Religious Nationalism in Brazil

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RELIGIOUS NATIONALISM IN BRAZIL

- Religion, Modernity and Anthropology
- "Religious" and "Secular"
- Religion and Nation Building
- Religion in Brazil
- Brazil’s 2018 Presidential Election
  - Evangelicals and Politics in Brazil
- Public Religion
- Religious Nationalism
- "Evangelical" Nationalism?
- "Secular" Nationalism?
RELIGION, MODERNITY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

- Anthropology and the study of the "human mind"
- Magic, Religion and Science
- Cultural Evolutionism
- Cultural Relativism
- Modernity and secularization
- Secularization
  - the end of institutional connections between the State and the Christian Church
  - the end of religion
For anthropologists, “religion” is not something given, but it’s a category that has to be explained, that changes, that has a history, even a history inside Anthropology itself.

Durkheim - “The elementary forms of religious life” (1912)
- ”Religion is an eminently social thing”.
- Religious beliefs - a classification of the real or ideal things that men conceive into two classes—two opposite genera— profane and sacred
- Religion has to do with social unity, cohesion, and collectivity. To talk about religion is to talk about society itself.
"RELIGIOUS" AND "SECULAR"

- Religion in a Modern Age

- New questions about the relation between religion and modernity had to be formulated

- Talal Asad - Books:
  - Genealogies of Religion (1993)
"RELIGIOUS" AND "SECULAR"

- How “religion” is being defined in this context, and in opposition to what?

- “Religion” is not a “thing” we know, but a category in constant movement

- **Talal Asad**: The anthropological concept of religion was forged by the Christian reference of Anthropology and its national contexts of emergence.

- **Cult / Sect x Religion**
- Religion has been a key element in the process of nation building around the world

- Religion: Identity, Culture, ”People”, Moral, Nationality

- Every so called national religion has been primarily imposed by authoritarian powers

- There’s not such a thing as a peaceful religious past that precedes a conflicted religious present

- There are usually positions that sustains their nationalistic ideas upon religious basis, and from their own specific position they define their “religious others” – those that accused of putting the nation at risk, and against which the “nation” has to defend itself
RELIGION IN BRAZIL: Catholicism

"The first mass"
Victor Meirelles - 1860
RELIGION IN BRAZIL: Catholic missions
RELIGION IN BRAZIL: Indigenous religions
RELIGION IN BRAZIL: Afro-Brazilian religions

Candomblé

Pierre Verger (1902-1966)
RELIGION IN BRAZIL: Catholicism
RELIGION IN BRAZIL: Catholicism and culture
RELIGION IN BRAZIL: Catholicism and the ”secular”
RELIGION IN BRAZIL: Protestantism

Anglican Church – 1811

Lutheran Church – 1824

Congregational Churches – 1855

Presbyterian Churches – 1859

Baptist Church – 1871

Adventist Church – 1890
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wave</th>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Churches</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First wave</td>
<td>1910s</td>
<td>Christian Congregation (1910)</td>
<td>Pentecostalism’s origin and international expansion. The initial reception in Brazil is limited</td>
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<td>Assemblies of God (1911)</td>
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<td>Second wave</td>
<td>1950s and early 1960s</td>
<td>Church of the Four-Square Gospel (1951)</td>
<td>Urbanization and mass society, especially in São Paulo, make possible a form of Pentecostalism which breaks with existing models</td>
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<td>- São Paulo -</td>
<td>Brazil for Christ (1955)</td>
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<td>God is Love (1962)</td>
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<td>Third wave</td>
<td>late 1970s and 1980s</td>
<td>Universal Church of the Kingdom of God (1977)</td>
<td>After the authoritarian modernization of the country, especially in communications, when over two-thirds of the population are urbanized, the economic ‘miracle’ is over and the ‘lost decade’ of the 1980s is beginning</td>
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RELIGION IN BRAZIL: “Evangelicals”

- Since the 90’s the number of evangelicals are growing in significant ways in Brazil. Evangelicals are nowadays 30% of the Brazilian population, with an important concentration in urban areas and urban peripheries.

- As time goes by, the image of Brazil as a Catholic country is not as strong as it used to be, and some evangelical groups are claiming an evangelical nationalism as a way of establishing their belonging to the country.
Em campanha, Bolsonaro exibiu imagem de Nossa Senhora em sua casa; esposa mandou tirar peças católicas do Alvorada

Evangélica, Michelle Bolsonaro mandou retirar um par de anjos barrocos tocheiros e quatro estátuas de santos nas salas do Palácio da Alvorada, para onde a família se muda em janeiro.
BRASIL ACIMA DE TUDO, DEUS ACIMA DE TODOS.”

Jair Bolsonaro
We will gather evangelical leaders so that we can pray to rid Brazil of chaos, social disgrace, expose this whole corruption and bring the days of peace and prosperity back. Each leader has the right to speak what he or she wants: both to ask for prayer and to talk about government. I will criticize vehemently the current government. But the act itself is not to be for or against the government – Pastor Silas Malafaia
March for Jesus
March for Jesus - Rio de Janeiro 2018
- De-privatization of religion - new global trend across all religious traditions and in all regions of the world

- The de-privatization of religion does not need to be interpreted necessarily as an anti-modern, anti-secular or an anti-democratic reaction

- Public religion is a religion which has, assumes or tries to assume a public character, function or role:
  - State level
  - Political Society
  - Civil Society
- Religion, Secularism and Democracy

- Nor the presence of a public religion necessary leads to undemocratic practices, neither secular positions are always democratic
Damares Alves - Minister of Women, Family and Human Rights
Religious nationalism is the relationship of nationalism and an idea of “nation” to a particular religion.

- Politicization of religion and the influence of religion on politics.

Religious Nationalism - Juergensmeyer (1996):
- Ethnic
- Ideological

If the **ethnic approach to religious nationalism politicizes religion** by employing religious identities for political ends, an **ideological approach to religious nationalism does the opposite**: It *religionizes* politics.
“EVANGELICAL” NATIONALISM?

- “Evangelical” religious nationalism is showing itself much more inclusive. If publicly it seems like a protestant action, in the backstage it’s joining many Catholic groups and leaders. **A Christian Nationalism?**

- Evangelical political practices with nationalistic horizons in Brazil are a tense articulation of groups with conflictive historical background regarding religious and political issues. To interpret it as a homogeneous movement is sometimes to do more than they are actually being able to do.

- What’s the opposition to a religious nationalism? **Can we define a “secular” nationalism?**
Juergensmeyer (2010): “The idea of secular nationalism is a fairly recent invention. It appears as the ideological ally of the new idea - the nation state - that appears in England and America in the eighteenth century.

Juergensmeyer (2010): “Secular nationalism is an ineffective and insufficient expression of public values and moral community in a global era in which traditional forms of social identity and political accountability are radically transformed. Religious violence is an expression of this anti-secular protest and the symptom of a longing for a renewed sense of morality and values in public life”.
THANKS!

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References (in order of appearance):

- **Durkheim, Emile. (1912).** The Elementary Forms of Religious Life (see publishers).
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