

Emerging Polish Culture in Brazil

Cultura Polonesa Emergente no Brasil

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Abstract: The article is part of a research study of Polish culture in Brazil in the scenario of immigration between the years 1869 and 1939. The research focuses on the concept of the structure of Raymond Williams characterized by residual, dominant and emerging to analyse the different moments of a transformation of the culture that Polish immigrants developed in Brazil. Thus, we present the formation of an emerging with roots from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and which shows few similarities with contemporary Poland, and much more with a rural Poland from a 100 years ago.

Keywords: Immigration. Culture. Structure of Feeling.

Resumo: O artigo faz parte de uma pesquisa sobre a cultura polonesa no Brasil no cenário da imigração entre os anos de 1869 e 1939. A pesquisa enfoca o conceito de estrutura de sentimento de Raymond Williams caracterizado por residual, dominante e emergente para analisar os diferentes momentos de transformação da cultura que os imigrantes poloneses desenvolveram no Brasil. Assim, apresentamos a formação de uma cultura emergente, com raízes do final do século XIX e início do século XX e que mostra poucas semelhanças com a Polônia contemporânea e muito mais com uma Polônia rural de 100 anos atrás.

Palavras-chave: Imigração. Cultura. Estrutura de Sentimentos.

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1. Introduction

After an intense process of Polish immigration to Brazil accentuated between the years 1870 and 1939, the article intends to make an analysis of the residues of this culture that were transformed in the 21st century into an emerging Polish culture. It is a culture with very specific characteristics, formed especially in a culture brought by the immigrants, poor farmers and illiterates who looked for land to plant. Immigrants took to other countries much more of an immaterial culture than a material culture. The long voyages on the ships, in almost inhuman conditions, had not allowed them to take large and heavy bags, and so, they took only what they could carry.

When the agents of the German or Italian immigration, announced the promise of new land to plant, where milk and honey flowed abundantly, small Polish artisans and peasants would soon be discarding all their acres to venture forth into new world. For Kaczorowska (2000) even though the immigration process was continuous, the highest peaks of the fever occurred in: 1) 1890-1891 - approximately 65 million immigrants; 2) 1895-1896 - approximately 25 million immigrants and 3) 1911-1912 - approximately 10 million immigrants.

The Brazilian government promised immigrants free transportation for of entire families in Brazil, as well as offering land to plant. Thus, the arrival of European immigrants to Brazil registered in the ports of Rio de Janeiro and Santos in São Paulo increased to approximately 100 million immigrants. The greatest intensification of Polish immigration to Brazil occurred in the years 1890-1891. It was the period of the so-called “Brazilian fever” when polish emigrants from Prussia and Galicia established in the states of Paraná and Santa Catarina in Brazil. Then the immigration wave of Poland diminished, and it returned to grow in 1895-1896 to mark the second period of the “Brazilian fever”. The immigrants were mainly inhabitants of the then Eastern Galicia. The third period of the “Brazilian fever”, occurred in the early years of the twentieth century, marked the year 1905. From these migratory waves the simple people and only a small percentage was constituted by intellectuals, teachers and religious. This can be observed in the data published by the Polish Journal *Polacy Zagranicq* in 1935.

Tabela 1: Polish immigrants in Brazil

Work	Percent
Peasant	95.0%
Workers and Artisans	3.5%
Traders and Industrialists	1.0%
Intellectuals	0.5%

Source: Journal *Polacy Zagranicq*. 1935

It was only after the revolution of 1905 that an increasing number of intellectuals were among the immigrants. Immigration of this period often had a political character, since this group was part of young Poles who had participated in the revolutionary movement, or people fleeing from military service in the Russian Imperial Military. The outbreak of the First World War of 1914 softened the third wave of immigration. This immigration was mainly constituted by peasants who sought land ownership and that with the increase of immigrants the land began to be paid to the Brazilian government in the long run with their agricultural production.

The immigration movement from Poland to Brazil grew again in 1919. But the economic crisis of 1930 contributed to the restriction of the immigration policy by the Brazilian government, and in 1934, a decree was signed to reduce the number of immigrants to Brazil. The decrees of the Brazilian government defended the interests of the country, opposing mainly to the increasing influence of the German immigration in the southern region of Brazil.

In this sense, the decree signed in 1938 on the nationalization of education contained many orders and prohibitions such as the obligation to bring foreign schools to a full adaptation to the national environment of Brazilians. The teaching of the history and geography of Brazil should be obligatorily in Portuguese as well as the participation of citizens in patriotic associations with the aim of forming a single national consciousness. It also recommended incorporating as many children of immigrants as possible into the army, especially in military units. The decree forbade the use of foreign languages in public places, in the barracks and during military service. It also ordered sermons in the churches to be pronounced in Portuguese.

From the cultural residues that the Polish immigrants brought to Brazil, we identified through Williams (1979), that these residues were consolidated in a dominant culture among them. The Polish past expressed as, for example, in their customs, ways of life, religion and education of its people were the main component of their cultural background that prevailed strongly until the mid-1930s. When they arrived in Brazil, the immigrants found in the wild lands a space for cultural production that did not exist. Thus, the sparsely inhabited regions of southern Brazil were a very fertile field for European immigrants to develop their cultural identity, taking as a reference the culture of their mother country. So, they transformed into an emerging culture where the Polish past of waste-mixed with Brazilian contemporary issues.

Taking these initial questions, this article intends to show how the remnants of the Polish past interfere and contribute to the emergence of a new culture among the descendants of Poles in Brazil. Therefore, we use as a methodology some elements of the history of immigration to analyse an online community created on Facebook formed mostly by descendants and admirers of Polish culture in Brazil, called *Kultura Polska*. The social media is where people are

active regardless of their geographic location. That is why we chose this platform as a way of collecting data for this research in view of the diversity of information that we can obtain. For Rogers (2009), the issue no longer is how much of society and culture is online, but rather how to diagnose cultural change and societal conditions with the Internet. The conceptual point of departure of the research program is the recognition that the Internet is not only an object of study, but also a source.

After the presentation of the topic *immigration - from Poland to Brazil*, the article approaches the concept of structure of Raymond Williams for understanding the three phases of a feeling of affection for the Polish culture in Brazil. Next, to explore the data found in the online community afore mentioned, we point out some results that allow us to think over all the research issues of diaspora around the world. Finally, we present some considerations about this culture which emerges from cultural residues that change with the passing of generations, but nevertheless keeps an essence, even after more than 100 years of immigration.

2. The Structure of Feelings in Raymond Williams

For over thirty years, Raymond Williams has developed the term structures of feeling that could point to an entity as vast as the dominant feelings of a given historical period, as well as emergent, defined as a set of concerns that focus on specific groups that can happen through the new social movements of the 1980s. Feelings could sometimes be covered by the word, experience and would include a large field of attitudes, ways, actions, behaviours. The structure seems to be a word that is mainly used to suggest a similarity in a series of relations and repetitions to insist that feelings are not the private property of an individual but are part of a common social culture, and in this article, we use the concept to reflect about Polish culture in Brazil.

In explaining the structure of feeling, Williams (1979) points out that we are concerned with meanings and values as actively lived and felt, and the relationships between them and formal and systematic beliefs are, in practice, various. We are talking about characteristic elements of impulses and inhibitions like effective elements of consciousness and relationships, not the feeling against thinking, but thought as meaning and feeling as thought, the practical consciousness of a presentation type, in a lived and interrelated continuity. We then define these elements, internal relationships with concomitantly specific interlacing and tension. But we are also defining a social experience that is still a process, generally still not recognized as social, but taken as private, idiosyncratic and even isolated.

The conception structures of feeling marked the main works of criticism of the author in which he presented three adjectives: residual, dominant and emergent. The dominant traits and

characteristics have a connection with the future and with the past. While a feeling emerges, we have the reference of a predominant feeling and a third that has already passed through the two previous processes, identified as residual. For the author, “[...] the complexity of a culture is found not only in its variable processes and its social definitions - traditions, institutions and formations - but also in the dynamic interrelations at all points in the process of historically varied and variable elements” (WILLIAMS, 1979, p. 124). The author called period analysis where the cultural process is taken as a cultural system, with certain dominant characteristics like a feudal culture or bourgeois culture or a transition from one to another.

The “dominant” is an indicator of a specific domain within a historically situated cultural process. Thus, it is subject to the movements of history, “[...] to recognize the complex interrelationships between movements and tendencies, both within and beyond a specific and effective domain” (WILLIAMS, 1979, p. 124). And what would be the residual aspect of a culture? The residual refers to something other than archaic, although in practice it is difficult to be distinguished. Any culture includes available elements from its past, but its place in the contemporary cultural process is profoundly variable. The author would call it archaic that which is fully recognized as an element of the past, to be deliberately observed, examined or consciously revived. And to conclude, the author says that, “[...] residual, by definition, has been effectively formed in the past, but is still active in the cultural process, not only as an element of the past but as an effective element of the present” (WILLIAMS, 1979, p. 125).

Therefore, we want to reinforce the importance of the concept of Williams for this research when comes to understanding the concept of residual culture. The author uses as reference “contemporary English culture” and shows as an example of predominantly residual, “organized religion” and other modes of social organization in the countryside that are opposed to urban industrial. In this case, he emphasizes:

[...] the idea of the rural community is predominantly residual, but under certain limited aspects, alternative or opposed to urban industrial capitalism, although for the most part be incorporated, as idealization or fantasy, or as an exotic leisure function (residential or escape) of the dominant order itself. (WILLIAMS, 1979, p. 125).

We still must dialogue with the concept of emergence, it is also necessary to move forward in the approach to the structures of feeling. For the author, “[...] by emerging, I mean that new meanings and values, new practices, new relationships, and types of relationships are continually being created” (WILLIAMS, 1979, 126). The author complements that it is exceptionally difficult to distinguish between those who are really elements of some new phase of the dominant culture and those that are essentially an alternative or opposing to it: emergent in the strict sense, and not simply new.

However, the author draws attention to the inexorable relations between the concepts of residual and emergent with the conceptualization of the dominant, that need to be considered in the dynamics of cultural processes. As we are always considering relations within the cultural process, the definitions of the emergent as well as the residual can only be made in relation to a full sense of the dominant. Even so, the social location of the residual is always easier to understand, since much of it (though not all) is related to earlier social formations and phases of the cultural process, in which certain real meanings and values have been generated. In the omission of a certain phase of the dominant culture there is a return to meanings and values created in societies and real situations of the past that still seem to have meaning because they represent areas of human experience, aspiration, and fulfilment that the dominant culture neglects, undervalues, oppose, represses or cannot recognize.

Therefore, if in the relationship between the dominant and the residual the question is put in the previous terms, where it is indicated that the social location of the residual is always easier to understand because the residual culture is linked to other moments of a generation of meanings and values, we must consider that the new element that appears is the emerging one. Williams (1979) explores the concept of emerging by taking it as a synonym of appearing. For example, we see in history the emergence of the components of a new cultural formation as the emergence of a new class consciousness and of the working class, although this has not occurred in a similar way in different contexts but with unequal and incomplete practices.

Finally, we conclude that the residual and emerging cultures seek to preserve their experiences, practices and meanings of a dominant past that can lead to changes in the social order. So, let us check, how the Polish diaspora in Brazil was constituted from the cultural residues that for many years was dominant and today it becomes an emergent Polish culture.

3. Land for planting and harvesting

In previous studies, we found that most Polish who immigrated to Brazil were peasants and small artisans who had a direct connection to the land. However, we affirmed that what motivated the families to dispose of all their properties and to try the life of the other side of the Atlantic Ocean was the desire for land to plant. The land was a symbol of prosperity that European rural workers wanted in the late nineteenth century. When they arrived in Brazil, they found a lot of native land with extensive forests but, had no infrastructure to cultivate the land. It was first necessary to get a roof to live and then to start clearing the forests to plant subsistence products. Regarding the importance that the property of land had for the family, we can see it in the photographs in which entire families appear in front of the house to show their inhabitation in new lands:

Figure 1 – Context of Polish Immigration in Brazil.



Source: Warsaw National Archive. 1939.

Unlike the United States, that preferred young men with some degree of education or small traders, Brazil had a preference for young families with children as for to establishing immigrants in Brazilian lands and not more return to Poland. Thus, along with the land properties of the settlers, the peasants themselves built a school and a church as a way of maintaining and preserving the culture of their country of origin. Masses in the church during the weekends and classes at school during the week were a form of peasant communities remaining united by their language, customs and other aspects of cultural life of Polish immigrants. However, those principles that church and school instituted among immigrants more than 100 years old are still present today in a reconfigured sense that here, through the concept of structure of feeling, we call an emerging culture.

The sense of prosperity through the land can still be followed today through the posts and interactions that participants of the online community *Kultura Polska* make on social networks. The main posts, elements such as prayers of thanksgiving, order blessings and products produced by the earth are most of the themes approached treated in this community. It seems that everything related to an agricultural past of hard work and that reverberated in producing food in abundance represented with images of a table full of food enchants and captivates all the community participants.

Figure 2 - Food Recipe of Small Knee/*Potcolanco/Joelho/Joelhinho*

Source: Facebook Community *Kultura Polska*. 2017

Until March 2019, the posting above counted with 350 comments and most of them were on the nostalgia they feel from the kitchen of the mother or grandmother. We also find that most of the people who commented are descendants of Polish and identified through this food by the feeling of longing. Here, we affirm that a simple fried sweet bread can recall memories, opinions and principles of life that can be studied in history. And finally, we emphasize that studying the history of human thought can also be realized from their comments on online interactive communities. The sweet made from the bread dough receives various names ranging from small knee, the cap of the priest or a mixture of the Portuguese language with the Polish language that refers the word *pocolanco* - a sweet fried cookie made from the dough of bread.

Along with the longing for the food of the ancestors, there are religious thank God photographs thanking for the good things that life has offered them. The images are published on religious celebratory dates such as Christmas, Easter, Pentecost or any date related to the national dates of Poland such as Warsaw Levant Day, Independence Day or Polish Constitution day. We find that through these publications, the people who interact most in the community with posts and comments believe they are contributing to the maintenance of a Polish identity in Brazil. But often this identity is less related to contemporary Poland and much more to an old Poland of more than 100 years ago because the history of the ancestors is more alive than contemporary Poland. This can be explained when we look at the territorial distance between the two countries, moreover, there is no direct flight connection between Brazil and Poland. But much more than these geographic or even economic questions because airfares are also expensive, there is a cultural barrier that does not allow a closer contact with presently Poland.

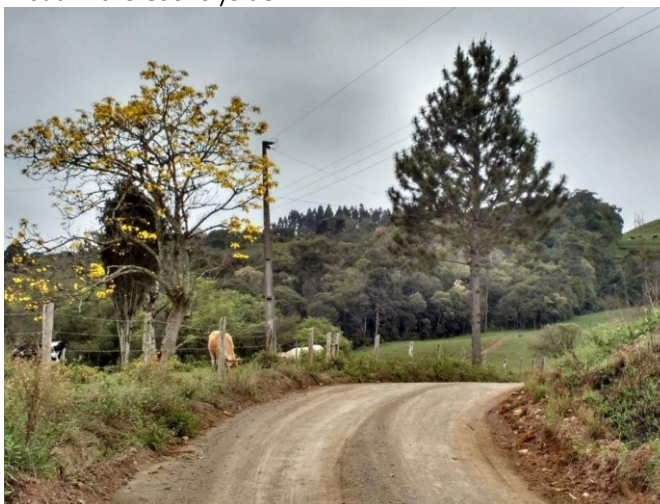
The differences start when there is no more linear communication with the source language and this case with Polish. The residues of the Polish language that the descendants in Brazil speak is not understandable by all Polish citizens, especially younger people. Young people emphasize that many words are not common in their daily lives, but have heard and usually to be associated with grandparents or other older people, such as, for example, those living in peasant villages. For Williams (2011), the countryside is always more unusual because things take time to happen, that is, the transformations are slow and gradual and therefore the researcher needs to know that the reality of the countryside is more distinct and specific than life urban.

Slow changes in the field also explain why the descendants of Polish in Brazil are still trapped in an old Poland that today is already difficult to find in Polish territory. In 1918, William Thomas and Florian Znaniecki published research in the experimental sociology, on the Polish peasant in the United States. The study showed that young descendants of Polish immigrants, contrary to other ethnic groups in the country, preferred to work to buy land and not

continue to study or conduct business in the cities. In Brazil, these empirical data are very similar when most immigrants have a desire to buy more land and therefore migrate to different regions of the country.

The relation that immigrants in Brazil have with the land is very visible and can be observed in the posts that appear in the online community mentioned here.

Figure 3 - Road in the Countryside



Source: Facebook Community *Kultura Polska*, 2017.

The previous photo is a road in the country next to the address of the person who made the postage justifying that they posted it because the photo is beautiful. In the course of time, some people from different places in Brazil comment that the photo also seemed to be near their addresses or reminded of the way to their mothers' or grandmothers' home. From the comments, we can see that community participants have a strong connection with the country, either because they live there or because their families still live in the countryside and therefore maintain a close relationship with the country life.

Let us take for example a paragraph from "The Country and the City", an analysis of the nineteenth-century British countryside, where Williams sees as a space undergoing physical and spiritual regeneration:

A working country, that is to say, was becoming, yet again but in a new way, a place of physical and spiritual regeneration. It was now the teeming life of an isolated nature, or the seasonal rhythm of the fundamental life processes. Neither of these feelings was new in itself. What was new was their fusion into a structure of feeling in which the earth and its creatures – animals and peasants almost alike – were an affirmation of vitality and of the possibility of rest in conscious contrast with the mechanical order, the artificial routines, of the cities. (WILLIAMS, 2011, p. 252).

Thus, it is the memories of the countryside that also bring the participants of this community around an identity with cultural

residues of Poland. However, these residues of a culture that was already dominant in Brazil, and we can say that dominated until 1938, when the Brazilian government imposed a decree that prohibited the language and some Polish customs. Interestingly, an urbanized view of the countryside occurs when a majority of the Brazilian population, more than 80 percent (IBGE, 2010), are located in urban centres, and not in the countryside, so, as Williams highlighted, there is an urban view that return to the bucolic countryside. Today this culture has become an emerging culture that is identified as Polish culture, but this far from the contemporary culture in Poland.

4. Emerging Culture

Based on the concept of structure of feeling presented by Raymond Williams, we present the emergence of a Polish culture in Brazil at the beginning of the 21st century. We call this emerging culture based on the Williams concept because it is born of an old Polish culture brought to Brazil more than 100 years ago by immigrants. Currently this culture does not necessarily represent the customs and life culture in Poland, but the ancestors that emigrated to the South America, especially Brazil, in the beginning of the 20th century. It is a culture connected to a past that refers to Polish immigration in a land not yet inhabited, where the immigrants had to create their own identity formed by the residues that brought with adversities found in the new land. Moreover, this residual culture brought by immigrants continued for a long time the main reference for the formation of cultural identity in Brazil. It was an identity constituted by work in the countryside, by the principles of the Catholic Church, and by the spirit of the school to maintain, but also to enhance and edify its cultural elements.

A culture that formed with little material basis because each family brought with it just a few personal belongings. That from the exit of Poland to the installation in a colony of land in Brazil could take from three to six months. After travelling for a few weeks by ship, when they disembarked in a safe land, they had to wait for the Brazilian government to be sent to some area of southern Brazil, especially on lands that had not yet been inhabited. They did not find much help from the government and therefore needed alone open trails with sickle and machete to dwell on native lands that offered nothing beyond the felling of hope to thrive in unfamiliar lands. We would like to signal that the feeling of hope was much greater than the objects in their bags.

Polish culture in southern Brazil today has much more of a sense of belonging to the culture of the ancestors than the actual culture in Poland. If we ask the descendants of Polish in Brazil what they now know about Polish culture, most will answer some themes from II World War, something from the post-war period and from communism. Asked about current issues in Poland, they will be able

to answer some questions related to football, exporting technologies and importing commodities. Therefore, we mean that even though descendants of Poland in Brazil do not know or ignore current Polish culture, they continue to feel and identify themselves as Poles. This can be best explained from the image that we found posted on the online community *Kultura Polska*.

Figure 4 - Flag of the Descendants of Poles in Brazil.



Source: Facebook Community *Kultura Polska*. 2018.

The photo shows the central band of three flags that descendants of Polish immigrants use to identify themselves in a community with social media. The first is the Brazilian flag with the phrase “Brazilian by obligation”. The second that is in the middle is the state flag of Rio Grande do Sul, which is the southernmost of Brazil and shows the phrase “Gaúcho³³ by tradition”, and finally, the flag of Poland below presents the phrase “Polish by heart”. The phrase “Brazilian by obligation”, highlighted in the Brazilian Flag, goes back to an identity imposed by the citizen obligation, associated with a commitment assumed around the rights and duties of Brazilian citizenship. On the other hand, in the banners that are below, the phrases show more a nostalgic residue of the identity of the ancestors, and therefore, formed by a sentimental nostalgia in which they are shown as tradition “gaúcho” and heart Polish.

We find here a population of descendants in which they show a soul, a heart, a Polish root, and they make a point of presenting this Polish essence as the main component of their identity. Here, we saw the emergence of a Polish culture in Brazil that is not necessarily

33. Cowboy in South American, a person who takes care of male and female cows in the biome called pampa in countries like Argentina, Uruguay and in the South of Brazil. (OXFORD DICTIONARY, 2019).

consistent with Poland, because it is formed from the cultural remains that immigrants collected from the past. In Brazil, Polish culture comes to be considered as a culture with its specific characteristics formed from a past of immigrant peasant and therefore, it differs from other ethnic groups in a country that is marked by cultural diversity.

5. Conclusion

In order to improve on the issues presented here, it is interesting to ask the following question: How to form the culture of a particular people? From what we present in our work, we would like to pay attention to the theme of the cultural formation of a certain group of people who has something in common, in this work were the residues of the Polish culture. The link presented here is the root of this culture that develops in another land with the influence of another environment. For Williams (1979), the structure of feeling is not an aspect of life that can be decoded and analysed because they involve the lifeworld in complex ways, like mood, attitude, manners, and emotions. Williams recognizes that the “structure of feeling” echoes with its complex emphasis on cultural issues, which can best be understood when analysed through generations. Thus, in order to better understand the concept of the author in the formation of cultural identity, it is necessary to analyse from the generational point of view.

A root of Polish culture was planted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in Brazil through immigration that for a time was the main element of this identity. But that with all the circumstantial changes like political, economic and social, this culture was elaborate in another level. And so, we see the emerging essence of Culture Polish completely reworked in a tropical context that occurred through a historical process of more than a century. This culture was maintained by three or four generations since their ancestors arrived in Brazil and so it has been changing over the years, but still, express some elements of Polish identity.

It remains to be pointed out that in researching cultural processes, it is important to understand evolutionary processes in the most diverse social and geographical contexts. And so, the concept of structure of feeling elaborated by Williams from the literature, it is very important to understand the formation of a cultural ethos. The immigration of the mass of workers from the turn of the 19th century to the 20th century did not occur only in some countries of South America, but also in other countries of different contexts. Therefore, it is necessary to study the most diverse historical factors that are involved in the cultural formation of certain ethnic groups to be able to understand their thinking, their behaviour, their attitudes and everything that involves the constitution of a social and moral identity.

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