



Migration, race, and the regional issue in Brazil: a reading of Giralda Seyferth's contribution

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Resumo

O objetivo desse artigo é analisar a atualidade da contribuição de Giralda Seyferth aos estudos sobre migração e raça em sua relação com a questão regional no Brasil. Giralda Seyferth (1943-2017) foi historiadora e antropóloga e se dedicou aos estudos sobre colonização, campesinato, imigração, nacionalismo e racismo. Quanto ao método, recorremos à pesquisa bibliográfica, com uma análise das publicações da autora sobre os temas migração, raça e desenvolvimento regional. Na leitura de sua obra é possível identificar, na construção das regiões Norte e Sul do Brasil, no século XIX, a diferenciação entre os *nacionais* e os *alienígenas*, e o racismo intrínseco ao processo migratório estimulado na região Sul. Na formação do Brasil, é possível constatar como a produção das diferenças regionais se deu a partir dos diversos ciclos do capitalismo periférico brasileiro e da funcionalidade da escravização de africanos e africanas e da imigração alemã ao capital. Na obra de Giralda Seyferth transparece a incorporação da raça e do racismo, o seu uso na construção da Nação e a sua presença na fragmentação do território em regiões.

Palavras-chave: Migração. Raça. Região. Giralda Seyferth. Brasil.

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyze the timeliness of Giralda Seyferth's contribution to studies on migration and race in its relationship with the regional issue in Brazil. Giralda Seyferth (1943-2017) was a historian and anthropologist and devoted herself to studies on colonization, peasants, immigration, nationalism and racism. Regarding the method, we used bibliographic research, with an analysis of the author's publications on migration, race and regional development. In reading her work it is possible to identify, in the construction of the North and South regions of Brazil, in the nineteenth century, the differentiation between nationals and aliens, and racism intrinsic to the migratory process stimulated in the South. In the formation of Brazil, it is possible to see how the production of regional differences

occurred from the various cycles of Brazilian peripheral capitalism and the functionality of both the enslavement of Africans and the German immigration to capital. In Giralda Seyferth's work appear the incorporation of race and racism, its use in the construction of the nation and its presence in the fragmentation of the territory into regions.

Keywords: Migration. Race. Region. Giralda Seyferth. Brazil.

Migración, raza y la cuestión regional en Brasil: una lectura de la contribución de Giralda Seyferth

Resumen

El objetivo de este artículo es analizar la actualidad de la contribución de Giralda Seyferth a los estudios sobre migración y raza en su relación con la cuestión regional en Brasil. Giralda Seyferth (1943-2017) fue una historiadora y antropóloga que se dedicó a los estudios sobre colonización, campesinado, inmigración, nacionalismo y racismo. En cuanto al método, recurrimos a la investigación bibliográfica, con un análisis de las publicaciones del autor sobre los temas de migración, raza y desarrollo regional. Al leer su obra, es posible identificar, en la construcción de las regiones Norte y Sur de Brasil, en el siglo XIX, la diferenciación entre nacionales y extranjeros, y el racismo intrínseco al proceso migratorio estimulado en la región Sur. En la formación de Brasil, es posible ver cómo la producción de las diferencias regionales se dio a partir de los diversos ciclos del capitalismo periférico brasileño y de la funcionalidad de la esclavización de africanos y africanas y de la inmigración alemana al capital. En la obra de Giralda Seyferth se pone de manifiesto la incorporación de la raza y el racismo, su uso en la construcción de la Nación y su presencia en la fragmentación del territorio en regiones.

Palabras clave: Migración. Raza. Región. Giralda Seyferth. Brasil.

1 Introduction

Immigration has grown by 24.4% in Brazil in the last decade. Venezuelans, Haitians, and Colombians are the most common immigrants to the country. Black immigrants predominate in migratory flows, with a greater presence in the labor market of São Paulo and the Brazilian South (OBMIGRA, 2020). Data on internal migrations across Brazilian macro-regions (until 2015) show that the Southeast is no longer so attractive for immigrants, a position now held by the Midwest and South (DOTA; QUEIROZ, 2020).

Brazil issued a new migration law in 2017, changing its discourse and practice of national security from seeing immigrants as a threat to internal security to incorporating the broader reference of human rights (COSTA; Souza, SOUZA, BARROS, 2019). After just two years, in 2019, and in surprising contradiction to the terms of the new migration law, the current President of the Republic decided that Brazil would no longer be a signatory to the Global Compact for Migration, explaining this gesture as an attempt to defend Brazilian sovereignty (SPOSATO; LAGE, 2020).

On January 24, 2022, African refugee Moïse Kabagambe was assaulted and killed by blows from a wooden artifact at a kiosk in Barra da Tijuca, Rio de Janeiro (DURAN; ARAÚJO, 2022). This evinces the existence, in the 21st century, of violent prejudice against Black immigrants. On February 7, in an interview with congresspersons Tabata Amaral and Kim Kataguri, Bruno Aiub (known as Monark), from the *Flow Podcast*, defended the free organization of a Nazi party in Brazil (ALECRIM; MOLITERNO; TORTELLA, 2022), thereby expressing his ideological identification with white supremacy.

Thus, considering the increasing immigration and internal migration (and its unequal distribution among Brazilian regions), the advances in migration legislation (and its recent setback), prejudice and violence against Black migrants, and public manifestations in defense of Nazism, we must aim to assess the historical continuity and discontinuity of migration processes and its geographical developments, especially regionally. At the core of this scientific task, we must also find the gaps which may point to practical-political changes.

Giralda Seyferth (1943-2017) pioneered studies on racism within immigration policies in Brazil (BLANCHETTE, 2019). An a historian and anthropologist, she dealt with specific themes – colonization, peasantry, German immigration, nationalism, and racism... – in a defined space-time: the Itajaí Valley, in the state of Santa Catarina, from the second half of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th. Her studies contribute significantly to evaluating how race and migrations relate to Brazilian regions.

Hence, this study seeks to analyze the topicality of Giralda Seyferth's work, considering the relations between migration, race, and the regional issue. Our specific objectives include (a) identifying the presence of migration and race in the construction of regions; (b) analyzing the relations between migration and race in the formation of capitalism; and (c) emphasizing aspects of Giralda Seyferth's work that may help us to reflect on the singularities of migration in southern Brazil.

Giralda Seyferth used the terms “immigration” and “immigrant” in her work due to the period she analyzed. However, we use migration when we refer to the broader theme since it designates both displacement within Brazil and international movements (DMDH, MIGRAMUNDO; FICAS, 2019). We selected her publications on the themes we chose: migration, race, and regional development. Giralda Seyferth works with quite diverse theoretical references. However, we especially stress her results on migration and race in Brazil. Thus, we refrained from chronologically organizing her ideas, works, and investigations, collecting her findings into four main themes: the invention of regions; nationals; aliens in the formation of Brazilian capitalism; and ethnic enterprises as an expression of the uniqueness of migration in southern Brazil. These themes originate from studies and books from several periods which we now place in dialogue.

Reading her work shows the 19th-century construction of the Brazilian North and South, the differentiation between *nationals* and *aliens*, and the racism that is intrinsic to the migratory process stimulated in the South. The formation of Brazil shows how regional differences were produced due to the various cycles of Brazilian peripheral capitalism, the functionality of Africans' enslavement, and the German immigration to the capital. Giralda Seyferth's work shows the incorporation of race and racism, its use in building a nation, and its presence in fragmenting the territory into regions.

This article is divided into six sections. Following this introduction, its second part (*The invention of Northern and Southern Brazil*) examines the historical relation between regional imbalances, race, and migration. Its third (*Nationals against capitalism*) discusses the racial character of the peripheral capitalism in Brazil. Its fourth (*Aliens and capitalism à la Brazil*) evaluates the use of family and moral logic as the basis for capital relations and the consolidation of ethnic enterprises. Its fifth (*A new homeland within Brazil? The curious example of ethnic enterprises*) evaluates the

forced nationalization of aliens, seeking to show that, even in the face of the “German danger,” campaigns failed to hinder businesses. Finally, in our final considerations, we synthesize Seyferth's main contributions to the theme and offer some digressions on the topicality of her work.

2 The invention of Northern and Southern Brazil

The Portuguese exploration/domination has conferred subaltern tasks to Brazil as early as the 16th century. Since then, the country has been fragmented and the inequalities, reproduced. Under this exploitation regime, the Brazilian North (present-day Northeast), extracted brazilwood and produced sugar. Then, the South-Central dug gold and diamonds, cultivated coffee and, from the 1930s, underwent industrialization. In these cycles, capital explored spaces and people to value/reproduce itself (THEIS, 2020).

While Brazil was a colony, space was initially fragmented into hereditary captaincies (1530) and then divided into two states (1621): Grão-Pará Brazil (KAHN, 1972). Brazil thus constituted an extension of the Portuguese State. In 1580, with the Iberian Union, Brazil would become a Hispanic Colony. The loss of the sugarcane market and the discovery of gold and diamond deposits will turn the Brazilian South-Central into an important economic space (MORAES, 2001; THEIS, 2020). This geographical displacement enabled the invention of the North and South throughout the 19th century.

In her studies, Giralda Seyferth used the terms North and South to address both regions and their people (*nationals* and *aliens*)¹, formation process, and how immigration policies saw them. She showed evidence of how the ways of being and living of these displaced populations changed how they interacted with the geographical space they began to occupy. Economic activities crossed such ways of being and living and contributed to regionalize Brazil, both by the central state and the regions themselves.

In this process, political and intellectual elites' discourse and practice adopted a miscegenation thesis and, from 1850, joined a discourse and nationalist practice which aimed at forming the nation. The whitening of the population and the constitution of a future Brazilian historical race, together with the occupation of the territory, were part of immigration policies (SEYFERTH, 1996). Thus,

(...) regional differences were taken as an indication of inequality (at times attributed to climatic and geographical peculiarities, at others, to racial problems) – leading some more impassioned nationalists to raise their concerns about the North-South ‘imbalance,’ which, according to the interpretation during the beginning of the Republic, would be solved by equitably distributing European immigrants throughout the national territory. (SEYFERTH, 2000, p. 82).

¹ Due to ethnicities and plural cultures, ordinary, mixed-race, Indigenous, and Black Brazilians were understood as nationals; and, Italians, Poles, and Germans, as aliens (of which the latter were seen as the most unlike the others) (SEYFERTH, 1997).

However, the state expectations toward colonization, assimilation, and intermingling were frustrated as the cultural diversity resulting from the migratory process was distinct from a national identity project. “The nation imagined by racialized nationalism, therefore, had room for neither Blacks, the Indigenous, nor mixed-race people who, in the biological hierarchy of phenotypic classification schemes, were closer to *barbarian races*.” (SEYFERTH, 2002b, p. 36).

The 1880s mark the beginning of a historical period of strong immigration to Brazil. In this broader context, colonialism and capitalism had grown. Thus, the Old Republic opposed, due to regional distinctions, the white and capitalist South to the mixed-race and backward North. Regional imbalances became associated with race (SEYFERTH, 2011; 2000; 1996). This period faced several revolts (Canudos, Contestado, the Vaccine Revolt, the Revolt of the Lash...) which increased tensions between subaltern social groups, regional elites, and the state.

The emergence of regional movements and literature and the creation of Historical and Geographical Institutes marked the first decades of the 20th century (ALBUQUERQUE JR., 2011). The need for a regional division which would serve as a basis to accommodate political and cultural regionalisms and facilitate control and state planning soon became evident. The first official regionalization of Brazil dates to 1942 (BALBIM; CONTEL, 2013).

From 1937 to 1945, the aforementioned “nationalization campaign,” which aimed to amass *aliens* on behalf of the nation, had affected a considerable part of the Brazilian population. The immigration policy of the Old Republic was criticized for enabling the fixation of homogeneous colonies in the South, neglecting its regional balance. Note that New State nationalists considered the Northeast as a *locus* of Brazilianness since it was left out of the immigration process. In this scenario, the most urgent objective was to “nationalize” the South (SEYFERTH, 1997).

Giralda Seyferth has innovated by relating migration and race as important processes in the fragmentation of Brazil into regions in the 19th century. She showed that the location of economic activities and the state role in migration policies contributed to inventing the Brazilian North and South. Although it failed to properly deal with the regionalizations of the 20th century, it certainly contributed, along with other authors (ALBUQUERQUE JR., 2011; BALBIM; CONTEL, 2013; CARDOSO, 2020; THEIS, 2019), to show the state role in building both Brazilian national identity and regional identities due, for example, to its “nationalization campaign” and official regionalizations.

3 Nationals against capitalism

In the 19th century, the “progress” discourse used racially and environmentally deterministic references which had been much disseminated in Europe. Both political and intellectual elites understood that economic inequality and different customs stemmed from supposed racial inequalities caused by miscegenation. Thus, transforming Brazil into an economically powerful country was necessary, which would be impossible with slavery and the enslaved. The Brazilian immigrantist discourse understood slavery as an archaic form of economic exploitation. Therefore, making Brazil a capitalist country would require bringing salaried immigrants (SEYFERTH, 2016; 2015).

Both political elites and immigration policies received Giralda Seyferth's attention, but she would also seek to show how intellectual elites treated the relation between race and migration. For this, she turned to interpreters of Brazilian social thought during slavery until the beginning of research on race relations in the mid-1950s². The idea of race and migration crosses interpretations of Brazil. Its historicity is fundamental to assess how racial/environmental determinism and eugenics manifest themselves in the public debate of the time (BAHIA; ZANINI; MENASCHE, 2015). "In fact, Giralda [Seyferth] was relentless in her analysis of how Brazilian policies on immigration were tied to the slave system and, later, to eugenic and racist proposals." (BLANCHETTE, 2019, p. 59).

Note that the "science of races" has been in Brazil since 1860, based on the hierarchy of races, in which whites emerge as superior. Disqualifying non-whites stemmed from their supposed inability to work freely (thus ignoring the end of slavery). This discourse naturalized enslavement and slave labor and failed to consider both the abolition and the substitution of slavery for free labor. "It is as if the descendants of Africans are simply destined to disappear in the context of a non-slave civilization." (SEYFERTH, 1996, p. 5).

The first attempts to colonize European immigrants took place in 1818, in present-day Northeast and in the state of Rio de Janeiro. The tropical climate of the former justified the failure of European colonization. After the Brazilian independence in 1824, immigration resumed due to territorial disputes with Argentina and Uruguay. Colonization would serve to protect borders and populate uncrowded areas. Due to its unsatisfactory results, it was interrupted in 1830 and resumed in 1846. Between 1818 and 1850 Brazil received 20,000 Europeans, of which 6,000 Germans were sent to Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, and Paraná States. From 1850 onward, with the abolition of the slave trade, immigration policies became more consistent, favored by law 601, which regulated the granting of public lands and emitted property titles to foreigners (SEYFERTH, 1996).

The notion of public and vacant land (the basis for the beginning of immigration in Brazil) failed to consider squatters and/or nationals' presence. This exclusion reflects the racism prevailing in the state apparatus since the 19th century and features, in the Republic, with the whitening thesis (GUIMARÃES, 2011), which explains the use of European immigration.

In the elites' discourse (including academia), when it comes to immigration, the ordinary mixed-race, Indigenous or Black Brazilian was condemned to racial inferiority, although miscegenation was deemed as a purifying process, which would have begun with the immigration. (SEYFERTH, 2005, p. 5).

Aliens' miscegenation and assimilation to the Republic featured in discussions on immigration policies. As mentioned, we find a strong influence of racial theories, especially eugenic ones. "The belief in whites' racial superiority continued to produce

² Some of these include Perdigão Malheiro, Joaquim Nabuco, João Batista de Lacerda, Sílvio Romero, Oliveira Viana, Manuel Bomfim, Edgar Roquete-Pinto, Gilberto Freyre, Fernando de Azevedo, Emilio Willems, Florestan Fernandes, Oracy Nogueira, Roger Bastide, and Thales Azevedo (BAHIA; MENASCHE; ZANINI, 2015).

the biological and cultural disqualification of Asians and Blacks and sometimes of so-called ‘Semitic peoples’ (including Arabs and Jews).” (SEYFERTH, 2005, p. 9).

Giralda Seyferth lead us to think about the formation of the Brazilian people and its disregard for Indigenous, Black, and mixed-race nationals, the constitution of its State, and the emergence of Brazilian social thought from European references. Racial determinism and eugenics, which exploited Indigenous and African people and attracted white Europeans via immigration policies, inspired these references. Seyferth minded the geographical location of economic activities and their cycles, highlighting racial aspects and immigration movements in the process.

In the case of Afro-Brazilians, ethnicity was a form of political mobilization. Seyferth analyzed the Brazilian Black Front of the 1930s and the proposal of intellectuals and Black people who adopted Afro-Brazilian ethnicity as a mobilization strategy in the 1970s. She justified her recovery of the African contribution to the formation of Brazil “not only by what the slaves represented in the economic plane, but by all the African contribution to Brazilian culture and society.” (SEYFERTH, 1983, p. 12).

4 Aliens and capitalism à la Brazil

Seyferth used the categories colonist, immigrant, foreigner, and *alien*. By 1818, Nova Friburgo (RJ) documentation showed no reference to immigrants. The used term was *colono* (“settler”). At the beginning of the German colonization, from 1818 to 1830, decrees and other documents use *colono*. Documentation began to refer to “foreigners” from 1830 onward, when naturalization and citizenship for immigrants (under certain conditions) became possible (SEYFERTH, 2008).

After previous attempts (at the beginning of the 19th century), colonization was resumed as a project in 1824, after the Brazilian independence. It aimed to stimulate agriculture based on small rural properties. Along with economic (urban supply) and geopolitical reasons (consolidating international borders and occupying uncrowded areas) (SEYFERTH, 2016). Leo Waibel – which Seyferth quotes (2016) – stated that settlers created a new cultural landscape but lamented that, despite access to more advanced technologies, colonies adopted a more primitive system: falling forests, slash-and-burn, and no-till farming (WAIBEL, 1949).

Immigration flows were very intense between 1880 and 1920. In 1890 alone, more than 1,200,000 Europeans entered Brazil under immigration policies serving the “imagined white nation of the future” (SEYFERTH, 1996, p. 11). Immigration in the Imperial period had been criticized for relying on homogeneous colonies. Unsurprisingly, nothing would substantially change with the Republic.

In the process of colonizing the South, the family was considered a productive unit. Peasants had trouble calculating the value of their workforce. In general, women and children’s labor were considered “help.” In Seyferth’s work, peasants “while self-exploiting, with exhaustive work routines, feel that they work for themselves and their families, generating surplus ‘at home’ and for the home (family), for their own.” (ZANINI, 2019, p. 82).

As productive forces developed, settlers would give way to settler-workers, who, on the one hand, own the means of production, but, on the other, sell their labor force as employees.

As Seyferth points out, the logic of peasants who are workers and bosses at the same time dilutes the sense of exploitation, making it a 'necessary evil.' This dilution shows the prevalence of a familiar and moral logic about a pure capitalist economic rationality. (ZANINI, 2019, p. 85).

Over time, settlers distinguished themselves from the people who lived in cities. In this process, the emergence of some trades contributed to establishing a rural-urban polarity. Immigrants who had some resources could start businesses. According to Seyferth (2016), the analysis of publications and studies on German immigration in the Itajaí Valley shows that entrepreneurs and the entrepreneurial spirit were praised, whereas the working class, which grew with industrialization, remained unknown. In many analyzed materials, peasants and workers appear as beneficiaries of capitalist entrepreneurs, people with supposedly great social concerns. In fact, a part of this story of kindness and altruism requires elucidation.

The industrialization of the Itajaí Valley comprises three moments: (i) the implementation of the textile industry (at the end of the 19th century), (ii) their strengthening and the predominance of settler-workers; and (iii) economic development since World War II, which expanded textile industries and increased factory jobs as settler-workers became workers (SEYFERTH, 1974). From 1925 to 1945, the two largest companies in Santa Catarina were the Carlos Renaux Fabric Factory, located in the municipality of Brusque, and the Hering Textile Industry Inc., in the municipality of Blumenau (GOULARTI FILHO, 2002). Would they have suffered any setbacks at the time?

The industrial bourgeoisie which developed in the Itajaí Valley, in Santa Catarina — which Seyferth calls an *ethnic enterprise* (see the next section) — had its origins in importing and exporting goods to and from Germany. With the Republic, Teuto-Brazilian political leaders emerged from this *ethnic enterprise*. We should stress that this economic elite was represented in most state governments and in the Senate during the Old Republic. Economic Germanity was taken to the political field in a context of divergent nationalisms (in this case, Brazilian and German) (SEYFERTH, 2011).

Immigration would constitute a cultural plurality conflicting with nationalism, which would prevail in Getúlio Vargas' government (SEYFERTH, 2005). This would arise in the 1937 "nationalization campaign." Immigration policies prior to 1930 were seen as leading to a large concentration of foreigners in a specific region of the country. Thus, in the "campaign of nationalization," "assimilation has become the essential qualifier for citizenship and nationality." (SEYFERTH, 2005, p. 11).

As industrialization grew in the Itajaí Valley after World War II, it required German-Brazilian workers and the hiring of "Brazilian" workers, suggesting that – given the performance of the Carlos Renaux Fabric Factory and the Hering Textile Industry Inc. at the time – businesses experienced unequivocal success. Thus, ethnic enterprises not only saw economic gains (as is adequate to capitalist enterprises) but also recognized their alleged generosity. On both the Teuto-Brazilian and "Brazilian" workers' part, although their coexistence failed to erase racial differentiation, it at least instilled an incipient class consciousness in them, which would eventually lead

to the first strike in Santa Catarina, lasting almost 30 days, in the early 1950s (SEYFERTH, 1981).

From Seyferth's work on German immigration in southern Brazil, we can follow the isolated constitution of colonies and colonists and the combination of family and morality with capitalism. This combination is first transposed into settler-workers, whom *ethnic entrepreneurs* exploited. These used the opposition between nationals and aliens to strengthen bonds of solidarity between ethnically equals, evoking the commitment to work and companies as a way to reinforce the characteristics of "working people" – thus masking the exploitation of workers, regardless of their ethnicity.

5 A new homeland within Brazil? The curious example of ethnic enterprises

Germany did not exist as a unified national state when its immigrants arrived in Brazil in the first decades of the 19th century. Note that Germany was unified at the end of the 19th century and, due to its rapid economic development, soon involved itself in inter-imperialist disputes, with its well-known corollary of overlapping economic interests. In this context, ethnicity helped to foster an anti-Germanic nationalist discourse (BAHIA, 2019; SEYFERTH, 2011).

We should recover part of its history to understand this movement. To do so, Seyferth investigated German immigration as a whole, using the aforementioned Itajaí Vale, in Santa Catarina, as a case study.

What makes German immigration as an important sociological and historical phenomenon is the fact that it was constituted mainly as colonization – i.e., many immigrants settled pioneer areas, building a society entirely different from the national one. (SEYFERTH, 2016, p. 17).

Note that colonization in lands considered vacant also colonized forests, which had no land communication routes. Thus, the first and second generations of immigrants had virtually no contact with Brazilian society. This eventually formed an ethnic community: the region as *Heimat* (home). This formation maintained much of settlers' original symbolic culture but also incorporated much of the local material culture, facilitating adaptation to the environment (SEYFERTH, 2011).

The aforementioned *ethnic entrepreneurs* stood out in the constitution of the Teuto-Brazilian identity. In possession of commercial houses, which served as places to socialize and sell newspapers and magazines in German, entrepreneurs brought settlers the discourse of ethnic belonging. These spaces circulated the notion of *Deutschtum*, which referred to

(...) the progress of the colonies as a product of 'German labor,' and the main contribution of exemplary citizens to the host country; with an emphasis on German origin and the 'right' to be a legitimate citizen as a distinct language and culture, in a country which should assume its cultural plurality. (SEYFERTH, 2011, p. 58).

Then, the use of ethnicity in politics would stand out as a strategy to consolidate the small local bourgeoisie. It denied assimilation and proposed a double belonging: to a Teuto-Brazilian identity and to Brazil, combining ethnicity and

citizenship. It aimed to maintain settlers' German origins and obtain Brazilian citizenship (SEYFERTH, 1999; 2011). "The definition of Teuto-Brazilian identity, however, suggests not only a claim to cultural pluralism but also to belonging to another people or race with its own culture and customs." (SEYFERTH, 2005, p. 12).

Brazilian political and intellectual elites' discourses and practices in the aforementioned period of nationalization oscillated between praising the German colonization and warning of the "German danger":

Immigration has always raised contradictory positions at any time: considered necessary and even an instrument of civilization in the consolidation of the State, it can be converted into a problem or danger in times of crisis or produce feelings of xenophobia when referred to the nation. (SEYFERTH, 2008, p. 12).

From 1937 to 1945, the aforementioned "nationalization campaign," which aimed to amass *aliens* on behalf of the nation, had affected a considerable part of the Brazilian population. "The campaign was conceived as a 'war' to eradicate alien ideas, with the aim of imposing the 'national spirit' on patricians who formed 'ethnic cysts,' wrongly tolerated by the liberalism of the Old Republic." (SEYFERTH, 1997, p. 95). During this period, not only were the circulation of foreign publications and the public teaching and use of foreign languages prohibited but schools were also forced to adopt the official national curriculum and dismiss teachers who were foreigners.

This nationalization campaign grew after 1942, when Brazil declared war on Germany. We should stress that, at that time, Nazism was a disaggregating element – for example, among Teuto-Brazilians in the municipality of Brusque, in the Itajaí Valley. In fact, they identified more with the Integralist Party than with Nazism. Note that Nazi propaganda was legal until 1938, when the New State prohibited it. It is curious that the responsibility for the nationalization campaign was attributed to Nereu Ramos, who, at the time, was an intervenor in Santa Catarina. To him, Getúlio Vargas seemed a benefactor of the working class (SEYFERTH, 1981; DEMIER, 2013). At this point, we should recover a previous statement: the textile industries in the Itajaí Valley, in Santa Catarina, greatly grew during the "nationalization campaign" and after World War II. The "German danger" failed to hinder enterprises.

Thus, the policy of increasing the internal supply of labor via immigration would eventually prevail, although it showed contradictions on nationalism and the construction of a national identity (culture, language, race, ethnicity, and/or civilization) (SEYFERTH, 2008). Note that the criticism directed at Germans referred, above all, to their "national pride, responsible for their tendency to remain German, without amalgamating themselves to Brazilians – which would pose risks to the integrity of the Brazilian nation." (SEYFERTH, 2016, p. 30). However, that the policy aimed at expanding the workforce eventually prevailed seems to suggest not only that identity aspects regarding the construction of nationality had, in the end, a lesser meaning but it also indicates that the advance of productive capital forces required the contribution of more people who could be mobilized to create value.

6 Final considerations: the still present past

We began this study by mentioning the increase in migration to Brazil, the displacement of migration flows to the Midwest and South, the change in migration laws (from deeming migrants as a threat to seeing them as human rights holders), violence against Black migrants, and recent public demonstrations in defense of Nazism. What relations can we draw between these facts and Giralda Seyferth's studies? What connections do we find between these data and migration, race, and the regional issue?

Seyferth's innovation was understanding migration and race as 19th-century processes which affected the fragmentation of the territory into regions, showing that they then contributed to inventing Northern and Southern Brazil. In her analysis of German immigration in southern Brazil, Giralda Seyferth historically assesses the regionalization of North and South to capture regions as a process rather than as natural or given spaces. Despite how state performance and economic activities influenced regionalization processes, she proposes to assess the movement of migrant populations as a relation: people make the region both when they leave their origins and when they arrive at their destination. People move and thus dialectically change the space in which they arrive.

Migration laws and policies can stimulate and guide migration, but they are unable to control them completely. Recovering her inferences, we can see a purpose to populate and whiten the population throughout the 19th century. From the turn of the 19th- to mid-20th century, the intention became to create a national identity. Despite the policies by the Brazilian state, isolated colonies diverged from the initially outlined purpose. If we refer to the current position of the Brazilian government (which aims to leave the Migration Pact), we have (new) evidence, based on Giralda Seyferth's work, that the state action has had strong connotations of racism, authoritarianism, and nationalism throughout history. Depending on the active rulers and the interests they represent, these racist, authoritarian, and nationalist references can be re-conveyed and lead to further setbacks – as they can dialectically also trigger resistance in migrants. After all, migration policies are unable to completely control migration.

Another point to consider is that both the State constitution and the elaboration of Brazilian social thought show European references regarding the formation of the Brazilian people, discriminating against national ones. Giralda Seyferth stressed the references inspiring these malformations: environmental and racial determinism and eugenics. They justified both enslaving and exploiting Indigenous and African peoples and attracting white Europeans via migration policies. Here, Giralda Seyferth's great contribution was including the racial component into migration studies. Via her investigations, we find the formation of structural racism, which, already in the 19th century, failed to grant nationals public and vacant lands. In the Old Republic, this racism appears in the whitening theory. In these unfortunate times, it manifests itself in the multiple discriminatory practices of the State, individuals, and social groups.

Regarding *nationals* and *aliens*, possibilities are open to recognizing the difficulties these social groups experienced and their political mobilization. In the case of *nationals*, former political and intellectual elites believed that Brazil needed

to be a capitalist country – which would be impossible with slavery and the enslaved. With the exclusion of *nationals* from land tenure and wage labor, we find a historical trajectory of struggle toward recognition and the recovery of the African contribution to the construction of Brazil. In turn, Brazilian capitalism incorporated *aliens*; first as settlers, then as settler-workers, and, finally, as workers. As the idea of a working people grew, as did the opposition between Teuto-Brazilians and nationals and the exploitation of labor and workers. The novelty Giralda Seyferth offered to this debate was that Teuto-Brazilians and nationals met on the factory floor and produced, however incipiently, some class identity.

We must question whether the current contact between ethnic groups in the work environment could also favor class awareness. In the relationship between *ethnic entrepreneurs* and workers, Giralda Seyferth showed that, both during colonization and more recently, the former receive praise and are deemed bearers of great social concerns, whereas the working class remains hidden and seen only as “collaborator.”

Considering that global capital, national states, and local/regional businesses sometimes contribute to, at times, stimulate and, at others, to displace populations, we must consider the implications of the increasing migration flows in sociopolitical, ethnic-cultural, and space-time terms. Regarding migration, race, and the regional issue, Giralda Seyferth's work not only inspires us to question *ethnic entrepreneurs'* altruism, the regionalizations induced by capital and state policies, and the subalternization of migrants but to also formulate strategies for action which address the needs of groups compelled to move and those constrained to a region. Perhaps ethnicity can instrumentalize political mobilization – in the unequal clash against global capital, national states, and local/regional businesses to articulate migrants' rights to dignity.

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