

Editorial / Editorial

We dedicate this edition of the journal to Benedict Anderson, who died on December 13, 2015. One of the most notable personalities in the field of Political Science and International Relations, and author of the classic “Imagined Communities” - a reference in the specialized literature on nationalities, Anderson was a member of World Tensions’ Advisory Board for 10 years. His last visit to Fortaleza took place in mid-August 2015, when he participated in the International Symposium “Nation, literature and transcontinental experiences”, at the State University of Ceará, and released his latest work, “Under Three flags: anarchism and anticolonial imagination”. The book deals with the complex interactions between politics and culture at the end of the 19th century, within the context of the anarchist movement. The national uprisings in Cuba (1895) and in the Philippines (1896) show the processes that enabled the creation of a transglobal coordination of anti-colonial struggles, as well as the links between political activists in different continents. Ben, as he liked to be called, had and still continues to have, a profound influence on those who devote themselves to the studies of the nation.

During the International Symposium, Luis Claudio Villafañe presented his ideas about the formation of the national sentiment in Argentina and Brazil. The presentation originated the article now published, in which the central argument is the otherness as a key element in the construction of national identity. Thus, for the author, the Brazilian nationality is based on its differences – real or imagined – with neighbor countries, in particular those in the region of the Río de la Plata, where contacts and exchanges were more intense. In this context, Argentina plays an important role as a counterpoint of Brazilian nationality. Relations, either of conflict or cooperation, reinforce the identities of the two nations that, in 1991, gave the first steps towards the creation of MERCOSUR. Despite the difficulties, regional integration initiatives can generate

cooperation mechanisms, so that divergent interests tend to be resolved as interdependence prevails over competition.

Continuing the debate on this topic, Jamile Tajra shares her academic studies about the MERCOSUR Parliament, during the period between 2007 and 2014. Her approach focuses on a current issue: regional representation and South-American citizenship. The meaning of citizenship within societies of MERCOSUR member-states is based on free movement of persons in the region; equal rights and civil, social, cultural and economic liberties; as well as equal conditions for access to work, health care and education. The author concludes that the actions of Parlasur prioritize civil rights, such as free professional mobility, instead of social rights, revealing the priority given to commercial relations in South American integration.

The next two articles were written by young professors from the National University of the Austral Patagonia who investigate the meanings of ideas about the nation in the narratives of oil workers and their families. Luperti Aylem and Cristina Cabrera examine women's experiences, from interviews with the wives of Yacimientos Petroliferos Fiscales workers - YPF. Their goal is to contribute to a better understanding of the representations of the Nation-State from a gender perspective, taking as a reference the concepts formulated by Renan and Anderson. The article reveals the perception of the company as "one big family" that governs the public and private life of women. In other words, the legitimacy of the Nation-State is guaranteed by relations of power between genders.

The links between nation and labor form the basis of the research by Milton Riquelme about the oil industry in Patagonia, Argentina. Based on the life story of an employee who worked for 25 years in YPF, the author analyzes the transformations caused by its privatization and subsequent nationalization. For this purpose, he uses Marx and Althusser as references, as well as the anthropological concept of discontinuity. The examination of changes in working conditions under neoliberalism clarifies the recent history of Argentina and its main source of energy, as an essential factor to build national sovereignty. This is a relevant discussion at a time

when oil reserves in both countries, Argentina and Brazil, which exercise leadership within MERCOSUR, are the target of international greed, in particular from the United States.

Dissatisfied with the interests of Latin American governments that seek development alternatives, the Empire persists in its efforts to renew the long lasting intervention in the Continent. Daniel Zirker focuses on the specific case of Brazil and remembers the book by Jan Black, published in 1977, which described the astute strategies for “foreign penetration”. He also looks into confidential State Department documents, which indicate the direct US interference in Brazilian foreign and domestic policy. Published by Wikileaks in 2010 and 2011, under the title “Cablegate”, these cables were widely disseminated by social media and newspapers during the following years.

The bloody conflicts in Syria and Chechnya are occupying most of the international news. If the mainstream media, on one hand, highlights the performance of the United States as a champion of democracy, on the other hand it omits the complex relationships between Russia and the regions that were part of the former Soviet Union. Miroslav Hroch noted that Westerners tend to see changes in the region as impositions from Moscow, and consider the post-Communist countries as being dominated by a destructive form of nationalism. In order to explore these issues, Diego Pautasso, Gabriel Adam and Bruno Lima analyze Russia’s foreign policy in relation to the Syria crisis, after the so-called 2011 Arab spring; Marcos Ferreira and Miguel Hannes show how the Russian State under Putin’s Presidency acts to ensure stability in the political system, in a region with strong separatist forces, as in Chechnya. With distinct visions, both articles discuss current phenomena: insurgency, Islamic fundamentalism and separatism.

The concept of democracy involves values, norms, attitudes and practices that organize life in society. Ricardino Teixeira makes a thorough exposition of the theoretical schools combined under the title of representative democracy and participatory democracy. His article challenges us to think about the African democratic process amid tensions of all kinds. The liberal model of democracy, globalization, and the climate crisis exposed by John Urt explores the role

of indigenous peoples as non-State actors. These three elements, in spite of their limitations, as the author recognizes, contribute to the beginning of a dialogue with the protagonists seeking emancipation.

We close this issue with a study that addresses a crucial factor for the consolidation of national feelings and languages: the novel. Manuela Barros and Erotilde Honório focus on contemporary and sentimental novels, which are popular in more than 114 cultural markets in the world, including Brazil. The success of the Girls' Library Collection with middle class readers in the period between 1930 and 1960 is the object of the authors' sociological reflections. They argue that the romantic images presented in this Collection have strengthened the ethos of a patriarchal and authoritarian society.

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The editors