INTRODUCTION

The Intellectual in Theory and Practice

We begin by clarifying what an intellectual is. The Italian thinker Antonio Gramsci (1971) identified two types of intellectuals: traditional intellectuals, such as teachers, priests, and administrators (who specialize in the production of ideas and knowledge and perform the same functions from generation to generation and who may have expressed their quest for knowledge in oral and written discourse, in poetic or plastic expression, in historical reminiscence or writing, or in ritual performance), and organic intellectuals (who are directly connected to classes in society and actively organize interests, seek power, and gain control). Many writers have focused on this activism and how intellectuals may engage with and shape public life. C. Wright Mills (1963: 299) looked at the public intellectual, suggesting that independent artists or writers were "among the few remaining personalities equipped to resist and to fight the stereotyping and consequent death of genuinely living things.... If the thinker does not relate himself to the value of truth in political struggle, he cannot responsibly cope with the whole of life experience." Paul Baran (1988) considered the intellectual the conscience of society and the representative of progressive forces – a social critic concerned with analyzing and working to overcome obstacles to the achievement of a more humane and rational social order. Edward W. Said (1996) saw the values of the intellectual as integrity, rigor of thought, conscience, and disdain for dogma, and he cautioned that intellectuals were nevertheless at risk of being lured by money, power, or specialization: "Insiders promote special interests, but intellectuals should be the ones to question patriotic nationalism, corporate thinking, and a sense of class, racial or gender privilege" (xiii). He considered intellectuals "endowed with a

faculty for representing, embodying, articulating a message, a view, an attitude, philosophy or opinion to, as well as for, a public" (11) and believed that they could be nurtured within the university or the corporation while maintaining autonomy and creativity in their work (74–75).

Intellectuals sometimes are seen as a social class. Alvin Gouldner (1979) identified intellectuals and the technical intelligentsia as constituting a new class – secularized, cosmopolitan, and multinational, more public than private in its activities, more marginal and alienated in a technocratic and industrial society, and associated with an anonymous market for its products and services – that he saw emerging everywhere. He contrasted his conception with interpretations of intellectuals as benign technocrats (Daniel Bell and John Kenneth Galbraith), a master class or socialist intelligentsia that exploited society (Nicolai Bukharin), a group of dedicated professionals who merged with the old moneyed class to form a collectively oriented elite (Talcott Parsons), the servants of power and the old moneyed class (Noam Chomsky and Maurice Zeitlin), and a flawed universal class, elitist and self-seeking (his own earlier position). Regis Debray (1981: 21–23), examining the relationship between intellectuals and power, viewed the intelligentsia as including liberal professionals as well as senior administrative personnel and as too heterogeneous to constitute a collectivity. The Brazilian political economist Luiz Carlos Bresser-Pereira (1981) identified an intermediate stratum in the form of a techno-bureaucracy that had emerged through the apparatuses of the state to exercise influence in the contemporary world. He saw the new class as having taken hold in some socialist countries, whereas in capitalist nations a mixed type of production had evolved. Even in decline, in his view, capitalism more effectively resisted the techno-bureaucracy.

These descriptions of intellectuals and especially the notion that they constitute part of a new class call to mind Karl Marx's identification (in an unfinished chapter at the end of *Capital)* of intermediate classes, the significance of which has only recently received scholarly attention. Dale Johnson (1982: 24), although considering it inappropriate "to posit professionals or any category of knowledge ability or technical expertise as constituting a universal class," pointed to the decline, with the process of capitalist accumulation, of the old petty bourgeoisie of independent producers, small farmers, and merchants and the rise of a new salaried intermediate class composed of technical, administrative, and professional employees that mediated between capital and labor.

This idea is reminiscent of Nicos Poulantzas's (1975) concept of "new petty bourgeoisie" made up of white-collar employees, technicians, supervisors, and civil servants. Poulantzas was concerned with designating positions in the social division of labor and distinguishing between productive and unproductive labor. For example, at the economic level, supervisory personnel are exploited like other labor, but at the political level, they participate in the exploitation of the working class. Poulantzas suggested that their position reflected both their dominant role in the social division of labor and their political domination by capital. Erik Olin Wright (1978: chapter 2, esp. 95–96) took issue with the distinction between productive and unproductive labor and emphasized "contradictory locations within the class structure" as a means of characterizing the position of managers and supervisors and certain categories of employees who maintained some control over their labor process but were positioned between the petty bourgeoisie and the working class.

This backdrop leads to a set of assertions about the role of intellectuals in contemporary society:

1. *Intellectuals may engage with society*: "An effective collaboration between intellectuals and the authorities which govern society is a requirement for order and continuity in public life.... Yet there is always a degree of tension between the two levels and various forms of consensus and dissensus prevail in the relations between intellectuals and the ruling powers of society" (Shills, 1972: 21).
2. *Intellectuals tend to reject inherited and prevailing values*: Kuhn (1970), in contrast, argued that paradigms of intellectual activity and thinking tend to persist until major new scientific understandings of revolutionary proportions come along.
3. *Intellectuals value originality*: Shills pointed to the genius of the individual, whereas Gouldner (1979) emphasized the autonomy arising from specialized knowledge or "cultural capital."
4. *Intellectuals are ideological*: "The disposition toward ideological construction is one of the fundamental properties of the human race, once it reaches a certain stage of intellectual development" (Shills, 1972: 28). Gouldner related ideology to autonomy and held that professionalism became intellectuals' public ideology.
5. *Intellectuals control culture*: Gouldner (1979: 19) saw intellectuals as constituting "a cultural bourgeoisie who appropriates privately the advantages of an historically and collectively produced cultural capital."

6. *Intellectuals constitute a sort of class*: As we have seen, Gouldner viewed intellectuals as a new class, subordinate to the old moneyed class but in de facto control over the mode of production and the means of administration. He distinguished at least two elites in the new class: "intelligentsia whose intellectual interests are fundamentally 'technical' and ... intellectuals whose interests are primarily critical, emancipatory, hermeneutic, and hence often political" (48). He acknowledged a struggle between the old and new classes over the protection of individual rights, harassment of the old class to secure material interests, cultivation of alliances with the working class, and advocacy of a welfare state. The new class was "a cultural bourgeoisie" – "the relatively more educated counterpart ... of the old moneyed class. Thus the New Class contest sometimes has the character of a civil war within the upper classes. It is the differentiation of the old class into contentious factions" (18). Shills, in contrast, referred to a vague hierarchy in which the lower stratum learned from the higher. He argued that intellectuals did not yet form a community bound together by a sense of mutual affinity and attachment to a common set of rules and identifying symbols, although subcommunities with these features did exist. Debray (1981: 202) also distinguished between a lower and a higher intelligentsia, the latter seeing the former as "backward and dangerous": "Whereas the lower intelligentsia exhibits solidarity, the high intelligentsia displays complicity; the former makes collective demands, the latter devises individual strategies." He maintained, however, that the intelligentsia could not be defined by its position in the material process of production: "It is not a class" (21).
7. *Intellectuals make revolutions with their ideas*: For Gouldner, the "new class" was increasingly involved in political life and inclined to shape revolutionary society in theory and practice. He was less interested in bourgeois revolutions than in "the collectivization of private property that increases the means of production at the disposal of the state apparatus" (1979: 11). Although its activity in mobilizing the masses was often disguised, ignored, or distorted, the new class not only was sometimes politically revolutionary but also constantly revolutionized the mode of production in its subordinate position to the old moneyed class.

My search for an understanding of the intellectual draws from Gramsci and approximates that of Carl Boggs (1993), exploring the changes in

intellectual life that accompanied capitalist modernization and especially "the political dimension of intellectual activity as it unfolds within the ongoing struggle for ideological hegemony" (ix). Boggs understood the crisis of modernity as linked to the conflict "between technocratic and critical modes of thought, between structures of domination and embryonic forms of opposition visible in the emergence of new social movements" (xiii). He saw intellectuals as involved in a counterhegemonic struggle that went beyond Gramsci's notion of the organic intellectual, envisioning "an engaged, critical, public intelligentsia whose activity is grounded in social projects, constituencies, and movements" (8). This new type of intellectual, he argued, was to be found in the mass media, education, trade unions, the university, popular and social movements, artistic communities, and even the state (9), and under organized state capitalism "a new dialectic between technocratic and critical intellectuals" was emerging (180) as the numbers of traditional and progressive intellectuals diminished.

Many years ago, I began my study with a deep interest and curiosity about Brazilian intellectuals, their ideas, their role and influence in academic life, and their participation in a society seeking to escape its colonial past. My study, however, intends to serve as a basis for comparative study relevant to shifting intellectual outlook and experience in particular situations. For instance, Debray (1981) suggests that an intellectual may move beyond an intellectual's vocation. He illustrates by identifying changing generations of French intellectuals, beginning with the Parisian intellectuals from 1880 to 1930, a professoriate linked generally to the Sorbonne; after 1930 until the 1960s, when new publishing houses fostered a "spiritual family" comprising the intelligentsia and their editors and included Sartre, Gide, Camus, Mauriac, and Malraux; and after 1968, when intellectuals shifted from their publishers to the mass media as journalists, advisers, and so on. Debray is concerned with the relationship of intellectuals and power. As he focuses on three generations of French intellectual life, he shows for each stage the replacement of a degenerative cycle with one of critical intelligence. He depicts the impact of capitalist development on the mind, the distortions of intellectual life, and the false consciousness that pervades contemporary media-oriented society.

Generational changes among intellectuals in the United States are also obvious and may help us in understanding the trajectory of the intellectual in Brazil. A major problem is the entrenchment of progressive intellectuals in academe and their marginalization or retreat

altogether from public life during the twentieth century, as in the case of the United States (see Paul Gorman, 1996, and John Carey, 1993, for useful overviews). With the Great Depression of the 1930s, intellectual life flourished under the communist, socialist, and other leftist progressive political parties. Newspapers and journals prospered as intellectuals, comprised of public-spirited academics within the universities and public figures, many of them immigrants from Europe, focused on solutions to the many problems of their era. Many of them came to be known as the New York Intellectuals whose contributions to American culture were substantial in all walks of life but who began to withdraw as the Second World War wound down and the Cold War evolved during the 1940s. The journal *Partisan Review* was at the center of these intellectuals' lives. They including Philip Rahv and William Phillips, who were influential since its founding, and Dwight Macdonald, F. W. Dupuy, and Mary McCarthy, all of whom joined the editorial board in 1937. Other early participants included Sidney Hook and James Burnham, whereas in the early 1940s Diana Trilling, Paul Goodman, and Alfred Kazin were involved, and a bit later a young group of writers such as Irving Howe, Daniel Bell, and Saul Bellow joined their ranks. Their story is revealed through fascinating appraisals, including Alexander Bloom's comprehensive intellectual history (1986) and Terry Cooney's treatment (1986) of the formative period before 1945, Harvey Teres (1996) explores radicalism during the 1930s and the culture wars of the 1940s, Howard Brick (1986) delineates the tension between socialist and sociological theory during the 1940s, and David Laskin (2000) emphasizes the role of women in the movement. Alan Wald has explored this period through three major studies, with the first (1987) looking at the New York Intellectuals and the rise and decline of the anti-Stalinist left from the 1930s to the 1980s; the second (1994) delving into the literary left with essays on the revolutionary left and the relation between radical artistic practice and politics; and the third (2002) exhaustively portraying major intellectuals and writers in the United States and their leftist activities in the first half of the twentieth century, in particular their affiliation with the American Communist Party and participation in popular front causes, their literary contributions, their political activism, and their impact on evolving American society, especially during the Depression and the decade of the 1930s, the Second World War, and the ensuing Cold War. Frances Saunders (1999) exposes the role of U.S. intelligence agencies and their infiltration, influence, and shaping of arts

and literature through manipulation of intellectuals to pursue an ideological agenda during the Cold War.

Although I was immersed in the study of Brazil and its intellectual life, my own thinking evolved as the decade of the 1960s ushered in an era of New Left thinking and challenge to mainstream and Old Left ideas alongside an impetus toward participatory democracy, experimentation, and radical leftist tendencies. Yet intellectuals eventually retreated once more as American society turned conservative and consolidated under the right-wing presidencies of Nixon and Reagan. Whereas Russell Jacoby (1987) emphasized the withdrawal of intellectuals, writers, and thinkers from public life after the tumultuous 1960s in his critically significant *The Last Intellectuals* (1987), Eric Lott in *The Disappearing Liberal Intellectual* (2006) traced the decline of the left, especially in the period 1992–2005; he criticizes this left's turn to social democratic reform in the form of identity politics or a cultural left. Carl Boggs (1993) describes this shift in terms of a crisis of modernity. An understanding of these trends evolves in personal accounts and retrospective works on the decade of the 1960s and its aftermath, including those by Todd Gitlin (1987), an early radical and later sociology professor and more moderate social critic at the University of California, Berkeley; Tom Hayden (1988), in his reflection on his experience as a leader of the student movement of the 1960s; James Miller (1987), in a serious retrospective of the 1960s, its understanding of participatory democracy, and the ideas that shaped the movement; and Harvey Terres (1996), drawing on his personal experience during the struggles of the 1960s and as a worker in various industrial jobs and later as an academic in his writing about the New York Intellectuals and their legacy and influence on the New Left during the 1960s and the far right in contemporary times as he traces the evolution of intellectual discourse and action from progressive to conservative discourse with attention to organization, individuals, and publications.

Other useful historical accounts of this rise and decline of intellectuals include those by Anderson (1995), who develops "activism as it unfolded, chronologically, each event building upon another, as the movement became a kaleidoscope of activity and as the sixties expanded in complexity and swelled in emotion"; Berman (1996), who dwells on four moments of 1968 and its implications; and Calvert (1991), who emphasizes the movement during the 1960s and its outlook for participatory democracy and spiritual faith in the goodness of every human being. A younger generation of historians assess the period in Farber (1994);

whereas Isserman (1987) looks at the links between the Old Left of the 1930s and the New Left of the 1960s, and Katsiaficas (1987) revisits the history of the New Left of the 1960s and the social movements associated with it in the United States and around the world. Historian Rorabaugh (1989) writes about the Berkeley movement during the 1960s, while editor Korda (1999) helps us with his impressions of major writers over many years in the New York publishing world. Richard Flacks (1988) explains the weaknesses of the left, especially leftist organizations that insist on conformity to their memory and identity, while sharing resources and information and mutually clarifying vision, strategy and program (277). Levine (1996) responds to the idea, inherent in Bloom (1987), that the contemporary university has closed to the absolute truths of classical writings and argues that we should "be open to the reality that all peoples and societies have cultures that we have to respect to the extent that we take the trouble to understand how they operate and what they believe" (19).

My understanding sees the Gramscian organic intellectual as an ideal type often conspicuous and even admired in traditional society, but today less influential in modern technological society. In my study of twentieth-century Brazilian intellectuals, I am generally concerned with scholars, teachers, journalists, and others rather than with an intelligentsia as distinguished by Gouldner, although the lines of demarcation are not always clear. At various times, some of these intellectuals assumed major roles in the state apparatus, and thus they were in a position to exercise power in dealing with the problems they perceived in their society. I want to know if their cultural production and their political participation influenced Brazil to awaken from its obsession with an inferior colonial past and to bring Brazilians together in common purpose to transcend past difficulties and unite the country in common purpose. Thus, my principal concern is a critical assessment of the production of ideas and knowledge by intellectuals and their impact on economic and political life. I am less interested in intellectuals as a class than in their relations with other classes. To what extent do they empathize with the bourgeoisie or proletariat? How do they identify their class position and class consciousness? I am also interested in their ideas and knowledge in theory and practice. Is their production diffused in abstract or concrete forms? Is their output incorporated into general commodity production, as suggested by Debray, or does it generate critical and creative thinking? Is the content of their ideas and knowledge shaped by bourgeois ideals associated with the emerging capitalist society, or does it serve to counter

the bourgeois outlook? Are the intellectuals inspired by positivist and liberal views or by Marxist perspectives, and did this lead to any practical outcomes? Have they simply retreated from their ideals and aspirations and concentrated on their professional careers within university or the state? Finally, are they interested in gradual change and reform, or are they committed to radical solutions? Do they advocate change within an evolving capitalist accumulation, or do they see socialism as an alternative?

Four principal themes run through my study. The first depicts the dramatic struggle of intellectuals to transcend a sense of inferiority based on Brazilian colonialism, backwardness, and dependence on foreign culture. Various intellectual ideas and movements have dominated Brazilian political thought and activity since the recognition, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, that the nation needed to transcend a colonialism and dependency on culture abroad. This awakening was not widely apparent after Brazilian independence in 1822 and during the imperial period up to the end of slavery and the establishment of the Old Republic in 1891. The rupture with colonialism accompanied the rise of an agrarian capitalism based on coffee production and export, along with oligarchical political domination under the ruling classes of Minas Gerais and São Paulo. Chapter 1 emphasizes the evolution of political thought throughout the twentieth century. This thought is particularly important in Rio de Janeiro, until 1960 the political capital and base for state institutions and political parties; in São Paulo, the burgeoning center for industry in the urban areas and coffee in the countryside and for the immigrant and national workers and their incipient labor movements; and to a more limited extent in the Northeast, especially Salvador (the old capital and locus of slave trade) and Recife, the region of major sugar production and export into world markets as well a center of cultural activity stimulated by many of the nation's major artists, novelists, historians, and social scientists. Chapter 1 introduces various overviews that depict the struggles to transcend cultural manifestations of inferiority and cast off the colonial legacy while introducing new understandings based on pride in nation and national destiny. Major themes such as nationalism, the bourgeois revolution, paths toward development, and alternative conceptions of democracy are introduced by the twentieth-century Brazilians presented in the initial chapter. They are explored in the chapters that follow.

The second theme focuses on the search of intellectuals for a national identity. It evolves for the most part in Chapter 2, which describes the

Rio intellectuals of the Instituto Brasileiro de Economia e Sociologia e Política (IBESP) and the Instituto Superior de Estudos Brasileiros (Superior Institute of Brazilian Studies [ISEB]) from the early 1950s until the 1964 coup and delves into their ideas on nationalism and development. This story is not widely known outside Brazil, but it is a fascinating account of how intellectuals of different political persuasions came together, examined major national problems, and began to evolve a political ideology of national development that would bring consensus to political economic thinking and, through the state, implement solutions to problems and permit Brazil to emerge as a major international power. Their effort accompanied a broad awakening around the belief that Brazil would someday overcome economic underdevelopment, social inequality, and cultural backwardness. There was internal dissension along this path, eventually culminating in a military coup in 1964 that brought down the ISEB but allowed its ideas of nationalism to carry on in different ways.

The third theme revolves around the efforts of São Paulo intellectuals to seek national identity and lead Brazil out of its backwardness through in-depth field studies and empirical work aimed at systematic analysis and understanding of particular problems around racial discrimination, social inequality, class differentiation under a rapidly industrializing region of the country, and the conspicuous problems that accompany early capitalism. Chapter 3 examines these intellectuals, with emphasis on social scientists and historians who gravitated toward Caio Prado Júnior and the Marxist social science journal *Revista Brasiliense* and the Capital Group of graduate students and young professors associated with Florestan Fernandes. Their work is known outside Brazil, but my account delves into their thinking and outlook, their cultural production, and their attempts to change society through new ideas and understandings.

A fourth theme draws out how the national experience of Brazilian intellectuals confronted and challenged ideas and theories that emanated from Eurocentric and North American thinking about development, some of it within prevalent mainstream thinking and some of it within outmoded ideas about backwardness in the dogma of the Third International and the Soviet Communist Party. Chapters 4 and 5 attempt to relate theory and reality by looking, on the one hand, at the important ideas on backwardness and underdevelopment evolving in the work of Caio Prado Júnior and Celso Furtado, on dependency in the writings of Theotônio dos Santos and others, on associated dependent development in the work of Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and on