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Maison du Brésil: a student residence for the Brazilian *elite* in Paris

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Abstract

In this text I present some thoughts about the *Maison du Brésil*. My objective is to research this temporary residency for researchers through the meanings that characterize it as a Brazilian territory in Paris and through the very belonging to the category *elite* as a peculiarity of its residents. I wish to analyze the international circulation of students and researchers that live there and have an educational experience of multiple dimensions as experiences of deterritorialization of identities and its consequences in a housing space which is at the same time public and private. Based on documental analysis and ethnographic fieldwork I present some aspects of the history and the everyday life of the Maison du Brésil. Also I intend to show how the meanings of Brazilianness are used as support for the identity crisis lived by the members of a supposed Brazilian *elite* in Paris, as I analyze the particularities of the mediations established by the residents of the *Maison du Brésil*, in the formation and international insertion of some researchers.

Keywords

elites, territory, student house, Brazilianness, educational experiences

Initial Considerations

The Maison du Brésil is one of the 40 residences that make part of the architectural set of Paris's Cité Internationale Universitaire. Some of these residencies (around 23) have a "national character" and are responsible for hosting graduate students and researchers during a temporary period that can vary from a few weeks to the time necessary for the obtention of a full doctorate degree in Paris. The CIUP was conceived in the 1920's, being meant by its main idealizer, André Honorat, as an international space for integration of the intellectual elites in formation in French soil. At that moment, it served to the double need of improvement of conditions of student housing in the period, situated at the *Quartier Latin*, and the development of an internationalist spirit towards keeping world peace, which was shaken by the First World War.

The Maison du Brésil was inaugurated in 1959 during President Juscelino Kubistchek de Oliveira's mandate. At that moment Brazil lived a period of economical growth, characterized by historiography as "national-developmentism". Its construction started with a negotiation between France and Brazil initiated in the 1920's. The

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Brazilian government, sponsoring the construction of the “Maison du Brésil” in Paris after an agreement with the University of Paris (which is circumscribed to the CIUP), bet on the need to make available a residential structure for its researchers, aiming at the educational internationalization of its “elites”.

In this sense, as we analyze the history of the Maison du Brésil throughout its 50 years of existence and the daily life of its current inhabitants, there is a question that emerges: the characterization of the term elite and the multiple meanings it acquires. These meanings have been perceived through the discourse of the residents and by part of the current administration of the Maison du Brésil. The term also comes up in the discourses of political and educational authorities in official ceremonies that took place at the Maison du Brésil, in the documents consulted and, mostly, regarding the overcoming of some crisis faces by its residents, observed during my fieldwork in 2004 and 2010.

It seems obvious that the reference to the term elite at the moment of the construction of the Maison du Brésil is not referred to its economical derivation. The hypothesis of the existence of an economical elite in Brazil and its moving to France aiming at an international formation would exclude *a priori* the need for a leveling housing base. On the contrary, it would imply in the existence of material and symbolic capital that could guarantee the trip and its success, in terms of the existence of potential financial differentiation, as Wagner proposes (1998, p.13), pointing at the “international identity” as a claim from the upper-class foreigners that come to France.

As the hypothesis of the economical elite is excluded, it is necessary to consider that the importance given to the category elite might not be connected to a defining adjectivation (economical, political, or intellectual, for instance) of its members, but to the differentiating connotation, the character of distinction that it reflects, according to Bourdieu’s perspective (1979, p.585)². This perception came up in my insertion and ethnographic insertion at the Maison du Brésil. My theme of research, in this perspective,

² Tout les agents d’une formation sociale déterminée ont en effet en commun un ensemble des thèmes de perception fondamentaux qui reçoivent un commencement d’objectivation dans les couples d’adjectifs antagonistes communément employés pour classer et qualifier les personnes ou les objets dans les domaines plus différents de la pratique. Matrisse de tous les *lieux* communs qui ne s’imposent si aisément que parce qu’ils ont pour eux tout l’ordre social, le réseau des oppositions entre haut (ou sublime, élevé, pur) et bas (ou vulgaire, plat, modeste) (...) a pour principe l’opposition entre l’«élite» des dominants et la «masse» des dominées (...). (Bourdieu 1979, p.546).

are not the Brazilian elites in its many adjectivations, but researchers and students that “are hosted” there in an academic experience of international formation.

The question regarding the elite comes up in a moment of deterritorialization of these subjects (from Brazil to France – Paris, CIUP, Maison du Brésil). In this sense, the processes of reconfiguration of identities in terms of the diacritics they activate or even the attributes they are granted in this context, happen as an educational experience of multiple dimensions, in another territory. A housing space which is at the same time public (patrimonialized) and private, signified as a territory of multiple contrasts where relations are processed encompassing local, regional, transnational and globalized dimensions.

This paper is an ethnography of the “Brazil House”, which I consider to be a privileged place to understand the plural processes of formation of Brazilian researchers in France, referred to by Britto (2000, p.158) and Almeida (2004, p.11), as they discuss the characterization and diversity of meanings of Brazilian studies abroad. My path starts with a methodological reflection on the vicissitudes of making this residential space into an ethnographic place.

Methodological Path

In October 2003 (Brum, 2009, p.91) when I arrived in Paris for a seven-month doctorate sandwich fellowship, the first of many impacts that waited for me in my first trip to Europe was the sight, at Paris’s Cité Internationale Universitaire, of a residence that was completely different from the others. The colorful sight of the Maison du Brésil brought me peace! It was a Friday afternoon. I had crossed the suburbs of Paris to get to the Maison, in an airport shuttle that picked me up at the Charles de Gaulle airport one hour later than it was supposed to. So, I had arrived safe and sound, I was in Paris, and better yet I was at a Brazilian place in Paris, as I realized since my first moments in the city.

My brief narrative of a troubled arrival, full of initial fears from life outside Brazil, tales of lost luggage and linguistic misunderstandings – “I don’t understand this French” - was recurrent in the stories of many people whose arrival at the glass hall of the

Maison du Brésil I witnessed during 2003 and 2004. Tired aspect, huge suitcases being dragged, with the necessary contents for a whole year, or even more, for those taking the full doctorate. People arrived bringing a set of expectations and fears, expressed in plural narratives. Mythical narratives that recall how everything started in Paris, at the Maison, with the new friends made into relatives, the follies and problems with advisors, the problems of insertion in the universities and laboratories.

In this universe, a parallel world of Brazilians in Paris was unveiled. The Brazilian researchers that live at the Maison du Brésil are neither immigrants nor tourists, though they interact, in a certain way, with these two universes. To come to study in Paris in a doctoral or post-doctoral fellowship involves the desire for an international formation, the search for exchange in research with professionals from France and other countries, but it also refers to other interests, such as knowing the city and other places in Europe, making new friends and affections, and, in some situations, finding temporary work.

In this sense, living at the Maison du Brésil makes the international experience of Brazilian researchers peculiar, for their insertion in the French educational setting is everyday marked by images of Brazil, by Portuguese language mixed to French spoken by Brazilians, and by relations, mostly, among other Brazilians in France. It is interesting to observe that the likely passage from a “local” setting in Brazil to a cosmopolitan setting (Hannerz 1990, p.253) happens through this space signified as a Brazilian territory in Paris.

At that moment, the situations I lived provoked deep strangement, and the housing and emotional structure needed to develop the doctorate sandwich period and cement a subsequent academic career. From the point of view of my strangements came up a desire to try to understand better the international educational experience that I and so many other researchers and their companions who had lived at the Maison du Brésil had been through.

In the beginning I tried to fully experience it and accept its daily contradictions. At a later period I tried to understand it from an anthropological point of view that was beyond my doctorate project, taking some notes on my field journal and producing some

images. After a few years, I came back to the Maison du Brésil, and started to perceive it as a meaningful place of memory in my life story (Augé 2003, p.43).

In January 2010, I came back to the Maison du Brésil for the undertaking of a long research journey related to the post-doctorate project *Maison du Brésil: a Brazilian territory in Paris*, financed by CAPES. The field work I have been performing since then encompasses a set of synchronic and diachronic actions that have as objective to perform a historical and anthropological reading of the Maison du Brésil throughout its 51 years of existence, and, mostly, to focus on the everyday life of its residents.

The diachronic analysis happens through the research of the broad documentation (digitalized and in paper) that exists in the archives of the Maison du Brésil. They are official correspondences exchanged between the Brazilian and French governments, articles, regulations, etc. At the Archives Nationaux de la France, in Fontainebleau, where the documentation related to the residences that make part of the CIUP is located, I mostly perform the analysis of the dossiers of the ex-residents of the Maison du Brésil. Part of the research constitutes in bibliographic research and related sites. The interpretation of data from the applications of the current residents makes it possible to perform a mapping of the occupation of the apartments and the academic profiling of the MdB residents.

The process of “participant observation” is plural. It happens, for example, through my presence in collective spaces of sociability (specially the kitchens of each one of the five floors), at the laundry, the cafeteria and in parties (feijoada, barbecue, cheese and wine) and in the so called “cultural activities” that happen at the theater, such as exhibits, cocktail parties, films, recitals, debates, lectures, and so on. I have also observed guided tours of visitor groups, promoted by the Maison du Brésil in its public areas (hall, theater and the *testimonial room*). It is worth remembering that the building, projected by Lúcio Costa and Le Corbusier, is classified as French historical heritage, for being an expression of modernist architecture. Thus, besides being a university housing facility of private character, the MdB also serves as a museum and has a very well marked public dimension in some of its spaces.

In terms of a more synchronic work (though the research is connected and intertwines these two aspects, as I intend to demonstrate in relation to the question of the

elite), I watch and photograph farewells and the other rites implied on living in the House. I observed soccer games (suffering with the mistakes our of team at the CIUP championship) and watched some transmissions of Brazil games in the World Cup in Paris and Madrid. I also take part in the preparation of dinners and lunches (as one of the cooks), where being at the stove grants me a privileged spot for observation and discussion of the research with the residents, who present a plural set of reactions towards its development.

There is a broad knowledge about the work I have been performing. In January 2010 I sent to the residents a piece of mail making explicit the objectives and the dynamics of the research. The reception is plural and has implied in various developments of the fieldwork, with a meaningful enlargement of the interviews with the expansion of the observations to other spaces in which I have perceived images of Brazil in Paris.

In this sense, I have also contacted Brazilians and non-Brazilians who come to the Maison du Brésil to enjoy their company. I took some residents (who had just arrived from Brazil) to open their French bank accounts, to buy their subway cards, and also to purchase the health insurance required by CAPES and CNPq. I took part in a French course promoted by the BACE/CIUP at the Fondation Franco-Britannique. I went to the university restaurant and the spaces for sports practice (especially the swimming pool), I took some yoga classes at the cafeteria of the Maison du Brésil, capoeira classes at the House of Spain, English conversations classes at the Maison du Cambodja and at the MdB and some seminars promoted about the CIUP, at the Maison Internationale. As part of the research I've also performed interviews with the staff of the Maison du Brésil and its current residents, in order to understand their trajectories regarding this moment and also the meanings that living at the MdB has in the paths of these students and researchers.

Living at the Maison du Brésil I have given and received medication, exchanged objects and bought others from residents who were leaving (my television, the printer, a sleeping bag and a suitcase were purchased in January 2010). I have shared *chimarrão* with other gaúchos and sympathizers, left things I didn't need anymore at the 5th floor donation table and gathered things from there as well. I have shared the collective

utensils in the kitchens, received personal donations of objects permeated by affective relations from people who returned to their homes – my cell phone, for example, belonged to Carla, who received it from Marcelo. In these experiences I perceived situations of spontaneity and exchange. Gift and counter-gift. The classification of people and things, the construction of hierarchies and the production of a universe of symbolic kinship, as Miller proposes (2007, p. 548), with the production of networks which re-signify the very notion of a Brazilian community in Paris, who live in the Maison du Brésil.

As I go back to these stages I admit I live a latent contradiction in the process of participant observation. Writing this text (about and at the Maison du Brésil) is the opportunity to acknowledge that the participant observation has become, many times, a process of observatory participation, in Wacquant's perspective (2005, p.8). Living at the MdB is a daily challenge of relativization of my personal and academic objectives and desires. I'm also a researcher performing fieldwork as many others who live here and establish a set of temporary social ties that help stand and go through with the *séjour* of research in Paris.

In the research project (Brum 2009, p.4), as I set limits to my methodological discourse, I already predicted the possibility of a passage from participant observation to observatory participation. The intangible and the immeasurable was the impact of the fieldwork at the Maison du Brésil for its residents and in my process of subjectification in France, which many times surpassed my possibility of action and understanding. Silences, things unsaid, veiled exclusions, ostensible invitations, excessive significations, demands from people willing to become main informants, being "hit" in the most different ways, linguistic trouble. Panic: my telephone rang and was followed by insistent knocking at my door in the middle of the night, after coming back from a party. An attempt of constant subversion permeates the spaces of the house at night – *Neverland*, *phantasy island*, as some residents have referred to.

I tried to escape without dodging, keeping my space with difficulty, taking into account Lévi-Strauss's advice to Descola about fieldwork among the Jivaro: "laissez-vous donc porter par le terrain" (Descola 1985, p.54). I let myself be conducted by the field until my physical and emotional limits allowed. In some moments the loneliness

was very intense, even painful I would say. The doors of the 16m² rooms are closed, the halls are empty during the day, and the silence is only broken by Seu Manuel fixing something or by the sound of the *femmes de ménage*. At night the house is filled with noise coming from the kitchens and the rooms are opened, people circulate, but still there is a weight, a mixture of saudade and euphoria, attachment and discontinuity which marks our days here, and goes away little by little with the wine and the smoke in the kitchen at every new encounter, but comes back everyday, sometimes along with a strong hangover.

I thought about giving up many times, for believing I wouldn't be able to "handle" the meanings that emerged. A feeling of anthropological impotence never experienced before challenged me and the "*elite*", like a fetiche, followed me in every corner of the house, even in my files. But, was it really a "Brazilian" "intellectual elite" that was there? Was this their everyday life in Paris? What was the group and the universe of meanings that I was facing, after all?

I kept on doing the fieldwork, and a clue unveiled, starting as an almost hidden personal question. I felt somehow as part of a relatively small universe of people (Brazilian researchers in Paris, living at the Maison du Brésil). This meaning emerged as a form of demand, or as a (minimizing) euphemism in situations where some discrimination took place. Besides that, the term elite is present in the discourses of inauguration of the MdB in 1959 and in the very conception of the idealizers of the CIUP in the between-war period, as I will approach later.

***"Rapprocher les elites au service de la paix"*³**

The CIUP was created on June 29, 1921 (Annuaire 2004, 20) with the publication of the law that approved its construction in France's Official Journal. Its conception communicates with the double perspective of celebration of the national and "opening to the exterior", in the interwar period. The genesis of the CIUP took place, according to Lemoine's interpretation (1990, p.21) in 1920, thanks to the meeting between the dean of

³ Drawing the elites closer in service of peace. This is the sentence quoted by Lemoine (1990, p.27) to make explicit the conception of the CIUP founders.

the University of Paris, Paul Appel, and the businessman Émile Deutsch de la Meurtre who proposed to pay for a residence to host 350 students. André Honorat, who was then Minister of Public Instruction in France, directed this possibility of donation to the creation of what would later become the Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris. The inauguration of the first residence, the Foundation Louise and Émile Deutsch de la Meurtre, happened in 1925 after a series of administrative obstacles were overcome, such as the demolition of part of the Fortification of Paris in the vicinity of the Bridge of Gentilly and the Bridge of Orleans and the evacuation of the old inhabitants (homeless and refugees) who lived in carts and improvised tents in the region.

The CIUP is inscribed in a modernist and internationalist project, connected to the celebration of the national. Examples of this politics, in relation to Europe and France, since the 19th century, were the International Fairs. According to Thiesse (2000, p. 196-198) the grandiosity of this “identity exhibits” has civilizing and territorial objectives, bearing a pedagogy of belonging as they show miniatures of the nations, in their diversity, to be celebrated.

The CIUP also incarnates the “civilizing” dimension, of attraction, enlargement and improvement of the living conditions for foreign students in Paris, as Karady (2002, p.56) demonstrates relating the mythical dimension of the magic performed by Paris as Europe’s intellectual capital, with the constitution of products for cultural consumption such as the universities and academies, which didn’t exist anywhere else. For the author (Karady 2002, p.59) the CIUP is part of the political efforts of the French State (with funding from different countries), with aims of supporting the coming of foreign students to Paris.

The context of its conception is the between-wars period, which, according to Hobsbawn (1995, p.21) besides facing a crisis in the European democracies, is also permeated by a strong socialist influence. From the point of view of the arts and the education: “whatever the local baggage of the modernism was, in the interwar period it became the emblem of the ones who tried to prove themselves cult and up-to-date” (Hobsbawn 1995, p.183)⁴. This period is also characterized by the search for pacifism

⁴ In this perspective, the Colégios Maiores of the Universidad Complutense de Madrid were also created. Regarding the educational relations with Brazil, the Colégio Casa do Brasil was inaugurated in 1962, in a

with the creation of the Society of the Nations (1919). In this same perspective, the CIUP aims at materializing an ideological territory for the creation of a “society of students of all nations”, providing for the approximation of the international elites, who, as they return to their countries of origin, would also become real “Knights in the Service of Peace”. According to André François-Poncet, president of the Foundation City University in the inauguration ceremony of the Maison du Brésil, in 1959:

For the City is not a hotel, or a collection of hotels, where life is cheaper than in other places. It is a place for international contact. It was created after World War I, with the help of foreign governments and generous donors, to bring together, during two or three years, an elite of young people from different countries (currently, there are seventy nations of origin) to take them to meet each other, to get united by bonds of affection and friendship, and to remain connected, throughout their lives and their careers, and make predominant in their respective homelands the consciousness of human solidarity, the spirit of conscience and mutual help. This is what makes the University City of the Boulevard Jourdan characteristic and different from the others. (Maison du Brésil Speeches 1959, p.40).

The project of the CIUP extrapolates both the creation of housing and the French university formation. It reaches a broad educational perspective aiming at keeping the world peace, with the demand of the formatting of the interwar modern mentality. The pedagogy of the feeling of belonging, mentioned above, encompasses at least three aspects. It aims at making compatible France’s identity demonstrations and those from the different countries that build their houses at the CIUP, the learning of the French nation and the universalist and pacifistic ideals in the period of their creation, as Lemoine demonstrates:

Therefore the Cité would be, by its own physiognomy, a micro-cosmic representation of the universalist ideal that it proposed to represent. The collective life attractively offered to students of many nationalities should be marked by a feeling of integral equality reinforced by the privilege of belonging to an

context similar to the creation of the Maison du Brésil at the CIUP. “Our college is one of the four ascribed to the Universidad Complutense whose aims are the divulgation of the language, of the culture and of the civilization of other countries. The others are: the Colégio Mario Colombiano Antonio Caro, which is a university foundation nowadays; the Colégio Mario Nossa Sra. de África and the Colégio Maior Argentino Nossa Sra. de Luján. The Colégio Casa do Brasil is also one of the oldest, since it started its construction in 1960, with the signing of the Cultural Treaty Brazil-Spain, in effect at the present, and on the same date when the Brazilian capital, which was Rio de Janeiro at the time, was transferred to Brasília. Source: <http://www.casado brasil.org/Historia-br.html> consulted on May 31st, 2010.

So as to understand the peculiarities of the Casa do Brasil in relation to the Maison du Brésil, I performed a first period of fieldwork in Madrid between June 21 to 28, 2010. Being hosted there, I had the opportunity to start an interlocution with the present direction, talk to a few residents and agree on the bases for a future research. In relation to the meanings of the term elite, in this first moment, I perceived an even more incisive emphasis than at the Maison du Brésil, which I related to an educational tradition of the *Colégio Mayores* as a locus of formation of the ruling elites of Spain. According to Lasso de Vega (1948, p.499) they have the national role of formation of rulers.

international elite. In the cosmopolitan city that Paris was, the students would be uprooted, despite the pavilions having been built according to the architecture in use in their respective countries and would bring memories from their nation of origin. (LEMOINE: 1990, 29).

It is about an ethos to be internalized by its temporary inhabitants: the respect to peace, the acceptance of difference for living together peacefully as a new universal pattern of the cultured and civilized world that these elites belong to. Currently this learning can be perceived in the architecture of the houses, in the collective spaces, in its norms and cultural activities (such as the international exhibits, at that moment) which are in dialogue with the nations and regions that own Maisons there, as well as their peculiarities of organization and relative autonomy, which is made dynamic throughout CIUP's history⁵.

Its contemporary proposal updates the ideals that originated it in the 1920's and aims at favoring the development of the international circulation of the elites in formation with the offering of the necessary housing structure⁶ "integrated" to the city of Paris, as a proposal for the individual development of each resident. As a collective project, the perspective of integration from the acquaintanceship of students of many nations and regions is expressed in the current 40 residences that compose it and materialize the representation of the world-diversity in the proposal of collective spaces to be shared by all its residents, such as the Maison Internationale, for example. In these spaces the language used to serve the public is French, as well as the norms of etiquette and the patterns of behavior.

One of the characteristics of the CIUP as a territory of international circulation is the dialogue between the manners of the other foreigner (compatible) in the respective Maisons with the emphasis of the French "nation" in its spatial public dimension. This composition of the dialogue public/private that takes place in the collective spaces of the CIUP can also be perceptible in each one of the residences, where the occurrence of international circulation is mediated by the weight of the national, expressed in the social relations and networks, interfaces and circularities, which, on their turn, refer to the

⁵ Site CIUP www.ciup.fr consulted on February 20, 2009.

⁶ It is worth remembering the modification and the expansion of the Parisian university system throughout the 20th century. The Parisian universities initially concentrated at the Quartier Latin. IN the 1960's and 1970's there was an expansion to other campo such as Jussieu, Nanterre and Vincennes/Saint Denis, as well as a move to the suburbs over the last decade.

dilemmas of multiculturalism that articulates in an unequal way the cultural questions and has difficulties to live with the difference. I perceive the preponderance of the French nation (space/territory) at the CIUP. It occupies a universal dimension compared to the other national (local) “particulars” which are present, in this setting that is discoursed as multicultural.

Todorov (2008, p.266), analyzing the relations between communities inside the pre-modern Estates, develops the notion of cosmopolitanism (also vulgarly called multiculturalism). He characterizes it as the promoter of cultural plurality and alerts about the need for the existence of a universal norm concerning the equality of all human beings, which imposes a regulation of differences. For the author, the idea of a cosmopolitan Europe is complementary to a Europe of the nations, one assuming the other and granting it a frame.

On the contrary, Mauss (1969, p.629), analyzing the meaning of the term cosmopolitanism, relates it to a set of ideas and facts that take to the destruction of the negation of the nation, reserving for the term internationalism (the opposite of cosmopolitanism) a dimension that reinforces the national dimension and, consequently, submits itself to it

L'internationalisme digne de ce nom n'est le contraire du cosmopolitisme, Il ne nie pas la nation. Il la situe. Inter-nation, c'est le contraire d'a-nation. C'est aussi par conséquent le contraire du nationalisme, qui isole la nation. L'internationalisme est, si l'on veut bien accorder cette définition, l'ensemble des idées, sentiments et règles et groupements collectifs qui ont pour but de concevoir et diriger les rapports entre les nations et entre les sociétés en général.(Mauss, 1969, p.630) (Emphasis from the author).

The CIUP is configured as a locus of Europe's international culture. Its construction is conjugated to the idea of the production of the representations of the national territory as a complex network, having Paris as a center, and is expressed in a set of transformations (such as the transport system, the city organization and the architecture) which provide for the circulation of people and of new ideas, as Ortiz proposes (2000, p.35) as he analyzes the transformations that led Paris to modernity in the end of the 19th century. This is about a “concrete universal” that is expressed in the press, big stores, and exhibits (Ortiz 2000, p.82).

The conjugation of elements of affirmation of nationalism with the idea of international at the CIUP presents pedagogical objectives in service of the intellectual formation of the elites that reside there, which affects the rules of this “deterritorialized”

setting. To Abelés the deterritorialization is related to the international circulation of people, ideas, meanings, merchandise and can be understood in a large theoretical spectrum that proposes to analyze from the complex issues concerning the life of the immigrants to the understanding of the temporary displacements caused by tourism (Abelés 2008, p.203).

The CIUP constitutes in the territory where these dual bonds/relations (taken as deterritorialized) are produced, between the nations of the students (represented by the Houses of their place of origin) and the collective spaces where French nationalism is publicized as a prescribed behavioral pattern. From the point of view of its conception the CIUP has the expressed concern of avoiding the formation of ghettos in the different residences and making effective the integration of researchers of different nations.

This attempt happens through the “*brassage*” (*action de remuer, brasser pour mélanger*), which corresponds to the occupation of up to 30% of each one of the residences by students of different nationalities than the nation that the Maison represents. In this norm established by the CIUP each house has the freedom⁷ to exchange residents, established through agreements between the Maisons, made by their directors, in which the structure to be offered and the conditions of housing are observed, for example. It is through the *brassage*, which literally has the objective of mixing, that the international circulation is made effective between the residents inside the CIUP limits. It is an important phenomenon for the understanding of the intellectual formation, for it allows to glimpse at the affinities and the construction of networks that place into interaction individual trajectories in the resident’s lives:

In January 2010 I met Lianne. She is Belgian, is taking her master’s in architecture, residing at the MdB for a year. Living together with the Brazilian residents, she learned to speak some sentences in Portuguese. In the evening, in the kitchen of the 4th floor, she lead a French conversation group for the Brazilian residents. We participated together in the seminary about the image of Philippe Descola at the College de France. We exchanged impressions about the methodology of our researches, which had in common the interviews and the meanings given to spaces in the urban world. She was of the Residents Committee, working in the organization of parties and film screenings. We participated together in some feijoadas and we plan to prepare a *maigré de canard* for her good-bye party at the end of the semester. Anne, Andréia and Paula (all of them residents in the 4th floor of the Maison du Brésil) became friends. She invited Andréia and Paula to go to Belgium to meet her family and they have invited her to visit Brazil in 2011.

Murad is Moroccan is taking his DEA in Engineering. He can already understand some words in Portuguese. He is our best soccer player. Since he is a Muslim he feels a strangeness regarding the high

⁷ This percentage corresponds to the interpretation of the data given to the residents on the occasion of the interview of admission with the director of the Maison du Brésil. It is also expressed at the CIUP site in relation to the presence of the same percentage of French students in the residences.

consumption of alcohol at the Maison du Brésil. In spite of the language barrier, he is very well integrated to the activities of the 5th floor of the MdB. (Field journal, May 2010).

The situation of *brassage* lived by these researchers puts into question the obligatoriness of interlocution with the world of the other as a condition for survival. To be chosen to live in a non-national house implies in accepting the criteria of classification used by the directors of the Houses as the only way of staying at the CIUP. It is possible to say that the “privilege” of staying in one’s national House falls over the members of the intellectual elite classified as preferential residents and most desired in the point of view of the administration and the norms of each house.

Maison du Brésil

The interlocution between the Brazilian and non-Brazilian researchers can be perceived in a peculiar way at the Maison du Brésil throughout its history. It was inaugurated with an interest in the dialogue between Brazil and France (in 1925, during the Getúlio Vargas government) which later led to its construction, as the minister of Education Clóvis Salgado states during the opening ceremony of the MdB in June 24 1959, referring to the relations between France and Brazil:

Destined to serve the intellectual exchange, Brazil’s pavilion is itself the result of an international collaboration. Trusting Le Corbusier with Lúcio Costa’s original design, the Brazilian Government intended to pay tribute to the person who inspired Brazilian modern architecture (...)

The inauguration of the “House of Brazil” is even more meaningful as it coincides with a noticeable extension of the cultural contacts between our two countries. Certainly the spiritual identity between Brazilians and French is neither a political product nor a diplomatic formula, or an occasional connection due to current interests. It is a reality of two peoples, the French people who got close to us since the ancient times of the discoveries, and of the Brazilian people who understood and loved France and its spirit since they had consciousness of their destiny (Maison du Brésil Speeches, 1959, p.10)

Having as perspective the offer of an international formation for Brazilian researchers, the understanding of the relations between Brazil and France is situated in the intensification of cultural exchanges based on the French welcome and its appreciation as a space of erudition. The relations Brazil/France are justified by a need of learning, and the awareness of the Brazilian destiny (a country in process of modernization) would happen from a process of intellectual elevation of the Brazilian elites in French soil.

The issue of the housing space as expression and representation of the Brazilian nation in France is fundamental to understand this process, for it refers to the country of origin as the place that the elites must necessarily go back to. The integration to the French world, in this sense, “must” be restricted and temporary. It presents clear limits. The interlocution at the CIUP happens between the elites of different countries and in some cases, with French from different regions in France. It is a setting for the “foreigners” to live in Paris, as the discourse of the Minister of Education in France, André Boulouche, in June 1959:

We are happy to host you in this City, which is the image of the modern world: you know that, to correspond to the wishes of André Honorat, its great founder, this city gathers currently students from 72 countries: 32 houses were donated by the University of Paris, whose founders firm a contract with the University of Paris, giving them magnificent constructions destined to host the university youth, establishing the conditions of its contribution and the modalities of its action in the ensemble of the City. We have seen the profitable results of these exchanges and the advantage of the original statute of this City, unique in Paris and in the world, with its 500 students, its private and own regulations: to try to mutually understand each other in the best possible way, discovering the different values that each country represents (Maison du Brésil Speeches, 1959, p.17).

According to Salim (2004, p.1) even though the first documents that mention the project of construction of the Maison du Brésil are from the 1930's, the legal proceedings only actually took place in the 1950's, and the building was completed in three years with resources from Brazilian Ministry of Education through CAPES funding. After the Decree 56.728 from 18/08/1965, the Maison du Brésil became connected to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its director is regulated as an official Brazilian agent in mission in France, with an annual budget of \$63.800 dollars. In the 1970's the statute of the Maison du Brésil was changed. Its donation to the Brazilian government is altered through a new composition of the House Administration Council, restricted to six out of the ten previous members, with only one Brazilian member and without the president of the Brazilian Ambassador. The Commission de la Fondation Franco-Bresilienne was created to supervise the activities of the Administration Council and the director of the house, with the objective of “better” ordinate the cooperation between the two countries. The Maison du Brésil is then called Fondation Franco-Bresilienne.

In spite of these changes that resulted in the restriction of the Brazilian autonomy in face of its administration (the new French director started to be indicated by the Administration Council) the yearly subvention of the Brazilian Government was kept

until 1981. Its suppression in 1982 was object of protest and of the organization of the residents with the Brazilian authorities (achieving some success). Between 1982 and 1995 some distortions started taking place at the Maison du Brésil regarding its university character. It starts hosting many short-term residents (temporary guests) charging higher values than the ones charged to the students/researchers (which also had their rates raised). In 1985 when the building of the Maison du Brésil was inscribed as French Historical Heritage, it already presents signs of deterioration, problems with security and insalubrity.

The residence housed some political refugees during the Military Dictatorship and, in 1968, the Maison du Brésil was used as place for meetings before the manifestations at the Quartier Latin (Rotman 2008, p.22). The 1970's were difficult times for the administration of the house in its dialogue with the Brazilian government. The Maison du Brésil suffered from lack of maintenance and wear, culminating with the progressive deterioration of rooms and furniture. In the 1990's the situation became chaotic and led to the closing of the theater, performed by the Préfecture de Police de Paris in 1994 and the closing of several rooms and the whole 5th floor. Some infiltrations and flooding also took place in the ground floor and in the basement, and the heating didn't work anymore in some places. Between 1993 and 1995 the position of Director of the Maison du Brésil was vacant, since Director's apartment was uninhabitable. The collapse of part of the ceiling of the ground floor, in June 1996, happened the day before the official visit of the President Fernando Henrique Cardoso to Paris.

After having the director's position vacant for three years and 30 years of French management, in 1996 the direction of the MdB was accepted by a Brazilian architect, who had the difficult mission of making an approximation with the Brazilian to get the necessary resources for its restoration. The House of Brazil was closed between 1997 and 2000, and its statutes were changed, regaining its autonomy.

This happened after MEC presented its willingness to grant two million dollars for the reconstruction of the Maison du Brésil, as long as the current statutes from House Administration Council were altered. MEC, through Itamaraty, was formally opposed to the proposal of recovery presented by the Fondation Franco-Bresiliénne to the House of Brazil Administrative Council, which conditioned its reform to a change in the donation

act to attach it to the Fondation Nationale, something that would imply in the definitive loss of its national character. With the acceptance from the CIUP of the conditions presented above, the Maison du Brésil was opened to be reconstructed. It was re-opened in 2000 and re-inaugurated in 2002.

Currently, the contact for the Brazilian researchers who wish to reside in the Maison, the necessary information about the residence and the application for the vacancies happens through the website www.maisondubresil.org, which presents the house, highlighting aspects of its history and reconstruction, its heritage character and its famous former residents. There is also a link for the Maison du Brésil at the Capes site, meaning a set of established relations between this graduate researchers funding program and the Maison du Brésil, as well as the relations established between Brazil and France. These mirror that the image of the nation and its struggles permeate the history of the residence and of the very Cité Internationale Universitaire de Paris that hosts it.

The documentation consulted about the history of the Maison du Brésil demonstrates a certain autonomy in its normative constitution in relation to the choice of residents, making its regulations compatible with the normative demands of the CIUP. Its criteria of admission privilege Brazilian Government's CAPES and CNPq fellows, which are considered by the MdB administration, as I will present later, as representatives of the Brazilian intellectual elite.

The establishment of the relation between the concession of scholarships and the constitution of an "intellectual elite" invites us to think about the enlargement of the concept of elite in relation to Brazil in current days. The appreciation of meritocratic individual criteria, through the granting of a scholarship to study abroad, and the existence of an agreement between the Maison du Brésil and CAPES/CNPq, demonstrates interest from the Brazilian state to propitiate its scholars with a certain "idealness" of conditions for the development of their studies which favors the establishment of criteria of distinction. In this case the distinction is established through the "schooling" investment in the appearance of legitimacy, in service of the legitimation of privileges, as Bourdieu and Passeron state (1964, p. 40). The objective is the production of a coincidence of interests between university education and national development, which culminates, according to Bourdieu and Passeron, in the reproduction

(194, p.191) of certain privileges of the Brazilian fellow abroad, in relation to the other researchers.

As the e-mails below demonstrate, received through the APEB⁸ mailing list, there is an heterogeneous perception from the Brazilian researchers in France regarding the Maison du Brésil, the funding agencies and the *brassage*:

Hi children

I'm going straight to the point: to make the life of whoever is not in Paris yet easier, and has to solve the biggest problem here: where to live (logement)

1 – the Maison of Brazil doesn't exist ! It is no exaggeration to call it – even in a mean way – CAPES Maison !

why ? because CAPES, after paying the biggest part of the Maison's debt, simply monopolized the vacancies : nothing less than that !

2- the 'news' that go around about power abuse, arrogance and other horrible things... are not only 'rumours'. I lived in the cité for three years (in other maisons) and I've met people who tried to change the « little schemes » at the Maison du Brésil ... hummm.. with no success !

3- the application for housing at the cité U. (until 2009) at least, was the following :
applying through the Internet

your dossier is sent to your country's Maison

you have (or not) a reply after 'some' time

that means, if you are NOT a CAPES fellow (which, by the way, are students that, due to the high value of their scholarships, are the ones who need the least) you will get, luckily, a NO from the Capes Maison !
sad but true! (message received by e-mail in June 18, 2010)

.....
Hi, I've lived at the cité for almost a year (actually I lived at the maison du brésil for only 15 days and after they sent me to the maison d'argentine, in brassage) and I can say that it's very good! there are many advantages, such as location and price, but I think the most important thing is to arrive in Paris and be able to have this whole structure of reception, and people willing to help you. I also think it's difficult to feel alone here. you normally make friends fast. this is very important, specially in the first months. of course, there are some difficulties: since it is university housing, there are many rules (such as paying to have guests, a limited time for that, not being able to smoke in the room) and the basic inconvenient of sharing a kitchen and a bathroom with a lot of people. ah, and if you stay at the maison of brasil there is also the inconvenient of speaking portuguese all the time... which, in my opinion, makes learning French a little more difficult. but generally I would say it's great ! ;) hugs and good luck.

The brassage currently is still processed through the liberality dressed as a gift that permeates the criteria of selection for admission at the CIUP throughout its history, as in 1959 the president of the Foundation Cité Universitaire expressed:

⁸ The APEB-FR (Associação de Pesquisadores Brasileiros na França – Brazilian Researchers in France Association) is an association that has been congregating researchers in France for the past 25 years and promotes and supports cultural and academic activities, such as the Cycle APEB and the extinct Domingo de Sol. The APEB has a mailing list, unmediated, in which information about the most varied subjects circulate. To preserve the privacy of the actors involved I have suppressed their names and other references.

The students who live in the Cité Universitaire don't do it as a right, but due to a favor. This favor, always revocable, is given to them in relation to their schooling history, their family situation, their intellectual aptitudes, but also in view of their moral qualities and their good behavior. This good conduct, justifying the credit that was open to them, must translate into serious, regular work, in the observance of the regulations and the common discipline, in the kindness to their comrades, in the attention to the youth that participates in the life in the city. (...) (Maison du Brésil Speeches 1959, p.40).

The privilege of living at the CIUP belongs to a select groups of people, based in criteria that conduct to the constitution of an "elite" of foreign students in France. It is worth thinking about the model character of these criteria and its parameters of constitution, for they point at the signification of the concept of elite at the CIUP, in the 1960's, whose criteria indicate a confuse mixture of bourgeois values (such as the school merit) with the archaic traditionalism of a supposed "academic court society" based on family origin, in which the character of distinction and election, according to Elias (1974, p.75) is expressed in the representation of it as "a favor", not in the right of the students to live at the CIUP.

The inexistence of a legal obligatoriness of hosting the students (in the limit of their vacancies) and the favoring/award to those who correspond to the values established as valid for the construction of a world intellectual elite that lives at the CIUP demonstrates that the qualification and the correspondence of "elite" is a social and historical construct expressed in the regulations and practices of the Maisons that compose the CIUP.

However, it is worth mentioning that the context of this discursive production is prior to May 1968, which corresponded to an effective revolution in the costumes of the CIUP itself, whose statutes were modified in 1973, with the possibility of introduction of co-ed pavilions and a relative break of the residents "ideological patrol", according to the articles 3 to 5 of the regulation of the Maison du Brésil in 1959:

"External visits to the rooms are formally prohibited, with an exception in certain special cases submitted to the director's judgment. The visits in the rooms between residents of different sexes are rigorously prohibited. Every violation of this rule, whatever the reason is, will be punished with expelling in 24 hours. No permission will be granted or accorded upon." "The students will abstain of every political or religious propaganda of whatever form in the House. No announcements or ads can be place inside the House without the director's written authorization".

The rigidity of the norms in its prescriptive character reinforces the search for idealness in the patterns of the period. If by one hand the audacious modernist

architecture of Le Corbusier and Lucio Costa at the Maison du Brésil (in contrast to other spaces at the CIUP, built in neoclassic style) invites to an immersion in the modern world of a house that is effectively to be lived in and disposed of, on the other hand the norms of its use by the elites that inhabit it are circumscribed to the traditional and archaic diktats that refer to the interwar period in a conception of students living at the CIUP.

Currently the Maison du Brésil⁹ has 100 apartments and a population of 125 people, including companions of some researchers who live in double rooms, and children up to nine years old. There are 102 Brazilians and 23 non-Brazilians. From these, 67 are doctorate researchers, 6 master researchers and 20 researchers (probably from post-doc). There are also 12 Brazilians with incomplete registration and 27 people of non-declared category – probably the companions or non-Brazilians with incomplete registration.

In terms of financing, the Brazilian funding agencies are responsible for almost 70% of the researchers. There are 54 sandwich-doctorate fellows from CAPES and 4 from CNPq. There are 7 post-doc fellows from CAPES and 2 from CNPq, 2 CNPq research scholarships and one from the CAPES/COFECUB agreement, and 3 FAPESP scholarships. There is one FORD FOUNDATION fellow, 3 from INRIA, one from MNHN, one from the French government, one from the Mexican government, and one from the Japanese government, in a total of 80 researchers with scholarships.

In the classification by area of knowledge there is a certain inaccuracy in the data, which makes its use a little harder: 48 residents are related to Human and Social Sciences, 20 to biological and biomedical sciences, 18 to physical and technological sciences and 5 to the arts. The reception by centers of research in the Paris region is also very plural with a highlight to the EHESS which hosts 15 researchers, Sorbonne (in its many campuses) which hosts 16 and the CNRS with 4. The age profiles shows that the population of the Maison du Brésil is considerably young: 42 researchers declare having been born in the 80's, 41 in the 70's, 15 in the 60's, seven in the 50's and there is only

⁹ The data supplied by the administration of the Maison du Brésil are from April 2010 and based in the admission form of the residents. The table is composed by their full name, place and date of birth, nationality, their source of financing and the institution of reception of the researcher in France. They don't allow for a mapping of their institutions of origin in Brazil.

one researcher from the 1940's. There is also a female preponderance at the Maison du Brésil – 75 women and 50 men.

As Garcia Jr. points (2009, p.14) a substantial transformation in the arrival of researchers to France happened after 1962, when the Brazilian government started granting scholarships. The analysis of the 30 interviews performed so far to get to know the individual trajectory of these researchers also points to the dependence on the scholarship for studying/researching abroad, even though the social and family origin of the researchers is very plural, as Garcia Jr. states:

The conception of the fellows as missionaries from their country of origin who wish to get instruments that seem to found modernity in the same bases. As in other projects of long-distance migration, the one that leaves is a depositary of hopes from the ones who stay, in the expectancy of the appropriation of new richness that might fecundate the economic life and the local culture. The international access of fractions of non-heirs frequently has as counterpart a feeling of moral debt vis-à-vis the collectivity that made that possible, which doubles, for them, the feeling of being a foreigner in the country that hosts them. (Garcia Jr. 2009, p.16)

This conception, which I perceived through my fieldwork at the MdB, produces an approximation between the fellows and the term elite that persists in the everyday life of the researchers, in their interviews and in the welcome meeting with the director of the MdB. This meeting in a group of up to 10 people takes place a few days after the arrival of the resident, in the director's office, and has as objective to clarify about the workings of the House and the CIUP. The words of Carlos, an economist from Recife, who lived at the Maison du Brésil between 2003 and 2004 refers to this moment lived by the residents in their first days at the Maison:

- Each one who arrived to live in the house was set to a *rendez-vous* with the director (individual or in small groups). The conversation basically consisted in the presentation of the main rules of functioning of the house and in the clarification of doubts, questions that the new residents might have. I remember specially from a sentence of the director that ended the display of the regulation of the house, which was: - "please, don't ask me to break these rules". The warning has as an assumption that Brazilians don't follow the rules, are averse to discipline, since they always look for a way to go around it.

In spite of the CIUP and MdB's internationalism, it is worth pointing out that the meetings with the director are made in separate moments for Brazilians and non-Brazilians. Despite the separation (which is probably justified by the newly-arrived Brazilian's difficulty in understanding French) I have perceived a discursive emphasis in relation to the complementarity between Brazilians and non-Brazilians who live at the MdB, perceptible, for example, in the mention that – "*here we are all foreigners*", the

obligatoriness of speaking French and, mostly, that the House is a space for encounter and living together of the world elites, where the legacy and spirit of conception of the CIUP must be respected.

The expression “please don’t ask me to break these rules” expresses the tension that permeates the relations at the Maison du Brésil and that I interpret as a cultural misunderstanding of the present management’s performance by many subjects. This misunderstanding is present in the complaints, by the direction, of the non-following of previously established norms, such as the care for collective spaces, for example. The residents complain of the intervention of the staff in their private lives, and, mostly, of the non-subjectification, the lack of affectivity, flexibility and the discourtesy when they are obliged to leave their rooms, many hours before the departure of their flights, that their presence means nothing for the direction of the house, who is only interested in numbers.

It is also in this context that the meanings of the term elite by the Director of the House are inscribed. The mentions that come up in her explanations about the history of the CIUP (built to foment an international pacifist mentality, by hosting the elites of countries) and about the Maison du Brésil, which, in this sense, aims at hosting, throughout its history, its intellectual exponents in their post-graduate formation in France.

I think that the characterization of the residents/fellows as – the Brazilian intellectual elite – has an explicit sense of their accountability for the House. It’s a pedagogical resource that is used for the sensibilization of the researchers about what it means to live at the Maison du Brésil. This characterization is preceded (in the meeting with the director) by the invitation to the individual presentation of each one of the participants and the questioning about their proposal of collaboration in the House, followed by the questions “Can I count on you?” - directed to each one of the participants.

The Director’s collocations in the meeting have at least two dimensions: they invite to the reflection about living at the Maison du Brésil as a privilege of the Brazilian intellectual elite who in their majority have government-granted scholarships. Added to this, I interpret it as a reference of desirable patterns of behavior of the Brazilian elite (who must not disappoint). These behavioral patterns are based in western codes shared

inside the erudite universe and the Brazilian civility standards, which are implicit (non-spoken), as in the previous example about the “don’t ask me to break these rules”, and refer to the incarnation, by the administration of the MdB, of the internationalist conception that originated the CIUP in the 1920’s.

From the contradictions of internationalism to the pedagogization of a feeling of *elite*

The fact that researchers of different nationalities are living together in this French “international” territory raises misunderstandings and contradictions that get in shock with the CIUP ideals. Next, I present two examples of these misunderstandings that took place at the Maison du Brésil, involving an Indian resident and a group of Pakistani students.

The Indian resident was called to the direction to give explanations about why he was using the bedspread to cover himself while sleeping instead of the sheets, which were intact when changed in his bedroom every two weeks. His explanation was that the white sheets are used in his region to cover the dead and it was bad luck to use them.¹⁰

In March 2010, Claudio, a historian from USP and ex-sandwich-doctorate fellow, told me about an incident lived in July 2008 at the Maison du Brésil with a group of young people from Pakistan which provoked strong reactions among the residents of the 4th floor, due to the inadequate use of the kitchens and bathrooms. A group of 18 guys was hosted in individual rooms where two beds were placed, during the summer vacations. They stayed at the MdB for a French summer course.

The indignation started when one of the residents, in the morning, went to the floor’s collective bathroom and found feces and urine outside the toilet. Horrified by the scene and assisted by the floor’s *femme de ménage*, she asked for urgent measures for the direction, which changed her room. Throughout the following three months the kitchen and the bathroom were avoided by the Brazilian residents who remained on the floor,

¹⁰ The information reported above happened in 2004. She was given to me by a Brazilian resident who was very close to the Indian resident, Sergio, from Fortaleza, as we spoke, and he complained about the lack of privacy in the house, the rigidity of the norms and the difficulty in accepting cultural difference.

claiming the lack of hygiene of the Pakistani who didn't use toilet paper, but water bottles to perform their hygiene in the bathrooms and soon after that went to the kitchen.

This probably happened because in Pakistan the toilets are directly on the floor (the so-called Turkish toilet). The western bathrooms, on their turn, don't allow for the usual position (squat) for defecation, causing collective intestinal problems. Thus, despite the reprisals, the Pakistani kept defecating on the floor.

The episode, more than cultural intolerance, shows the lack of mutual knowledge of both universes and a lack of broad educational preoccupation for the occupation of collective spaces. It also demonstrates that the western patterns of hygiene and behavior are taken as *a priori* data. There is no acknowledgment of difference, even if that seems contradictory for a space that denominates itself multicultural. In this sense, there isn't by the CIUP or by the respective Maisons, a concern with non-western habits in terms of eating, hygiene, etc., as, for example, the restaurant of the Maison Internationale, which doesn't offer non-western options in the menu.

Recalling these two incidents illustrates the difficulty that living with the difference raises for the most diverse actors that share life at the CIUP. There is no one to blame for this situation, but the ignorance of certain "details" which, from a cultural point of view, become fundamental. I understand this living together and its difficulties as an educational experience of large dimensions, in which the learning of the language, new costumes, rules of etiquette are inscribed, besides, obviously, and education of the body, in short, a civilizing process, as Elias proposes (1982, p.300) which, analyzed in relation to the practices exemplified above, demonstrates the radicalism of oppositions that characterize East and West.

In fact, in spite of this discoursed multiculturalism and the demand of *Brassage* inside the CIUP, the Maison du Brésil has as main concern to host members of its *élite* that come to Paris to do research. To Claudio, an economist from São Paulo taking his post-doc, who lived there in 2009-2010, "the MdB should be thought of as an instrument of the relations that are established from the French-Brazilian graduate policy, and not its cause". Logically, beyond the individual desire of each one of the researchers that live there, the MdB can't host the major part of the students in formation in France. It is

worth pointing that the coming of Brazilian researchers to Paris doesn't happen because of the MdB, though one of the reasons for its existence is to host this "elite".

According to the current regulation of the MdB, approved in February 2010, the choice of candidates to be a resident depends on the Admission Committee of the MdB, which, on its turn, takes into account in their decisions the priorities of the Brazilian cultural and scientific policy as it is transmitted by its government officials, according to article 2: "The committee agrees on a priority to the candidates presented by the Ministry of Education of Brazil through CAPES (Coordination of Improvement of Superior Level Personnel) or by competent origin in the subject".

One of the members of the Admission Committee is the Director of the Franco-Brésilienne Foundation (the legal denomination of the MdB). In practice it is responsible for admission and the implementation of the necessary procedures, along with the secretaries, who welcome the residents and correspond with them by e-mail. This way, the Director has a very visible and decisive agency in the everyday of the House, raising heterogeneous reactions:

- The set of clarifications about the House was important. After the meeting I understood better the need for imposition of the norms. There is a relation between the Maison du Brésil and the Brazilian funding agencies that can be seen in the director's words and I think it's great for a house like this, which is for the students, and it can't fall into the hands of an embassy, which is political, and, in this sense, its work is very praiseworthy (Mauro, Law, PUCSP);
- The meeting with Inez is something revealing about the House, which is a place that hosts you, even though people see it as their personal house, beyond a contract. But it gives me the creeps to think about it, that we live through a rite of imposition of her authority as a matriarch. She has a very masculine personality. This is from the farm, from Brazil. It is the father that "smacks" you and gives you affection (Fernando, Sociology USP).

Exploring the differences of meaning of the director's words for the two residents, it is worth pointing out at the strength of the reactions that her actions raise. In the representations produced about the MdB the director of the House is always mentioned in a passionate way (either loved or hated). There is, on one hand, the highlight of the acknowledgment of her performance in terms of the recovery process that took place in

the 90's and the keeping of "order" for the proper working of the Maison du Brésil, but there are also countless complaints in relation to her rigidity and insensitiveness¹¹.

The testimonials are revealing of the meanings of the relations between management and the members of the intellectual elite that reside at the MdB. In these terms, Fernando's statement reveal the criticism of a learning of archaic cultural patterns of a retrograde Brazilian tradition that projects itself in France, especially in a moment in which it would be desirable to break with these patterns to enter a cosmopolite universe represented by a trip to Paris.

The keeping of this *ethos brasiliis* would make difficult the possibility of opening and interlocution with the French world, for referring to the presence of Brazil with the imposition of its "cultural defects" through the performance of a retrograde mentality, denoting that the educational process of the Brazilian residents at the MdB is completely mediated by the images of Brazil. The House would reflect as a simulacrum the image of a hierarchical, authoritarian and traditionally male Brazilian society, a pre-modern Brazil to be lived in France.

Some researchers (who, like Fernando, have a critical posture regarding the universe of the House) even relate the lack of insertion of the Brazilian doctorate students in the French academic universe with their permanence at the Maison du Brésil, seen as a *bunker* (for Kahlo, Sociology from UFRGS), a *uterus* or a *safe harbor*, or even as a *favela*, *Neverland* or *Phantasy island*, which dichotomously welcomes and protects.

These representations refer to an idyllic world, temporary and unreal, of a Brazil to be lived in France, invented by the researchers that reside here that is endlessly re-created and stereotyped at every "Brazilians" party in the kitchens or at the Cafeteria of the Maison du Brésil. The very interpretation of some residents as they consider themselves as elite or not reveals about this living, of the embodiment or not of an internalized elite ethos and its developments in relation to the Parisian life.

- About the Brazilians who are here, you can't even think about an elite. The fact of coming here doesn't make for a better student. If he has previous conditions he is going to enjoy it and not only live with

¹¹ Since 2003, when I lived at the MdB for the first time and I mention her in several situations as part of my interest of research, people who have had some contact with the residence always ask about the permanence of the current director. I mention this fact to justify the impact of her action.

Brazilians. By the sample I have these are not the best. The international experience is important for everyone, but we are away from everything and the exchange depends on the student. That's why I think CAPES is bad and dumb, it has no control of partnership with the students and doesn't make things clear even for the ones who host us. (Mauro, Law, PUCSP).

- To say that we are the elite is not very healthy. I don't have any pretension of being the elite, though I am called like that. (Beatriz, Philosophy USP).

- We that live here think we are an elite, think we are "above everything". And I see so many Brazilian students here outside that the House doesn't support, that the direction turns its back to. This here is fake, it is a Brazil that doesn't exist. That's what Inez says, that this is her house, and CAPES is another one that lets you down. (Diana, Music UNICAMP).

- I am part of an elite, yes, in the sense that only very few people have access to this. It's part of a group that has access to education, to the academic part and to cultural exchanges, the income that also improves. But this is also a merit, an individual battle. (Sandra, Applied Social Sciences IFRRJ)

- This house doesn't show the Brazilian diversity because the people that come here, in Brazil, are upper middle class children, who have a housekeeper, who never left home and can't use collective spaces. They don't want to establish relations with people who are from different worlds, even other Brazilians. (Leonardo, photography, UFRJ).

There is a plurality of perceptions of the term elite by the residents of the MdB, such as: the perception of being part of a privileged minority (who were casually awarded) with access to a scholarship that allows for the international experience and the feeling of difference and superiority shared by the members of the group, in opposition to other Brazilian students that don't live at the MdB. There is also the perception of some disdain to the category itself (members of a Brazilian elite) with a bias of oppositions of social classes demarcated in the diversity of the residents of the MdB, such as the discrimination that the term brings and the troubles caused by belonging or being perceived as part of this category.

The polemic that the term raises is not unworthy of its classificatory dimension inside the Maison du Brésil. It has a pendulous character that has as a common point the "differentiation" that the expression raises, oscillating between economical and intellectual adjectives. There isn't, therefore, among the residents, a consensus about which elite we are talking when we think about the MdB, even though its pedagogical dimension owns a symbolic efficacy that permeates the living of its residents in different situations.

In search of overcoming the difference: of the uses and "abuses" of the nation and the region.

From the statements placed throughout this text it is possible to relate the MdB with the constitution in a space for the formation of “the elites” in full meaning. A place in which Brazil is recreated and where there is a frequent dialogue with the living of its stereotypes. A Brazilian territory in Paris of temporary cultural learning of the residents who want to take some distance from Brazil, without breaking the links, as some of the following statements reveal about the experience of living at the MdB:

- The Maison du Brésil is important because we feel welcomed, even though there is no immersion in the language. In France, at the university, I feel like a fish out of water. I have troubles with the language. Here at the Maison du Brésil, people help you and give you the coordinates. (Vera, Literature, Bahia).
- I love the Maison du Brésil, the Cité and the cafeteria. But I think it's sad that these stereotypes are perpetuated. There are some indians (that is shit) in the front door of the House and we end up perpetuating that. At the Argentina House there is Borges and Cortázar. (Jacó, Math, Minas Gerais).

The testimonials above reveal the acknowledgment of some advantages of living at the Maison du Brésil for its dimension as a safe harbor and the good structure that it offers for living in France. The criticisms refer to the constant presence of Brazil in the symbolic universe of international formation of these researchers, as Brito analyzes (2002, p.189) as he studies the relations between French advisors and Brazilian fellows, in the 1990's, in France. An ambiguous imaginary, since the Brazilians leave the country wishing to enjoy the cosmopolitanism of an international formation and they perceive it as permeated by the local (Hannerz 1990, p.253). This localism is here represented by the linguistic issue and by the presence, at the entrance of the Maison du Brésil, of two wood sculptures of indians in natural size which, according to the direction of the MdB, were a gift of the Yanomani people.

The ostensive presence of these sculptures causes deep uneasiness. This image of Brazil “offered” to visitants and residents at the very entrance of the House demarcates a territory also populated by less ostensive symbols, but equally visible, and that refer to Brazil, such as the ads in the murals, colors, plants, and commemorative plaques. The contact with the wooden indians and its repulse refers to a negative interpretation of this materiality, by relating it to incivility, to irrationality. Metaphorically it refers to Brazil as a country of barbarians, of natives that need to be civilized and colonized by the French, in the context of the CIUP, in contraposition to the image presented by Argentina

which has, in the entrance of its House, the most precious pearls of its erudite universe – Cortázar and Borges.

Maybe the revolt is related to a perception of the colonizing position that the image of the indians brings, for it refers to Brazil as the country of colors, of soccer, of Carnival, of nudity and of laziness, and not of intellectual production. In this sense, the indians are represented as a thick material for the production of stereotypes which reify Brazil as an exotic by excellence to be lived in France to which is added a plurality of images that populates Paris such as restaurants of Brazilian food, bars, forrós, shops of Brazilian products, etc.

The presence of the indians raises indignation and resentment, referring to questions of great importance, which have remained without an answer. What is the Brazil that the Maison du Brésil mirrors? What does it wish to show as an image? A country that is so proud of its ethnic plurality and the living of diversity that elects it as its preponderant representation and exposes it at the entrance of a “Brazilian” historical heritage in France? Or the representation of an idyllic and hedonist exoticism?

It is undeniable that the production of this representation about an indigenous Brazil refers to a dichotomy between the academic and erudite universe to which the members of this elite that lives at the Maison du Brésil belong and the natural world to which the “Indian” has been historically related to and generalized. Paradoxically, the fact that the statement above characterizes the presence of the sculptures as *shit* reinforces the impossibility of seeing the other, of breaking with the interpretation of the stereotype and reversing this representation of its inferiority to the positivity of difference, as Bhabha proposes (1998, p.111). But this would be a long path to be followed and might not even be desired.

The indians raise veiled nocturne actions, the performance of rites of status reversion. At a goodbye party that took place at the MdB, one of the Yanomami sculptures was removed and taken to the Cafeteria by some residents. There the indian danced, was touched and adored by the presents, and later, divided in two pieces and thrown in a corner, was “forgotten” by the bystanders (maybe despised). After some time the Security Guard who was at the Reception was called to open the door of one of the rooms and the “Indian” was put back in its place of origin, without bigger consequences.

The action was planned, in a way, and had been mentioned before as a strong wish, in some intimate gatherings, which I interpret as a way to demonstrate unconformity, even if veiled, referring to practices associated to an adolescent universe that is projected in the Maison du Brésil through the everyday life of its elites.

Stealing the indians and misplacing them, taking them to live, even temporarily, the ethylic and live universe of the Cafeteria, where people dance and limits are extrapolated in the goodbye parties, is revealing of the use of stereotypes as a possibility of re-organization of the symbolic universe for the overcoming of the crisis lived by the residents of the MdB. Bourdieu, analyzing the international circulation of ideas, relates the intellectual world to the difficulty of managing a set of prejudices:

On croit souvent que la vie intellectuelle est spontanément internationale. Rien n'est plus faux. La vie intellectuelle est le lieu, comme tous les autres espaces sociaux de nationalismes et de imperialismes, et les intellectuelles véhiculent, presque autant que les autres, des préjugés, des stéréotypes, des idées reçues, des représentations très sommaires, très élémentaires, qui se nourrissent des accidents de la vie quotidienne, des incompréhensions, des malentendus, des blessures (celles par exemple que peut infliger le narcissisme le fait d'être inconnu dans un pays étranger). (Bourdieu: 2006, p.3)

Analyzed along with other events (the party with the indian) refers to the interpretation of the Brazilian national and its regions, in which I perceived the use of caricatural resources, mixed to a desire of authenticity in these practices, such as the organization of goodbye parties, feijoadas and some barbecues, at the weekends, in which there is an attempt to reproduce the characteristics of a Brazilian feijoada or a Gaucho barbecue.

-Our desire for authenticity (in the search for Brazilian flavor) has as its practical limits the purchase of the ingredients. In Paris, we rarely found manioc flour, much less kale. We made farofa from couscous and used broccoli leaves for as mineira kale. The beans were a product of transnational circulation since they were brought from Brazil by family members or friends who came to visit, but we also tried to cook (with some success) the red beans used for salad in France, in our feijoadas, which we baptized *Feijoada Mëtisse*. For the churrasco (barbecue) we purchased meat at a Chinese market close to the Maison. Nothing like our succulent Gaucho cuts. The meat was cooked on a grill outside the cafeteria like the *assados de tira* eaten in Uruguay and Argentina. It was such a cold January day that we also left our beers outside, close to the improvised churrasqueira (barbecuer). (Field journal, 2004).

- To buy good meat the best is to already know the butcher. We have been buying at a butcher's in Porte d'Orléans and our final objective is to be able to make a barbecue here at the MdB with our cuts. In this last barbecue he cut it closer to what we wanted. But my father always says that the best is to buy meat at the supermarket, because the meat at the butcher's is his (the butcher's) and he will only sell you the left-overs, but here we can't find what we are looking for in the supermarket. (Tabajara, 33 years-old, gaucho, post-doc in Chemistry, 2010).

Feijoadas and barbecues are special occasions that gather between 20 and 30 people and, in which, even though we debated about our non-intention of producing

stereotypes and tried to deny them, Brazil and Rio Grande do Sul were celebrated. According to the analysis of Fry (1977) and Maciel (1996) these eating rituals present clear identity dimensions. At the Maison du Brésil they refer to the maxim that we might have never felt so Brazilian as during those months in Paris. The same seems also to be truth for the regional issue, in relation to Rio Grande do Sul. A group of gauchos, representing satirically their integration to the expansion of gauchism throughout the world, created in 2003 at the Maison du Brésil the CTG Coxilha do Eliseu¹². According to Cristiano:

- The CTG Coxilha do Eliseu started with the fact that I used to drink chimarrão every Saturday in the late afternoon, and habit that I started to share with you and after that things expanded, our friendship in special. But our sports rivalries were kept. I always used to make fun of the colorado monkeys and vice-versa... something typical among us, that you don't see among cariocas, paulistas or other people from the country with the same intensity as among us.¹³

One of the activities of the CTG was to improve the gaucho typical dish which was most viable to be made in Paris, the rice with sausage or “china rice”¹⁴, roughly translated as “riz au saussice de mouton ou riz à la putaine pouvre”. In 2010, also as a satire, at the 5th floor of the Maison du Brésil, where many gauchos lived, the Maison do Rio Grande do Sul was created. A flag of the state was hung on the kitchen wall to decorate a Sunday feijoada and jerseys from Grêmio and Internacional were placed side to side with the Brazilian team jersey and the picture of the Maison du Brésil team. According to Tabajara's words (post-doc in Chemistry) the objective of this exaltation

¹² CTG is the abbreviation of Center of Gaucho Traditions, which, in Rio Grande do Sul, corresponds to a social club where gauchism is worshipped, a movement that lives the gaucho of the past in the present based on the production of representations and practices that refer to the incarnation of the gaucho. The CTG is a representation of the old gaucho farms and reproduces this structure. An example is the denomination of male participants as “peões” (in a reference to the rural laborers of the Rio de La Plata region). The CTG Coxilha do Eliseu is an allusion to the Champs Elysée, in which the fields are referred to as coxilha, which means an elevation in the terrain, in a reference to the region of Rio Grande do Sul, the campanha, which has this kind of landscape.

¹³ Cristiano's mentions to the chimarrão refer to a typical drink of the south region of South America. An herbal infusion is placed in a round recipient (the gourd) to be drunk with hot water. The reference to the Colorado monkeys denotes the animosity of Cristiano, a fanatic supporter of Grêmio de Football Portoalegrense (whose colors are blue, white and black) to the supporters of the Sport Clube Internacional (white and red). The allusion to a colorado corresponds to a very gaucho designation for the color red. The monkey denotes the (animal) and racist scorn by this “civilized” supporter from Grêmio.

¹⁴ The “china rice” or “poor whore rice”, in an allusion to the women designated as Chinas (here a synonym of prostitute) who lived in the gaucho fields during the 19th century. This is a cheap dish made only with the mixture of pork sausage and rice. It was also a cheap dish for the residents of the Maison, and also simple and fast to make. The sexual connotation and the weekly frequency that it was made was symbolically reverted in favor of our situation of student misery, in opposition to the barbecue, which was very expensive for our standards, and only happened once in a while.

was precisely to make a regional joke. According to Caio (sandwich-doctorate in History 2010), the idea was to produce a caricature of diversity and its relations, since in Rio Grande do Sul he never entered in a CTG, because he always felt like an extra-terrestrial in places where gauchism was worshipped.

Thiesse (1997, p.114) as he discusses the issue of the exaltation of the regional, in a context of affirmation of nationalism, the voluntarism in the celebration of the traditions tries to impose the consensual image of the national community through a pacific cult of diversity, which has as objective to supply the new generations with a culture that is declared healthy, but obsolete, in opposition to a cosmopolitan modernity.

Studying the gauchism, Oliven characterizes it in consonance with the Brazilian national, as a well-succeeded case of regionalism, “in which the continuity and validity of this regionalist discourse indicate that the significations produced by it have a strong adequacy to the representations of gaúcho identity” (Oliven 2006, p.90). At the same time the identification with the Brazilian national in the *Maison du Brésil*, focusing the gaúcho identities, does not oppose to the regional, on the contrary, it is emphasized from the selection of diacritic signs that affirm and celebrate the regional (Brum 2006, p.259), without having them in shock with the Brazilian national. Even then, in this case, the regional diversity is emphasized and the stereotypes of the gaúcho chauvinism as reinforced, expressed, for example, in the designation *china rice* or *poor whore rice*, and in the separatist dimension that has also made part of the history of Rio Grande do Sul in relation to Brazil.

Even if they are satires of gauchism these exaltations constitute a serious game. In Ortner’s perspective (2007, p.46) serious games imply the game of actors, seen as agents that imply in the production and acknowledgment of the power of individual agency and of the collective acknowledgment or repulse of the promoters of these parties, in which the exaltation of the national and the regional takes place. I believe, then, that it is possible to relate them to a proposal of identity exaltation of the Brazilian national and/or its regions, with the plural perception that exists about the constitution and characterization by the residents of the MdB, as members of an elite.

One of the reasons that lead me to establish these relations is that the places where they occur, the MdB and the CIUP, are historically signified by its creators and managers

as places of formation of the world elites. This territory signified as national or even the Brazilian local/regional, is a place in which the subjects are living a situation of international circulation to acquire a cosmopolitan formation and have been, on one hand, treated as a distinguished group – an elite – and discriminated just like other immigrants that, even temporarily, feel like exiled in France.

To Ortiz (2002, p.62), the constitution of a territory is related to the group's capacity of symbolic manipulation in terms of spatial delimitation, that is: "a group is a territory which is able to mark its own borders." In this context, the capacity of symbolic manipulation refers to a shared universe of codes that refer to Brazil and its regions. In a way, even taking the risk of generalizing, it is necessary to recognize that the dialogue that the members "of a so-called intellectual elite" establish with France in this process of international formation obligatorily passes, as I tried to demonstrate throughout this text, through shared images of Brazil and their manipulation. Even if they happen in French soil, referred to as cosmopolitan, internationalist and multicultural, the selection of elements refers to the Brazilian national and the living of the difference has as one of its objectives to bear the contradictions in which these educational processes are located.

Löfgren (1999), studying the metaphysical and existential sense of crossing the national borders in their places of entrance and exit refers to a multi-faceted pedagogy of the space that is expressed in relations of anxiety and discomfort in face of the unknown: "Another common metaphor is the nation as a house and the immigrant as a visitor knocking at the door or the window, standing at the threshold or in the back yard" (Löfgren 1999, p.12). The metaphor of the house as a nation is materialized and complexified in the setting of the CIUP, for the Maison is signified as the territory of welcoming, of integration.

The metaphor of the nation as a house, according to Löfgren, states that "there is an ethnification of national identity involved" (1999, p.13) and it is expressed by different ways signified in the visibilization of the national in their ritual and everyday livings, in the production of regional and national stereotypes, in the images of Brazil offered at the Maison du Brésil. The different of a return home in the image produced by Löfgren, is in the inverse, but also correlate signification of living at the Maison. On one side the house is lived as a nation, but this happens when one leaves Brazil to go to

France, which makes the issue of the protection even more meaningful. As the search for a “safe harbor” is expressed, referring to the happy Brazilian place in France, which I perceived as being affirmed through (sort of) caricatural representations of what Brazil is.

The point of balance might be the contact with the foreign other and its developments. The presence of this other at the parties is a constant. But it is worth pointing that he is also a foreigner in France and his interpretation is plural. Thus, the ritualization lived extrapolates the national character of the feijoada “restricted” to Brazilians, according to Fry (1977) and it starts to, as a shared national symbol, to focus in the question of the international circulation of the subjects in formation in a cosmopolitan setting permeated by reciprocity, in which dinners and parties are exchanged, and costumes and music are taught: they are total social facts (Mauss 2003, p.209). Feijoadas, barbecues and other parties, private Indian, Belgian and Lebanese dinners such as the ones I participated in the Maison du Brésil, are inscribed in the learning of reciprocal national characters in which social ties are introduced. These events are stages of reciprocal belonging and acknowledgment and exchangeable affirmation and identification, as Ricoeur proposes (2007, p. 260), when he analyzes the path of self-identification to the power of the individual agency of its participants.

The construction observed in the living of this circulation of researchers, also presents a “local” dimension and is based in readings of images and in the affirmation of the Brazilian national abroad through the presentation of an “exotic” diversity, of behaviors and flavors that highlight an erotic connotation, reinforcing the very stereotype of Brazil abroad in terms of music, dance and gender.

But, according to Leitão, as she approaches the issue of the Brazilian fashion in France and the exoticism around it: “This reinvention of the country, however, must be taken as much more than a source of reflection about the Brazilian imaginary – and French - about Brazil, than as an accusatory instrument.” (Leitão 2007, p.228). From what it is possible to affirm, in terms of the international circulation and of the living, that the weight of the reception of this gaúcho-Brazilian stereotype is, at the same time, double and divided.

To Bhabha the stereotype is a complex and ambivalent form of representation of the fetishistic and phobic identification that acts in the construction of the collective

imaginary. “The fetish grants access to an identity based both in the domination and in the pleasure as in the anxiety and in the defense, since it is a form of multiple and contradictory belief in its recognition and refusal of difference” (Bhabha 1998, p.116).

Both the affirmations of the Brazilian national identities as of regional diversity, regarding gauchism, refer to a path of reconstitution of layers of lived time and space, expressed in the representations of the resident researchers of the Maison du Brésil, filtered by my own position and ability to look at the difference. To Feldmann-Bianco (2004, p.293), this reconstitution refers to the question of the individual memory that, on its turn, is connected to the collective memory regarding a lived experience and represented by the groups as a common identity discourse.

In this sense, the Maison du Brésil can be understood as a territory of international circulation and formation of the elites that is characterized by the exaltation of the Brazilianness permeated by images of Brazil and its regions that also dialogue with the tenuous images of other nationalities of the “foreigners” that live there.

It seems that there is a clear intentionality by the part of the administration of the MdB and the CIUP in understanding them as a territory for the international formation of the intellectual elites that circulate that and a pedagogy of this feeling of belonging to be internalized, as I tried to demonstrate. The meanings of the term elite and of the very MdB in the trajectory of its residents are plural and ambivalent and reflect, as a simulacrum, the logics described by Bhabha of the power of feeling cosmopolite, but with a colonial bias of the oppressive domination of the local that here dialogues endlessly in the signification of the international university educational experience of these subjects, expressed in their words and other supports of the memory.

It is still necessary to question if: despite the substantial difference that exists between the diacritics activated by the members of the Brazilian elite in formation in France that live at the Maison du Brésil and the affirmation of difference in a situation of concrete exclusion (as in the issue of the polemics of the veil, for example) there is a difference of meaning of these identity claims. In case there is no difference in the affirmation it is necessary to acknowledge that the intellectual elites in circulation at the CIUP are constituted in temporary and special immigrants, but equally discriminated and set apart from the French universe they want to dialogue with. The international

intellectual elites equally inhabit, using Löfgren's logic, the threshold and the backyard of the French world. A university city built for foreigners and that, spatially situated at the quatorzième arrondissement is signified and lived as the separation between the central region and the *banlieue* – a vacuum – that separates the foreign students and researchers from the “real” Paris.

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