

**OS SERTÕES BETWEEN CIVILIZATION AND BARBARISM: THE DIMENSION
OF A SUPPOSED EUCLIDEAN SOCIOLOGY FOR THE FORMATION OF
BRAZILIAN SOCIAL THOUGHT¹**

**OS SERTÕES ENTRE A CIVILIZAÇÃO E A BARBÁRIE: A DIMENSÃO DE UMA
SUPOSTA SOCIOLOGIA EUCLIDIANA PARA A FORMAÇÃO DO PENSAMENTO
SOCIAL BRASILEIRO**

**OS SERTÕES ENTRE LA CIVILIZACIÓN Y LA BARBARIE: LA DIMENSIÓN DE
UNA SUPUESTA SOCIOLOGÍA EUCLIDEA PARA LA FORMACIÓN DEL
PENSAMIENTO SOCIAL BRASILEÑO**



Guilherme Ferreira DEFINA²
e-mail: guilherme.defina@unesp.br

How to reference this paper:

DEFINA, G. *Os Sertões* between civilization and barbarism: The dimension of a supposed euclidian sociology in the formation of Brazilian social thought. **Rev. Sem Aspas**, Araraquara, v. 12, n. 00, e023007, 2023. e-ISSN: 2358-4238. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.29373/sas.v12i00.16894>



| Submitted: 03/07/2022
| Revisions required: 10/08/2023
| Approved: 11/09/2023
| Published: 17/10/2023

Editor: Prof. Dr. Carlos Henrique Gileno
Deputy Executive Editor: Prof. Dr. José Anderson Santos Cruz

¹ This article is the result of the course "Formation and Development of Brazilian Society" taken by the author during their studies in Social Sciences at the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of Unesp Araraquara, as well as the debates and reflections it generated

² São Paulo State University (UNESP), Araraquara – SP – Brasil. Undergraduate student in Social Sciences.

ABSTRACT: This article contextualizes the importance of Euclides da Cunha's "Os Sertões" in the War of Canudos and the development of Brazilian Sociology, highlighting its significance beyond a mere historical narrative by exploring the intersection of science and art, making its mark on Brazilian literature. The main objective is to analyze how a supposed Euclidian sociological perspective influenced Brazilian social thought, primarily through the antinomy between the "civilized" and the "barbarians." The theoretical framework incorporates Euclides da Cunha's ideas, sociological theories of the time, and concepts from comparative literature, while the methodology involves a critical analysis of the work and the historical and social context of the War of Canudos. The results emphasize Euclides da Cunha's significant contribution to Brazilian Sociology, introducing unique concepts and approaches, and the discussions highlight its relevance in understanding the social and cultural dynamics of 19th-century Brazil. This study contributes to the field by underscoring the importance of Euclidian sociological thought in shaping Brazilian social thought and understanding the relationships between culture and society in the context of the War of Canudos.

KEYWORDS: Euclides da Cunha. Literature. Brazilian sociology. Social thought.

RESUMO: *Este artigo contextualiza a importância de “Os Sertões” de Euclides da Cunha, na Guerra de Canudos e no desenvolvimento da Sociologia Brasileira, destacando sua transcendência além de uma mera narrativa histórica ao explorar a intersecção entre ciência e arte, marcando a literatura brasileira. O objetivo principal é analisar como uma suposta perspectiva sociológica euclidiana influenciou o pensamento social brasileiro, especialmente através da antinomia entre os “civilizados” e os “bárbaros”. O referencial teórico incorpora as ideias de Euclides da Cunha, teorias sociológicas da época e conceitos da literatura comparada, enquanto a metodologia envolve análise crítica da obra e contextualização histórica e social da Guerra de Canudos. Os resultados destacam a contribuição significativa de Euclides da Cunha para a Sociologia Brasileira, introduzindo conceitos e abordagens únicas, e as discussões enfatizam sua relevância na compreensão das dinâmicas sociais e culturais do Brasil no século XIX. Este estudo contribui para a área ao ressaltar a importância do pensamento sociológico euclidiano na construção do pensamento social brasileiro e na compreensão das relações entre cultura e sociedade no contexto da Guerra de Canudos.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Euclides da cunha. Literatura. Sociologia brasileira. Pensamento social.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo contextualiza la importancia de “Os Sertões” de Euclides da Cunha en la Guerra de Canudos y en el desarrollo de la Sociología Brasileña, destacando su trascendencia más allá de una mera narrativa histórica al explorar la intersección entre la ciencia y el arte, marcando la literatura brasileña. El objetivo principal es analizar cómo una supuesta perspectiva sociológica euclidiana influyó en el pensamiento social brasileño, especialmente a través de la antinomia entre los “civilizados” y los “bárbaros”. El marco teórico incorpora las ideas de Euclides da Cunha, teorías sociológicas de la época y conceptos de la literatura comparada, mientras que la metodología implica un análisis crítico de la obra y la contextualización histórica y social de la Guerra de Canudos. Los resultados destacan la contribución significativa de Euclides da Cunha a la Sociología Brasileña, introduciendo conceptos y enfoques únicos, y las discusiones enfatizan su relevancia en la comprensión de las dinámicas sociales y culturales de Brasil en el siglo XIX. Este estudio contribuye al campo al resaltar la importancia del pensamiento sociológico euclidiano en la construcción del pensamiento social brasileño y en la comprensión de las relaciones entre cultura y sociedad en el contexto de la Guerra de Canudos.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Euclides da cunha. Literatura. Sociología brasileña. Pensamiento social.*

Introduction

During the peak of the War of Canudos (1896-1897), the newspaper Estado de São Paulo sent the journalist and engineer Euclides da Cunha (1866-1909) to the battlefield in the interior of Bahia to cover the conflict. Before his departure, Euclides planned to provide a simple narration of the clash between the religious forces led by Antônio Conselheiro and the urban and industrial forces represented by the Brazilian Army. However, the writer produced an elaborate discursive work, which gave rise to his most significant literary work: "*Os Sertões*" (1902). From this work emerged not only one of the most important contributions to the history of Brazilian literature but also one of the works that would become a precursor to social studies in Brazil, or in other words, a fundamentally Brazilian sociology.

There are few studies on the relationship between Euclides da Cunha and the formation and development of Brazilian social thought. In general, studies of his works primarily focus on his literary and artistic aspects. With exceptions, including sociologists Antônio Cândido and Guerreiro Ramos, reflections of his sociological angle receive more attention, especially in his most important work, "*Os Sertões*." Not coincidentally, in his major work, Euclides da Cunha transcends the historical and literary narrative, demonstrating the meeting point of science and art, as well as the issues arising from the clash between two distinct sociocultural blocks, one perceived as barbaric and uncivilized, and the other as modern and civilized. Moreover, Euclides endeavors to diagnose the case in question using the scientific principles of his time.

It is in this context that this article aims to present, in an objective yet clear and detailed manner, the contribution and dimension of Euclidian sociology to the formation of Brazilian social thought, given the insights provided by the analysis of "*Os Sertões*" in consolidating sociology as an empirical science in Brazil. To achieve this, the paper is divided into two parts: the first provides a brief historical overview of the emergence of sociology as a science and then details the incipient context of its consolidation in Brazil, including the brief background in which Euclides da Cunha was situated. The second part, in turn, aims to meticulously analyze some aspects of Euclides da Cunha's work, highlighting the sociological dimension of his thinking.

The Incipient Context of Brazilian Sociology

Sociology is not limited to studying the social conditions of human existence. However, this constitutes the most fascinating and vital part of its subject matter, and it fueled the concern to apply the scientific perspective to the observation and explanation of social phenomena. When we speak of man as the object of specific inquiries of thought, it is impossible to pinpoint exactly where these particular inquiries begin and their limits. At most, these inquiries began to acquire scientific consistency in the modern world, thanks to the extension of scientific principles and methods to investigate the social conditions of human existence. In other respects, it has been said that man has always been the primary object of human curiosity. Behind the myths of religion or philosophy, there is always a great human being who is fundamentally concerned with questions related to the origin, life, and destiny of his fellow human beings (FERNANDES, 1977, p. 11, our translation).

The modern era emerged with the decline of feudalism and the development of great explorations. Modernity, in turn, began with the bourgeois and French revolutions, along with the emergence of the bourgeois class itself. Since its inception, the bourgeoisie has been the most revolutionary class that has ever existed, constantly inciting new transformations not only in the material realm but also in the abstract. In this context, the germ of capitalism appeared with the advent of modernity and the bourgeoisie through a new time, a time of novelties. In the context of the incipient consolidation of the sciences, these novelties would require them to reinvent themselves to understand them fully.

Throughout history, the force of *logos* – word, reason, an eminently human capacity to ask questions about oneself, culture, nature, the universe, and even others around them- has always existed in human existence. Traditionally, *logos* formed the basis for dialogue and enabled the construction of society through words' power throughout the civilizing process, starting from a human being who sees and suffers and beginning to transform this into words. Human beings represent the language of nature, reflecting what nature truly is.

The *logos* of scientific knowledge, therefore, signaled the negation of the *kosmos*, which etymologically means divine order, and reality, which, being divine, was perfect in itself. In every divine order, there is a strict hierarchy that separates and orders different ontologies from each other, and the role of the *kosmos* in this context was to legitimize this hierarchy. However, from the Renaissance, with the philosophical thought of the modern era, based on the new man and the knowledge that arises from the senses, one of the greatest revolutions of human beings was carried out: the liberation of the human being and the dissolution of the notion of *kosmos*, understanding that it was an idea and not an absolute truth or an immutable destiny, and primarily, the power of words – the *logos*.

Meanwhile, modernity is essentially ambivalent, resulting from conflicts rooted in recognition. These recognitions are linked to subjective identities that become real because they are rational. With increasingly pronounced contradictions, the task of Sociology, "with its dilemmas and determinations, as a form of knowledge historically situated, that is, located in a contradictory social formation that cannot produce univocal self-knowledge" (FORACCHI; MARTINS, 1977, p. 1, our translation), is to understand them.

As is well known, Sociology as a science emerged and established itself as such in a relatively recent historical period, with the development of a branch focused on and committed to social studies, the product of modernity and nineteenth-century scientific enthusiasm. Antônio Cândido, in his text "*A sociologia no Brasil*" ("Sociology in Brazil"), when analyzing the formation of Sociology as a science in Brazil, divided the process of its constitution into two phases: a period from 1880 to 1930 and another that extends from 1940 to the present, with the decade from 1930 to 1940 being configured as an intermediate transitional interval.

In the first phase, Brazilian social studies were conducted by intellectuals who were not specialized in social research but were interested in unraveling Brazilian society in general and developing theoretical principles for a deeper understanding. During this period, this activity was mainly carried out by jurists, driven by the canons of scientific and philosophical evolutionism, who were dedicated to defining a modern state and analyzing its economic and political organizational relationships. Therefore, there were no specific teaching programs or the existence of observations and empirical work on delimited situations of the then-prevailing reality (CÂNDIDO, 2006, p. 271).

In the 1930s, Sociology gradually became institutionalized in Brazil, incorporated into the secondary and higher education curricula, becoming an instrument for social evaluation and forming the first generation of specialized scholars. The first Brazilians with proper national university-level sociological education graduated in 1936 from FESPSP - *Fundação Escola de Sociologia e Política de São Paulo*, at the time known as the *Escola Livre de Sociologia e Política de São Paulo*. This was a period, in the words of Cândido (2006), that was rich and decisive, which can be considered a moment of transition to the second phase and the current stage of consolidation and development of Sociology, both as a university discipline and as a socially recognized activity that began around 1940.

However, for the core of this discussion, only the first stage of Cândido's proposed chronological division is of exclusive interest since not only "*Os Sertões*" but also the entire literary production of Euclides da Cunha was situated within this time frame. Therefore, the

whole social theoretical paradigm followed by the author was linked only to the references and guidelines that guided social studies in Brazil up to that date.

Indeed, as mentioned, it fell to intellectuals, especially jurists, to play the main role in capturing and absorbing the social, not only in its essence but also in its geometry of reproduction. In this sense, the jurist was the ultimate interpreter of society, encompassing functions of lawmaking, understanding parliamentary techniques, defining administrative conduct, and explaining it (CÂNDIDO, 2006, p. 272).

Scientific theories in the second half of the 19th century were firmly based on evolutionism and the methodological models of exact sciences. Consequently, positivism denoted the scientific position and orientation of jurists, who also had the cooperation of engineers and physicians from the beginning. This is why it is said that Brazilian Sociology was formed under the aegis of evolutionism and received its fundamental practical and methodological questions from it, which continue to influence many of its aspects. For example, it inherited the emphasis on natural factors, especially biology-related, such as race, attention to historical stages, and interest in general explanatory studies. Hence, the evolutionary criterion's continued influence and the history reconstruction on Brazilian sociologists, the heirs of the "philosopher jurists" and their logical successors (CÂNDIDO, 2006, p. 272).

Cândido (2006) emphasizes that evolutionism adapted to various Brazilian local realities, not being artificially imported from European reference models. This is because the existence of a people characterized by their slave past and mixed heritage must be considered to construct a faithful representation on the ideological level concerned with the possibilities of future national development. In this context, starting with Euclides da Cunha, one can speak of a "Brazilianized" norm and model of social studies, where the reinterpretation of the past for the understanding of the present and the blend of study with personal intuition and the writer-scientist with the rhetorician marked those who would be considered the first authors "academically undefined between Sociology and History" (CÂNDIDO, 2006, p. 273, our translation).

The following section will focus on how Euclides da Cunha can be considered one of the first Brazilian authors to write a work of essentially anthropological and sociological foundation. The reading of a historical event expressed in "*Os Sertões*," published in 1902, demonstrates, in addition to the promotion of convergence between science and art in a single narrative, the social contradictions arising from what the author understood as the "living rock of our race" (CUNHA, 1984, our translation).

Is Euclides da Cunha a Sociologist?

Journalist and engineer Euclides da Cunha, when writing his major work, "*Os Sertões*," a product of his mission for the Estado de São Paulo newspaper to cover some of the developments of the War of Canudos (1896-1897) in the interior of Bahia, initially intended only to provide a first-hand account of the conflict between the *sertanejos*³ led by the religious leader Antônio Conselheiro and the Brazilian Army, symbolically representing a modern industrial and urban elite. However, the author's work transcends this scope: from his writings emerged a complex and elaborate discursive work that, in addition to narrating a historical event, reveals the antinomies arising from the racism and prejudices of his time, through the account of the lives of a neglected and forgotten society.

Furthermore, Euclides' journey through the hinterlands of the backlands brought him into contact with the unknown, the different, which made him reconsider his values and his own identity. In the reading of the work, questions arise about the benefits that progress and modernity brought to the Brazilian reality, considering the clear distinction between barbarians and civilized people established between the *conselheiristas*⁴ and the republican soldiers, respectively. It can be said that the writing of the work traversed the sphere of Anthropology by experiencing alterity with the unknown other and the sphere of Sociology by resulting in a social analysis and, as we will see in this section, an attempt to establish principles for understanding it in its entirety.

As Dias (2003, p. 3) reminds us, the author portrays a country where the privilege of being or appearing was granted to only one face of society. Euclides da Cunha presents to the Brazilians of his time the nonexistence of a nation and the existence of a deeply divided country, formed by two contrasting Brazils: one centered on the hegemony of the oligarchic elites of the rural landowners of São Paulo and Minas Gerais, and the other marginalized, with no capacity to compete on an equal footing with the regions holding political and economic power in terms of capital and labor. Therefore, it implied the pronounced landscape of socio-economic inequalities in Brazil at that time. Euclides portray this dichotomous landscape in a striking image of a child with a mutilated face:

³ A person who lives in the backcountry; someone who resides in very small towns, villages, hamlets, or rural areas, typically with very simple habits.

⁴ A person who followed Antônio Vicente Mendes Maciel, popularly known as Antônio Conselheiro (1828-1897), who led the Canudos Revolt in the interior of Bahia.

And this child was horrifying. Its left side had been torn away long ago by a shrapnel fragment; as a result, the bones of the jaw stood out very white between the red edges of the already healed wound... The right side of the face was smiling. And that incomplete and painfully horrifying smile on one side, suddenly extinguishing itself on the other in the void of a scar (CUNHA, 1984, our translation).

"This was the ultimate symbol of the country's dichotomies. In one face, there was a smile; in the other, the wound... In the smile, irony. In the wound, revenge" (DIAS, 2003, p. 3, our translation).

The author speaks of a "frank extermination of the inferior race by war, its slow elimination, its slow absorption, its dilution through interbreeding" (CUNHA, 1984, our translation). This extermination is related to the influence he received from the positivist precepts in interpreting the psychology of the protagonists of this conflict he directly observed. In this perspective, it is clear and, in some passages, admitted the influence that social Darwinism from Gumplowicz and the theory of Buckle, and indirectly, the biases of Ratzel regarding the hypertrophy of the burden of geographical factors in human formation had on Euclidean thought.

In Gumplowicz's (1940) opinion, the conflict of groups for supremacy is always civilizing, and the progress of humanity occurs through it. The author of this sociological theory justifies his position by claiming that through war, the stronger race would subdue the weaker one to its goals, forming a new society where the latter would be incorporated into civilization. This contemporary society, where dominators and dominated would coexist "harmoniously," would be superior to the previous ones, as the work of the weaker ones would allow the stronger ones to accumulate wealth, which in turn would allow the latter to devote themselves to their artistic and intellectual developments, driving the evolution of the human race. The struggle of groups, races, and ethnicities, no matter how it employs extreme, brutal, and blind violence, will always be the "driving force of History" (CUNHA, 1984, n.p, our translation).

The theory of the British historian Henry Thomas Buckle (1857), on the other hand, proclaims the impact and sovereignty of the geographic or spatial environment on the formation of human character and its consequent role in shaping and developing specific psychological types of human groups. This is a form of geographical determinism. In this regard, Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904) also had an equally influential role in shaping the author's ideas concerning anthropogeography, which attributed to the environment a role in conditioning cultural manifestations of man, proposing the "geographic or terrestrial or territorial way for the

interpretations of differentiations in the evolution and cultural patterns (anthropogeography) of peoples" (BARROS, 2007, p. 216, our translation).

Because of these aspects, Euclides da Cunha based his rigorous explanation on naturalistic determinism, manifested in the forces of the racial constitution of social groups and the physical environment, to uncover the problems and contradictions of his time. As Guerreiro Ramos (1995) evokes critically, Euclides was a victim of the racist anthropology and sociology of his time and the scientific theories of the 19th and 20th centuries. Thus, the author of "Os Sertões" constantly asserts throughout the work that the cultural evolution of a people is entwined with its ethnic development: "Our biological evolution demands the guarantee of social evolution" (CUNHA, 1984, our translation). According to him, racial mixing is detrimental to the improvement of the human race, and the mestizo – mulatto, *mameluco*, or *cafuzo* – is not an intermediary, "[...] is a degenerate, lacking the physical energy of savage ancestors, lacking the intellectual stature of the forebears," or still, he is "unbalanced" or "hysterical" (RAMOS, 1995, p. 173, our translation). Although seen as retrogressive, Euclides da Cunha says that through the civilizing process, he will cease to be so: "We are condemned to civilization [...] either we progress, or we disappear" (CUNHA, 1984, our translation). Nevertheless, in his writings, the burden of interiorizing human contingents was attributed to the climate and other negative geographical influences.

In the present, Euclidean sociology would be considered too mechanical and obsolete, as the emphasis is currently placed on factors of a specifically social nature. However, it must be remembered that Euclides da Cunha was in contact with the political, social, cultural, and intellectual milieu of his time, so his ideas were in line with the dominant conceptions of naturalism and fervent enthusiasm (CÂNDIDO, 2012).

As highlighted by the author, mesological elements play a predominant role in the distribution, genesis, and configuration of human groups, with the added influence of race on individuals' psychological structure and behavior (CÂNDIDO, 2012, p. 29). These are not separate sets of factors but complement each other: the physical environment acts incisively on the group's evolution, while race predominantly influences collective behavior.

Cândido (2012, p. 29) highlights the moment when Euclides da Cunha differentiated *sertanejo* society into three distinct classification types, considered a significant positive

contribution to Brazilian social history: 1) the *bandeirante*⁵ society; 2) the mission⁶ society; and 3) the pastoral society. All of these shared the same ethnic basis – the intermingling of European white and native Brazilian indigenous people – but were dispersed across different physical environments. In this regard, the author states:

Anyone considering the settlements along the São Francisco, from its source to its mouth, witnesses the succession of the three cases mentioned. [...] Leaving the mountainous regions, cities perched on hills, reflecting the unparalleled audacity of the *bandeiras*; then crossing the vast plains, immense arenas suited to the rough, accessible, and firm society of cowboys; and finally reaching the less desirable regions, cultivated by droughts, chosen for the slow and arduous paths of the missions... (CUNHA, 1984, our translation).

In this context, the physical environment gave rise to three different social types within a population that was initially homogeneous. It not only led to differences in social organizations and economic activities but also caused ethnic differentiations:

In the initial mestizo, a more or less uniform mix of white and indigenous people, gave rise to the proper northeastern subtype. While the *mameluco*⁷ from the mouth and source continued in the dizzying mixture of blood (with various black ethnicities, with new white contingents), the one from the mid-backlands purified the initial miscegenation into a stable type in which psychic characteristics were equally stabilized. The instability of the mestizo, which, according to Euclides, tended to stabilize in reverse, i.e., returning to the peculiarities of the lower elements of the mixture, was compensated for by the isolation imposed by the physical environment. And the *sertanejo* type differentiated itself in our ethnic chaos as a result of biogeographical components" (CÂNDIDO, 2012, p. 29, our translation).

The term "isolation" is one of the most important in Euclidean sociology. As evidenced, the environment acted as a factor of differentiation and ethnic and social segregation, isolating parts of the *sertanejo* population from miscegenation and contact with the coastal population. The concept of isolation is thus substantially sociological. However, Antônio Candido (2012) emphasizes the need to distinguish between isolation forced by the environment (cause) and isolation as a specific form of social life, characteristic of a segregated culture and a decisive factor in the organization of society (effect). Furthermore, Euclides da Cunha also examines economic and political factors. The author says:

⁵ A group responsible for the exploration of inland territories in Brazil, with some of their functions including the capture of runaway slaves, the enslavement of indigenous populations, and the search for precious metals in the territory.

⁶ Missions established by the Jesuit Order in the late 17th century, primarily aimed at the catechism of indigenous people.

⁷ Mestizo of white with indigenous or white with caboclo.

Very energetic causes determined the isolation and preservation of the indigenous people. Let's highlight them. [...] First, they were the large land grants, defining the most enduring features of our petty feudalism. [...] The February 7, 1701, royal charter was then a supplementary measure of that isolation. It forbade, imposing severe penalties on offenders, any communications from that part of the backlands with the south, with the mines of São Paulo. Commercial relations were not tolerated; even the simplest product exchanges were banned. [...] Moreover, considering the genesis of the *sertanejo* in the far north, another reason stands out: the physical environment of the backlands across the vast territory that extends from the bed of the Vaza-Barris to the Parnaíba in the west" (CUNHA, 1984, our translation).

As a sociologist, Euclides da Cunha highlights not only the anthropological consequences but also the social effects of the phenomenon. One of the consequences of social evolution concerns the dissemination and integration of cultural elements and values of a dominant group over a group it subdues. The author illustrates this phenomenon through the description of the cultural autonomy of the Northeastern caboclo:

Pressured by a harsh environment, isolated from civilization by the desert, by the property regime, by metropolitan politics; isolated from his fellow man by low population density, he turned in on himself and crafted, with the meager resources available to him, the bare essentials for survival. The *sertões* describe their leather clothing, a kind of armor; they describe the few items they produce – the *caroá* net, the hunting bag, the crude saddle, the lead-filled club; they describe what they received from the coast – a sickle, a pointed knife, a rifle, a blunderbuss, spurs; they talk about their barbaric diet, the Amerindian passoca; the chest and the two or three stools that furnish their fragile house. There is the inventory of material culture. In terms of spiritual culture, there's a Catholicism adapted to the environment, mixed with fetishism, consisting of propitiatory rites – the most necessary for those who struggle against drought – and even creating their own saint, a professional saint: São Campeiro" (CÂNDIDO, 2012, p. 31, our translation).

Because it is a culture primarily born from ethnic and racial segregation, it cannot evolve precisely for that reason. The *sertanejo* adapted to the environment by establishing and adhering to the minimum he created for his adaptation, while coastal populations, distant, are years ahead. This is a case that applies to the concept of cultural lag, coined by American sociologist William Fielding Ogburn to explain conflicts resulting from processes of social change. Indeed, when "a culture in a state of lag" (CÂNDIDO, 2012, p. 31) clashes with the standards of a fundamentally urban culture seen as advanced, it is natural that from a sociological perspective, one can expect a situation of antagonism where one side fights to preserve its values, and the other to superimpose its values on the other. Frequently, the outcome is a change in the

dominant culture, which incorporates cultural traits of the dominant culture to a lesser or greater extent.

It is precisely through this interpretative axis that supposed Euclidean sociology operated to establish a connection that unifies and provides explanatory context to the extensive process of transformation through which the Brazilian society of its time was passing, not only due to Portuguese colonization but also due to the tragedy of Canudos that Euclides sought to comprehend in its thoroughness.

Final consideration

Euclides da Cunha was much more than a Brazilian author and literary writer. He not only played a significant role in the history of Brazilian literature but also, as discussed throughout this work, was an important actor and interpreter in consolidating Brazilian social studies and, thus, in forming genuinely Brazilian social thought. Even this was not his primary intention when he was sent by the newspaper Estado de São Paulo to the War of Canudos to cover the conflict between the Brazilian Army and the religious community led by Antonio Conselheiro.

Euclides da Cunha's importance to social research is so significant that it is possible to speak of the existence of Euclidean sociology. As Antonio Candido (2012, p. 33) noted, Euclides da Cunha was much more than a sociologist; he was an almost enlightened being. The simplifications he made at a time when there was no specific branch focused on the analysis of social and cultural changes were of paramount importance for the construction and solidification of Brazilian sociology.

In "*Os Sertões*," the author incorporates the barbaric backlands into civilized Brazil, establishing a consortium between science and art to demonstrate social antinomies and the cultural dynamics of the backcountry. However, Euclides, in a somewhat controversial way by today's standards, used fatalism to explain some of the social changes of his time, especially factors related to the physical environment and racial constitution, as seen throughout this discussion. Guerreiro Ramos was one of the authors who presented a critical view of Euclides, claiming that the author was a victim of the scientific theories of the 19th and 20th centuries, which were inherently racist.

In any case, the magnitude of Euclides da Cunha's relevance to the formation and development of Brazilian social thought and sociology is undeniable, given the author's

alignment with the scientific principles of the intellectual context of the time, as well as the various reasons and motivations outlined in this work. The sociological aspect of Euclides da Cunha is still a topic that should be the subject of multiple studies to more comprehensively understand Euclidean thought's full extent and grandeur in the socio-cultural construction of Brazilian empirical studies.

REFERENCES

- BARROS, N. C. C. Especiação na antropogeografia de Frederico Ratzel. **Revista de Geografia**, Recife, v. 24, n. 1, 2007. Available at: <https://www.periodicos.rc.biblioteca.unesp.br/index.php/ageteo/article/view/1375>. Accessed in: 25 Jan. 2023.
- BUCKLE, H. T. **History of Civilization in England**. London: J.W. Parker and Son, 1857. v. I.
- CÂNDIDO, A. A sociologia no Brasil. **Tempo Social**, [S. l.], v. 18, n. 1, p. 271- 301, 2006. DOI: 10.1590/S0103-20702006000100015. Available at: <https://www.revistas.usp.br/ts/article/view/12503>. Accessed in: 25 Jan. 2023.
- CÂNDIDO, A. Euclides da Cunha sociólogo. **Remate de Males**, Campinas, SP, 2012. DOI: 10.20396/remate.v0i0.8635985. Available at: <https://periodicos.sbu.unicamp.br/ojs/index.php/remate/article/view/8635985>. Accessed in: 21 May. 2022.
- CUNHA, E. **Os Sertões**. São Paulo: Três, 1984.
- DIAS, L. C. S. **O (des)tecer de enredos: uma leitura d'Os Sertões, de Euclides da Cunha**. 2003. 134 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Literatura e Diversidade Cultural) — Universidade Estadual de Feira de Santana, Feira de Santana, BA, 2003.
- FERNANDES, F. A herança intelectual da Sociologia. In: FORACCHI, M. M.; MARTINS, J. S. (org.). **Sociologia e Sociedade: leituras de introdução à Sociologia**. 1. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Livros Técnicos e Científicos Editora, 1977.
- FORACCHI, M. M.; MARTINS, J. S. **Sociologia e Sociedade: leituras de introdução à Sociologia**. 1. ed. Rio de Janeiro: Livros Técnicos e Científicos Editora, 1977.
- GUMPLOWICZ, L. **La lucha de razas**. Madrid: La España Moderna, 1940.
- RAMOS, G. **Introdução crítica à sociologia brasileira**. ED. UFRJ, 1995.

CRediT Author Statement

Acknowledgments: I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Ma. Iara Lalesca Calazans, a doctoral candidate who taught the course "Formation and Development of Brazilian Society" during the first semester 2022 at UNESP/FCLAr. Her assistance in curating the relevant bibliography related to the topic I explored for the final assignment in the course above was of utmost importance to me.

Funding: Not applicable.

Conflicts of interest: There are no conflicts of interest.

Ethical approval: Not applicable.

Data and material availability: All materials used to prepare this work can be easily located and accessed through the internet via open-access digital libraries for the publication of scientific journals.

Authors' contributions: Guilherme Defina was responsible for research, analysis of the bibliography used, and article writing.

Processing and editing: Editora Ibero-Americana de Educação.
Proofreading, formatting, normalization and translation.

