner or not, white or mixed-race, and sometimes Black, the result of long-standing acculturation and intermingling" (Candido, 1955, p. 322).[18] According to the author's own view (1955), until the 1930s, the rural population remained present only as ambivalent stereotypes of the *caboclo* in the literature of regionalist writers, or as a social problem in need of a solution. This made them seem increasingly exotic and foreign in the face of the intense urbanisation they were experiencing.

Before writing his thesis, Antônio Candido was already a writer for Folha da Manhã and had published the book *Brigada Ligeira* (1945). Aged 26 and having just earned his bachelor's degree, he passed a competitive exam to become a professor of Brazilian literature – a fact that earned him the title of Doctor of Letters, although, ultimately, he was not appointed to the position. In 1942, he joined the faculty at USP as an assistant in the Sociology II department under Fernando de Azevedo,[19] one of USP's founders. He filled the position recently vacated by Emílio Willems, editor and director of Brazil's first social sciences journal, Revista Sociologia, who was appointed to head the newly created Department of Anthropology.

As Candido himself recounts, the position as Azevedo's assistant turned him into a sociologist at that moment, much as he had become a literary critic despite having no desire to be either. The loss of his father at a young age,[20] coupled with the urgent need for financial resources as the eldest son, led him to approach Fernando de Azevedo about a philosophy professorship at the high school Colégio Universitário, which did not require a teaching degree (an issue then subject to ongoing debate). This resulted in an invitation to fill the assistant position vacated by Willems (Pontes, 2001, p. 24).

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[18] Free translation by the author.

[19] Azevedo was the first professor to hold the sociology chair at USP, and was founder of the Brazilian Sociological Association in 1937. Initially known as the São Paulo Sociological Association, it only became a national organisation in 1950.

[20] His father died in 1942 at the age of 56.

Willems, a German who lived in Brazil and was the author of a study on Brazilian communities (Willems, 1947), was a key influence on Candido's introduction to anthropology. In his interview with Pontes (2001), [21] Candido stated that he attended Willems' classes in 1942 and 1943, while pursuing his doctorate, and that he was greatly influenced by the literature he read. He cited the works of Redfield, Melville Herskovits, Irving Hallowell, Raymond Firth, Malinowski, Evans-Pritchard and Radcliffe-Brown,[22] who shaped the influence of functionalism and the concept of structure. This concept was later transferred from anthropology to literary criticism. However, Candido was not without his criticisms of his German colleague. According to Jackson (2001, pp. 136–137), "the most important difference [...] is that Antônio Candido draws on history to understand the group under study", influenced by the historical-sociological essays of the 1930s.

A requirement for getting assistant positions was to complete a thesis. Still, since he had already earned his degree in Language and Literature, were it not for his refusal to accept the 'academic shortcut' authorised by the congregation, *Os parceiros do Rio Bonito* would not even exist. As Candido recalls, he decided to submit to the rules imposed on all teaching assistants, namely completing a thesis within the prescribed timeframe, for feeling "morally obliged to demonstrate his competence in the subject he taught" (Pontes, 2001, p. 26).[23] Although his experience in sociology was brief, it is considered the 'backbone' of his worldview. This experience stemmed from his participation in a unique historical moment of interaction with people from different academic disciplines. At that time, in his own words, he could "see the emergence of sociology and anthropology as disciplines requiring serious specialisation" (p. 28).

His doctoral advisor was Roger Bastide, a French sociologist who taught at USP from 1939 to 1954. At the time, he held the Chair I of Sociology, a position later filled by Florestan Fernandes. Candido, who held the

[21] Although this interview was only published in 2001, it was conducted on 19 August 1987 at the Institute for Economic, Social and Political Studies of São Paulo (Idesp).

[22] At that time, Radcliffe-Brown had not published anything other than his seminal work, *The Andaman Islanders*.

[23] It is worth noting that he was writing both *Os Parceiros and Formação da Literatura Brasileira* simultaneously; the former was begun in 1946 and completed two years earlier than the latter, in 1954.

position previously occupied by Willems[24] at that time, had been a Bastide's undergraduate student in the course on Aesthetic Sociology in 1940. In his thesis, which was criticised for not being 'pure sociology'[25], he credited his advisor with endorsing a daring style for the time – and, perhaps, still today in the view of some conservative scholars –, which not only drew on different fields, particularly sociology, anthropology and history, but also consciously selected various theorists based on their ability to analyse rural culture. In Candido's own words about Bastide,

> He had no theoretical or methodological biases. During the slow process of writing my doctoral thesis, I had many doubts due to my literary background. Then, I asked Bastide if that was really sociology, just sociology, since then there was a sort of obsession with the discipline's specificity and unmistakable purity, a legacy from Durkheim, who found necessary to proclaim the uncontaminated validity of the new science. Bastide, who had been a student of the more open-minded Gaston Richard in Bordeaux, despite being protective of the primacy sociology ought to maintain in works falling within its scope. said that it was legitimate to blend sociology, history, and anthropology. That is why, when I voiced my doubts to him, he would say: "The important thing is not whether the thesis is sociological or not, but that it is good." Despite this, when I defended my thesis, while all the examiners gave me a ten, he gave me a nine – or a nine and a half, I don't recall – arguing that it was more anthropological than sociological… A very curious mind (Pontes, 2001, p. 14).

During an appearance on Rádio USP, in 1990,[26] he asserted that the presence of French professors in Brazil was fundamental to transmitting a

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[24] From that moment on, Candido says, he knew he wanted to pursue literature. In fact, he said that he "never considered himself a sociologist, but merely a professor of sociology, which is something else" (in Pontes, 2001, p. 27). In 1956, he took a one-year sabbatical, after which he taught one final course on social organisation at USP. In 1958, he began teaching Brazilian literature at one of the three new colleges established by the São Paulo state government, which later became the Assis campus of UNESP (p. 28).

[25] In addition, there was a push to systematise the three fields of sociology, anthropology, and political science due to the influence of Georges Gurvitch's time at USP in 1947, when the Department of Social Sciences was established in the American style (Peixoto, 2001).

[26] A special series programme from Rádio USP (93.7 MHz), titled *Esta é a Universidade de São Paulo – Faculdade de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras*, and coordinated by journalists Melchiades Cunha Jr. and Marcello Bittencourt. https://jornal.usp.br/cultura/a-vida-a-obra-e-o-legado-de-antonio-candido/#:~:text=A%20forma%C3%A7%C3%A3o%20da%20USP%2C%20por%20Antonio%20Candido&text=%E2%80%9CQuem%20teve%20a%20ideia%20da,Filho%E2%80%9D%2C%20afirma%20o%20professor

'spirit' of what a university should be, as well as a conception of what a course is, classes prepared with modern bibliographies, and the selection of research fields. He drew freely on "certain insights from anthropology and others more typical of sociology" (Candido, 2010, p. 21). He even said that we owe the discovery of Brazil by Brazilian students to some of them, as the students were, in his words, "so ignorant about Brazilian culture that they knew more about France or Europe than Brazil."[27] The French researchers and professors were responsible for awakening Brazilian students' interest in the *caboclos*, Black people, urban growth, the plight of São Paulo's poor, and the various forms of land occupation in agricultural enterprises. Exposure to the works of French scholars was invaluable, particularly to those who had visited Brazil, such as Pierre Monbeig, whose pioneering studies on farmers and the development of agriculture in São Paulo offered Candido an important example of how to construct a book based on concrete research. A book whose analytical richness I will now describe, though with no intention of exhausting its content. I maintain that it should be read and reread in its entirety.

Candido's pioneering study: The *aforantes* and the transformations of *caipira* culture

Written between 1948 and 1954, *Os Parceiros do Rio Bonito* drew on a variety of concepts and combined qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Rather than focusing on the issues of rural populations adapting to a rapidly expanding urban environment, as many did, the book examines the transformation of the traditional *caipira* culture in the countryside of São Paulo state, based on meticulous field research conducted at the Bela Aliança farm in the municipality of Bofete. The site was formerly known as Rio Bonito, a name derived from a small settlement called Samambaia that had formed around a chapel. There, the predominant "categories of

[27] Bastide was surprised, stating that "[...] without being highbrows, our students had sufficient knowledge of French" (Arbousse-Bastide, 1978, cited in Peixoto, 2001, p. 484). Claude Lévi-Strauss, a member of the French mission for the sociology department, shared this impression and emphasised the enrolment of members of the elite in the USP programme, in which he was also deeply involved: "At that time, a French person could feel at home in Brazil. Every Brazilian with even a modicum of education spoke French" (Lévi-Strauss, 1983, cited in Peixoto, 2001, p. 484).

living" were smallholder and rural partner,[28] sometimes embodied by the same person. The municipality's former coffee farm fell into crisis in 1902. It was sold in 1918 and passed into the hands of a creditor ten years later. This creditor left the farm inactive until 1948, when it was taken over by his son Edgard Carone – a historian in the Department of History at USP. Carone lived on the farm from 1948 to 1960, during which time he facilitated Antonio Candido's stay in the region (Jackson, 2001).

Candido demonstrates that the peculiar situation found in Bofete in the late 1940s, stemming from factors related to the coffee crisis and the collapse and abandonment of local estates, amidst a general trend of agricultural regression, created a favorable context for understanding the redefinition of *caipira* culture then under the influence of abandoned farms. In the span of only half a century, the area underwent economic, technical, and cultural transformations that made it an exceptional setting for researching these changes. The area had experienced slave labour, the settlement of free Black people and Portuguese immigrants, and, beginning in 1918, it ceased to be a farm in the strict sense – that is, "a managed property where the owner engages in this or that branch of agricultural or livestock activity" – to become a collection of plots leased out under partnership arrangements and distant supervision. Black people and Portuguese left and were replaced by *aforantes caipiras* (Candido, 2010, p. 146). That is why Candido stated that "on the ruins of the productive latifundium, in the absence of economic leadership, traditional culture reemerged like a scar, reestablishing the interrupted rhythm of rural life. The farm became a quasi-neighbourhood in the social sense of the word" (p. 146).

Candido himself was part of the *caipira* cultural scene that formed a "cultural tapestry" following the end of the *Bandeirante*'s (explorer frontiersman) era in the captaincies (hereditary fiefs) of Minas Gerais, Goiás and Mato Grosso, in what was known as Paulistânia – towns and farms emerged, shaping social stratification, first through sugarcane cultivation, then cattle ranching and subsequently coffee cultivation - all of them, therefore, linked to the market. Among the sociological justifications for choosing this research site – a fundamental condition for high-quality

[28] Translator's note: Parceiro rural is a farmer who earn the right to use a plot of land of other person in exchange of a share of its production.

research –, alongside the fact that rural communities[29] constituted the majority of the national population in the 1950s, the intense transformations experienced in that location over a short period rendered it an interesting laboratory for interpreting the changes underway in traditional rural life.

Notable for its literary and scientific quality, the work was attuned to the issues of its time and pioneered systematic social science studies of peasant societies (Jackson, 2001). The initial focus of the thesis harnessed the literary experience of the young Candido, aiming to analyse the relationship between literature and society through the transformations of the *Cururu*, popular poetry of rural *caipira* culture that, despite maintaining certain patterns over time, exhibited changes in its structure. As the research progressed, Candido refocused the central question on the transformations of the *caipira* culture occurred since the beginning of Brazilian colonisation, becoming consolidated in the 18th century with the end of the *bandeirante* cycle in the state of São Paulo. Candido (2010, p. 110) took the "elementary problem of survival" as his focus and leaned towards what he termed a "sociology of livelihoods".[30]

His research shows that "the resistance of the *caipira* culture is variable, depending on land tenure arrangements, labour conditions and legal status" (Candido, 2010, p. 117). Using quantitative data on coffee cultivation area and population from municipalities surrounding Bofete[31] and its distribution across rural, urban and suburban areas, the author reveals the objective link between coffee and the demographic surges associated with the coffee boom in São Paulo: an increase until 1920, followed by a decline after the crisis that year, with the centres that were becoming more urbanised through

[29] Candido places himself among USP's authors, of those decades, devoted to the study of the then called 'rustic groups' – individuals of Portuguese, Black or Indigenous origin, of varying degrees of mixed heritage, engaged in rudimentary agriculture, and living in rural areas with varying degrees of social and cultural proximity to urban centres (Candido, 2006, p. 298). These groups constituted the majority of the national population in the 1950s. These rural communities were the subject of numerous studies by American and Brazilian scholars, primarily in the form of community monographs, a method pioneered by Willems and Pierson. However, as Candido (2006) notes, these studies were relatively recent, and many had not yet been published by the time of his writing.

[30] Regarding the food-related issues analysed, I believe the author can be considered a pioneer of the sociology or anthropology of food within Brazilian social sciences.

[31] The municipalities studied by Candido were: Bofete, Botucatu, Itapetininga, Tatuí, Pirambóia, Conchas, Guaré, Angatuba, Porangaba and Pereiras. Interestingly, where coffee plantations were not accompanied by commercial and industrial growth, as in the main city of the region, São Manuel, compared to Botucatu, the population decline was more significant.

commerce and industry attracting thousands of workers and small farmers. Although Bofete attracted a relatively large number of foreigners, its isolation was not threatened by the decline of coffee. In this sense, according to the author, Bofete did not integrate the pace of modern life at that time. On the contrary, there was certain assimilation of Bofete's immigrants into the *caipira* culture (p. 130), leaving the area marked by a certain steady poverty, even among farmers and smallholders, in a population somehow or other devoted to agriculture.

In this scenario, the rural partner emerges as a way to utilising land that is not being used for large-scale production initiatives. Candido defines it as follows: "essentially, a partnership is an association through which one party provides land and retains the right to a share of the products obtained by the other party" (Candido, 2010, p. 136). In the region, these partners are called *aforantes*, and there are different types of arrangement between landowners and partners involving varying proportions of produce and tasks assigned to each party. An exception to the partnership model, not classified as an *aforante* in the region, was the *meeiros*, a type of partnership in which the landowner provided land that had been cleared, burned and ploughed, as well as seeds, and, in return, the partner was responsible for planting, weeding, harvesting and returning half of the produce.

Candido chose the social category of 'partners' for his analysis because, while this category represented the "least stable and least cohesive aspect of the social and economic life of rural people" (Candido, 2010, p. 118), it was still rooted in traditional culture – thus allowing for a sociological analysis of the impact of new living conditions on that culture. Traditional structures that characterized such culture involved isolation, land ownership, domestic labour, neighbourly assistance, land availability, and leisure time (p. 108), which were transformed under the new social condition as 'partners', who acquired a standard of living similar to smallholders, gaining higher "social dignity than that of wage earners", though being "in a certain sense, a rural proletarian for limited autonomy, spatial mobility, and atrophy of cultural life, since the *caipira* culture is largely a *neighbourhood culture*" (p. 118, emphasis added).

The concept of the neighbourhood is central to Candido's analysis, which rejects economistic explanations. By 'neighbourhood', the author refers to "[...] a territorial grouping, more or less dense, whose boundaries are defined by residents' participation in mutual aid efforts" (Candido,

2010, p. 87). This bilateral obligation to help and be helped in certain neighbourhood-level activities is intrinsic to the sociability of *caipira* culture and is characterised primarily by the *mutirão* (joint effort). Therefore, what explains sociologically its existence is not merely geographic proximity, but rather a sense of community among residents and cooperation among families. In this sense, the *caipira* family's self-sufficiency can only be understood in the context of neighbourhood sociability, which in turn enabled neighbourhood self-sufficiency. A certain homogeneity expressed through shared material and symbolic practices, such as social gatherings, family organisation, oral literature, agricultural procedures and the equipment used, favoured cultural isolation.

Candido takes the availability of land previous to the transformations of the 1940s and the precarious nature of land titles, rather than some ethnic characteristic stemming from intermarriage with indigenous peoples, as the basis for the *caipira*'s tendency towards mobility – which allowed for the readjustment of their culture, when necessary, for example in cases of inheritance or expulsion. In this sense, Candido (2010, p. 106) defines the typical *caipira* as one "who formed this vast lower stratum of farmers closed off in their cultural life, though often at the mercy of sudden displacements due to irregular land tenure, and dependent on the whims of large landowners to continue their toil". Living with the bare minimum in both basic needs and social life, the *caipiras* – just like their Indigenous ancestors – rejected wage labour, employers and the ways of thinking and working demanded by large sugarcane and coffee plantations. According to Candido, the slaves and European settlers were, therefore, those called upon to fill the roles that the *caipira* could not or would not take on.

Candido says that, at the time of the initial field work, the population consisted of farmers, smallholders, sharecroppers, settlers and wage earners, as well as artisans, merchants and employees. The *aforantes* refused leasehold, a form of partnership involving monetary payment for the use of the land. This type of partnership is more common in regions dominated by entrepreneurs growing larger crops, such as cotton. According to Candido, echoing the logic of the rural folk in justifying their refusal of leasehold and their preference for sharecropping: "in the *aforamento* (partnership), there are equivalent risks and returns for both parties; if the year goes badly, the share follows suit, and vice versa. But with a lease, whether the year is good

or bad, the rent – which is stipulated in advance – does not vary, and this can drive the small farmer to ruin" (Candido, 2010, p. 137). For this reason, the analysed category of rural partner typically used sharecropping (in this case, the partner was not called an *aforante* but rather a sharecropper) and the 20% partnership, in Bofete, comprising part of the universe of *aforantes*, a category that does not own land. However, smallholders, while characterised by land ownership, can also lease land. In other words, one category does not always exclude the other.

In the late 1940s, most of the population consisted of small landowners and sharecroppers, grouped by type of activity, resources, and way of life. One important characteristic that distinguished the region was the smaller gap between farmers, small landowners and sharecroppers. It was far from "resembling the feudal model that had disappeared with the decline of the coffee cycle" (Candido, 2010, p. 139) and that had been unable to structure a hierarchical society as it had occurred in other regions such as the Northeast, which will be analysed next. In Bofete, there was a fairly flat social pyramid in which *caboclos* and immigrants mingled homogeneously. Depending on the neighbourhood researched, Candido mentions Portuguese pioneers who arrived in the region as early as the 19th century, as well as German, Italian, Japanese, Spanish and Syrian-Lebanese immigrants. There were even areas inhabited solely by *caboclos*, who gave way to white *caipiras*, generally blonde and referred to as "diluted mestizos. [...] Few *mulatos*. Black people, very few", what, according to Candido (2010, p. 143), suggests that "the former slave population emigrated, if in fact they ever formed a significant community" in the area. However, the region where he conducted his research – on the farms of Morro de Bofete and Morro Grande – was where most Black people were concentrated.

In 1954, during Candido's second visit to the region – for filling in gaps and testing hypotheses that had arisen while writing his thesis – a new spike in coffee prices led to the increased use of tenant farming on the plantations, significantly altering the context and giving rise to a category known as "*formadores*", "a hybrid category between tenant farmer and partner, since their obligation consists of planting and tending the crop for up to three or four years on the owner's land, where they are free to grow intercropped crops for their own use" (Candido, 2010, p. 138). It was also a time of expansion in livestock farming that involved the

work of the so called "*camaradas*," who were paid monthly, provided with housing, and received other benefits, such as a plot of land on which to grow their own crops.

For example, between 1948 and 1954, Candido notes the end of the economic self-sufficiency regime, with many products being purchased outside the group. This included some items that were previously acquired and prepared at home for the weekly menu, such as lard, coffee, meat and fish. At that second visit, sugar was no longer produced at home, nor was rice hulled there. These changes were interpreted as "a marked increase in dependence, which undermines the autonomy of the neighbourhood group and incorporates it into the commercial system of the cities" (Candido, 2010, p. 178). They began to depend on money to acquire new necessities and "thus a balance was established in which income and expenses took centre stage – elements that had been non-existent in their past lives". In other words, relationships compatible with the modern economy emerged, gradually incorporating them into its sphere (p. 207). This new situation contrasts with the concept of time in the *caipira* culture, which was tied to the rhythm of work – unlike the time of the settler or wage earner, which is based on monthly cash payments. For the *aforante*, "the accounts are settled at the end of the agricultural year, and thirty days mean nothing. The rhythm of life is determined by the day, which marks the alternation between effort and rest; by the week, measured by the 'lunar cycle,' [...] and by the year, which encompasses the growth of seeds and plants" (p. 156). Although the week plays a decisive role in the *caipira*'s leisure and recreation, it is the agricultural year that is "the major and decisive unit of time that defines the course of the *caipira*'s life by determining their economic possibilities and obstacles and setting the direction for the following year" (p. 157). When it comes to meeting new needs, expenses and income become disproportionate. In addition to the requirement to pay rent for the land due to soil degradation resulting from previous monoculture, they needed to put in more effort to cultivate it, a task for which the *caipiras*' rudimentary techniques were often inadequate.

It is worth noting that Candido's work should not be interpreted as a deterministic view of a fate to which everyone was doomed. In fact, the author rejected such views regarding the transformations resulting from the expansion of large-scale commercial estates. He made it clear that his

study presents just one possible explanation for what happened in Bofete. In the 1950s, in addition to a variety of adjustments stemming from new spheres of social relations, based on three social actors with whom he built relationships during his research – Nhô Quim, Nhô Bicudo, and the Gázio brothers – the author identified three possible paths of profound transformation in the *caipira* culture: the *caipira* who completely renounced the traditional way of life, the *caipira* who gave up a modicum of autonomy by becoming a wage earner, and, finally, the *caipira* who, in an attempt to preserve his cultural traits, found himself in a situation of hunger and destitution.

Rural studies in the Northeast and the emergence of graduate programs in Anthropology in Brazil

While Antonio Candido's career and education coincided with the establishment of the undergraduate program in Social Sciences in the 1930s and the launch of graduate programs in Sociology in the mid-1950s at the University of São Paulo, Afrânio Garcia Jr. was part of a team led by Moacir Palmeira at the first Graduate Program in Social Anthropology (PPGAS), established at the National Museum of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ).

In Rio de Janeiro, the undergraduate programme in Social Sciences was established at the National School of Philosophy (FNF) as late as 1947. Founded in 1939,[32] the FNF replaced the former Federal District University, which had opened in 1936 – a situation similar to that discussed above regarding São Paulo. According to Peixoto (2001), Dumas once again served as the intermediary in hiring French scholars for the state, as he had done at USP. However, in Rio de Janeiro, these hires required direct approval from the Vargas administration and a connection to the Church. In sociology, Jacques Lambert was the French scholar who pioneered this exchange.

The case of Rio de Janeiro, in my view, is an excellent example of how the separation between academic disciplines, especially regarding

[32] Other universities also continued to welcome French delegations and establish new programmes. For example, the University of the Federal District (then located in Rio de Janeiro) did so in 1936. For a broader overview, see Peixoto (2001).

peasant studies, does not make much sense in Brazil. A key figure in the establishment of the PPGAS was Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira (1928–2006). He earned a bachelor's degree in philosophy from the University of São Paulo (USP) in 1953, later completing a PhD in sociology under the guidance of Florestan Fernandes at the same institution. His studies of the Tükúna people (Oliveira, 1964/1996) and subsequent career established him as one of the country's most renowned anthropologists. His career at USP and the foreign influences of that time were shaped by the prevailing political climate. Following his advisor's example, when Oliveira took the lead in establishing the graduate programme in anthropology in Rio de Janeiro, he also "welcomed the proximity of sociology [...] or even political science, which was in the process of being established" (Garcia Jr., 2009, p. 412). Moreover, in that political context, it had become urgent to forge a united front in the face of persecution against social scientists.

Moacir Palmeira joined the staff of the National Museum in 1969 at Oliveira's invitation. He had not yet earned his PhD in Sociology but had completed his thesis for the doctoral programme in Sociology at the University of Paris V (Palmeira, 1971). He was invited to participate in a research project led by Roberto Cardoso de Oliveira in partnership with David Maybury-Lewis, titled *Comparative regional development study project*. The project was part of an agreement between the National Museum and Harvard University, with which the British anthropologist was affiliated at the time (Laraia, 2008). Palmeira coordinated the team conducting research in the state of Pernambuco in north-eastern Brazil. A social scientist who graduated from PUC-Rio de Janeiro in 1964, Palmeira's role in consolidating the PPGAS was pivotal not only in training scholars specialised in the Brazilian rural environment who were recognized by their peers, but also in securing funding for field research, fellowships and faculty salaries in the 1970s (Garcia Jr., 2009).

Palmeira's time in Paris is key to understanding the research he conducted with his team, composed of Masters' students under his supervision at the time. Although Pierre Bourdieu did not supervise him,[33] Palmeira attended his seminars in France shortly after the philosopher – recently reconverted to sociology – returned from a stay in Algeria during the independence war

[33] Moacir Palmeira's mentor in Paris was François Bourricaud.

(Pérez, 2022). Palmeira would become a key figure in disseminating the sociologist's ideas within the Brazilian academic community (Rocha, 2022). Besides responding for the first Brazilian translation of a work by Pierre Bourdieu (Rocha, 2022; Bortoluci *et al.*, 2015), he pioneered team research work in Brazil, a defining feature of the French sociologist's early career (Garcia Jr., 2019; Sigaud, 2008). According to Palmeira, who was interested in forming a group to study the sugarcane region, the project was "[...] an opportunity to reflect on the plantation and its transformations, taking into account – in Bourdieu's terms – the entire set of social positions and oppositions present there" (Lopes, 2013, p. 443).

It is worth noting that Afrânio Garcia Jr., Marie-France Garcia Parpet (Klüger & Krohn, 2019) and José Sérgio Leite Lopes (Novaes & Valeriano, 2010) were all economists by training who transitioned to anthropology under Palmeira's guidance. They joined the team for the aforementioned project (Perosa & Gheorghiu, 2018; Garcia Jr., 2009). As Garcia Jr. clearly demonstrates, it was the

> simultaneous presence of favourable conditions for creating the Master's programme in Anthropology (with support from the Ford Foundation, access to field research and engagement with innovative international literature) and the establishment of enduring forms of repression against intellectual activities [that] spurred students to invest heavily in renewing the anthropologist's craft (Garcia Jr., 2009, p. 412).

However, as Garcia Jr. points out, the foreign influences of the United States and France at that time, particularly in terms of social, economic, intellectual and symbolic capital coming from abroad, "[...] could only have an impact once combined with the capital accumulated by Brazilian faculty members and researchers." In this sense, "while the PPGAS certainly cannot be regarded as a belated offspring of the 1930s 'French mission,' neither was it a tropical replica of the Harvard PhD, much less an exclusively indigenous invention" (Garcia Jr., 2009, p. 412).

Like Candido, Afrânio was the son of medical doctors. However, as he noted in an interview with the Romanian sociologist Mihai Dinu Gheorghiu (2018)[34], this did not mean that he came from a more affluent background.

[34] The interview was translated into Portuguese and published in 2020 in REPOCS, 17 (33) (Gheorghiu, 2020).

His father, the eldest son, who had been fatherless since the age of two or three, was able to pursue his studies thanks to the support of priests in Rio de Janeiro and a scholarship. His mother, a widow from the small town of Antônio Prado de Minas in Minas Gerais, moved to Rio de Janeiro in search of her uncle and never returned. Her father and only brother lived as guests in the homes of wealthy people, including doctors and major industrialists. This enabled the family to access good Catholic high schools and provided the father with the opportunity to study medicine and the uncle with the opportunity to study law. With her uncle's[35] support, the mother secured the family's consent to study medicine in Rio de Janeiro after the family's decline following the 1929 crisis. It was there that she met her future husband.[36]

Afrânio Garcia Jr. was born in Rio de Janeiro in 1947. He first travelled to France in 1966, staying with the family of José Sérgio Leite Lopes, whose father – a renowned physicist – was in exile. Having been friends since high school, they both enrolled on the economics programme at the Nanterre Law School, which was the cradle of the May 1968 student movement at the time. They returned to Brazil that same year, completing their studies at the Catholic University of Rio de Janeiro in December 1969. They enrolled on the recently established Social Anthropology programme at the newly established National Museum within the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), partly encouraged by their professor of economics,[37] whose proposal to include them in the doctoral research program – which was still in its early stages – had reportedly been rejected by the university president, who accused them of being communists. Unlike Candido, they had no prior knowledge or reading experience in the field of anthropology and followed the advice not to get lost "in the intricacies of kinship," being accepted at the Museum in 1970 (Gheorghiu, 2018). It was only during their graduate studies at UFRJ that they first encountered classic anthropological works, as

[35] The latter became a diplomat – a career path also pursued by Afrânio Garcia Jr., until it was cut short by his uncle's suicide in 1964, just months after the military coup.

[36] In the same interview, Garcia Jr. conducted a self-analysis which explained why his parents chose to practise medicine in outlying areas or places that were less valued, both symbolically and economically. It also explained the shared perception they both held that hunger was Brazil's main problem. Garcia Sr. worked in remote areas and later became a doctor at a public hospital. His mother pursued a career as a researcher in anatomical pathology.

[37] Professor Isaac Kerstenetzki. According to Garcia Jr. (Gheorghiu, 2020, p. 241), "[...] a liberal and a Tinbergen's doctoral student in the Netherlands, who had excellent knowledge of statistics and econometric models".

well as early texts by Pierre Bourdieu, alongside a wide range of international literature on the peasantry – in particular, Alexander Chayanov, Karl Kautsky, and Jerzy Tepicht, as well as American scholars, particularly Sidney Mintz and Eric Wolf – to name a few of those cited in Afrânio Garcia Jr.'s book presented here.

Afrânio Garcia Jr.'s first experience of working as a researcher in the Northeast was as a research assistant to Palmeira, conducting a survey of farmers' markets in Pernambuco in 1971. Pernambuco, the birthplace of the movement that became known as the Peasants' Leagues, was the scene of the largest peasant mobilisation in the struggle for labour and land rights (Stedile, 2006; Julião, 1968). From then on, Palmeira led a significant group of graduate students whose theses are fundamental to understanding the transformations in rural areas of north-eastern Brazil. Thanks to funding from the Ford Foundation, which ensured the operation of the PPGAS and the research, the team's efforts were divided between the northern and southern Zona da Mata regions of the state of Pernambuco. Key works associated with this first major project include: *Os Clandestinos e os Direitos* and *A Nação dos Homens* by Lygia Sigaud (1979a), *Terra de Trabalho* by Afrânio Garcia Jr. (1983), *Bacurau* by Marie-France Garcia Parpet (1977), *A Morada da Vida* by Beatriz Heredia (1979) and *O Vapor do Diabo* by José Sérgio Leite Lopes (1976).

Thus, in the 1970s, a researchers' team was formed at the National Museum, which distinguished itself for the quality of their work and their collective approach to generating knowledge, as mentioned earlier. At that time, the 'countryside' (as opposed to the city) had no prominent place in academic and political circles (Sigaud, 1992). However, the team led by Palmeira was strongly committed to putting theory to the test. Through direct dialogue with 'real, flesh-and-blood people', they sought to capture the reality of Pernambuco's Zona da Mata region. Meanwhile, some disciples of Roger Bastide and Florestan Fernandes, such as Octavio Ianni and Fernando Henrique Cardoso, were researching the descendants of slaves and their integration into Brazilian society. However, they were perceived as products of 'sociology'. As Garcia Jr. (2009, p. 416) explains, "becoming an anthropologist in the 1960s was almost synonymous with dedicating oneself to the study of a particularly unknown group perceived as 'not integrated' into national society: the Amerindians".

Building on the knowledge gathered in the state of Pernambuco and needing new funding sources to consolidate the PPGAS and ensure the continuity of research at the doctoral level, another collective project was launched titled Employment and Socioeconomic Change in the Northeast (Palmeira, 1977). Funding was obtained from the Brazilian Agency for Studies and Projects Financing (FINEP), the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA), and the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE), which ensured the continued operation of the PPGAS for 25 years.[38]

Based on the hypothesis that changes in the Agreste and Sertão regions were as radical as those in the sugarcane-growing region, each researcher examined different aspects of these changes through the lens of their respective doctoral research, focusing on shifts in the structure of the peasant economy and the nature of prevailing social relations. Through the active collaboration of the entire team, and with special contributions from Afrânio Garcia Jr. and José Sérgio Leite Lopes (who were employed at FINEP at the time), the research region was expanded to include the states of Alagoas (Heredia, 1988) and Paraíba (Garcia Jr., 1989a, 1989b; Garcia Parpet, 1983, 1984).

Here I will focus on the work produced by Afrânio Garcia Jr. during his doctoral studies in Paraíba. As Garcia Jr. explains (Ramiro & Garcia Jr., 2016), the team's broader objective was to identify other sugarcane plantations with significant variations relative to the Pernambuco forest zone, in order to determine whether the issues analysed in Pernambuco were recurrent throughout the Northeast region. Through this anthropological search for invariants, they perceived that terms such as 'freed people' and 'subject people', regarded as 'outdated' in the neighbouring state, were still explanatory categories in Paraíba and could be analysed in greater depth through ethnographic research. This research culminated in his doctoral thesis, which he defended in 1983. Following a revision carried out during his postdoctoral studies – supervised by Pierre Bourdieu between 1983 and 1986 – certain distinctions emerged in the chapter structure and emphasis, in the Brazilian edition of *O Sul: o caminho do roçado: estratégias de reprodução camponesa e transformação social* (1989a) and its French

[38] For more information on the history of the projects and the researchers' careers, see the "Trajetórias" project, available on the Memov website, coordinated by José Sérgio Leite Lopes: <memov.org/site/>

version, *Libres et Assujettis: marché du travail et modes de domination au Nordeste* (1989b). It is worth noting, however, that the quality of the works produced by the group of researchers at the National Museum would likely not have been achieved without the constant exchange of ideas among the individual research projects. For example, Afrânio's research engages intensively with the findings of other team members, and he even co-authored some articles while they were still conducting their research, as was the case with the article co-authored with Heredia (1971), titled "Trabalho familiar e campesinato" (Family labour and peasantry)[39] In addition, research conducted in Brazil has reached an international level, with publications in renowned foreign journals (Garcia Jr., 1986a, 1986b, 1993a; Garcia Jr. & Garcia Parpet, 2023; Leite Lopes & Alvim, 1993; Leite Lopes, 1991; Alvim & Leite Lopes, 1990). This includes the special issue *Droit, Politique, Espace Agraire au Brésil*, organised by Afrânio Garcia Jr. and published in the journal *Études Rurales* (1993b), to which several colleagues from the National Museum team – supervised by Palmeira in their research in the Northeast region – contributed.

Freed people and subject people: The social reproduction of a threatened peasantry in Paraíba

Like Antonio Candido, Afrânio Garcia Jr. does not view rural and urban areas as opposing spaces. Focusing on the issues of his time, which arose from urbanisation and profound social transformations, he analysed the circumstances faced by small farmers in the Northeast. His central thesis – which did not go unnoticed, though not disturbing those who followed the paradigm of his time deeply concerned with the proletarianization of the peasantry and the possibility (or lack thereof) of creating a class consciousness destined to spark a revolution at the height of the capitalist system, a necessary evil, as predicted by Marx — demonstrated that "[...] the growth of the industrial labour market was not preceded by the elimination of personalised forms of domination in the countryside, characteristic of plantation areas such

[39] Years later, the collaboration resumed for the writing of the article "Campesinato, família e diversidade de explorações agrícolas no Brasil" (Peasantry, family and diversity in Brazilian farming) (Garcia Jr. & Heredia, 2009).

as the sugar and coffee-growing regions" (Garcia Jr., 1989a, p. 11). However, while Candido chose the *aforante caipira* – "old *paulista* rural folk of the lower classes" (Candido, 2010, p. 46), a free man who "rejected slavery and later serfdom" (p. 105) – as the primary informant for his research, Garcia Jr. relied on those who identified themselves as farmers. At that time, this category was used to identify those responsible for small and medium-sized farms, whether being landowners or not, as a way to map the social landscape.

While, in Candido, coffee plantations were perceived as scars, in Garcia Jr.'s work they were still part of everyday life in north-eastern Brazil, alongside sugarcane fields and mills that were operating at full capacity thanks to heavy government subsidies during the military dictatorship, particularly in the late 1970s and early 1980s. The chosen location was Brejo, a region in the state of Paraíba where various monoculture crops (coffee, agave, cotton and sugarcane) were present, with one or the other prevailing at different times. At the time of his field research, which included stays at various points in the agricultural cycle and in different years (1976, 1977, and 1982),[40] Areia, the municipality where Garcia stayed, was home to the headquarters of the Santa Maria sugar mill, established in 1931 (Soffiati & Ramiro, 2024).

While, since the 1950s, other researchers were consolidating the subfield of a sociology and anthropology categorised as 'urban' – in which the interest in rural culture was essentially focused on interpreting how such populations adapted to the urban environment, as was the case, for example, with Eunice Durham[41] (1973) – Garcia Jr. took a different approach. He rejected the notion of homogeneity in the goals of northeasterners heading towards the labour market in the Southeast, particularly in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. He rejected the explanatory trend of the time that the return to one's region of origin was a sign of failure in one's endeavour. Garcia Jr.'s aim was "to examine the multiple effects of migration on those who leave and those who remain and on the relationships both groups maintain with their social space of origin" (Garcia Jr., 1989a, p. 13). Through this line of

[40] The first stay took place from July to September 1976; the second, from February to March 1977; and the last, from January to February 1982 (Garcia Jr., 1989a, p. 13).

[41] She was a Florestan's student during her undergraduate and Masters' studies, under the guidance of Egon Schaden. She was part of the first cohort of anthropologists to graduate from USP. Schaden (1913–1991) held a degree in philosophy and subsequently became an assistant to the German anthropologist Emílio Willems. He succeeded Willems as chair in 1949 when the latter moved to the United States. Schaden played a central role in establishing the Revista de Antropologia, in 1953.

inquiry, Garcia Jr. demonstrated that, for many, leaving for the South was a strategy to reproduce their peasant status in their place of origin rather than a path to permanent proletarianisation. In this sense, migration was a way for them to return with the means to invest in property, lease land and purchase livestock, thus enabling them to form marital bonds with someone from their region of origin.

Since the 1950s, structural transformations in the country had been mobilising differently social actors from different regions and positions. In the Brejo region of Paraíba, the late 1970s marked a period of competition for control over physical space amid the significant expansion of sugar mills. Field research revealed a context of decline in the traditional, personalised form of domination that prevailed in the so called 'condition for dwelling', strongly shaken by the combined effect of three factors: competition in the national and international sugar markets, growing awareness of labour rights, belatedly won by agricultural workers, which finally placed them[42] on equal footing with factory workers, and the opening of new employment opportunities, albeit in the distant industrial market of the Southeast. These factors resulted in the mass expulsion of residents, for whom there was no single predetermined outcome concerning the course history would take. However, the path adopted under the auspices of the ruling classes sought to normalise the idea of capitalism's inexorable advance, which would leave no opportunity for former residents to become free farmers. According to Garcia Jr. (1989a, p. 211), by merely altering the form of domination, "they transform their former residents into wage labourers 'without a home or a place to call their own.'"

It is worth noting that, in northeastern sugarcane-growing regions, the term *morada* (dwelling) should be understood as a social category that goes beyond the common-sense meaning of "dwelling." As outlined by Palmeira (2009), more than seeking a job, what the worker looks for is a *casa de morada* (dwelling house) to provide for their livelihood and the opportunity to enjoy the farm. An opportunity that is accessible to only a few; the 'resident with a plot' is the ideal type of resident, who enjoys slightly more 'privileges' and demonstrates greater loyalty to the employer.

[42] Rural workers would gain their first legislation specifically tailored to their category twenty years after the 1943 Consolidation of Labor Laws (CLT), through the enactment of the Rural Workers' Statute, Law No. 4,214, during the administration of João Goulart.

For example, they are the only ones in the 'resident' category authorised to plant fruit trees – a privilege denied to most residents – because it serves as proof of a more permanent connection to the place. The trade-off for the house, however, does not depend on the resident's status (resident without a plot, resident with a plot or tenant farmer[43]) – they are all *moradores de condição* (conditional residents); that is to say, their trade-off for the house consists of hard labour and loyalty to the landowner. Indeed, the 'condition for dwelling' has been nothing more than a "pretext for inaugurating a new form of servitude"; after all, even though being paid, they were not masters of their own time or that of their families.

Whereas before the decline of personalised domination, the immobilisation of the labour force allowed residents to move from one sugar mill to another – in the historical context of the growing power of mill owners –, the expulsion of residents and the prohibition against seeking new housing became strategies adopted to reduce labour costs and maximise the use of land for sugarcane cultivation, which came to occupy all available planting space. As the mill owner's power grew and personalized domination declined, a mass expulsion of workers from the estates took place. However, as the author insightfully demonstrates throughout the book, there was no predetermined fate for residents who left the mill lands: they could either become wage labourers on the sugar plantations, in which case they could become *alugados* or *fichados*, depending on holding a formal employment contract or not and on the type of working day, or become small-scale farmers and/or merchants, a category that began to participate in local markets, selling their own produce or that of others. Being a hired worker (*alugado*) meant having no employment contract; those who sold their labour to others did so according to their needs. This arrangement was designed to reduce the exploitation of the domestic labour force, serving as an alternative during times of scarcity in the life cycle – due to the gender or age of family members – to meet the demands of agricultural work. Working as a hired labourer did not preclude the possibility of also being a smallholder or tenant farmer, and the same person could fulfil more than one role simultaneously.

After attempting to interview some residents in the Brejo region of Paraíba, Garcia Jr. realised that, although they wanted to talk to the

[43] Someone who receives land and pays for it.

researchers, they would immediately withdraw; after all, they could not do so without permission of their employer. As the field research progressed, he observed that the categories *sujeitos* (subject people) and *libertos* (freed people) were used to understand the social space and applied differently depending on the speaker's position – without overlooking the matter of how the researcher was perceived in the field. After all, as Garcia himself states: "We know fully well that what is said is directly related to whom it is said and when it is said" (Garcia Jr., 1989a, p. 31), this latter being also directly related to the life cycle of the family group. This demonstrates how the category 'agriculture' revealed the contours of different economic enterprises, and how, in the case of Paraíba – unlike in Pernambuco – the subjugation of the social category known as 'residents' still prevailed. Therefore, while expressions appearing in testimonies collected in neighbouring states served as an explanatory reference to the recent past (Sigaud, 1979b; Garcia Jr., 1983; Heredia, 1979), in Paraíba they represented the present. This allowed the ethnographic research to adopt a comparative perspective, drawing on constant dialogue with studies produced during the implementation of the first collective project (Ramiro & Garcia Jr., 2018).

The opposition between 'subject people' and 'freed people' is indicative of a social universe characterised by different meanings of 'land' – such as plantation land versus agricultural land – as well as between farmland of the poor and farmland of the rich. The latter prevents residents from planting perennial crops, such as cassava, in the *roçados* (small plots of land allocated to residents as part of the moral agreement between the plantation owner and the resident). This situation shows that subjugation occurs both through subordination of the domestic group and through subordination of the products of their labour, even if this is felt with less intensity than the subjection of the family's bodies and time. In sociological terms, plantation lands are more than just sites for monoculture farming; they are "areas where crops are cultivated by workers personally subject to the owner of the land on which they live and work, and who are commonly referred to as 'residents' – a privileged stage of subjugation" (Garcia Jr., 1989a, p. 25). Therefore, for the lower social strata, it was the place of residence, whether inside or outside the sugar mills, that determined whether they were subject to subjugation or had the status of freed people. For the local agrarian elite, however, becoming mere suppliers of sugarcane to the owner of the sugar

mill turned some *senhores de engenho* (lords of mill) into captives. As Garcia Jr. (1989a, p. 259) states, "the use of the opposition between freed people and subject people does not refer solely to individual strategies but rather denotes the social composition and dynamics of social relations in specific physical spaces."

Afrânio Garcia Jr.'s keen listening skills enable him to unravel the different aspects of the social reality he encounters. In the phrase that serves as the book's title, he states that the South – a term he primarily uses to refer to the states of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo – was the path to the *roçado* for many people from Paraíba. The South was a place that appeared on the horizon of possibilities for earning a living through labour. For residents, this meant escaping subjugation, while for small farmers it was a means of securing their status as freed people. Such migrations could result in either total and irreversible proletarianisation or the accumulation of resources for a later return as a farmer and/or merchant.

It is important to note that defining farmers as the central category of analysis did not mean synthesising or merely systematising the statements of the interviewed social agents. Rather, it involved careful analysis based on these statements, aligning the "reference theory and the concrete discourse of the social agents' statements and attitudes" (Garcia Jr., 1989a, p. 23). Among the various meanings of the term 'agriculture', the author is primarily concerned with revealing the significance of apparent paradoxes. After all, "the tendency to universalise individual situations is quite common, but the statements they contain gain all the more meaning the more we can objectify the social position of the speaker" (p. 171). It is also worth noting that this focus did not mean neglecting informal conversations or conducting semi-structured interviews with other categories of workers, including large landowners, residents of large estates, merchants, and others, which provided a better understanding of issues addressed by small-scale producers, albeit outside the scope of their own practices.

The author highlights the importance of not being confined by existing concepts and categories, which often prevent us from 'listening to what we are hearing', [44] as was the case with wage labour and the category wage/commercial relation. His research reveals that the wage is not always synonymous with wage labour. The prevailing view was that labour

[44] For more on the stages of knowledge construction in the social sciences, I recommend reading Oliveira (2000).

would be the only commodity left to the free persons, owners of their own person, who, in selling their labour capacity could sell only their own body, not the product of their labour. However, Afrânio Garcia Jr.'s analyses of the farmers' social reality refute these two premises. Through empirical case studies, he demonstrates that peasant production can be commercial production without necessarily being capitalist production. Furthermore, Garcia Jr. shows that, in the case of *moradores* (residents), labour is not wholly transformed into a commodity, as they remain subject to landowners even though receiving wages.

In the words of Garcia Jr. (1989a, p. 26), "the core of the debate on peasant economic differentiation is centred in the salaried labour that reached the heart of the peasantry subordinated to capitalist development." In this sense, the concept of the labour market becomes central to Garcia Jr.'s work, alongside the empirical demonstration that "the peasantry is not an obstacle to capitalist development" (p. 27). By rejecting any deterministic view of a peasantry on the verge of disappearance through proletarianisation, the author sought to "identify the precise determinants of the material underpinning that explain why and how one of the movements at play, one of the forces present, becomes dominant" (p. 27). Therefore, the analysis of the heterogeneity of social forces and their relationships shows readers "the conditions for the emergence of a peasantry that is born free and distinct, yet already under threat" (p. 27) and "inexorably refutes the idea of 'a single linear trajectory of the historical process'" (p. 30).

Regarding the analysed region, strategies for the reproduction or social reconversion of the dominant class were identified, depending on how the family's land assets were used. These assets could be redirected towards other interests, often through high-level educational investments in the children, which would change the direction of the family business in their generation. For those who retained their land, two economic possibilities beyond mere speculation were identified. One scenario involved planting sugarcane crops, which meant subjugation to the sugar mill owner at the height of the mill's operations. The other scenario focused on livestock farming, which was subsidised and encouraged by the state at the time. The key point was the realisation that, once the structure of domination underpinning the sugarcane latifundium was shaken, it was up to the agrarian elite to find

new strategies that would guarantee their social reproduction – that is, their continued position of superiority – while precluding any possibility of upward mobility for agricultural workers. However, resuming the question of the inexorable fates, not all of those who abandoned their status as residents became wage labourers on the plantations or even in the south of the country. For some, it meant becoming small-scale farmers and/or merchants, albeit with some family members temporarily migrating to the South. Some combined agriculture and business with animal husbandry, becoming a stronger kind of farmer. This diversity could only be fully grasped by a perspective firmly grounded in theory.

Another important aspect to highlight in *O Sul: caminho do roçado* is the relational dimension of the interplay of forces among social actors in different positions. This is introduced in a highly innovative way in Afrânio Garcia Jr.'s thesis, which devotes an entire chapter to the ruling classes. According to the author, observing from a relational perspective, he noticed something far from "[...] a process that pits two forces against one another, operating in a social vacuum. What happens to each and to both is linked to what happens to the truly dominant groups – the large landowners" (Garcia Jr., 1989a, p. 266). Furthermore, in this competition for the appropriation of space, what happens in rural areas shapes the social composition of the expanding urban space, both through the formation of *pontas-de-rua*[45] to which residents expelled from the sugar mills migrate and through the growth of markets and businesses.

In short, the book shows that moving to the south of the country could be the conceived solution to the challenges facing agricultural production and has served as a viable alternative for many in the Northeast to secure or even expand their wealth. The city and the countryside, those who leave and those who stay, these are two sides of the same coin that enable small farmers to remain in Paraíba, albeit in quite different situations depending on each family group's trajectories and social circumstances, as well as its respective life cycle.

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[45] *Ponta-de-rua* is a residential neighbourhood mostly occupied by a proletarian population whose absolute majority is composed of salaried and seasonal rural workers (Grabois, José. !999. Que urbano é esse? O habitat num espaço de transição do norte Pernambucano. *Estudos Avançados*, 13(36), 79-103). (Translator's note)

Concluding remarks

In this article, I sought to demonstrate that although reflecting on 'the rural' in sociology involves analysing the international exchange and circulation of ideas, this has not meant a passive acceptance and incorporation of what was coming from abroad. To illustrate this point, I provided concrete examples of two historically situated studies conducted in the São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro regions, by Antônio Candido and Afrânio Garcia Jr. What I exposed was the consolidation of studies that creatively and singularly put theory to the test by empirically applying it to the social groups that the researchers sought to interpret. Without detaching the works from their contexts, I argue that Antonio Candido's pioneering research on the *caipiras* of Bofete, submitted at USP in the 1950s, and Afrânio Garcia Jr.'s thesis, written under the supervision of Moacir Palmeira in collaboration with a group of researchers from the National Museum, remain fundamental milestones for understanding Brazilian realities in their diverse historical contexts even today.

Both authors focused on interpreting the transformations of a peasantry that resisted (and still resists) the advance of capitalism in Brazil. Garcia Jr. (1989a, p. 27) aimed to "examine more deeply the conditions surrounding the emergence of a free and differentiated peasantry", which had already begun to emerge under threat during the decline of the *morada* system in the Northeast. In contrast, Antônio Candido (2010, p. 220) questioned whether the peasant economy could resist "amid its constantly threatened reproduction" or if this would merely be another phase of adaptation.

The key point was that social transformations during the periods covered by the studies affected different groups of people in different ways. However, as the two studies clearly demonstrated, the experiences of the working classes were linked to the advances or setbacks of the ruling classes. The cases described here – the decline of the coffee cycle in São Paulo in the late 1920s, and the expansion of sugarcane cultivation in the Northeast in the 1970s – revealed important insights into the possible and empirically proven ways of adaption by *caipiras* in São Paulo state's countryside and small farmers in Paraíba's Agreste region.

Recognising that, during the first half of the last century the plantations, more than the basic unit of an agroindustrial process, were the matrix of

sociability in the rural world (Garcia Jr., 2003), Antônio Candido and Afrânio Garcia Jr.'s research focused on segments of the rural population occupying the lowest rungs of the social hierarchy, albeit through quite distinct social categories. They discuss the multitude of pathways for transforming rural structures, through which more egalitarian arrangements could replace the Master's houses and slave quarters, until then this had not yet been the case.

Whether during periods of decline, as analysed by Candido, or of expansion, as shown in Afrânio Garcia Jr.'s research, with the plantation system driving these transformations, a free peasantry emerged in both regions, though often living on the bare minimum. In the area formerly occupied by São Paulo's coffee latifundia, a type of "malnourished hunter, master of his own destiny thanks to a precarious independence from poverty" (Candido, 2010, p. 107) persists – one who rejected slavery and, subsequently, serfdom; and, on the lands occupied by sugarcane plantations in the Northeast, a worker whose liberation from servitude – although placing him in a new position as a freed person – failed to guarantee decent living conditions, what meant, for many, impoverishment in rural or urban areas.

Reading these authors reminds us that people are classified, for heuristic purposes, based on the researcher's objectives. Often, the constructed categories are neither mutually exclusive nor fixed. As we saw in Candido, for example, the *aforante* may be a landless person, yet also a smallholder; in Afrânio, a subject farmer may become a freed person or vice versa, depending on the circumstances at each moment experienced. Both show analytical ability free from the constraints of specialisations that would limit the interpretive potential regarding both the objects and the involved social sciences areas, by drawing, each in their own way, on a diverse selection of theories combined with different methods as required by the research problems posed by the authors and the selected objects of study. Such theoretical and methodological diversity never lacks a well-defined purpose, never appears as a mere display of accumulated knowledge. In this sense, researching the rural means "studying cases, selecting and examining constructed objects," just as in any well-conducted social science – after all, the selections refer to the disciplines and not the reality itself (Bourdieu *et al.*, 2010).

Anyone expecting to read this article as a manual for conducting research in rural settings, to be followed to the letter, will be disappointed. Here, I hope to have demonstrated that good research is constructed seriously and creatively, guided by its own research problems and situated within historical academic contexts. The most appropriate theories and methods are those that can address our research problems without forcing the subject matter into the theory at any cost. As Afrânio Garcia Jr. (1989a, p. 266) states at the end of his book, "a privileged point of view proves its effectiveness through the relevance of the results it manages to establish. Science does not thrive on the discussion of each's territory, but rather on the work each has done." Neither of the two studies proposes a model to be followed. As Santos (2002, p. 34) aptly described, "[...] Candido does not give lessons, but reveals possible paths." The same undoubtedly applies to Afrânio Garcia Jr.

This institutional contextualisation of each author was necessary because, as Bourdieu (2019, p. 79) states, "it is impossible to have a proper understanding of the stakes of the scientific games of the past unless one realizes that the past of science is a stake in present-day scientific struggles." In the case of Antonio Candido, his ultimate shift to the field of literature, despite drawing heavily on his time in the social sciences (Pontes, 2001), means that he did not mentor a generation of sociology students. Nevertheless, he continues to influence new research not only regarding the *caipira* culture (Queiroz, 1973; Brandão, 1995, 1983) but also the profound transformations of the peasantry in the country, as well as its links to the setbacks and advances of the plantations.

On the other hand, Afrânio Garcia Jr.'s work engages with a variety of themes concerning Brazilian society that transcend the false rural/urban dichotomy. It explores the relational dimension of the interplay of forces among social actors in different positions and draws attention to the need to address the ruling classes, their strategies of social reproduction, and their forms of domination. Following his time at UFRJ, Garcia pursued a career at the renowned École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales (EHESS) in Paris. His time abroad was not merely a continuation of his research and exploration of diverse topics, but also notable for his efforts[46] to welcome as many students and researchers as possible, playing an indispensable

[46] Among the topics addressed by the researcher are the international mobility of Brazilian intellectual elites and the transformation of the agrarian elites.

role in national research. The influence of the book *O Sul: caminho do roçado* on research into migration from the Northeast to the Southeast, as conducted by Marilda Aparecida de Menezes (2020, 2002), is undeniable, as is its influence on other authors who have studied agrarian elites, such as Piccin (2015), who wrote about the rural patronage system in Rio Grande do Sul. Furthermore, Afrânio Garcia Jr. was an active researcher on the project Reconfigurations of the social space of the Brejo region of Paraíba in the 21st century (Ramiro, 2021), which updates research in the same region where he earned his doctorate – in a context that would have been unthinkable at the time of his dissertation.

In short, these studies endure not only through the works they produced and their central role in the genuine accumulation of knowledge – that must always engage with the authors who preceded us – but also in the education of new generations engaged with similar issues. I argue that these works should continue to be read and re-read by anyone wishing to understand the current reconfigurations and their discontinuities and continuities regarding of our colonial past, as well as to gain inspiration to creatively, critically and rigorously advance knowledge on rural-urban relations and the gaps between established social categories.

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