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11/15/2011

*Progeny of Progress: Child-Centered Policymaking and National Identity Construction
in Brazil, 1922-1954*

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An abstract of

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the James T. Laney School of Graduate Studies
of Emory University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in History

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Abstract

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In the early twentieth century, the confluence of high infant mortality and the drive to define national identity drew elites' attention to Brazilian children as objects of health and social welfare reform, as well as embodied symbols of progress and development at the level of the body politic. Circles of intellectuals, policymakers, philanthropists, and health professionals emerged to address the unique challenges of crafting a healthy, stable, and productive generation of Brazilian citizens. Ideas and practices formulated by these elite circles led to the foundation of federal, state, and municipal level institutions centered upon the National Children's Department (1940). Using state authority, this small group of elites attempted to disseminate prescriptions for child rearing, health, and family life to all corners of Brazil. Simultaneously, they collaborated with federal administrators to craft Brazilian national character based on images of healthy, well-parented, and productive children. Child-centered nation-making and public health campaigns became key mechanisms in the state's attempts to engender development, propel modernization, and prescribe social and cultural behaviors.

Brazilian officials, philanthropists, and health professionals relied on *puericultura* as a central discursive and policy platform. Puericulture encompassed the "art and science" of healthy child-rearing. Pro-child advocates spread puericultural practices through various public initiatives including print media, exhibitions, radio programs, and educational campaigns. Brazilian doctors and state administrators viewed puericulture as an intellectual and practical sidestep to European-derived eugenics theory. These elites were particularly concerned with the hygenization and health of children's bodies, which was deemed necessary for their eventual contributions as "colonizers" and "immigrants" in settling and cultivating Brazil's interior. Getúlio Vargas' regime (1930-1945) bolstered the formulation of child health and welfare initiatives that aimed to unite, modernize, and develop Brazil through artful and scientific child-rearing. Alongside efforts to reform public health and assistance for the youngest members of the body politic, contemporary medical and social thinkers utilized the child as a powerful national symbol. The image of the well-cultivated child was used by contemporary officials and intellectuals to displace the notion that Brazil was a tropical backwater by expressing a sense of nationhood still undergoing a healthy and progressive development.

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Acknowledgements

I am especially grateful to Dr. Jeffrey Lesser for shaping my research interests into a viable project. His generosity, enthusiasm, and commitment to my professional development have sustained me through each stage of the dissertation process. I also owe him a great deal of thanks for connecting me with other inspiring scholars. I am indebted to Dr. Jerry Davila for his direction and support. He provided me with countless archival leads and great insights on what it means to be a scholar of Brazil. I am also grateful to have had Dr. Walter Adamson as a teaching mentor and dissertation committee member. Dr. Peter Brown graciously read my dissertation in its final stages and offered valuable comments that helped me view the project from an interdisciplinary perspective. Drs. Bianca Premo and Susan Socolow also provided me with inspiration to develop a project focused on children. Drs. George Armelagos and Lynn Sibley listened to my ideas as they emerged and showed great generosity throughout my time in Atlanta. I also thank my many supportive colleagues at Emory University. Special thanks go to Ashley Brenner, Alex Borucki, Daniel Domingues da Silva, Melissa Gayan, Glen Goodman, Rachel Lambrecht, Brad Lange, Leonardo Marques, Adam Rosenbaum, Uri Rosenheck, and Lena Suk. Matt Barton, Megan Machnik, and Laura Premack also provided much needed friendship and many laughs during my time in Brazil.

I also wish to thank the many Brazilian scholars, archivists, and friends who contributed to the success of this work. Dr. Marcos Chor Maio welcomed me at the Casa de Oswaldo Cruz. The faculty and students there provided me with fantastic research suggestions and urged me to engage with Brazil's complex history of public health and medicine. I thank them for also giving me a venue to share my work in its preliminary stages. The personnel at the Biblioteca Nacional, Arquivo da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, CPDOC, Arquivo do Estado de São Paulo, and the Emilio Ribas Museu de Saúde Pública deserve thanks for their time and assistance. I benefited from the guidance of Olga Sofia Fabergé Alves and Maria Lucia Mott, who kindly allowed me to access the private collection of the *Cruzada Pró-Infância*. Dra. Claudia Passos became a wonderful friend and mentor in Rio de Janeiro, as did the instructors and students at Saraswati Yoga Studio. Special thanks go to Dra. Carla Mathias for giving me modern-day perspectives on puericulture and helping me nurture my most valuable souvenir from Brazil.

I am especially grateful for the resources that made my research possible. Dissertation research in Brazil was supported by a J. William Fulbright IIE grant and the Joseph J. Mathews Prize given by Emory University's Department of History. Preliminary research funds were provided by Emory University's Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center, the James T. Laney Graduate School Travel Fund, and a Piedmont-TATTO Workshop Grant.

I dedicate this work to my father, Richard L. Williams, who passed away shortly after I returned from Brazil. His support for me was as unparalleled as my love for him as a father and friend. Without the constant guidance from my mother, Karen Hay Williams, I would not have completed this work. I am grateful to Mark and Doris Maes for their encouragement and love despite the distance that separates us. Finally, I am most thankful for my husband, Dr. Kenneth Maes. The memories we have collected over the past five years will keep us laughing for many more to come. Kenny tirelessly read versions of this work and endured the chaotic writing and revision process while trying to

embark on his own academic career. I could not have completed this project without his constant love and inspiration. To him and our son, Miles, I wish to express my profound thanks for allowing me to be an historian, a partner, and a mother.

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INTRODUCTION

In the days following the 2010 official selection of Rio de Janeiro as host of the 2016 Summer Olympic Games, a striking propaganda campaign swept across the city. Posters and billboards featuring simple portraits of child athletes graced subway stations, bus stops, storefronts, and building facades. Smiling, elementary-school-aged boys and girls wearing athletic gear and standing against a white background promoted the celebratory slogan; "Rio 2016: another future begins now."¹ The images and rhetoric suggested the opening of a new chapter for Brazil's youngest generations, one forged through the socioeconomic development and international attention promised by the Olympic Games.

The children selected for the Olympic campaign physically embodied the diversity of the Brazilian population; a blond, blue-eyed girl, an Afro-Brazilian boy, and another girl with a medium complexion and black hair. Their faces projected conventional images of Brazil's racial and ethnic plurality by comprising European, African, and mixed-race identities. Placed alongside the Olympic slogan, these children symbolized both the continuation of the nation's legacies and the promise of a progress in the decades to come. The idea of "another future" conveyed the Olympics as the beginning of an imagined transformation, one which explicitly positioned Brazil's youngest generations as both key benefactors and protagonists.

Remarkably, almost ninety years before the 2010 Olympic Games announcement children had emerged to represent the nation during another moment in the international spotlight. In 1922, Brazil commemorated the Centennial of its independence from

¹ In Portuguese the text reads, "Rio 2016: um outro futuro começa agora."

Portugal with ostentatious festivities and exhibitions in its capital, Rio de Janeiro. One of the main Centennial exhibits, the Children's Museum, focused exclusively on Brazilian children and their roles in shaping the nation at the symbolic dawning of the country's second century of independence. The exhibit featured dramatic visual representations of Brazil's major child welfare concerns, such as infant mortality, poverty, disease, and neglect.² Without directly pronouncing the year 1922 as the start of "another future," the imagery implied the urgency of fundamental child-focused reforms to ensure Brazil's prosperity.

One poster stood out among the hand-drawn images of abandoned, diseased, and malnourished youngsters. Entitled, "O Brasil Amado" (beloved Brazil), it highlighted the demographic promise of Brazil's youngest generations. Although it misrepresented the severity of infant mortality in the early twenties, the panel illustrated how children would symbolically and physically regenerate the nation.

Figure 1: "O Brasil Amado" (1922)



(Arquivo Geral da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro)

Shrouded by light on the left side of the image, an ostensibly white, healthy infant rested in crib situated on a patch of Rio de Janeiro's famous coastline. An indigenous

² For a more comprehensive overview of the Children's Museum exhibit, see James E. Wadsworth and Tamera L. Marko, "Children of the Patria: Representations of Childhood and Welfare State Ideologies at the 1922 Rio de Janeiro International Centennial Exhibition," *The Americas*. 58:1 (2001), 65-90.

man gestured toward the child while crushing the threat of death depicted as a miniature grim reaper. A contemporary version of the Brazilian flag, adopted in 1889 and inscribed with the positivist phrase, “Ordem e Progresso,” or "Order and Progress," waved in the background, revealing only the word “progresso.” Peeking out behind the indigenous man, the word, “progress,” impelled his action as he opened the way for the rise of the future generation in the twentieth century.

The selection of children as metaphors for the nation in 1922 and 2010 signaled turning points in the ongoing development of *brasilidade*, or a constructed sense of Brazilianness. Like the 2010 Olympic child-centered campaign, the 1922 poster suggested that Brazil would embark on a new trajectory; one in which children figured prominently as embodiments of the nation’s potential. While the 2010 panels celebrated children as the bearers of the Brazilian population’s multifaceted heritage, the 1922 poster portrayed the single, white child as reconfiguration of national character as it was forged by the melding of populations in the colonial period. It communicated that the nation’s “progress” hinged on the colonial past ceding the way for the genesis of a healthy, homogeneous, and prosperous Brazil. In both pieces of propaganda the use of children underscored contemporary narratives and attitudes regarding national self-consciousness.

The Centennial celebration itself symbolized the opening of a new era, one in which Brazil began to showcase its socioeconomic and cultural legitimacy as a member of the imagined “concert of nations” and eschewed characterizations of degeneracy and backwardness that predominated in the nineteenth century. Similarly, the conferral of the 2016 Olympic Games represented an opportunity for Brazil to demonstrate its fitness,

both literally and figuratively, as an economically and socially-ascended nation in the twenty-first century. With these objectives in the background and children's faces in the foreground, the 1922 and 2010 images both demonstrated the real and imagined roles Brazil's youngest generations have played in larger nation-making projects.

This dissertation examines children as key protagonists in twentieth-century national identity construction, as well as in social and geopolitical unification projects. It offers a reinterpretation of twentieth-century nation-making that examines how state federal policymakers and medical professionals in particular, envisioned Brazil's youngest generations as the harbingers of modern nationhood and development. Children, understood as both symbols and subjects, provide an intriguing analytic lens with which to view nation-making processes in this context. Due to the precariousness of their lifestage and their potential value to the body politic, they weave in and out of a myriad of discussions of public and private life in Brazil. Specifically, in the period stretching from Brazil's Independence Centennial in 1922 to the mid-1950s, children appear prominently as cultural reference points, objects of social reform, and as untapped resources primed to fulfill an imagined national destiny.

Both the physical image of the child and developmental energy of childhood also serve as allegories for the life of the nation itself in the Brazilian case, as they have in many other historical contexts.³ This work, then, is an inquiry into how and why children

³ For works on the use of children and childhood as metaphors for nationhood, see Kristen E. Cheney, *Pillars of Nation: Child Citizens and Ugandan National Development* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Thomas Hylland Eriksen, "The Nation as a Human Being—a Metaphor in a Mid-Life Crisis?" in *Siting Culture: the Shifting Anthropological Subject*, eds. Karen Fog Olwig and Kirsten Hastrup (New York: Routledge 1997), 108-109; Caroline E. Levander, *Cradle of Liberty: Race, the Child, and National Belonging from Thomas Jefferson to W.E.B Du Bois* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

became primary discursive and visual icons to a specific sector of the Brazilian elite engaged in nation-building in the twentieth century. The child-centered ideologies and policies espoused by this group, mainly comprising government officials, philanthropists, and medical professionals, provide another angle with which to view the forging of *brasilidade* and Brazilian social thought in general. A focus on children as symbols of the nation also allows for a broad and eclectic analysis of contemporary themes beyond national identity construction. Concerns over child welfare, health, education, and livelihood consistently intersected with concurrent debates over the definition of family life, gender roles, public health, economic development, as well the definition of class-based, racial, ethnic hierarchies within Brazilian society. An analysis of the discursive and visual cooptation of Brazilian children therefore offers a unique vantage point from which to understand nation-making processes in the modern period.

In addition to its focus on children, this work analyzes the coalescence of political and medical prerogatives in the governance of Brazil's body politic in the first half of the twentieth century. Ideas about population health and demographic fitness emanating from Western Europe and the United States, where Brazil's most prestigious statesmen and medical professionals often trained, turned infant mortality and child welfare into urgent national problems. A new field of medical specialization called *puericultura*, a nineteenth-century French-derived term for healthy childrearing practices, emerged to address to these issues. Different from pediatrics, puericulture, as it was interpreted by Brazilian physicians, entailed the *maintenance* of health and fitness rather than the *treatment* of illnesses. Brazilian *puericultores*, or puericulturists, reinterpreted French models to meet the unique exigencies of infant survival and childrearing in the tropics.

For example, doctors adapted nutritional standards for Brazilian children whose diets and growth rates differed from their European counterparts. The Brazilian variant of puericulture comprised the close management of pre-and post-natal nutrition, hygiene, and development through a set of practices and behaviors prescribed for the home and clinic. Implicit in the puericultural doctrine was an alliance between doctors and mothers, the latter being charged with both figuratively and literally raising the nation. This dissertation elucidates the ways in which *puericultura*, considered as a set of discourses, policies, and practices, became a key locus for the promotion of racial egalitarianism in the thirties and forties. The puericulture initiative also became part of the federal government's geopolitical agenda that sought to integrate the nation through the standardization of child health and rearing practices, as well as through the expansion of medical services and infrastructure.

With its focus on pre-natal health, *puericultura* reinforced some aspects of contemporary eugenics theory. Again drawn from the European academe, eugenics, specifically Mendelian models of heredity, had stoked doctors' and social thinkers' preoccupations with Brazil's heterogeneous and purportedly sickly population. Brazilian intellectuals eschewed the more rigid biological determinism of Mendelian eugenics in favor of neo-Lamarckian theory as it promised the gradual perfection of the race over several generations. For some social thinkers the whitening of the Brazilian population through racial mixing, a process known as *branqueamento*, was an implicit part of eugenics-based. Whiteness and physical health remained the imagined benchmarks of modernity and progress for much of the twentieth century.

However, doctors and public authorities familiar with Brazil's staggeringly high infant mortality rate had long since realized that the application of neo-Lamarckian principles, which prioritized progenitors' health and fitness, remained ineffectual for improving the nation's demographic profile. *Puericultura* served as an intellectual and practical alternative to eugenics as it addressed specific maternal and medical interventions intended, first and foremost, to ensure survival and healthy development in the post-natal stage. A close reading of puericulturists' discourse reveals that most doctors valued a child's overall health and wellbeing over his inherited traits, including skin color and ethnicity. Puericulturists even propagated the inculcation of racial egalitarianism as an important part of Brazilian child rearing. As early as the mid-thirties, puericulturists openly advocated that parents teach their children that the social divisions spawned by racial prejudice hindered Brazil's progress. These doctors also championed the expansion of state-sponsored pre-and post-natal health services into the largely non-white populations concentrated in impoverished urban zones and remote regions of Brazil's interior. Puericultural print media sources and public forums in the thirties and forties did not exclusively present whiteness as synonymous with health. Puericulturists often awarded black and mixed-race babies prizes in annual "Robust Baby" contests and printed their photos in official publications.

Yet, puericulturists' attitudes toward race and health fluctuated in accordance with socio-cultural and political norms in the thirties and forties. Contemporary Brazilian aesthetics, highly influenced by foreign trends, still privileged white skin as a marker of fitness. As a result, puericulturists consistently utilized white children as primary icons in their propaganda campaigns, educational pamphlets, parenting magazines, and

exhibitions. In 1938, the American child actress Shirley Temple even graced the cover of *Criança*, a parenting magazine published by Brazil's Ministry of Education, Institute of Puericulture, and Division of Maternal and Infant Support. The magazine's sponsors considered *Criança* to be a "vehicle into the homes" of all Brazilians that would instill the precepts for raising the future stewards of the nation.⁴ By projecting a foreign, white child (one with bountiful blond curls and blue eyes nonetheless) as a symbol of health and wellbeing, these officials revealed their reluctance to embrace the Brazil's cultural and racial heritage. The use of such imagery also served to inscribe whiteness as an unattainable, at least for most Brazilians, aesthetic and standard of health. Throughout the thirties and forties, the doctors and officials that promoted puericulture disagreed about race and its impacts on the management of child-centered public health, welfare services, development, and national identity construction. Practices and attitudes toward race and its relationship to pre-and post-natal health, as well as toward racial relations more generally varied among the individuals who advocated puericultural social policies. For medical professionals and policymakers, discussions of race remained secondary to their focus on population health, welfare, and Brazil's demographic profile.

With the inception of Getúlio Vargas' first regime (1930-1945), puericulture became a key feature of the state's development and nation-building agenda. Federal and state-level officials' biopolitical prerogatives coalesced with puericulturists' attitudes toward child-focused health and welfare reform. This confluence resulted in the creation of a federal department devoted to children's issues in 1940, the *Departamento Nacional da Criança* (hereafter, *DNCr*) or National Children's Department. A National Institute of Puericulture, (hereafter, *INP*) had previously emerged in 1937 as the primary training and

⁴"Criança na opinião dos mestres," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. I, no. 7 (June/July 1938), 2.

research center for the *DNCr*. Housed in the federal capital, Rio de Janeiro, these two institutions, as well as several smaller child-oriented agencies, further demonstrated the fusion of politics and medicine. This study, then, is also an analysis of the relationship between ideas and institutions in twentieth-century Brazil. Puericulture and the formation of the *DNCr* provide a compelling lens with which to evaluate how and why a relatively circumscribed group of doctors came to influence national-level population health policy, national identity construction, and development. Although it ceased to shape national-level policymaking after the mid-1960s, puericulture endured well into the second half of the century within Brazil's medical academy. Puericultural manuals and parenting magazines continued to reference the tenets formulated by Brazil's first *puericultores* in the early thirties. Its persistence proved not only that children's health and welfare remained critical, but that discourses and practices that had risen to prominence decades earlier had made an indelible mark on medicine, public health, and child welfare in modern Brazil.

Locating the Child in Brazil and Beyond: Historiographical Perspectives

Historians of Latin America have long struggled to hear the muffled and scattered voices of actual child subjects in historical documentation. These “little hidiers” often evade the historian’s investigative eye, leaving only indirect impressions of their experiences and thoughts.⁵ Social historians, in particular those working on the colonial and Republican eras, have made great strides in tracking down children through legal and institutional records. They have revealed how children fit into the system of colonial

⁵ Bianca Premo, “‘The Little Hiders’ and Other Reflections on the History of Children in Imperial Iberoamerica,” in *Raising an Empire: Children in Early Modern Iberia and Colonial Latin America*, eds. Ondina E. González and Bianca Premo (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007). See also, Tobias Hecht, *Minor Omissions: Children in Latin American History and Society* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2002).

authority and society, as well as how they interacted within public and private spaces.⁶ Sources providing children's first-person accounts remain few and far between; however, young protagonists are not wholly absent in historical narratives.⁷ The paucity of direct evidence has influenced the proliferation of investigations into child welfare, health and educational policymaking, legal reforms, and the concept of childhood broadly defined.

Brazilian scholars have produced a number of studies related to the concept of *infância*, or childhood in a variety of historical contexts. In fact, to find references to this topic, one need only look to the iconic work of sociologist Gilberto Freyre's, *The Masters and the Slaves* (1933/1946). Freyre's appraisal of his own early interactions with Afro-Brazilians provided the backbone for his theory of Brazil's racial democracy. The author's descriptions of boyhood experiences amidst the mysterious and bountiful tropical landscape of the Northeast, in this work and others, also helped forge a national narrative on the unique balance of environment and civilization throughout Brazilian history. Many of Freyre's discussions of childhood serve as allegories for understanding larger dimensions of Brazilian society, such as the negotiation of public and private spaces, racial, ethnic, and gendered interactions, and the boundaries of patriarchal authority.

⁶ For examples of such social histories see, Linda Lewin, *Surprise Heirs I: Illegitimacy, Patrimonial Rights, and Legal Nationalism in Luso-Brazilian Inheritance, 1750-1821* and *Surprise Heirs II: Illegitimacy, Inheritance Rights, and Public Power in the Formation of Imperial Brazil, 1822-1889* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Nara Milanich, *Children of Fate: Childhood, Class, and the State in Chile, 1850-1930* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009); Bianca Premo, *Children of the Father King: Youth, Authority, and Legal Minority in Colonial Lima* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005); A.J.R Russell-Wood, *Fidalgos and Philanthropists: The Santa Casa de Misericórdia of Bahia, 1550-1755* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968); Ann Twinam, *Public Lives, Private Secrets: Gender, Honor, Sexuality, and Illegitimacy in Colonial Spanish America* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999) and Erica Windler, "City of Children: Boys, Girls, Family, and State in Imperial Rio de Janeiro, Brazil" (PhD Dissertation, University of Miami, 2003).

⁷ Bianca Premo argues that Latin American historians have long analyzed children and childhood indirectly in studies of slavery, family, and society despite the "late" emergence of a considerable genre in the mid-1990s, see Premo, "How Latin America's History of Childhood Came of Age," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 1:1 (2008), 63-76.

Three historians, Irma and Irene Rizzini and Mary del Priore, have covered substantial territory in terms of sources and themes related to the history of children and childhood in Brazil. Their volumes offer an array of insights into historical transformations in the legal and social considerations of children and childhood. Del Priore's 1999 edited volume, *História da criança no Brasil*, examines children over the five centuries of Brazil's history, making it a foundational text. The work illuminates the presence of children in even the most critical and precarious moments, such as soldiering in the Paraguayan War and factory labor in the early phase of São Paulo's industrialization. While the authors engage with an impressive variety of sources, they confront the methodological limitation of only analyzing adult observers' impressions of children and childhood experiences.

Irma and Irene Rizzini, both affiliated with Rio de Janeiro's *Centro Internacional de Estudos e Pesquisas sobre a Infância* (CIESPI), have contributed significantly to Brazilian historiography on children as well. In her 1995 and 2000 works, Irene culled institutional and legal documentation to analyze how adults classified, contained, penalized, and protected children from Brazil's colonial period to the twenty-first century. Along with Irma, Rizzini has also translated her scholarly investigations into "pro-child" political activism and has promoted access to historical sources on children and childhood through CIESPI's archives. Most importantly, CIESPI houses the Moncorvo Filho Archive which contains institutional records, correspondence, medical journals, and visual sources from Rio de Janeiro's *Instituto de Proteção e Assistência à Infância* (Institute of Child Protection and Assistance) founded in 1881. These documents have allowed Brazilian and foreign scholars to access the records of one of Brazil's first state-

sponsored pediatric and child welfare institutions and analyze both quantitative and qualitative data.⁸

This dissertation aims to contribute to the body of literature on the history of children in Brazil, but fits in specifically with more recent trends in historiography based within and beyond the context of Brazil and Latin America. In the last decade, scholars have moved away from traditional social histories of children that have relied on quantitative evidence. They have expanded the horizon of sources capable of portraying qualitative traces of the ways children and childhood intersected with more broad social and cultural phenomena. These new studies have inquired into the ways in which adults co-opted, governed, and educated children for the purposes of inculcating their own ideologies and practices. Using children as a lens with which to view processes such as the construction of national identity, cultural models, gender relations, social hierarchies, and family life, scholars have shed light on a new generation of historical subjects.

Two particular currents of this recent historiographical shift provide relevant frameworks for this study. First, investigations focused on periods of consolidation following war and political transformation most starkly reveal how ruling elites use child-centered language and imagery to reinforce power dynamics, group identification, and national identity.⁹ Such scholarship demonstrates how top-down usage of children as rhetorical and visual devices in nation-building contexts derives from a belief that

⁸ For a more detailed description of this repository and its holdings see, Tamera L. Marko, "When They Became the Nation's Children: The Foundation of Pediatrics and the Raced, Classed, and Gendered (Re)Inventions of Childhood in Rio de Janeiro, 1870-1930" (PhD Dissertation, University of California, San Diego 2006).

⁹ See, Kristen E. Cheney, *Pillars of Nation: Child Citizens and Ugandan National Development* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Laura Lee Downs, *Children in the Promised Land: Working-class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880-1960* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); Heide Fehrenbach, *Race After Hitler: Black Occupation Children in Postwar Germany and America*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); and Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008).

symbolic regeneration, via nascent generations, is a unifying and/or fortifying force. Although Brazil did not endure prolonged, domestic conflict in the early and mid-twentieth century, it did face dramatic political transitions, uneven social and economic development, and tense ideological conflict over the definition of *brasilidade*. As Daryle Williams' work reveals, twentieth-century among intellectuals, social reformers, and government officials engaged in a "cultural war" over the aesthetic and social characteristics that would define Brazilian national identity. Williams argues that government officials managed to co-opt artists and intellectuals to craft expressions of *brasilidade* according to the state's ideals, often in spite of their professed political opposition to Vargas' regime.¹⁰ Against the backdrop of this ideological battle, some nation-builders found "*a criança*" to be a symbol of rebirth and sociocultural fusion, as well as a touchstone for the development of an idealized version of national character. Perhaps more significantly, doctors and social reformers perceived themselves as engaged in war against high infant mortality and childhood disease. By making children a priority of the state and a symbol of progress in the public consciousness, child advocates hoped to venerate the young as vital contributors to Brazil's demographic profile and overall development. The use of children as central figures for formulating *brasilidade* transcended ideological divisions among policymakers, intellectuals, and medical professionals by providing a shared metaphor for representing the nation. This convergence in the construction of national identity explains why child-centered language and imagery pervades such a wide array of official and intellectual sources throughout the period under study.

¹⁰Williams, *Culture Wars*, 60-62.

Brazilian medical professionals and policymakers came to rely on *a criança* not as a result of direct exposure to prolonged, violent warfare as nation-builders in other contexts had, but in response to ongoing political and cultural tensions, as well as demographic and public health problems. Thus, my analysis complicates assessments of children's symbolic function as it has been asserted in scholarship that examines post-World War II Europe, post-Civil War United States, and post-conflict African nations. The Brazilian context illustrates how a group of doctors and government officials engaged in a wholly different type of conflict appropriated and transformed the idea of regeneration using child-centered discourse and imagery in the mid-twentieth century and applied them to a concerted nation-making project.

A second, recent historiographical trend that investigates the ways adults have appropriated children and children's images in health and educational reforms also informs my analysis. Scholars investigating such projects have demonstrated how and why children figure into official and popular perceptions of medical interventions, public health policy and campaigns, as well as educational projects. While children may or may not be the explicit focus of these inquiries, their presence as subjects and as representations have compelled scholars to address how adult power-holders contended with and manipulated them. My analysis of child-centered nation-making processes and children's health promotion in Brazil specifically enters into dialog with studies that examine contexts in which policymakers, medical professionals, and educators appropriate children's bodies, minds, and images to advance the health and welfare of the body politic.¹¹ Works focusing on the twentieth-century provide particularly instructive

¹¹ For works that explore this topic in the twentieth-century, see Davila, *Diploma of Whiteness*; Michelle Mouton, *From Nurturing the Nation to Purifying the Volk: Weimar and Nazi Family Policy, 1918-*

analytic frameworks as this period encompasses a transition in which children's care became a priority of the collective, in the eyes of the state, rather than solely a family responsibility.

Historians of Brazil have offered valuable insights into these types of projects. Jerry Davila's 2001 examination of educational reform in the inter-war period provides a fundamental understanding of how educators and government officials envisioned a generation of children as the key propagators of their homogenizing social values. Most importantly, his work elucidates the unique tone of Brazilian policymaking during this period in which medical and scientific professionals also occupied highly influential positions within federal ministries.¹² The circles of doctors and officials at the core of his monograph aimed to translate their raced and classed conceptualizations of Brazilian national character into educational policy for children at the public school level. Davila's assessment of the ways specific social reformers and government representatives infused national-level educational legislation and programs with their own ideologies of race, science, health, pedagogy, and culture provides a foundation for understanding how these relationships and processes worked within the context of the *DNCr* and among its affiliate organizations. Additionally, by focusing on patterns in medical discourse and practice over three decades, rather than using the traditional bookends defined by political transitions, his study de-centers any specific regime as the barometer of Brazilian social thought. This dissertation further elucidates constructions of child-centered discourse

1945 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Meira Weiss, "The Children of Yemen: Bodies, Medicalization, and Nation-building," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* (June 2001) 15:2, 206-221.

¹² See, Davila, *Diploma of Whiteness* and Sergio Miceli, *Intelectuais e Classe Dirigente no Brasil, 1920-1945* (São Paulo: DIFEL, 1979).

and imagery that endured from the early twenties to the mid-fifties despite dramatic political changes.

Analyzing the same period, specifically the years under the rule of President and dictator Getúlio Vargas, Cristina M. Fonseca's work further illuminates the institutionalization of public health as a means of nation-making. She provides insights into the ways in which officials inside the Ministry of Health and Education, *MES*, viewed Brazil's children as fundamental elements in their public health promotion campaigns.¹³ Fonseca analyzes ministerial documents and other government sources to argue that Vargas-era paternalistic health and welfare policies also served to symbolically unify Brazil's territory and people under the idea of a national family. Her work highlights a key period under consideration in my dissertation in which the central government nationalized special departments, such as the *DNCr* (1940), charged with resolving a range of social, economic, and environmental problems across the country. As Fonseca and other scholars have revealed, and as I argue for the case of child health campaigns, the majority of the programs and policies conceived and experimented with in Brazil's metropolises during this period failed to impact populations in the interior.¹⁴ This type of analysis illustrates the driving ideologies of mid-twentieth-century nation-builders by focusing on how and why the paternalistic, central government attempted to mold Brazil into a unified, national family.

Brazil's "Century of the Child:" Reflections on Periodization and Demographics

¹³ See Cristina M. Fonseca, *Saúde no Governo Vargas (1930-1945): dualidade institucional de um bem público* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FioCruz, 2007) and "'Modelando a cera virgem': a saúde da criança na política social do Vargas" (M.A. Thesis, Universidade Federal Fluminense, 1990).

¹⁴ On the uneven distribution of services, resources, and programs during the Vargas years see, Robert M. Levine, *Father of the Poor?: Vargas and His Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); John D. Wirth, *The Politics of Brazilian Development, 1930-1954* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1970) and John Crocitti, "Vargas Era Social Policies: An Inquiry into Brazilian Malnutrition during the Estado Novo (1937-1945)," in *Vargas and Brazil: New Perspectives*, ed. Jens R. Hentschke (New York: Palgrave, 2006).

The periodization of this study represents a divergence from the standard temporal breaks established by many scholars who use regime change alone to demarcate modern Brazilian history.¹⁵ Rather, the bookends of this era coincide with the emergence and dissipation of a specific set of ideas and institutions centered on the Brazilian child. Despite dramatic political transformations at the national level, doctors and social reformers determined the intensification and waning of the "*pró-infância*," or pro-child agenda in this period. Their efforts certainly coalesced with the patriarchal persona propagated by President Getúlio Vargas (1930-1945 and 1951-1952) and his administrators. Yet, without the ingenuity of Brazilian medical professionals his child-centered rhetoric and image as the "friend of children" would have been little more than a remained a political gimmick. The doctors and health reformers whose careers blossomed in the first half of the century were able to harness the discourse of modernization and use to propel the biological and sociocultural regeneration of Brazil. While contemporary economists, industrialists, and policymakers discussed how to awaken the "sleeping giant" by stimulating The Vargas regime granted them the institutional platform necessary to legitimate their theories and transform them into practice.

The selected years, 1922 and 1954, have both symbolic and political meanings for the study of children as key signifiers in elite constructions of national identity and development projects. This period encompasses three decades in which doctors, social thinkers, and policymakers expressed intense interest in the economic and cultural value

¹⁵ Scholars who have used regime change to establish chronologies in modern Brazilian history include: Lilia Moritz Schwartz, *The Spectacle of the Races: Scientists, Institutions, and the Race Question in Brazil* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1999); Steven Topik, *The Political Economy of the Brazilian State, 1889-1930* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987) and Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars*.

of Brazil's youngest citizens. As mentioned above, the 1922 Centennial marked the dawn of the country's second century as an independent nation and represented a benchmark in which officials, intellectuals, and artists began to define Brazil in the present and envision its future. The nation certainly experienced a dramatic regime change in 1954, brought about by the suicide of Getúlio Vargas, on the eve of a military coup, during his second term as president (1951-1954). Vargas, who, along with his closest officials, had cultivated a paternalistic image and consistently played the role of the nation's father and "friend of children" by using the Brazilian child as a central symbol and through the promotion of child-centered legislation. Therefore, the end of his rule symbolized a culmination of an era of intense rhetorical and visual reliance on Brazilian children in national-level politics.

The consolidation of Vargas' dictatorial regime, the *Estado Novo*, from 1937-1945 indeed represented a pronounced period of child-focused policymaking and statecraft. During this period, the administration, specifically via the *Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda*, Department of Press and Propaganda (*DIP*) and the Ministry of Health and Education (*MES*), cultivated various images of Vargas as the "friend of children" and as the nation's "father" through the inclusion of children and youth, both physically and symbolically, in political rallies, appearances, parades, and propaganda campaigns.¹⁶ Likewise, the *Estado Novo* ushered in policies to organize Brazilian youth and inculcate the regime's imagined norms of morality and patriotism. The founding of

¹⁶ During the *Estado Novo* the federal government also founded the *DNCr* (1940). Specific sources that promoted the image of Vargas as an ally of children and as a paternal figure include: Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda, *Getúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda, 1940) and Departamento Nacional da Criança, "Deixai que venham a mim...criancinhas," *Criança: revista para os pais*, (January 1940), 18-19. This last article directly compared Vargas' love of children to Jesus of Nazareth.

the National Youth Organization, *ONJ*, in 1938, the creation of a National Youth Hymn in 1940, and the erection of the National Monument to youth in the capital in 1944, the signaled the centrality of Brazil's youngest generations as cultural and political reference points in the Vargas dictatorship.¹⁷ Despite such clear intensification of this type of politics, imagery, and rhetoric during the *Estado Novo*, children and youth continued to play a prominent role in the policymaking of subsequent regimes under José Linhares (1945-1946) and Eurico Gaspar Dutra (1946-1951).

Vargas' re-election in 1951 likewise did not rupture patterns of elite reliance on children as markers of Brazilian national character that had emerged in the twenties. In fact, as some historians have argued, the Vargas administration attempted to amplify the president's populist image during his final three years in office.¹⁸ Although key ministry officials and other officeholders who had crystallized child-centered politics during the *Estado Novo* no longer served under Vargas in this period, many children's institutions, programs, and activities continued. For example, a partnership remained strong between the *DNCr*, the *Legião Brasileira de Assistência*, and the *Campanha Nacional da Criança* and these groups carried on with the same events, fundraisers, and publications, albeit with significantly less fanfare, they had promoted since the early forties. With Vargas embroiled in political chaos, first lady, Darcy Sarmanho Vargas, and first daughter and wife of then governor of Rio de Janeiro state, Alzira Vargas Amaral Peixoto, replaced the president as prominent supporters of Brazil's continued *pró-infância* initiatives. In

¹⁷ For an examination of Vargas-era youth movements and programs see, Helena Maria Bomeny, *Organização Nacional da Juventude: a política da mobilização da juventude no Estado Novo* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora CPDOC, 1981).

¹⁸ For discussions of Vargas' role in the emergence and decline of populism in mid-twentieth-century Brazilian history see, Michael Conniff, ed. *Populism in Latin America* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999) and Joel Wolfe, "'Father of the Poor' or 'Mother of the Rich'?: Getúlio Vargas, Industrial Workers, and Constructions of Class, Gender, and Populism in São Paulo, 1930-1945," *Radical History Review*, 58 (1994): 80-111.

Vargas' final term in office, it would be his wife and daughter whose images stood alongside Brazil's children at robust baby competitions, school and institutional visits, and National Children's Week events.

The year 1954, then, marked the culmination of a concerted, rhetorical focus on Brazil's children and youth as political and cultural symbols in central government's construction of *brasilidade*. As historian Jerry Davila argues, the so-called "Vargas Era" provides an effective frame, despite persistent scholarly debate over its exact meaning, for understanding nation-building processes in Brazil's modern period.¹⁹ By analyzing intellectual and social trends without the traditional bookends of the Vargas Era, this dissertation considers a consistent ideological trend that transcended political transformations that occurred between 1922 and 1954.²⁰ For this study, 1954 demarcates a point of rupture in which national-level officials began to shift away from *a criança* and toward industrial and economic resources as the primary harbingers of the nation's prosperity. With the exit of Brazil's carefully-styled 'patriarch' in 1954 the image of the consolidated national family faded as the ideal social model of order and progress that would propel development. In some ways, post-Vargas-Era policymakers substituted children with natural resources and industrial innovations as the new "seeds" they imagined would be necessary for Brazil's ascent in the latter part of the twentieth century.

¹⁹ Jerry Davila, "Myth and Memory: Getúlio Vargas' Long Shadow Over Brazilian History," in ed. Hentske, *Vargas and Brazil*, 263-266.

²⁰ Works that defy the conventional chronologies for post-independence Brazil include: George Reid Andrews, *Blacks and Whites in São Paulo, 1888-1988* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); Susan K. Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy: The Modernization of Gender Inequality in Brazil, 1914-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Maria Helena Capelato, *Os arautos do liberalismo: imprensa paulista, 1920-1945* (São Paulo: Editora Brasiliense, 1989); Sueann Caulfield, *In Defense of Honor: Sexual Morality, Modernity, and Nation in Early Twentieth-Century Brazil* (Durham: Duke University, 2000); Davila, *Diploma of Whiteness* and Wadsworth and Marko, "Children of the Patria" and Barbara Weinstein, *For Social Peace in Brazil: Industrialists and the Re-Making of the Working Class in São Paulo, 1920-1964* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

It is essential to note that diminishing reliance on children as symbols at the national-level did not signify a deeper transition within the circles of twentieth-century child advocates in Brazil. In fact, the endurance of their practices and ideologies reinforces the periodization of this study, as it covers three decades of consistent discourse and imagery focused on Brazil's youngest generations. The period under investigation encapsulates the apogee of medical professionals', philanthropists', intellectuals', and government officials' interests in Brazil's children the most valuable members of the body politic. Although the end of Getúlio Vargas' almost twenty-year reign represented a symbolic break with the intense child-focused politics of the past, it did not signal an ideological shift particularly within the ranks of Brazil's professional puericulturists, among *DNCr* officials, and philanthropists associated with various child welfare organizations. The *DNCr*, for example, remained active at the federal and state level until 1970 when it was phased out by the installation of other child welfare organs introduced during the military dictatorship beginning in 1964. Even after these political and institutional transformations, members of the *DNCr* participated in federal child-centered policymaking by serving as advisors for the newly-created departments, particularly the *Fundação Nacional do Bem-Estar do Menor*, (FUNABEM).²¹ Thus, many of the same medical professionals and child advocates that had been instrumental in founding national-level child policies continued to advance health and welfare initiatives in spite of both regime change and changes in international ideology and practice.

²¹ The 1966 *FUNABEM* charter stated that the director of the *DNCr* should be appointed to the foundation's national council See, *Fundação Nacional do Bem-Estar do Menor* (Rio de Janeiro: Departamento de Imprensa Nacional, 1966), 10.

Of note was the national-level career of Dr. Olympio Olinto de Oliveira, first head of the *DNCr*, that spanned from 1917-1945. The child-centered medical innovations and programs crafted by such doctors and social reformers forged a uniquely Brazilian approach to child politics over three decades. National-level authorities, namely president/dictator Getúlio Vargas (1930-1945 and 1951-1954), certainly provided institutional and financial support to puericulture and child welfare initiatives in the thirties and forties. Consequently, Vargas' "friend of children" image erroneously attributed him sole credit for championing children's causes. However, the work of individual doctors and social thinkers supplied the fundamental templates for the federal government's educational and assistance programs, as well as for the expansion of health services and infrastructure. With a focus on Brazil's *DNCr* and its precursor institutions, the following chapters provide detailed profiles of these elite groups with descriptions of their emergence, professional development, principle initiatives, and ideologies. The enduring careers of child-focused doctors and advocates stand as a testament to their effective translation of medical knowledge into government policy.

Why "A Criança, "?: Contemporary Demographic and Ideological Considerations

It is no coincidence that children took center stage in various nation-building projects as Brazil embarked on its second century as an independent nation. In demographic terms, Brazil was indeed a "young" country, one in which children represented a large share of the total population.²² The percentage of the total population under age ten represented approximately, cohort and as a result of the social exigencies they generated. Rising birth rates and a decline in infant mortality in the first two

²² Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, *Estatísticas do Século XX* (Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 2003), 40-46.

generations of the twentieth century led to an expansion of the youngest age cohorts. Table 1 provides a general picture of the approximate increase in the 'under 10' age cohort over the first four decades of the twentieth century.²³

Table I: Under Age 10 Cohort and Total Population (in millions), 1900 and 1940

	<u>1900</u>	<u>1940</u>
Population Under Age 10	2.6	12.2
Total Population	17.4	41.2
% Under Age 10	15%	30%

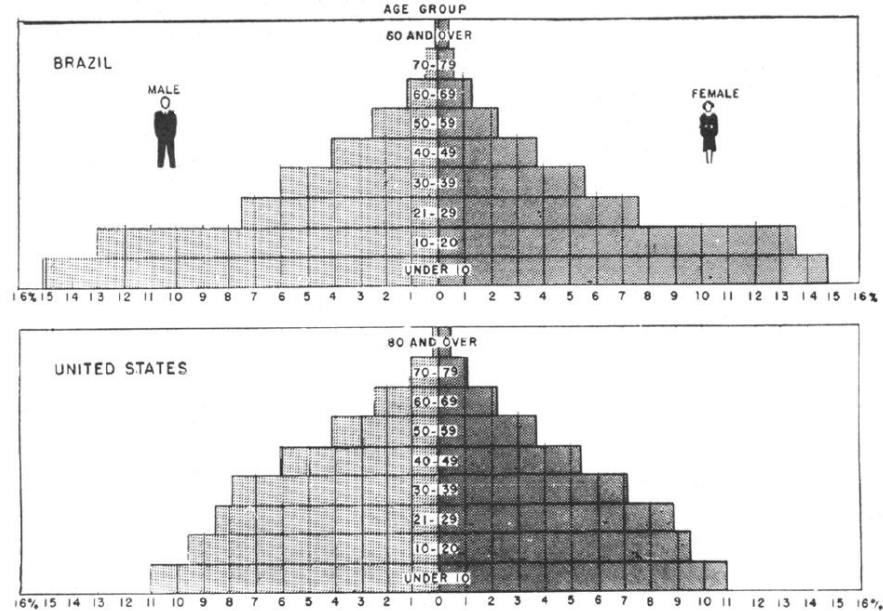
A dramatic increase in the 'under 10' age group in this period can be attributed to both a boom in birth rates between 1925 and 1930 and a coinciding decline in overall death rates. As industrialization and public health services expanded in the first half of the century, Brazil entered what demographers identify as Stage II of demographic transition. This phase of development is characterized by a combination of high birth rates and declining overall death rates. As a result of these population trends, the bottom of the age pyramid widens. Figure 2 provides a comparison of population distribution based on age groups in Brazil and the United States in 1920. Brazil's 'under 10' population clearly represents the largest share of its total population.²⁴ Although both Brazilian and foreign statisticians struggled to acquire precise measurements of birth and date due to

²³ Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, "Estatísticas do Século XX-Estatísticas populacionais, sociais, políticas, e culturais," (1908, 1920, 1936, 1941), <http://www.ibge.gov.br/seculoxx/arquivos-pdf/populacao.shtml>

²⁴E.H. Christopherson, "Child Welfare Work in Brazil," *Journal of Pediatrics*, 28:3, (March 1946), 335. Christopherson's report will be explored further in Chapter I. His data came from a study executed by Brazil's Ministry of Education and Health and the Institute of Inter-American Affairs that aimed to improve health conditions for American troops working in the Rio Doce and Amazon Valleys during World War II.

inconsistent and insufficient records, available information reflected the steady expansion of the nation's youngest generations.

Figure 2: Population Distribution by Age and Sex, Brazil and the United States, 1920



Source: E.H. Christopherson, *Journal of Pediatrics* (March 1946)

By 1950, persons aged 14 years and below represented a total of almost fifty percent of the total population.²⁵ The omnipresence of children created by these demographic dynamic ushered in a host of social problems that required specific child-focused resolutions. It was against this backdrop that Brazil's "pro-child" initiatives emerged.

However, Brazil's high birth rate and the expansion of its nascent generations belied its enduring infant mortality crisis. Overall death rates had decreased in the first decades of the twentieth century but crude rates of infant mortality remained staggeringly high in comparison with those of Western Europe and the United States. Again, the paucity of standardized data prevents precise calculations of the national infant mortality averages before 1940. Most sources assert that Brazil's rate fluctuated around 200 for the

²⁵ Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, *Estatísticas do Século XX*, 40-46.

first half of the century. As a comparison, the United States rate fell from 87 in 1920 to 40 in 1943.²⁶ Chapter I explores this theme in more detail but it is important to note that any modest declines in infant mortality occurred disproportionately among Brazil's white, urban populations. The 1940 census reported that infant mortality among the population recorded as "white" had dropped from almost 400 in 1890 to 73 in 1939. In the same period, the rate declined from 407 to 144 among the group recorded as "mulatto" and from almost 500 to 300 per thousand among the population categorized as "black."²⁷ Rates among Brazil's nonwhite, impoverished, and rural populations were staggeringly high through mid-century and they overshadowed marginal improvements in other areas of public health as the century progressed. In São Paulo, for example, between 1909 and 1938 the overall infant mortality rate only dropped from approximately 167 to 138.²⁸ As a result, a preoccupation with infant mortality and other child care concerns intensified among public health professionals, philanthropists, doctors, and government officials.

Being a demographically "young" nation, Brazil also confronted several ubiquitous child welfare problems in the early decades of the twentieth century. Infant mortality, disease, malnutrition, delinquency, and educational disparities accompanied the rapid urbanization and industrialization set in motion in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The abolition of slavery in 1888 combined with waves of European immigration to create stark social inequalities and conditions of misery and insalubrious

²⁶ Christopherson, 338.

²⁷ For a more detailed discussion of this data and effects of race and class on demographics during the early twentieth century more generally, see, Sam Adamo, "The Broken Promise: Race, Health, and Justice in Rio de Janeiro, 1890-1940"(PhD Dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1983).

²⁸ These statistics come from the state of São Paulo's *Secção de Higiene da Criança*, Section of Children's Hygiene. J. Dalmacio Azevedo, *Considerações gerais sobre a reorganização da Secção de Higiene da Criança* (São Paulo: Rev. dos Tribunais, 1940), 71. Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, GC-1241f.

living especially in Brazil's principle cities. Such transformations also forced children and their deficiencies out of private, domestic and institutional spaces and into the public sphere.²⁹ Malnourished, abandoned, and delinquent children literally became the emblems of Brazilian society's struggle to reconcile the advantages and consequences of intense modernization. In many ways, the child replaced the former slave and the immigrant as a target of social welfare reform, political and juridical vigilance, and philanthropic interest. The body and image of the child took on new meaning by the second decade of the century: he/she was simultaneously the embodiment of the nation's potential, as well as a liability and an omnipresent reminder of Brazil's uneven development.

Again, infant mortality stood out as a major child welfare concern and as a demographic plight for the nation as a whole. The early twentieth century represented a turning point, perhaps due to the results of the 1920 census, in transforming discussions of solutions to infant mortality into action. Director of Rio de Janeiro's Public Health Service reflected in 1937 that infant mortality drew the attention of nineteenth-century doctors and sanitarians, but only in the twentieth century did public and private organizations join in a concerted fight against the problem.³⁰ Two principle factors contributed to the increased emphasis on infant mortality as inimical to Brazil's prosperity in this period: the intensification of international discourse and policymaking towards child welfare and domestic perceptions of the link between stable demographic indicators and economic development.

²⁹ See Windler, "City of Children."

³⁰ José Paranhos Fontenelle, *A Saúde Pública do Rio de Janeiro, 1935-1936*(Rio de Janeiro, 1937), 339.

Early twentieth-century Brazilian officials and intellectuals engaged in child welfare and public health promotion, many of whom received professional training in the United States and Western Europe, had an acute awareness of the emerging international “pro-child” movement. Although child-centered legal and social reforms had arisen as a result of rapid industrialization in the previous century, the first three decades of the twentieth century saw the amplification of debates and policymaking regarding children’s positions in society and their value as members of the body politic. The nineteenth-century idea that “the problem of the child was the problem of the state” became more salient in response to transformations in domestic life, urbanization, and international conflict.³¹ World War I and its aftermath likewise precipitated international anxieties about the protection and preservation of the world’s young generations. The subsequent Geneva Declaration on the Rights of the Child adopted at the 1924 League of Nations symbolized the consecration of an international standard in child welfare for the Western world. These factors, combined with the realization that private philanthropic interventions alone could not resolve the social and health problems facing the world’s children, contributed to what Hugh Cunningham defines as the international “child saving” moment of the early twentieth century.³²

Within Brazil and Latin American in general, child welfare concerns had spawned multinational collaborations and dialogs that echoed foreign discourse, but also reflected

³¹ This quote is attributed to an 1892 publication by Jacob A. Riis (1849-1914), a Danish-born photojournalist who chronicled the lives of the poor living in New York city tenements. See Riis, *Children of the Poor*, 2nd Edition (New York: Garrett Press Inc., 1970), 1. It is interesting to note that this quotation is referenced in a 1945 edition of a Brazilian gynecological and children’s health journal published by the São Paulo state commission of the Legião Brasileira de Assistência (Brazilian Assistance League), see Dr. Alfredo Magalhães, “Puericultura: ciência médica da espécie,” *Maternidade e infância*, ano 1: no. 3 (October 1945), 66.

³² See, Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500* (London: Longman Press, 1995), 137-163.

the unique needs of children in this region, such as elevated infant mortality and tropical disease. Since 1916 Pan-American Child Congresses convened throughout the Americas every two to three years until 1968. These meetings involved discussions of child labor, pediatric medicine, legal reform, and the moral status of children and families. A resulting Pan American Child's Code was adopted following the 1948 meetings in Venezuela that in many ways mirrored the 1924 Geneva Convention declaration in its delineation of fundamental children's rights.³³ Intensifying international and domestic debates regarding the place and value of children in society heavily influenced Brazilian officials' discussions and policy innovations in this period. Officials began explicitly reasserting Brazilian children's rights based on the charters of the Geneva Convention and the United States' 1931 Hoover Initiative.³⁴ Irma Rizzini argues that Brazilian social reformers, at least rhetorically, joined in the international "child-saving moment" by the early thirties.³⁵ This ideological trend continued among philanthropists, intellectuals, and government officials into the following decades.

Within the context of the international pro-child movement in the early and mid-twentieth century, Brazilian children acquired new discursive and representational meanings in the context of national identity construction. Portrayals of "*a criança*"

³³ Guy (1998), 49-52.

³⁴ Partial translations and citations of both the Geneva Convention's Declaration of Child's Rights, as well as President Herbert Hoover's Children's Charter appear in documents deriving in the Ministry of Education and Health and the *DNC*. "Conferencia Nacional de Proteção a Infância," Arquivo Anísio Teixeira: Rolo 3, foto. 700; "Cria-se a Campanha da Redenção da Criança" Arquivo Gustavo Capanema: Rolo 62, Pasta I; "Projeto: Cria-se o Departamento da Criança: Art. 25 Semana da Criança" Arquivo Gustavo Capanema: Rolo 61: Pasta IX. A photo of Herbert Hoover appeared in propaganda for the 1943 National Children's Week celebration, Ministerio de Educação e Saúde, *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1944) Anno III, no. 14, 18.

³⁵ Rizzini contends that the elites' usage of the term *criança* represented their adoption of an emergent social consciousness of the moral and physical precariousness of childhood. The idea of "saving" (literally *salvar*) replaced an earlier ideology that emphasized containing and controlling children. See, Rizzini in Hecht, ed. (2002) and *A Criança e a Lei no Brasil: revisitando a historia*, (Rio de Janeiro: Universidade de Santa Ursula Editora Universitaria, 2002), 35-36.

shifted in distinct ways as the century progressed and, again, were strikingly influenced by international attitudes and events. Officials and intellectuals often used references to children and child welfare conditions in contemporary foreign contexts to define what it meant to be a Brazilian child. It would be through this evolving, reflective process that the child increasingly became a central figure in constructions of *brasilidade*. At times the foreign contexts provided clear antitheses to what officials, intellectuals, and social reformers envisioned for Brazil's youngest generations. For example, characterizations that emerged around the time of the Centennial celebration in 1922 and lasted into the late thirties emphasized the Brazil's tragic infant mortality and childhood disease rates. As a result, medical professionals and policymakers made recurrent rhetorical connections between Brazil's child welfare conditions and those of Africa and Asia.³⁶ Such comparisons questioned Brazil's level of civilization by putting it on par with areas most Brazilian elites considered as socially and culturally backward. It also served to stimulate a social and politic response that would reassert the value of children as propagators of the nation's prosperity.

As World War II ravaged Europe, Brazilian elites shifted their reference point from the abysmal child health conditions in Africa and Asia to the generation of children devastated by prolonged warfare. Visual and textual propaganda highlighting the plight of European children appeared in print media sources, children's and parenting magazines, and political speeches during and after the war. Brazilian child advocates conjured images of malnourished, orphaned, and injured European children, usually

³⁶ President Getúlio Vargas utilized this comparison in his 1932 *Mensagem do Natal* by stating that the levels of infant mortality in the capital, Rio de Janeiro, could only be compared to the tropical cities of Asia and Africa and that the rates in the rest of Brazil were considerably worse. A transcription of this text appears in Getúlio Vargas, "Mensagem do Natal 1932," Arquivo Gustavo Capanema, CPDOC: GC1935.05.27, Rolo 60, fotograma 538.

placed in the context of the Holocaust and specific war-torn regions, to underscore the value of the nation's young. Such characterizations demonstrated the strides Brazil had made in domestic child welfare and served as precautionary lessons of how political negligence impacted society's most vulnerable members. Simultaneously, Brazil's own involvement in World War II spawned a current of political rhetoric that defined "*a criança*" as essential for the nation's military prowess. For instance, youth-centered propaganda published during the *Estado Novo* often featured uniformed children marching or standing in formation. Likewise, military-inspired *DNCr* slogans presented in magazines, bulletins, and at public exhibitions described Brazilian children as "an army marching for the conquest of progress."³⁷ World War II, then, allowed Brazilian elites to convey the importance of protecting and fortifying its nascent generations. By the mid- forties, the degradation of European children replaced earlier references to conditions in Africa and Asia as an antithetical model of child welfare and as an impetus for further improvements.

Foreign attitudes and practices continued to shape how officials and intellectuals envisioned Brazil's children; however, the post-World War II child welfare climate, coupled with a more concerted drive to define national character and spark development in the forties, ushered in a period of internal reflection. Public health, social welfare, and philanthropic endeavors had previously promoted the idea of the child as the "man of tomorrow" since the early thirties. By the end of the decade, *Estado Novo* officials transformed such rhetoric to specify the evolution of the "Brazilian man of tomorrow." This ideology demonstrated that the focus of comparison had shifted inward, away from

³⁷ *Boletim Trimensal do DNCr*, 2^o edição (March 1942), 13.

references to foreign children and child welfare to Brazil's own cultural and social context.

One explicit manifestation of Brazilian social reformers' and medical professionals' self-reflective transition in the mid-forties appeared in educational legislation and pro-child propaganda that construed children as "Brazil's ideal immigrants." Forthcoming chapters will explore the connection between this characterization of children, agricultural/territorial development, and national identity construction. However, it is important to emphasize here that conceptualizations of the relationship between children and nation transitioned, throughout the period under consideration in this study, from an outward-looking reliance on foreign reference points to more internally focused characterizations.

The following chapters will provide a detailed overview of the various circles of elites engaged in debates and discussions concerning Brazilian children during this period, but suffice it to say that they roughly divided into groups comprised by a.) intellectuals and professionals in the medical, public health, pedagogy, science, and child welfare fields; b.) government officials and policymakers, such as representatives of the *DNCr* and the Ministry of Health and Education (*MES*); c.) philanthropists; and d.) artists and writers.

A Crianca: a Note on Terminology and Sources

Discerning children found in the historical record involves a challenging disjuncture between children's representational and biological significances that requires precise analytic terms. To be sure, the child is a nebulous category of analysis. In some instances children are human subjects, while in others they are social, cultural, and

intellectual constructions created by other individuals. This work explores a context in which children often straddle the blurry line between these two classifications. As such, it is essential to clarify precisely how contemporary officials, medical professionals, and intellectuals discussed children and the terms they employed in such discussions.

First and foremost, the singular Portuguese term, "*criança*," is translated throughout this work as both "child" and "children" depending on the context and source. For example, I employ the English word "children" when discussing Brazil's *Departamento Nacional da Criança* (*DNCr*, National Children's Department, and its annual commemoration of Children's Week, or *a Semana da Criança*.³⁸ The founders of the department modeled it closely after the U.S. Children's Bureau (1912) and the word, "children," is a more natural English translation. Additional examples of this type of translation include the names of various child welfare, health, and philanthropic organizations, such as the *Campanha Nacional da Criança* (1947), the National Children's Campaign, and the *Campanha da Redenção da Criança* (1943), the Children's Redemption Campaign.

Other references justify direct translation of "*criança*" into the singular form, "child" or "the child." At times policymakers and intellectuals relied on the abstract term, "*a criança brasileira*," or "the Brazilian child" to discuss the collective issues and problems of Brazil's youngest generations. In other instances, the category signified a singular model and an idealized emblem that reflected how these pro-child reformers conceptualized Brazilian children. For instance, a common propagandistic phrase calling the "*a criança brasileira*" the "man of tomorrow" appeared consistently in *DNCr*

³⁸ The acronym, *DNCr*, will be used throughout this dissertation to signify the department rather than *DNC* which refers to another Vargas-era federal institution, the *Departamento Nacional do Café*.

bulletins, speeches by government officials and philanthropists, and in parenting and children's magazines. Finally, the singular form of "child" was also used to refer to specific categories of children, such as the "problem child," the "abandoned child," and the "rural child."³⁹

Both the temporal context and the sources themselves inform the delineation of exactly who and what constituted a child in twentieth-century Brazil. For the purposes of this study, the terms, “child” (individual) and “children”(cohort) signify persons and/or representations aged roughly from birth to adolescence. These bookends, however, remain flexible as legal, social, and medical definitions of childhood as an age category shifted throughout the century. The 1927 Código de Menores (Minors’ Code) defined legal minority as applicable to children from zero to fourteen years of age, with those older than fourteen being eligible for criminal prosecution as adults.⁴⁰ A 1940 reform to the penal code advanced the age of legal minority to include individuals under the age of eighteen. Likewise, on the other end of the age spectrum, medical professionals and government health officials also considered unborn children to be the targets of certain reforms and campaigns. Pediatricians and puericulturists, a sector of specialists trained in

³⁹ The use of a collective signifier such as "the child" relates to contemporary terminology used to discuss other groups and/or subjects of study. For example, state officials and intellectuals aggregated persons of African descent into a single group, labeled "o negro" in order to discuss them as demographic and social category. See, Arthur Ramos, *O Negro Brasileiro*, 2nd edition (São Paulo: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1940) and *A Criança Problema: a higiene mental na escola primária* (Rio de Janeiro: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1939).

⁴⁰ For analyses of the 1927 Minors' Code legislation, see Irma Rizzini, *A Criança e a Lei no Brasil*; Esmeralda Blanco Bosonaro de Moura, “Meninos e meninas da rua: impasse e dissonância na construção da identidade da criança e o adolescente na República Velha,” in *Revista Brasileira de História: dossiê infância e adolescência* (São Paulo: ANPUH/Humanitas Publicações, 1999), 19:37, 91; Adriana de Resende B. Vianna, *O mal que se adivinha: polícia e menoridade no Rio de Janeiro, 1910-1920* (Rio de Janeiro: Arquivo Nacional, 1999); and Fernando Torres Londoño, “A Origem do Conceito Menor,” in Mary del Priore, ed., *História da Criança no Brasil* (São Paulo: Contexto, 1991). Legal definitions of the age-based definition of “child” and “adolescent” were consistently debated at a series of Pan American Child Congresses held throughout the Americas from 1916 to 1948. See Donna J. Guy, “The Pan American Child Congresses, 1916 to 1942: Pan Americanism, child reform, and the welfare state in Latin America,” *Journal of Family History* 23:3, (1998).

the promotion of pre and post-natal child health that emerged in the early 1930s, often referred to children as “seeds” and “embryos.” Their conceptualizations of children and childhood extended into the womb and, at times, into the pre-conception phase when they discussed "*a criança brasileira*" as a stakeholder in the context of reproductive and pre-nuptial health. Therefore, the categorization of children as an age group requires careful consideration of the source's production date in relation to changes in law and social practice, as well as the author's perspective and purpose.

It is also essential to delineate the multiple meanings and modes of discussing children employed by specific groups of Brazilian elites in the early and mid-twentieth century and how this dissertation will engage with such categories. First, there are two fundamental ways contemporary officials, professionals, and intellectuals envisaged and conversed about Brazilian children: as human subjects and as representations. These classifications were not mutually exclusive and, as stated above, the individuals producing the core of the documentation analyzed here often blurred the lines between the two. When discussing children as human subjects, these individuals emphasized their meaning and value as biological entities, as bodies. They intended the words "child" and "children" to signify, for example, demographic units, citizens, objects of medical and scientific inquiry, students, orphans, criminals, and laborers. Discussions of this category of Brazilian children appeared most often in medical and scientific journals, institutional bulletins, and governmental policy-writing. In these types of sources, the authors employed the word "*criança*," but also frequently substituted the word, "*menor*" to convey legal and juridical classification.⁴¹ The use of qualifying and descriptive terms

⁴¹ See Londoño, "A Origem do Conceito Menor," for a detailed description of the evolution of the term, "minor" in Brazilian history.

alongside these words further clarifies the discursive distinction between children discussed as biological entities and those used as representations. For example, a "*menor abandonado*," an abandoned child, would refer to an actual, human child legally defined as orphaned or separated from his or her caregivers. This type of categorization was commonly used by officials and professionals associated with institutions and welfare organizations, such as in the records of the *Serviço de Assistência de Menores*, the Minors' Assistance Service, or in studies produced the *Laboratório de Biologia Infantil*, the Laboratory of Child Biology. In this type of documentation, the use of the word, "minor," rather than, "child," assigned specific legal meaning to a human subject for the purposes of classification, placement, and study.

On the other hand, the term, "*a criança abandonada*," the abandoned child, connoted an abstract, non-legal label typically used to represent a collective social group. In this sense, the "abandoned child" was not a legal definition, but a strategic rhetorical device most often found in contemporary philanthropic and governmental propaganda, as well as in print media sources. Brazilian officials, doctors, and social thinkers used such symbolic terms as shorthand for discussing the myriad of social welfare and health concerns facing the nation's young. Here, they intended the term "*criança*" to convey the idea of the child figuratively, rather than emphasizing any concrete legal meaning. These child-focused professionals also relied on such singular labels to construct models of *brasilidade* based on the image of the child and to discursively represent their imagined ideals of child health, behavior, family life, and physical appearance. For example, *DNCr* officials crafted a compelling slogan that promoted "*a criança brasileira*" as

Brazil's best immigrant, in other words, as the social group most fit to settle and cultivate the interior, in the late 1940s.

While it is important to distinguish the terminology and meanings Brazilian child advocates created to discuss the young in this period for the purposes of this dissertation, the documentation analyzed here rarely offered such clear cut distinctions. I do not suggest that these individuals consistently, nor consciously employed these categories, *child as human subject* and *child as representation*, in their conversations and publications. Rather, most of the textual and visual sources revealed no explicit differentiation; children appeared as subjects and objects, as both human beings and signifiers of cultural meaning and social inscription.⁴² For example, in bulletins and magazines produced by the *DNCr*, officials often simultaneously referred to children as human subjects and as rhetorical devices to symbolize larger ideas. Within a single volume, therefore, "*a criança*" could be an orphan found in an institutional profile and an icon used in photographic montages to promote patriotism. Again, the major contrast emerged between the ascription of legal meaning through the substitution of the word, "minor," rather than "child." "*A criança*," understood as the child in both a biological and figurative sense, connoted innocence, vulnerability, and potential. Such attributes made the child an attractive and malleable reference point for nation-building projects in this period.

Despite the complexity of children's subjectivity in historical research, this dissertation proceeds with the analysis of how and why *adult* subjects utilized various articulations of the Brazilian child in their nation-building projects. It is an examination of their voices, attitudes, and cultural expressions, rather than those of Brazilian children.

⁴² Caroline Levander, *Cradle of Liberty*, 16.

The sources simply do not justify the categorization of this work as a study of childhood or the social history of Brazilian children in the twentieth century. Rather, it is an historical examination that isolates child-centered discourse and imagery as a means of arguing that, to a specific group of officials and intellectuals in this period, children were key scaffolds in the construction of Brazilian national character and development.

Chapter I explores the ideological and demographic origins of Brazil's 'century of the child.' By analyzing medical discourse and imagery from the early decades of the twentieth-century, the chapter reveals how doctors and government officials grappled with infant mortality as both a real population health concern and as an imagined marker of modern nationhood. Concerns over infant mortality and population health more generally led Brazilian doctors to innovate a French-derived medical specialization called *puericultura*. Chapter II examines how puericulture evolved within the Brazilian medical academy and the ways in which it impacted federal child welfare and health policymaking, child-centered statecraft in the thirties and forties. As puericulture advanced as a field of medicine and a set of practices prescribed for child-bearing Brazilians, officials and doctors also integrated it into the state's development agenda. Chapter III argues that puericulture's adherents envisaged healthy child-rearing as a vehicle for unifying and modernizing Brazil's disparate populations. Doctors and officials not only projected the diffusion of puericultural practice across the nation, but articulated the expansion of child-focused medical services and infrastructure as a means of extending state authority. Intriguingly, as conventional methods of delivering health care services provided untenable outside the coastal metropolises, puericulturists began to figuratively "map" puericulture onto the Brazilian landscape to bolster Vargas-era

national development projects. Puericulture gave rise to Brazil's first federal department charged with implementing comprehensive child welfare and health policy. Chapter IV delves into the foundations and functions of Brazil's National Children's Department (*DNCr*) and examines how the institution balanced medical and state prerogatives. The chapter also analyzes the public education campaigns formulated by the *DNCr*, including the publication of parenting magazines and exhibitions. Chapter V further elucidates the *DNCr* in the context of the *Estado Novo* presidential dictatorship (1937-1945) and beyond. During this period *DNCr* officials coordinated with Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture to propose children's agricultural education for the purposes of molding a generation of healthy "little farmers" charged with simultaneously reversing rapid urbanization and providing a stable, native workforce. Federal officials and doctors imagined children as Brazil's "best immigrants" and produced propaganda to portray children as both key labor resources and icons of national identity. Finally, Chapter VI reflects on the interplay between child-focused politics and nation-making and the persona attributed to President Getúlio Vargas. By analyzing selected imagery produced in the thirties and forties, this chapter deconstructs Vargas' "friend of children" image.

CHAPTER I

Brazil's 'Century of the Child': The Emergence and Evolution of Child-Focused Politics, Medicine, and Development in the Twentieth Century

...but when the whole of humanity awakens to the consciousness of the "holiness of generation." This consciousness will make the central work of society the new race: its origin, its management, its education.
-Ellen Key (Sweden), *The Century of the Child*, 1900

Take care of the child and everything else will fall into place naturally.
-Dr. Oscar Clark, (Brazil), 1944

The turn of the twentieth century marked a renaissance of the youngest generations in the Western world. Modernity in the capitalist system hinged upon the stable reproduction and production of man who, in turn, constructed the nation. Children had begun to figure prominently in this equation beginning the mid-nineteenth century. As the seeds of the future, children required protection, as well as physical, emotional, and intellectual sustenance. As argued by French sociologist Philippe Ariès in the early sixties, adult powerholders began to ascribe to children's bodies and minds a separate lifestage called childhood.⁴³ Although scholars, particularly historians of the medieval Europe, have criticized Ariès work for obscuring the existence of separate social and cultural age categories prior to the nineteenth century, his theory provides a useful lens for understanding the emergence of the 'century of the child' in the Western world.⁴⁴ By

⁴³Phillipe Ariès, *Centuries of Childhood: A Social History of Family Life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962).

⁴⁴For critiques of Ariès' work, see Allen M. Barstow, "The Child in the Middle Ages: The Ariès Thesis," *Children's Literature*, vol. 4, (1975) 41-44. See also, Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500*, 2nd edition (New York: Pearson Longman, 2005); Colin Heywood, *A History of Childhood: Children and Childhood in the West from Medieval to Modern Times* (Cambridge, UK:

the late nineteenth century, childhood had become a shared cultural concept that differentiated the experiences and treatment of the young from that of adults. Yet, the precise role of the child as a national citizen and member of the body politic remained problematic. Enlightened ideologues promoted the protection and education of all children while liberal policymakers encouraged the containment, control, and reform of those they deemed as threats to progress. As the century progressed, Western conceptions of what comprised a 'modern' state likewise became increasingly linked to population health. With the emergence of these new social and political preoccupations, the medical academy created specialized practices focused on healthy reproduction and preventative care for the young. Consequently, doctors' research interests coalesced with the state's public health concerns, resulting in the infusion of medical knowledge into the management of the body politic. Social reformers across the industrializing world now considered infant survival and healthy childhood to be key indicators of demographic and economic progress.

This chapter examines how the struggle to attain 'modern' standards of population health, medical services and infrastructure, and demographic stability unfolded in Brazil during the first half of the twentieth century. It analyzes the ways in which a particular group of medical professionals and government officials envisioned pre- and post-natal health as the foundations of economic prosperity, social order, and cultural legitimacy. For these child advocates, Brazil's ascent to modernity revolved around resolving what they perceived as enduring crises of national health and welfare. As such, this chapter focuses first and foremost on the protracted campaign to lower infant mortality and its

associated public health impacts. An analysis of contemporary medical discourse and imagery reveals how and why Brazilian child advocates construed infant mortality as a both an economic and social anathema. Infant mortality and the debates surrounding its resolution provided policymakers and medical professionals with a conceptual framework for understanding Brazil's deficiencies and imagining its future.

In the first half of the century, doctors and demographers possessed limited knowledge about the scale of infant mortality across Brazil's vast territory. Despite the absence of precise and standardized demographic measurements, child advocates propagated an image of infant mortality as an enduring and grave public health concern. Nebulous understandings of this population indicator, as this chapter finds, allowed it to become a common rhetorical tool used by government representatives and doctors to decry Brazil's lagging development and sickly population. For government officials and public health professionals concerned with raising Brazil's international profile, high infant mortality signaled backwardness. Foreign conceptions of what constituted modern nationhood consistently mediated Brazilians' perceptions of how high infant mortality stalled the nation's advancement in the twentieth century. However, persistent preoccupations with high infant mortality and its collateral effects forced doctors to examine critically Brazil's unique social and environmental conditions.

As this chapter will elucidate, early twentieth-century debates about child health became fertile ground for doctors to challenge the predominance of European-derived models of population health that had been based largely on eugenic science. Intriguingly, the officials and doctors who championed the infant mortality crisis called for the extension of child-focused medical services to all regions and sectors of Brazilian

society, rather than prioritizing the European-descended populations that inhabited the coastal metropolises. Intriguingly, high infant mortality he Brazilian medical academy rejected foreign models in favor of more socially egalitarian public health measures that they believed would spur national development. However, Brazilian doctors and government officials remained preoccupied with the nation's demographic profile and foreign perceptions of its ability to address high infant mortality. For contemporary child-focused doctors and policymakers staggering infant death rates and poor child health and welfare not only signaled an enduring population health deficiency but the inadequacies of the Brazilian medical academy and state welfare agencies. These preoccupations provided the ideological impetus for the emergence of federal child-centered institutions, public health campaigns, and statecraft in the following decade. Thus, an analysis of infant mortality and its imagined relationship to the modernization process reveals an important chapter in the history of twentieth-century nation-making in Brazil.

The Origins of Brazil's 'Century of the Child'

In 1900 the Swedish feminist writer Ellen Key identified the new era as 'the century of the child.' Her book, translated into English as *The Century of the Child* in 1909, explored the myriad social questions facing policymakers, educators, and parents at the dawn of the twentieth century. Key offered new perspectives on the governance and development of children within domestic and public spheres, with a particular emphasis on pedagogical approaches. Unlike the American journalist Jacob A. Riis who had asserted that the "problem of the child was the problem of the state" a decade earlier,

Ellen Key identified parents as the ultimate stewards of their offspring's wellbeing.⁴⁵ She likewise argued for the protection of the "unborn generation" through the management of women's health and work.⁴⁶ Key's work received international acclaim, particularly from health and education reformers who used it to lobby for new social welfare programs tailored specifically for women and children. Her work resonated deeply with policymakers and medical professionals in nations faced with high and/or stagnant infant mortality rates in the early twentieth century.

In the United States, Key's work informed the organization of a Children's Bureau in 1912 and the passage of unprecedented legislation in favor of women and children's health. Notable among these reforms was the 1921 Sheppard-Towner Maternal and Infancy Protection Act that stipulated the distribution of federal funds for pre-and post-natal health education campaigns. Although the measure languished by the end of the decade, its initiatives created a public dialogue, particularly among women, on the importance of 'baby saving' and scientific motherhood for the nation's prosperity.⁴⁷ Sheppard-Towner's educational and infrastructural models subsequently influenced similar social medicine programs elsewhere in the Americas, particularly in Brazil where a national-level children's department emerged in 1940. As it had in the United States in the first two decades of the century, the problem of high infant mortality continued to magnetize medical professionals and public health officials in the industrialized nations of Latin America. Key's 'century of the child' metaphor provoked what historian Donna

⁴⁵ Jacob A. Riis, *Children of the Poor* (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1892), 1.

⁴⁶ Ellen Key, *The Century of the Child* (New York: J.P. Putnam, 1909), 72.

⁴⁷ Molly Ladd Taylor, "'Why does Congress wish women and children to die?': the rise and fall of public maternal and infant health care in the United States, 1921-1929," in Valerie Fildes, Lara Marks, and Hilary Marland, *Women and Children First: International Maternal and Infant Welfare, 1870-1945* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 122.

Guy identifies as a Pan-American movement in favor of women and children. Most notably in 1916 five Latin American countries participated in the first Pan-American Child Congress. Delegates from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, and Uruguay met in Buenos Aires to discuss child welfare concerns and policy responses in comparative perspective. As Guy's research reveals, doctors and health reformers from the United States played a marginal role in these annual conferences until 1927 when the delegations convened in nearby Havana, Cuba.⁴⁸ Thus, within the Pan-American 'century of the child' Latin American officials, doctors, and social reformers demonstrated their collective and individual innovations in the field of public health and child advocacy. Early twentieth-century pro-child dialogues provided a space for Latin American professionals and policymakers to circumvent foreign conceptualizations of population health and welfare management.⁴⁹ Despite the predominance of European scientific and medical ideals in Latin America, child welfare and health professionals formulated unique measures to confront the biological, environmental, and social forces affecting the lives of their youngest citizens.

Nearly three decades after its publication, Ellen Key's work directly inspired Rio de Janeiro-based doctor and pedagogue, Oscar Clark to apply the 'century of the child' metaphor to Brazil. In 1937 Clark, then medical inspector in the Federal District school system, published a work entitled, *O Século da Criança*, the *Century of the Child*. The Brazilian doctor had been active in shaping hygiene education initiatives in the capital

⁴⁸ Donna M. Guy, "'The Pan American Child Congresses, 1916 to 1942: Pan Americanism, Child Reform, and the Welfare State in Latin America,'" *Journal of Family History*, (July 1998), 282.

⁴⁹ For works that explore child welfare and health initiatives in Latin America during this period see, Anne-Emmanuelle Birn, "Doctors on Record: Uruguay's Infant Mortality Stagnation and Its Remedies, 1895-1945," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine*, 82:2, (Summer 2008), 311-354; Guy (1998); Victoria Mazzeo, *Mortalidad infantil en la ciudad de Buenos Aires, 1856-1986* (Buenos Aires: Centro Editor de América Latina, 1993).

since the early twenties. He first began to lobby for the federalization of his pedagogical model during the *Estado Novo* era (1937-1945). Following Key's conclusions, Clark argued that the key to unlocking Brazil's potential involved the fusion of public education and medical treatment. He called for the installation of *escolas-hospitais*, or hospital-schools that would provide schoolchildren with preventative and curative care. Clark argued for increased cooperation between the state and medical academy for a comprehensive health, welfare, and education program that would redeem Brazil's youngest generations. Such an alliance, he reasoned, would guarantee Brazilian children's basic rights to both healthy gestation and life.⁵⁰ Although Clark was not trained as a puericulturist, his discourse bore a striking resemblance to the social reforms advanced by a growing number of child-focused doctors throughout Brazil in the 1930s. Like his counterparts in the field of puericulture, Clark identified infant mortality as the nation's most pressing problem. Also echoing puericultural thought, he characterized the 'healthy man' as Brazil's most promising source of capital and contended that lowering the infant mortality rate would spur the national economy by creating a steady infusion of productive workers.

While Oscar Clark's adaptation of Ellen Key's work did not touch off pro-child policymaking in Brazil in 1937, his work provided an important set of metaphors for understanding the relationship between infant mortality, governance, and political and intellectual perceptions of modern nationhood. More importantly, perhaps, Clark's seminal publication provides a clear example of how ideas forged within the Brazilian academic sphere motivated federal policymaking in the first half of the twentieth century. The direct impact of intellectual, medical, and scientific ideas on national-level politics

⁵⁰ Oscar Clark, *O Século da Criança* (Rio de Janeiro: Pongetti e cia., 1937), 18.

was a unique feature of the Vargas years (1930-1945), specifically the *Estado Novo* dictatorship period from 1937-1945. Seen in this context, the integration of Oscar Clark's 'century of the child' metaphor into the state's policy agenda typified the ways in which circles of intellectuals shaped the modern nation-making process. For example, Clark's own innovation, the *escola-hospital*, became a federally-sanctioned institution beginning in 1945.⁵¹ The transformation of child welfare and health concerns into pillars of federal policymaking also attested to the representational value of children in the construction of Brazilian national identity. It is telling that Brazil's 'century of the child' symbolically began in 1937 with the adaptation of a foreign pedagogical model. During this period children took center stage in the *Estado Novo*'s statecraft and propaganda. However, like the pro-child policy agenda itself, the idealized Brazilian child icon proved an unsustainable model by the late forties.

Infant Mortality in Brazil's 'Century of the Child': at Home and Perspectives from Abroad

*Infant mortality is to the public health worker
what the thermometer is to the physician.*
-Dr. George Chandler Whipple (United States), 1919

In our country, a child dies every 42 seconds, 85 per hour, 2,040 each day, creating enough victims to fill a cemetery 1 million square meters in size, giving just 1 square meter to each victim. Spread out in a line, their tombs would span the 42 kilometers that separate Copacabana from Petrópolis.⁵²

⁵¹ "Escolas Hospitais," *Jornal do Comércio*, (Rio de Janeiro), (February 4, 1945), 4. The article reproduced Oscar Clark's speech at the inauguration of the first *escola-hospital* in the Federal District. Clark credits Getúlio Vargas, Rio de Janeiro mayor, Henrique Dodsworth, and State Secretary of Education, Jonas Correia for endorsing his project.

⁵² "Exposição ao Ministério de Educação e Saúde," in Ministério de Educação e Saúde, *Relatório de 1947: Departamento Nacional da Criança*, (Rio de Janeiro: Departamento de Imprensa Nacional, 1947), 24.

Biostatistician and *DNCr*-affiliated physician, Dr. Clovis Côrrea da Costa made the startling calculation above in 1947. His observations echoed those made by medical professionals and policymakers since the early decades of the century. Despite concerted efforts to improve sanitation and public health, Brazilian authorities had not managed to curb the high incidence of infant deaths from disease, malnutrition, poverty, and environmental factors. Moreover, the federal institutions that orchestrated medical and educational campaigns were ill-equipped to measure, much less manage, this demographic problem. Although the *DNCr* had served as the central coordinating body for child health and welfare since 1940, its reach was limited by the amount of federal funds and personnel allotted for its infant mortality reduction projects.

For mid-twentieth-century public health and welfare advocates the protracted battle against infant death destabilized the image of order and progress they and their predecessors had constructed since ending colonial rule in 1822. They worried that with an aggregated rate close to 200 deaths per 1,000 live births, Brazil appeared more like a tropical backwater than a modern nation. National-level policymakers and intellectuals desperately wanted to declassify Brazil as "tropical," a trait they perceived as uncivilized, uncultured, and undeveloped. Yet, unwaveringly high infant mortality and other public health problems delegitimized contemporary comparisons between Brazil's metropolises and the perceived bastions of progress in Europe and the United States. Some social thinkers and intellectuals countered this characterization by arguing that the social and cultural implications of Brazil's tropical character were mutable through modern medicine, government-sponsored programs and private philanthropic aid, but infant mortality remained stagnant for most of the "century of the child." By the 1940s public

health officials and medical professionals began to realize that the nation's youngest generations were not intrinsically unfit; rather, poverty and disease created environments unfit for their survival.

The following section traces the evolution of infant mortality as both a population indicator and a sociocultural concept in twentieth-century Brazil. Demographic statistics related to high infant mortality only partially explain why child-centered discourse and policy intensified during the thirties and forties. The number of children dying before reaching age one was undeniably high during this period. However, it is important to note that contemporary policymakers and medical professionals had no precise summations of national infant mortality rates until after 1940. Rather, it was the *idea* of infant mortality and what it signified as a marker of development that brought about new institutions and practices related to children's health and wellbeing.

For the doctors and government officials who grappled with the nation's public health concerns, infant mortality was particularly vexing. It was difficult to measure and generally unresponsive to interventions that had proven successful in other parts of the world. In the field of tropical disease eradication, Brazilian researchers had gained international acclaim for their innovations.⁵³ Consequently, these endeavors received considerable funding and attention. Campaigns to lower infant mortality, on the other hand, required sustained programs that combined education, assistance, clinical treatment, and infrastructure and produced gradual improvements. A project so comprehensive remained untenable until the concept of infant death became intricately

⁵³ On tropical disease eradication see, Gilberto Hochman and Diego Armus, eds., *Cuidar, controlar, e curar: ensaios históricos sobre saúde e doença na América Latina e Caribe* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Fiocruz, 2004); Simone Petralgia Kropf and Magali Romero Sá, "The Discovery of *Trypanosoma cruzi* and Chagas Disease, (1908-1909): Tropical Medicine in Brazil, *História, Ciência, e Saúde-Manguinhos*, 16: (sup.1), (July 2009); Julyan Peard, *Race, Place, and Medicine*.

tied to both the development agenda and the political personality constructed over two decades by Getúlio Vargas' administration (1930-1945). It would be Vargas, Brazil's "friend of children," whose rhetoric and policies would bring Brazil's dismal demographic profile out of the shadows. Vargas aimed to regenerate the nation through intense educational, public health and assistance, and economic reforms. The emergence of what he and his administrators imagined as the "new Brazilian man" depended on the reproduction of healthy, productive citizens.⁵⁴ Although pro-child discourse circulated within medical, juridical, and philanthropic before the Vargas years, his administration's symbolic reconstruction of the Brazilian child as a fulcrum of development shifted how nation-builders perceived children and their demographic contributions. Brazil's infant mortality rate in particular became a metaphor for the nation's ability to keep pace with other modern states. It would be within this ideological context that Brazilian doctors and pro-child advocates found the institutional support, funding, and statecraft to advance their pre- and post-natal health and welfare campaigns.

Puericulturists, medical professionals specializing in pre- and post-natal health care, understood comprehensive healthcare for the young as *the* building block of modern nationhood. In the thirties and forties, they explicitly connected economic advancement with the generation of healthy, productive children. Puericulturists differed from contemporary eugenics-driven social thinkers who used science and medicine to solidify race and class-based divisions. Rather, these doctors sought to distribute health care, protection, and education to all sectors of society and regions of Brazil as a means of spurring development. Their medical and welfare-oriented projects grew out of intense

⁵⁴Paulo Augusto de Figueiredo, "O Estado Novo e o Homem Novo," *Cultura Política*, vol. 1, no. 1, (March/April 1941), 133-138.

preoccupation with Brazil's high infant mortality rate and its status as a perceived tropical backwater in comparison to the United States and Europe. As a result, the veneration of children was simultaneously about child-centered health care reform and national identity creation. Throughout the thirties and forties, puericulturists and other pro-child advocates crafted the notion of a "century of the child" to venerate Brazil's youngest citizens. This agenda, buttressed through public events, publications, and educational programs, brought about a shift in social attitudes towards the value of children within society and as integral cultural and economic capital for national development.

In the mid-1990s, the work of anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes threw a spotlight on infant death in Brazil and the rest of developing world. Using ethnographic data collected over three decades in northeastern Brazil, the author contends that endemic poverty and a culture of violence had reduced children's social value such that mothers perceived death as a routine response to birth. She argues that this phenomenon had emerged through the "modernization" of child mortality in which survival past age five became a privilege of Brazil's upper-class in the latter part of the twentieth century.⁵⁵ Her work brings into focus the community and family-level implications of high infant mortality while recognizing that these interpretations have also been conditioned by culturally-constructed ideas about children's values and roles in society. Thus, Scheper-Hughes describes how attitudes toward infant and child death evolve out of both poor pre- and post-natal health conditions and shared expectations for human life within a marginalized population.

⁵⁵Nancy Scheper-Hughes, *Death Without Weeping: the Violence of Everyday Life in Brazil* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), 280.

Scheper-Hughes work raises questions about the coincidence of child-centered social thought, cultural representation, and high infant mortality in Brazil's "century of the child." For the last three decades of the twentieth century, she suggests that a culture of violence spawned by deep class and race-based divisions relegated some Brazilian children to the periphery of social, political, and even maternal consciousness. A cycle of frequent deaths among the very young created a sense of antagonism against life, which she characterizes as a jarringly anachronistic attitude for the time period. Her evidence elucidates the connections between prevailing cultural, political, and social considerations of children and interpretations of child death at the individual and family levels. Scheper-Hughes contends that the sheer frequency of death generated a sense of indifference toward the survival of offspring who exhibited weaknesses. Her conclusions provoke questions about the early part of the century that witnessed similar, and in many cases higher, rates of infant mortality alongside the cultural veneration of children and socio-political advocacy for their health and wellbeing.

In relative terms, the levels of infant death Scheper-Hughes witnessed from the 1960s to the 1990s were on par with what puericulturists and policymakers contended with before mid-century. Likewise, the causes she describes as the "new killers" such as, low rates of maternal breastfeeding, insalubrious living environments, malnutrition, disease, and poor access to medical services, were threats consistently discussed by these earlier pro-child advocates.⁵⁶ As early as the mid-thirties, doctors initiated print media and educational campaigns to warn mothers against using manufactured infant formula. These same medical professionals also understood that the ignorance and misery that incited high infant death was "indissolubly linked to the problem of wealth distribution"

⁵⁶Scheper-Hughes, 280.

in Brazil.⁵⁷ In 1939, literature emanating from Getúlio Vargas' newly-formed *Estado Novo* dictatorship described how the administration would improve child welfare by mitigating the "disparities of fate" between members of the Brazilian national family.⁵⁸ Pro-child advocates, particularly around mid-century, regularly discussed the concentration of acute infant death among specific populations and they implemented programs, with varying degrees of success, to ameliorate these inequities. In fact, one puericulturist suggested that if contemporary demographers were to readjust Brazil's infant mortality rate to exclude urban *favelas*, or slums, the national rate would be comparable to those found in Buenos Aires and Montevideo.⁵⁹ Some doctors and officials referred to the shantytowns sprawled across the hillsides of Rio de Janeiro as "machines" that produced "little angels for the heavens."⁶⁰ Discussions of the plight of impoverished urban classes pervaded child welfare and health debates particularly after 1945. In the words of one observer, one need not leave the comfort of Brazil's coastal metropolises to see children "born like rats and living like rats."⁶¹ Thus, the "modernization" of infant mortality, which Scheper-Hughes defines as the relegation of high rates to the very poorest populations, occurred much earlier than the author proposes and coincided with the expansion of the urban poor population in the first half of the

⁵⁷Dr. Pedro de Alcantara, "Por quê morre tanta criança no Brasil?," *Infância*, ano III, no. 7 (October 1937), 26.

⁵⁸Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda, *O Estado Novo*, (Rio de Janeiro: DIP, 1939), 116.

⁵⁹Dr. Alvara Aguiar, "Favelas, cemitérios de crianças," *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, (May 30, 1948), Suplemento de Puericultura, section III, page 8.

⁶⁰Dr. Olinto de Oliviera, "Discurso do Professor Olinto de Oliveira, Presidente da Comissão Executiva," *Conferência Nacional de Proteção à Infância*, vol. I, (Rio de Janeiro: MES, 1933), 41; "Casas higiênicas para crianças cariocas," *Puericultura*, ano I, nos. 7 and 8 (April/May 1942), 25; "A solução das favelas é o parque proletário," *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, (June 20, 1948), Suplemento de Puericultura, section III, page 8; "Assistência à maternidade e à infância nas favelas," *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, (October 12, 1952), Suplemento de Puericultura, section III, page 6. "Amemos as crianças," *Momento Femenino: um jornal para o seu lar*, ano I, no. 6, (August 1947), 9.

⁶¹Eurico Carneiro, A mãe, o filho, e o Estado," *Boletim da Legião Brasileira de Assistência*, ano II, no. 27, (September 1947), 22.

century.⁶² Scheper-Hughes' conclusions obscure the pervasiveness of infant mortality discourse within twentieth-century policymaking and social thought in Brazil and the fact that, particularly within the disadvantaged urban masses, Brazilian mothers had long endured frequent and tragic child loss. Rather than comparing late-twentieth-century Brazilian attitudes toward child death to those recorded in Early Modern Europe or elsewhere in the modern developing world, Scheper-Hughes needed only reflect on the earlier part of Brazil's "century of the child."

In terms of infant mortality statistics, the time period examined by Scheper-Hughes and the first half of the twentieth century seem analogous. Infant and child death rates, in her words, caused Brazil to have the demographic profile of a nation at war.⁶³ However, a crucial difference existed between the concurrent cultural and political valuation of all children that pervaded the earlier period and the repression and violence that shaped considerations of children by the end of the century. For health care professionals and social reformers in the thirties and forties "cleansing" the nation entailed the education, protection and provision of health care services for Brazilian children nationwide. At least on a rhetorical level, puericulturists and other child-focused ideologues professed egalitarian visions for improving the health of the youngest members of the body politic. Conversely, authorities crafting child welfare and health legislation during the military regime (1964-1985) and the following decades of redemocratization, understood "cleansing" as the containment and/or elimination of

⁶² Scheper-Hughes, 279-281.

⁶³ Nancy Scheper-Hughes, "Death Squads and Democracy in Northeast Brazil," in *Law and Disorder in the Post-Colony* in eds., John and Jean Comaroff (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 154.

children deemed detrimental to society.⁶⁴ This contrast substantiates the underlying argument of this chapter and the dissertation more general. It demonstrates the potency of pro-child ideals in the first half of the century that, despite high infant mortality rates, propagated the idea that Brazil would flourish into modern utopia of the child. Medical professionals and officials used public forums and campaigns to celebrate the "century of the child" as a platform for economic development, national identity creation, and social cohesion.

Although much scholarship has focused on the evolution of attitudes toward child death and strategies to mitigate its impacts, infant mortality as population statistic remains an elusive topic in twentieth century Brazilian history. This lacuna in the historiography owes as much to the complex nature of studying infant death in a developing country as it does to the lack of coherent data for Brazil before the 1940s. Public health professionals often consider infant mortality rates as a robust measure of a country's overall health and living standards. Expressed numerically, infant mortality rates give a crude idea of how well the human species fairs against various environmental, social, and biological factors. Yet, simply assessing a nation's rate as statistically "high" or "low" does not provide a precise portrayal of the processes that determine survival in the post-natal stage. Understanding the causes and implications of infant mortality in historical context requires knowledge of several immeasurable determinants. As Moseley and Chen argue, infant mortality in the developing world is

⁶⁴ For works that explore child-focused repression during the military regime see, Gilberto Dimenstein, *Brazil: War on Children* (Latin American Bureau, 1991); Teresa Pires do Rio Caldeira, "Direitos humanos ou 'privilegios de bandidos'?: desventuras da democratização brasileira," *Novos Estudos-CEBRAP*, 30, (July 1991), 162-174 and Ana Paula Serrata Malfitano and Rubens de Camargo Ferreira Adorno, "Infância, Juventude, e vivências nas ruas: entre o imaginário da instituição e do direto," *Imaginário (Juventude)*, ano xii, no. 12, (1ºsem., 2006), 15-33.

rarely attributable to a single cause of death, but rather many overlapping social, economic, cultural, and environmental mechanisms. Their work suggests that such mechanisms operate at the level of the state, community, household, and individual.⁶⁵ In the first half of the twentieth century, Brazilian doctors and social reformers were just beginning to investigate how maternal education, traditions and values, family structure, class, and race/ethnicity affected an infant's likelihood of survival. The Brazilian medical academy had only recently begun to generate practitioners who specialized in pre- and post-natal health and who marshaled forth public programs to improve standards of living for the young. For the first half of the "century of the child," understandings of the social and economic values of infant survival for the Brazilian state and society remained abstract. Although health reformers and social thinkers in the capital spoke of calamitous infant mortality rates, they lacked comprehensive statistical data and first-hand knowledge to substantiate their claims.

Compounding the fact that pediatrics and puericulture were developing medical fields in this period, Brazil's doctors and state policymakers devoted their attention to other public health challenges that they perceived as manifesting more immediate detriment. During the period 1910-1930, defined by historian Gilberto Hochman as an era of "exponential increase in public awareness of government responsibility in health matters," doctors and public health officials ignited hygiene and health reforms.⁶⁶ The eradication of insect-borne, congenital, and communicable diseases, as well as the overall

⁶⁵W. Henry Moseley and Lincoln Chen, "An Analytic Framework for the Study of Child Survival in the Developing World," *Population and Development Review*, (10:supplement), (1984), 25.

⁶⁶Gilberto Hochman, "Great Hospital, Vast Backlands: The Public Health Reform in Brazil (1916-1930), paper presented at the Latin American Studies Association Annual Meeting (1998), <http://lasa.international.pitt.edu/LASA98/Hochman.pdf>, 2 and in "Logo ali no final da avenida: Os sertões redefinidos pelo movimento sanitarista na Primeira República," *História, Ciências Manguinhos*, vol. V (supplement), (July 1998), 217.

improvement of public sanitation occupied much of the available manpower and resources. Public health reformer Miguel Pereira's 1916 claim that Brazil was an "immense hospital" set the tone for early twentieth-century health reforms that focused on curing and preventing illnesses. State-sponsored programs, known as the Sanitarian Movement, employed both "horizontal" and "vertical" approaches to improving population health. These terms describe two interrelated modes of delivering health care and medical services. The former encompasses broad, long-term interventions, while the latter involves specialized, short-term solutions.⁶⁷ Federal authorities and medical professionals generally designed "horizontal" strategies to resolve the high incidence of infant death across Brazil. In the imaginary of the public health officials and medical professionals charged with addressing this demographic problem, the intertwined influences of education and prevention would produce a healthy generation of Brazilians within a few decades. They infused their discourse with references to the future and ultimately envisioned the legacy of their interventions as the human capital that would survive long enough to become part of the *pátria*, or Brazilian homeland.

Among the "vertical" strategies enacted in the first three decades of the twentieth century were various vaccination and public works campaigns designed to transform what some intellectuals and doctors perceived as the sickly character of the Brazilian body politic. Through a well-executed process of diagnosis and prophylaxis Brazilian medical professionals and research entities stemmed the spread of diseases like

⁶⁷The "horizontal" versus "vertical" paradigm emerged in scholarship on public health management and systems in the 1960s and has been revised with the more recent emphasis on global health. See, C.L. Gonzalez, *Mass Campaigns and General Health Services* (Geneva: World Health Organization, 1965), Public Health Papers, no. 29; Anne Mills, "Vertical vs. Horizontal Health Programmes in Africa: Idealism, Pragmatism, resources and efficiency," *Social Science and Medicine*, 17:24 (1983), 1971-1981 and "Mass Campaigns versus General Health Services: What Have We Learnt in 40 Years about Vertical versus Horizontal Approaches?" *WHO Bulletin*, 83:4 (April 2005), 315-316.

hookworm, malaria, and Chagas disease.⁶⁸ From the standpoint of the federal policymakers who underwrote national programs, infant mortality did not respond to interventions as dynamically as some other public health problems had. Change in rates in any context occurs gradually over several generations, making improvements more difficult to register in the short term. As a result, campaigns aimed at lowering infant mortality received less sustained government funding and interest than other high-profile and easily-remedied public health issues. Throughout the thirties and forties, medical professionals, as well as state and municipal-level policymakers frequently petitioned federal administrators and publicly decried the lack of funding for pre-and post-natal health services.⁶⁹ Unlike yellow fever, dengue, Chagas disease, and polio, infant mortality did not dramatically abate after a series of medical and environmental interventions. Until the late thirties, the federal government did not allocate significant funding toward lowering infant mortality. Doctors engaged in this type of research did not receive the institutional support and financial resources that other professionals like

⁶⁸For works on disease eradication and vaccination campaigns see, Carlos Antônio de Castro Santos, "Poder, ideologia, e saúde no Brasil da Primeira República: ensaio de sociologia histórica," in *Cuidar, controlar, e curar: ensaios históricos sobre saúde e doença na América Latina e Caribe*, orgs., Gilberto Hochman and Diego Armus (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2004); Gilberto Hochman, *A era do saneamento* (São Paulo: Hucitec, 1998); Simone Kropf, "Carlos Chagas e os debates e controvérsias sobre doença no Brasil, 1909-1923," *História, Ciência, e Saúde- Manguinhos*, 6:1 (July 2009), 205-227; Nisia Trindade Lima and Gilberto Hochman, "Condenado pela raça, absolvido pela medicina: o Brasil descoberto pelo movimento sanitário da Primeira República," in orgs., Chor Maio and Ventura Santos, *Raça, ciência, e sociedade*; and Jeffrey Needell, "The Revolta Contra Vacina of 1904: The Revolt Against 'Modernization' in Belle Époque Rio de Janeiro," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 67:2 (May 1987), 233-270.

⁶⁹Dr. Edgard Braga, "O problema da puericultura no Brasil," *Infância*, ano II, (February 1946), 4-5; Dr. João Amarante, "Menores abandonados," speech given on Rádio Clube Brasil and printed in *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano III, no. 15 (December 1943), 18; *Campanha da Redenção da Criança: relatório das atividades da Campanha da Redenção da Criança desde seu início 1943 at'e maio 1945*, (Campanha da Redenção da Criança: Imprensa Nacional, 1943); "Carta da Sociedade de Medicina e Cirurgia de Ilheus," (October 23, 1944), Arquivo Nacional, Gabinete Civil da Presidência da República, processo no. 7562; "Carta da Liga Bahiana Contra Mortalidade Infantil pedindo um auxílio para levar avante suas finalidades," (December 18, 1944), Arquivo Nacional, Gabinete Civil da Presidência da República, processo no. 12931; Correspondence from Dr. Oscar Clark to President Getúlio Vargas (February 5, 1945), Arquivo Nacional, Gabinete Civil da Presidência da República, processo no. 4982.

Drs. Carlos Chagas and Oswaldo Cruz had received for their accomplishments in parasitic disease eradication. By the late 1940s, private fundraisers, usually organized by the *DNCr*, began to sustain national child health and welfare programs that faced waning federal funding. Thus, the nature of infant mortality itself and its position within the contemporary public policy hierarchy partially explains the paucity of information from the first four decades of the twentieth century.

At the level of the historical record, the dearth of precise information on infant mortality from this period stems from inaccurate and incomplete demographic evidence from the first half of the century. Before the foundation of Brazil's *Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)*, in 1934 and its first official census in 1940, information on infant mortality and other population health indicators was limited. *Anuários*, or yearly synopses of population and geographic data published at the federal, state, and municipal levels, offered insights into Brazil's demographic profile and were some of the only sources of statistical information on the health and welfare of the national body politic. Many of these publications pertained only to Brazil's major metropolises and offered little or no data on nationwide population statistics and health concerns. In one annual report published for the 1922 Independence Centennial, Chief of the National Inspector of Infant Hygiene, Dr. Fernandes Figueira, proclaimed that Brazil's elevated infant mortality rate placed it "in a humiliating condition of inferiority."⁷⁰ Limited statistical evidence corroborated this kind of rhetoric, making it easy for policymakers to reason that demographic problems observed in urban centers manifested equally or worse in the hinterland. Until the *DNCr* began conducting more

⁷⁰ *Assistência pública e privada no Rio de Janeiro (Brasil)-História e estatística-Comemoração do Centenário da Independência Nacional* (Rio de Janeiro: Typographia do Anuário do Brasil, 1922), 14.

comprehensive inquests into population health after 1940, official statistics captured only a fraction of the overall birth and death rates.

Even after the initiation of federally-funded investigations the measurement of infant mortality was problematic. Federal and municipal authorities often used incompatible methods for collecting data. For instance, federal institutions relied heavily on the *registro civil*, the registry that issued official birth certificates, while local statisticians used a combination of civil and ecclesiastical data, such as baptism and funerary records. Federal law required all parents to register the births of their offspring within fifteen days of birth; however, many of Brazil's rural and impoverished families were either unaware of the procedure or unable to comply.⁷¹ *DNCr* doctors reasoned that the high incidence of home birth and rural parents' disconnection from bureaucratic offices made the *registro civil* an imprecise indicator of Brazil's birth rate. This inaccuracy, they claimed, ultimately inflated the measurement of infant death. Bahian puericulturist Dr. Martagão Gesteira, who became director of the *DNCr* in 1946, estimated that the civil registry reflected only half of the total number of births nationwide.⁷² The department utilized its public events and publications to raise awareness about the importance of official birth registration.⁷³ The *livro da mamãe*, or baby memory book, advertised in the *DNCr* and its precursor's publications in the late thirties and early forties devoted pages for parents to commemorate their child's civil

⁷¹For an analysis of popular perceptions of civil registration in Brazil, see Mara Loveman, "Blinded Like a State: the Revolt Against Civil Registration in Nineteenth-Century Brazil," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 49:1, (January 2007), 5-39.

⁷²Martagão Gesteira, *Puericultura*, 2nd edition (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Pan Americana, 1945), 461.

⁷³"Proteção aos adolescentes no perigo moral," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano II, no. 8, (March 1942), 12 and *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano II, no. 9, (June 1942), 16; Departamento Nacional da Criança/Campanha de Educação Para Adultos, *Cuidemos da Criança*, (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Gráfico do Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, 1947), np, CPDOC, Clemente Mariani Collection, Cma10f; Olinto de Oliveira, *Esperando o filhinho*, (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1945), 7.

registration. An accompanying poem urged parents to participate in the census count or be faced with a fine.⁷⁴ *DNCr* officials even selected "Register Your Child!" as the theme of the 1949 National Children's Week commemoration as an additional strategy to correct what they perceived as a misrepresentation of Brazil's demographic profile.

In addition to problems associated with civil bureaucracy, federal biostatisticians also often relied on spurious methodologies for reporting infant mortality and for calculating national and/or regional averages. From the twenties onward, federal entities consistently condensed estimations into four and/or five-year averages, *quadriênios* and *qüinqüênios*, that tended to obscure crucial short-term and local-level shifts in infant mortality brought on by epidemics, droughts, as well as other socioeconomic and environmental factors. Beginning with the 1940 census, statisticians generated regional data that reflected demographic data for Brazil's center-west, south, southeast, north, and northeast regions.⁷⁵ Ironically, these types of aggregated measurements failed to register the effects of small-scale improvements in infant mortality rates brought about by the *DNCr*'s and other federal campaigns. For example, *DNCr* officials in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo relied on territorial divisions, or *puericulture districts*, created by state and national public health officials to implement programs and collect data. Starting in the mid-forties, departmental media publicized district-level rate decreases as both indicators of systemic demographic upturn and to incentivize federal funding for the expansion of *DNCr* interventions. *DNCr* officials, particularly the medical professionals in charge of individual districts, often reported drastic decreases in infant death as a result of health and educational programs. For example, in a speech given at the 1948 National

⁷⁴Bastos Tigre, *Meu Bebê: livro das mamães*, 4th edition (Rio de Janeiro: Oscar Mano & Cia., 1939), np.

⁷⁵João Yunes and Vera Shirley Carvalho Ronchezal, "Evolução da mortalidade geral, infantil, e proporcional no Brasil, *Saúde Pública*, 8, (June 1974), 3-4.

Children's Week celebration, Dr. Mario Ramos, chief of Rio de Janeiro's 4th Puericulture District, revealed a striking rate shift from 36.8 to 7% in 1947 recorded in his district.⁷⁶ Officials from other districts in the state also observed rate decreases throughout the forties as the *DNCr*'s funding and projects expanded.⁷⁷ However, the use of aggregated data sets failed to show these localized shifts and instead conveyed Brazil's infant mortality rate as static. Despite small-scale improvements, the overall profile of infant mortality continued to characterize Brazil as a demographically unstable country.

DNCr officials attempted to correct discrepancies in demographic statistics by creating national averages based on data from sample cities. From 1942 to 1948, the *DNCr*'s Statistics Service tracked infant mortality in fifteen cities across Brazil. The study concluded that the *registro civil* underreported births and thus reflected an inflated infant mortality rate by significant measure in each city observed.⁷⁸ National averages for demographic indicators remained difficult to obtain in this period, yet Brazilian medical professionals and officials articulated strikingly similar infant mortality rates. In 1937, Dr. Castro Barreto, a leading figure in the public health movement, estimated the national infant mortality rate between 170 and 190 deaths per 1,000 live births.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ Mario Ramos, "Palestra do Chefe do 4º Distrito de Puericultura e da Polícia Militar na Semana da Criança," (October 15, 1948), Arquivo Nacional, audiovisual collection, FC120, side A, minute 000. In Rio de Janeiro, the division of the city into health districts was an initiative sponsored under the leadership of Mayor Henrique Dodsworth in 1940.

⁷⁷ For reports on the lowering of infant mortality at the district level see, Dr. Alvaro Aguiar, "Mortalidade infantil entre matriculados e não-matriculados nos postos de puericultura do quinto distrito de puericultura," *Boletim de Higiene e Saúde Pública-Rio de Janeiro*, ano I, no. 1 (August 1943), 47; Mario Tinoco Filho, "Mortalidade infantil e puericultura," *Puericultura*, ano XI, no. 15 (December 1942), 7; *Campanha de Redenção da Criança: relatório das atividades da Campanha de Redenção da Criança desde o seu início dezembro 1943 até maio 1945*, CPDOC, Gustavo Capanema Collection, Rolo 81, foto 047.

⁷⁸ Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Boletim do Departamento Nacional da Criança* (Rio de Janeiro: DNCr, 1951), 18.

⁷⁹ Dr. Frota Pessoa, "Semana da Criança," *Puericultura*, ano I, nos. 10 and 11, (July/August 1942), 3.

Likewise, a 1940 *DNCr* report estimated that approximately one-fifth of all infants born in Brazil died before reaching age one.⁸⁰

These estimations are consistent with data generated by a joint project sponsored by Brazil's Ministry of Education and Health and the Institute of Inter-American Affairs in the mid-1940s. A collaborative team of statisticians employed a similar sampling technique that combined data from twenty-one cities over two years between 1944 and 1946. Despite problematic data collection at Brazil's state and federal levels, numbers generated by this multi-national study corresponded with infant mortality rates recorded by other contemporary Brazilian reports. The purposes and implications of the 1946 project will be explored in more detail below.

Brazil's official source of historical biostatistics, the *IBGE*, also offers insights into the contours of infant mortality in the twentieth century. One of its online reports closely examines the economic, political, and social forces that influenced key demographic outcomes. Written by *IBGE* researchers 1999, the article clearly demonstrates the scarcity of national infant death statistics in the early part of the century. Its authors restrict their analysis and the exposition of quantitative data to the post-1930 era. The publication also illustrates a reliance on the 1940 census as the official source of population data, rather than estimates produced by other governmental entities and organizations engaged in demographic research in the early twentieth century. The centralization of the federal authority and the intensification of institutional governance during the Vargas years (1930-1945) created a political climate that valued quantification. Consequently, the 1940 census data became one of the "strong languages" through which federal administrators managed the body politic, assessed development,

⁸⁰ J.P. Fontenelle, *Higiene no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Estbel Gráfico Canto e Reile, 1940), 24-25.

and articulated power.⁸¹ In terms of infant mortality the 1940 census supplied clear evidence the modernization process had done little to protect Brazil's most vulnerable citizens.

Figure 1.1 shows the aggregated infant mortality rates for the period 1935-1960 as it is reported in the 1999 *IBGE* publication.

Figure 1.1: Infant Mortality Rates, 1930-1955 based on *IBGE* census data

Year	National Average*
1930	162.4
1935	152.7
1940	150.0
1945	144.0
1950	135.0
1955	128.2

*Number of deaths before age 1 per 1,000 live births

Source: *IBGE, "Evolução e perspectivas da mortalidade infantil no Brasil,"* (Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 1999)⁸²

Declining national averages culled from census records illustrate the gradual effect of government-sponsored interventions into pre- and post-natal health care after 1930, as well as general improvements in infrastructure and public assistance programs.

Intriguingly, the nationwide infant mortality rates shown in Figure 1.1 are lower than averages recorded in other contemporary investigations. Averages reported by *DNCr* studies estimated the national infant mortality rate closer to 200 until the mid-1950s.

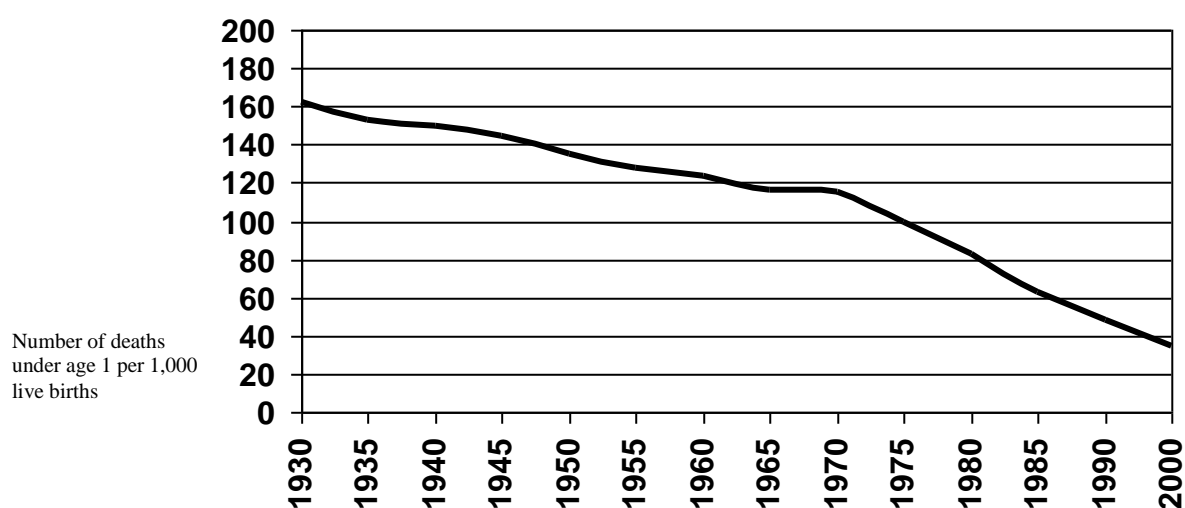
Again, the discrepancy results from differing statistical methodologies. Census-takers relied on the *registro civil*, while the *DNCr* and other institutions employed sampling techniques.

⁸¹The term "strong languages" comes from the work of anthropologist Talal Asad. It signifies a process by which statistics and statistical reasoning are employed in an attempt to reconstruct the moral and material conditions of target populations. Theories of the rise of statistics during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries have been explored previously by Michel Foucault in his analyses of "biopolitics" and "governmentality." See Talal Asad, "Ethnographic Representation, Statistics, and Modern Power," *Social Research*, 61:1, (1994), 78-79 and

⁸²This publication has been digitized and is available online at: http://www.ibge.gov.br/home/estatistica/populacao/evolucao_perspectivas_mortalidade/evolucao_mortalidade.pdf.

The 1999 *IBGE* study reveals that Brazil witnessed a relative decline in overall infant mortality after 1960. As the authors contend, lowered fertility rates and the expansion of government assistance, health programs, and basic sanitation infrastructure coalesced during the military dictatorship period beginning in 1964.⁸³ Figure 1.2 illustrates this trend in the latter half of the twentieth century. From 1930 to 2000, the national infant mortality rate fell from approximately 165 to 34.

Figure 1.2: National Infant Mortality Rate Estimates for Brazil, 1930-2000



Source: IBGE, "*Evolução e perspectivas da mortalidade infantil no Brasil*" (Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 1999) and IBGE, Census of Population, 2000. *as of 5/2011 the 2010 Census data had not been fully analyzed and published

Compared to rates recorded in Spanish-speaking Latin America, Brazil possessed the second highest level of infant death in 2000 according to the World Bank. In 2000, only Bolivia reported a higher rate (62).⁸⁴ By the eclipse of the twentieth century, countries across Europe and North America (the United States and Canada) had lowered infant mortality to single digit figures. Brazil's rate, although significantly improved since the

⁸³IBGE, "*Evolução e perspectivas da mortalidade infantil no Brasil*" (Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 1999), 17.

⁸⁴World Bank population indicators "infant mortality." Online: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.DYN.IMRT.IN/countries>

first half of the century, was still roughly four times those observed in the "developed world."⁸⁵

Entering into the new millennium, Brazil had, from a demographic standpoint, become a more hospitable environment for some of its youngest citizens. Improvements in public education, health services, and household incomes made basic survival past the age of one year more tenable. Yet, extreme disparities in living conditions and access to health care and assistance services persisted across the major geographical regions of Brazil. In the latter part of the century, rural areas of the underdeveloped North and Northeast still registered infant mortality rates approximately two to three times higher than the South and Southeast regions.⁸⁶ Skin color and class in both urban and rural settings remained important determinants of survival and overall standard of living. A 2010 analysis of census and survey data from 1960 to 2000 revealed that Afro-descended groups experienced a level of child mortality that was consistently ten to twelve percent higher than those recorded in Brazil's white population.⁸⁷ As a legacy of more than three centuries of slavery, the nation was left with profound race and class-based inequalities.

Just as puericulturists and social reformers had observed during the first half of the century, Brazil's territorial size, environmental variations, and heterogeneous population complicated the standardization of population health. These intrinsic factors

⁸⁵Denisard Alves and Walter Belluzzo, "Child Health and Infant Mortality in Brazil, 1970-2000," paper presented at the *Seminar on Child Health, Poverty, and the Role of Public Policies-Interamerican Development Bank*, Washington DC, February 2004), online <http://www.iadb.org/res/laresnetwork/files/pr206finaldraft.pdf>, 1-2.

⁸⁶Alves and Belluzzo, 3 and IBGE, "*Evolução e perspectivas da mortalidade infantil no Brasil*" (Rio de Janeiro: IBGE, 1999) 22-23.

⁸⁷Child mortality measures the rate of death in the first five years of life and, like infant mortality, is a robust indicator of overall population health and standards of living. The study recorded the following differentials in the Afro-Brazilian population: 1960, 10.1; 1980, 10.5 and 2000, 12.9 higher than rates recorded in the white population. See Charles H. Wood, José Alberto Magno de Carvalho, and Cláudia Júlia Guimarães Horta, "The Color of Child Mortality in Brazil, 1950-2000-Social Progress and Persistent Racial Inequality," *Latin American Research Review*: 45:2, (2010), 133.

certainly undermined the "uniform progress" that some twentieth century child-focused policymakers imagined would occur across Brazil during the "century of the child."⁸⁸ However, the intensification of demographic change after 1960 cannot be attributed solely to worldwide upturns in standards of living, nor the reforms implemented by the military dictatorship. Child-centered ideologies had been an enduring feature of federal policymaking in Brazil for over half a century. The public campaigns and statecraft conjured between the 1920s and 1950s undoubtedly influenced how military officials conceptualized children, public health, and development.

Ultimately, the models of systemic health and hygiene education, medical services, and infrastructure conceived by doctors and officials in the first half of the century effectively lowered infant mortality under a new political regime and amidst neoliberal economic advancement. The military regime's repressive and far-reaching authority (1964-1985) and Brazil's simultaneous economic prosperity were key pillars for the successful implementation of specific population health initiatives that lowered the infant death rate. Although not wholly absent in the earlier period, these economic and political structures had only been effective at improving standards of living in specifically-targeted municipalities and regions. Alternatively, the military regime's intense ordering of public space and social life precipitated macro-level demographic changes over its twenty-five-year administration.

Of course, the statistical improvement of a newborn's chance at survival in the latter half of the twentieth century did not signify sustained health and welfare for many of Brazil's children. Among the urban and rural poor, the majority of whom were non-

⁸⁸Dr. Silveira Sampaio, "Civilização e enriquecimento," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano II, no. 8, (March 1942), 43.

white Brazilians, childhood was still an extremely precarious lifestage. The same health reforms responsible for lowering national infant mortality rates also sought to contain and, many times, purge society of children and others deemed detrimental to the body politic. Brazil's "century of the child" may have culminated with a better demographic profile than at its inception, but the nation was anything but a utopia for the young. The cultural promotion of children during the first half of the century had not generated an enduring set of values strong enough to withstand the deep social divisions created by decades of uneven development and military repression.

Imperial Eyes on Brazil's Infant Mortality Problem in the 1940s

Although the medical specialists and government officials associated with "pro-child" campaigns considered high infant mortality a national problem, they had little first-hand knowledge of its impacts beyond the capital Rio de Janeiro and other major coastal metropolises. As one *DNCr* official recalled, infant mortality was something discussed by many among the middle and elite classes, but "few had any exact notions that corresponded with reality."⁸⁹ Conditions medical professionals and policymakers observed in among the urban poor in Brazil's major cities, often substantiated larger claims about health and welfare in other regions. For instance, one statistician expressed the national infant death rate in 1942 as an extrapolation of data recorded in one municipality over a single month to come up with a nationwide total of 400,000 infant deaths per year.⁹⁰ In many ways, Brazil's national infant mortality problem was as much a pervasive demographic reality as an ideological construction in the first half of the

⁸⁹"Semana da Criança de 1942-11 a 18 de outubro," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano II, no. 10, (September 1942), 11.

⁹⁰Mario Tinoco Filho, "Mortalidade infantil e puericultura," *Puericultura*, ano XI, no. 15, (December 1942), 7.

twentieth century. A small but influential group of doctors and child welfare advocates based in the federal capital crafted child-centered representations of population health and development crises that suited their reform agendas. These same individuals perceived themselves as the most authoritative purveyors of knowledge on Brazil's particular child welfare and demographic concerns despite their circumscribed familiarity with its impacts and causes nationwide.

This section examines an important foreign assessment of infant mortality and child welfare in the 1940s, a critical decade of Brazil's "century of the child." It analyzes the findings of a joint investigation into general health in Brazil by domestic professionals and institutions, as well as American doctors, military officials, and the Institute of Inter-American Affairs. The project created an opportunity for the study of infant mortality, its causes, and implications on a more comprehensive scale. Foreign and domestic researchers culled health and population data from available censuses and municipal-level records as a part of the U.S. military's resource extraction program during World War II. Medical personnel also collaborated on a longitudinal study of infant mortality in twenty-one Brazilian cities. A published summation of the investigation subsequently provided some of the most precise and revelatory information on contemporary infant mortality and child health in general. More significantly, however, the report exposed the fallacy of Vargas-era pro-child health and welfare reforms and child-centered statecraft. These political strategies had purported to redeem the nation's children through puericulture and forge the 'new Brazilian man.' Yet, the emergence of a new institution, the *DNCr*, its commemorative holidays and campaigns, and Vargas' "March to the West" development plan had scarcely addressed the

underlying problem of infant mortality on a national scale. In fact, it would take this multinational project to put Brazil's demographic profile in proper perspective and to bring particular attention to regions of the interior that federal administrators and doctors in the capital had yet to study.

In a 1946 report in the *Journal of Pediatrics*, North American Army Corps doctor, E.H. Christopherson offered his impressions of Brazil's infant mortality problem.

Christopherson was assigned to study the state of public health in Brazil in 1943 through a project initiated jointly by Brazil's Ministry of Education and Health and the Institute of Inter-American Affairs. The goal of the program was to develop adequate health care services for American troops stationed in Brazil during World War II. Stationed in the American Army and Navy bases on the coasts and in the mining and rubber regions of the interior, these servicemen had been assigned to extract primary materials for the wartime production of weaponry and other manufactured supplies for the Allied cause.⁹¹

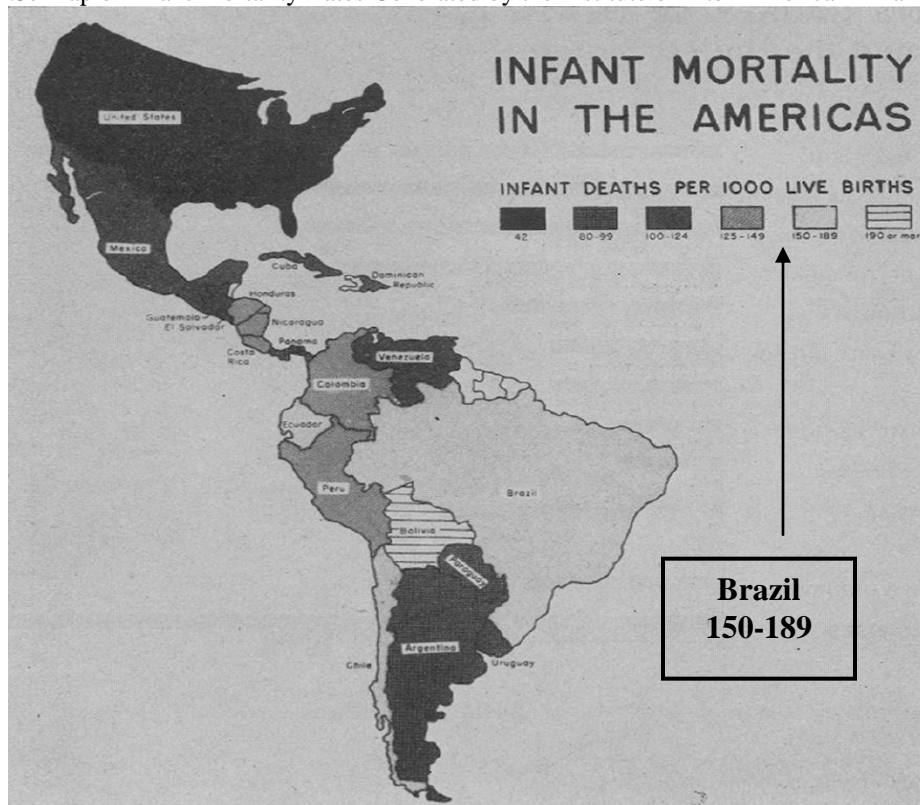
After traveling through the country and gathering data for over two years, the physician concluded that an overall lack of basic health care and resources had allowed infant deaths to spiral out of control. He characterized infant mortality as one of many "community problems" that could be resolved through the development of comprehensive medical services and health education campaigns. Christopherson urged Brazilian policymakers to realize the economic and political value of health work for the overall progress of the nation.⁹² Furthermore, his report included statistical data that

⁹¹For other works on wartime industries in Brazil see, Seth Garfield, "Tapping Masculinity: Labor Recruitment to the Brazilian Amazon During World War II," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 86:2, (2006), 275-308; Greg Grandin, *Fordlandia: The Rise and Fall of Henry Ford's Forgotten Jungle City* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2009) and Frank D. McCann, *The Brazilian-American Alliance, 1937-1945* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974).

⁹²E.H. Christopherson, "Child Welfare Work in Brazil," *The Journal of Pediatrics*, 28:3, (March 1946), 333.

directly compared infant mortality rates with those recorded in the United States and across the Americas. Figure 1.3 shows a map of data derived from the Institute of Inter-American Affairs in the mid-1940s. The map identifies Bolivia as possessing the highest infant mortality rate among the recorded countries in the hemisphere. Brazil and Chile fell into the same category with national averages estimated between 150 and 189.

Figure 1.3: Map of Infant Mortality Rates Generated by the Institute of Inter-American Affairs, c. 1945



Source: E.H. Christopherson, *Journal of Pediatrics* (1946)

Several additional charts and graphs portrayed Brazil's calamitous combination of high birth rates and high infant death throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Christopherson even called Brazil's two metropolises, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, "modern appearing" cities whose staggering infant mortality rates belied their

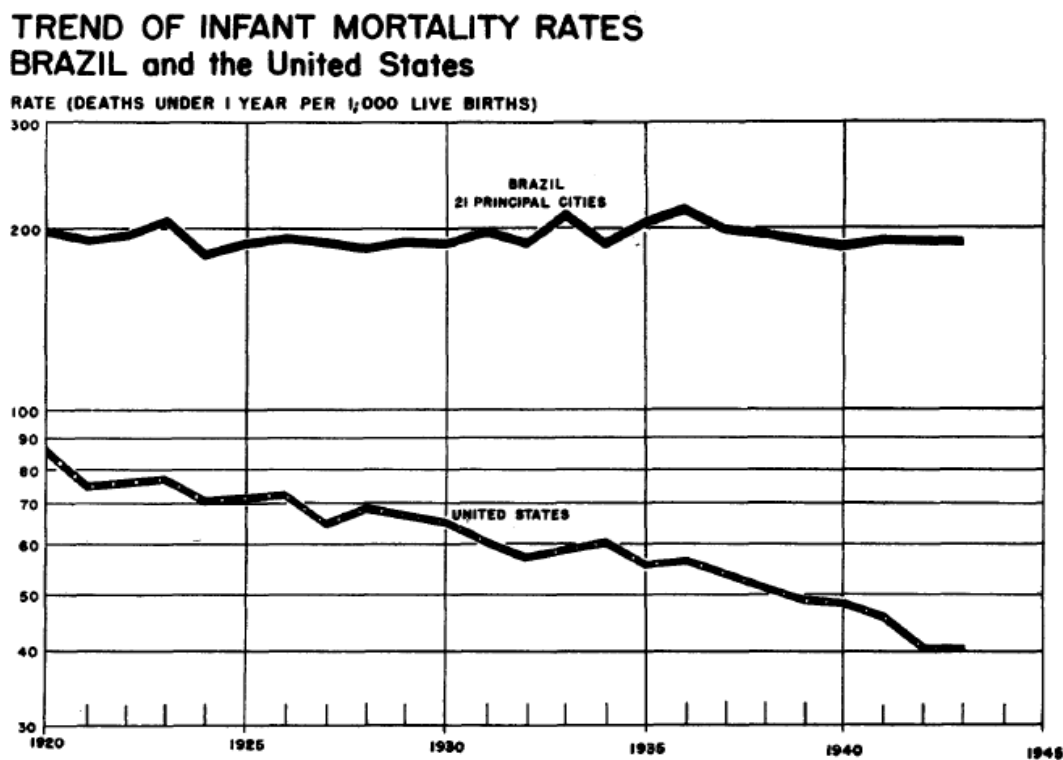
contemporary façades.⁹³ The report certainly tarnished the image of modernity and prosperity that Brazilian intellectuals and officials had consistently propagated since the 1922 Independence Centennial Exposition. That event had galvanized nation-builders' desires to showcase Brazil's cultural and economic modernization and the fallacy of its purported backwardness. During the following two decades, officials and intellectuals, particularly in the capital, initiated countless programs and events to modernize Brazil's international image. Most notably, economic development and national identity construction became the crux of Getúlio Vargas' presidency and later dictatorship. Christopherson's synopsis of demographic evidence revealed that, despite the intensification of child health and welfare services under Getúlio Vargas' *Estado Novo* regime (1937-1945), infant mortality remained high and public health services lagged. Modernization had been an illusory political agenda that failed to guarantee the means of basic survival for many Brazilians.

Christopherson's observations shed light on a central subplot of Brazil's purported "Century of the Child:" the concurrent state of public health remained inhospitable to the nation's offspring. Brazilian officials and medical professionals remained ineffectual at both understanding the causes and managing the effects of infant mortality nationwide. Even in the capital, which served as a laboratory for medical and public health innovations, infant mortality hovered around 150. In fact, Christopherson showed that the national average for this demographic indicator had remained static for almost twenty five years and had increased in some regions of Brazil (see Figure 1.4). Though Brazilian doctors routinely argued that rates could not be determined definitively due to errors and lacunae in civil records, they admitted that the number of infant deaths was

⁹³Ibid, 340.

higher than official estimates. During the thirties and early forties, many child welfare advocates and doctors claimed that Brazil's infant mortality rate was comparable to "the most backward tribes of Africa and Asia."⁹⁴ The team of American doctors acquired birth and death statistics from the Brazil's Ministry of Education and Health (*MES*). As a subsidiary of the *MES*, the *DNCr* supplied official estimates of infant mortality rates to federal registries through its *Serviço de Estatística*, or statistics service. Christopherson's report combined these types of data with his team's records collected over two years in twenty-one cities across Brazil.

Figure 1.4: Comparative Infant Mortality Rates, Brazil and the U.S. (1920-1945)
Generated by the *MES*/Institute of Inter-American Affairs (1946)



Source: E.H. Christopherson (1946)

⁹⁴ Dr. J. Dalmácio de Azevedo, *Considerações gerais para a reorganização da seção de higiene da criança* (São Paulo: Revista dos Tribunais, 1940), 60, CPDOC, Arquivo Gustavo Capanema, GC1241f. Medical professionals and officials regularly made comparisons between Brazil's infant mortality rate and those found in Africa. See, Getúlio Vargas, "Mensagem do Natal," (1932), CPDOC, Arquivo Gustavo Capanema, GC Rolo 60, foto 538; Ministério de Educação e Saúde, *Conferência de Proteção à Criança, 17-27 setembro 1933, atas e trabalhos* (Rio de Janeiro: MES, 1933), 4.

As the graph shown in Figure 1.4 illustrates, Christopherson's data echoed this figure, citing that the national average taken from twenty-one cities remained near 200 from 1920 to 1945. The side-by-side comparison of infant mortality rates over twenty-five years in the United States and Brazil put the latter's demographic crisis in proper perspective. Most importantly, the chart demonstrated the inelasticity of infant mortality in Brazil despite numerous public health and educational campaigns. Again, the project required researchers to investigate health indicators in the rubber and mineral rich regions of the central Amazon and the Rio Doce Valley (Minas Gerais). Christopherson described the assignment as "controlling disease conditions in strategic areas in the shortest time possible."⁹⁵ The areas under investigation contained some of Brazil's least developed population centers where access to basic health care remained limited. Hard data on population health in these areas often eluded census takers and other official investigators, including those affiliated with the *DNCr*. For this reason, estimates generated by Christopherson and his colleagues provided a more realistic cross-section of infant mortality rates in the first half of the twentieth century. The *DNCr* regularly relied on its state-level offices, most of which were in Brazil's southern and coastal areas, to report on local infant mortality statistics. This strategy limited the institution's purview and confined its official estimations to better-developed capital cities and their surrounding municipalities. Even the teams of medical professionals operating rural clinics and mobile puericulture posts were unable to gather accurate and complete information in much of Brazil's sparsely-populated interior due to inadequate funding and manpower. Alternatively, the collaborative project described by Christopherson delved

⁹⁵Christopherson, 342.

into these impenetrable regions where American troops would temporarily reside and work.

A few months after Christopherson's article appeared in the *Journal of Pediatrics*, Dr. Martagão Gesteira repudiated its findings in a quarterly bulletin published by Brazil's Institute of Puericulture, (*INP*). As director of the *DNCr*, Gesteira criticized the shortsightedness of Christopherson's assessment of the department's programs and child welfare in Brazil more generally. Christopherson had written that the *DNCr* "had not been able to develop to any considerable extent" due to scarce government funding.⁹⁶ Gesteira interpreted this observation as a condemnation of both the Brazilian state's and society's indifference to child welfare problems. He wrote that the American doctor had painted Brazil's public health and child welfare conditions with "tremendously black colors."⁹⁷ In an effort to correct some of Christopherson's errors, Gesteira enumerated all of the *DNCr*'s initiatives and argued that the American researchers had no direct contact with the department's state and municipal-level representatives. His eleven-page diatribe included an indictment of the research team's infant mortality estimations. Gesteira, like his puericulturist colleagues, cited the *registro civil* for under-representing births. He candidly admitted that, as *DNCr* director, he "carried the responsibility" for correcting the fallacies propagated by Christopherson's article.⁹⁸

Although the Institute of Inter-American Affairs' research team collaborated with Brazil's *MES* and the *SESP*, or national Public Health Service, Dr. Gesteira disavowed its

⁹⁶Christopherson, 332.

⁹⁷Dr. Martagão Gesteira, no title, *Boletim do Instituto, 1947-1948*, ano IV, no. 8 (Rio de Janeiro: Gráfica Guarany Ltda., 1948), 7. Gesteira was using the term "black" metaphorically. It had no apparent racial connotations, as Christopherson's article did not discuss skin color as a determinant of infant mortality in Brazil.

⁹⁸Ibid.

data on grounds that the *DNCr* possessed more intimate knowledge of child health in Brazil. Christopherson certainly did not purport to provide an historical overview of the *DNCr* administration and operations. Incidentally, the American doctor praised the puericulture and maternity clinics constructed by the *DNCr* as providing optimum, yet insufficient, health care for Brazil's children.⁹⁹ The infant mortality figures generated by the multi-national investigation also corresponded with rates produced by the *DNCr*'s own statistical service in the mid-forties. Department officials had regularly cited Brazil's national infant mortality rate as roughly 200, which echoed the data reported in Christopherson's report. However, by the time of the article's publication in 1946 the *DNCr* had not conducted any inquests in regions of the Amazon where Christopherson and his team had worked. For example, a *DNCr* sample study of infant mortality executed by the department's own statistical service from 1942 to 1948 had excluded the entire Amazon region.¹⁰⁰ Information on infant death in the Northern region, save for a few coastal capitals, remained beyond the *DNCr*'s grasp during the 1940s, although data had been made available after the 1940 census when the *IBGE* began recording infant mortality rates for the capitals, Manaus (Amazonas) and Belém (Pará).¹⁰¹ Christopherson professed that the collaborative team had conducted research across the entire Amazon

⁹⁹ Ibid.

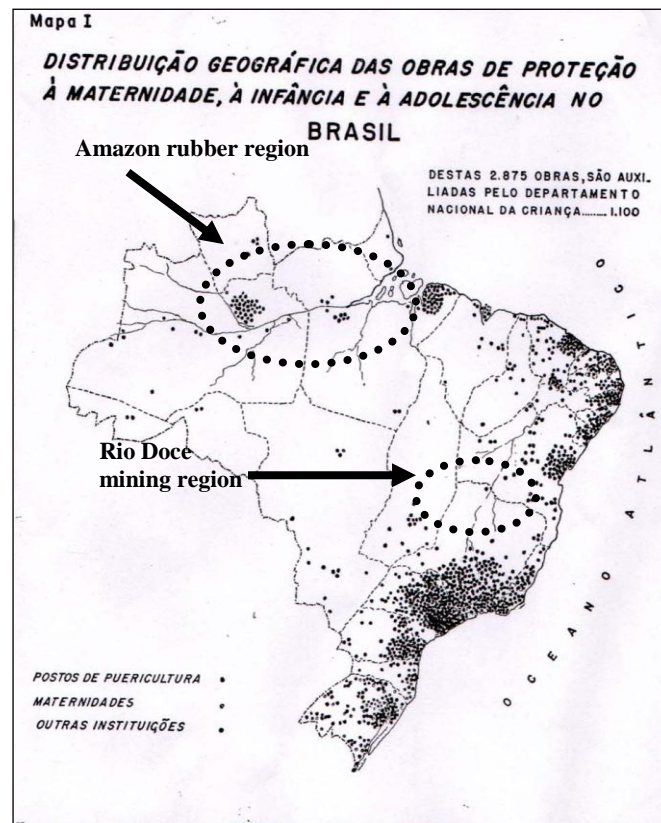
¹⁰⁰ Departamento Nacional da Criança, "A mortalidade infantil no Brasil," *Boletim do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, (1951), 18. The study recorded data in 15 cities at 15 different intervals between 1942 and 1948. Data was recorded in Bragança, a city on the coast of Pará in an area not considered to be part of the lower Amazon rubber-producing region.

¹⁰¹ Belem served as the *DNCr*'s headquarters for distributing funds and registering data. Representatives in Belem oversaw *DNCr* activities and programs in the states and territories of Amazonas, Pará, Rio Branco, Guapore, Amapá, and Acre. No comprehensive infant mortality data is reported by the *DNCr* from this region in the forties. See Departamento Nacional da Criança, *O Departamento Nacional da Criança: quarto anos de administração, 1947-1950* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1951), 34 and Departamento Nacional da Criança, "Organograma do *DNCr*" *Boletim do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, (1951), 3.

The 1940 census was the first to record infant mortality data on 2 cities in the Amazon region: Manaus (Amazonas) and Belem (Pará). The rates were 302.9 and 189.6 respectively. See Yunes and Carvalho Ronchezal (1974), tables 14 and 15.

and mining region of central Brazil.¹⁰² Figure 1.5 presents a 1951 *DNCr* map highlighting the geographical distribution of federally-funded child and maternal protection institutions.¹⁰³ Although the plot points are indistinguishable (see map legend-lower left), the map clearly demonstrates the contrast between the level of services provided in Brazil's interior and in its coastal regions. The areas I have circled roughly correspond to the rubber and mining territories under investigation in the multi-national project described in Christopherson's article.

Figure 1.5: *DNCr* map of existing child and maternal protection infrastructure by 1951



Source: *DNCr* (1948), CPDOC, Clemente Mariani Collection, CMa75f
Highlighted areas inserted by author.

¹⁰²Christopherson, 342.

¹⁰³Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Departamento Nacional da Criança: quatro anos de administração, 1947-1950* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional: 1951), 32.

In its first decade of operations, the *DNCr* had made considerable strides in advancing the frontier of pre- and post-natal health services in Brazil's interior. Spreading health care and puericultural education to the interior was an important policy objective for *DNCr* officials. In the forties, representations of infant mortality in Brazil's "hinterland" became key fixtures in the department's public expositions. By exhibiting maps of the territorial advancement of government-sponsored programs and the reality of infant death through photography, *DNCr* officials showed urban observers what rural Brazilians experienced directly. Imagery and rhetoric focused on what some medical professionals called the "massacre" of children in Brazil's interior, legitimated the *DNCr*'s initiatives and incentivized the subvention of its expansion.¹⁰⁴ However, by mid-century the population health dynamics that separated urban centers from rural peripheries had not shifted significantly. The sparsely-populated areas of the Center and North remained disconnected from modern medical infrastructure and health education campaigns. With its teams conducting research in parts of these regions and in coastal cities, the Institute of Inter-American Affairs collaborative project ascertained a more nuanced perspective on Brazil's infant mortality than the federal authorities charged with ameliorating this demographic problem. At the conclusion of its health and welfare investigation, the Institute of Inter-American Affairs had constructed thirty-five posts intended to serve as medical clinics and health education centers with the help its Brazilian colleagues. The Institute also provided 153 scholarships for Brazilian health workers and medical professionals to receive training the United States.¹⁰⁵ For a multi-national initiative with

¹⁰⁴The term "hecatombe" was used regularly by puericulturists referring to Brazil's high infant mortality rate. See Martagão Gesteira, *Puericultura*, 2nd edition (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Pan Americana, 1945), 34 and "A Hecatombe," *Diário de Notícias* (RJ), (October 10, 1948), *Seção da Puericultura*.

¹⁰⁵Christopherson, 344.

short-term military goals, the efforts of Brazilian and foreign doctors resulted in the advancement of the nation's health care services.

Martagão Gesteira's criticism of Christopherson's synopsis had less to do with the legitimacy of statistics and much to do with the fact that Brazil's infant mortality problem was now under foreign scrutiny. For Gesteira, Christopherson and his collaborators approached the subject of child welfare in Brazil from what Mary Louise Pratt identifies as "capitalist vanguardist" vantage point.¹⁰⁶ Their perceptions of Brazilian public health practice had been shaped primarily by U.S. imperialist and military prerogatives. The 1946 article drew attention to vast inequities in Brazil's overall development by investigating population health beyond its prosperous cities. By revealing the inelasticity of infant mortality in the interior, the report ultimately contested Brazil's status as a modern, ascending nation. Furthermore, Christopherson argued that any concerted effort to improve the survival of Brazilian children was predicated upon the protection of families and basic hygiene and health education campaigns.¹⁰⁷ This suggestion effectively undermined persistent pro-child policymaking that had purported to ensure nationwide protections, education, and services since the early thirties.

As head of the *DNCr* and former member of the Bahian League Against Infant Mortality, Martagão Gesteira understood the causal relationship between welfare, education, and infant mortality. He had witnessed advancements in puericultural programs over his twenty-year career and clearly resented Christopherson's claims that the U.S. military initiative had brought about measurable change where Brazilian officials had not. Further inciting Gesteira's backlash, Christopherson suggested that the

¹⁰⁶ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 152.

¹⁰⁷ Christopherson, 340.

Brazilian doctors looked to their counterparts in the United States for "medical leadership."¹⁰⁸ For Gesteira and the other pioneers of Brazilian puericulture, foreign models provided inspiration, but the sociocultural and environmental exigencies of Brazil required a specialized medical knowledge only ascertained through domestic experience and training. In Gesteira's opinion, Christopherson's article had publicized child health and welfare problems without fully acknowledging the innovative solutions engineered by Brazilian doctors. His conclusions advanced the idea that Brazil's metaphorical "century of the child" had not yet begun. Despite the presence of a federal department devoted to lowering infant mortality and improving welfare, the numbers presented in Christopherson's article showed that a large portion of Brazil's youngest citizens still languished as a result of uneven development. The investigation certainly raised questions about the efficacy of the *DNCr* and undermined the momentum of what twentieth-century policymakers imagined as steady modernization. Finally, the multinational project challenged Vargas' 'Friend of Children' image propagated by *Estado Novo* officials, as well as the institutional legitimacy of the national department that had been the cornerstone of his pro-child nation-building plan.

Although Martagão Gesteira and E.H. Christopherson's confrontation over child welfare and infant mortality in Brazil occurred indirectly, it revealed a deeper ideological preoccupation that had pervaded medical and intellectual discourse since the mid-nineteenth century. Twentieth-century Brazilian doctors continued to grapple with professional insecurities, as well as more general preoccupations with their nation's tropical character, generated by the dominance of European medical and scientific authority. Advancing the achievements made by their nineteenth-century counterparts,

¹⁰⁸ Christopherson, 333.

medical professionals in the thirties and forties consistently innovated theory and practice to address the unique cultural and environmental needs of the Brazilian populace. These efforts also served to legitimate the Brazilian medical academy by demonstrating intellectual and scientific rigor on a level comparable to Europe and the United States. Julyan Peard's work reveals a central tension among nineteenth-century Brazilian intellectuals in the Tropicalista School who simultaneously embraced and rejected foreign standards of scientific and medical inquiry. She argues that Tropicalistas' attempts to downplay foreign influences represented their recognition of European science as insufficient for Brazilian context, but was also a way to portray Brazilian and European scholars as equals.¹⁰⁹

Gesteira's defense of Brazil's child welfare policymaking and public health programs against E.H. Christopherson's claims clearly reflected the perpetuation of this tension and its impacts on relations between North American and Brazilian intellectuals. Like the Tropicalistas, Gesteira was also from the Northeastern State of Bahia and his published works demonstrated his loyalty to his fellow colleagues. In his narration of the origins and evolution of Brazil's "pro-child" campaign, Gesteira argued that Bahian doctors led the way in the fight against high infant mortality. He described 1937 as a pivotal year in which the center of the campaign transitioned from Bahia to Rio de Janeiro.¹¹⁰ As the Tropicalistas had done decades earlier, Gesteira imagined himself and his fellow puericulturists as the vanguard of modern medical science in Brazil. Thus, the contributions Northeastern doctors had made to federal child-focused policies and institutions were particularly salient for Gesteira. Brazilian puericulture and the strides

¹⁰⁹Peard, *Race, Place, and Medicine*, 3-4.

¹¹⁰Gesteira, *Puericultura*, 635.

made in favor of sick and marginalized children represented a continuation of the Tropicalista's legacy. Consequently, Gesteira interpreted E.H. Christopherson's report as an unwelcome critique of the Brazilian medical academy and its capacity to effectuate public health and welfare policy in the forties. For Gesteira, the quantification of Brazil's child welfare problem by foreign observers undermined medical and scientific innovation, much of which had been led by Northeastern scholars. Ultimately, Christopherson's report and Gesteira rebuttal revealed the ways in which foreign scientific thought and standards continued to serve as key metrics through which Brazilian doctors and intellectuals defined their place among modern nations in the twentieth century.

Conclusion

High infant mortality was simultaneously a lived experience for many Brazilians and a powerful symbol for the medical professionals and social thinkers engaged in health and welfare promotion. Its consistent impact on the nation's demographic profile stymied efforts to portray Brazil as modern and healthy. The puericulturists and social reformers who championed the infant mortality cause envisaged its decline as a fulcrum of progress. These child advocates effectively translated child death into a national-level economic problem by commodifying children as capital inputs necessary for Brazil's development. Despite the fact that pro-child policymakers and doctors in the capital scarcely understood the scale of infant mortality nationwide, they wielded it as a key symbol in their discourse and imagery. The *idea* and representation of Brazil's faltering demographic profile simultaneously served the professional needs of puericulturists hoping to advance their campaigns and federal administrators who hoped to modernize

and integrate the hinterland. During the *Estado Novo* era, infant mortality became a tool for expanding the presence of federal authority into Brazil's hinterland. However, Vargas' "March to the West" rhetoric, as well as his unprecedented trips to the Amazon and other interior states, did little to change the rate at which infants in these regions succumbed to disease, malnutrition, and lack of basic health care.

Officials affiliated with the *DNCr*, created as the nation's first child-focused department during dictatorship, generated copious amounts of discourse and imagery related to infant mortality. However, sustained interventions and concrete improvements in infant mortality on a national scale remained untenable during the forties. As contemporary foreign and domestic calculations made clear, nearly a fifth of Brazil's children did not survive past age one for the first half of the 'century of the child.' This dire population indicator would become an important policy question again during Brazil's military regime. Yet, unlike earlier puericulturists and pro-child statesmen, the military's child-centered policymaking did not involve the cultural and social valuation of all children. In a sense, Brazil's 'century of the child' flourished in demographic terms during a period in which children became objects of repression and violence.

CHAPTER II

"Gods in the Hands of Science:" Puericulture Initiatives and the Modernization of Child-Focused Public Health

**Nothing could be better for the family, for society,
than a Nation whose strength is represented
by the vigor and health of its children.**

---Dr. Moraes Barros Filho (1940)

**"The National Puericulture Institute should be hailed as
a place where the child is a god in the hands of science."**

-DNCr bulletin (March 1945)

In a 1942 article on the state's management of child health and welfare, Dr. Darcy Evangelista evoked Brazil's national sport, soccer. He criticized a lack of cohesion between contemporary federal officials, doctors, and child advocates who zealously supported unsustainable solutions. Comparing their dedication to that of the followers of Brazil's many soccer clubs, he observed, "some support the pink team, others follow the black, and then there are those who think every team is marvelous."¹¹¹ Evangelista then extended his metaphor by conjuring a fictional meeting between public officials and professionals. His anecdote narrated a debate between a teacher, a public health official, an economist, a physical fitness instructor, a writer and a puericulturist. Through a series of interruptions and contradictions, each participant identified his opinions on Brazil's most pressing social problems and suggested resolutions. Evangelista wrote:

The public school teacher would say: "Naturally it is illiteracy."

"Excuse me," the sanitarian would interrupt, "public health is more important. Health first, education later!"

"I beg your pardon," said the economist, "but, nothing will be resolved until we raise our standard of living. Without resources, man cannot take care of himself nor flourish."

¹¹¹Dr. Darcy Evangelista, "A responsabilidade individual para com a criança brasileira," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 19 (December 1944), 43.

From the back of the room the fitness instructor claimed that daily exercise would save the nation, while the writer solved the issues of the day with fifty lines of prose.

Still, someone here has the unfortunate task of resolving the nation's most serious problem...and that someone is the puericulturist.

Evangelista's narrative presented what he imagined as the ideological disjunctures crippling Brazil's advancement in the mid twentieth century. In his example, a critical lack of consensus among doctors, officials, and intellectuals prevented the resolution of the nation's most pressing social and economic problems. As a puericulturist himself, Evangelista reasoned that the redemption and protection of the young through a prescribed set of medical practices and interventions would improve Brazil at its very roots. The anecdote typified the attitudes held by contemporary medical professionals engaged in promoting puericulture as the cornerstone of social welfare, public health, and development policymaking. Although child-focused doctors throughout Brazil had successfully integrated puericultural ideals into public policy since the early thirties, they had yet to witness substantial demographic and population health improvements as a result of their campaigns. By the forties, puericulturists and the federal officials who endorsed it faced the bitter reality that the pro-child institutions and initiatives they had devised were insufficient and unsustainable. The power of ideas shared by a circumscribed group of doctors and child advocates was no match for the logistical and ideological obstacles involved in implementing puericultural initiatives at the federal level. Federal officials and puericulturists had successfully strategized a child health and

welfare campaign as big as Brazil itself, but implementing it on a national scale proved impossible in the 1940s.¹¹²

Evangelista's reaffirmation of the *puericultor* as the nation's preeminent social reformer represented a renewed call to action in favor of Brazil's children. Yet, despite the persistence of child-centered statecraft and medicine during this period, puericulture did not fundamentally reorient how the state managed children's health and wellbeing. Puericulture-inspired propaganda and educational projects likewise failed to standardize child rearing practices across Brazil as its proponents had envisioned. At best puericulture served as a metaphor for imagining the formation of Brazilian national identity and development in the mid twentieth century. It provided nation-builders with a set of symbols, among which the child figured prominently, for imagining Brazil's future. Ultimately, Brazilian puericulture allowed medical professionals and social thinkers to circumvent deterministic paradigms emanating from Europe and the United States that oriented population health policy and set the parameters for modern nationhood. By portraying the nation as perpetually 'in development' and projecting the child as a national icon, doctors and officials obscured the travails of the past that supposedly categorized Brazil as culturally and socially inferior and instead focused on the promise of the future.

What made puericulture such an enduring approach for twentieth-century policymakers and doctors hoping to improve public health for Brazil's youngest generations and simultaneously bolster the nation's prosperity? How did puericulture become intertwined with and evolve alongside national identity construction and

¹¹²Jerry Davila deserves credit for conceptualizing the imaginations of Brazilian intellectuals and nation-builders using a geographical metaphor.

development projects aimed at modernizing and incorporating Brazil's vast and varied population? This chapter examines how and why specific circles of Brazilian officials and medical professionals envisioned puericulture as a bottom-up solution to national problems they deemed as eradicable in nascent generations. My analysis of puericulture-oriented documentation over four decades reveals that child-centered health and welfare policies and propaganda served the unique needs of elites formulating nation-building projects and those designing Brazil's national character. I argue that as state-generated approaches and attitudes toward crafting the nation shifted throughout the first half of the century, puericulture and child-centered policymaking remained consistent apparatuses for imagining and prescribing Brazil's future. While understandings and practices of puericulture certainly transformed during this period, doctors and officials continually made use of its inherent, symbolic emphasis on regeneration and development to fuel various nation-making projects.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, French-influenced discussions of puericulture emerged among Brazilian physicians, philanthropists, and officials as they became more aware of the socioeconomic costs of high infant mortality. Statisticians and economists routinely estimated the economic losses the nation would incur without the steady infusion of healthy human capital.¹¹³ Children and their collective well-being became testaments of the nation's economic prowess. As a foundation for national-level child-centered policymaking, the mass inculcation of puericulture stood out to

¹¹³ For a brief discussion of these calculations see Tamera L. Marko, "When They Were The Nation's Children," 294. Puericulturists continually relied on the approximations made by Afranio Peixoto in the mid-1910's that appointed a potential capital input value of cr\$9.000,00 to each human born in Brazil. This number would be multiplied by either the rate of infant mortality to express potential losses and/or multiplied by population cohort figures to express potential gains. A reference to this type of early twentieth-century calculation can be found in Martagão Gesteira, *Puericultura, 2nd ed.* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Pan -Americana, 1945), 34 and "Valor econômico da puericultura," *Puericultura: mensario prenatal, puericultura, assistência social, e educação*, ano 1, no. 1 (October 1941), 21.

Republican-era nation-builders as a way to simultaneously address high infant mortality, standardize public health and welfare administration, and create social order.

Contemporary sanitarians and public health policymakers interested in eliminating the ill effects of venereal disease, alcoholism, and illegitimacy on children also perceived puericultural education as a viable, comprehensive solution.

By the mid-1920s, federal officials and doctors concerned with improving the nature of the Brazilian population linked puericultural initiatives with eugenic social and public health policies. Puericulture then stood in as a more positive discursive substitute for eugenics and the racist, pseudo-scientific approaches that began to lose credibility beginning in the late 1930s and more profoundly following World War II. Within the first four decades of the century, these elites, therefore, saw Brazil's "order and progress" potentially beginning and ending with the youngest members of the body politic. They rallied support for puericulture as a measure of social control and economic stabilization rooted in the idea that the salvation of the child represented the fortification of the nation.

During the *Estado Novo* era (1937-1945), the state ushered in corporatist nation-making projects that likewise relied on puericulture as a crucial tool for standardizing and modernizing health, welfare, and domestic life across the country. Policymakers and doctors engaged in such programs disseminated puericultural practices to craft the next generation who they hoped would be born self-consciously Brazilian, as well as physically, mentally, and culturally fit citizens. State officials as well as medical professionals and intellectuals also discussed puericulture as a mode of "civilizing" the interior through a series of systemic interventions intended to expand and modernize public health programs for children. They reasoned that subsequent generations of rural

children, who they continued to view as valuable national resources, would be jeopardized by what they considered to be backward, adverse child health and rearing practices.

Puericulture, through the mass application of modern, medical techniques, stood out as a way to ensure demographic stability by prescribing standards of reproduction, health care, and domestic life. During this period, doctors and child advocates reinforced women's maternal roles in both urban and rural settings as integral to the successful application of puericulture in the domestic sphere. By the mid-1930s the proliferation of puericultural guidebooks, health and hygiene courses for young women, and public exhibits and campaigns coalesced into what historian Ana Paula Vosne Martins labels "maternal pedagogy."¹¹⁴ Such initiatives served to restructure, at least rhetorically and symbolically, the dynamics of family life that had transferred women's labor to the manufacturing and service sectors during Brazil's industrialization in the early twentieth century.

Finally, by the end of the forties and continuing into the following decade, this circle of doctors and child-focused policymakers began to link puericulture to its etymological cousin, agriculture. The development of agriculture-based curricula and the emergence of agricultural day camps and educational farms went hand in hand with the state's and the medical academy's continued emphasis on raising healthy children. Joint endeavors sponsored by the Ministry of Health and Education and the Ministry of Agriculture likened the cultivation of land with the cultivation of a prosperous generation of Brazilians. Propaganda and policies created by these departments and others portrayed

¹¹⁴ Ana Paula Vosne Martins, "'Vamos criar o seu filho:' os médicos puericultores e a pedagogia materna no século XX" *História, ciência, e saúde-Manguinhos*. 15:1 (jan/mar 2008).

children as settlers, immigrants, and little farmers who would, both literally and figuratively, sew the seeds of prosperity throughout Brazil. Puericulturists and child welfare policymakers often compared the procreation of robust children to the cultivation of hearty crops and livestock, all of which played important roles in shaping the state's economic and geopolitical development agenda. Puericulture remained a critical buttress for national development programs well into the forties, as officials and medical professionals touted healthy children as one of the nation's most important economic resources. Federal officials within the National Children's Department (*DNCr*) and the Ministry of Agriculture characterized children as 'little farmers' and the nation's 'best immigrants' and initiated agricultural education programs to incite colonization and resource extraction in uninhabited regions. Chapter Five analyzes the dynamics of this relationship in further detail, but it is worth mentioning it here as a part of the evolution of puericulture as a component of nation-building in this context.

Foundations of Puericulture in Brazil

Puericulture, derived from the Latin terms for "child" and "to cultivate," first emerged in late nineteenth-century medical discourse emanating from France. Brazilian puericulturists commonly referred to the nineteenth-century French physicians Drs. Alfred Caron and Adolphe Pinard as the foundational puericulturists or puericultors. Concerned with the social and economic repercussions of depopulation in France, these physicians argued that collective investment in child welfare and health would benefit the entire body politic.¹¹⁵ Both doctors envisioned children and, secondarily, women as the

¹¹⁵ The two works most often referred to as the pillars of French puericulture are, Alfred Caron, *Introduction à la puericulture et l'hygiène de la première enfance*, (Paris: n.p. 1865) and Adolphe Pinard, *La puericulture du premier âge* (Paris: n.p. 1902). Pinard's 1895 speech in front of the French Academy of

focal points of medical intervention. Caron's work encapsulated the "art" of child rearing while Pinard's crafted the "science" of producing healthy progeny. Caron's publications emerged in the 1860s and served as guidebooks to instruct women on the proper, hygienic care of newborns. Pinard, writing almost thirty years later, infused the English geneticist Sir Frances Galton's theories of heredity into his research and writing. Pinard's rearticulation of puericulture as a facet of eugenics emphasized sound health as a prerequisite for potential progenitors, as well as the obligation of the mother throughout the pre-natal stage.¹¹⁶ Twentieth-century Brazilian puericulturists would eventually find both Caron's and Pinard's approaches fruitful for advancing child-focused health and medical reforms. Brazilian specialists effectively intertwined Caron's "art" and Pinard's "science" into a brand of puericultural initiatives that addressed the unique social and environmental needs of the population.

An interest in improving child health in Brazil began with the publication of maternal manuals in the late eighteenth century. These texts, most notably the 1790 guidebook by Portuguese-born Dr. Francisco de Mello Franco, initiated the long process of the medicalization of maternity and child-rearing in Brazil. Twentieth century medical professionals posthumously proclaimed doctor de Mello Franco, the nation's "first puericulturist" and consistently referred to his pioneering work on children's physical health.¹¹⁷ However, the modern variant of Brazilian puericulture, which became a professional specialization and, later, an institutionalized approach to child and maternal

Medicine is also frequently cited as the debut of puericulture as a reformulation of neo-Lamarckian eugenics in the landscape of French medicine.

¹¹⁶ For a discussion of the ideological divergences between Caron and Pinard see William H. Schneider, *Quality and Quantity: The Quest for Biological Regeneration in Twentieth-Century France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), Chapter III.

¹¹⁷ José Martinho da Rocha, *Nosso Primeiro Puericultor* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Agir Editora, 1946) and *Guia para criar o bebê: puericultura elementar* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Editora Zelio Valverde, 1947), 7.

health, grew out of the early twentieth century sanitarian movement and eugenics discourse that emanated from Western Europe.

The characterization of Brazil as an "immense hospital" precipitated large-scale public health, hygiene, and sanitation reforms following the turn of the century.¹¹⁸ Positivist intellectuals and policymakers directing such programs from the capital envisioned science and medicine as the fulcrums that would propel the nation, modernize Brazil's interior populations, and reinforce social order. Essential to the sanitarian ideology, and eventually to that of Brazil's puericulture movement, was the potential to remedy, through state-controlled interventions, undesirable social and physical attributes among the population. Sanitation campaigns consisted of disease eradication, through environmental and biological measures, the reorganization of public space and infrastructure, and public works projects.¹¹⁹ Policymakers, intellectuals, and professional eschewed nineteenth-century European-influenced theories of tropical civilization that pigeonholed Brazil's multi-faceted society as inherently degenerate and backward.¹²⁰ As a result, by the early 1920's, the curative powers of science and medicine became

¹¹⁸ The phrase is an excerpt of a 1916 quote by Dr. Miguel Pereira of Brazil's Faculdade de Medicina in Rio de Janeiro.

¹¹⁹ For works that explore the early twentieth-century sanitarian movement in Rio de Janeiro see Teresa A. Meade, "*Civilizing Rio*" *Reform and Resistance in a Brazilian City, 1889-1930* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1997), Chapter III; Jeffrey Needell, "The Revolta Contra Vacina of 1904: The Revolt Against "Modernization" in *Belle Époque* Rio de Janeiro," *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 67:2, (May 1987), 233-269, and Nisia Trindade Lima and Gilberto Hochman, "Condenado pela raça, absolvido pela medicina: o Brasil descoberto pelo movimento sanitarista da Primeira República," in *Raça, ciência, e sociedade*, Marcos Chor Maio and Ricardo Ventura Santos, orgs. (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Fiocruz, 1996). For works that explore sanitation and public health initiatives outside the capital see Stanley E. Blake, "The Medicalization of Nordestinos: Public Health and Regional Identity in Northeastern Brazil, 1889-1930," *The Americas*, 60:2, (October 2003), 217-248 and Steven C. Williams, "Nationalism and Public Health: The Convergence of Rockefeller Foundation and Brazilian Federal Authority, 1925-1930," in Marcos Cueto, Ed. *Missionaries of Science: The Rockefeller Foundation and Latin America* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1994).

¹²⁰ Dain Borges examines how the idea of degeneracy manifested in public health legislation, literature, and political debates during the First Republic in "'Puffy, Ugly, Slothful, and Inert': Degeneration in Brazilian Social Thought, 1880-1940" *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 25:2, (May 1993), 235-256.

symbolically linked with the idea of regeneration. Regeneration, precisely the cultivation of healthy progeny for the benefit of the nation, would become the bedrock of Brazilian puericulture in subsequent decades.

Puericulture also took root beyond the scope of the sanitarian movement in Brazil's capital in the early twentieth century. Hygiene courses taught in the Normal Schools of Bahia in Brazil's northeast also gave rise to the connection between child health promotion and national regeneration and paved the way for puericultural discourse and policymaking. Dr. Alfredo Magalhães, a Bahian physician and instructor at Salvador's *Escola Normal*, the main teacher training institute in Bahia, introduced child hygiene courses in 1910. He claimed to have initiated such courses in order to “vulgarize” the principles of puericulture among those working with school-aged children.¹²¹ The aim of integrating puericulture into normal school curriculums, according to education historian Ana Laura Godinho Lima, was two-fold. First, instructors hoped the young, single women enrolled in such courses would absorb the lessons in child hygiene and caregiving into their own practice of motherhood. They envisioned these female students applying their knowledge as both the mothers of Brazil's future generations and as future teachers, capable of passing on puericultural ideals to their students. For example, the first puericulture center in São Paulo was also founded in the normal school, *Escola Normal de Artes e Ofícios*, by Professor Horácio Silveira and Dr. Octavio Gonzaga in 1931. Its curriculum aimed to instruct female

¹²¹ Dr. Alfredo Magalhães, “Puericultura: Ciência Médica da Espécie,” *Maternidade e Infância*, ano 1, no. 2 (August 1945), 66. For more on Magalhães' courses in Bahia and hygiene and puericulture courses taught in other cities in the 1910's and 20's see Moysés Kuhlmann Jr., “Educando a infância brasileira,” in Eliane Marta Teixeira Lopes, et al. *500 anos de educação no Brasil* (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2000), 478-480.

students, a cohort considered to be the nation's future educators, about child hygiene, household management, cooking, and basic first-aid.¹²²

Further north in Salvador, Bahia, Alfredo Magalhães organized his courses around two basic categories of puericulture: preventative and definitive. Preventative puericulture, according to him, actually subsumed eugenics and addressed the child in its “virtual” existence, meaning its pre-conception phase. Definitive puericulture signified the hygienic care of the child in the womb, during birth, and in its post-natal life.¹²³ His courses covered disease prevention in the pre-and post-natal stages, proper nutrition, as well as basic child and household hygiene. Intriguingly, in 1945 Magalhães contended that his courses on puericulture preceded discussions of eugenic theory among intellectuals in southeastern Brazil. He called Bahian puericulture the “precursor” to the eugenics movement generated in São Paulo and refuted Dr. Renato Kehl’s claim that paulista doctors were the original proselytizers of Brazilian eugenics.¹²⁴

Regardless of the accuracy of Magalhães’ contention, his child hygiene courses indeed precipitated the dissemination of puericulture in the northeast and perhaps provided a model for puericultural instruction in other regions of Brazil. Dr. Magalhães directly influenced the later work of one of Brazil's foremost puericulturists, Dr. Martagão Gesteira. Gesteira, a pediatrician reared at Bahia's medical school in Salvador, served as honorary president of Bahia's Pediatric Society alongside Magalhães from 1930

¹²² Ana Laura Godinho Lima, “Maternidade Higiênica: natureza e ciência nos manuais de puericultura publicados no Brasil,” *História: Questões e Debates* (Curitiba: Editora UFPR), 47, (2007), 20-21. . For a full description of this normal school program see, Dr. Silvio de Araripe Sucupira, "Mortalidade Infantil (ação dos centros de puericultura) in *São Paulo na Conferência Nacional de Proteção à Infância* (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado, 1934), 241-249

¹²³ *Ibid*, 67.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 69.

to 1937.¹²⁵ He went on to become the founder of Brazil's *Instituto Nacional de Puericultura* (National Puericulture Institute) in 1937, directed the *DNCr* in the late forties and early fifties, and founded the *Campanha Nacional da Criança* (National Children's Campaign) in 1947. The integration of puericulture into educational training curricula in the early part of the century led to the inclusion of hygiene lessons in Brazil's primary and secondary schools in subsequent decades.¹²⁶ Likewise, the normal school courses, whose basic objective was to influence the young, female population, inspired the development of didactic texts and training courses tailored for young girls, "mamãezinhas," or "future mommies," that emerged by the late thirties.

Sciences of the Species: Early 20th-Century Intersections of Brazilian Puericulture and Eugenics

It is difficult to discern whether puericulture preceded or followed discussions of eugenics among Brazilian intellectuals. Additionally, as revealed above, what constituted puericulture and eugenics within the Brazilian medical and scientific academy differed from region to region. What is clear, however, was that the two theories converged and diverged at different points in the first half of the twentieth century. As historian Nancy Leys Stepan argues, the French notion of "puericulture before birth" became a particularly provocative element of the neo-Lamarckian theories of heredity adopted in Latin American countries in the early twentieth century.¹²⁷ For this reason, puericulture is often misrepresented as simply a synonym for eugenics or as an area of concentration

¹²⁵ "Society News," *American Journal of Diseases of Children*, 40:4, (1930), 858.

¹²⁶ Stanley E. Blake explores the introduction of hygiene courses and debates over the initiation of "domestic education" for young girls in Pernambuco beginning with educational reforms in 1928, see Blake, *The Vigorous Core of Our Nationality: Race and Regional Identity in Northeastern Brazil* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2011), 255-257. On hygiene courses incorporated into Rio de Janeiro's public schools see Davila, *Diploma of Whiteness*, 42-47.

¹²⁷ Nancy Leys Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender, and Nation in Latin America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 80-84.

within the larger field of eugenic theory. It certainly contained aspects of eugenics, namely the value of pre-nuptial and pre-conception health screenings for the elimination of hereditary disorders.¹²⁸ However, by the late thirties puericulture would evolve into a separate area of scientific and medical inquiry that influenced a different variety of social, moral, and cultural policies in Brazil.

Puericulture also became an explicit field of study and career specialization whose adherents distanced themselves from eugenics proponents and instead aligned with philanthropists and child welfare advocates. As mentioned above, when acceptance of eugenics as the basis for social policy waned in late thirties and forties, many of its elite adherents shifted their attention to puericulture. Discussing child-centered approaches to public health allowed officials and medical professionals to continue promoting mental and physical fitness without evoking the word *eugenics* and its negative connotations, although some explicit eugenics-based discourse persisted. While eugenics provided the initial frame for discussions of Brazilian puericulture in the early years of the twentieth century, it eventually evolved to encompass a host of moral, social, and cultural values that clearly separated it from the eugenics paradigm by the late thirties.

In the first three decades of the twentieth century, initial connections between Brazilian variants of eugenics theory and puericulture were forged through contemporary medical and political debates concerned with degeneracy. The environmental and social "vices" that social reformers and doctors identified as the primary denigrators of the

¹²⁸ Brazil's 1934 Constitution, promulgated by Getúlio Vargas' administration, mandated pre-nuptial examinations for the eradication of infectious diseases such as syphilis. The law was never enforced and was subsequently omitted in the 1937 Estado Novo constitution. For a further discussion of eugenics and this type of legislation see Nancy Leys Stepan, "Eugenics in Brazil, 1917-1940" in Mark B. Adams, ed, *The Wellborn Science: Eugenics in Germany, France, Brazil, and Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 138-141.

Brazilian population were infectious diseases (mainly syphilis and tuberculosis) and behaviors such as alcoholism, prostitution, inbreeding, and procreation outside of marriage. Although at this time in Brazil there were no self-proclaimed, career "puericulturists" focusing exclusively on pre-conception, pre-natal, and post-natal health, Brazilian eugenicists and child welfare advocates found puericulture a useful tool for identifying the roots of degeneracy, particularly along gendered lines.

Much of the early twentieth-century discourse that fused puericulture and eugenics classified women and children as passive victims and men as the main contributors to hereditary and congenital problems. Again, this logic followed Pinard's turn-of-the-century French model of neo-Lamarckian puericulture that pinpointed negative progenitor behavior, such as alcohol abuse or promiscuity, as the main impediment to the improvement of the human species.¹²⁹ Nineteenth-century French puericulturists, as many of their Brazilian counterparts eventually would, often targeted the sexuality and lasciviousness of single men as the principal dangers to healthy procreation. Brazilian scientists, doctors, and philanthropists found such gendered causation particularly resonant because it reflected their perceptions of the nation's "uncivilized" masses. Such logic also combined well with what historian Sandra Lauderdale Graham termed the separation of "house and street" within Brazilian society and culture.¹³⁰ This dichotomy characterized the domestic sphere as a protected space for women and children and public areas as a predominantly male domain that served as a space for physical and moral corruption.

¹²⁹ For more on the connections between puericulture and eugenics in France see Schneider, *Quality and Quantity*, Chapter III.

¹³⁰ Sandra Lauderdale Graham introduced this framework by analyzing the gendered, classed, and racial dimensions of the separation of space in *House and Street: The Domestic World of Servants and Masters in Nineteenth-Century Rio de Janeiro* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).

The practice of puericulture sought to regulate male and female behavior within these realms for the betterment of their offspring. Such a framework allowed social reformers to associate continued degeneracy with specific groups, such as immigrants, the urban and/or rural poor, the indigenous, and Afro-Brazilians. Consequently, a single male representative of these groups was commonly the image eugenicists wielded in discussions of how to mitigate their degenerative impacts on the rest of the body politic. Early twentieth-century social reformers and intellectuals wielded the image of the *malandro*, or rogue, as a representative of degeneracy, often describing him as sickly, ignorant, delinquent, and unfit for marriage and procreation.¹³¹ The sickly or diseased male character served a didactic function because he conveniently embodied the perils of moral and physical disorder that could infect individual families and society. The most notable of these male symbols was fiction writer J.B. Monteiro Lobato's "Jeca Tatu," (1914) a poor, mixed-race character meant to represent how disease, poverty, and ignorance caused degeneration. Brazilian eugenicists, and Lobato himself, first interpreted Jeca's problems as grounded in his racial heritage, but later concluded that preventable disease and immoral social behaviors were the more prominent causes. Early twentieth-century puericulturists followed this literary tradition by depicting male protagonists, usually husbands and fathers, as the vectors that introduced disease and poor habits into the home. Such characters became key symbols in puericultural education campaigns, exhibits, and propaganda beginning in the twenties.

¹³¹ For discussions of eugenics and the impact of this fiction work see Pietra Diwan *Raça Pura: uma história da Eugenia no Brasil e no mundo* (São Paulo: Editora Contexto, 2007), 100-112 and Thomas E. Skidmore, *Black into White: Race and Nationality in Brazilian Thought* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 179-184. Explorations of the *malandro* character can be found in Roberto da Matta *Carnivals, Rogues, and Heroes: An Interpretation of the Brazilian Dilemma* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1991), Chapter V.

Brazilian elites also found puericultural theory and practice useful for prescribing gender roles in eugenics-based moralization campaigns in this era. Puericulture-inspired policymaking reinforced the type of hygienic and morally sound reproductive behavior and family life that Republican-era elites, especially those in the capital, hoped to implement among the masses.¹³² These initiatives, for example campaigns against prostitution and public drinking, effectively infused the "art" of puericulture and the "science" of eugenics by re-asserting women's roles as mothers within the domestic sphere, rather than in public spaces. Particularly in the coastal metropolises eugenic social reformers aimed to eradicate what they viewed as hereditary disorders by defining and directing women as reproducers and caregivers.¹³³ Using the practice and ideology of puericulture they simultaneously attempted to shape and control men's behavior, by discouraging alcoholism and sexual promiscuity, for example, for the benefit of future progeny. Thus, by the early 1920s, Brazilian eugenicists, without explicitly acknowledging the ideological linkages, integrated the tenets of puericulture into larger discussions of how hereditary science could foster social order and modernization among the nation's upcoming generations.

The 1922 Independence Centennial Celebration shed light on how some intellectuals and medical professionals merged eugenics and puericulture for the elimination of degenerating forces and for the reproduction of healthy Brazilian children. In addition to the visual exhibits focused on the social and economic costs of high infant mortality, several pieces in Dr. Moncorvo Filho's Children's Museum dealt directly with

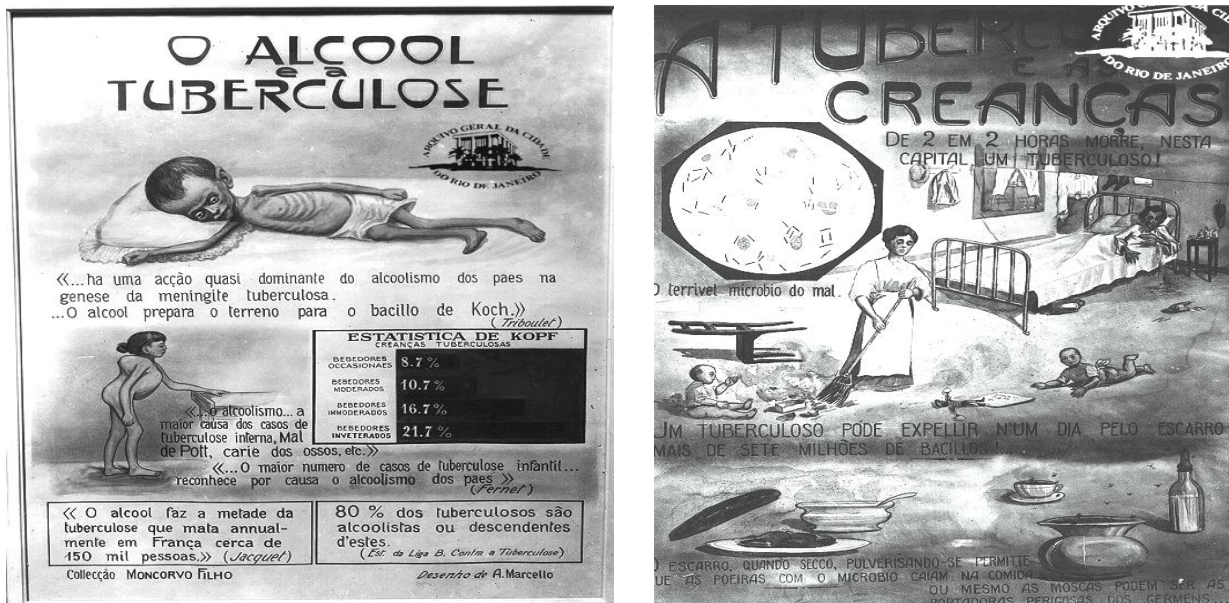
¹³² Historian Sueann Caulfield explores the gendered dimensions of urban moralization campaigns in Rio de Janeiro in *In Defense of Honor*. For an examination of similar campaigns in the Northeastern state of Pernambuco see Stanley E. Blake, *The Vigorous Core of Our Nationality*, Chapters III and IV.

¹³³ Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics*, 103-104.

degenerating forces within Brazilian society. Overall, the posters portrayed women and children as the victims of disease, poverty, and insalubrious living environments and signaled that social order and healthy procreation hinged on the improvement of male progenitor behavior. Using statistics and provocative illustrations eugenics-based propaganda informed the museum's visitors how unhygienic lifestyles and immoral behavior impacted the overall health of Brazil's progeny. The exhibit's organizers, following Galton's ideological path, assumed that visitors (specifically Brazilian parents) when educated about hereditary disease, would voluntarily change their behaviors to improve the health of their eventual offspring.¹³⁴ The nation-building atmosphere of the Centennial Celebration and the Children's Museum exhibits furthered this assumption by evoking a collective desire to craft a modern, healthy family and, by extension, a nation possessing the same qualities. The exhibit's posters showed the grim realities of child welfare and health in Brazil alongside the medical, scientific, and moral innovations that could transform them. Such transformations hinged, however, on the compliance and education of contemporary and future parents. Brazilian puericulturists would later adopt this philosophy as well. They would go on to employ similar didactic rhetorical and visual tools to craft publications, policies, and propaganda with the same underlying presumption that progenitors desired the simultaneous improvement of their own children and the nation.

¹³⁴ For a discussion of Galton's theory of progenitor compliance and its broader influence on eugenists, see Nathaniel Comfort, "Polyhybrid Heterogeneous Bastards": Promoting Medical Genetics in America in the 1930s and 1940s," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 61:4, (October 2006), 428-429.

Figures 2.1 and 2.2: Educational Posters Displayed at the 1922 Centennial Children's Museum Exhibit, Rio de Janeiro



Museu da Infância, 1922 Centennial Collection, Arquivo Geral da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro

Figure 2.1 above presented the correlation between parental alcohol abuse and childhood tuberculosis. The emaciated and disfigured bodies of children illustrated the supposed hereditary repercussions of social habits deemed degenerate by contemporary medical professionals, officials, and philanthropists. Statistics cited in the poster repeated the words "the alcoholism of parents" as the primary cause of tuberculosis, rather than citing any environmental or other biological causes for childhood disease. This language demonstrated how the exhibit's organizers meshed puericulture, specifically focused on parental roles and behavior, with eugenics-based theories of hereditary disease. In this image, eugenics theory reinforced how emerging generations would bear the positive and (here) negative genetic markers of their progenitors. Puericulture, then, in this visual was represented by the children themselves, as well as the idea that parents' actions, not exclusively biological and environmental forces, could adversely affect offspring.

Figure 2.2 depicted the detrimental presence of a tubercular father on his family and living space. A weary mother and two toddlers occupied the foreground of a

disheveled dwelling, while an ailing father lain stricken in the background. Here, two specific themes that tied puericulture and eugenics theory were readily apparent. The mother and children stood out as the ultimate victims of the father's sickness. It was obvious from his bed-ridden condition and suggested by the hat and suit hanging on the wall that the father was not working to provide for his family. In contrast, the mother stands at the center of the family minding the children, cleaning the space, and attending to her husband. Furthermore, the mother was not directly attending to the children, as the ideal practice of puericulture dictated. Her duty as the sanitizer of the domestic space took precedence over her maternal role due to the germs introduced by the father, magnified versions of which loomed over the scene. Such images fit in well within the "child-saving" themes of the Children's Museum because they demonstrated how ignorance and neglect victimized Brazil's most vulnerable citizens; women and children. Both posters also demonstrated the intersections of puericulture and eugenics in that they presented the relationship between social, familial, and biological factors affecting healthy reproduction and child-rearing.

The 1920's women's magazine, *Pró-Matre*, also illustrated the confluence of puericulture and eugenics during this period as well. This bi-monthly publication, sponsored by the *Associação Pró-Matre*, based in the capital, instructed women on the creation and maintenance of "happy and healthy" homes.¹³⁵ The magazine, whose full title was *Pró-Matre: revista das mães e do lar* (maternal and household magazine) was first published by the *Pró-Matre* Association in August 1924. By December of 1924, the magazine changed its name to *Pró-Pátria* and continued publication under that title until April 1925. Under the title *Pró-Pátria* the magazine was directed by Rio de Janeiro-

¹³⁵ *Pró-Matre: revista das mães e do lar*, ano 1, no. 1, (August 1924), inside cover.

based writer and pro-child advocate, Bastos Tigre. Tigre consequently used the magazine to advertise his series of baby memory/record-keeping books for mothers and his published poetry collections. *Pró-Matre* was essentially a precursor to a genre of puericulture-focused magazines that would emerge in the late thirties. It illustrated the convergence of eugenics-based theories of heredity and attitudes and approaches to domesticity and childcare that were clearly rooted in puericulture. It showcased a foundational stage in the twenties that preceded puericulture's eventual ideological and rhetorical evolution away from eugenics.

Brazil's foremost eugenicist Renato Kehl contributed regular scientifically-oriented articles written for a female audience, despite the publisher's claim that the magazine would not print "long-winded dissertations."¹³⁶ Kehl's articles and other texts published in *Pró-Matre* did not directly employ the word "puericulture," but their contents certainly reinforced its central messages regarding maternal duties and the value of children's health to the nation. His works emphasized science over maternal instinct and mothers' promotion of their children's overall physical health rather than emotional caregiving.¹³⁷ These hygienized attitudes, such as the cautions against kissing and cuddling infants, continued to be reflected more strongly in puericulture magazines that emerged in the late thirties and throughout the following decade. Kehl's contributions further forged the connections between puericulture and eugenics theory by isolating women's and children's roles in improving the fitness of the Brazilian race. By presenting raw scientific data regarding genetics and principles of eugenic social policy alongside

¹³⁶ *Pró-Matre: revista das mães e do lar*, ano 1, no. 1, (August 1924), 1. Instruction in eugenics theory and practice was listed as the primary objective of the magazine.

¹³⁷ Renato Kehl, "A ciência da boa geração," *Pró-Matre: revista das mães e do lar*, ano 1, no. 2 (setembro 1924), np and "Os principios da lei da eugenia," *Pró-Pátria*, ano 1, no. 6 (dezembro 1924), 22.

childrearing and household maintenance tips, *Pró-Matre* suggested that the domestic sphere could be an effective laboratory for such improvement. The contents of the magazine characterized the mother as the implementer of puericultural habits and, with scientific evidence, demonstrated how children could become the beneficiaries of her efforts.

Pró-Matre specifically targeted female readers, as evidenced by its original title and advertisements for household products, beauty supplies, and baby items. It provided access to sophisticated discussions of hereditary science accompanied by texts about infant hygiene, nutrition, parenting, and child behavior. The magazine's unique combination of eugenics-based content and prescriptions for happy and healthy family life paved the way for the emergence of more specialized puericulture publications in subsequent decades. In the context of the 1920's, *Pró-Matre* also clearly demonstrated the interconnections between practices and principles puericulture and eugenics theory in Brazil.

The Emergence of Brazilian Puericulture

An analysis of the emergence of Brazilian puericulture during the interwar period rather in the post-World War II era provides a more comprehensive understanding of its foundations and nuances. In her work on eugenics across Latin America, Nancy Stepan locates a rise and/or return to child-centered medical thought and policymaking in Brazil after 1940.¹³⁸ However, she gauges this intellectual and policy shift by looking only at national-level institutional changes. Indeed, the *DNCr* rose to a national department in 1940 and intensified the political and social focus on children. However, the genesis of

¹³⁸ Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics*, 168.

Brazilian puericulture began much earlier and more subtly following the clear articulation in 1929 of what constituted eugenics in Brazil.

The First Eugenics Congress, held concurrently with the centennial celebration of Brazil's National Academy of Medicine in 1929, can be viewed as a key forum through which Brazilian eugenicists articulated the direction of the movement in the subsequent decade. During the conference more than one hundred scholars participated in lively debates over the precise role genetic science would play in shaping social policy and public health programs. The participants remained divided over how best to integrate eugenics theory and practice to ignite what many conference attendees intellectuals imagined as Brazil's 'racial improvement.' While some intellectuals steadfastly supported Mendelian genetic models, a growing contingent of Brazilian eugenicists articulated neo-Lamarckian views that favored the environment as the main determinant of population health. The lack of a clear consensus within the Brazilian medical and scientific academy opened the possibility for more pluralistic approaches to resolving Brazil's major public health and social welfare challenges. Perhaps the most significant outcome of the event was the idea that scientific and medical theories alone, particularly those derived in Europe, were insufficient tools for raising the nation's demographic profile and combating the effects of uneven development.

In the wake of the 1929 conference, puericulturists began charting their own intellectual and political territory by recognizing the limitations of eugenics within the context Brazil's child welfare and health challenges. In his 1936 article, "O problema da puericultura no Brasil," Dr. Edgard Braga suggested that Brazilians needed to pull away from French and German-styled genetic theories. He called for the formulation of

approaches that more adequately addressed the physiological and cultural needs of Brazilian children. Braga argued that his colleagues often disregarded Brazil's unique nutritional exigencies and bacteriological threats by uncritically prescribing European standards.¹³⁹ However, twentieth-century puericulturists were not the first Brazilian intellectuals to decenter of foreign scientific and medical thought. Nineteenth-century doctors and scientists had also attempted to distance the Brazilian academy from European standards.¹⁴⁰ Thus, Braga's call for more introspective scientific and medical inquiry fit into a well-established tendency among Brazilian scholars to pioneer innovations that parted from prevailing foreign models. The gradual development of more inward-looking approaches in the thirties also provided a forum for Brazilian professionals to carve out contributions to the fields of public health, science, and medicine. These contributions offer an intriguing lens with which to view and understand the concurrent nation-making process in the mid-twentieth century.

From an analytic standpoint, neglecting the early development of the puericulture movement also leads to a problematic conclusion: puericulture merely replaced eugenics after its widespread repudiation following the Nazi atrocities of World War II. This limited historical perspective spuriously characterizes puericulture's amplification in the 1940s as reactionary and obscures the advancements of the previous decade. Historicizing Brazil's puericulture movement this way also overemphasizes the influence of European trends on Brazilian intellectuals precisely at a time when some began to retreat from foreign influences. More importantly, such a perspective discounts Brazilian puericulturists' efforts to distance themselves from their eugenicist colleagues by

¹³⁹ Dr. Edgard Braga, "O problema da puericultura no Brasil," *Infância* (February 1936), 4.

¹⁴⁰ See Peard, *Race, Place, and Medicine*.

cultivating the practical, rather than the scientific aspects of puericulture. Just as innovations in genetic science and antipathy towards Nazi pseudoscience precipitated the decline of eugenics by the mid-forties, a combination of factors concurrently pushed puericulture into the forefront.¹⁴¹ The rise of this medical specialization in Brazil then must be viewed not simply as a reaction against eugenic thought or as a substitute, but as part of a longer evolution initiated by Brazilians themselves and as a product of the contemporary sociopolitical climate. The following examination of the gradual ascension of puericulture as an ideology and practice elucidates the unique innovations Brazilian medical and social policy intellectuals forged in the thirties and forties.

Previously intertwined with eugenics theory, puericulture began to develop into a distinct field of medical specialization and a key facet of social policy in the thirties. Following the First Eugenics Congress in 1929, the champions of puericulture, mainly Rio-based doctors, philanthropists, and government officials, also hoped to move puericultural practice beyond the clinic and into the domestic realm. This transition coincided with a more broad turn in Brazilian intellectualism. Instead of simply imitating European approaches, most of which did not adequately address the needs and values of Brazilian society, they devised new tactics. As a result, a new brand of "pragmatic-critical" thinkers and intellectual trends emerged in the post-1930 Revolution period. Historian Cristina Fonseca contends that Vargas-era (1930-1945) officials fit into two intellectual categories based on the conclusions made by Brazilian sociologist Guerreiro Ramos.' The first group, labeled, *hipercorretos*, or hyper-correct, continued to rely largely on European intellectual attitudes to shape policy and discourse. In contrast, the group defined as *pragmático-crítico*, critical pragmatists, ushered in original approaches

¹⁴¹ Daniel Wikler, "Can We Learn from Eugenics?" *Journal of Medical Ethics*. 25:2 (April 1999), 186.

that more effectively suited the Brazilian context.¹⁴² Puericulturists certainly fit the latter profile as they distinguished themselves from the branch of Brazil's eugenisists who espoused Mendelian genetic theories. Rather than ascribing ill-fitting European ideology and practice, puericulture's adherents rooted their children's health and welfare resolutions in Brazilian reality. By formulating fresh techniques and policies early 1930s puericulturists demonstrated their awareness of Brazil's unique environmental and social dimensions.

The 1929 Eugenics Congress drew together physicians, government officials, and intellectuals from a variety of fields for a week of debate and discussion. Themes presented at the conference collectively promoted eugenic science and policy as the linchpins of Brazil's future. It provided a forum in which scholarly discourse translated into the proposition of reforms for immigration, public health, marriage, and education. While child and maternal health and welfare received some attention, conference participants did not make direct references to puericulture as a key strand of eugenics. Instead, the overarching rhetorical emphasis on Brazil's "future" predominantly focused on restricting the entrance of immigrants deemed physically unfit. The production of healthy Brazilian offspring remained a secondary approach to controlling the negative impacts of immigration and the hygenization of the masses.¹⁴³ Building a physically and mentally sound Brazil continued to revolve around mitigating the influence of non-

¹⁴² Cristina M. Oliveira Fonseca, *Saúde no governo Vargas (1930-1945): dualidade institucional de um bem público* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FioCruz, 2007), 65. See also, A. Guerreiro Ramos "A inteligência brasileira na década de 30, à luz da perspectiva de 1980," in *A Revolução de 1930: seminário internacional*, (Brasília: Editora UnB, 1983), 532-534 and Sérgio Miceli, *Intelectuais e Classe Dirigente no Brasil (1920-1945)* (São Paulo: Difel, 1979).

¹⁴³ For a detailed description of papers and themes presented at the Congress see Vanderlei Sebastião de Souza, et al, "The National Museum's Physical Anthropology Archive: sources on the history of eugenics in Brazil," *História, Ciências, e Saúde-Manguinhos*, 16:3 (July/Sept. 2009). The most notable immigration resolution discussed at the conference involved the proposal of a medical test intended to weed out genetically unfit individuals.

white/non-European immigrants, as well as social vices such as alcoholism and promiscuity and the spread of hereditary diseases. For those involved, the event consecrated Brazilian eugenics as a scientific solution to various social and environmental problems plaguing the nation in the twentieth century. It subsequently opened a space for puericulture to emerge and develop as another avenue for resolving such problems.

On what ideological grounds did Brazilian puericulturists distinguish themselves from eugenicists? While both groups set their sites on improving future generations of Brazilians using scientifically-based interventions, they differed on who and what were their primary targets. First, Brazilian eugenicists relied on models of genetic science to ameliorate perceived inferiorities and social problems within the population. As the 1929 conference demonstrated, these intellectuals defined inferiorities primarily in racial and ethnic terms. Following Lamarck, they reasoned that the prevention of hereditary inferiorities required racial/ethnic assimilation, the improvement of overall health among the masses, and possibly the restriction of certain immigrant groups. Homogeneity and the perfection of the Brazilian race were the ultimate objectives of contemporary eugenics theory and the social policies it engendered. There were clear extremes among those involved in the eugenics movement. Some viewed immigration bans, pre-marital exams, and sterilization campaigns as viable, while others were staunchly anti-racist and framed problems as cultural and environmental. Eugenics advocates differed in their individual approaches, but those based in the capital predominantly defined population fitness in racial terms and used science and medicine to promote a veneer of racial harmony in Brazil.

Puericulturists, on the other hand, perceived the nation's future in a different light, viewing Brazil's youngest citizens as their primary targets. While some intellectuals and professionals referred obliquely to race in discussions of pre- and post-natal health, they were far more concerned with demographic problems and population health on the whole. Their debates focused on how a perceived population deficit would impact Brazil's economic and social prosperity. As such they targeted primarily women and children and sought to improve the health and living conditions of these groups. Infant mortality and early childhood disease, nutrition, and welfare trumped a preoccupation with racial imbalances as the obstacles to Brazil's progress.

Like some contemporary eugenicists, puericulturists promoted changes in health and hygiene habits to effectuate genetic improvement in subsequent generations. However, puericulturists, with very rare exceptions, did not advocate sterilization or the revocation of the right to marry and procreate. A physically, emotionally, and morally healthy domestic realm, they believed, could mitigate even the most severe genetic flaws. Nurture could overtake nature through a series of medical interventions that guided practice in the home. This is not to suggest that puericulture advocates completely disparaged all principles of eugenics theory. In fact, many of them were well-versed in genetics and reproductive science; however, they tended to view the laws of heredity in a more positive light. They reasoned that, in spite of imperfections in genetic character, a healthy environment allowed whatever *good* qualities a child possessed to manifest and multiply.¹⁴⁴ In their view, *ignorância*, ignorance, also stood out as an obstacle to the

¹⁴⁴ Jorge Morães Barros Filho, *O Médico e a Criança* (São Paulo: Empresa Gráfica da "Revista dos Tribunais," 1940), 25.

genesis of a healthy generation of children, who would become the stewards of the nation's progress.

As a result, puericulturists advocated measures to promote early maternal training, nutritional awareness, and basic bodily and environmental hygiene. Puericulture-oriented publications of the thirties and forties often featured articles directly dealing with "congenital weaknesses," such as syphilis, tuberculosis, blindness, and mental retardation.¹⁴⁵ Unlike their eugenicist contemporaries who viewed such disorders as marks of degeneracy to be contained and eliminated, puericulturists offered frank information on how to manage and improve the lives of afflicted children. Writing in the *DNCr*'s parenting magazine in 1941, Dr. Alvaro Murce warned against the uncritical application of eugenic science to pre and post-natal health stating,

In contrast to the [child health] problems of the primitive era, these days we face a new kind of challenge created by the misinterpretation and exaggeration of scientific precepts.¹⁴⁶

Puericulturists propagated the idea that the perfection of the race depended on a structured and healthy home life, rather than innate biological qualities. In contrast to the classification of eugenics as a science that could corrupt reproductive and parenting behaviors, puericulturists viewed their practice as an art that enhanced domestic life and family health.

Puericulture grew strongly in the Northeastern state of Bahia as an outgrowth of the nation's first *Liga Contra Mortalidade Infantil* (League Against Infant Mortality)

¹⁴⁵ The phrase often used to describe children with birth defects and hereditary disorders in Portuguese was "debeis congenitos." Examples of such articles can be found in the puericultural magazines *Criança: revista para os pais* and *Puericultura* from the thirties and forties. Partial collections of these are held in Brazil's National Library.

¹⁴⁶ Dr. Alvaro Murce, "A ciência e a arte de criar os filhos," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. 3, no. 27 (December 1941), 13.

(1923) and hygiene courses taught as a part of teacher training. This region concurrently gave rise to some of the most fervent countercurrents to the brand of eugenics rooted in the southeastern part of Brazil.¹⁴⁷ Sociologists and anthropologists, such as Edgar Roquette-Pinto, Arthur Ramos, and Gilberto Freyre, stood against the biological racism emanating from intellectual circles in other regions. These three scholars organized the nation's First Afro-Brazilian Congress in Recife, Pernambuco (1934) which specifically countered the 1929 eugenics conference by celebrating African contributions to culture and society. Gilberto Freyre, who presided over the event, told the local press that the 1934 conference took a stand against the "official Aryanism" among Brazilian intellectuals in the thirties.¹⁴⁸ They also introduced a manifesto against racism in intellectual engagement to counter the prevailing eugenics discourse that had been solidified at the 1929 eugenics conference. For scholars and officials based in the Northeast where the non-white and mixed-heritage population dominated, eugenics theory that considered these groups degenerate and backward was not a productive model. Although Ramos, Freyre, and Roquette-Pinto's discourse was not completely devoid of eugenic principles, they emphasized the influence of culture over race. By favoring culture rather than biology, an idea attributed to the German-American anthropologist Franz Boas, these intellectuals focused their attention on how education and health care could improve the Brazilian race. Amidst this spirit of anti-racism,

¹⁴⁷ For detailed analyses of how medical-scientific thought developed and differentiated itself in the Northeast see Stanley E. Blake, *The Vigorous Core of Our Nation, Peard, Race, Place, and Medicine* and Lilia Moritz Schwarcz, *Spectacle of the Races: Scientists, Institutions, and the Race Question in Brazil, 1870-1930* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1999).

¹⁴⁸ Gilberto Freyre, "O Afro-Brasileiro," *Diário de Pernambuco* (November 3, 1934), 3. For a review of the conference see Robert M. Levine, "The First Afro-Brazilian Congress: Opportunities for the Study of Race in the Brazilian Northeast," *Race and Class*, 15:2, (1973), 185-193. For an analysis of Arthur Ramos and racial thought in the thirties see Brad Lange, "Importing Freud and Lamarck to the Tropics: Arthur Ramos and the Transformation of Brazilian Racial Thought, 1926-1939," *The Americas*, 65:1, (July 2008), 9-34 and Davila (2003), 39-41.

puericulture began to flourish in the early thirties. Thus, puericulture was both an intellectual sidestep for Northeastern scholars seeking a way around the biological determinism of eugenics and a practical approach for improving infant mortality and poor child health in the region. Some scholars have conceptualized Brazilian and other Latin American variants of eugenics as intellectual alternatives to European and North American models. Accepting this logic, puericulture allowed Brazilian doctors and social thinkers to further distance themselves from foreign ideologies in the 1930s.¹⁴⁹

Geographically closer to the eugenics movement in the Southeast, puericulturists in the capital and in São Paulo differentiated themselves from eugenicists by drawing attention to urban environmental factors that impacted child welfare and health. Rather than admonishing the denigration of the Brazilian race by hereditary disease, they focused on how poverty, criminality, moral/behavioral vices, and sanitation problems harmed the very young. Like their Northeastern counterparts, these intellectuals prioritized the improvement of external influences over the transformation of innate biological characteristics. For example, moral and physical abandonment, malnutrition, and sickness caused by poor hygiene were some of the major targets of discussion and policy formulation among puericulture advocates. In the thirties and forties, their writings and propaganda consistently identified specific the "contagions," "enemies," and "threats" that contaminated children's lives and adversely affected their health (see Figure 2.3). These dangers ranged from bacteria to alcoholism. Suggested approaches to eliminating external hazards included sanitation patrols, courses in household hygiene,

¹⁴⁹See Stepan, *The Hour of Eugenics*, Skidmore, *Black into White*, and Graham, ed., *The Idea of Race*.

and registries that catalogued and monitored the health of all adults who cohabitated with children.¹⁵⁰

Figure 2.3: "Gallery of Children's Enemies" Puericultural Propaganda (featuring a syphilis-causing bacteria)



Puericultura, ano 1, no.9, (June 1942), 22.
Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro

This ideological position also led puericulturists in Brazil's two largest urban areas, Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, to affiliate themselves with both religious and secular philanthropic organizations. Consequently, puericulture in these metropolises encompassed the salvation and protection of children through a combination of social uplift and medical interventions. In São Paulo, for example, puericulturists linked themselves with the *Cruzada Pró-Infância* (1931), a secular children's charitable organization that regularly hosted hygiene exhibits and educational programs aimed at families. Rio de Janeiro-based puericulturists likewise collaborated with a variety of philanthropic institutions and organizations, such as the Campaign for Childrens'

¹⁵⁰ "Contaminação da criança," *Coleção DNCr #127* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1946), 22-41. This article suggested the use of thoracic registries for all adults living with children to diminish the chance of transmitting respiratory illnesses.

Redemption (*Campanha da Redenção da Criança*), in the thirties and forties to fundraise and disseminate information.

Puericulturists based in the capital and elsewhere also demonstrated their distance from eugenicists by disseminating information on child welfare and health widely and through diverse forums. Jerry Davila's 2003 work on mid-twentieth century educational programs in Brazil shows how eugenics theory highly influenced the ways reformers formulated curricula and day-to-day procedures. He argues that the explicit goal of such projects was the management of racial hierarchy and the eventual elimination of behaviors and characteristics in schoolchildren deemed degenerate by policymakers. Puericulturists differed from such reformers in their efforts to reach all strata of society through more comprehensive educational campaigns. They designed educational campaigns alongside their efforts to spread knowledge about hygiene, nutrition, childcare, and healthy family life. For instance, puericulturists associated with the *DNCr* attempted to reach illiterate Brazilians by integrating their outreach programs with literacy campaigns.¹⁵¹ An explicit collaboration between the *DNCr* and the *Campanha de Educação de Adultos* (Adult Education Campaign) existed briefly in the 1940s. As a result, the *DNCr* published puericulture-oriented *cartilhas*, or informational pamphlets, and created filmstrips with both illiterate and under-educated audiences in mind.¹⁵² In other endeavors, such as the annual Children's Week celebrations and in the publication of parenting magazines, puericulturists designed simple, visual materials to reach a

¹⁵¹ Martagão Gesteira, *Boletim do Instituto de Puericultura*, ano 4, no. 8 (1947-1948), 7-18.

¹⁵² Examples of the connection between is the publication include, *Cuidemos da Criança!* (1947) that was jointly published by the *DNCr* and the *Campanha de Educação de Adultos* and was a free publication. A series of filmstrips was also offered by a joint program between the *DNCr*, the *Campanha de Educação de Adultos* and the *Departamento Nacional de Educação*. See Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Cuidemos da Criança!* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço Gráfico do Instituto de Geografia e Estatística, 1947), Clemente Mariani Collection, CPDOC, 10f and *Criança no Lar*, Série Ensino Visual, Folheto 1 (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério de Educação e Saúde, 1949), Clemente Mariani Collection, CPDOC, 7f.

diverse public. By the forties, puericultural radio programs that featured informative speeches and musical performances emerged to augment the dissemination of parenting and child health and welfare knowledge. In 1933, the *Revista Mensal de Clínica e Higiene Infantis e Puericultura* described puericulture in the following terms:

Puericulture-whose concepts should be spread everywhere, through all media, and throughout every social class, being that ignorance is not confined to the illiterate, or to the lower class, but extends into the highest echelons of society, where its influence is most dangerous.¹⁵³

Whereas eugenics theory impacted educational policy at the level of school administration and curriculum reform, puericulturists aimed for a more diffuse influence by crafting numerous, multifaceted projects.

By emphasizing public works projects, educational programs, and philanthropic contributions as pivotal for improving the Brazilian race, puericulturists further differentiated themselves from eugenicists. Renato Kehl, one of Brazil's most prominent eugenicists, remarked that eugenics was concerned primarily with improving the "*plasma germinal*," the biological essence of the body politic.¹⁵⁴ Meanwhile, puericulturists made the case that multiple non-genetic factors explained Brazil's continued high infant mortality rate and other child welfare problems. Puericulture represented a more positive approach to resolving such challenges because it downplayed biological determinism in favor of environmental, social, and cultural forces. For puericulturists working to develop this area of professional specialization and lay practice, science and medicine alone were insufficient mediators between Brazil's masses and the progress of the nation.

¹⁵³ "Puericultura," *Arquivos de Pediatria: revista mensal de clínica e higiene infantis e puericultura*, ano 5, no. 61 (Rio de Janeiro), (October 1933), 658.

¹⁵⁴ Renato Kehl, "Renato Kehl, Presidente da Comissão da Eugenia," *Infancia e Juventude: Mensario de Orientacao Pedagogica na Escola e no Lar*, ano 1, no. 7 (December 1936), 452-455.

Contemporary eugenicists contended that the perfect generation of Brazilians had not been born yet, while puericulturists saw, and hoped to cultivate, an existing potential in the nation's children and parents.

The Evolution of Brazilian Puericulture: Professionalization and Institutionalization

On Christmas day of 1932, Getúlio Vargas, then president of the provisional government, symbolically ushered in a "new era of constructive politics" aimed at improving the quality of Brazilian children's lives.¹⁵⁵ That day he circulated a memo, *Mensagem do Natal*, to the leaders of each state pledging to reverse high infant mortality rates with comprehensive child health and welfare policy. The head of state declared that the time had come to rally forces for the fortification of the nation through the redemption of its children. He called for the organization of a national conference that would foment interest in the cause and ignite copious intellectual and scientific inquiries into the major problems plaguing Brazilian children.¹⁵⁶ The speech was more than a rhetorical ploy to garner the favor of the working-class; it initiated and guided action at national, state, and local levels.

Those present for this galvanizing moment continually used Vargas' *Mensagem do Natal* as a symbolic reference point to justify and advance child-centered programs. From an historical standpoint, it was a key turning point in which Vargas-era politics solidified its paternalistic character and laid the foundation for improving the Brazilian family through the redemption of its youngest members. Vargas' message was discussed

¹⁵⁵ Ministério de Educação e Saúde Pública, *Conferência Nacional d Proteção á Infância* (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério de Educação e Saúde Pública, 1933), 3.

¹⁵⁶ Getúlio Vargas, "Mensagem do Natal" (transcript), (December 25, 1932). Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, GC 1935.05.27, Rolo 60, foto 538. In the message's text Vargas specifically stated that a meeting would be held in the capital that would convene representatives from each state to formulate child welfare and health reform.

frequently in legislative and institutional documents, as well as in print media and radio programs for popular consumption, that offered historical summaries of child welfare in Brazil.¹⁵⁷ Professors of puericulture even referenced Vargas' *mensagem* in commencement addresses to inspire graduates and characterize their future contributions as a part of a national effort.¹⁵⁸ In addition, the officials and professionals who authored these histories often made comparisons to the negligence of previous regimes. Their descriptions portrayed the Vargas regime as the first to champion the pro-child cause and Vargas as the first leader to recognize children as the future of Brazil.¹⁵⁹ Such documents often describe the Vargas administration, as represented by the *mensagem*, as unprecedented in its concern for Brazilian children.

The following September, a National Conference for the Protection of Childhood was held in Rio de Janeiro. Vargas' rhetoric had indeed resulted in a watershed event in the history of child welfare in Brazil. The concurrent International Congress for Child Protection held in Paris also inspired the organization of the Brazilian event. The 1933

¹⁵⁷ Examples of contemporary references to the *mensagem* include: Correspondence, Dr. (X)Javier de Oliveira to Minister Gustavo Capanema, (September 9, 1935), Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, 1935.05.27, Rolo 60, foto 413; Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, "Mortalidade infantil no Distrito Federal," *Centro de Saúde Mensário de Higiene Saúde Pública e Medicina Social*, no. 7/8 (1939), 68-69; "Aos Srs. Interventores dos Estados," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano 2, no. 8 (March 1942), 5; "A obra do Presidente Vargas no campo social –o que representa para a sociedade brasileira o DNC?-declarações do Dr. Orlando Seabra Lopes-Médico-Chefe do Serviço de Puericultura do DNC-Pelotas, RGS, 11, 1942 ao Diário Popular of Pelotas," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano 2, no. 8 (March 1942), 34-39; Marcondes Filho, "As crianças do Brasil e as palavras do Ministro de Trabalho," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano 2, no. 10 (September 1942), 7-8.

¹⁵⁸ Dr. Martagão Gesteira, "Crianca na Guerra e no Brasil-Discurso de paraninfo--Discurso na formatura dos médicos de 1943 na Faculdade Nacional de Medicina 1943" Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, GC266f, 14-15.

aos doutorandos do Professor Martagão Gesteira.

¹⁵⁹ Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, "Conferência pronunciada pelo radio em Roma, em 14 de outubro 1937 á proposito da Semana da Criança," Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, 1935.05.27, Rolo 60, foto 491; Sr. Conde Pereira Carneiro, "Pelo Brasil!," *Puericultura*, ano 1, no. 1 (October 1941), 1; "Semana da Criança em 1942," *Puericultura*, ano 1, no. 12/13, (September/October 1942), 5; "Palestra do Dr. Flammarion Costa, Diretor da DPSI do DNC no radio jornal do Brasil á convite da Sociedade de Puericultura do Brasil," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano 3, no. 15 (December 1943), 13-15.

conference directly led to the emergence of several key institutions and programs, as well as a general line of policymaking, discourse, and resource allotment for the pro-child cause. It marked a definitive shift in which the federal government structured the control and improvement of children's collective well-being. The administration effectively translated Vargas' words into action and the resulting forum led to a series of institutional changes.¹⁶⁰ Several key recommendations were passed by the conference's executive commission including legislative reform suggested for the Constitution of 1934 and the reorganization of federal child welfare and protection divisions, such as the *Divisão de Amparo à Maternidade e Infância*, the primary child and maternal welfare department. Policies enacted and recommended at the event were foundational in the evolution of child-centered programs throughout the following decades.¹⁶¹

As the first post-revolution meeting of state, federal, and municipal representatives for the purpose of child welfare and health reform, the 1933 conference raised debates concerning political power and administrative oversight. The executive commission articulated policy changes that would impact governance at the federal, state, and municipal level, as well as recommendations for how to manage parts of the interior not under government control. These suggestions raised questions about precisely how puericulture, as an umbrella term for health and welfare approaches, could be applied and

¹⁶⁰ Dr. Olinto de Oliveira applauds the changes brought about by the 1933 conference in Flammarion Costa, *Departamento Nacional da Criança: objetivos e realizações* (folheto no. 16), (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério de Educação e Saúde/Serviço de Documentação, 1945), 5-6. Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, CG348, 5-6.

¹⁶¹ Two specific advancements that followed the 1933 conference were the *Primeira Campanha Nacional de Alimentação da Criança* (First National Child Nutrition Campaign) in 1934 and, in 1935, the creation of *Conselho Nacional de Proteção à Maternidade e à Infância*, to serve under the Ministry of Health and Education. It was to function as a group of advocates drawn from the Ministries of Health and Education, Justice, and Work, as well as from the Senate, from the Brazilian Red Cross, and from medical and legal professions. This body became an important model for the creation of the *DNCr* in 1940. *Câmara dos deputados: projeto no. 324* (1935), Gabriel Passos Collection, CPDOC, 13f.

enforced effectively by officials. Consequently, discourse focused on how to define federal jurisdiction and how to secure funding in the national budget and from other sources. The two largest delegations from Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo had distinct visions for achieving those objectives.

Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, then director of the *Inspetoria de Higiene Infantil* (Inspector of Child Hygiene) and Dr. Moncorvo Filho, who founded Rio de Janeiro's *Instituto de Protecção à Infância* (Institute for Child Protection and Assistance), presided over the conference and represented the pro-child movement based in the capital. Dr. Moncorvo Filho had organized a similar meeting in conjunction with the 1922 Centennial Exposition's Children's Museum and concurrent the Pan-American Child Congress held in Rio de Janeiro. He had also founded Brazil's first Children's Department (1919) based on the U.S. Children's Bureau (1912) model in 1919, which he intended to serve as a federal institution. That particular manifestation of the Children's Department did little more than gather and publish statistics related to child welfare disparities and did not create or enforce legislation. However, the charter of the department clearly identified the advancement of puericulture as one of its primary objectives.¹⁶²

Moncorvo Filho and Olinto de Oliveira, along with Dr. Fernandes Figueira, were undoubtedly *the* foundational professionals in the development of child welfare and puericulture governance in the capital. Their organizations in Rio de Janeiro served as models for federal and state institutions that evolved during the thirties and forties. The 1933 conference was one of the few times they collaborated directly despite their shared interests. At the conference they infused their experiences in Rio de Janeiro to shape

¹⁶² Moncorvo Filho, *Histórico da protecção á infância no Brasil, 1500-1922*, 2 ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Paulo Pongetti & Cia, 1925), 283-285. For a detailed examination of this department and its founder see also, Tamera L. Marko, "When They Were The Nation's Children."

understandings of the most effective ways to manage child welfare. Both men had struggled to support their respective programs since the early twentieth century, having relied on personal finances and funds raised from within their circles of colleagues and friends. They, in turn, envisioned the combination of public and private resources and energies as essential for the effective administration of puericultural programs at the federal, state, and municipal levels. During the conference, Olinto de Oliveira asserted that the cause of the child was not only a problem of the state that could be resolved through debate and discussion¹⁶³ He and Moncorvo Filho knew that the conference could not advance the cause without consistent fiscal support from the central government. Since the early twentieth century, they had both seen pro-child interests stagnate in the capital due to lack of resources. Despite the foundation of several agencies and departments within the federal government, there had not been any coordinated, nationwide programs or consistent allocation of funds. The 1933 conference was a first comprehensive step in moving the cause out of the philanthropic domain and under the auspices of the state. The Rio delegation brought to the conference a sense of skepticism about this process and the knowledge that only a combination of private and public efforts would advance the child welfare cause in Brazil.

Participants from São Paulo, a group of eleven delegates from medical, legal, and public service fields, raised particular concerns about federal control and pressed for constitutional law. Not surprisingly, their preoccupations stemmed from the civil war that broke out in 1932 in reaction to the absence of a constitution following the Vargas-led revolution in 1930. One paulista participant gave a presentation that directly

¹⁶³ Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, "Discurso do Professor Olinto de Oliveira, Presidente da Comissão Executiva," Ministério de Educação e Saúde Pública, *Conferência Nacional d Proteção á Infância* (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério de Educação e Saúde Pública, 1933), 43.

confronted the issue of state versus federal control over the administration of puericulture and other child-centered programs. Dr. Geraldo Horacio Paula Souza director of São Paulo's Hygiene Institute expressed the desires of the delegation stating that each state should retain more administrative and fiscal responsibility than the central government in order to maintain the "spirit of a truly federal regime."¹⁶⁴ He suggested a model based on the United States' Sheppard-Towner Act (1921) that allocated federal funding to fight infant and maternal mortality and poverty.¹⁶⁵ With São Paulo's state population representing approximately a fifth of the national total, a system that assigned federal resources based on demographic need made sense to the paulista delegation. Overall, the representatives supported a system of federal oversight and budgeting that allowed for autonomous state administration.

In addition to policy and institutional recommendations, the conference's executive commission also emphasized the importance of regular child-centered public exhibitions and commemorations. It suggested robust baby competitions, awards for hygienic households in impoverished neighborhoods, and prizes for prolific and healthy reproduction.¹⁶⁶ Members of the São Paulo delegation were especially cognizant of how such events promoted public awareness of health and welfare problems and disseminated puericultural knowledge. In that city, the *Cruzada Pró-Infância*, a private philanthropic organization, had been hosting public celebrations of Children's Week since 1931.

Annual celebrations held in October included hygiene and nutritional expositions, robust

¹⁶⁴ Dr. Geraldo Horacio de Souza, "Deverão os serviços de proteção e higiene da criança ser entregues aos estados ou ficar subordinados á administração federal?," *São Paulo na Conferência Nacional de Proteção á Infância-Setembro de 1933* (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado, 1934), 470.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 470.

¹⁶⁶ "Recomendações de ordem geral formuladas pela comissão especial," *São Paulo na Conferência Nacional de Proteção á Infância-Setembro de 1933*(São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado, 1934) 10-11.

baby and breastfeeding mother contests, lectures, and fundraising drives.¹⁶⁷ The 1933 conference commission did not overlook the utility of such activities for the advancement of the health and welfare cause and included an article regarding them in its policy recommendations. The following year in 1934 the federal government sponsored the First National Children's Week in Rio de Janeiro featuring a public puericulture exhibition. In 1939, the Vargas administration passed a decree stipulating the annual celebration of National Children's Day on March 24.¹⁶⁸ Public engagement and education remained mainstays throughout the evolution of puericulture in the thirties and forties.

In the post-1930 political climate, debates over the power of the federal government reached into every area of public policy. The landscape of governance changed with the advent of a complex network of institutions, most importantly a series of new ministries, and a new emphasis on federal oversight. Tensions certainly flared within the intellectual and professional circles in the capital over how best to apportion power and finances. Daryle Williams' 2001 work illustrates how such contentions played out in the realm of national culture. He argues that power struggles erupted over the control and crafting of national images, symbols, and other cultural properties. A similar conflict emerged within the process of federalizing child welfare and health early Vargas era. Unlike the "culture wars" Williams' work delineates, the tensions in the pro-child

¹⁶⁷ Maria Lucia Mott, et al, *O Gesto que Salva*, 62. Pérola Byington, the founder of the *Cruzada Pró-Infância*, attended the 1933 National Conference and gave a lecture on sexual education.

¹⁶⁸ The Vargas administration changed the date of Children's Day from October 12 to March 24. It had originally been established by the delegation of Brazil's First Conference for Child Protection of 1922 to coincide with the commemoration of the discovery of the Americas in October. For a discussion of this shift see Mott, et al., *O Gesto que Salva*, 17.

debate were subordinated by an explicit consensus that infant mortality, disease, and welfare concerns were problems that required collaborative solutions.

The 1933 conference indeed shed light on the tensions between intellectuals and officials within the capital, as well as between the federal representatives and delegations from other states. Scarcely three years had transpired since the Vargas-led revolution and the encroachment of central authority by a provisional administration had not met with passive acceptance.¹⁶⁹ However, policy debates over the plight of Brazil's children generated more consensus than other issues. The 1933 congress also demonstrated a collective awareness that child welfare and health were interdependent problems. The meeting of state and federal delegations itself was a symbolic step in the process of recognizing that children's social and health concerns crossed state lines. State-level officials and professionals from different regions had been battling infant mortality, child hunger, poverty, and disease relatively autonomously. The 1933 event helped to coordinate their efforts and initiate a new, integrated course of action. A new logic emerged as a result of the conference; one that connected the progress of the nation with the physical, mental, and moral fitness of the youngest generation. Puericulture stood out as a viable policy approach to uplift Brazil's children for this purpose.

In addition to being a watershed event in the evolution of child welfare and health policy in the twentieth century and a glimpse into the tensions of contemporary politics, the 1933 National Child Protection Conference advanced puericulture as a state initiative and a profession. One of the articles adopted by the conference's executive commission

¹⁶⁹ Works that explore the political repercussions of the 1930 revolution include; Boris Fausto, *A revolução de 30: historiografia e história*, 8th edition (São Paulo: Brasilense, 1982), Ludwig Lauerhauss Jr., *Getúlio Vargas e o triunfo do nacionalismo brasileiro* (Belo Horizonte: Editora Itatiaia, 1986), Thomas E. Skidmore, *Politics in Brazil, 1930-1964: An Experiment in Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967).

contained a clause stipulating the creation of puericultural chairs in Brazil's medical schools.¹⁷⁰ This step signaled the rise of an area of specialization, distinct from the fields of pediatrics and hygiene, within the Brazilian medical curriculum. A new category then emerged within the medical profession; the *médico-puericultor*, or puericulture doctor.

One of the key distinctions between a specialization in puericulture and a more conventional concentration in pediatrics was the notion that the latter treated only sick children. This perception existed within the medical academy and in general society in the early decades of the twentieth century. Since its foundations in the nineteenth century and throughout its evolution as a practice in Brazil, pediatrics was associated with clinical treatment.¹⁷¹ Pediatric medical interventions entailed the incursion of a doctor, traditionally a male, into the intimate space between mother and child for the purposes of healing the latter. The vast majority of Brazilian mothers did not seek out pediatricians for preventative care, a norm that reinforced the connection between pediatric medicine and childhood illness.¹⁷² The practice of relying on a "curiosa," or laywoman who professed specialized knowledge in child and reproductive health, was more common particularly among the working and lower classes. Likewise, many parents relied on networks drawn from their families and communities when it came to matters of child health and rearing. By the second decade of the twentieth century, pediatrics remained a branch of medicine that reached few families, mostly within the urban, upper-class. Pediatricians formed alliances with mothers in this social sector. Together, as historian Maria Martha de Luna Freire argues, they contributed to the medicalization of maternity

¹⁷⁰ "Recomendações de ordem geral formuladas pela comissão especial," *São Paulo na Conferência Nacional de Proteção à Infância-Setembro de 1933* (São Paulo: Imprensa Oficial do Estado, 1934) 10.

¹⁷¹ On the foundation of pediatrics in Brazil see Marko (2006).

¹⁷² Dr. Ernest Caufield, "Como mudou a assistência á infância," *Crianca: revista para os pais*, vol. 1, no. 7 (June/July 1938), np.

and childhood.¹⁷³ However, this alliance continued primarily through clinical interactions for the purposes of treating illnesses and problemsolving.

Puericulture, on the other hand, aimed to proactively treat and maintain the health of the young in the both the pre and post-natal stages. It represented the "new politics" of children's healthcare because it was a preventative, rather than a curative practice.¹⁷⁴

Puericulturists classified pediatrics as a science and considered their own efforts as the fusion of science and art of childrearing. Pediatrics focused solely on the child and, more specifically, on the eradication of childhood diseases, the causes of infant mortality, and the mitigation of developmental problems. Puericulturists hoped to serve a more comprehensive purpose by engaging with parents, the domestic environment, and the larger social realm of the child. Specialized training in puericulture required expertise in all stages of childhood, including pre-natal and adolescent health. In his commencement address to the 1944 graduating class of Brazil's *Instituto Nacional de Puericultura* (National Puericulture Institute-*INP*), Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, director of the *DNCr*, remarked:

Today, puericulture is much more than knowing how to bottlefeed babies and change their diapers. In Latin 'pueri' does not mean 'baby.' It means 'young man.' Our art extends into puberty, where we find plenty of work to be done.¹⁷⁵

Brazil's early puericulturists attempted to distinguish themselves from other physicians by actively promoting their field as an art form that sought to maintain health rather than treat illnesses. However, as Brazilian puericulture evolved as a career it attracted doctors

¹⁷³ Maria Martha de Luna Freire, *Mulheres, mães, e médicos: discurso maternalista no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora FGV, 2009).

¹⁷⁴ "Centro de Exames Periódicos de Saúde do Dr. Oscar Clark-Professor de clínica médica na Faculdade de Ciências Médicas" (1935), Paulo Assis Ribeiro Collection, caixa 242, Arquivo Nacional, 18-19.

¹⁷⁵ "Puericultores de 1944-curso de puericultura," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano 5, no. 20 (March 1945), 5.

from a variety of specializations within the larger field of child-focused and reproduction medicine.

Who were the Brazil's first career puericulturists? The *DNCr* maintained two separate categories for puericultural education. One category of courses trained the aforementioned group of doctors who received formal academic degrees. The second group encompassed "*senhoras da sociedade*" (elite women) and future mothers, including young girls, who received an official title of specialization upon completion of the coursework.¹⁷⁶ It is important to note that before the founding of Brazil's National Puericulture Institute (hereafter *INP*) in 1937, there were no degreed puericulturists. The 1933 National Child Protection Conference speech had urged the establishment of puericulture chairs in Brazil's medical schools; however, a systematic curriculum and degree program did not emerge until *INP*'s foundation. Self-identification as a puericulturist was uncommon before the *INP*'s specialized program existed and most doctors practiced under the original title of their medical degree. In fact, before 1944, when a federal decree appointed a career entitled "*médico-puericultor*" a doctor who considered himself a puericulturist was reared at a major medical school in a conventional discipline, typically pediatrics or obstetrics, but devoted his time to promoting puericultural practice.¹⁷⁷ Doctors receiving this designation were expected to serve under the auspices of the *DNCr* in some official capacity at the municipal, state, or federal level. As Maria Martha Luna Freire argues the early twentieth century represented a "golden age" in which doctors considered themselves to be intellectuals and

¹⁷⁶ Departamento Nacional da Criança, "Atividades do Departamento Nacional da Criança," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, vol. 2, no. 8 (March 1942), 37.

¹⁷⁷ Flammarion Costa, *Departamento Nacional da Criança: objetivos e realizações* (folheto no. 16), (Rio de Janeiro: Ministerio de Educação e Saúde/Serviço de Documentação, 1945), 20. Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, CG348.

engaged in contemporary social debates.¹⁷⁸ Early puericulturists reflected this trend by maintaining professional practice as doctors with concurrent intellectual interest and activism in child-centered debates.

Outside the realm of medical doctors who either received degrees or self-imposed the title 'puericulturist,' women who attended puericulture courses could carry the label as well. Female puericulturists fell into two categories: women who served as health monitors and/or itinerant nurses and adolescent/young women who attended maternal training courses. The first group grew out of the collaboration of the *Legião Brasileira de Assistência* (1942) and the *DNCr*. *Legionárias*, the women who volunteered for the legion, received puericultural training as a part of a broader effort to aid families, particularly servicemen's families, during WWII. First-Lady Darcy Sarmanho Vargas served as the first president of the *LBA*, a position that characterized her as an altruistic, maternal figure and helped build her husband's paternal persona.

Female legion members attended puericultural courses at the *INP* in the capital. The *DNCr* relied on *legionárias* trained in puericulture to collaborate on several projects. These women participated in fundraising events during annual National Children's Week celebrations and the *LBA* stood out as an important co-sponsor of the week's activities, including the public puericulture exhibits. *LBA* volunteers also traveled into the interior with *DNCr* representatives to strategize plans for building puericulture posts in areas without medical infrastructure.¹⁷⁹ Their fundraising efforts resulted in the building of several of these posts, as well as lactation centers, nurseries, and playgrounds in the

¹⁷⁸ Maria Martha de Luna Freire, *Mulheres, mães, e médicos*, 182-183.

¹⁷⁹ Flammarion Costa, *Departamento Nacional da Criança: objetivos e realizações* (folheto no. 16), (Rio de Janeiro: Ministerio de Educação e Saúde/Serviço de Documentação, 1945), 18. Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, CG348.

capital. Families, particularly women and children, could receive food subsidies, health care, and other resources at the clinics, centers, and puericulture posts established and operated by the *LBA*. Finally, these women played an important role in the development of agricultural education for children, mainly through recreational agro-clubs.¹⁸⁰ These clubs were intended to incorporate children into the effort to grow food and raise small livestock for during WWII. As part of the agenda of the agricultural clubs, the female volunteers offered puericultural training in hygiene and nutrition.

The *LBA* also published its own bi-monthly puericulture magazine entitled, *Maternidade e Infância* beginning in 1945. *Legionárias* submitted texts about their experiences with women and children, as well as informational articles about healthcare and child rearing. It provided a forum for scholarly exchange between *LBA* volunteers, medical professionals, *DNCr* representatives, and other intellectuals.¹⁸¹ The magazine opened a space for female puericulturists to voice their ideas and integrate themselves into the broader circle of male doctors and intellectuals.

The second category of female puericulturists, or *puericultoras*, evolved out of puericulture courses taught to girls and young women. The *escolas/cursos de mãezinhas*, or "mommy schools/courses," provided instruction in baby care, nutrition, hygiene, and household management. French puericulturist Adolphe Pinard had pioneered the idea of maternal education at the level of primary schools in the early twentieth century. His curriculum meant to imbue young girls with the idea that "if she has breasts, it is for

¹⁸⁰ One way the *LBA* volunteers promoted agriculture among Brazilian youth was by encouraging the planting of "victory gardens" and small-scale animal husbandry. During the 1945 National Children's Week celebration the *LBA* sponsored agricultural contests and expositions and distributed hundreds of seed packets. See Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, vol. 6 no. 24, (March 1946), 20-21 and "As crianças contribuem para a Vitória," *Riquezas de Nossa Terra*, vol. 7, (Jan/Feb. 1943), np.

¹⁸¹ "Razão de ser desta revista," *Maternidade e Infância*, ano 1, no. 1 (June 1945), 11-13.

feeding" and to teach them to mother before they became women.¹⁸² A number of public and private schools in Rio de Janeiro adopted these courses in an attempt to "create a generation of little puericulturists to break the cycle of flawed mothering."¹⁸³ Maternal education had been around since the early twentieth century; however, a specific drive to target young females through structured curricula began in the early 1940s. The courses combined simulations using dolls, lectures, filmstrips, and role playing activities. Figure 2.4 depicts a group of *puericultoras* instructing young girls how to hold an infant properly.¹⁸⁴

Figure 2.4: A puericulture course for young girls in Juiz da Fora, RJ



Puericultura (June 1942)

¹⁸² Quoted in Alisa Klaus, *Every Child a Lion: The Origins of Maternal and Infant Health Policy in the United States, 1890-1920* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 79. Klaus explores how the French mothering courses influenced maternal education in the United States. Brazilian puericulturists were well-read in medical literature from the US and Europe. Many of them also received training in medical schools and institutes abroad.

¹⁸³ "Escola de mãezinhas nos colégios do Rio," Suplemento de *Puericultura*, *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, (January 9, 1949), section III, pg. 8.

¹⁸⁴ "80 operárias diplomadas em puericultura pelo Instituto de Assistência Social de Juíz de Fora," *Puericultura* (June 1942), 2.

Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, director of the *DNCr* from 1940-1945, asserted that the goal of these lessons was to "awaken" an interest in the primary elements of puericulture among pre-pubescent girls.¹⁸⁵

The emergence of a category of female puericulturists exposed an implicit contradiction between the practical exigencies of puericulture and its underlying ideology. On one hand, access to training and professional positions, such as traveling nurses and sanitary inspectors, opened a space for Brazilian women and girls to interact in a realm previously dominated by men. The *DNCr* and its programs required women to work in various capacities to reach distant populations, to fundraise, and to educate other women. On the other hand, the fundamental lessons of puericulture clearly reinforced women's roles as mothers and housewives. The very purpose of courses aimed at "little mommies" was to encourage proper homemaking and instill the idea that maternity was one's patriotic duty. One female puericulturist even remarked that such training should be understood as "required military service" for women and that puericulture should be as standard in education as mathematics, science, and philosophy.¹⁸⁶ Making a similar analogy, Dr. Martagão Gesteira, one of Brazil's most prominent puericulturists, lobbied for the issuance of certification card for all women and girls who successfully completed puericultural coursework. He likened the protocol to a military reservist's card and called motherhood the "most important service" a woman could give her country. He cited the

¹⁸⁵ Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, "Prefácio da Primeira Edição," in Guiomar R. Rinaldi, *A Mamãezinha: pequenas lições de puericultura*, 3^ªed., (Rio de Janeiro: Edições Melhoramentos, 1945), 3.

¹⁸⁶ Laura Rego do Monteiro, "No século da criança..." *Puericultura*, ano 1, no. 3 (December 1941), 8.

fact that men and women competed in the same professional realm and should be obliged to the equal standards.¹⁸⁷

As is common in many historical analyses of intellectual currents in Brazil, ideologies stemming from the capital tend to overshadow those emanating from other regions. What tends to emerge is a center-periphery dynamic that relegates contributions from outside Brazil's southeastern metropolises to secondary standing. An examination of puericulture as a "movement" and/or a circle of intellectuals and professionals warrants attention to the presence of both regional tensions and collaborations. Indeed, the majority of doctors who labeled themselves 'puericulturists' graduated from the schools of medicine in Rio de Janeiro and in São Paulo. However, a good number who also went on to influence policy at the federal level came from other states. Stanley Blake's 2011 work reveals how professionals and officials from the northeastern state of Pernambuco used their connections with federal policymakers to advance spending on projects and programs in their region. Likewise, Dr. Arthur Ramos, a medical doctor born in the Northeastern state of Alagoas, spent most of his professional career in Salvador, Bahia and Rio de Janeiro. Although he was trained in clinical psychiatry, he authored a well-known text on children's mental hygiene, *A criança problema* in 1939.¹⁸⁸

The post-1930 Vargas era certainly intensified interest in child welfare and health in the capital and as a result the majority of influential thinkers and policymakers originated and operated within *carioca* or *paulista* intellectual spheres. Yet the very nature of the Vargas administration's call to action in 1932 and the resulting 1933 conference demanded the integration of professionals and officials outside the "center."

¹⁸⁷Dr. Martagão Gesteira, *Puericultura: higiene alimentare social da criança* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora Pan-Americana, S.A., 1945), 624-625.

¹⁸⁸See). For more on his career and works see Lange, "Importing Freud and Lamarck to the Tropics.

In light of the contemporary spirit of collaboration among Brazil's pro-child advocates, the next section profiles two prominent puericulturists from two distinct regions who became national-level officials; Dr. Olinto de Oliveira (Porto Alegre) and Dr. Martagão Gesteira (Bahia).

In the capital, Dr. Olinto de Oliviera was the most influential, self-proclaimed puericulturist.¹⁸⁹ A native of Porto Alegre, he received his medical degree in pediatrics from the University of Brazil in 1887. After serving as director of the University of Porto Alegre's medical school (1906-1917), he moved to the capital to collaborate with other child health specialists. Olinto de Oliveira first collaborated with Rio de Janeiro-based pediatricians and child welfare advocates at the 1916 First American Children's Congress in Buenos Aires. He served as a part of the Brazilian Commission and presided over the maternal and child assistance session with Dr. Fernandes Figueira.¹⁹⁰ His career moved into the realm of federal policymaking when he became the director of the *Inspetoria de Higiene Infantil* in the capital in 1930. Through the long period of institutional reform during Getúlio Vargas' provisional government and dictatorship, Olinto de Oliveira remained the highest ranking official in the field of child welfare and health. He presided over the *Diretoria de Proteção á Maternidade e á Infância* (1934-1937) and the *Divisão de Amparo á Maternidade e á Infância*.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ His full name was Olympio Olinto de Oliveira, (b. 1866).

¹⁹⁰ For more on the Brazilian Commission at this conference, see *Comite Nacional Brasileiro no Primeiro Congresso Americano da Criança-a realizar-se em julho de 1916 em Buenos aires-em comemoração do 1o Centenário da Independência Argentina* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1916).

¹⁹¹ A summation of Olinto de Oliveira's career and accomplishments in the field of child health and welfare appeared in the *DNCr's* monthly bulletin after his retirement in 1945. See Dr. Gastão de Figueiredo, "A aposentadoria do Professor Olinto de Oliveira," in Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano 5, no. 23 (December 1945), 3-4.

Figure 2.5: Portrait of Dr. Olinto de Oliveira



Boletim Trimensal do DNCr (December 1945)
Biblioteca Nacional, Rio de Janeiro

Olinto de Oliveira consistently and successfully lobbied federal officials for the expansion of puericultural services and child welfare reform in general.¹⁹² Beginning in 1934 with the organization of the First National Campaign for Children's Nutrition, he dedicated his career to establishing federal oversight, resources, as well as public awareness related to children's health and wellbeing. In his crusade, he also promoted the equitable treatment of all children regardless of race/ethnicity, religion, gender, and/or social status. He tirelessly made the case that ignorance, rather than any biological or sociocultural factor, denigrated Brazil's children. Child protection and charity, he argued, superseded prejudices.¹⁹³ His ideology, with regard to the equal comprehensive protection and care of children, weighed heavily on the founding tenets of the *DNCr*.

He served as *DNCr* director from its inception in 1940 until his retirement in 1945. During his tenure he advanced the pro-child cause through by spreading

¹⁹² Numerous correspondence documents between Olinto de Oliveira and Gustavo Capanema, Minister of Health and Education (1934-1946) are archived in Gustavo Capanema Collection (MES), CPDOC, particularly Rolos 60-61.

¹⁹³ Ministério de Educação e Saúde Pública-Diretoria de Proteção á Maternidade e á Infância, *Campanha Nacional pela Alimentação da Criança, 1934-1935-associações de proteção á infância* (Rio de Janeiro: MESP, 1935), 10.

puericultural education and services, innovating approaches to healthcare and assistance, and securing funding from the federal government, as well as private individuals and organizations. Olinto de Oliveira's commitment to egalitarian protection and support for all children influenced his drive to spread puericulture into the interior and among rural populations. The idea that all children possessed inalienable rights to health and well-being underscored his strategies for expanding the reach of the *DNCr* to areas that had no prior contact with doctors or pre/post-natal care. His unbiased approach also impacted the content in the *DNCr*'s parenting magazine, *Criança: revista para os pais*, as well as the imagery and rhetoric presented in public puericulture exhibitions and during National Children's Week commemorations. These particular impacts will be explored in Chapter III. Suffice it to say that these events and publications attempted to represent and engage with diverse segments of Brazilian society. Over the fifteen years of his career as a national-level official, Olinto de Oliveira's unique vision helped re-frame political and social attitudes toward children and their roles in the national family.

Dr. Martagão Gesteira received his training in pediatrics from the *Faculdade de Medicina* in the Northeastern state of Bahia.¹⁹⁴ As one of the founders of Bahia's League Against Infant Mortality (1923), his medical focus related to childhood disease and the environmental factors causing illness and death. He served as a professor and director of the infant hygiene specialization in Bahia's school of medicine from 1915 to 1937. During his career in Bahia he founded the State Children's Department (1935) modeled after the U.S. Children's Bureau and the Children's Department (1919) founded by Dr. Moncorvo Filho in Rio de Janeiro. Gesteira rose to prominence on the federal level

¹⁹⁴ His full name is Joaquim Martagão Gesteira (b. 1884).

when, in 1937, the Vargas administration appointed him to direct the *INP* being founded in the capital.

Gesteira worked with Olinto de Oliveira to lobby the president, via Gustavo Capanema, Minister of Health and Education, for the creation of a specialized higher learning and research institute of puericulture. These three corresponded frequently leading up to the foundation of the *INP* in January 1937 and throughout that year until the institute became part of the University of Brazil in December.¹⁹⁵ Gesteira served as the first director of the institute until 1946 when he took over directorship of the *DNCr*. He organized and presided over the *Jornadas de Puericultura e Pediatria*, annual scholarly meetings intended to be extensions of the 1933 National Child Protection Conference.¹⁹⁶

As a central figure in creating and presiding over the *INP* and planning events during his directorship of the *DNCr* (1946-1954), Martagão Gesteira helped advance the constructivist and integrative strategies of the Estado Novo administration. According to Gesteira, each annual *jornada* and National Children's Week was an exchange of ideas and provided a chance for state representatives to collectively examine what measures effectively resolved child health and welfare problems.¹⁹⁷ His efforts reflected the overarching political ideology of the *MES* during the Estado Novo. Underlying the corporatist vision of the administration were the dual approaches of "construction" and

¹⁹⁵ The *MES* section of the CPDOC Gustavo Capanema Collection contains a series of letters between Olinto de Oliveira, Gustavo Capanema, and Martagão Gesteira. Capanema passed on several of the exchanges to Getúlio Vargas. See Rolo 60, fotos 417-454 and 539-549. In 1941, the federal government issued a decree to incorporate the *INP* into the *DNCr* and move its headquarters from Rio's School of Medicine to the Hospital Arthur Bernardes.

¹⁹⁶ The *Jornadas* were held in Rio de Janeiro (1947), Salvador (1948), Curitiba (1949), and Porto Alegre (1950), Rio de Janeiro (1951), and Belem (1952). Each was held concurrently with National Children's Week from October 10-17.

¹⁹⁷ "Trabalho das Delgacias Federais da Criança-assistência á maternidade e á infância nas favelas, fala a reportagem do Professor Martagão Gesteira, Diretor do *DNCr*," *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, (12 October, 1952), section 3, pg. 6.

"stimulation." The *DNCr* and its corollary institutions fell under the central authority of the *MES*. This ministry fulfilled the aforementioned objectives by building infrastructure and pooling resources from federal, state, and municipal budgets, as well as from private organizations.¹⁹⁸ Gesteira's efforts were grounded in his desire to collaborate with intellectuals and professionals throughout Brazil. This drive coalesced with Vargas administration's systemic approach to the child health and welfare campaign before and during the *Estado Novo*.

Gesteira also pioneered projects intended to spread puericultural knowledge and services into rural, interior areas of Brazil. His innovations and programs in this vein also echoed the Vargas administration's desires to harness land, labor, and natural resources that still remained outside the bounds of the national economy. Despite the harmony between Gesteira's approaches and the federal government's prerogatives, funding remained a constant obstacle to the fulfillment of many puericultural projects. Perhaps due to these limitations his impact at the federal level has been neglected in historical analyses of politics and governance in the mid-twentieth century. Gesteira's legacy in his home city of Salvador, where a major infant care hospital and research center bears his name, remains stronger than in Rio de Janeiro. A controversy arose in September of 1948 when the rector surprisingly fired Gesteira from the directorship of the *INP*. The national student's union and government representatives from Bahia protested the firing with letter writing campaigns to the rector. They extolled his pioneering work in the field and urged the administration to "keep him on the national

¹⁹⁸ *Exposição do Estado Novo* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1939), 31.

scene."¹⁹⁹ President Eurico Dutra denounced the firing, but Gesteira stepped down amidst the fury.²⁰⁰ The 1946 shift in federal administration had resulted in personnel changes and the reformulation of the Ministry of Health and Education. By 1948, the blending of old guard officials appointed during the Vargas era, such as Gesteira, with new leadership and approaches came to a head.

Despite the setback at the end of his professional career Gesteira was undoubtedly a pioneer in the advancement of puericulture. Perhaps his most lasting contribution was his 1942 publication, *Puericultura: higiene alimentar e social da criança*. In the forties the monograph functioned as a textbook for puericulture courses. Today, it provides historians a comprehensive overview of the development of Brazilian puericulture, the nature of its practice, and an exposition of contemporary child health and care problems. The text contains valuable statistics regarding disease and infant mortality rates in the early twentieth century, as well as data about medical and charitable infrastructure, such as hospitals, clinics, lactation centers, and orphanages in Brazil.

Both Olinto de Oliveira and Gesteira helped pave the way for the professionalization and institutionalization of puericulture in the thirties and forties. Their careers served as models for the effective fusion of medical interests and public policymaking. Leadership roles in the two most prominent national institutions, the *DNCr* and the *INP*, allowed Olinto de Oliveira and Martagão Gesteira to influence how the art of puericulture intersected with the child-centered politics at the federal level. Public events, publications, media, and national campaigns pushed their influence further

¹⁹⁹ "Deputados baianos solidarios com o Professor Martagão Gesteira," *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, (September 3, 1948), section I, pg. 2.

²⁰⁰ *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, (September 7, 1948), section II, pg.1.

and pushed their puericultural agenda into previously uncharted territory. Many other puericulturists followed in their footsteps by receiving specialized training.

As per the nepotistic nature of the Brazilian professional and official world, both Olinto de Oliveira's and Martagão Gesteira's sons became puericulturists. Raymundo Martagão Gesteira graduated from the National School of Medicine with a focus on pediatrics and puericulture. He also published an instructive puericulture text in 1974. Raymundo's wife, Natercia, also presided over the *Campanha Nacional da Criança* in the 1950s.²⁰¹ Mario Olinto also became a puericulturist and served as the director of the Arthur Bernardes Women and Infants Hospital in Rio de Janeiro. Mario became director of the *Divisão de Amparo à Maternidade e à Infância* and director of the *INP*. Mario and Raymundo left comparatively minor impressions as political emphasis shifted away from children after Getúlio Vargas' death in 1954. The Vargas administration had actively cultivated the image of a national family with Vargas himself as the paternal authority. During this administrative era, children and their images played important symbolic roles in the construction of national identity, in development projects, and for projecting Brazil's future. The careers and policymaking strides of the first generation of puericulturists advanced these political strategies and characterizations of the regime by helping reproduce, heal, and protect the nation's children.

Puericulture in the Public Sphere: Expositions and Print Media

Public exhibitions and print media were three of the most explicit ways puericulturists defined and disseminated their practices in the thirties and forties. The 1922 Centennial Celebration's Children's Museum ignited the development of child and family hygiene in subsequent decades. The early thirties saw an increase in the number

²⁰¹"Suplemento de Puericultura," *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro (16 October, 1955), section IV, 8.

of these events as the child-oriented political agenda of Vargas' provisional government unfurled. Across the country child health and welfare advocates, mostly physicians and philanthropists, organized puericulture exhibits of varying sizes and types. According to Dr. Martagão Gesteira, the Brazilian expositions followed a French model for the dissemination of child hygiene information in public forums. The model, articulated by doctors at the 1933 International Congress for Child Protection in 1933, outlined how to stage an effective exhibit using informational posters, tactile objects, and photography.²⁰² Permanent and itinerant exhibitions in the thirties indeed reflected this layout and focused on basic child hygiene information. Doctors and government officials in Brazil's large urban areas staged such displays consistently in the early thirties prior to the organization of the national exhibit held concurrently with National Children's Week.

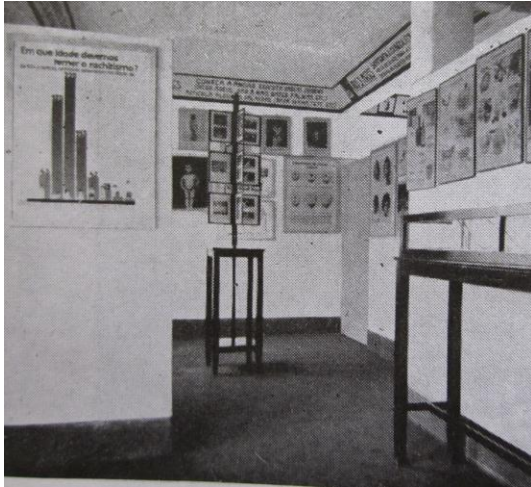
In the capital, pediatrician, Dr. Fernandes Figueira maintained a small hygiene exhibition and library at the Arthur Bernardes women's and infants' hospital.²⁰³ Despite Rio de Janeiro-based puericulturists' lobbying, it was the last permanent exhibit open to the public. Future expositions would be held in various venues around the city and then shipped for display in other cities and rural areas. The Bahian Infant Mortality League (1923) also sponsored an exhibit in Salvador that led visitors through informational corridors organized according their importance as a precept of puericulture. When Dr. Martagão Gesteira directed the *INP* in the capital he and his colleagues utilized this format in the creation of annual puericulture exhibitions.²⁰⁴

²⁰² Gesteira, *Puericultura* (1945), 618-624.

²⁰³The hospital exhibit closed in 1935 when the building closed for remodeling. Dr. Olinto de Oliveira lobbied President Vargas for the federal support to resurrect the museum, but it was never fully restored. Correspondence Dr. Olinto de Oliveira to Ministro Gustavo Capanema, (22 June, 1935),

²⁰⁴ Gesteira, *Puericultura* (1945), 622.

Figure 2.6: Child Higiene Museum
Salvador, Bahia



Martagão Gesteira, *Puericultura* (1945)

Puericulture Exhibit
Rio de Janeiro, 1943



DNCr, *Boletim Trimensal* (December 1943)
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In São Paulo, the women's charitable organization, *Cruzada Pró-Infância* organized its first public child health and welfare exhibition in 1931 with the explicit purpose of attracting the federal government's attention, as well as the population at large. The *Cruzada's* founding members composed a letter to President Vargas that called for

a plan to raise collective awareness across the nation of the problems facing Brazil's children... a problem that impacts us all and requires the concern and interest of every Brazilian.²⁰⁵

Vargas replied to the the organization's director, Pérola Byington, stating that he had relayed the information to his Minister of Education and Health who would take the appropriate measures to support the cause.²⁰⁶ A year later the President made his foundational address on Christmas Eve 1932 proclaiming his administration's dedication to the nation's children. Vargas' rhetoric in the *Mensagem do Natal* and in subsequent

²⁰⁵ Correspondence Cruzada Pró-Infância to President Getúlio Vargas, "Semana da Criança realizada de 12 a 17 de 1931," 1-2, caixa "Histórico" Acervo Cruzada Pró-Infância, Museu Emilio Ribas. An informal archive of the Cruzada Pró-Infância's documents exists in the Emilio Ribas Museum of Public Health in São Paulo. The collection contains the organizations bureaucratic documents, photographs, newsclippings, as well as family items and the *Cruzada's* publication, *Infância*.

²⁰⁶ Correspondence President Getúlio Vargas to Pérola Byington, "Semana da Criança realizada de 12 a 17 de 1931," 3, caixa "Histórico" Acervo Cruzada Pró-Infância, Museu Emilio Ribas.

speeches mirrored the call to service the *Cruzada* had made in 1931 and the drive to rally public support through similar campaigns became a federal prerogative.

Three years later the first major puericulture exhibit took place in the capital during the *Campanha de Alimentação da Criança* in 1934. Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, then director of the *Inspetoria de Higiene Infantil* organized the exhibit in Rio de Janeiro's *Liceu de Artes e Ofícios*. It followed the models established by the aforementioned exhibits, consisting of informational panels and objects used in the hygienic care of children and households. The first official puericulture exhibit took place in the capital during the 1939 National Children's Week. The event drew little attention from the general public despite the fact that it took place in three venues.²⁰⁷ In fact, before 1942, when the *DNCr* held its annual puericulture exhibit in Rio de Janeiro's central railstation, the events drew limited audiences.

Prior to the institutionalization of the *DNCr* in 1940, small, private venues played host to the week's commemorations and expositions. All were held in upperclass neighborhoods, such as Flamengo at the *DNCr* headquarters or the arts and theater district at the School of Music. By 1942 the *DNCr* made puericulture exhibitions more accessible to broader audiences by relocating to heavily-traveled public spaces and by increasing media propaganda for the events. For example, *DNCr* officials at the 1942 puericulture exhibit utilized the trainstation's loudspeakers to narrate the displays and to transmit speeches given by puericulturists on a variety of topics.²⁰⁸ This was the first

²⁰⁷ The 1939 exhibit had installations in the Cineac Trianon hall, the *Associação Cristão de Moças*, and in the *DNCr* headquarters in Flamengo. Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Exposição de Puericultura 1942*, (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1943), 15-16.

²⁰⁸ "O DNC e as exposições de puericultura," in Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Exposição de Puericultura 1942* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1943), 16. A smaller exhibition was concurrently held in the Palace Hotel.

such event that drew "thousands and thousands" of visitors from the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro each day, according to a report in the *INP's* magazine, *Puericultura*.²⁰⁹ The visual installations of the 1942 exhibit also traveled to cities in the interior of Rio de Janeiro and to the neighboring city of Niteroi.

A similar pattern of media campaigns and mobile displays characterized the *DNCr's* puericulture exhibits of the 1940s. In 1945, the *DNCr* again reported that thousands of visitors passed through the exhibit installed Rio de Janeiro's central station.²¹⁰ The scope and promotion of the events undoubtedly increased throughout the forties despite the ousting of the Vargas administration in 1945. The following chapter will analyze the content and context of National Children's Week in depth; however, it is important to note here that the expositions played a crucial role in the *DNCr* and other officials' strategies to disseminate puericultural practice beginning in the late thirties. Puericulturists envisioned these events as didactic forums whose visual, tactile, and auditory information would impact all sectors of society.

To further their efforts to inculcate puericulture across Brazil, puericulturists, specifically those in the capital and in São Paulo, created publications for public consumption. They viewed parenting magazines, newspaper columns, and monthly departmental bulletins as modes of extending the messages presented during annual exhibitions. Dr. Olinto de Oliveira reflected,

National Children's Week represents a period of intense promotion of puericultural knowledge. However, it is necessary to fully spread the ideas germinated during that week. Periodical publications fulfill this exact need by

²⁰⁹ "A Semana da Criança de 1942," *Puericultura*, ano 2, no. 14, (November 1942), 4. These types of estimates must be carefully considered as no official record of visitation was registered by the *DNCr*

²¹⁰ Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, "As exposções de 1945," in Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano 6, no. 24 (March 1946), 20. .

keeping the public permanently informed and interested in the ideas and methods of child welfare.²¹¹

Three publications in particular demonstrated puericulturists' drive to instill the values and practices of their discipline in the Brazilian population: *Criança* and *Puericultura* parenting magazines and the "Suplemento de Puericultura," a puericulture-focused section of the Rio de Janeiro daily newspaper, *Diário de Notícias*. Two parenting magazines published by federal entities, *Criança: revista para os pais* and *Puericultura*, stood out in the late thirties and early forties. Their pages promoted the moral, physical, and psychological wellbeing of children as it was formulated by contemporary puericulturists. The images presented in these magazines also helped forge a sense of Brazilian national identity through the lens of the child. Chapter Five analyzes the images presented in these magazines in more detail, but a brief description here elucidates a key dimension of the advancement of puericulture through initiatives aimed at the Brazilian public.

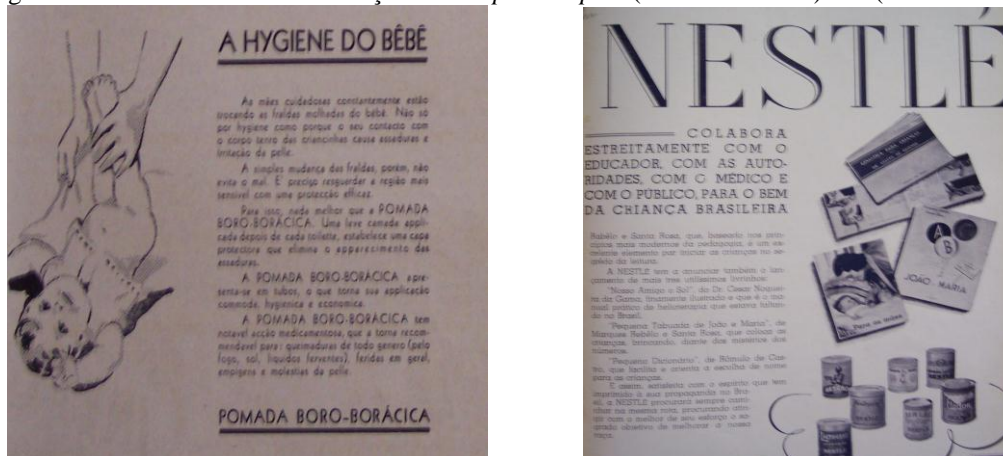
Before its transformation to a national department the *Divisão de Amparo á Maternidade e á Infância* (Division of Maternal and Infant Support), with the support of the *Ministério de Educação* and the *INP*, began publishing a parenting magazine, *Criança*, in 1937. Classified as "puericulture monthly," its directors, Drs. Marcelo Garcia and Jose Martinho da Rocha, filled its pages with a mix of scientifically-oriented articles on child care and health and practical homemaking tools, such as recipes and sewing patterns. Each edition cost \$2 reais and yearly subscriptions were available.²¹²

²¹¹ Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, "Semana da Criança," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. 2, no. 21 (October 1939), 3.

²¹² Dr. Marcelo Garcia was a pediatrician from Rio de Janeiro's Hospital Jesus. Dr. Martinho da Rocha was a Rio-based pediatrician who published several maternal guidebooks in the thirties and forties. The

Works translated from foreign publications on child health made up much of the puericultural content in the early volumes. Its creators intended it to fill a void in the diffusion of puericultural knowledge by directly addressing parents and spreading to the distant corners of Brazil.²¹³ Dr. Olinto de Oliveira applauded the magazine in 1938, calling it the "best and most effective weapon" in the pro-child campaign.²¹⁴ *Criança* also promoted the commemorations of National Children's Week each year by publishing schedules and logistical information, propaganda posters, and previews of the week's most tantalizing attractions, such as performances, giveaways, and contests. The *DNCr* utilized it as a forum for touting its achievements and for soliciting funds. Featured advertisers, such as Nestle and other baby product producers explicitly designed their propaganda to complement the puericultural themes of the magazine.

Figure 2.7: Advertisements in *Criança: revista para os pais* (November 1939) and (October 1939)



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magazine's complete title was: *Criança: revista para os pais- mensário de puericultura, educação e vida escolar, psicologia, literatura, teatro, cinema, desenho, e vestuário infantil.*

²¹³ *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. 1, no. 12 (October 1938), 1 and vol. 3, no. 35 (October 1941), 3.

Criança went out of publication briefly between January 1941 and October 1941 due to the restructuring of the *DNCr*.

²¹⁴ "Criança na opinião dos mestres," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. 1, no. 7 (June/July 1938), 1.

The *INP* also published its own monthly magazine for parents entitled *Puericultura: mensário pré-natal, puericultura, assistência social, e educação*. *Puericultura* presented content similar to that of *Criança*. Although both publications entered in press during the first year of the Vargas-led dictatorship, the Estado Novo (1937-1945), *Puericultura* contained more explicit pro-regime propaganda. Several editions featured articles devoted to the Estado Novo and depictions of Vargas as the nation's father and best child advocate.²¹⁵ Although *Puericultura* exuded a more patriotic tone, it was still a medium for puericultural education. Published by the *INP*, *Puericultura* often contained more technical writing and information. Articles often touted the innovations made by Brazilian puericulturists, such as the use of altitude treatments in airplanes to treat respiratory illness in children.²¹⁶ *Puericultura* functioned as a means of self-promotion for the Estado Novo and as a mode of disseminating knowledge about puericulture and its advancements as a field of study.

Criança and *Puericultura* extended the 1920's genre of child health and hygiene publications aimed specifically at Brazilian mothers, like *Pró-Matre* discussed earlier in the chapter. However, the concurrent definition of puericulture as a concrete set of practices and ideologies in the thirties lent a distinct style to the magazines of the thirties and forties. A guiding principle explicitly labeled, "puericulture" replaced the idea of "eugenics" found in earlier women's/mothers' magazines. Produced under the auspices of the *DNCr*, the *INP*, and the *MES*, the magazines also reflected the nation-making efforts

²¹⁵ See "A criança no estado nacional," *Puericultura*, ano 1, no. 1 (October 1941), 7; "O Estado Novo e a proteção do menor abandonado," *Puericultura*, ano 1, no. 2 (November 1941), 12; "O maior amigo das crianças," *Puericultura*, ano 1, no. 9 (June 1942), 5 and "Presidente Vargas," *Puericultura*, ano 2, no 9 (January 1943), 23.

²¹⁶ "Voando para curar coqueluche," *Puericultura*, ano 1, no. 2 (November 1941), 26-27. According to the article, the use of altitude to help respiratory illness originated in Europe. The Brazilian experiment was coordinated by the Mario Olinto, director of the *INP* and Rio de Janeiro's School of Aeronautics.

of the Vargas administration. A collaborative tone underscored the articles, imagery, and advertisements. Their messages shifted focus away from singular families and households to the nation itself. Puericulture monthlies identified mothers, and to a more limited extent fathers, as part of a collective effort to uplift a generation of Brazilians rather than restricting their impacts to individual households. Whereas its antecedents urged women to follow eugenics and sanitize their own homes and offspring, *Criança* and *Puericultura* attempted to convince mothers that their efforts would fortify the Brazilian family. Portuguese verbs like "colaborar" and "cooperar" appeared throughout the texts and visuals, encouraging proper childrearing as a patriotic duty.

The authors and contributors to *Criança* and *Puericultura* also demonstrated more critical reflection on the specific needs of Brazilian children and tailored their content accordingly. This tendency reflected the ongoing evolution of a uniquely Brazilian brand of puericulture in the thirties and forties. Brazilian puericulture developed amidst the nationally conscious Vargas era and aimed to address contemporaneous environmental and social contours rather than simply reiterating foreign approaches. Puericulture magazines illustrated this evolving self-awareness by featuring content geared toward Brazilian families and their experiences with childrearing and child health. Texts featured information on nutrition based on Brazilian food, treatment of tropical maladies, sun and sea safety, and proper attire for the country's climate.²¹⁷ The authors of both publications transmitted puericultural knowledge using easily recognizable and culturally relevant tropes and scenarios to connect with readers. Puericulture-focused

²¹⁷ The December 1938 edition contained an index of all articles published in volume one. See "Índice do Primeiro Volume de 'Criança,'" *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol 1, no. 12 (December 1938), np.

advertisements and *DNCr* propaganda in *Criança* particularly reinforced the magazines' spirit of *brasilidade*, or national consciousness.

Figure 2.8: Nestle Advertiser
Criança (March 1938)



DNCr visual propaganda
Criança (September 1942)



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Both images pictured above demonstrate advertisers' and magazine editors' attempts to connect to readers by featuring elements of Brazilian culture and society. Nestle's advertisement for infant formula draws on a centuries-old Brazilian tradition of wet-nursing. With the title, "Infant Feeding of Yesterday and Today," the image juxtaposes traditional and modern trends in motherhood and child care. The larger, foregrounded image promotes the use of manufactured powered formula as a standard of modernity and contrasts it with the *ama-seca*, wet nurse, depicted in the background. Nestle emphasizes *Criança's* puericultural themes by establishing the proper maternal role in infant feeding and through the prescription of factory-made nutrition. By portraying the *ama-seca* as an antiquated practice, the image bolsters puericulturists' stance on the eradication of wetnursing in favor of maternal breastfeeding and formula.²¹⁸

²¹⁸ *Criança* consistently featured articles that promoted breastfeeding by biological mothers and the use of formula. Several articles about the transmission of disease also asserted that *ama-secas* transmitted

The advertisement simultaneously conveys a constructed sense of national culture by gesturing toward a shared past and present.

A propaganda poster featured in Figure 2.8 (on right) illustrates another example of the imagery used to instill puericultural practice through the use consensual cultural and social values. Large, bold letters proclaim, "Learn to Eat!," accompanied by smaller text that explains: "not only the poor eat badly, many rich people do it out of ignorance." Reinforcing the textual message are depictions of a well-dressed woman and child disregarding the sign and the more attentive woman of a lower social class, as suggested by her appearance and the bundle she carries. Brazil's social and racial divisions come through in the exaggerated caricatures of class markers. The negligent rich woman and child don gloves and hats, while the other woman wears clothes commonly associated with domestic workers. The image claims both classes of women as parts of the Brazilian social fabric, but tacitly appeals to elite women by clearly asserting their roles, as juxtaposed to non-elites, in the realm of motherhood and family health. In the Nestle advertisement and the *DNCr* propaganda, explicitly Brazilian tropes helps forge a sense of national collectivity for the purposes of inculcating puericulture. These images reified the publication's overarching objective, which was to connect to readers through a shared sense of national belonging and past.

Rio de Janeiro's *Diário de Notícias* also published a puericultural section in its daily newspaper. The "Suplemento" or "Secção de Puericultura" began publication in 1948 and continued until 1953. Dr. Darcy Evangelista, a pediatrician-puericulturist,

illnesses and called for the eradication of wetnursing. See "A mãe deve amamentar o filho," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. 1, no. 4 (January 1938), np.; "Amamentação ao seio," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. 1, no.7, (June/July 1938), np.; "Alimentação artificial do bebê," *Criança: revista para os pais*, ano 1, no. 2 (November 1937), np.

organized the section that ran on Sundays. The content ranged from didactic cartoons and trivia to editorials and articles written by medical professionals. Three of the recurring cartoons, "Evite se puder" (Avoid if you can), "O erro não compensa" (Mistakes don't pay), and "O quê esta errado?" (What is wrong?) offered puericultural lessons alongside cartoon drawings and photographs. These pieces transmitted the basics of puericulture by demonstrating common parenting errors, such as those associated with bathing, feeding, and dressing children. A common distinction between the methods of modern puericulture and the ignorance of previous generations of parents appeared frequently in these cartoons. A 1949 "Evite se puder" pictorial showed a grandmother scoffing at the "bobagens," or frivolities, of a mother's childcare practices. The text urged mothers to disregard the uninformed advice of older relatives in favor of puericultural practices. The final line stated, "no one today would dress their child with the fashions of 1903..." leading readers to conclude that using antiquated advice was equally preposterous.²¹⁹ "O quê esta errado?" portrayed puericulture in a similar light and downplayed the value of traditional and folk approaches to child health and welfare. The cartoons were intended to draw the attention of children, but the content often related to adult mistakes. Figure 2.9 provides an example of this trivia cartoon.

²¹⁹ "Suplemento de Puericultura," *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, (October 13, 1949), section I, pg. 2.

Figure 2.9: "What's wrong?" from the "Suplemento de Puericultura"
Diário de Notícias, RJ, (October 13, 1949)



Biblioteca Nacional

An older female relative tells a lactating mother that her milk is insufficient. "I don't even have to check," the woman claims. The image instructed readers to guess which elements were erroneous. Answers were revealed with musical jingles during the *Reino de Alegria* (Kingdom of Happiness), a children's radio program sponsored by the Ministry of Education and broadcast in Rio de Janeiro. The image and text in such educational cartoons emphasized the dangers of following non-scientific advice about child health and wellbeing. Puericulturists urged women to negate the words of friends and relatives in favor of strict adherence to child hygiene and health as it was prescribed by medical professionals.

Puericultural publications served a dual function in the thirties and forties. They provided a forum for medical professionals hoping to spread the ideology and methods of puericulture. At the same time, these magazines and newspaper features fulfilled

government officials' desires to build a sense of national character around the image of the child. The creators and contributors to these publications drew representations from the Brazilian social imagination in order to produce socially and culturally relevant content.²²⁰ Through their publications puericulturists, whether individual professionals or federal department officials, created a system of representations that scaffolded the dissemination of puericulture and the construction of national identity. An internal logic guided the design of imagery and textual composition of these publications: puericulture redeemed children and children would, in turn, redeem the nation. This reasoning distinguished 1930s and 1940s-era publications from their antecedents. Earlier magazines, such as *Pró-Matre* promoted the salvation of the child for children's sake, and perhaps to a lesser extent for the fortification of humanity. Puericultural publications instead presented a unique coalescence of national consciousness and concern for child health. These ideas overshadowed each other interchangeably in the print media of this period. Ultimately, the texts and imagery presented in these publications contributed to the larger, on-going campaign to extend the influence of puericulture to all segments of society and to all corners of Brazil. Chapter IV further analyzes imagery found in government-sponsored parenting magazines in the thirties and forties. Photographs and illustrations of children in these publications demonstrated the extent to which puericulture, via the depiction of health and whiteness, extended into nation-making.

Returning to the anecdote that opened the chapter, we find that child-focused officials and doctors indeed viewed themselves as uniquely poised to resolve Brazil's enduring health and welfare problems. As Dr. Darcy Evangelista reflected in 1942,

²²⁰ Roger Chartier describes how representations take on collective meaning in "The World as Representation," in *Histories: French Constructions of the Past*, eds. Jacques Revel and Lynn Hunt (New York: New Press, 1995).

beginning in the mid-thirties puericulturists attempted to confront the nation's demographic and population health problems using careful vigilance over reproduction and child rearing. By promoting puericulture, a set of practices and ideologies derived from nineteenth-century French medicine, ruling elites attempted to instill science into the daily lives of child-bearing citizens in order to raise Brazil's international profile as a healthy, modern nation. Brazilian doctors likewise adhered to the tenets of puericulture to further reject the rigid biological determinism of contemporary eugenics theory. Foreign attitudes towards the innate backwardness of tropical and mixed-race populations provided early twentieth-century Brazilian elites a narrow lens with which to view the nation's future. In contrast to foreign and Brazilian eugenists, puericulturists focused on the inherent mutability of the young and promoted an alliance between mothers and doctors to improve overall infant survival rates and insalubrious rearing practices. Puericulturists also relied on educational materials and public forums to mitigate the effects of ignorance, which they perceived as the most detrimental force affecting Brazil's nascent generations. The reign of President Getúlio Vargas (1930-1945) provided a fortuitous political space in which puericulture flourished, giving rise to national-level policies and institutions. Medical professionals from distinct regions of Brazil convened in the capital, Rio de Janeiro, to initiate a series of educational and infrastructural programs that aimed to advance puericulture into the public consciousness. Vargas' personas as the nation's 'Father of the Poor' and the 'Friend of Children' coalesced well with child-focused medicine and social reform and the president became an outspoken supporter of puericulture.

Despite the persistence of child-centered statecraft and medicine during the thirties and forties, puericulture proved unsustainable. Educational campaigns and health and welfare services were limited to Brazil's coastal cities. Puericulture-inspired parenting magazines and public exhibitions also failed to standardize child rearing practices across Brazil as its proponents had envisioned. Remarkably, puericulturists produced scant quantitative evidence that their practices and interventions improved the nation's major population health concerns, such as infant mortality, childhood disease, and malnutrition. The editors of *Criança* and *Puericultura* regularly printed praise from medical professionals, but never included information regarding public consumption of and reactions to the magazines. *DNCr* and *INP* officials likewise did not document the scale to which such educational print media circulated throughout Brazil, nor did they reveal the volume of annual subscriptions to the magazines. Although puericulturists filled these magazines with practical child-rearing information, it remains impossible to gauge precisely who read them and how such forums influenced parenting behaviors. However, the rich rhetorical and visual content of child-focused print media demonstrates the extent to which doctors and government officials endorsed puericulture as a panacea for the social, economic, and health deficiencies that had endured for centuries. Rather than inciting substantive changes in parenting and child wellbeing at the level of the populace, puericulture provided child-focused doctors and policymakers with a framework for imagining Brazil in both the present and future contexts.

Conclusion

As the chapter title suggests, the core philosophy of Brazilian puericulture advanced the idea that science and medicine could transform the nation's children into

healthy, prosperous citizens. Puericulture began circulating within the Brazilian medical academy in the late eighteenth century with the publication of maternal guidebooks. Nineteenth century doctors integrated concepts of French puericulture, particularly those of Drs. Caron and Pinard, into Brazilian pediatric and reproductive medicine. Twentieth-century proponents of puericulture proposed an alliance between doctors and parents, namely mothers, which would theoretically improve the Brazilian race and create a generation of "gods."²²¹ As puericulture evolved from an abstract, foreign ideology to a uniquely Brazilian medical specialization, it consistently provided doctors and policymakers with a framework for understanding children's roles in nation-building projects.

In the early thirties, puericulturists effectively intertwined solutions for Brazil's most pressing child health concerns with strategies for stabilizing the country's demographic profile, at least on a theoretical level. As doctors and pro-child social reformers articulated these objectives, they consequently demonstrated the ideological distinctions between puericulture and contemporary eugenics theory. The Brazilian variant of the French-derived "art and science" was clearly not synonymous with eugenics as it was in the United States and Western Europe. Puericulturists eschewed the idea of biological determinism and focused on improving population health by extending medical infrastructure, services, and health education programs. For Brazilian doctors, the concerns with poor population indicators, like infant mortality, trumped notions of racial improvement or the imagined "whitening" process. Most strikingly, Brazilian doctors used public forums, such as parenting magazines and exhibitions, to advocate

²²¹"Comentários da imprensa sobre as atividades do DNCr," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, vol. V, no. 20 (March 1945), 28.

more tolerant race relations. Puericulturists viewed child rearing as a form of social training, initiated in the home and enhanced through medical guidance, which had the potential to transform Brazil into a prosperous and harmonious nation. Although puericultural exhibits and publications consistently showcased white, healthy children as idealized icons of a new Brazilian generation, doctors openly promoted anti-racism as key part of puericultural practice. This trend, begun in the late thirties, persisted into the following decade when federal officials began propagating images of white and black children to advertise new economic development programs.

During this time the study of puericulture also opened up the male-dominated Brazilian medical profession to women. Despite the rigidly-defined maternal and domestic roles ascribed to Brazilian women by the tenets of puericulture, many male doctors openly endorsed the professionalization of *visitadoras*, or female health workers. Subsequent federal health education and service extension programs would rely on female puericulturists to teach courses, operate clinics, and make home visits. Puericulturists likewise touted the value of puericultural training for young girls and published fictional guidebooks, plays, and radio programs to inculcate "little mothers." Female puericulturists routinely taught these courses and, thus, embodied a paradoxical role as both medical professionals and maternal figures. Despite these innovations, puericulture, as both a concept and set of practices, remained mostly confined to the male Brazilian medical academy. Two puericulturists in particular, Drs. Olinto de Oliveira and Martagão Gesteira, can be credited with moving child-focused medicine out of the laboratory and into the public sphere. Their successes in this domain came during mid-

thirties when the prerogatives of the state shifted to focus squarely on the nation's youngest citizens.

After assuming the presidency following the 1930 Revolution, Getúlio Vargas became the first Brazilian statesman to directly endorse puericulture as a viable platform for formulating public health, welfare, and development policy. His 1932 *Mensagem do Natal*, Christmas Message, ignited a series of institutional and legal reforms aimed at standardizing children's health care, education, and legal protection. Child-centered policymaking gained momentum as Vargas promoted himself as the 'Father of the Poor' and 'Friend of Children.' By the late thirties, a national puericulture institute had emerged as well as professional degree programs that allowed medical students, both men and women, to specialize in puericulture. Doctors affiliated with these new institutions then attempted to move puericulture into the public domain by reformulating an existing genre of parenting magazines and hygiene exhibitions that had emerged earlier in the century. Relying on these forums, puericulturists advanced the idea that *nurture* could overtake *nature* through a series of medical interventions that guided child-rearing practices. Yet, the greatest strides began after 1940 when Vargas' *Estado Novo* institutionalized puericulture by creating Brazil's first federal children's department, the *DNCr*.

Historical documentation related to Brazilian puericultural initiatives provides little insights into the measurable impacts of educational programs and health care services aimed at women and children. On one hand, a federal institution with an organized bureaucracy for implementing puericultural initiatives did not emerge until 1940. Additionally, much of the extant data on puericulture programs pertains to the capital, Rio de Janeiro, the city that housed the *INP* and its affiliated medical

professionals. Federal policymakers set their sites on regions outside Brazil's industrialized Center-South; however, the capital and other major coastal metropolises drew the most resources and personnel for most of the twentieth century. Puericulturists overwhelmingly portrayed their policies and projects as effective and impactful. Particularly after 1940, doctors and pro-child advocates within the *DNCr* and *INP* had to compete with a plethora of other federal departments for government subvention and ideological support. For this reason much of the documentation downplays the shortcomings of puericultural initiatives and instead highlights evidence, however scant, of positive public health and welfare outcomes. Where the analysis of this type of documentation falls short, specifically in revealing substantive transformations in parenting behavior and adherence to puericultural programs, more quantitative examinations may provide new insights. One potential lens may be the geographical charting of puericultural clinics, posts, and other types of infrastructure during the first half of the twentieth century. A better understanding of the impacts of federal programs may be attained by investigating the addresses of these sites and analyzing the data using geographic-mapping software. As the following chapter reveals, Brazilian puericulturists envisioned the comprehensive installation of services and programs across the country, but provided little evidence of precisely how and where such initiatives effectuated change. Geographic mapping may provide more nuanced understanding of the imagined landscape of puericulture and its role in shaping public health outcomes in twentieth-century Brazil.

CHAPTER III

*Discourse into Action: Puericulture Posts and
the Mapping of Child Health and Welfare Services on the Brazilian Landscape*

O Governo da República
pediu, com bondade extrema
a colaboração pública
na solução do problema.
Pois a solução feliz
do problema é, com ternura,
espalhar pelo país
Postos de Puericultura.

-"Amparemos a criança" poem by José Naegele (1942)

An illustration printed in a 1941 volume of the parenting magazine, *Puericultura*, made compelling claim that reasserted a centuries-old institutional hierarchy in Brazil. Intended as a form of visual propaganda, the image and accompanying text characterized the puericulture post as an institution equal in importance to the church and the school. The article (Figure 3.1) portrayed these three entities as a trifecta through which governance was most effective.

Figure 3.1: "The Church, the School, and the Puericulture Post"
Puericultura, ano 1, no. 1, (October 1941)



Intriguingly, it claimed the puericulture post was vital springboard that prepared children to cultivate their intellectual and spiritual selves in the other two institutions.²²² For the first time in Brazil's history, a medical institution symbolically took precedence over the church and school, two pillars of society since the colonial era. Since its foundation in the sixteenth century, the Catholic Church existed as the highest authority and remained highly influential in the twentieth century. Education through private Catholic schools and, later, state-run schools had represented an important step in Brazil's modernization in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Thus, the theoretical introduction of a new institution challenged conventional views on the tenor of Brazilian social life. The image declared the puericulture post and medical science more generally as key purveyors of change in twentieth-century Brazil. Although the image did not ignite a widespread media campaign, its striking reformulation of institutional hierarchy clearly demonstrated the imagined role puericulture would play in shaping public health projects in the late 1930s and throughout the 1940s. Puericulturists envisioned posts and clinics as transformative institutions, capable of improving what they perceived as detrimental and/or backward practices related to parenting, domestic life, and child health.

In addition to publications and public exhibitions, puericulturists of the thirties and forties innovated Brazil's medical infrastructure for the advancement of their practices. Contemporary puericulturists decried the absence of comprehensive healthcare for women and children, blaming this lacuna for Brazil's high infant mortality and childhood disease rates. Obstetrical and pediatric care existed only for those in urban areas or rural peoples who had the ability to travel to nearby clinics. Even within cities, such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, suburban populations lacked access to medical

²²² "A igreja, a escola, e o posto de puericultura," *Puericultura*, ano 1, no.1, (October 1941), 21.

services due to distance and poverty.²²³ The metaphor that described Brazil as one "immense hospital" was untrue from the standpoint of actual infrastructure.²²⁴ Following this characterization, the impoverished and rural masses of the population could be considered potential "patients" for medical services that remained out of reach.

Mid-twentieth century puericulturists envisaged puericulture posts to provide both education and prophylactic care to mothers and children throughout the pre and post-natal stages. The *DNCr* stipulated that each post specifically aimed to: conserve children's health, prevent illnesses, subsidize nutrition, aid development, educate mothers, and stimulate social interactions.²²⁵ They did not aspire to initiate a new set of puericultural practices and medical interventions, but to bring medical services and personnel into contact with underserved populations and modernize approaches to child health and welfare. Puericulture posts provided a way to observe, register, and manage child health and rearing practices where the field of medicine had little previous impact.²²⁶ As the *DNCr*, a federal department, funded and operated the majority of the posts, this initiative also represented the extension of the state into new regions and among new populations.

Puericulture posts also functioned as sites where traditional values and approaches interacted with those constructed by professionals, intellectuals, and the federal government. Gauging the impacts of official ideologies on individual and group habits raises an important methodological challenge. While *DNCr* and other institutions

²²³ On the availability of pediatric services in Rio de Janeiro during this period see Marko, *When They Were the Nation's Children*, Chapters III and IV.

²²⁴ Sanitarian Miguel Pereira made this assertion in 1916 in reference to the lack of public works and hygiene outside Brazil's capital and São Paulo.

²²⁵ Dr. Flammarion Costa, "Objetivos e realizações do DNC-palestra pronunciada no dia 22 de dezembro de 1947," in Ministério de Educação e Saúde: Boletim do Instituto de Puericultura da Universidade do Brasil, ano 6, no. 8 (1948), 8.

²²⁶ The idea that medical infrastructure and services signify literal and figurative control over human subjects comes from Michel Foucault, *Birth of the Clinic: an archaeology of medical perception* (New York: Vintage Books, 1973).

provide copious evidence of the installation and operation of puericulture posts across Brazil, they do not attest to effects of such initiatives on the ground. For example, *DNCr* records convey the number and locations of puericulture posts, as well as data about the services offered and the amount of people served. However, these documents do not reveal the nature of interactions between medical professionals and the public or their implications. *DNCr* officials boast about the thousands of educational pamphlets they distributed at the posts, but they do not report who read them, nor *how* or *if* they changed behaviors. As such it is essential to adjust the argument according to the documentation analyzed. Official data reveals only the measures taken by puericulturists to spread their practices to regions and populations they viewed as deficient in medical services. To make larger claims about their impacts would attribute more meaning to the documents than they possess. *DNCr* and *MES* documents occasionally demonstrate the correlation between lowered infant mortality rates and the presence of puericulture posts. These types of evidence must be contextualized accordingly. Documents originating in federal departments have the potential to overestimate or misrepresent how their services impact the public in order to maintain funding and interest. Likewise, as the *DNCr* itself often argued, infant mortality rates were difficult to ascertain in many parts of Brazil due to unregistered births. What was clear from such documentation was a concerted, well-designed effort to promote child health through puericultural interventions and ultimately fortify Brazil itself.

The remainder of this chapter explores these efforts and argues that the establishment of puericulture posts was largely a symbolic gesture of authority. While these centers certainly impacted populations by occasionally offering access to medicines

and food subsidies, they were limited by a consistent lack of both human and financial resources. Perhaps the greatest repercussion of this initiative was the shift in the state and institutional self-perceptions. Puericulture posts allowed the federal government and child welfare departments to feel that they were harnessing and modernizing Brazil. The production of maps and data about the development of puericultural infrastructure created a sense of control and authority over peoples and places that remained outside the state's purview.

What were puericulture posts and how did officials construct them as tools for the dissemination of their prescriptions and practices? A drive to deliver medical services to rural and impoverished regions and peoples took hold in the late nineteenth century with the sanitarian movement. The adoption of a federal system in 1891 had symbolized the aggrandizement of the central state and its obligation to serve Brazil's rarefied populations. Recuperating and integrating the nation became fundamental objectives that medical professionals and officials achieved through scientific inquiry, as well as public health, sanitation, and education campaigns.²²⁷ The first puericulture posts built on these principles and on those created by charitable institutions. Early twentieth-century child-saving institutions relied on models of assistance established by lay and religious charities, but relied on science, rather than goodwill and spirituality, to fuel their endeavors.²²⁸ Puericulture posts that emerged in the late thirties and surged in the

²²⁷ For an historical assessment of early medical and scientific interventions see Nísia Trindade Lima and Gilberto Hochman, "Condenado pela raça, absolvido pela medicina: o Brasil descoberto pelo movimento sanitaria da primeira república," in eds., Marcos Chor Maio and Ricardo Ventura Santos, *Raça, ciência, e sociedade*. On medical interventions in Rio de Janeiro see Jeffrey Needell, "The Revolta Contravacina in 1904: the revolt against " modernization" in *Belle Epoque Rio de Janeiro*," *The Americas*, 67:2 (May 1987), 233-269.

²²⁸ Maria Luiza Marcilio, "A roda de expostos e a criança abandonada na História do Brasil, 1735-1950," in *História Social da Infância no Brasil*, org. Marcos Cezar de Freitas (São Paulo: Contexto, 2006), 78.

following decade indeed symbolized the fusion of charitable and medical services by offering medical services along with material, moral, and educational support.

The first comprehensive proposal for puericulture posts grew out of the 1934 National Campaign for Child Nutrition organized by Dr. Olinto de Oliveira in the capital. As a result of roundtable discussions held at the conference, Dr. Waldyr de Abreu crafted a plan for what he labeled, "*consultórios de higiene infantil*," or infant hygiene centers. He contended that the main goal of the center would be to "accompany the life of the child, see her, examine her often to correct the minor problems that thwart development as a result of a mother's ignorance or negligence."²²⁹ Prevention through proactive and consistent care stood out as the main goals of this early model for the puericulture post. Abreu even included the well-being of the family and community as the ultimate repercussions of the installation of such centers. His basic design in 1935, a small scale clinic with one doctor and an itinerant nurse, was a precursor for the development of various types of posts in the latter part of the decade.

The *Departamento da Criança*, the institution founded by Dr. Moncorvo Filho in 1919, also precipitated the emergence of puericulture posts in the thirties. Although his Rio de Janeiro-based department did not officially designate its services as "puericulture posts," it offered a variety of services, such as human milk banks, nurseries, and maternity centers. The department divided its public works projects into "puericultura intrauterina" and "puericultura extrauterina," that treated women and infants in the pre and post-natal periods respectively. It estimated that 251 locations offering these services

²²⁹ Dr. Waldyr Abreu, "Consultórios de higiene infantil e sua organização nas pequenas cidades," in Ministério da Educação e Saúde Pública/Diretoria de Protecção á Maternidade e á Infância, *Campanha Nacional da Alimentação da Criança* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1935), preface. Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, GC642.

existed throughout Brazil by December of 1933.²³⁰ Again, this type of data offers a general picture of how institutions assessed their services and demonstrates that this specific department installed various puericultural sites. The degree to which the department maintained these sites and their impacts remains unknown.

When the *DNCr* became a federal institution in 1940, the establishment of puericulture posts became one of its most pressing objectives. The department published special pamphlets that contained instructions for the construction and operation of these posts. Three basic layouts existed: type A, B, and C. Posts considered "type A" served urban and rural locations with ten to twenty thousand people. "Type B" puericulture posts provided for locales with three to ten thousand residents and "Type C" met the needs of any village or town with a population under three thousand.²³¹ Puericulturist envisioned the posts as a solution to high infant mortality rates and designed them to treat women and children exclusively. The educational programs offered were intended for mothers and future mothers only and puericulturists hoped the gathering of women for these services would promote a communal effort to valorize children. Figure 3.2 shows a *DNCr* propaganda poster that depicts the puericulture post as a friendly and supportive environment.

²³⁰ Departamento da Criança no Brasil, *Rápida Notícia sobre o Departamento da Criança no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: Typografia Lyra, 1934), anexo no. 1. Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, GC640.

²³¹ Dr. Levi Queiroga Lafetã, "Ligeiras considerações em torno de um plano de amparo á criança e ao adolescente" in Ministério da Educação e Saúde, *Boletim do Instituto de Puericultura da Universidade do Brasil*, ano 8, no. 6 (1948), 33-35.

Figure 3.2: Propaganda for a *DNCr* Puericulture Post

Boletim Trimensal do Departamento da Criança (September 1942)
Biblioteca Nacional

Puericulturists portrayed the posts in this light to forge trust among women who previously had limited interactions with medical professionals. They hoped to convey the post simultaneously as a rigorous clinical environment and as a place for friendly congregation.²³² The personnel directing each post kept records or *fichas*, pertaining to each child and mother. Women who used the post's services were required to present civil documentation such as marriage licenses and birth certificates.²³³ The provision of this information consequently allowed the federal government, via the *DNCr*, to better track demographic data such as marriage rates, illegitimacy, and infant mortality. In this way, puericulture posts were a part of a larger project to incorporate the Brazilian population and manipulate child-rearing behaviors. The proliferation of departmental reports and quantitative data suggests that puericulturists' efforts to record and collect

²³² Dr. Olinto de Oliveira reified this point in his 1944 manual for expectant mothers, *Esperando o Filhinho*, 2nd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1945).

²³³ Martagão Gesteira, *Puericultura* (1945), 621-632.

information about the posts' patients took precedence over the large-scale child health and welfare objectives the posts originally aimed to fulfill.

From the earliest discussions of these posts, puericulturists agreed that they would be the most cost-effective way to spread their practices and monitor child health in areas without medical services. The *DNCr* stipulated that the posts should be simple, containing a small exam room with scales and basic implements and a waiting area.²³⁴

Dr. Olinto de Oliveira suggested that support services, specifically child health and hygiene vigilantes or "*visitadoras*," be provided by volunteers and designated upper-class women as the best candidates.²³⁵ By the late 1940's, the debate about how to lower the costs of posts caused dissention among puericulturists from different districts. By this period state delegations and state-level children's departments had taken the reigns of the drive to disseminate puericulture through these centers. One point of disagreement arose over the provision of human and powered milk. A *DNCr* official raised the question, "what good does it do to teach mothers how to prepare food that does not exist?"²³⁶

Another delegate from Paraná's State Children's Department proposed the incorporation of pre-fabricated wooden posts that could be easily installed and maintained in a variety of climates and terrains. The *DNCr* decided to adopt this plan in 1949 and construct its own manufactured posts to increase the cost-benefit ratio for the puericulture post

²³⁴ Ministério de Educação e Saúde/Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Associações de Proteção à Maternidade e à Infância*, 3rd edition (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1944), 10-11.

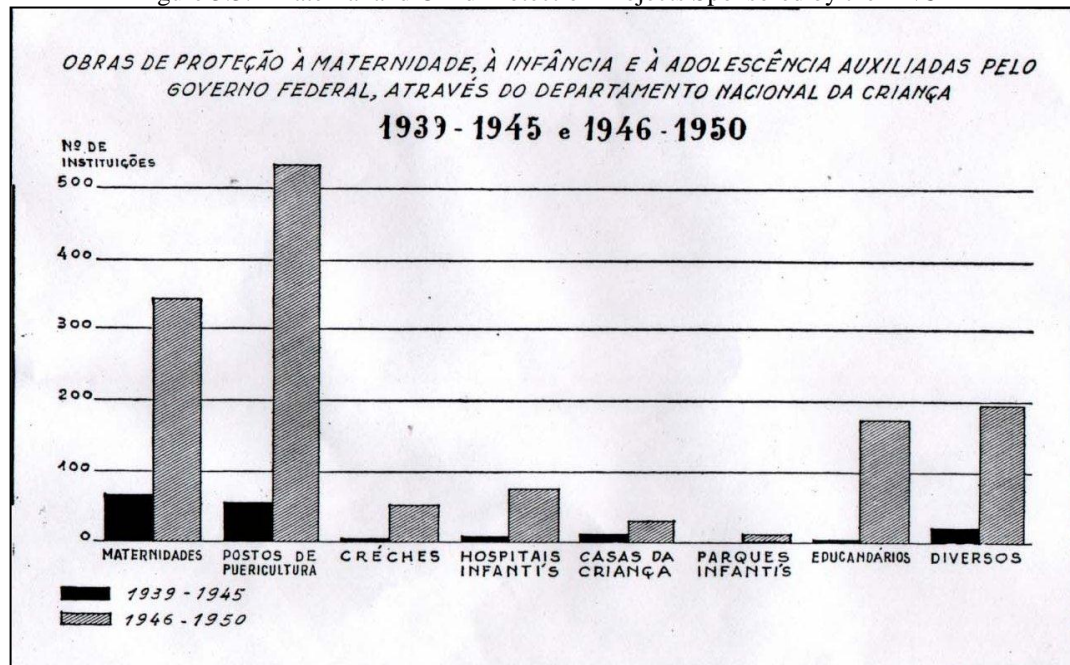
²³⁵ *Ibid*, pg 11. He later suggested that volunteers needed to be paid if they were working in rural areas and that they should be given a car to facilitate their duties. Olinto de Oliveira, *Postos de Puericultura*, 3rd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1944), 8.

²³⁶ Dr. Levi Queiroga Lafetã, "Ligeiras considerações em torno de um plano de amparo á criança e ao adolescente" in Ministério da Educação e Saúde, *Boletim do Instituto de Puericultura da Universidade do Brasil*, ano 8, no. 6, (1948), 32.

program.²³⁷ Despite these cost-saving measures, the *DNCr* consistently struggled to supply resources and personnel to puericulture posts. The actual construction of the posts was of primary importance while maintenance of the facilities and services remained secondary considerations.

Figure 3.3 illustrates the rapid increase in the construction of puericulture posts roughly corresponding to the Estado Novo period (1937-1945) and the presidency of Eurico Dutra (1946-1951). It demonstrates the proliferation of puericulture posts sponsored by the *DNCr* and its cooperating programs, such as the *CNC* (National Children's Campaign) during these two periods. As the graph clearly demonstrates, puericulture posts received the most federal support and far outnumbered other types of child welfare services.

Figure 3.3: "Maternal and Child Protection Projects Sponsored by the *DNCr*"



O Departamento Nacional da Criança, quatro anos de administração, 1947-1950
Clemente Mariani Collection, CPDOC, Cma 75f

²³⁷ "Postos de Puericultura, a prova da qua, amplas e a baixo custo-A iniciativa do DEC do Paraná será seguida em grande escala pelo DNCr," Suplemento de Puericultura, *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, (6 March 1949), section III, pg. 8. The prefabricated posts were estimated to save CR\$20.000,00 per post.

Federal government expenditure on all states during the period 1946-1950 was 128 million cruzeiros with approximately twenty percent of that total going to the federal district of Rio de Janeiro.²³⁸ As a result of this imbalance in the allocation of resources, the federal district reported more improvement in overall health, numbers of people frequenting the posts, and lower infant mortality. Divided into districts for the distribution of public health services, this region registered one puericulture post for every 15,000 inhabitants. Dr. Alvaro Aguiar, chief of the fifth district, cited the lowering of infant mortality in the federal district to 8/1000, or eight deaths out of every thousand live births in 1943.²³⁹ He attributed this improvement the increased number of clinical births, instead of home births, and the frequency of visits for early infant respiratory and intestinal illnesses as the most beneficial. Puericulture posts provided free services and food subsidies. Such provisions attracted some citizens who otherwise would have had no access to medical services or supplemental nutrition. Rio de Janeiro's newspaper *Diário de Notícias* listed the locations of the city's free puericulture posts in its *Suplemento de Puericultura*.

Advancing and Showcasing State Power in Brazil's Interior

As puericultural programs and institutions multiplied in the 1940s, officials and professionals began discussing new territorial and demographic targets. The federalization of the *DNCr* in 1940 shifted the scale of Brazil's "child problem" for elites

²³⁸ *O Departamento Nacional da Criança, quatro anos de administração, 1947-1950* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1951), 11 (quadro I).

Clemente Mariani Collection, CPDOC, Cma 75f

²³⁹ *Boletim de Higiene e Saúde Pública-Rio de Janeiro*, ano 1, no 1 (August 1943), 46. Dr. Aguiar considered this a very low infant mortality rates. Estimates of infant mortality in the entire federal district in 1937 were around 170/1000. See "Assistência a infância no ano 1937," *Puericultura*, ano 2, nos. 18/19 (March/April 1937), 15.

involved in resolving it. Policies applied in the capital and other urban areas did not signify a triumph of the state and medical science over Brazil's high infant mortality rates nor childhood diseases and deficiencies. Urban populations and landscapes merely served as ready-made laboratories where federal programs proved effective or languished. In the case of puericultural initiatives the services and resources allocated to major coastal metropolises had demonstrated the energy and strategy of the *DNCr* and other institutions. However, detailed investigations of the effects of puericultural interventions in the federal district and other major cities did not surface until the late forties. Therefore, the drive to expand such programs nationwide arose from the central state's corporatist prerogatives and faith in the *DNCr*'s approaches rather than from quantitative evidence of improvement. Brazil's land size and widely dispersed interior populations provoked both intellectual curiosities among puericulturists and challenged state officials to re-imagine the relationship between territory and authority.

In the early 1940s, during the height of Vargas' *Estado Novo*, ministry representatives and puericulturists set their sites on rural Brazil. *DNCr* officials in particular strove to demonstrate the department's command over what James C. Scott calls, "non-state spaces," or areas perceived to have the most attenuated child health and welfare problems and where access to state resources remained scarce. As opposed to "state spaces," "non-state spaces" are less politically and economically visible to central authority and are perceived by officials as disordered and uncivilized.²⁴⁰ Scott's work provides a model for understanding the Brazilian federal government and *DNCr* officials'

²⁴⁰See James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 11-16.

categorization of territory, conventionally divided into the "civilized" and modern coastal areas and the unsettled, disorderly rural areas of the interior.

In 1941, just a year after the foundation of the *DNCr*, the department's director, Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, invoked a tree metaphor for imagining the relationship between central state health and welfare programs and Brazil's interior. He envisioned the *DNCr* as the tree's trunk, the "supreme entity whose foliage extends across the national territory." Intriguingly, he identified the "roots" of the department's program as the municipal-level interventions that reached families in the smallest towns of the interior.²⁴¹ In addition to this central metaphor, the expansion-oriented objective gave rise to a new set of discourse and symbols used by intellectuals and officials who adapted child-centered programs outside the urban context.

Based in capital and other cities, earlier puericulturists' discussions focused on mitigating specific biological, environmental and social "threats" that affected children. As a result, most of their imagery and language concentrated on identifying these dangers and educating the public on how to avoid them. Now, puericultural discourse fixated on new challenges, specifically Brazil's unwieldy size and the heterogeneous character of rural peoples. Propagandistic language found in puericultural print media and public forums also identified the errors of rural child-rearing and explicitly promoted the modernizing powers of puericulture. Maps became predominant symbols in the *DNCr*'s propaganda and exhibitions, replacing visual depictions of planned infrastructure and data charts that had been the norm in the previous decade. In speeches and texts, puericulturists based in the capital often measured their programs' progress in terms of

²⁴¹ Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, "Departamento Nacional da Criança." *Puericultura*, ano 1, no. 1 (October 1941), 2. In his metaphor, Olinto de Oliveira described the "branches" of the state's child health and welfare initiatives as the regional delegations and state Children's Departments that reported directly to the *DNCr*.

"kilometers-covered" and conjured images of an advancing frontier of medical and educational interventions. Puericulture effectively became a tool for extending state authority into remote rural areas of Brazil. State officials and professionals envisaged that a standardization of domestic life and child-rearing practices would modernize and unify Brazil. In effect, discussions of how to disseminate puericultural knowledge served as proxies for asserting state control in areas previously beyond the central government's purview. The reproduction of a healthy and productive generation of Brazilians was now a national project that involved the cooperation of all citizens despite their levels of detachment from the capital. As such, puericultural projects forced elites to redefine *who*, in terms of population, and *what*, in terms of territory, belonged to the Brazilian nation. Pro-child attitudes developed throughout the first part of the century had solidified elite professionals' and officials' beliefs that the body politic's youngest members were its most valuable. Therefore, the amplification of puericultural programs into the interior represented the identification of both the needs and potential of a new demographic category of 'Brazilian.' Protecting and fortifying the Brazilian child now entailed engaging with the *sertanejo*, the *campesino*, and the *indio*. Precisely how and where to forge these interactions would become the major source of debate and discussion between puericulturists in the capital.

Histories of Brazil often frame the incursion of authoritative institutions (i.e. the Crown, the federal government, or the church) into the interior as a mode of "civilizing" both people and land. Whether or not scholars specifically employ the word, "civilize" they identify the powerholders' intentions as such. In both the history and historiography of Brazil, the broad term "civilization" has signified many different processes. Common

to all of these is the interaction between previously autonomous groups and/or ideologies, one self-identified as dominant and another, designated by the former, as 'other.' Projects that fit the historical model of 'civilizing' tend to incorporate or neutralize the 'other' and, in turn, legitimate the belief system and power of the dominant force. Most recently scholars of Brazil and other contexts have explored how public health and educational campaigns, as well as scientific inquiry represent attempts to assert institutional authority and/or state sovereignty.²⁴² Many of these works reveal the contested nature of 'civilizing' programs by questioning the assumption that power and knowledge are imposed unilaterally. This body of scholarship also cautions against appropriating the word 'civilize' uncritically.

In the case of mid-twentieth-century Brazil, puericulturists and other professionals did employ the word *civilizar*. The term signified the transformation of what they perceived as antiquated, rural child-rearing practices into the modern techniques formulated in urban, coastal settings. For elites engaged in pro-child initiatives, Brazil struggled with "heterogeneous civilization," or vast disparities in welfare, culture, and development.²⁴³ In his 1932 *Mensagem do Natal*, Getúlio Vargas disdainfully compared

²⁴² For works on Brazil, see Jose Gondra, *Artes de civilizar: medicina, higiene, e educação escolar na Corte Imperial* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora EdUERJ, 2004); Luiz Antônio de Castro Santos, "O pensamento sanitário na Primeira República: uma ideologia de construção da nacionalidade" *Dados: Revista de Ciências Sociais*, 28:2 (1985), 193-210; Teresa Meade, "Civilizing Rio." For works on other contexts, see Warwick Anderson, "'Where Every Prospect Pleases and Only Man Is Vile,': Laboratory Medicine as Colonial Discourse," *Critical Inquiry*, 18:3 (Spring 1982), 506-529; David Arnold, *Colonizing the Body: State Medicine and Epidemic Disease in Nineteenth-Century India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Alison Bashford, *Imperial Hygiene: A Critical History of Colonialism, Nationalism, and Public Health* (Bastingsoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2004); Anne-Emanuelle Birn, "A Revolution in Rural Health? The Struggle Over Local Health Units in Mexico, 1928-1940," *Journal of the History of Medicine*, 35 (January 1998), 43-76; Gilberto Hochman and Diego Armus, eds., *Cuidar, controlar, e curar: ensaios históricos sobre saúde e doença na América Latina e Caribe* (Rio de Janeiro: Fiocruz, 2004); Meghan Vaughn, *Curing Their Ills: Colonial Medicine and African Illness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

²⁴³ Dr. Silveira Sampaio, "Civilização e enriquecimento," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano II, no. 8 (March 1942), 43.

infant mortality rates in Brazil with indices seen in the "tropical cities" of Africa and Asia, but lauded the capital for its relatively low death rates.²⁴⁴ He cited high infant mortality as a primary cause of what some elites imagined as Brazil's uneven and incomplete development. At the time, infant mortality remained a poorly understood phenomenon, which made it an effective scapegoat. A decade later, after observing varying levels of infant mortality and birth rates across both urban and rural areas, officials and professionals in the capital concluded that variation itself generated Brazil's child health and welfare problems.

Puericulturists in particular cited inconsistencies in public health and educational services in Brazil's "hinterland" as the primary obstacles to development. Instead of blaming abstract demographic indicators like infant mortality and birth rates as earlier officials had done, these specialists indicted the inadequacies of federal programs in the interior. As a result, standardization of services, resource allocation, and education emerged as the primary policy approaches for mitigating the effects of poor health and impoverishment. Specifically under Vargas' Estado Novo administration, initiatives designed to "civilize" promoted uniformity and modernization. Puericulturists associated with the *DNCr* and other officials based their interventions on so-called modern models of hygiene, reproduction, nutrition, domestic life, and child care that had been established in Brazil's metropolises.

Although many puericulture-oriented source materials invoke the term *civilizar*, efforts to inculcate child health and rearing practices in Brazil's interior were not simply

²⁴⁴ A copy of the speech's text can be found in CPDOC's Gustavo Capamena Collection, see "Mensagem do Natal," Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, Rolo 60, foto 528.

"civilizing projects."²⁴⁵ Rather, the collective efforts of the federal government and the *DNCr* represented a dual process of incorporation and, what anthropologist James C. Scott identifies as domestication. Scott defines domestication as a process of "social gardening" by which urban elites render the landscape and people of the countryside more identifiable and accessible.²⁴⁶ For the Estado Novo administration, domestication entailed the extension of state presence into disconnected regions. Its main objectives were to harness untapped resources, modernize infrastructure, standardize social and cultural norms, and ultimately build a national 'family.' In this spirit Vargas utilized the motto, "March to the West," as a rallying cry for what he called an "immense system of colonization."²⁴⁷ The strengthening of existing national-level institutions and the creation of new ones, like the *DNCr*, provided the means for reaching these goals.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁵ It is interesting to note that some Brazilian historians working on state and medical interventions in the interior use the idea of a "civilizing process" and often rely on and/or critique the framework introduced by German sociologist, Norbert Elias, in his two-volumed work, *The Civilizing Process*, revised edition, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994). A 2009 conference held at the Casa de Oswaldo Cruz, a research and educational department of the Fundação Instituto Oswaldo Cruz in Rio de Janeiro, was organized under the title, "Civilizar o Brasil." Papers presented there offered diverse historical reflections on the incursion of scientific experiments, medicine, and health reform in non-coastal areas of Brazil. For works that specifically frame puericulture as a "civilizing process," see Ana Maria Godinho Lima, "Maternidade Higiénica" and Lílíana Müeller Larocca and Vera Regina Beltrão Marques, "Higiene e infância no Paraná: a missão de formar hábitos saudáveis (1931-1949), *Texto e Contexto-Enfermagem*, 19:2 (April/June 2010), 309-316.

²⁴⁶ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 184.

²⁴⁷ *Ministério de Agricultura no Governo Getúlio Vargas, (1930-1934)* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço de Documentação-Ministério de Agricultura, 1945), 17. The specific goals of Vargas' colonization program involved the development of the following states: Amazonas, Pará, Maranhão, Piauí, as well as other territories. Such projects were built around *colônias agrícolas* and *núcleos coloniais*, or rural administrative centers, where dispersed populations could receive medical services, state bureaucratic services, and development aid. For a detailed examination of these operations and colonizing policy under the Estado Novo, see Seth Garfield, *Indi genous Struggle at the Heart of Brazil: state Policy, Frontier Colonization, and the Xavante Indians 1947-1988* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001).

²⁴⁸ The creation of the *Conselho de Imigração e Colonização* (Immigration and Colonization Council) in 1938 was one of the most notable institutional developments. The department handled "population" issues, such as immigration quotas, internal migration, and land settlement. See "Povoamento," in DIP, *A Exposição Nacional do Estado Novo, 1939* (Rio de Janeiro: DIP, 1939), 38. On the council's role in immigration restrictions, see Jeffrey Lesser, *Welcoming the Undesirables: Brazil and the Jewish Question* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995).

During the Estado Novo, these projects were bolstered era by a renewed reverence for the Portuguese Empire and its colonizing prowess. In an effort to mimic the imperial "glory days," intellectuals and policymakers created programs to explore and reap Brazil's physical and human resources.²⁴⁹ Along with policy initiatives forged in this vein, officials, particularly those in the *Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda* (*DIP*, Department of Press and Propaganda), crafted textual and visual materials that expressed discursive and symbolic dominance. They produced maps, propaganda posters, informational pamphlets, and public exhibitions that illustrated its development initiatives and demonstrated the central state's power over Brazil's land and people.

In 1938, a national exhibit, *A Exposição Nacional do Estado Novo*, laid bare the regime's vision. The event presented the achievements and aspirations related to settling, modernizing, and industrializing Brazil's interior. *DIP* organizers explicitly promoted national unity through the use of "easily readable visuals, an abundance of photographic documentation, and simple demonstrations" that allowed the "common man off the street to appreciate Brazil's accomplishments and potential."²⁵⁰ As historian Daryle Williams argues, Brazil's exhibition at the 1939 World's Fair in New York also showcased industrial innovations that harnessed vast natural resources. Maps and visual representations of Brazil's geographical commodities, such as coffee-producing mountains and navigable rivers, appeared at both the *Estado Novo* exhibit and the

²⁴⁹ Omar Ribeiro Thomaz, "Do Saber Colonial ao Luso-Tropicalismo: "Raça" e "Nação" nas Primeiras Décadas do Salazarismo," in orgs. Chor Maio and Ventura Santos, *Raça, ciência, e sociedade*, 88-90.

²⁵⁰ Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda, *A Exposição Nacional do Estado Novo, 1939* (Rio de Janeiro: DIP, 1939), 1. As the *DIP's* report demonstrates, event organizers purported to encompass Vargas-era development achievements beginning in 1930. The 1939 report states, "eight years is only a moment in the life of a nation...aiming to show the synthesis of Brazilian life in the past eight years, the government organized a national exposition of the Estado Novo."

World's Fair Brazil Pavilion.²⁵¹ The incorporation of these propagandistic materials served the administration's desires to portray Brazil as economically and culturally 'modern' and to characterize the Estado Novo as a twentieth-century extension of Portuguese colonizing acumen.

Puericulturists' discursive and visual representations of Brazil's interior and their use of maps and demographic data charts fell in line with this overarching state prerogative. They based their understandings of the interior on historical conceptions of Brazil's geography that, in the words of historian Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, construed the non-coastal areas as "sparsely populated and out of touch with urban culture."²⁵² By the early forties, Estado Novo-era federal officials had established the use of geographical depictions to codify state authority and claim territory under the banner of *brasilidade*. With the creation of the *DNCr* in 1940, puericulturists also began using maps and other territory-focused materials to involve and co-opt diffuse peoples in a single discourse and set of practices.²⁵³ For *DNCr* officials and associated medical professionals, the crafting of maps and depictions of the geographical scope of child

²⁵¹ Williams, *Culture Wars*, 201-207. Armando Vidal, head of Brazil's 1939 World's Fair Commission, explicitly aimed to differentiate Brazil from other "tropical" countries in the hemisphere and "maintain an image of Western civilization." For more the organization of the World's Fair display, see *O Brasil na Feira Mundial de Nova York de 1939-Relatório Geral* by Armando Vidal Comissário Geral do Brasil (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1941), 27.

²⁵² Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, *Raízes do Brasil*, 26th edition (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1995), 101.

²⁵³ Historian Valerie Kivelson argues that conventional theories of the 'power' of mapping overlook the ways that states wield such representations to co-opt, rather than obliterate local interests. See Valerie Kivelson, "Cartography, Autocracy, and State Powerlessness: the Use of Maps in Early Modern Russia," *Imago Mundi*, 51, (1999), 84. Kivelson revises the conclusions of other historians who claim that state-generated maps work as tools of oppression. On this line of analysis, see Matthew Edney, *Mappign and Empire: the Geographical Construction of British India, 1765-1843* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997); Manu Goswami, *Producing India: from Colonial Economy to National State* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); Geoff King, *Mapping Reality: an Exploration of Cultural Cartographies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996); and Walter Mignolo, *The Darker Side of the Renaissance: Literacy, Colonization, and Territoriality* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1995).

health outreach initiatives were important symbolic steps in the dissemination of puericulture across Brazil.

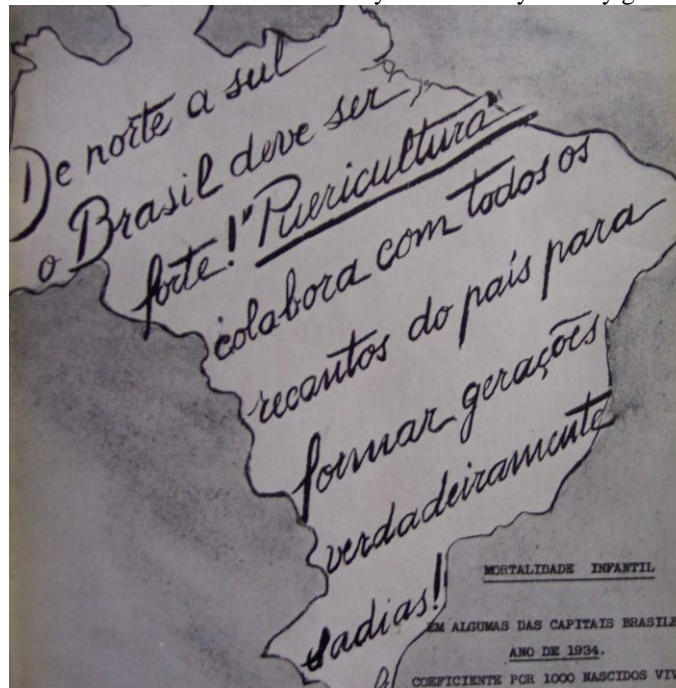
Departmental publications and public exhibitions contained imagery that reinforced the link between well-cultivated, healthy children and Brazil's overall development. Like other institutions under the Estado Novo regime, the *DNCr* and *INP* focused more energy on representations of territorial expansion than on enacting actual puericultural programs in the interior. Throughout the late thirties and forties, copious amounts of imagery and rhetoric centered on the domestication of rural areas via puericultural practices emerged in print media and events. An analysis of these materials reveals the coalescence of puericulturists' and national-level officials' developmental prerogatives in this period. Such representations of Brazil's landscape and interior populations also demonstrate how puericulturists imagined stable child health and welfare as the linchpins of modernization, unification, and national progress.

Imagined Landscapes: maps, mobile posts, and modern nation-making in the 1940's

Figure 3.4 typifies how puericulturists used visual representations to stake ideological claims and take symbolic ownership of Brazil's interior. Appearing in a 1941 edition of the *INP* parenting magazine *Puericultura*, the image uses text and Brazil's national outline to promote puericulture's expansion.²⁵⁴ Emblazoned across the map, the word "*Puericultura*" signifies both the imagined disseminative power of the magazine and the puericulture campaign itself.

²⁵⁴Instituto Nacional de Puericultura, *Puericultura* (October 1941), 3.

Figure 3.4: "From North to South, Brazil should be strong! "Puericultura" collaborates with all corners of the country to form truly healthy generations!"



Puericultura (October 1941)-Biblioteca Nacional

With text stretched across the expanse of Brazil, the map expresses puericulturists' symbolic appropriation of territory. The image also establishes a fixed boundary within which puericulturists draw upon an imagined national consciousness to ascribe their ideologies and practices.²⁵⁵ Puericulturists' rhetoric in print media and departmental documents, as well as in public exhibitions also buttressed the overarching message of this image. Specifically, the *DNCr*'s public educational activities and propaganda reinforced federal administrators' renewed affinity for the legacy of Portuguese "conquest." Puericultural language and imagery also supported the regime's desire to spur development through the codification and command of Brazil's diverse regions.

²⁵⁵ Benedict Anderson analyzes the foundations and evolution of "imagined communities" and how delineations of territory reinforce national identity formation. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

Beginning in the late thirties and throughout the following decade, puericulturists utilized explicit language that signaled their preoccupations with the nationwide dissemination and standardization of child-focused health and rearing practices. Often, they characterized projects aimed at remote regions as "crusades" and "missions."²⁵⁶ One of the *DNCr's* affiliated programs, *A Missão da Infância Feliz*, (Mission of Happy Childhood), functioned as an outreach program providing donated foods and hygiene products at puericulture posts. Founders of the São Paulo-based organization, *Cruzada Pró-Infância*, (Pro-Child Crusade), also framed their puericultural and charitable works as expanding and incorporative causes. In other forums, puericulturists referred to their initiatives "banners of civilization" and "victorious conquests."²⁵⁷ The *DNCr* utilized slogans that linked puericultural campaigns and the reproduction of healthy offspring to the "conquest of progress" in Brazil.²⁵⁸ Such language reified the processes of domesticating, co-opting, and modernizing Brazil's interior.

Puericulturists also relied on familiar historical tropes to construe Brazil's child health and welfare problems as surmountable through state intervention. For instance, an homage to Getúlio Vargas in the 1943 National Puericulture Exposition in Rio de Janeiro contained images of the Independence-era statesman José Bonifácio. The display

²⁵⁶ Bahian Dr. Martagão Gesteira consistently invoked these words in his speeches and publications. In a 1941 speech, he spoke of the need to prepare new doctors for the "grand mission they have before them as the veritable missionaries in the crusade for humanity and patriotism..." In his 1943 graduation address at Rio de Janeiro's Medical School, Gesteira also called puericultura a "patriotic crusade." See Martagão Gesteira, "Discurso sobre as realizações do governo federal de proteção á maternidade e á infância," (DIP, 1943), Coleção audiovisual (FC125), Arquivo Nacional and Martagão Gesteira, "Pela criança na Guerra e no Brasil," Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, GC266f, 14.

²⁵⁷ Flammarion Costa, *Departamento Nacional da Criança: objetivos e realizações* (folheto no. 16) (Rio de Janeiro: Ministerio de Educação e Saúde/Serviço de Documentação, 1945), 5-6. Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, CG348, 13 and "Os mais famosos pediatras," *Diário de Notícias* (Rio de Janeiro), (October 1948), Seção de Puericultura.

²⁵⁸ One phrase that consistently appeared in *DNCr* bulletins was, "Children make up the army that marches for the conquest of progress." Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano II, no. 8, (March 1942), 6 and *Boletim Trimensal*, ano II, no. 9 (June 1942), 7.

identified Bonifacio as Brazil's first child advocate and directly declared Vargas as a reincarnation of this predecessor.²⁵⁹ Likewise, in a 1949 radio address pediatrician and puericulturist, Dr. Rinaldo de Lamare, invoked a famous nineteenth-century battle cry. Calling the National Children's Campaign (*CNC*) a "large-scale crusade," he echoed the words of military commander, Francisco Manuel Barroso da Silva, stating: "Brasil expects each one of us to fulfill his duty!"²⁶⁰ By alluding to such historical figures and moments, puericulturists glorified their endeavors to resolve child health and social problems in the interior. They also framed puericulture as a patriotic initiative and part of a longer trajectory of triumphs in Brazil's history. Such metaphorical language and imagery reinforced the developmentalist ideology that had been crafted during the *Estado Novo*. Throughout the late thirties and forties, doctors, philanthropists, and intellectuals affiliated with the pro-child cause corroborated the Vargas administration's veneration of Portuguese imperial power, as well as the modernization of infrastructure, industry, and culture that continued into General Eurico Dutra's presidency (1946-1951). Finally, puericultural discourse also solidified the medical profession as an extension of political power during this period.²⁶¹ This perceived authority among puericulturists had begun intensifying with the federalization of the *DNCr* and other child-focused organizations in 1940 and continued throughout the decade as officials set their gaze on Brazil's interior.

²⁵⁹ Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Exposição de Puericultura, 1943* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1943), 10.

²⁶⁰ Dr. Rinaldo de Lamare, "Palestra do Presidente da Sociedade Brasileira de Pediatria na Semana da Criança," Audiovisual Collection, FC118, Arquivo Nacional. Dr. de Lamare's radio address was broadcast during the 1949 National Children's Week commemorations. Admiral Francisco Manuel Barroso da Silva led Brazilian forces in the Battle of Riachuelo (1856) during the War of the Triple Alliance/Paraguayan War (1864-1870).

²⁶¹ Jose Gondra historicizes the connection between medicine and state power and its emergence in the nineteenth century in "Medicina, higiene, e educação escolar," in Eliane M.T. Lopes *500 anos de educação no Brasil*, 2nd edition (Belo Horizonte: Autêntica, 2000), 524-527.

Maps and territory-focused language became increasingly prominent as puericulturists and state officials set their rural development strategies in motion. Visual depictions of the locations of puericulture posts and federally funded child welfare programs appeared regularly in *DNCr* publications and public exhibits in the forties. By charting the territorial expansion of child-oriented services, puericulturists demonstrated the political power of their interior initiatives and delineated the presence and absence of state authority across Brazil. Maps and other visuals functioned as tools of legibility by which medical professionals and government officials attempted to order land and people perceived as disconnected from the capital.²⁶² Such imagery also buttressed the construction of *brasilidade* by rendering visible the connections between national boundaries, land, and people. During Brazil's participation in World War II in the early forties, more dichotomous definitions of 'nation' as "Us versus Them" emerged. In this context, the proliferation of national maps helped officials imagine who and what territories were within and beyond state control.²⁶³ Strikingly, an analysis of the imagery used in puericultural exhibits and publications reveals that puericulturists considered the information conveyed by maps as secondary to their representational values. Rather than exhibiting precise data on puericultural infrastructure and services, puericulturists crafted imagery to illustrate the advancing frontier of state authority over child health and welfare standards. Maps used in public forums and in *DNCr* media often contained superficial and/or nonsensical information, but drew attention to the supposed preponderance of puericultural programs spread across Brazil. Such images ultimately

²⁶² James C. Scott defines legibility as a process by which the state manipulates and represents geographical and social boundaries to exert authority particularly in "non-state" areas. See Scott *Seeing Like a State*, Part I.

²⁶³ See Anderson, *Imagined Communities* on the relationship between cartographic boundaries and representations and the imagining of national consciousness.

gave priority to what officials and professionals perceived as puericulture's quantitative achievements rather than depicting qualitative changes in local practice and state services.

Annual Children's Week celebrations provided particularly effective forums for puericulturists and other officials to showcase how they conceived the territorial advancement of child health and welfare standards. Before the official nationalization of Children's Week in 1940, visual elements in the public expositions mostly consisted of didactic posters and graphics that educated visitors about proper hygiene, nutrition, rearing, and family life. After 1940, these exhibitions transformed to promote state development prerogatives by highlighting infrastructural and medical innovations related to puericulture. Architectural blueprints and small-scale models of puericulture posts, maternity centers, and other clinical services became key symbols in Children's Week displays. During the forties, the *DNCr* used the event to reify the central state's construction of national identity as well. Event organizers specifically designed the Weeks' public exhibitions "in the spirit of forming a national consciousness" for children's problems.²⁶⁴ Geographical imagery provided visitors with the visual inspiration necessary for imagining themselves as part of a national collective. As such, maps of Brazil and charts demonstrating puericulture's advancement in the interior were prominent fixtures in Children's Week displays. Again, the process of rendering maps and their expression of state authority and national cohesion were of primary importance to *DNCr* event organizers.

²⁶⁴ Flammarion Costa, *Departamento Nacional da Criança: objetivos e realizações* (folheto no. 16) (Rio de Janeiro: Ministerio de Educação e Saúde/Serviço de Documentação, 1945), 20. Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, CG348.

Figures 3.5 and 3.6 reveal the prominence and representational value of maps in the 1943 National Children's Week exposition. The event, held in the main hall of Rio de Janeiro's National School of Music, promoted the plight abandoned children as a central theme.

Figure 3.5: *MES* National Puericulture Exhibit, 1943



DNCr, *Boletim Trimensal*, (October 1943) Biblioteca Nacional

Figure 3.6: *DNCr* National Children's Week Exhibit, 1943



DNCr, *Boletim Trimensal*, (October 1943) Biblioteca Nacional

The photographs in Figures 3.5 and 3.6 depict the two façades staged at the main entranceway of both the National Puericulture exhibit, sponsored by the *MES*, and the thematic exhibit put on by the *DNCr*. Departmental documents reveal that officials installed two temporary exhibits at the 1943 event and constructed separate exposition spaces.²⁶⁵ Despite the fact that organizers admittedly purported to present two "very distinct" exhibits, they used the same map as the focal point in each one.²⁶⁶ The text pictured above the maps at the center of each photograph demonstrates the data supposedly conveyed by each image. During the National Puericulture exposition, the

²⁶⁵ Dr. Flammarion Costa, director of the *DNCr*'s Division of Children's Social Protection, explained that the National Puericulture exposition was symbolized by the mother and child statue. A statue of São (Saint) Vicente de Paulo graced the entryway during the thematic exposition. For more on the organization of the 1943 event, see Dr. Flammarion Costa, "Exposição comemorativa da Semana da Criança," in *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano III, no. 14 (October 1943), 8.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 8.

map identified construction projects funded by the *DNCr* across Brazil, such as puericulture posts, nurseries, and maternity clinics. A legend below the map provided a state-by-state breakdown of *DNCr* money spent on such initiatives.

Under the auspices of the *MES*, the puericulture exposition aimed to show the state's commitment to child and maternal public health and construe them as national concerns. The map used in its central display effectively communicated this point by using bold, diffused lines to represent *MES* and *DNCr* projects extending across Brazil. In the thematic display shown in Figure 3.6, organizers used the same map, merely inserting different data to change its significance. Although difficult to read in the photograph reproduced here, officials used the map to show the "distribution of federal funding via the *DNCr* from 1940 to 1942."²⁶⁷ In the context of the "abandoned child"-themed exposition, the map displayed general state support for the pro-child cause rather than citing specific infrastructural initiatives or services. Again, bold lines radiating from points across the map portrayed the command and concern the *DNCr* and federal government shared for child health and welfare across Brazil.

By making maps the centerpiece of two supposedly distinct Children's Week exhibits, *DNCr* officials revealed their preoccupations with showcasing state interventions across Brazil and financial support for the pro-child cause. The use of convoluted and intersecting lines to locate services and indicate the destinations of federal funds on the map prevents the observer from readily recognizing the dissemination of puericulture. At first glance, the two-dimensional map makes a dramatic impact and its lines seem to cover most of Brazil's territory. However, a closer examination shows that coastal areas continued to draw the majority of services and

²⁶⁷ Ibid, 19.

money. The distribution of locations represented by the lines did suggest an advancing frontier of *DNCr* infrastructure and services which was a key discursive and symbolic prerogative of the department and central state.

DNCr and federal ministry officials clearly demonstrated the power of symbolic propaganda by assigning two different sets of information to the same map. Concrete evidence of infrastructural and service improvements remained secondary to constructing images that conveyed children's problems as national concerns and illustrated the dissemination of state control and official prescriptions for child health and wellbeing. Figure 3.7 further evinces how officials mapped the provision of state services as a means of claiming territory. The image appeared in a *DNCr* departmental report and aimed to show the geographical distribution of three categories of services: puericulture posts, maternity centers, and "other" services. However, a poorly drawn legend prevents the reader from discerning precisely which services correspond to the dots shown on the map. In the original document, the dots indicated in the legend appear in black and white and possess no distinguishing characteristics. If a colored or differently textured version of this map existed, it was not reproduced as such in the departmental report. An accompanying report estimated the total number of puericulture posts nationwide as 1046.²⁶⁸ Despite the imprecision of the data presented, these maps provide another example of how officials used such visual tools to promote the territorial coverage of departmental programs.

²⁶⁸ See *DNCr, Quatro anos de administração, 1947-1950* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1951), 31. Clemente Mariani Collection, CPDOC, Cma 75f.

Figure 3.7: DNCr map "Geographic Distribution of Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Protection Projects" (1947-1950)



DNCr, *Quatro Anos de Administração* (1951), CMa 75f, CPDOC

Maps played an important role for puericulturists, as well as *MES* officials hoping to fulfill the Vargas' Estado Novo administration's development goals. Intense emphasis on such visuals and the use of quantitative data and geographic discourse allowed them to plot the perceived successes of the *DNCr*'s programs in Brazil's interior. Simultaneously, the staging of maps in public forums reinforced a sense of national belonging by representing a delimited space as "Brazil."²⁶⁹ By locating puericultural projects and the destinations of federal funds on maps, puericulturists ascribed what they imagined as an advancing frontier of modern medicine, social welfare, and domestic life. Their visions coincided with the Estado Novo's drive to modernize and incorporate disparate regions

²⁶⁹ On nationalism and the definition of fixed borders, see Manu Goswami, "From Swadeshi to Swaraj: Nation, Economy, Territory in Colonial South Asia, 1870-1907," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 40 (1998), 609-636.

and groups to create an ordered national family. On a rhetorical and representational level, the *DNCr*'s territorial imagery fostered the projection of state power and influence across Brazil and into the lives of previously disconnected regions. Maps and other forms of visual propaganda also demonstrated the accountability and legitimacy of the *DNCr* in its first decade as a national department. By the mid-forties, however, both puericulture professionals and state officials began to move beyond making claims of power and influence and devised new modes of intervention to substantiate their efforts across Brazil's interior.

Puericulture on the Move: otorized clinics, regional outposts, and visiting nurses

In a 1948 Rio de Janeiro newspaper piece extolling the benefits of mobilized puericulture posts in Brazil's interior, *DNCr* pediatrician Dr. Silveira Sampaio proclaimed:

They will serve as banners of civilization, penetrating the interior wherever there is an airstrip, a navigable river, a passable highway...²⁷⁰

Sampaio's statement demonstrated the belief that the modernization and incorporation of Brazil's rural areas hinged upon the introduction of child-focused health initiatives in regions outside the influence of modern medicine and the lifeways of the coastal metropolises. His rhetoric symbolized the dawn of a new phase in federal officials' and professionals' efforts to transform Brazil's disparate and diverse populations into a unified, healthy national family. By the mid-forties, a new tenor was being set for the widespread dissemination of puericultural ideologies and practices that had been forged over the preceding four decades. The engineers of this new strategy, mostly *DNCr*-affiliated doctors and *MES* officials, hoped the incursion of puericulture in Brazil's

²⁷⁰ "Os mais famosos pediatras," *Diário de Notícias* (Rio de Janeiro), (October 1948), Seção de Puericultura.

interior would turn the tide on the high infant mortality, disease, ignorance, and cultural backwardness that they construed as hindrances to progress.

Perceptions of rural peoples and landscapes highly influenced the ways urban policymakers and puericulturists formulated health and welfare interventions. Regional characterizations based on scant first-hand knowledge were often the basis for the state's interventionist programs.²⁷¹ Since the early decades of the twentieth century intellectuals and state officials had identified specific regional "problems" that required improvement for the benefit of the national collective. High infant mortality, childhood disease, and the paucity of medical services for mothers and children had been generalized as national problems and not identified with any specific region. After the federalization of the *DNCr* in 1940, however, puericulturists began to discuss region-specific challenges and developed initiatives accordingly. With this new agenda the *DNCr* began tailoring its propaganda and interventions to suit the perceived needs of rural and indigenous populations in the interior. Puericulturists and state officials effectively tried to "sell" the art and science of raising healthy offspring to various regional groups. By appealing to what they viewed as specific needs, as well as cultural and social practices among such groups, urban elites furthered the central state's attempts to co-opt and modernize the entire Brazilian body politic.

The *DNCr's* amplification of its puericultural services to include mobile units, namely motorized trailers, boats, and itinerant nurses represented an acute awareness of the geographical and environmental challenges of Brazil's landscape. To surmount these challenges, puericulturists and federal officials had to straddle an ideological line. On

²⁷¹ For an analysis on this process in Brazil's Northeastern region, see Stanley E. Blake, *The Vigorous Core of Our Nation*.

one hand they had to acknowledge that Brazil's territorial size and population were key economic strengths. On the other hand, they confronted imagined and real infrastructural, environmental, and cultural variability that were consequences of its massive land size and diverse population. As Dr. Flammarion Costa, a *DNCr* official, wrote in 1941, "Brazil is an immense country with a rarefied population forming distant nuclei throughout great expanses of uninhabited territory."²⁷² Puericulturists had to fine tune their rhetoric to simultaneously extol the benefits and drawbacks of improving children's health and wellbeing across Brazil. Like the organizers of the 1939 World's Fair exposition who downplayed Brazil's perceived "tropical" characteristics, child advocates struggled to portray the nation's unwieldy size and development disparities as the foundations of, rather than impediments to, future prosperity. Puericulturists, however, had to face the real challenges of expanding services and institutional influence in unfamiliar and underdeveloped areas.

In their attempts to reconcile Brazil's size, landscape, and population diversity puericulturists crafted region-specific propaganda and initiatives. As mentioned above the use of maps emphasized Brazil's geographic prowess and helped bring visual coherence to its vastness. Puericulturists often used the nation's territory immensity as a discursive jumping off point in discussions of how to best implement health and welfare policy in the interior. By describing the supposedly backward and detrimental hygiene, nutrition, and child-rearing habits of rural and indigenous peoples puericulturists also made the case for state-led modernization projects. Calculations of towering infant

²⁷² Dr. Flammarion Costa, "Assistência social para o interior do Brasil," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano II, nos. 5,6, and 7 (June 1941), 7.

mortality rates in interior states fortified the call for modern bureaucratic and medical intervention as well. Dr. Silveira Sampaio offered the following insights in 1942:

In the special case of Brazil, we encounter territorial vastness and diverse levels of development among the nuclei of civilization spread across eight million kilometers. We are a people of heterogeneous civilization where one moment man flourishes in his environment and in another he languishes. High indices of infant mortality in underdeveloped regions reflect the urgent need for support and stimulus from those concerned with the homogeneity of our race, an indispensable factor for the uniform progress of our country.²⁷³

For puericulturists the inculcation of prescribed child rearing and hygiene practices would best prepare nascent generations to overcome Brazil's environmental and social challenges. Characterizing the environment as both an asset and a foe allowed them to imagine Brazilian children as victims and victors in the process of national development.

DNCr documents and other puericulture-focused sources also reveal an interesting, on-going dialogue about the relationship between man and climate that surfaced along with the drive to nationalize child health and welfare standards. These discussions extended earlier intellectual debates over the primacy of heredity over environment and vice versa. Puericulturists, drawing upon Lamarckian "soft inheritance" principles, furthered the argument that Brazil's climate and the rearing of healthy children were not fundamentally at odds. Dr. Alfrânio Peixoto, a hygiene specialist and notable figure in the sanitarian and eugenics movements, noted:

The climate impedes nothing on its own...man is cosmopolitan if he has common sense. Common sense is necessary, a favorable climate is not. There is, however, an art to mitigating the climate, or supplanting it, through adaptation...the climate, combined with common sense, education, and hygiene will not hinder us.²⁷⁴

²⁷³ Dr. Silveira Sampaio, "Civilização e enriquecimento," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano II, no. 8(March 1942), 43.

²⁷⁴ Dr. Alfrânio Peixoto, "Clima e Saúde: introdução bio-geográfica á civilização brasileira (Rio de Janeiro: Companhia Editora Nacional, 1938), 294-295.

Concurrent discussions the causal relationship between high infant mortality rates and Brazil's environment also emerged among officials and professionals in the capital. Puericulturists recognized that environmental factors alone did not account for staggering infant death indices. However, they also discussed how Brazil's landscape itself prevented comprehensive and accurate calculations of such demographic data. "O clima" contributed to high infant mortality while preventing the collection of necessary data which, in turn, stalled the implementation of measures to lower the number of deaths.²⁷⁵ Medical professionals and federal officials shared a desire to overcome these barriers for the purposes of spreading puericultural influence, modernizing the interior, and expanding state authority.

One way doctors and officials pursued such objectives was by articulating puericultural projects in regional terms. They drew upon connections with state children's departments that had been slowly emerging after 1940. Previously, there had been a one-way flow of information between the *DNCr* and other federal departments and representatives in the interior. Federal agencies sent investigators, publications, educational materials, and even traveling exhibits to distant states as a means of spreading child health and welfare norms formulated in the capital. After 1940, however, regional affiliates began conducting their own inquiries, publishing their own media, and exchanged general information regarding conditions in their areas with federal institutions. By 1942 the *DNCr* recognized the organization of affiliated child welfare and health institutions in Goiás, Ceará, and the then Territory of Acre.²⁷⁶ A year later

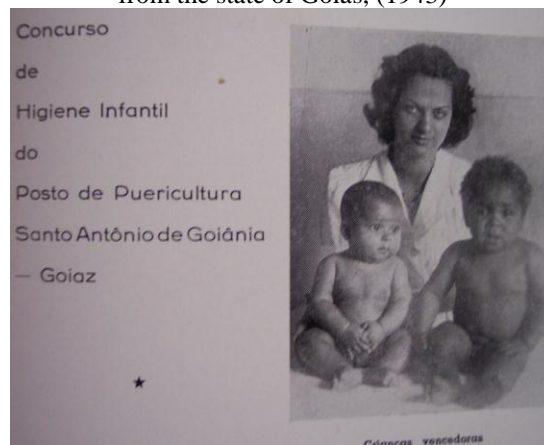
²⁷⁵ Dr. Luis Torres Barbosa, "Mortalidade infantil," *Puericultura*, ano III, no. 30 (March 1944), 16.

²⁷⁶ "Aos Senhores Intervenores dos Estados," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano II, no. 8 (March 1942), 5.

departmental bulletins displayed visual and textual evidence of National Children's Week unprecedented celebrations in Paraíba, Sergipe, Rio Grande do Sul, and Amazonas.²⁷⁷

By the mid-forties *DNCr* reports on National Children's Week commemorations routinely listed the activities and festivities held in the interior. Detailed lists enumerating precisely how many puericulture posts were inaugurated, how many pamphlets and containers of powdered milk were distributed, and how many public expositions were held became key barometers for measuring the advancement of puericulture in the interior.²⁷⁸

Figure 3.8: Winners of the Infant Hygiene Contest from the state of Goiás, (1943)



Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança (December 1943)
Biblioteca Nacional

Telegrams between the *DNCr* and state children's departments and other regional organizations proliferated in the forties. The content of the correspondence ranged from petitions for funding to photographs of annual "robust baby" contest winners (Figure

²⁷⁷ "A Semana da Criança nos estados-comemorações nos estados," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano III, no. 15 (December 1943), 30-39.

²⁷⁸ "A Semana da Criança no Interior," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 19 (December 1945), 5.

3.5).²⁷⁹ By 1948, the *DNCr* had organized seven federal children's delegations with headquarters in Belem, Belo Horizonte, Fortaleza, Porto Alegre, Recife, Salvador, and São Paulo. Another clear example of the emergence of regionalized puericulture was the publication of a maternal guide book for "Northern" mothers. Published by a pediatrician and head of the Northwestern state of Maranhão's children's department, the book offered specialized advice for child health and wellbeing.²⁸⁰ The existence of such a manual illustrated the inapplicability of puericultural standards produced in the capital to the lives and conditions of families in other parts of Brazil. *DNCr* and federal ministry officials relied on the information provided by colleagues in diverse regions to design state-sponsored interventions.

Before introducing new modes of delivering puericultural knowledge and medical services in the interior, *DNCr* officials discussed how to engage with rural and indigenous populations. They collectively recognized that the methods used to spread puericulture among the urban masses would be ineffective among the agriculture-oriented populations in interior states. Instead, *DNCr* doctors promoted the cultivation aspects common to both agriculture and puericulture. Some capital-based puericulturists lamented the fact that rural farmers were adept at reproducing healthy crops and livestock, but ignorant about how to raise and rear equally healthy children. They questioned how farmers could know so much about animal nutrition, but committed so many errors feeding their human offspring.²⁸¹ To mitigate these perceived deficiencies,

²⁷⁹ The Gabinete Civil da Presidência da República collection in Brazil's National Archive contains many letters and reports exchanged between the *DNCr* and state-level departments.

²⁸⁰ Dr. Olavo Correia Lima, *Eu e Mamãe (puericultura para a mãe nortista)* (São Luis, Maranhão: Imprensa Oficial, 1949).

²⁸¹ Dr. Freire de Vasconcelos, "Valorização do Brasileiro," *Puericultura*, ano I, no. 14 (November 1942), 22.

the *DNCr* crafted propaganda that appealed to the sensibilities and strengths of farming families.

One *DNCr* puericulturist urged his colleagues to rely on catchy slogans that evoked the idea that healthy, well-cultivated children would benefit the rural economy. He suggested using printed propaganda that proclaimed, "a child saved is a future customer in your store!" and "save a child and gain two more hands in the field!"²⁸² The *DNCr* hoped these slogans would resonate with rural farming parents and encourage them to seek out maternal and child health services and integrate puericultural practices into their lives. Puericulturists and officials acknowledged that the success of state modernizing projects hinged on the complicity and cooperation of rural peoples. The perpetuation of a strong, productive labor force was a shared objective between puericulturists, the state, and agricultural families in Brazil's interior in the forties.²⁸³ As such, the *DNCr*'s propaganda campaigns aimed at rural farmers were important precursors to the promotion of agricultural education for Brazil's children as the foundation of national progress.

DNCr officials were less explicit about how best to introduce puericulture to Brazil's indigenous populations. First-hand knowledge of the child-rearing, health, and nutritional practices of remote populations were scarce.²⁸⁴ Vague and out-dated

²⁸² Dr. Menandro Thomaz Whately, "Puericultura nas fazendas," *Boletim do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano vi, no. 24 (Março 1946), 22.

²⁸³ Ana Maria Kapelusz-Poppi provides a model for understanding the overlapping agendas of medical professionals, the federal government, and agrarian society in Mexico, see her "Physician Activists and the Development of Rural Health in Post-Revolutionary Mexico," *Radical History Review*, 80 (Spring 2001), 35-50.

²⁸⁴ Some information about indigenous child welfare appeared in an article by Edgar Roquette Pinto in Dr. Moncorvo Filho's work, *História da proteção á infância no Brasil, 1500-1922*, 2nd edition (Rio de Janeiro: Paulo Pongetti & Cia., 1925), 238-239. Roquette Pinto claims to have attempted to measure the bio-metric features of an undisclosed group of indigenous children. His report claims that all were malnourished and that mothers relied on archaic feeding practices due to their inability to produce breastmilk and/or use

generalizations about high infant mortality and immoral, unhygienic living among these groups solidified state intervention as the only viable path to modernization and regional incorporation. However, Brazil's National Council on Geography filed a commission report in 1940 stating that any state programs should not interfere with indigenous family life and customs. The same commission recommended that services be offered to provide basic medical services and aid supplies, such as seeds and tools, but that the goal of federal programs was not to "modify" indigenous populations.²⁸⁵ Federal support for such provisions usually came in the form of *postos indigenas*, or indigenous outposts, that had been introduced in the early thirties. Under the auspices of the National Service for the Protection of Indians, these centers offered educational programs and health promotion based on a model of "friendly" and "peaceful" state intervention.²⁸⁶ These outposts also fostered puericultural practices by disseminating information about infant and child hygiene and nutrition. By the forties the *DNCr* was beginning to follow the lead of other state agencies in the formulation of puericultural services and outreach programs aimed at indigenous populations. The introduction of mobile posts and traveling health inspectors and/or nurses would mark a new phase in the nationwide rollout of puericulture.

Since the thirties, the *MES* and the *DNCr* had invested in the construction of fixed puericulture posts, as well as other maternal and infant support centers across Brazil. The primary consideration in the planning of this type of infrastructure in both urban and rural

manufactured bottles. Other information cited in Moncorvo Filho's book comes from the Rondon Commission reports small children smoking, being bathed in cold water, and remaining naked in cold weather. See pages 240-241.

²⁸⁵ *Anais do Congresso Brasileiro de Geografia-trabalhos da terceira e quarta comissões* (Rio de Janeiro: Conselho Nacional de Geografia, 1944), 120-123.

²⁸⁶ *O Ministério de Agricultura no Governo Getúlio Vargas (1930-1934)* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço de Documentação do Ministério de Agricultura, 1945), 375.

settings was the proximity to available hospitals, clinics, or doctors. *DNCr* legislation stipulated that any population center with more than five hundred inhabitants and at least two dozen small children should maintain a fixed puericulture post.²⁸⁷ The posts would serve two primary functions; puericultural education and basic medical services. Educational programs aimed at local communities, most often young women, involved catechism in the nutritional, hygiene, and general health of infants and children. In addition to public service these posts served as research nuclei for the *DNCr* and the *MES*. Technicians and doctors who operated fixed puericulture posts, most of whom received training at the *INP* in Rio de Janeiro, were responsible for recording demographic data by maintaining *fichas* or files on each patient. However, the provision of public health service, puericultural education, and state research agendas fell short of their goals. Fixed posts required patients to travel to receive services. It stands to reason that when supplies such as powdered milk and clothing were provided free of charge the posts saw heavy traffic. Technicians and doctors had a tougher time attracting parents to bring their children to posts for routine checkups and vaccinations.

One of the fatal flaws of the fixed post model was the provision of free, yet inconsistent services and supplies without sustained federal funding. Secondly, the success of puericultural education and medical interventions were predicated on patients' willingness to seek out such services. Puericulturists reasoned that the long commutes to fixed posts were incompatible with mothers' domestic obligations, such as cooking and cleaning. They believed that constructing more accessible posts in city suburbs and rural

²⁸⁷ Ministério de Educação e Saúde/Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Semana da Criança em 1942: sugestões para a sua comemoração*. "Postos de Puericultura" (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1942), pg. 14.

areas would increase the numbers and consistency of families seeking medical services.²⁸⁸

In order to reach more of the public and cover more territory outside Brazil's coastal regions, puericulturists in the *DNCr* devised two new modes of delivering child health and welfare services. They retained the basic idea of the fixed post, but reflected on the diverse challenges of the Brazilian landscape to foster prolonged interactions between medical professionals and patients. *DNCr* director, Martagão Gesteira pitched the idea of mobile puericulture posts in the mid-forties and the first versions, called "rolling posts," began functioning in 1948. Usually consisting of a motorized vehicle and trailer, these posts attempted to mimic the clinical environment of fixed puericulture posts. Theoretically, each post would have two teams of technicians made up of one doctor, a nurse, and an assistant. Post personnel would attend to patients, distribute food supplements and medicines, and sponsor educational activities twice each month. *DNCr* officials envisioned these innovations as a "mobilized war" that would attack infant mortality "by land, by water, by air."²⁸⁹ The images shown in Figure 3.9 and 3.10 respectively show the *DNCr*'s official illustrator's design for the motorized puericulture post and an actual post operating in the suburbs of Rio de Janeiro.

²⁸⁸ "Postos volantes de puericultura," *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, (16 May, 1948), Suplemento de Puericultura, section III, pg. 8.

²⁸⁹ Dr. Silveira Sampaio, "Os mais famosos pediatras," *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, (31 October, 1948), Seção de Puericultura, np.

Figure 3.9: *DNCr* "rolling post" design illustration



Um dos tipos de Posto de Puericultura Volante, em estudos pelo Departamento Nacional da Criança.

Diário de Notícias, RJ (May 16, 1948)
Biblioteca Nacional

Figure 3.10: *DNCr/CNC* mobile post in the Federal District (1949)



Fig. 6 — Posto Volante em funcionamento no Distrito Federal

Clemente Mariani Collection, Cma75f, CPDOC

The repercussions of this new puericultural service were never studied systematically by *DNCr* officials. Departmental reports cite decreased federal funding and the lack of personnel as the factors that hindered the effectiveness of mobile posts. A collaboration with the *Campanha Nacional da Criança*, a private philanthropic organization that hosted annual fundraisers, allowed for the maintenance of a few posts. *DNCr* officials and technicians from the Federal District (Rio de Janeiro) recorded data from one post between 1948 and 1952. According to the *DNCr* report, over 2,400 women and children patronized the motorized post and the total number of consults numbered over 11,000.²⁹⁰ Officials crafted departmental propaganda to inform the public about the advantages of mobile puericulture posts. "Instead of the child going to the doctor, the doctor comes to the child," stood out as a key slogan, while other propaganda extolled the "time-saving" benefits for busy mothers.²⁹¹ From an official standpoint, using propaganda helped enlist patrons from surrounding communities and, thus,

²⁹⁰ Dr. Filgueira Filho, "Uma urgente mobilização de valores," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 19 (December 1944), 46. The data was collected from a mobile post serving District 14. The *DNCr* relied on the territorial and population divisions used by the *MES* and other public health institutions to organize services in the Federal District. The total number of women (pregnant women) and children served was 2, 430 and the total number of consults was 11, 273.

²⁹¹ "Postos volantes de puericultura," *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, (16 May, 1948), Suplemento de Puericultura, section III, pg. 8.

legitimized the operation of mobile posts. Likewise, puericulturists hoped to disseminate puericultural values through the distribution of *DNCr* pamphlets, educational seminars, and films held in the "waiting areas" of the motorized posts.²⁹²

In 1949, the *MES* and *DNCr* developed a filmstrip series specifically for the diverse audiences at mobile posts. One film, entitled "The Child at Home," combined lessons on child hygiene, housework, and nutrition with slides that urged parents to be "good Brazilians by knowing how to raise healthy children."²⁹³ The instructions for the technician stipulated that he/she should facilitate discussion among attendees and adapt the content to suit the customs of the locality.²⁹⁴ Such educational programs offered alongside medical services promoted the *DNCr*'s expansionist agenda. Puericulturists imagined mobile posts as vehicles of modernization whose educational and health campaigns would simultaneously generate national cohesion and standardize child welfare

Despite being more cost effective than fixed posts, the *DNCr* could not sustain the "rolling post" program. By the early fifties funding for these posts began to dwindle along with federal budget cuts to other *DNCr* initiatives. The impact these posts had on the evolution of infant and maternal health in Brazil was largely symbolic. Official reports provide oblique insights into the encounters between rural people and post technicians, not to mention the effects of puericultural education programs. By mobilizing doctors to reach regions without medical services, puericulturists and state officials hoped to advance their modernizing and corporatist objectives. Despite the fall

²⁹³ Ministério de Educação e Saúde/Departamento Nacional da Criança/Departamento Nacional de Educação, *A Criança no Lar: Instruções ao Professor, Serie Ensino Visual-Folheto* no. 1 (Rio de Janeiro: MES, 1949), 11. Clemente Mariani Collection, CPDOC, Cma7f.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 3.

of the *Estado Novo* and the inception of Eurico Dutra's presidency, *DNCr* officials continued to lobby for the expansion of puericultural infrastructure in the late forties. Their ideological commitment to a federally-funded system of modern medical services, however, only spurred the installation of a handful of itinerant clinics and outposts by 1950.

"Rolling posts" did pave the way for another innovation in the *DNCr* and federal administration's drive to improve child health and welfare across Brazil. The inconsistent successes of motorized posts led some puericulturists to contemplate how to surmount logistical obstacles, such as the paucity of roads over large expanses of the interior. The Amazon Basin quickly became a target of new initiatives to introduce modern medical services to disconnected regions. A project organized as a part of Getúlio Vargas' "March to the West," formed public health districts across Amazon territory as a part of a larger web of agricultural colonies. These interventions, enacted since the mid-thirties, included roving doctors who purportedly consulted with families surrounding the colonies twice per month.²⁹⁵ Under the "colonial nucleus" system, women living in smaller villages and settlements still had to travel to the fixed posts to receive treatment and aid.

By the 1940s, a framework had been established for provisioning public health and development services in the Amazon region. *DNCr* puericulturists followed the tracks laid by federal agencies investing in these programs. However, in 1949, Dr. Getúlio de Lima Junior, a *DNCr* official, conceived a plan that turned the region's difficult terrain into an opportunity. After deeming the medical outreach provided

²⁹⁵ *O Ministério de Agricultura no Governo Getúlio Vargas (1930-1934)* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço de Documentação do Ministério de Agricultura, 1945), 17-19.

through the federal system as ineffective, Lima Junior proposed using "*postos fluviais*," or floating posts to deliver puericultural and other public health services to the dispersed Amazonian populations. Lima Junior cited the high maintenance costs and the lack of incentives for mothers to travel with children to receive care as the primary counter-indications of fixed posts in these regions.²⁹⁶ Instead, he designed a plan to use boats that carried a doctor, an attendant, and supplies to various points along the river at predetermined times. The first floating puericulture posts were inaugurated in Manaus, capital of the state of Amazonas, in April 1949. By August of the following year, the *DNCr* and the Health Department of the State of Amazonas reported that the post attended to over two thousand children in adjacent river communities.

Figure 3.11: Floating puericulture post, Manaus, Amazonas (1949)



Boletim do Departamento Nacional da Criança, (1951)
Biblioteca Nacional

DNCr puericulturists perceived river-bound posts as a more cost-effective approach to lowering infant mortality in regions outside the reach of fixed posts. Furthermore, by the

²⁹⁶ "Movimento do Posto Fluvial de Puericultura do Serviço de Proteção à Maternidade e à Infância do Departamento de Saúde do Amazonas," *Boletim do Departamento Nacional da Criança* (1951), 27-28.

time floating posts appeared in 1949 departmental reports had exposed many cases of half-constructed and abandoned fixed puericulture posts across Brazil. *DNCr* officials critiqued their previous efforts at spreading puericulture with fixed posts saying they were nothing more than empty buildings usually named after some elite, but absentee donor.²⁹⁷ However, the fate of the river-bound clinics mirrored that of the fixed and rolling puericulture posts. By the early fifties, the *DNCr* had effectively abandoned the mobile post project and had turned its energies back to the coastal metropolises where the health needs of the rapidly-expanding urban masses once again took precedence.

Conclusion

By innovating the dissemination of puericultural practices in Brazil's interior, federal officials and medical professionals attempted to extend the reach of state authority. *DNCr* puericulturists used the idea of a crusade against high infant mortality to legitimate the incursion into remote areas. On the surface, the introduction of mobilized public health units appears to fulfill this agenda. However, department and *MES* officials rarely investigated the effects of pilot programs before applying them systematically. Many of their new projects in the forties grew out of the inconsistency of federal funding to maintain existing services, supplies, and infrastructure. Departmental reports suggest that fixed posts failed in many regions due to a lack of personnel and resources. As a result, the *DNCr* constructed several strategies to lower costs, such as using pre-fabricated puericulture and mobilized posts. However, puericulturists and state officials consistently cited a lack of human and material resources as the obstacles to the prosperity of their programs. In light of the continued paucity of funds and the absence

²⁹⁷ "Postos volantes de puericultura," *Diário de Notícias*, Rio de Janeiro, (16 May, 1948), Suplemento de Puericultura, section III, pg. 8.

of comprehensive investigations to substantiate puericultural initiatives in the early forties, it seems illogical that the *DNCr* and central state forged ahead to the end of the decade. Only one longitudinal study of the Federal District showed a decrease in infant mortality from 163 deaths per thousand live births in 1944 to 107 in 1951.²⁹⁸ Yet, the constant construction of posts and the introduction of new mediums to inculcate the populace seemed satisfactory to professionals and federal officials. Seeing their ideas manifest into action seemed to provide enough momentum to sustain puericulture into mid-century. Despite regime change in 1946, innovations in public health and welfare services for Brazilian children remained generally the same. Puericulturists and federal administrators continued to envision the advancement of the pro-child cause as a key element in the modernization of the body politic and in the construction of a cohesive nation.

²⁹⁸ "Decresce a mortalidade infantil no DF, Brasil," *Boletim do Departamento Nacional da Criança* (1952), 5.

CHAPTER IV

From "Stepchildren of the State" to the Brazilians of Tomorrow: The Foundation, Programs, and Legacy of Brazil's National Children's Department

We can be sure that the politics of protecting mothers and children has moved beyond the stage of instability and inadequacy that preceded the creation of the National Children's Department, beyond the initial phase of plans and debates ... Today we are in the midst of realization.

-Gustavo Capanema, Minister of Education and Health, 1944

From time to time, campaigns benefitting children are started, child conferences, commemorative holidays. Departments have been created.

All of this, however, has not gone beyond discourse and colorful flyers.

-Ana Montenegro, "Crianças sem sol," 1948

In 1948 the following political cartoon appeared in Rio de Janeiro newspaper.

Figure 4.1: "Childhood Problems" cartoon



Órgãos de Proteção à Infância e à Adolescência...
Diário de Notícias, Puericulture Supplement (June 1948)
Biblioteca Nacional

Entitled "Childhood Problems" the illustration sharply criticized the contemporary management of child welfare in Brazil. At the center of the image a small child endured

a quartering at the hands of furious adults. An accompanying caption identified the adult figures as symbols of Brazil's "child and adolescent protection agencies." Using this acerbic personification, the unnamed artist captured the contested nature of contemporary child-centered politics by depicting physical polarization and strain. Clearly displayed gender and class characteristics provided further insights into the power dynamics of child welfare policymaking in the first half of the twentieth-century. Well-dressed white males grappled over the child's body and affirmed the elite and paternalistic authorities embroiled in this debate. A lone female placed strategically behind the man on the left suggested women's indirect roles in shaping contemporary child policy. Her position vis-à-vis the man ascribed her subordinate power and demonstrated how male elites mediated interactions between women and children. Furthermore, the woman's physical exertion on the man fortified his control over the child, portraying her as a complicit participant in the child's victimization rather than intervening for his protection. This portrayal of women's roles in child politics rang true in the 1940s. Outside the idealized duties relegated to mothers in the domestic sphere, male powerholders afforded women little direct agency in the formulation of child welfare and health legislation. Ultimately, the drawing provided an unabashed assessment of the power dynamics at stake in debates over the governance of children. Most significantly, the artwork offered critical perspectives on how divisive policymaking adversely affected Brazil's youngest citizens around the mid-century mark.

Appearing just eight years after the foundation of the *DNCr*, Brazil's first federal child health and welfare institution, the cartoon also encapsulated the enduring inconsistencies and shortcomings of state policy towards children. Ironically, the

medical professionals and government officials who had championed the *DNCr's* creation in the thirties purported to resolve the very political and ideological divisions represented in the cartoon. Like other federal institutions emerging during Getúlio Vargas' *Estado Novo* regime (1937-1945), the *DNCr* aimed to standardize state services and resource allocation for child protection and health care. The puericulturists directing the department also hoped to disseminate their prescriptions for healthy reproduction and child-rearing nationwide and expand medical services and infrastructure. However, *DNCr* campaigns fell short of their intended objectives as financial support waned and logistical difficulties hindered the advancement of campaigns across Brazil's expansive territory. Tellingly, by the end of the *DNCr's* first decade of operation, measurable and sustainable health and welfare projects were confined to the coastal metropolises in Brazil's Center-South region. As this chapter will argue, such regional disparities led *DNCr* officials to emphasize the department's geopolitical prowess in innovative and predominantly symbolic ways. Public exhibitions and departmental print media became key forums in which officials employed geographic representations and discourse to figuratively "map" the *DNCr's* authority onto the Brazilian landscape. The richness and abundance of such documentation reveals the intricate ways elites wielded child-focused health and welfare as tools of nation-building.

Another result of the *DNCr's* operational challenges involved the emergence of several alternative organizations that provided supplemental sources of funding and manpower to combat the nation's lingering child welfare problems. Private and public organizations such as the *Campanha Nacional da Criança* (National Children's Campaign), the *Campanha da Redenção da Criança* (Children's Redemption Campaign),

and the *Legião Brasileira de Assistência* (Brazilian Assistance League) gradually took over the management of *DNCr*-initiated programs. By the late forties, these entities even operated puericulture posts and organized annual fundraisers. After 1943, *DNCr* documentation explicitly credited these groups as key collaborators in numerous departmental endeavors, such as the annual Children's Week celebrations. The emergence of these subsidiaries exposed the fallacy of the *Estado Novo's* institutional model that had designated authority to an unprecedented number of federal departments. Although its framers had imagined the *DNCr* as the central state's supreme administrative body in the realm of child welfare, its impacts proved to be short-lived and circumscribed. Neither the department's programs nor the ideas and practices propagated by its officials secured a monopoly over contemporary child-centered policymaking in the forties. The *DNCr* had evolved out of a unique coalescence of medical and political prerogatives set into motion in the early thirties. Intriguingly, puericulture, both as an approach to social welfare and a professional specialization, prevailed despite faltering institutional support. Puericulture maintained adherents within the Brazilian medical academy well into the 1970s, thus demonstrating both its applicability to the nation's health exigencies and its ideological durability well beyond the social and political context of the thirties and forties.

Although the cartoon pictured above accurately illustrated the social and political angst generated by the gradual dissipation of the *DNCr* in the late forties, it obscures the department's role in shaping twentieth-century child governance. While the work identified the main protagonists in this branch of policymaking, it blurs how and why medical professionals and social reformers brought child welfare and health to the

national stage. This chapter analyzes *DNCr* documentation, other governmental sources, contemporary print media to trace the department's evolution from its ideological origins in the twenties and thirties to its federalization in 1940, and finally, its gradual decline in the following decades. It explores the intricacies of the *DNCr*'s foundation, operation, and impacts, as well as the innovations in state policy, public health, and statecraft made by the puericulturists comprising the department. An analysis of departmental publications, such as monthly bulletins, manuals, and parenting magazines, reveals the logic behind *DNCr* initiatives and the functioning of contemporary federal institutions more generally. This examination elucidates the ways in which national identity construction merged with social policy during Getúlio Vargas' presidency and dictatorship (1930-1945). The *DNCr* was undeniably a product of this era and its successes and failures reflect the specific cultural, demographic, political, and socioeconomic contours of this part of the twentieth-century.

A Note on Sources

The analysis of *DNCr* documentation requires a degree of skepticism. *Estado Novo* officials produced copious amounts of propaganda, most of which portrayed Vargas and his regime as unwaveringly triumphant. *DNCr* sources published between 1940 and 1945 in particular reflect this "official" conceit. Departmental officials, mostly doctors, bore the triple burden of strictly adhering to the state's political agenda while simultaneously advancing their own professional objectives and portraying the *DNCr* as an effective, thriving federal institution. As a result, much of the documentation from this period overwhelmingly emphasizes *DNCr* accomplishments and quite overtly negates its shortcomings, as well as those of the state more generally. However, the

sources clearly signal this trend. When *DNCr* programs begin to prove unsustainable by the mid-forties, departmental propaganda grows intensely symbolic and illusory. Rather than substantiating the effects of its initiatives with quantitative data, *DNCr* officials crafted rhetoric and imagery to reflect imagined transformations in demographic and social conditions in abstract terms. In general *DNCr* documents contain little direct evidence of the effectiveness and/or outcomes of its programs. Critical perspectives on the department and its impacts can be found in a variety of primary sources from the mid- and late forties; however, reactions against the *DNCr* tend to reflect discontent with the *Estado Novo* more generally rather than with specific institutions or individuals.

Brazil's National Children's Department: Foundations and Institutional Structure

On February 17, 1940 Brazil's National Children's Department (*DNCr*) became a federal institution under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Health. Law 2.024 extinguished the power of Brazil's *Divisão de Amparo à Maternidade e à Infância* (Division of Maternal and Child Support), declaring the *DNCr* as the "supreme organ for coordinating all national activities related to the protection of mothers, children, and adolescents."²⁹⁹ Following this measure, the date and federal decree number became important discursive markers for legitimating pro-child policymaking throughout the forties. Medical professionals, government officials, and other contemporary child advocates routinely referred such information to underscore the *Estado Novo*'s endorsement of child health and welfare programs. In fact, the legal registry number and date of decree appeared frequently alongside references to various *DNCr*'s activities in departmental bulletins, public speeches, correspondence, and propaganda. The entire

²⁹⁹ Flammarion Costa, *Departamento Nacional da Criança-objetivos e realizações*, (folheto no. 16), (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Saúde-Serviço de Documentação-Imprensa Nacional, 1945), 6. CPDOC, Gustavo Capanema Archive, GC348.

decree even appeared in the 1942 children's fiction work, *A Mamãezinha*. Endorsed by the *DNCr* but written by an unaffiliated female author, the tale introduced young girls to basic mothering skills.³⁰⁰ The curious inclusion of 1940 law in this children's book attested to the extent to which *DNCr* officials publicized it. By reiterating the date and decree, department officials situated their policymaking within the ever-expanding bureaucracy of Getúlio Vargas' regime. Consistent reproduction of the legislative information imbued the numbers with a moral value. They symbolized the federal administration's commitment to the wellbeing of Brazil's youngest generations, and thus, the nation's future.

During Vargas' *Estado Novo* dictatorship, preoccupations with legislative and institutional legitimacy were justified. Officials within the newly created *DNCr* viewed the federalization of child health and welfare services as a major milestone. However, they maintained a degree of skepticism after decades of inadequate and mismanaged child-focused policymaking. Getúlio Vargas' maintained a clear commitment to Brazil's children after the 1930 Revolution that brought him to power, but continued political tensions and disorganized legislation stalled the execution of effective, top-down child-centered programs. Vargas' provisional presidency (1930-1932) had given way to a new federal constitution in 1934 in the wake of civil unrest over the exercise of state power. Soon after instating the *Estado Novo* dictatorship in 1937, Vargas introduced yet another constitution, this time abolishing the National Congress and sidelining state and municipal legislative powers. Meanwhile, throughout the thirties ideas for improving the status of Brazil's children proliferated without the institutional support and financial

³⁰⁰ Guiomar R. Rinaldi, *A Mamãezinha: pequenas lições de puericultura*, (São Paulo: Editora Melhoramentos, 1942). The book was subsequently republished in two editions, the last one in 1945. Dr. Olinto de Oliveira provided the forward to the first edition while he was director of the *DNCr*.

resources needed to execute them. Physicians and child advocates in the country's major cities, particularly Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, and São Paulo, worked to sustain their own programs. Their activities primarily depended on private philanthropic donations and municipal funding in the absence of a designated federal budget for children's issues. Organizations in the capital also emerged in an attempt to administer reforms on a national scale. The *Divisão de Amparo á Maternidade e á Infância*, (*DAMI*) served as the precursor to the *DNCr* and worked in conjunction with the *MES* and *National Puericulture Institute*, *INP*. However, limited resources and personnel confined their investigations and interventions to the regions surrounding the federal district. Intellectual exchange through both domestic and international child-focused conferences fostered more dialogue than action. Brazilian doctors and advocates participated in the 1930 and 1935 Pan-American Child Congresses and sponsored their own national conferences on child protection in 1933 and 1935. Yet the political atmosphere of the decade did not promote the movement of ideas from small circles of medical and social thinkers into the federal policymaking agenda.

Within this chaotic political arena, Vargas rhetorically prioritized the Brazilian child as a target of his reforms and his administrators simultaneously promoted him as a benevolent patriarch and "friend" of children. A 1939 article appearing in *Criança: revista para os pais*, the official parenting magazine of the *MES*, *DAMI*, and eventually of the *DNCr*, proposed that Brazil's *golpes de estado* served to sweep away everything old and rotten. This cleansing action, the article argued, prepared the way for new

approaches child welfare.³⁰¹ Rising to this challenge, doctors and officials based in the capital began to lobby more strongly for centralized child health and welfare services. Not until the institutionalization of the *DNCr* in 1940 did his government begin enacting comprehensive policymaking and streamlining federal funds through a central coordinating body.

During this period the *Estado Novo* administration became a veritable machine creating new departments and institutions to manage state bureaucracy and implement social, economic, cultural, and infrastructural projects. Vargas' regime designed the *DNCr* and other federal departments to neutralize the state/municipal-level health and welfare initiatives and those executed by non-governmental organizations and individuals. According to official propaganda, federal entities would confront the child problem practically across the nation through interventions that "could never come from private initiatives and autonomous actions."³⁰² Medical professionals also recognized the limitations of relying on private funding and disparate philanthropic and municipal organizations. In an editorial appearing the October 1940 volume of the magazine *Arquivos de Pediatria (Pediatric Archives)*, Dr. Dermeval Monteiro de Carvalho, a Rio de Janeiro-based physician, summarized the current state of child assistance. He wrote,

Until now we have not had more than simple attempts, some official and some private, and all spirited with praiseworthy and patriotic intentions. Some dedicated men, idealists along with state support here and there, have implemented their own initiatives showing the goodwill and enthusiasm that makes their noble crusade stimulate and compel the rest of us. But this, which is considerable, is not enough for all of Brazil.³⁰³

³⁰¹ "Um nome que deve desaparecer," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. 2, no. 13, (February 1939), 17.

³⁰² Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda, *O Estado Novo*, (Rio de Janeiro: DIP, 1939), 116.

³⁰³ Dr. Dermeval Monteiro de Carvalho, "Assistência á infância no Brasil," *Arquivos de Pediatria: revista mensal de clínica, higiene infantil, e puericultura*, ano XIII, vol. XIII, fascículo 1, (Rio de Janeiro), (October 1940), 7. Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, who later served as first director of the *DNCr*, contributed to this publication as "scientific director" from 1933 to 1939.

Thus, in response to rapidly expanding federal legislation and institutionalization, and after more than a decade of political instability, *DNCr* officials repeatedly deployed the registry number and date of their department's foundation. Frequent mention of this information lent symbolic credibility to *DNCr* efforts and served as a concrete marker of an imagined pact between the *Estado Novo* and the medical professionals who directed the *DNCr*. The latter group clearly understood both the representational and actual magnitude of the 1940 national child health and welfare decree and wielded it to legitimize their activities and ideologies. Reproducing the legislative information in public and internal government forums served as reminders of a shared vision that, in the words of *DNCr* director Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, would "safeguard the future of the nation."³⁰⁴

Brazil's National Children's Department: Origins, Organization, and Services

Brazil's *DNCr* evolved out of two organizations based in Rio de Janeiro. Its namesake, the *Departamento da Criança*, was founded in 1919 by pediatrician Dr. Moncorvo Filho. Modeled after the United States Children's Bureau (1912), the department aimed to disseminate healthy child rearing practices through public expositions, a permanent museum, conferences, and publications. Moncorvo Filho and several other capital-based physicians funded operations themselves but the municipal government formally recognized the department as a public utility in 1920.³⁰⁵ According

³⁰⁴ Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Exposição de Puericultura na Semana da Criança de 1942*, (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1943), np. CPDOC, Gustavo Capanema Collection, GC1294f.

³⁰⁵ The *Departamento da Criança* was officially founded on March 1, 1919 and deemed a public entity by the Rio de Janeiro municipal legislature by decree number 2.340 on November 18, 1920. For more on its foundation and operations, see Dr. Moncorvo Filho, *Histórico da protecção á infância no Brasil, 1500-1922*, (Rio de Janeiro: Paulo Pongetti & Cia, 1925), 283-287 and James Wadsworth and Tamera Marko, (2001).

to its articles of foundation, departmental personnel would conduct nationwide statistical research into infant mortality, abandonment, and other child welfare concerns. However, its public educational campaigns on child hygiene, rearing practices, and morality remained at the forefront of its operations. Most significantly, the department sponsored and crafted the First National Children's Museum exhibit for the 1922 Independence Centennial Celebration in Rio de Janeiro. Moncorvo Filho's prize-winning posters and displays remained a permanent part of a museum located at the *Instituto de Protecção e Assistência á Infância* headquarters in downtown Rio de Janeiro.³⁰⁶ The style of the department's educational activities and public exhibits directly inspired the forums and projects developed by the *DNCr* after 1940. Specifically, the *DNCr* continued the tradition of hosting robust baby competitions, celebrating Children's Day, as well as organizing public puericulture expositions. The Children's Department also published a bulletin beginning in 1920 with the final (90th) edition printed in 1938. These reports provided information about the department's research, educational, and public service activities. Again, its style and content would be reflected in the *DNCr*'s own bulletins published from 1940 until the late 1960s. Intriguingly, *DNCr* documents do not directly attribute the origins of its programs and publications to the *Departamento da Criança*. Rather, histories of the national department cite another contemporary institution, the *Divisão de Amparo á Maternidade e á Infância*.

³⁰⁶ The *IPAI* and its clinic, founded by Dr. Arthur Moncorvo Filho in 1899, was housed in a privately donated mansion on Avenida Visconde de Rio Branco until 1929 when it moved to another building on the newly inaugurated Rua Moncorvo Filho near Rio de Janeiro's *Praça da República*. On the *IPAI*'s history and the creation of the *Departamento da Criança*, see Tamera Marko, "When They Were The Nation's Children," Chapter Ten. See also, Ferreira da Rosa, *Rio de Janeiro em 1922-1924*(Rio de Janeiro: Prefeitura da Cidade do Rio de Janeiro, 1925), 148-155.

In a 1945 speech commemorating the retirement of Dr. Olympio Olinto de Oliveira from his five-year directorship of the *DNCr*, Dr. Gastão de Figueiredo branded him the "supreme arbiter" of Brazil's complex child protection problem. Reflecting on his colleague's career, Figueiredo extolled his dedication in the face of numerous hindrances created by mismanaged government bureaucracy.³⁰⁷ Olinto de Oliveira, a pediatrician from Porto Alegre who trained under Moncorvo Filho's father, served as the head of the three institutions that preceded the *DNCr*; the *Seccão*, and later, *Inspetoria de Higiene Infantil*, the *Diretoria de Proteção á Maternidade e á Infância*, and the *Divisão de Amparo e Proteção á Maternidade e á Infância*. His contemporaries identified him as the first government official to address child welfare as a systemic problem. Indeed, as early as 1935, Olinto de Oliveira expressed his desires to build an independent department for children's affairs, separated from the administration of public health in Brazil.³⁰⁸ Later, in 1939, a year before the creation of the *DNCr*, Olinto de Oliveira organized the first comprehensive distribution of federal aid for the construction of maternity centers and puericulture posts in municipalities lacking such infrastructure. Additionally, as director of the *DAPMI*, he pioneered the dissemination of puericultural print media and educational campaigns in interior states. For this reason, the *DNCr* includes data from 1939 in its reports on federal financial support and outreach.³⁰⁹ Olinto

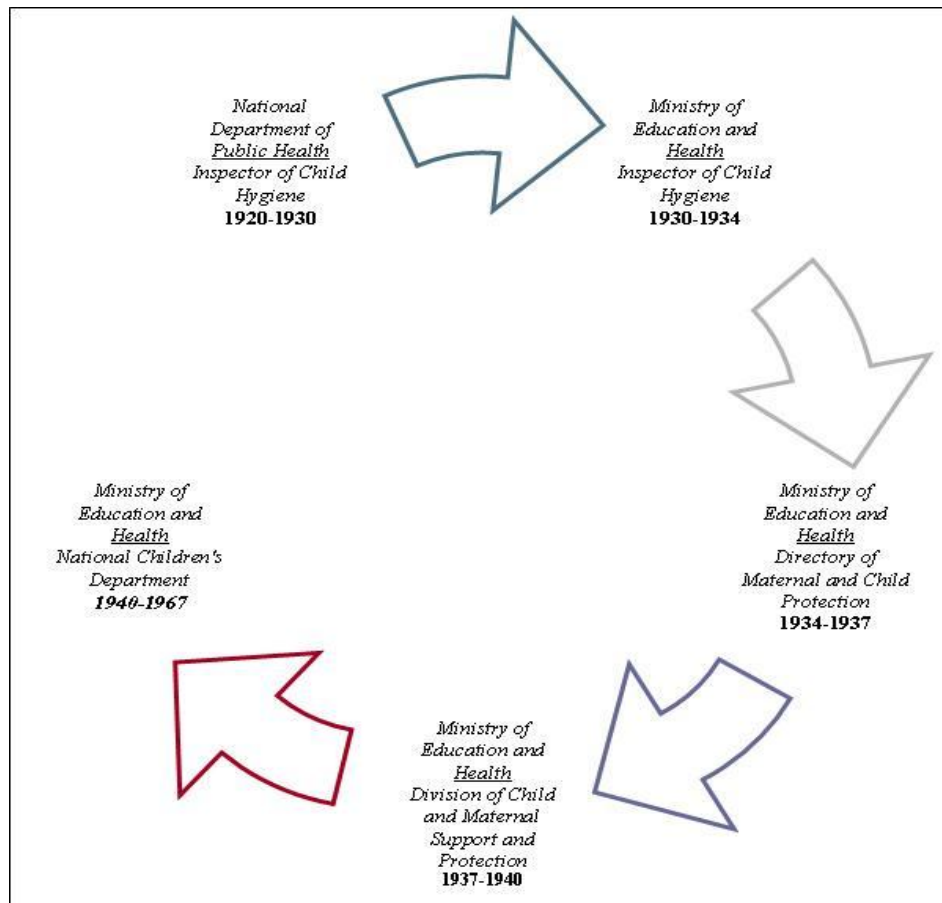
³⁰⁷ Dr. Gastão de Figueiredo, "A aposentadoria do Professor Olinto de Oliveira," *Boletim Trimenal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 23 (December 1945), 4-5. The author stipulated that Olinto de Oliveira's retirement was required by law as he had passed 68 years of age.

³⁰⁸ Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, "A organização dos serviços de protecção á infâcia no Brasil" in *Diretoria de Protecção á Maternidade e á Infância* (Rio de Janeiro: DPMI, 1935), 2. CPDOC, Gustavo Capanema Collection, GC601.

³⁰⁹ A list of technical and material resources for the period 1939-1944 appears in Dr. Flammarion Costa, *Departamento Nacional da Criança-objetivos e realizações* (folheto no. 16) (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Saúde-Serviço de Documentação-Imprensa Nacional, 1945), 6. CPDOC, Gustavo Capanema Archive, GC348. Olinto de Oliveira's early attempts to implement nationwide programs are also mentioned in "A Semana da Criança," *Criança: revista para os pais*, ano I, vol. 9 (Setember 1938), np.

de Oliveira's comprehensive vision for the administration of child welfare in Brazil provided a clear operational blueprint for the *DNCr*. Olinto de Oliveira became the first director of the *DNCr* and remained engaged in departmental activities even after his retirement in 1945.

Figure 4.2: Institutional Evolution of Brazil's *DNCr*, 1920-1967



When the *DNCr* became a federal institution in February 1940, Minister of Education and Health, Gustavo Capanema commemorated the moment with a speech outlining the *Estado Novo*'s hopes for the department. First and foremost, he claimed, the department would address what he and others in the regime perceived as national demographic problems. *DNCr* educational campaigns and services would simultaneously

raise the quantitative and qualitative values of Brazil's population. To this end, a coordinated system would spread the precepts of puericulture to all corners of the nation to promote healthy physical, moral, and intellectual development among Brazil's youngest citizens.³¹⁰ According to the articles of its foundation, the *DNCr* would disperse federal resources for child health and welfare, serve as official liaison between state and municipal level organizations, conduct research, and sponsor educational campaigns. Olinto de Oliveira described the tone of departmental operations as "rigid in principle, but gentle and protective in practice."³¹¹ These ideological pillars shaping the *DNCr*'s activities evolved out of both the 1924 Charter of Children's Rights adopted by the League of Nations and U.S. President Herbert Hoover's versions of it in the twenties and thirties.³¹² Following these examples, *DNCr* official crafted two governing documents: Rights of the Brazilian Child and the Department Credo. However, the Brazilian documents derived from particular environmental and social needs that differed from the conditions that inspired their foreign predecessors. The League of Nation's and Herbert Hoover's responded to child health and welfare disparities brought on by World War I. While the *DNCr* charter certainly took cues from these documents, its principles responded more to consistently high infant mortality, as well as poverty, disease, abandonment, and disproportionate access to medical care and education. Brazil had not

³¹⁰Excerpts from Capanema's speech appear in Dr. Flammarion Costa, (folheto no. 16), (1945), 6-7.

³¹¹ Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, "Departamento Nacional da Criança," *Puericultura*, ano I, no. 1 (October 1941), 2.

³¹²Herbert Hoover drafted three charters concerning children's rights to health and wellbeing in the United States in 1922, 1924, and 1930 respectively. The 1930 charter, written during Hoover's presidency, fueled a propaganda campaign to disseminate its principles to the American public. For more on Hoover's children's rights activism, see Dominique Marshall, "Children's Rights and Children's Actions in International Relief and Domestic Welfare: The Work of Herbert Hoover Between 1914 and 1950," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 1:3(Fall 2008), 351-388.

yet experienced the effects of large-scale international war yet, thus *DNCr* officials drew upon other domestic challenges to shape their own charter.

A statement of twelve children's rights entitled all children born or residing in Brazil to receive care and protection. The *DNCr* published copies of the charter in its parenting magazine, *Criança* and its departmental bulletin. During National Children's Week celebrations poster-sized renderings of the charter were displayed for public audiences. A *familia*, individual families, would be primarily responsible for ensuring children's rights; however, the charter declared the state the ultimate guarantor and enforcer. The charter effectively isolated the child as the beneficiary of the rights, only mentioning mothers once as a priority population to rescue alongside children in the event of a crisis. Intriguingly, Right VIII defended Brazilian children against being "undervalued" due to their family status, illegitimacy, poverty, race, religion, or physical impairment.³¹³ When considering these social markers in the broader context of Brazilian history, the inclusion of them as inalienable rights of the child in 1940 was striking. The 1930 Hoover Children's Charter had been punctuated with a final clause stating that no child would be denied any of its nineteen rights on the basis of their "race, color, or situation, wherever he may live under the American flag."³¹⁴ It contained a separate right regarding the care of children with physical disabilities. Therefore, the framers of the 1940 *DNCr* charter added the terms *illegitimacy*, *poverty*, and *religion* to reflect their own attitudes about ideal Brazilian childhood. Contemporary perspectives on these three factors had certainly been shaped by the increasing role of the state in the

³¹³ Copies of *Direitos da Criança Brasileira* can be seen in *Exposição de Puericultura de 1942*, CPDOC, Gustavo Capanema Collection, GC1294 and *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano III, no. 14, (October 1943), 22.

³¹⁴ Marshall (2008), 380.

governance of children's lives in the twentieth century. Barriers created by illegitimate birth, socioeconomic status, and religious beliefs were an indelible part of Brazil's social fabric whose effects had accrued since the early colonial period.³¹⁵ However, more liberal understandings of citizen's rights and the gradual overshadowing of the Catholic Church's influence in favor of the state in articulating social norms allowed government officials in 1940 to condemn discrimination on these grounds.

The specific inclusion of the term *race*, however, raises questions about the *DNCr*'s political motivations and social welfare ideologies. Were they merely copying the United States Children's Charter uncritically? Or, did the medical professionals administering the *DNCr* indeed view anti-racism as an important building block for future generations of Brazilians? Almost fifteen years after Hoover's 1930 Charter, Brazil's *DNCr* continued to utilize the former President's portraits and words in public forums and print propaganda.³¹⁶ This enduring admiration for Hoover's initiatives demonstrated the extent to which *DNCr* officials imbibed his messages. Yet, Brazilian puericulturists had articulated their own views about race and its role in shaping future generations. On the whole child-focused medical professionals eschewed the biological determinism in favor of propagating hygienic and artful child rearing. Departmental documents and imagery, as well as those created by affiliated puericulturists suggested

³¹⁵ Works that place illegitimacy, poverty, and religion in historical context, see Linda Lewin, *Surprise Heirs I and II* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003); Laura de Mello e Souza, *The Devil and the Land of the Holy Cross: Witchcraft, Slavery, and Popular Religion in Colonial Brazil* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003); João José Reis, *Death is a Funeral: Funeral Rites and Rebellion in Nineteenth-Century Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Marcos Chor Maio and Carlos Eduardo Calaça, "New Christians and Jews in Brazil: Migrations and Anti-Semitism," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies*, 19:3 (2001), 73-85; Roberto da Matta, *Carnavais, malandros, e heroes: para uma sociologia do dilema brasileiro* (Rio de Janeiro: Zahar, 1979) and Thomas Skidmore, "Brazil's Persistent Income Inequality: Lessons from History," *Latin American Politics*, 46:2 (2004), 133-150.

³¹⁶ Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Boletim do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano III, no. 14 (October 1943), 17.

that, within the arena of child politics, elites promoted anti-racism. Even before the culmination of World War II, puericulturists promoted the idea that nascent generations should develop more egalitarian social views. However, the concurrent political atmosphere clearly reinforced how *DNCr* officials discussed such topics.

First, Brazil did not legally prohibit racial discrimination until the passing of the 1951 *Afonso Arinos* Law. Especially within elite circles the idea that race or any other social characteristic would unduly marginalize an individual was generally disavowed in favor of promoting Brazil's inherent harmonious social relations. As Thomas Skidmore argues, most contemporary policymakers did not contemplate the possibility of enacting equal opportunity laws as they perceived such legislation as incongruent with what they perceived as Brazil's history of social justice.³¹⁷ Likewise, race existed as a more flexible category than it did in the United States and the possibility of "whitening" oneself for increased social status served as a potential sidestep to racism. However, evidence suggests that puericulturists viewed racism as a detriment to children's social development and evolution into future Brazilians. An article appearing in a 1937 edition of the child advocacy magazine, *Infância*, produced by the *CPI*, served as an important precursor to the connection between puericulture, children, and racial attitudes in Brazil. In "The Child and Race," Dr. Raul Briquet, a São Paulo based pediatrician, argued that Brazilian parents needed to instill the idea that all men are equal despite their color, origin, and/or ethnicity.³¹⁸ This work served as a precursor for further efforts to characterize puericulture as a field for promoting harmonious social interactions among

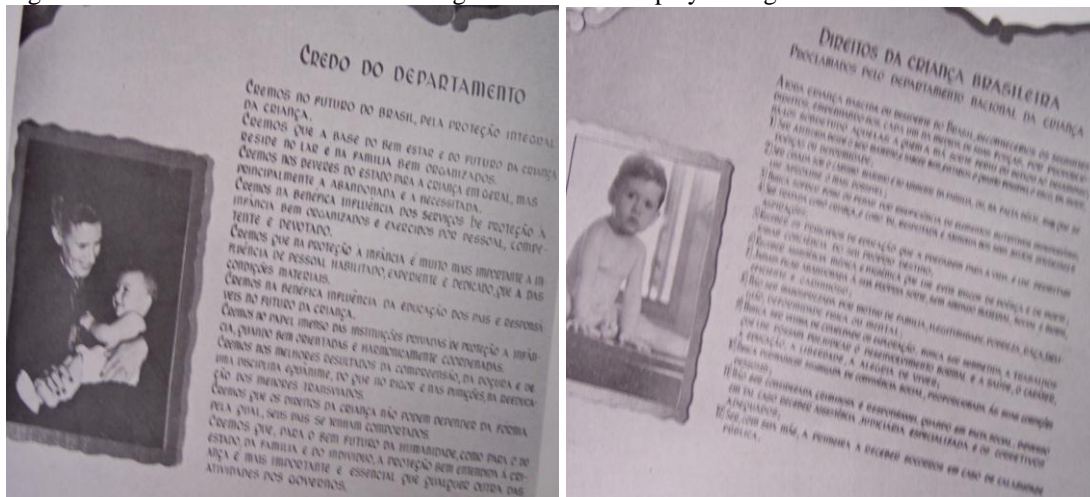
³¹⁷ Debates over the need for anti-discrimination laws came to a head in 1951 when Congress passed a law protecting against racial discrimination in public places. For more on the historical significance of the Afonso Arinos Law, see Skidmore, (1993), 207-218 and Elisa Larkin Nascimento, "Aspects of Afro-Brazilian Experience," *Journal of Black Studies*, 11:2 (December 1980), 195-216.

³¹⁸ Dr. Raúl Briquet, "A criança e a raça," *Infância*, (August 1937), 20 and 24.

the young. Chapter VI explores this topic in further detail. Puericulturists prioritized children's health and wellbeing over preoccupations with the extant social taboo of acknowledging racism in Brazil. For *DNCr* officials and affiliated doctors a child's race was secondary to his overall physical health. The department's credo, examined below, revealed this shared belief. The charter specifically granted children, rather than adults, the right to equal treatment. Potential empowering non-white children represented much less of a threat to established, and generally unspoken, social hierarchies in Brazil. Finally, *Estado Novo*-era nationalist rhetoric simultaneously reinforced social egalitarianism and attributed the idea of universal belonging to Brazil's national family. The administration declared racial differences as transitory and called for all races to form a brotherhood for the construction of a single, great nation.³¹⁹ As a newly created department under Vargas regime, *DNCr* officials likely adhered to the ideologies articulated by top-level administrators. Nonetheless the inclusion of anti-discrimination rights in the *DNCr*'s charter set the tone for how a national-level institution hoped to influence Brazil's children. By protecting the young against discrimination, *DNCr* officials attempted to foment racial egalitarianism among the nation's future generations.

In addition to crafting a declaration of children's rights, the *DNCr* also articulated its own guiding credo. Consisting of ten core beliefs, the document laid out how the *DNCr* hoped to raise a generation of Brazilian citizens.

³¹⁹ "A igualdade de raças no Brasil: suas raízes históricas," *Cultura Política*, vol. 1, no. 1 (March/April 1941), 202-206.

Figure 4.3: *DNCr* credo and Children's Rights Charter on display during National Children's Week 1943

Criança (October 1943)
Biblioteca Nacional

It expressed the role of the state, the family, and private institutions in supporting children's general health and welfare. According to the principles, the care of the child was more "important and essential" than any other government activity that promoted the future of humanity, the state, the family, and the individual.³²⁰ One belief stipulated that the extension of rights to the child would not depend on the behavior of his/her parents. This tenet underscored the perceived independence of children from the disadvantages of their upbringing. The term *behavior*, however, remained open to interpretation. Puericulturists clearly tried to influence parental behaviors in reproduction, gestation, and child rearing through numerous educational campaigns, publications, and public forums. *DNCr* officials likewise identified poor parenting and ignorance as major causes of Brazil's child health and welfare problems. Perceiving children as isolated from their forbearers' faults, genetic or otherwise, fit in well with concurrent ideologies of viewing

³²⁰ "Painéis-Credo do Departamento Nacional da Criança," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano III, no. 14 (October 1943), 21.

children as "virgin wax" and "moldable plastic."³²¹ Seen in this light, a child's character could be shaped by both genetic and exterior forces. More broadly, such rhetoric symbolized the idea that future generations would advance the nation by incrementally distancing it from the perceived cultural and socioeconomic deficiencies of its past.

Again, *Estado Novo*-era social policymaking influenced how the *DNCr* constructed its approach to child welfare. The portrayal of children as malleable and as absolved from their parents' negative influences corresponded to the regime's emphasis on the new Brazilian Man. Vargas' administrators propagated the idea that a new man would spring forth under the tutelage of the *Estado Novo*'s educational, health, and civic campaigns.³²² The child figured prominently in this proposal as the seeds and energy behind this qualitative human transition in Brazil. *DNCr* propaganda and documents produced by other child-focused entities similarly characterized children as the future of the Brazilian race and the man of tomorrow.³²³ In the words of a *DNCr* affiliate from Santa Catarina, the next phase of civilization would witness a new Brazilian generation, one healthy in body, pure of spirit, and open to the "penetrations of a new order of human existence."³²⁴ The foundation of the *DNCr* represented a means to achieving this

³²¹ The term "virgin wax" was first used by Getúlio Vargas in 1913 speech in Porto Alegre as state-level legislator. It is quoted in the *Estado Novo*-era propaganda book, *Getúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças* (Rio de Janeiro: DIP, 1940), 3. The reference to children as moldable plastic comes from "A criança do ponto de vista militar," *Puericultura*, ano III, no. 28 (January 1944), 13.

³²² Paulo Augusto de Figueiredo, "O Estado Novo e o Homen Novo," *Cultura Política*, vol.1, no. 1 (March/April 1941), 138.

³²³ References to children as the future of Brazil and men of tomorrow appeared frequently in departmental publications and public forums. For example, see Dr. Newton Potsch "Colaboração á um problema nacional," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 19 (December 1941), 41; *1.000 crianças em colônias de férias-Estado do Rio de Janeiro, 1942*, (Rio de Janeiro: Secretaria de Educação e Saúde/Divisão de Amparo á Maternidade e á Infância e á Adolescência, 1942), np; "Um nome que deve desaparecer," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol II, no. 13 (February 1939), 17; Saul de Gusmão (Juiz de Menores) "A criança é obra social da Sra. Darcy Vargas," *Anais do Instituto 7 de Setembro*, vol. iv (December 1940), 10; A. Saboia, *Proteção á infância desvalida*, (Rio Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional 1938), 3.

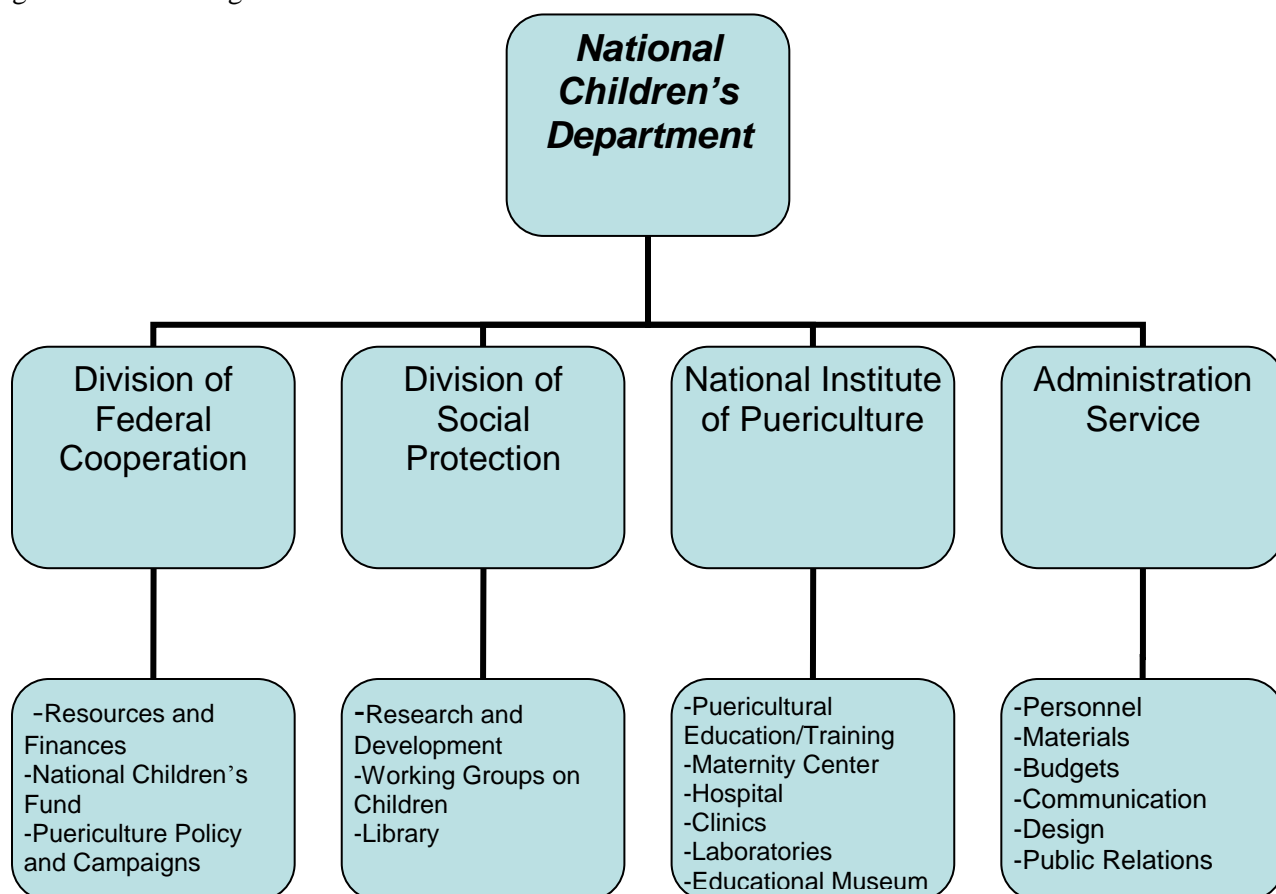
³²⁴ Dr. Armando Valeiro de Assis, "Uma tarefa de brasilidade," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 19 (December 1944), 55.

objective; therefore, its principles and programs echoed the regime's hopes for Brazil's young. The creation of a more fit generation also served as the ideological crux of puericultural practice in the thirties and forties. Thus, *DNCr* rhetoric and programming represented a coalescence of contemporary medical attitudes towards Brazil's children and the *Estado Novo's* nation-building and development agendas.

With its founding ideologies clearly articulated, the *DNCr* began implementing projects in mid-1940. Although it was a sub-department of the Ministry of Education and Health, the *DNCr* operated out of the Arthur Bernardes Hospital in Flamengo. Rather than move to the newly inaugurated *MES* building near other government offices downtown, the *DNCr* remained where some its precursor institutions had been housed.³²⁵ Out of this location the department executed its three major functions: research, clinical work, and public relations. A cadre of doctors comprised the technical personnel under the leadership of Dr. Olinto de Oliveira.³²⁶ His son, Mario Olinto, ran the *INP* which cooperated in research and project development efforts. Figure 4.4 illustrates the administrative organization of the *DNCr* after its reorganization in 1941.

³²⁵ Most notably the *Instituto Fernandes Figueira*, a major pediatric and maternal research center and clinic in Rio de Janeiro, operated out of the Hospital Arthur Bernardes from 1924 to 1928. The Inspector of Child Hygiene and the Division of Child and Maternal Support and Protection were also headquartered there. Closed for renovations between 1935 and 1938, the hospital reopened and became the first center for the National Institute of Puericulture. Today the hospital has been remodeled and is a teaching center and clinic for the *IFF*. See Dr. Olinto de Oliveira to Minister Gustavo Capanema, 22 June 1935. CPDOC. Gustavo Capanema Collection, Rolo 60, foto 408.

³²⁶ The technical corps was comprised of the following doctors: Gastão de Figueiredo, Orlando Seabra Lopes, Hermes Bartolomeu, Getúlio Lima Jr., Júlio Cavalcanti, Cleto Seabra Veloso, Antônio Filgueira, Darci Evangelista, Naim Marched, Americo da Silva Pinto, Luis de Castro Leitão, Dr. Flammarion Costa, and José de Medeiros Teixeira. See Dr. Flammarion Costa, *Departamento Nacional da Criança-objetivos e realizações*, (folheto no. 16), (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Educação e Saúde-Serviço de Documentação-Imprensa Nacional, 1945), 19. CPDOC, Gustavo Capanema Archive, GC348.

Figure 4.4: *DNCr* organizational structure

Doctors collaborating on research at the *DNCr* headquarters actively engaged with mothers and children who sought out clinical services at the hospital. These patients provided the basis for much of the department's studies into child development, nutrition, hygiene, and illnesses. According to Dr. Olinto de Oliveira the goal of the data produced by this laboratory would clarify and guide public opinion, as well as support and orient the work of federal, state, and municipal-level institutions.³²⁷ For large-scale investigations, such as those dealing with infant mortality, officials formed special commissions, traveled to research sites outside the capital, and relied on networks of child specialists in other states. For example, between 1942 and 1948 the *DNCr*'s

³²⁷ Dr. Olinto de Oliveira, "O Departamento Nacional da Criança," *Puericultura*, ano I, vol. 1 (October 1941), 2.

statistical service orchestrated a survey of infant mortality in fifteen municipalities across ten different states. The investigation purported to show the inadequacies of the *registro civil*, or civil registry, in recording infant mortality rates. Surprisingly, the report cited extremely inflated infant mortality rates registered by both federal and state "biostatisticians" who inaccurately interpreted public baptism, burial, and census data.³²⁸ This type of research became the norm after 1940 as puericulturists affiliated with the department often criticized what they perceived as the state's erroneous demographic data collection. Specialized commissions subsequently published findings from independent investigations into high infant mortality in departmental reports and magazines to assert the *DNCr* as the authority on the crisis. The reports went beyond more broad quantitative research on the topic generated by other governmental agencies as they usually contained first-hand observations, as well as provocative images and rhetoric. *DNCr* doctors and activists hoped to publicize the problems facing Brazil's young to substantiate federal oversight into public welfare problems and to draw more focused attention on specific areas of need. The publication of such reports in parenting magazines and newspapers also projected an image of the *DNCr* as the preeminent source of information on child welfare problems and as the key to resolving them.

One such report appeared in the April 1941 edition of a Rio de Janeiro pediatric and puericulture journal. It revealed data collected over four years at the Fernandes Figueira Puericulture Post in São Gonçalo, a city across the bay from Rio de Janeiro. The

³²⁸ "A mortalidade infantil no Brasil," in Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Boletim do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, (1951), 18. The report reflected data collected from selected cities in the following states: Bahia, Minas Gerais, Pará, Paraíba, Paraná, Pernambuco, Rio Grande do Sul, Santa Catarina, São Paulo, and Sergipe. The largest discrepancy was recorded in Pombal, Paraíba where the federal data from the civil registry recorded a infant mortality rate of 509.4 deaths per 1,000 live births and the *DNCr* commission found a rate of 306.4/1,000.

DNCr directed the study that observed the health, development, and behaviors of 444 impoverished children and their parents. To receive clinical services and participate in the study, each family registered with a health history, or *ficha*, that detailed pre and post-natal nutrition, illnesses, habits, and birth experiences. Enrollment also required a fee of two *cruzeiros*, unless the family presented an *atestado de pobreza* (testament of poverty) that qualified them for free services. Demographic information about the study group identified the *côr*, or color, of 254 children as *white*, 145 as *parda*, or mixed-race, and 45 as *preta*, or black. When asked why so few black parents sought out services the report's author replied:

To our knowledge, ignorance and poverty are still the two greatest factors. Others are unaware that a puericulture center exists. Others do not have the two *cruzeiros* for enrollment and are not interested in obtaining a testament of poverty.³²⁹

Such discourse revealed puericulturists' enduring interest in combating high infant mortality among impoverished urban populations, many of whom fit into the racial categories *pardo* and *preto*. However, an awareness of race as a factor in determining child welfare remained secondary to poverty. Puericulture posts and demographic studies oriented by the *DNCr* routinely recorded race in their patient registries, thus health personnel and departmental analysts gained a general understanding of the interplay of race and public health for children.³³⁰ Yet this 1941 report stood out among others for its direct inquiry into possible explanations for health care disparities between races in

³²⁹Arquivos de Pediatria: revista mensal de clínica e hygiene infantis e puericultura, ano xvii, vol. 17, fascículo 4, (April 1945), 24. To put the expense of the enrollment fee in perspective, it would have been comparable to the cost of a magazine.

³³⁰Examples of the health and family history registration forms used at *DNCr* puericulture posts can be seen in Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 16, (March 1944), 12. *DNCr* registration forms used the word, *côr*, to denote race.

Brazil's cities. In print media sources, officials predominantly used words such as "ignorance" and "poverty" to identify the causes of high infant mortality rather than race or color words. Even propaganda used in these documents and many public forums did not overwhelmingly depict mixed race and Afro-Brazilian parents as the sole perpetrators and their children as the victims of Brazil's health and welfare problems. However, the *DNCr* routinely utilized depictions of white children to illustrate ideal health and stability in print media and propaganda; however, they portrayed and discussed the negative impacts of high infant mortality, disease, and other social problems on children from all racial and socioeconomic backgrounds.

For *DNCr* puericulturists in the forties, living conditions, nutrition, and hygiene trumped skin color as causes of infant mortality and childhood illness. Folk medicine and insalubrious habits preoccupied child health specialists and often motivated educational publications and campaigns, as well as public exhibits. The data collected in the aforementioned 1941 study revealed that the majority of births (295 of 444) took place with a *curiosa*, or midwife, outside a clinical setting. Since the late nineteenth-century Brazilian doctors identified what they characterized as untrained midwives as a primary cause of high infant mortality. As the medicalization of maternity and children's health care intensified in the early twentieth century, doctors consistently portrayed themselves as the only safe, meaning scientific and rational, option for childbirth and pediatric care.³³¹ Puericulturists used statistics and images in the twenties and thirties to educate women about the dangers of relying on aunts, grandmothers, and female neighbors as midwives. By the time the *DNCr* began its investigations into high infant

³³¹ Maria Martha de Luna Freire, *Mães, médicos, e medicalização*, 127.

mortality after 1940, researchers made this practice one of their primary targets and their data collected on birth experiences clearly illustrated these preoccupations.

In addition to its research endeavors, the *DNCr* aimed to standardize the execution of child health and welfare services throughout Brazil. To maintain positive and effective relationships with governmental and private entities across regional networks, the *DNCr* published several guidebooks and mandates. In 1941 the *DNCr* published the first of these works in an attempt to regulate the operations of child-focused organizations nationwide. The guidebook featured instructions for forming and equipping local associations, operating clinics, and commemorating civic holidays for children. The book's author, Dr. Flammarion Costa, head of the *DNCr*'s Division of Social Protection, called on participants to put ideological differences aside in favor of children's causes. He also indicted his fellow countrymen for their lack of civic engagement, stating, "[w]e, Brazilians, generally have little associative spirit."³³² The document also provided guidelines for registering new associations, recording activities, and corresponding with the *DNCr*. Plentiful correspondence between groups outside the capital and the *DNCr* available in archival sources provide evidence that, at least in the short-term, this directive inspired interaction.³³³ Correspondence, some of which will be explored in a later section, came in the form of praise and criticism and illustrates the extent to which *DNCr* objectives were executed and interpreted in various regions of Brazil. Likewise, they show the contours of a network of medical and social thinkers invested in children's causes and public health.

³³² Dr. Flammarion Costa, *Associações de Proteção à Maternidade e à Infância*, 3rd ed. (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1944), 7.

³³³ Some of the correspondence between associations outside the capital Rio de Janeiro and the *DNCr* is collected in Brazil's *Arquivo Nacional's Gabinete Civil da Presidência da República* archives. *DNCr* tri-monthly bulletins also printed some correspondence, mostly positive, from various regional affiliates.

Puericulturists across Brazil organized and directed state-level children's departments throughout the forties and fifties that operated as branches of the national institution. Gustavo Capanema first proposed extending the network of child-focused policymakers and professionals with the initiation of *departamentos estaduais*, state-level departments in 1945.³³⁴ These entities conducted research, distributed federal funds, orchestrated the installation of clinical services, and sponsored public events like annual National Children's Week celebrations. By the late forties, several states had enacted *DECrs* and began child health and welfare campaigns in collaboration with the federal department. *DECrs* emerged in São Paulo in 1946, Paraná in 1947, Maranhão in 1948, and Bahia in 1949.³³⁵ These local branches reported to the *DNCr* frequently, often reporting on the nature of local Children's Week celebrations and the construction of puericulture posts and other health services. Following the installation of state level offices, the *DNCr* relied on statistics reported by local researchers, rather than commissions organized in the capital, who investigated infant mortality, disease, and the distribution of funding. In 1948, a federal law mandated the creation of seven federal *delegacias da criança*, or delegations. These organizations set up headquarters in Belém, Recife, Fortaleza, Salvador, Belo Horizonte, São Paulo, and Porto Alegre.³³⁶ This restructuring demonstrated a new level of *DNCr* oversight into state-level operations and illustrated the endurance of the department despite concurrent regime change. During

³³⁴"Solução objetiva para o problema da criança" in Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Boletim Trimestral do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 19 (December 1944), 2.

³³⁵ See Departamento Estadual do Paraná, *Relatório do Departamento Estadual da Criança* (Curitiba: Secretária de Saúde e Assistência Social, 1947); Angelo Hyppolito Filho, *Dicurso proferido por ocasião da Semana da Criança de 1947 em Cruzeiro* (São Paulo: Departamento Estadual da Criança, 1947); Secretária de Educação e Saúde, *Departamento Estadual da Criança: Regimento do Departamento Estadual da Criança*, (Salvador: SA Gráficas, 1950).

³³⁶ Departamento Nacional da Criança, *O Departamento Nacional da Criança: quatro anos de administração, 1947-1950* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1950), 16. CPDOC, Clemente Mariani Collection, Cma 75f.

this period, the *DNCr* also relocated its headquarters to Rua Senador Dantas in downtown Rio de Janeiro to expand both its clinical and administrative services.

In addition to its administrative functions, the *DNCr* distributed federal funding to states and municipalities beginning in 1940. It allocated the majority of funds for the construction of puericulture posts, maternity centers, and other types of medical outreach services for mothers and children. Departmental records show that the *DNCr* distributed 7.2 million réis among Brazil's states and territories between 1939 and 1940.

Municipalities throughout the State of Rio de Janeiro received approximately 20% (\$350k) of the total budget and Minas Gerais received the lowest allocation of federal funds (\$100k).³³⁷ During this period, *DNCr* officials began actively touting the outreach of national child welfare and health programs despite the uneven distribution of financial support. However, at least until 1944, programs initiated in the capital and other major coastal metropolises received more funding because they served as experimental models for eventual implementation in other regions. Interior states quickly became the recipients of increased funding and attention for the construction of puericulture posts and educational campaigns. While scant data exists in the departmental documentation to attest to how local-level officials actually spent these monies, the *DNCr* made it a point to record federal disbursement totals. Some municipalities dutifully reported using federal funds to build infrastructure, dispense food and medical aid, and commemorate National Children's Week. Such reports appeared in departmental bulletins usually to demonstrate

³³⁷Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano II, no. 8 (March 1942), 25-26. According to the 1942 data, the State of Mato Grosso did not receive federal funding, nor did the Territory of Rio Branco.

the scale of National Children's Week celebrations.³³⁸ Overall, federal funding filtered through the *DNCr* did not reach the level necessary to resolve public health and welfare disparities affecting Brazil's children.

After 1950 the *DNCr* ceased to publish tri-monthly bulletins and instead offered yearly departmental publications. The 1959 annual bulletin offers insightful information about the *DNCr*'s financial and public relations campaigns. Again, the following data reflect estimations originating within the department itself and have not been compared against other federal budgets from the corresponding period.

Table 4.1 : Summary of *DNCr* campaigns 1940-1958³³⁹

	Totals Recorded 1940-1958
Educational/Puericultural publications distributed to the public	1,272,720
Investigations Conducted	35
Children treated at <i>DNCr</i> clinic (<i>IFF</i> in Rio de Janeiro)	518,323
Pregnant women treated at <i>DNCr</i> clinic (<i>IFF</i> in Rio de Janeiro)	31,866
Municipalities supported	945
Federal Funds distributed	CR\$730.022.727,00

To what extent did this type of intervention impact overall child welfare following the institutionalization of the *DNCr* in 1940? Undoubtedly, the expansion of children's health care services to remote regions of Brazil shifted the dynamics of state power over

³³⁸ A 1944 report detailed the activities, installations, and inaugurations of puericulture posts and other types of services in interior states. See "Semana da Criança no interior," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no . 19 (December 1945), 5.

³³⁹ Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Boletim do Departamento Nacional da Criança* (1959), 8.

the body politic. Children became the focus of modern Brazilian bio-politics that aimed to generate healthy, productive, and nationalized citizens.³⁴⁰ Through the installation of puericulture posts, the distribution of food subsidies and other materials, and numerous educational campaigns the *DNC* exerted its authority over the care of the nation's children. However, ascertaining the precise impacts of its activities on the ground presents some methodological challenges. First, Brazilian repositories do not contain complete collections of all *DNCr* bulletins. From the editions consulted for this dissertation, I find no suggestion the department conducted any comprehensive study of overall infant mortality, disease rate, malnutrition, or, most importantly, adherence to *DNCr* programs among targeted populations. Reducing infant mortality remained the primary objective of most departmental investigations, yet these studies were limited to cities with the sustained infrastructure, personnel, and participant populations necessary for executing data collection.

Next, because the *DNCr* organized and conducted its own research and published it in departmental media the results contain a degree of bias. Throughout the forties and early fifties, *DNCr* officials struggled to maintain consistent federal funding. By the end of the *Estado Novo* in 1945, private donations and charity drives provided the bulk of funding for *DNCr* programs in the absence of a stable source of government support. Thus, officials had an incentive to produce favorable data to attract more money from the federal budget for departmental activities. Intriguingly, *DNCr* statisticians may have been just as likely to downplay their impacts on child health and welfare problems to

³⁴⁰ French philosopher Michel Foucault introduced the term "bio-politics" in his *History of Sexuality, volume I: Will to Knowledge* (London: Penguin Books, 1976). Didier Fassin's revision of Foucault's work offers a framework for understanding *Estado Novo*-era approaches to public health and assistance by arguing that the term 'bio-politics' is a politics of population or a community of living beings. See Didier Fassin, "Another Politics of Life is Possible," *Theory, Culture, and Society*, 26:5, (2009), 44-60.

demonstrate their intensity and endurance. As mentioned, *DNCr* doctors and researchers viewed state-generated demographic data with skepticism and portrayed themselves as the more appropriate purveyors of information about a host of health and welfare problems. Whether or not departmental officials manipulated statistics to raise awareness of child-centered issues or to exaggerate the *DNCr*'s impacts, they were nonetheless professionals engaged in resolving causes close to their own and the nation's hearts. Many of them were active practitioners who confronted the repercussions of welfare and health inequities in clinical settings. These experiences shaped their attitudes and policymaking, distinguishing them from other elites and government officials who, for the most part, remained detached from the masses. The plight of Brazil's youngest generations, constantly framed as the future of the nation by child advocates and puericulturists, was a highly sentimental issue in the early and mid twentieth century. Thus, the combination of professional agendas, contemporary politics, and the highly sentimental nature of child-centered policymaking is a crucial dynamic to consider when analyzing data presented in *DNCr* documentation.

One *DNCr* rare comprehensive study of infant mortality suggests that federal provisions of public health infrastructure and services had a positive effect on infant mortality rates in specific areas of Brazil. The 1950 report supplied information aggregated from *DNCr* investigations into infant mortality in nine cities from 1934 to 1949. Table 4.2 summarizes the results as they were printed in a 1950 *DNCr* publication.

Table 4.2: Infant Mortality Rates in 9 Cities, 1934-1950*

City (State)	<u>1934-1937</u>	<u>1938-1941</u>	<u>1942-1945</u>	<u>1946-1949</u>
Federal District (Rio de Janeiro)	177.0	182.7	148.7	115.7
Pôrto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul)	215.1	235.6	174.1	125.3
Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais)	152.9	152.4	123.1	99.3
Curitiba (Paraná)	127.8	122.8	137.0	111.4
São Paulo (São Paulo)	145.3	135.0	113.1	80.1
Vitória (Espírito Santo)	238.4	175.3	174.1	141.6
Niterói (Rio de Janeiro)	180.0	183.1	165.5	133.3
Florianópolis (Santa Catarina)	262.2	276.7	218.8	175.1
São Luiz (Maranhão)	280.5	280.6	235.0	193.8

*deaths in infants (<12 months of age) per 1,000 live births

Text accompanying the data attributed the greatest declines in overall infant mortality to campaigns where the department implemented the highest level of services, personnel, and infrastructure.³⁴¹ Infant mortality fell dramatically in São Luiz, Maranhão over the fifteen year period, yet it remained staggeringly high in comparison to rates in other industrialized countries in at mid-century. Puericulturists in São Luiz maintained strong networks with *DNCr* officials in the capital and developed a thriving state-level children's department which successfully lobbied for federal funding in the mid and late forties. As mentioned in Chapter II, one member of the state level children's department in Maranhão authored a specialized puericulture guide for "Northern mothers" that

³⁴¹Departamento Nacional da Criança, *O Departamento Nacional da Criança: quatro anos de administração, 1947-1950* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1950), 34. CPDOC, Clemente Mariani Collection, Cma 75f.

adapted child health and rearing techniques for the environment and culture in northern states.³⁴² Other states saw significant declines in infant mortality as well, suggesting that federal and local pro-child advocacy and medical practice bore at least some positive outcomes on Brazil's demographic profile. As was customary *DNCr* publications, the authors directly attributed such improvements to the department's federal and state-level campaigns. However, the report's authors provided no substantive evidence to connect these outcomes to specific *DNCr*'s initiatives. The report also lacked a comprehensive description of how and where it derived data on infant mortality. Again, the paucity and inadequacy of direct evidence of *DNCr* child health and welfare interventions reflected a general trend seen among federal institutions during the forties. Ironically, *DNCr* officials fell victim to the very errors they had accused other contemporary biostatisticians of committing in the collection of demographic data.

After its first decade of operations the *DNCr* demonstrated a limited capacity to fulfill its founding purpose as the singular administrator of child health and welfare services in Brazil. *DNCr* publications from the forties show a clear inclination for theoretical and quantitative proof of efficacy over concrete and qualitative evidence. This trend owes as much to the nature of Vargas-era institutional models and politics as it does to Brazil's uneven development in the first half of the twentieth century. The bias of *DNCr* documents prevents an objective assessment of its overall impacts after 1940, yet its presence and principles designated the social needs of Brazilian children as a state obligation. Borrowing a metaphor found in pro-Vargas propaganda, the *DNCr*, at least in

³⁴² Dr. Olavo Correia Lima, *Eu e Mamãe: puericultura para a mãe nortista* (São Luiz, 1949).

theory, typified the transformation of children from "stepchildren of the state" to key citizens and symbols of Brazil.³⁴³

Brazil's *DNCr* remained marginally active until the late sixties when the military government installed the *Fundação do Bem-Estar do Menor* (FUNABEM), or Foundation for Minors' Well-being) in 1964. A 1966 FUNABEM charter designated the director of the *DNCr* as an advisor to its national council on child welfare, demonstrating that the department remained at least nominally present in policymaking in the latter part of the twentieth century.³⁴⁴ FUNABEM's objectives and structures scarcely resembled those of the *DNCr*. Rather, the institution represented the military regime's attempt to contain and control minors perceived as detrimental to national security.³⁴⁵ With the fall of the military dictatorship and the redemocratization of Brazil in the latter part of the twentieth century, smaller, private organizations have replaced federal departments as the major purveyors of child welfare and health advocacy. More than half a century after puericulturists and government officials began agitating for the integration of private and state initiatives, this approach to child health and welfare administration has materialized in Brazil.

A Nation With a Child's Face: Analyzing DNCr Public Outreach in Parenting Magazines

Since the early thirties the month of October has belonged to the Brazilian child. Beginning in 1931, the São Paulo-based women's philanthropic organization, *Cruzada Pró-Infância* began celebrating Children's Week during the second week of the month. After its foundation in 1930, the *CPI* bylaws designated October 12 as "Children's Day."

³⁴³DIP, *Getúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças* (Rio de Janeiro: DIP, 1940), 4.

³⁴⁴*Fundação Nacional do Bem-Estar do Menor* (Brasília: Departamento de Imprensa Nacional, 1966), 10.

³⁴⁵For a survey of institutional transformations in the late twentieth-century see, Irene and Irma Rizzini, "Children and Youths in Institutional Care in Brazil: Historical Perspectives and Current Overview," (Rio de Janeiro: CIESPI, 2003), 1-26.

Its organizers hoped the holiday would "implant in everyone's minds the need for cooperation to effectively combat infant mortality."³⁴⁶ The following year *CPI* directors orchestrated an entire week of celebrations focused on promoting awareness about child hygiene, nutrition, disease, and other welfare issues. Five days of public exhibits, roundtable discussions, children's activities, music and cinema enticed *paulistas* to reverently and properly rear their offspring. Organizers intended the commemorations to delight children while educating adults.

Within the next five years, medical professionals, and officials in Brazil's capital, Rio de Janeiro, adopted the holiday. In 1937, the *Diretoria de Proteção à Maternidade e à Infância* organized a week of local events including puericulture exhibits, children's theater, and various charitable activities. To publicize the event, the newly created *Divisão de Amparo à Maternidade e à Infância* also published the first edition of its parenting magazine, *Criança: revista para os pais*. These two forums became potent mechanisms for transferring concern for child health and welfare from small elite circles to the masses. Medical professionals, policymakers, and philanthropists gained crucial channels for advancing puericulture into the public domain. While the primary objective of both the magazine and Children's Week celebrations was to disseminate proper health and rearing practices, both consequently propagated Brazilian national identity as it was construed by contemporary elite child advocates. Visual and discursive propaganda urged parents to give their children Brazilian names and images of children surrounded by patriotic symbols filled the pages and covers of *Criança*. The imagery and rhetoric used in public exhibits and events, as well as in *Criança*, conveyed nascent generations as

³⁴⁶ *Cruzada Pró-Infância-Relatório dos trabalhos realizados de 12 agosto de 1930 a 3 de maio de 1933* (São Paulo: Cruzada Pró-Infância, 1933), 6.

essential transmitters of *brasilidade*. As such, officials imbued children's faces and bodies with what they envisioned as the specific markers of Brazilian national culture. The remainder of this chapter examines the images and rhetoric found in the *DNCr's* parenting magazine during the late thirties and early forties. The following chapter analyzes the content and form of National Children's Week celebrations in this period.

Criança began as a monthly magazine intended for parents and children. Readers had the option of buying single editions from neighborhood newsstands for two *reís* or subscribing for monthly delivery. Two Rio de Janeiro-based pediatricians, Dr. José Martinho da Rocha and Dr. Marcelo Garcia started the publication as a medium for promoting hygienic childrearing practices and information about children's cognitive and emotional development. According to its organizers, *Criança* corrected a "deficiency in the diffusion of knowledge about ways to "preserve and conserve children's health."³⁴⁷ Its original subtitle revealed its eclectic subject matter: *puericulture, education and school life, psychology, literature, theater, cinema, drawing, and children's fashion*. Ultimately, the magazines creators and contributors purported to set readers on "scientific paths" to child health and welfare.³⁴⁸ To this end, in its first year of publication the magazine offered parents guidance related to such topics as vaccination, bathing, breastfeeding, congenital diseases, and prenatal health. Other topics provided insights into childhood behavior and emotional development. "Teaching Your Child Responsibility," "How to deal with Fear of the Doctor," and "The Nervous Child,"

³⁴⁷ *Criança: revista para os pais*, ano i, no. 3 (December 1937), 1. Dr. José Martinho da Rocha was chief of Rio de Janeiro's Child Clinic at the *Policlínica Geral* and a professor of pediatrics at the *Faculdade Nacional de Medicina*. He also authored several puericulture guidebooks including, *Guia para criar o bebê* in 1947. Dr. Marcelo Garcia was director of pediatrics at the Hospital Jesus in Rio de Janeiro.

³⁴⁸ "Visão retrospectiva," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. I, no. 12 (December 1938), 1.

featured suggestions for tackling the psychological rearing of children.³⁴⁹ Some of the early content also revolved around domestic arts such as cooking and sewing. Sewing patterns for children's clothing and recipes appeared in most of the 1937 and 1938 editions. Content for children included coloring pages, short stories, poetry, and cartoons. After its first year of publication, Dr. Olinto de Oliveira praised the magazine as one of the most effective tools in the campaign for child health and welfare in Brazil.³⁵⁰

Under the direction of two Rio de Janeiro-based pediatricians between 1937 and 1938, *Criança* helped underscore the medicalization of childhood and maternity by appropriating parents and doctors as allies. In the early days of its publication, the magazine's content did not directly engage with issues of national culture, patriotism, civic responsibility, and/or citizenship. Photographs of local children, sometimes the sons and daughters of medical colleagues, appeared on the magazine's covers. The children pictured did not exude any particular characteristic of Brazilian national identity or local culture. In fact all of them were objectively white, healthy, and happy children who intriguingly bore little resemblance to the "problem" children described in *Criança's* articles. Rather, the children on the covers represented the ideal child in terms of physical appearance, health, and temperament. Figure 4.5 below shows examples of the cover images featured from 1937 to 1938.

³⁴⁹ A summary of the all articles written from October 1937 to October 1938 appears in "Índice do 1º volume de *Criança*," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. I, no. 12 (December 1938), last page.

³⁵⁰ "Criança nas opiniões dos Mestres," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. I, no. 7 (June/July 1938), 1.

Figure 4.5: Examples of *Criança* covers 1937 to 1938

Biblioteca Nacional

The June/July 1938 edition of *Criança* even pictured the U.S. American actress, Shirley Temple, further suggesting the dislocation of Brazilian national identity from the images of children on its covers in its first year of publication. Instead of portraying children with specifically and ostensibly *Brazilian* qualities, the magazine's directors projected the physical and emotional characteristics that they imagined as indicative of ideal childhood in the late thirties. Additionally, several articles written by foreign, mainly U.S. American specialists, appeared in translation throughout the first volume. The influence of foreign intellectuals and approaches also shaped how their Brazilian counterparts discussed and portrayed children's lives and health. Foreign models of family life, domestic roles, and aesthetics affected the ways the magazine's editors

understood and projected the modern Brazilian child. As a result, white skin and stable wellbeing remained the markers of optimum fitness according to medical practitioners such as da Rocha and Garcia. Although *Criança's* articles never directly mention whiteness as a valuable trait, the magazine's imagery implicitly made such a claim. White children embodied health and hygiene for many puericulturists in the late thirties. Their attitudes continued to reflect the racial ideologies propagated by late nineteenth and early twentieth-century intellectuals. Whereas earlier child-focused medical professionals and policymakers explicitly discussed fitness and health in racial, ethnic, and/or color terms, *Estado Novo*-era puericulturists regularly used the terms "health" and "hygiene" as analogues for whiteness. However, the magazine's editors did echo the rhetoric generated by *Estado Novo* officials that defined Brazil's youngest generations as the citizens of tomorrow. An August 1938 article called children the "constructors of tomorrow's Brazil."³⁵¹ Yet, overall early volumes of *Criança* did not overtly celebrate *brasilidade* in its first year, but instead promoted health, domestic arts, and children's interests based predominantly on foreign trends.

Beginning in its second year of publication, the Ministry of Education and Health officially endorsed *Criança*. Puericulturists affiliated with both the *Division of Maternal and Child Support and Assistance* and the *National Puericulture Instituto* contributed to the magazine, consequently changing its overall tone. Once the *Estado Novo* institutions became involved at the end of 1938, *Criança* became a platform for showcasing the uniquely Brazilian child as an embodiment of national identity as it was conjured by the regime. During this period the magazine also reinforced Vargas' "March to the West" efforts to expand the reach of the state and incorporate disparate peoples and regions of

³⁵¹"A Semana da Criança," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. I, no. 9 (August 1938), 1.

Brazil. After a brief pause in publication in 1940 during the reorganization of child welfare and health services under the *DNCr*, the magazine reemerged under new editorial direction and purpose.³⁵² It maintained its original goal to provide educational materials on all aspects of puericulture and child rearing. Now, however, as the official parenting magazine of the *DNCr* and thus, the *Estado Novo*, *Criança* also aimed to "penetrate into all corners of Brazil."³⁵³ Likewise, articles on wide-ranging topics now spoke of a singular *criança brasileira*, or Brazilian child, and advised parents how to produce and raise the nation's future generations. Texts began speaking to "all Brazilians" to reflect the concurrent regime's and the *DNCr*'s desires to standardize and nationalize approaches to public health and welfare.³⁵⁴ *Criança* served as a medium for discussing what its directors, as well as child-focused policymakers, considered a national problem.

Publishing images of President/Dictator Getúlio Vargas alongside children became a common feature in *Criança* in the forties. The magazine buttressed his administration's portrayal of Vargas as the 'father' of the nation and 'friend' of children. *Criança*'s evocation of these characterizations makes it an intriguing lens with which to examine Vargas' relationship with the nation's children as it was crafted by *Estado Novo* propagandists. The inclusion of photographs depicting Vargas in his paternal role also demonstrated the complicity of *DNCr* officials to devote the pages of its magazine to conveying pro-regime content. If the underlying purpose of the magazine was to convey proper parental roles and behaviors, then *DNCr* contributors clearly projected Vargas as a model father. Again, a decisive shift in content occurred during the height of the *Estado*

³⁵² *Criança*'s new directors beginning in October 1941 were Drs. Moyses Xavier de Araújo and Thomas Newlands Neto. After 1941, the *DNCr* took over official direction of the magazine.

³⁵³ *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. III, no. 25 (October 1941), 3.

³⁵⁴ *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. IV, no. 3 (October 1942), 4.

Novo. Criança no longer simply pertained to the propagation of hygienic and well-balanced approaches to parenting. Not only did the expectations of parenting expand to include the rearing the future stewards of the nation through moral, civic, and patriotic instruction, but the magazine was now a tool of the state.

One article in particular featured a photo montage of Getúlio Vargas interacting with Brazilian children in a variety of settings.

Figure 4.6: Photo Montage featuring President Getúlio Vargas (white suit and hat) engaging with Brazilian children,



Criança (January 1943)
Biblioteca Nacional

Entitled, "*Deixai que venham a mim as criancinhas...*" (Let the little children come to me), the text summarized the President's pro-child politics. It began with a biblical allusion in which Jesus of Nazareth vows to protect the world's innocent children.

Bringing the focus back to contemporary Brazil, the author lamented the absence of this "man of God," in present-day society, but stated;

But [today], we have a man to continue this superior doctrine who considers the child as the touchstone for the future of the world. This man, who is simple and affable as well, is President Getúlio Vargas.³⁵⁵

In addition to overtly comparing Vargas to Jesus, the article's anonymous author labeled the President as "friend" and "comrade" of the nation's children. Among the advancements in child welfare and health attributed to Vargas' regime, the article listed the fortification of children's bodies, the inspiration of learning, and a solid work ethic all forged through comprehensive state programs. To extend the biblical metaphor and to imbue Vargas with seemingly god-like powers, the article claimed that the next generation would achieve a new "biological classification."³⁵⁶ Accordingly, this new species of Brazilian would emerge as a direct result of Vargas-era health and welfare policymaking. This assessment granted enormous agency to the state and portrayed its medical and social assistance as capable of changing Brazilian race at the biological level. During this period, even the older generation of puericulturists did not invoke the idea of biologically reclassifying the Brazilian body politic by manipulating the reproduction and care of its youngest members.

³⁵⁵"Deixai que venham a mim as criancinhas..." *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. II, no. 24 (January 1940), 18-19.

³⁵⁶ Ibid.

While the intended significance of this proposal remains curious, it is clear that *DNCr* medical professionals involved in *Criança's* production complied with Vargas' propagandists. The Vargas-centered photo montage and accompanying article certainly served the *Estado Novo's* agenda rather than offering readers concrete advice on parenting. In fact, the images included in the article came from another contemporary publication, *Geúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças*, (Getúlio Vargas: the Children's Friend). Published in 1940, this *cartilha*, or educational pamphlet, reified Vargas' paternalistic persona through the exposition of his child-focused policymaking and general passion for Brazil's youngest citizens. *Criança's* reproduction of the exact images featured in the *DIP cartilha* demonstrated the magazine's role as a vehicle for state propaganda. Images venerating Vargas' role as father of the nation and the children's friend also reasserted the relationship between the state and individual families. Such representations transmitted the idea that parenting was a top-down endeavor initiated at the highest level through a paternalistic state. *Criança* helped forge a sense of national patriarchy whose power to shape future generations subsumed that of Brazilian parents. Ultimately this content evinced a clear shift in subject matter toward political propaganda after federal institutions took over *Criança's* publication.

Other images signaled the transition of *Criança* from an initiative of private pediatricians to a tool of state propaganda and national identity creation. When the *MES* and *Divisão de Amparo á Maternidade e á Infância* began endorsing *Criança* in 1939, the imagery on covers and internal pages began to reflect Brazilian, rather than foreign traits. While the children featured on its covers remained white, physically healthy, and

happy, contributors began to incorporate more symbols of *brasilidade*. Figure 4.7 depicts a photograph appearing on the cover of the March 1939 edition.

Figure 4.7: Carnaval edition of *Criança* magazine



Criança (March 1939)
Biblioteca Nacional

The photograph commemorated the upcoming Lenten celebration, or *carnaval*, and depicted a young girl dressed in festive attire. Her dress and headpiece evoked the look of Rio de Janeiro's samba school dancers who participated in parades and competitions during the holiday. More specifically, the use of beads or shell necklaces, cloth head wraps, and large, ornate skirts symbolized the African roots of Brazilian *carnaval*. Such costuming originated with the West African female slave population in Northeastern Brazil in the sixteenth century. Religious women donning white head wraps and broad skirts became part of *carnaval* festivities in the early twentieth century and *carnaval* costumes have evolved around their image ever since.³⁵⁷ The young girl photographed

³⁵⁷For scholarship that explores the African origins of Brazilian Carnival culture, see Peter Fry, "Negros e brancos no Carnaval da Velha República," in João José Reis (org.), *Escravidão e invenção da liberdade: estudos sobre o negro no Brasil* (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1998); Peter Fryer, *Rhythms of Resistance:*

above embodied the *baiana*, or Bahian woman, or more precisely, her aesthetic as it was interpreted by elites in Southern Brazil in the late 1930's. By selecting a white child to represent the *baiana*, the editors of *Criança* exposed the mutability of Brazil's carnival culture. The appropriation of a traditionally Afro-Brazilian dress onto a white child demonstrated the magazine directors', and thus the *Estado Novo* regime's, desire to reclaim this cultural style. By infusing the *baiana* style with traits such as youth, white skin color, health, and happiness, officials and puericulturists detached *carnaval* from what they perceived as its lower class, black roots. Child-focused policymakers reasoned that if the annual celebration typified Brazilian national identity, then it followed that the face of *carnaval* should be that of the imagined 'citizen of tomorrow.' Clearly, for the magazine's contributors, the future of Brazil would embrace the culture of the nation's past while eschewing its racial realities.

This cover image also coincided with other efforts to elevate aspects of Bahian regional identity to markers of national identity. Famed singer, Carmen Miranda, also white and of Portuguese descent, concurrently interpreted the *baiana* persona by wearing costumes similar to the one pictured on the 1939 *Criança* cover. As her music and image gained international popularity, her carnivalesque attire became a symbol of Brazil and tropical culture in general. Meanwhile, *Estado Novo* propagandists also attempted to co-opt *carnaval* celebrations by composing patriotic and moralistic samba lyrics. In 1938, Rio de Janeiro's *Escola Portela* samba school performed a special parade for the President and Rio de Janeiro mayor, Henrique Dodsworth. Dressed in traditional festive

African Musical Heritage in Brazil (Hanover, NH: University of New Hampshire Press, 2000); Hendrik Kraay, *Afro-Brazilian Culture and Politics: Bahia 1790-1990* (New York: M.E. Sharp Inc., 1998); Hermano Vianna, *The Mystery of Samba: Popular Music and National Identity in Brazil* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999).

attire, men, women, and children performed a samba dedicated to Vargas.³⁵⁸ The samba school, established in 1920, was one of the most traditional schools in Rio de Janeiro and had won the 1935 *carnaval* competition. The fact that its performers composed music in Vargas' honor demonstrated the extent to which *Estado Novo*-era propagandists influenced the expression of popular culture. The *Departamento de Propaganda (DIP)* sought to educate the public and revere the Vargas dictatorship by reclaiming a musical style associated with Brazil's non-white and impoverished masses.³⁵⁹ Indeed, the 1939 *Criança* cover demonstrated the magazine's, and, by proxy, the *DNCr*'s reinforcement of Vargas-era initiatives that sought to transform national identity according to the state's vision. Originally intended to be read by parents and children alike, regime officials knew *Criança* could influence a key demographic: the Brazilians of tomorrow and the generation charged with rearing them.

The *DNCr* continued publishing *Criança* until 1944 when the *INP* began to pour more energy into its parenting magazine, *Puericultura*. Advertisements for the new magazine appeared in several volumes of *Criança*, suggesting that its organizers were preparing readers for the transition. *Puericultura* also solidified itself as a medium for pro-Vargas propaganda by publishing extensive articles and imagery on the relationship between the child and the *Estado Novo*. Although *Puericultura* was not produced by the *DNCr*, many of the same contributors and endorsements that appeared in *Criança* were also featured in the *INP* parenting magazine. By its second edition in 1941, *Puericultura* published praise from Gustavo Capanema, Dr. Olinto de Oliviera, and President

³⁵⁸"O desfile das escolas de samba em homenagem ao Presidente Getúlio Vargas," *A Nota* (Rio de Janeiro) (October 4, 1938), 5.

³⁵⁹On attempts to change samba lyrics, see Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars*, 85-87 and Bryan McCann, *Hello, Hello Brazil: Popular Music in the Making of Modern Brazil* (Durham: Duke University Press 2004).

Vargas.³⁶⁰ While I found no evidence to suggest that sales of *Criança* waned with the introduction of *Puericultura*, the content of and volume of advertisements for the latter demonstrated that it had become the preferred child-focused medium for promoting the Vargas regime. Articles and images devoted to Vargas and his child-centered policymaking appeared in every volume of *Puericultura* from 1941 to 1944.

After the fall of the *Estado Novo* in 1945, the *DNCr* and the *INP* ceased publication of their respective parenting magazines. Institutional instability and dwindling resources forced officials and medical professionals to reformulate their approaches to public outreach and education. After 1945, National Children's Week became the principal forum for promoting puericulture and awareness of children's social concerns. The *DNCr* also forged an alliance with Ministry of Agriculture to publish a children's interest magazine called, *Brincar e Aprender* (Play and Learn) in 1945. The magazine promoted *DNCr* initiatives and contained educational content for parents and children on a variety of topics ranging from hygiene to civic participation. However, the publication focused predominantly on encouraging children's interest and participation in agriculture. The magazine's content echoed a newly-forged Ministry of Agriculture and *DNCr* alliance that purported to mold Brazil's youngest generations into a viable, native-born labor force and as potential inhabitants of the country's hinterland. The culmination of *Estado Novo*-era child politics and statecraft thus initiated a shift away from the puericulture-based print media and advocacy that had dominated during the preceding decade. Elite social thinkers at the forefront of child-centered policymaking now imagined Brazilian children as "little farmers" and immigrants capable of propelling the nation's economic prosperity. Despite this ideological transition and the political

³⁶⁰*Puericultura*, ano I, no. 2(November 1941), 1.

transformations that persisted after 1945, children remained key icons of Brazilian national identity and the genre of government-sponsored magazines prevailed into the following decade.

Conclusion

The foundation of Brazil's first National Children's Department in 1940 represented a unique confluence of medical and political prerogatives that had begun during the preceding decade. Medical professionals based in Rio de Janeiro had raised the banner of puericulture in the early 1930s as a strategy for improving Brazil's demographic profile and safeguarding the nation's youngest citizens. Such discourse connected well with the social reform and development agendas of the post-Revolution Vargas state. The *DNCr* was just one of numerous federal departments, ministries, and institutions created during the *Estado Novo* regime, yet its foundations had been laid decades earlier. Unlike other federal entities, the *DNCr* had existed in some form since 1919 when Dr. Moncorvo Filho established the Rio de Janeiro-based Children's Department. Several precursor institutions organized by pediatricians, philanthropists, and social reformers also influenced the eventual foundation of a national-level children's department. Although the *Estado Novo* ultimately installed and oriented the *DNCr*, its evolution truly reflected the ingenuity and energy of child-focused medical professionals in the first half of the twentieth century. Its emergence clearly demonstrated the momentum behind contemporary "pro-child" ideology and the credibility attributed to puericulture, despite its position as a relatively circumscribed branch of medical science.

In many ways, the *DNCr*'s organizational structure was ahead of its time. Officials carefully organized the department to oversee infrastructural development,

educational campaigns, health care services, and public outreach programs. Yet, as well-structured as it was, the *DNCr* functioned with a limited financial support from the federal government and, throughout the early years of its existence, its officials formulated projects that far exceeded both its financial and manpower capabilities. As a result, the department's impacts were confined to the urban and suburban areas of the Federal District. Again, *DNCr* documentation contains little quantitative evidence of the implications of its services and programs in the forties. Officials consistently decried the lack of funding and personnel and attributed the nation's ongoing high infant mortality and other child welfare problems to insufficient federal support. To mitigate the paucity of resources, *DNCr* officials reached out to private organizations and philanthropic groups, such as the *LBA* and *CNC* to buttress its expansion into new regions of Brazil.

DNCr documentation possesses rich evidence of public outreach and media campaigns designed to disperse puericultural knowledge throughout the Brazilian populace. Parenting magazines and photographic coverage of National Children's Week celebrations in provide compelling insights into the functioning of the *DNCr*. The forums also demonstrate the relationship between child-focused medicine, public policy, and national identity creations. The images crafted to represent Brazil during public events and on magazine covers spoke volumes about the ways in which *DNCr* officials perceived the *brasilidade* in aesthetic, cultural, racial, and gendered terms. Images of white, healthy children remained overwhelmingly dominant, although the boundaries of these standards began to blur as *DNCr* campaigns ventured into new regions of Brazil. Throughout the forties, *DNCr* publications increasingly published images of non-white children as winners of robust baby competitions and as participants in civic celebrations.

This type of representational plurality reflected the more socially and racially egalitarian attitudes that had distinguished Brazilian puericulturist from their eugenists counterparts in the 1930s.

Today few Brazilians have heard of the *DNCr*, even those whose parents may have showered them with gifts during National Children's Week or entered them into a healthy baby contest in the thirties and forties. Some older generation Brazilians recall the Johnson and Johnson and GB (Gerber Baby) Contests and Pageants of the 1960s. In fact, Brazil's National Archive contains a collection of thousands of photographs submitted to a GB Beautiful Baby Contests in the sixties. However, the *DNCr*'s legacy remains locked inside the few remaining published documents that exist in repositories across Brazil. Perhaps the most tangible evidence of its existence is the department's original headquarters, the *Hospital Arthur Bernardes*, which still stands on Avenida Rui Barbosa in the Flamengo neighborhood of Rio de Janeiro. The building houses the *Instituto Fernandes Figueira*, a women and children's research and health care institution, and former *DNCr* affiliate, founded in 1946. In 2009 a major structural renovation removed the entire façade of the old hospital, replacing its cracked stucco with gleaming white tiles and large windows. Throughout the months-long construction, the original mother-and-child statue installed by the *DNCr* in 1940 remained untouched. The sculpture, seen in Chapter III (Figure 3.5), was used by the *DNCr* in several exhibits and became a central icon representing the institution throughout the forties. Workers milled around these two figures, covering their angelic faces with dirt and cement. When the renovation was complete, the mother and child graced the entryway reminding passerbys of the beauty and precariousness of human life. The statue remains the only public

patrimony of the *DNCr* in Rio de Janeiro today. Still standing after more than seventy years, the statue is an allegory for a period in Brazil's history in which a national institution attempted to embrace the child with the care and reverence of a mother.

CHAPTER V

"Our Best Immigrants:" Child-Centered Development, Agricultural Education, and Images of National Identity

Brasileiro do sul, brasileiro do norte
 Amas a tua pátria até a exaltação!
 Mas não basta querê-la e preciso servi-la
 Toma a semente e o arado e vai lavar o chão!
 Multiplica o teu gado! E desce ao sub solo,
 Onde dorme o petróleo, o diamante, e o carvão!
 Não busques na cidade os tesouros que rolam
 Do baixo litoral ao mais alto sertão!

Poem-Martins d'Alvarez (1942)

Just as the keen farmer carefully prepares his soil for planting, fertilizing and watering it before sowing seeds, and continuing to care for it until it bears fruit, so too should the government of a progressive nation care for its children, with the same tenderness and zeal, after all, the child is the seed of nationality.

Dr.Emilio Ribas (1950)

On Christmas Eve 1939 Getúlio Vargas proclaimed his enduring commitment to child and maternal protection in a special *Mensagem do Natal* (Christmas Message). His address, radio broadcast across the nation, reiterated the pledges he had made exactly seven years earlier to the day. The first Christmas Message of 1932 had catalyzed the nationalization of child health and welfare services and solidified Vargas as a devoted national 'father.' Vargas' blunt appraisal of infant mortality in the first speech emboldened contemporary medical and social thinkers to examine the plight of Brazil's women and children. His rhetoric had also conjured the image of the young and vulnerable being transformed into "strong and capable citizens."³⁶¹ Seven years later in 1939, Vargas, now head of an authoritarian regime, invoked similar language and again drew upon the symbolism of Christmas to encourage the redemption of Brazil's youngest

³⁶¹ Getúlio Vargas, "Mensagem do Natal" (transcript) (December 25, 1932). Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, GC 1935.05.27, Rolo 60, foto 538.

generations. However, he added a crucial corollary: children would be transformed into "robust and energetic" workers.³⁶²

Vargas began his 1939 address with a litany of reasons why the goals set forth in his 1932 Christmas Message had not been fulfilled. A general lack of national cooperation, he claimed, prevented the government from establishing an effective network of services for children and mothers. Vargas then described how well-cultivated children fit into his administration's plan to valorize the "working man." He called for state and municipal-level governments to underwrite puericulture programs that would develop the nation's "potential riches."³⁶³ For the President and other officials in the *Estado Novo* regime, Brazil's children embodied these "riches" in two ways. Following their predecessor power-holders and social thinkers in the earlier part of the century, Vargas and his administrators considered children to be the future stewards of the nation. They continued to characterize *the child* as inherently virtuous and imagined them as valuable players in national development. However, during the height of the *Estado Novo's* interventionist and development-driven regime, officials not only perceived children as commodities in and of themselves, but as key mechanisms in the exploitation of Brazil's natural resources. Healthy, well-parented children represented an essential labor force capable of harnessing, producing, and extracting wealth from Brazil's vast territory. *Estado Novo*-era officials and medical professionals moved beyond an abstract understanding of how children's health and welfare contributed to Brazil's economic security and prosperity. Rather, by the mid-forties they began implementing agricultural

³⁶² "Em favor da maternidade e da infância," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. 2, no. 24 (January 1940), np. The magazine published the transcript of Vargas' 1939 Christmas Eve radio address.

³⁶³ Ibid.

education programs and propaganda to specifically mold Brazilian children into farmers who would eventually populate and cultivate the interior.

Vargas' 1939 Christmas Message touched off a phase of cooperative policy-making and cultural production between Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health and Education, and the *DNCr*. Through a series of coinciding projects these federal institutions buttressed the Vargas administration's "March to the West"-inspired economic, infrastructural, and colonizing objectives. The *DNCr* utilized its two major forums, its parenting and puericulture magazines and its National Children's Week exhibits, to demonstrate how child-centered labor and colonization fit into the realm of national development. In 1941, the Ministry of Agriculture began publishing its own children's magazine intended to promote agricultural activities, as well as good nutrition and hygiene. Agricultural clubs stood out as a major initiative designed to turn farming and animal husbandry into recreational activities for children. Another publication produced by the ministry, *Riquezas da Nossa Terra*, (Riches of Our Land) featured a children's section that illustrated the work of such clubs and also promoted the *DNCr*'s initiatives. The Ministry of Education and Health simultaneously implemented educational campaigns, in conjunction with the *DNCr*, aimed at instilling a love for the land among adults and children. Federal programs also went beyond education and propaganda to stimulate children's interest in agriculture. For example, the *DNCr*, in cooperation with the Legião Brasileira de Assistência, distributed seeds to families and sponsored children's vegetable growing and livestock competitions. These groups also organized the symbolic planting of trees and "victory gardens" to mitigate deforestation and food shortages respectively.

Language produced by federal institutions also shifted to reflect the concurrent emphasis on children's roles in the exploitation of natural resources. Officials and medical professionals made more explicit references to the connection between puericulture and agriculture. Vargas' 1939 Christmas Message was rife with agricultural allusions. He described his plan for child health and welfare improvements as a "good seed that would germinate in fertile soil, flowering and bearing opulent fruit."³⁶⁴ *DNCr* officials and puericulturists maintained the metaphorical rhetoric used by their predecessors that characterized children as seeds and quality parenting as cultivation. Adding to these comparisons, Estado-Novo era child advocates portrayed Brazil's young as essential actors in national development, calling them colonizers, immigrants, soldiers, and farmers. Such language suggested that children were no longer considered passive natural resources whose healthy growth was their primary contribution to the nation. Instead, such discourse conveyed children as growers and laborers themselves, charged with what the Ministry of Agriculture's propaganda called the "economic, moral, and cultural aggrandizement" of Brazil.³⁶⁵

While Brazilian puericulturists and other officials engaged in this endeavor did not directly refer to early twentieth-century United States children's agricultural programs, their initiatives were strikingly similar. In particular, elites at the forefront of child-centered agriculture development seemed to take inspiration from the American organization, 4-H. 4-H clubs originated in the late nineteenth century as a means of bringing new technology and methods to American commercial farming. Agricultural researchers and engineers realized that young people were more willing than adults to

³⁶⁴ Ibid

³⁶⁵ Ministério de Agricultura, "Para uma vida melhor no campo," *Riquezas de Nossa Terra*, no. 19 (January/February 1944), np.

accept new approaches, so they organized rural youth programs to introduce innovations in farming communities. According to the organization's historical narrative, the originators of such clubs hoped to promote "hands-on" learning among American children to resolve agricultural challenges. By the early twentieth century, local youth crop-growing clubs emerged around the country. Federal legislation in 1914 sanctioned boys and girls' agriculture clubs and the 4-H became a national organization soon after.³⁶⁶ In their existing documentation, neither the *DNCr* nor the Ministry of Agriculture mentioned this American precursor as an inspiration for rural education and clubs in Brazil. However, a 1942 National Children's Week poster provides compelling evidence that officials had some awareness of 4-H and its projects.

Figure 5.1: *DNCr* "Happy Childhood Mission"
"The child can only feel happy when he is well-fed"



Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança (September 1942)
Biblioteca Nacional

Figure 5.2: 4-H official emblem (1910)



www.4-h.org

³⁶⁶ Information about the 4-H Club's origins can be found at www.4-h.org.

In addition to the visual similarities between symbols used by the *DNCr* and 4-H, Brazilian officials also discussed the importance of practical education that would reconnect children with the land as the American organization had done decades earlier. Like their American counterparts, Brazilian elites in the capital perceived children as the "agents of progress" that would cultivate and populate the nation's vast territory. Puericulturists and other federal officials often discussed how what they viewed as improper and/or ignorant agricultural practices hindered the success of rural farming. However, a crucial distinction exists in the comparison of American 4-H origins and Brazil's child-focused agricultural initiatives in the twentieth century. As mentioned, U.S. 4-H grew out of industrialists' and agricultural researchers' enlistment of children introduce new methods and technologies in communities where established farmers were reticent to accept such innovations. Rather, in the Brazilian context, these programs emerged in response to more development-based and geopolitical needs like the colonization of uninhabited regions and demographic redistribution. Whereas America's "March to the West" occurred in a more structured, linear (East to West), and comprehensive fashion, similar processes in Brazil were more sporadic.³⁶⁷ In the 1940s, agricultural policies designed for children simultaneously aimed to fill demographic voids, fortify the commercial agriculture industry, and provide a replacement workforce in response to urban migration. As an added benefit, puericulturists also designed agricultural clubs, education, and events in the hopes that Brazil's children would learn good nutrition and sanitary interactions with their environments.

³⁶⁷ For an historical overview of demographic patterns and population in Brazil, see Thomas W. Merrick, *The Demographic History of Brazil* (Albuquerque: The Latin American Institute, University of New Mexico, 1980) and *Population and Development in Brazil, 1800 to the Present* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).

In 1944 a *DNCr* official revealed a compelling slogan shared among his colleagues that labeled Brazil's children as the country's "best immigrants."³⁶⁸ In a departmental bulletin report, Dr. Cleto Seabra Veloso attributed the phrase to another contemporary Rio de Janeiro-based pediatrician, Dr. Castro Barreto. Castro Barreto's original dictum opened the possibility that Brazil could transform itself through "*sui generis* immigration."³⁶⁹ In his formulation, state intervention into children's health, education, and welfare would produce a viable and productive generation capable of populating Brazil's expansive territory and reaping its rich natural resources. Echoing his colleague, Veloso went on to say that tensions over how to best govern the nation's children were similar to the "intricate problems" that surrounded legal debates over immigration in the preceding decades. The question of how to maximize children's economic and demographic contributions reminded him of earlier discussions about how German, Italian, and Japanese immigrants could benefit the nation.³⁷⁰ The slogan, "children are our best immigrants," appeared later in the bulletin with the following supplication: "let us not forget this profound truth and accumulate such precious capital, capable of making Brazil greater, stronger, and more respected."³⁷¹ Whether or not government officials and intellectuals outside the *DNCr* adhered to this specific slogan, the portrayal of children as immigrants coincided with other federal development initiatives. By casting children as Brazil's best immigrants, *DNCr* officials echoed a sense of nationalism and nativism shared by intellectuals, ministry officials, and other

³⁶⁸ Dr. Cleto Seabra Veloso, "Construindo gerações," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 19 (December 1944), 41.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

³⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 41.

³⁷¹ Dr. Orlando Seabra Lopes, "Uma justa homenagem," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 19 (December 1944), 56.

power-holding elites in the thirties and forties. A speech given during National Children's Week in October 1939 perhaps first introduced the idea of populating Brazil with its own children. Dr. Vasco Barcelos, a Rio de Janeiro-based epidemiologist and public health official, summarized,

To defend the child is to increase the population of Brazil and to increase the population with *our own children* is to assure the nation's unity. Our motto will be, "grow as to not disappear," and grow with physical and intellectual vigor...³⁷²

In the mid-1940s, the logic used by puericulturists and state officials to enlist potential settlers and farmers from the ranks of Brazil's youngest generations echoed the attitudes of ruling elites who had urged bans on foreign immigrants they classified as "non-white," in preceding decades.³⁷³ Brazilian children represented a home-grown, burgeoning, and, perhaps most importantly, assimilated population that allowed officials to assuage their preoccupations with foreign immigration and demographic instability.

In the context of the *Estado Novo* administration, the idea of demographic increase and economic production from *within* was certainly significant. Officials in Vargas' dictatorship made it a point to downplay cultural and regional differences and attempted to unify the Brazilian national family using nationalistic symbols, rhetoric, and public events, such as the patriotic celebrations, *Day of the Brazilian Race* and *Day of the Nation*. Administrators, particularly those engaged in immigration and colonization policy, argued that modern democracy was predicated upon the assimilation of non-Brazilian born citizens. In its attempts at national fusion, the regime outlawed foreign

³⁷² Dr. Vasco Barcelos, "A saúde pública e seus deveres para com a criança," *Centro de Saúde-Mensário de Higiene, Saúde Pública, e Medicina Social*, nos. 7 and 8 (1939), 55.

³⁷³ Color and nation of origin had been used to disqualify foreign immigrants to Brazil since the late nineteenth century. For detailed examinations of immigration and race in Brazil see Lesser, *Welcoming the Undesirables* and Skidmore, *Black into White*.

languages, used the army to surveil immigrant communities, and coercively promoted the "Brazilianment" of foreign groups.³⁷⁴ Thus, the specific use of the word "immigrant" to describe children as potential settlers and farmers was striking during this period.

Although the concurrent dictatorship aimed to suppress the existence and influence of immigrants, puericulturists found it a useful term to describe how healthy, well-parented children would serve as a replacement labor force in the interior. The use of the term "immigrant" was a testament to mid-twentieth century Brazilian elites unwillingness to abandon the late nineteenth-century model of immigration as the fulcrum of economic growth. Thomas Skidmore argues that many early twentieth-century Brazilian officials interpreted the continued economic success of Argentina and the United States as a direct result of immigration, more specifically the influx of white European immigrants.³⁷⁵ The slogan, "children are our best immigrants," illustrated how the *DNCr* translated federal government's nativist prerogatives into child-centered policymaking. By propagating this ideology, puericulturists clearly asserted their commitments to shaping both child health and national development.

By the time puericulturists identified children as potential settlers and laborers in the forties, debates over who could be Brazil's "best immigrants" had been brewing for decades. The abolition of slavery in 1888 coupled with booming commercial agriculture and the subsequent rise of urban industry created what some governing elites and the planter class considered a dire need for laboring hands. Government-subsidized immigration programs attracted thousands of immigrants each year, most of which were

³⁷⁴ Gilda Seyfirth, "Os imigrantes e a campanha de nacionalização do *Estado Novo*," in Dulce Pandolfi, org., *Repensando o Estado Novo* (Rio de Janeiro: Editora da FGV, 1999), 217. Seyfirth attributes the term *abrasileiramento* to Antônio Gavião Gonzaga, a member of Brazil's Immigration and Colonization Council in 1940.

³⁷⁵ Skidmore, *Black into White*, 145.

of European descent. However, the steady input of immigrant labor did not spur the level of colonization in Brazil's interior as proponents had hoped.³⁷⁶ Instead newly arrived foreigners settled in the coastal metropolises where work was more readily accessible and where they could rely on established networks of fellow immigrants. Faced with the confluence of accelerating urbanization and a consistent dearth of agricultural laborers in the interior, federal officials had to redesign programs to attract settlers and workers to agricultural regions. By the forties, material incentives and state-organized colonies had proved unsustainable as a means of drawing immigrants and other workers to the countryside. The *Estado Novo* regime remained steadfast in its commitment to development through the population of the interior and the exploitation of Brazil's vast natural resources. Both real and perceived food shortages resulting from Brazil's involvement in World War II compounded the challenges of national development. At this crucial moment *DNCr* officials proposed Brazil's children as ideal immigrants and devised initiatives to resolve the administration's development woes, food shortages, as well as child health and welfare problems.

Against the backdrop of World War II, the encouragement of immigration from within was especially poignant. Nazism had made some Brazilian elites revise their overt race-based presumptions about how an infusion of foreign laborers might affect the nation. However, a small, yet influential sector of Brazil's political and intellectual elite continued to defend against the entry of what they considered to be non-white populations, namely persons of African, Asian, and Middle Eastern descent, as well as Jewish immigrants. Throughout the thirties, federal advisors urged Vargas to attract

³⁷⁶ On state colonization programs and immigration see, Thomas Holloway, "Immigration in the Rural South," in *Modern Brazil: Elites and Masses in Historical Perspective*, eds., Michael Coniff and Frank McCann (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1989).

immigrants with a natural "affinity" for melding into the Brazilian way of life as they perceived it. In a 1935 report to the president, five federal representatives urged Vargas to choose Brazil's socioeconomic fate. They offered two options: Brazil could continue to develop slowly and rely on natural population growth or it could hasten economic expansion by allowing immigrant laborers to extract and cultivate its natural resources. The report advised Vargas to choose the latter but cautioned him to carefully manage immigration to ensure Brazil did not become a refuge for the "demographic excesses" of other countries.³⁷⁷ Despite ideological tensions over foreign immigration, officials and intellectuals tended to agree that Brazil needed manpower to harness its natural resources and land. Concurrent federally supported child welfare reforms, as well as the puericulture-focused media, public events, and educational campaigns drew attention to Brazil's children as a viable sector of the population.

The *DNCr*'s puericulture-based prerogatives and the *Estado Novo*'s development agenda coincided conveniently in the 1940s. *DNCr* child advocates and medical professionals perceived Brazil's development as inextricably linked to the health, welfare, and education of its children. They shared the regime's concern for the adverse effects of rapid urbanization on social welfare and health across the nation. For more than a decade, puericulturists based in the capital had targeted Brazil's major metropolitan areas in an effort to promote models of hygiene, nutrition, and healthy child rearing practices. They had begun to shift its focus away from cities to champion child health in rural areas in the late thirties; however, escalating urban health crises prevented the *DNCr* from

³⁷⁷ "Senhor Presidente," Gustavo Capanema Collection (1934-1935), CPDOC, Rolo 60, foto 501-502. The five federal immigration advisors signed the report were; João Carlos Muniz, director of the *Conselho de Imigração e Colonização*, Dulphe Pinheiro Machado, director of the *Departamento Nacional de Imigração*, Ernani Reis, secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Arthur Hehl Neiva, a *CIC* official, and Jose de Oliveira Marques.

concentrating solely on introducing child-focused initiatives in the interior. Urbanization also preoccupied *DNCr* officials because it transformed the traditional family structures and values upon which they had based the precepts of puericulture. Specifically, puericulturists lamented what they perceived as inadequate and improper nutrition among the urban masses and the negative impacts of female labor outside the home.

Overcrowding and impoverishment created by the influx of foreign immigrants and domestic migration also compromised puericulturists' prescriptions for hygiene in both public and domestic spaces. These factors threatened to nullify the *DNCr*'s efforts to sanitize and protect the nation's children particularly in coastal metropolises.

In the early forties puericulturists conjured a causal model explaining precisely why and how rapid urbanization impaired the health and welfare of Brazilian children. They reasoned that Brazil's youngest generations lacked an essential "love" for the land. Urban life had separated children from the soil and erased their admiration for nature. With this loss of contact with the environment came unhealthy lifestyles, improper nutrition, and a dependence on manufactured products instead of the raw materials that had been the basis of the Brazilian economy. Urbanization became a real and symbolic villain for puericulturists and other ruling elites because it undermined the agriculture-based economic system, as well as the health and wellbeing of nascent generations. Resolving perceived demographic inequities between Brazil's city and interior regions became a central theme in federal efforts to recalibrate population patterns using children as both settlers and farmers. An article appearing in a 1946 *DNCr* bulletin claimed that the Brazilian man's dislocation from the land occurred as a result of the "illusory promises" of urban life and the "poor countrymen's" inability maintain profit from

agricultural work.³⁷⁸ The article suggested that a combination of agricultural education and first-hand contact with Brazil's flora and fauna would keep Brazil's development apace in the global economy and fix the nation's population disparities.

Officials and professionals invested in children's health and welfare likewise began to romanticize rural life and agricultural activities during this period. An article appearing in a 1942 volume of a Ministry of Agriculture children's magazine, *Brincar e Aprender* (Play and Learn), reminded young readers that the modern nation had grown out of the soil of the countryside where the roots of Brazil's future prosperity remained firmly implanted. The text, entitled "The Soil is the Nation: to Cultivate it is to Enrich it!," also called children into action, rallying them to "make the soil produce."³⁷⁹ By romanticizing the role of agriculture in Brazil's past, the Ministry clearly asserted children's roles in continuing national traditions and securing Brazil's economic future through agricultural labor. Publications concurrently produced by the *DNCr* likewise extolled what puericulturists imagined as the positive effects of the "rural mentality" on Brazil's youngest citizens.³⁸⁰ Strikingly, less than a decade earlier the same *DNCr* and federal ministry officials had stereotyped rural life as backward, unhygienic, and detrimental to the healthy and productive development of both the Brazilian child and the nation. Qualities attributed to interior populations once perceived as ignorant and primordial by coastal elites were reformulated by these groups as the essence of

³⁷⁸ "A criança, as atividades agrícolas, e a alimentação," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano VI, no. 24 (March 1946). Although this volume was published in 1946 after the overthrow of Getúlio Vargas' *Estado Novo* regime, it pertains to the National Children's Week celebration in 1945. That year's celebration, held from October 11th to 17th, took place on the eve of the military *golpe de estado* that removed Vargas from power on October 29, 1945. Nevertheless the *DNCr* and Ministry of Agriculture worked in conjunction to promote the event according to the *Estado Novo*'s development agenda.

³⁷⁹ Ministério de Agricultura, "O solo é a pátria: cultive-lo é engrandece-lo," *Brincar e aprender: revista dos clubes agrícolas*, no. 16 (March/April 1945), 1.

³⁸⁰ Ministério de Agricultura, "Para uma vida melhor no campo," *Riquezas de Nossa Terra*, no. 19 (January/February 1944), np

brasilidade. Fervent nationalism crafted by the *Estado Novo* regime influenced ruling elites and intellectuals to revise their assessments of rural Brazil and reclaim its natural and demographic resources as national assets rather than burdens.

In the early forties the shift in official and intellectual attitudes towards the interior arose in response to the *Estado Novo*'s "March to the West" agenda, wartime food shortages, and the expansion of the urban masses through foreign immigration and internal migration. As historian Seth Garfield argues the *Estado Novo* administration no longer considered natural resources and peoples of the hinterland as Brazil's "forgotten backyard" and formulated policies to reap its resources.³⁸¹ However, rather than focusing solely on improving the health and education of rural populations, medical professionals and federal officials began to imagine how the young in particular could contribute to the economic development of the interior. Puericulturists now imagined that the modern, well-cultivated child would be the primary settler and producer in the backlands. With the introduction of this characterization, the goals of the health, hygiene, and child-rearing campaigns that had been designed over the course of the previous decade transformed in the early forties.

Shortly after the *DNCr* became a federal department in 1940, its officials and affiliates began to view the contribution of the healthy child as more than a symbolic marker of progress that raised Brazil's international profile. Instead, they contemplated the practical ends of fostering a healthy and capable generation. While health and welfare reforms, such as the improvement of infant death rates and the expansion of state

³⁸¹ Seth Garfield, "The Roots of the Plant That Is Today Brazil:" Indians and the Nation-State Under the *Estado Novo*," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 29:3 (October 1997), 750. Garfield also argues that the *Estado Novo*'s political and economic interest in interior regions led to the resurrection of Brazil's indigenous heritage and the image of the Indian became a powerful representation of the true essence of Brazilian identity.

health services, remained key aspects of puericulturists' policymaking, the *DNCr* and other government offices now considered the next step. They envisaged healthy children as the labor force that could unlock the nation's economic potential by specifically harnessing natural resources in the interior. Officials and professionals now viewed the proper care and protection of future laborers as the momentum that would propel development in the second half of the twentieth century.

Staging War at Home and Waging War Abroad: the Effects of the Second World War on puericulture, children, and national identity

In 1942 Brazil declared war against the Axis powers and sent an expeditionary force of over 25,000 troops to fight with the Allies. Back home, the nation felt the sting of food and energy shortages, as well as unstable production and employment. Heavily populated cities on the coast experienced the most pronounced scarcities. With capital and infrastructure now devoted to producing materials for war, such as rubber and steel, domestic commercial agriculture suffered. Federal funds previously used to maintain roads and railways were diverted for wartime industries and the flow of agricultural goods within Brazil became increasingly inconsistent. However, historian Roney Cytrynowicz argues that resource scarcity did not loom as large as contemporary officials, intellectuals, and the media portrayed. Cytrynowicz finds that despite the utilization of a ration system for food products and other austerity measures, Brazilians did not experience severe deprivation or hunger.³⁸² Whether or not shortages had the dramatic effect that *Estado Novo* officials and puericulturists perceived during wartime, their policies and propaganda suggested that portraying Brazil as vulnerable

³⁸² Roney Cytrynowicz, "Efeitos e imagens da mobilização civil na cidade de São Paulo durante a Segunda Guerra Mundial," *Estudios interdisciplinarios de América Latina y el Caribe*, vol. 12, no. 1 (Tel Aviv: School of history, University of Tel Aviv, 2001), 108.

served certain political and socioeconomic purposes. Again, according to Cytrynowicz, officials hoped to turn the war into a collective experience that would unify the Brazilian population.³⁸³ War and its domestic impacts also resonated with *Estado Novo* policymakers whose development agendas depended on the improvement of social welfare and economic expansion. Within this context, socially conscious elites wielded images of children, both Brazilian and European, as key allegories of the war's impact on society. Cytrynowicz' work reveals that symbols of abandoned and impoverished children served to promote a variety of social assistance programs during and after World War II. Specifically, his research illustrates that such representations fostered a sense of altruism and solidarity particularly within Brazil's Jewish communities. Community-level philanthropic enterprises supporting children's needs ultimately compensated for inefficient and inconsistent state assistance in the forties.³⁸⁴ However, this child-focused symbolism also pervaded the wartime statecraft generated by federal agencies like the *DNCr*.

In response to both real and imagined conditions brought about by Brazil's engagement in World War II, puericulturists in the *DNCr* raised the banner of child malnutrition as its primary cause. In 1943, Dr. Cleto Seabra Veloso reported that undernutrition and malnutrition accounted for approximately 32% of all deaths in children under one year of age.³⁸⁵ The *DNCr*, through its Department of Puericulture, initiated food distribution programs to promote healthy eating habits and fight hunger in

³⁸³ Ibid, 123.

³⁸⁴ Roney Cytrynowicz, "Instituições de assistência social e imigração judaica," *História, ciência, e saúde-Manguinhos*, 12:1 (Jan/Apr 2005), 169-184.

³⁸⁵ Dr. Cleto Seabra Veloso, "Mortalidade infantil no Brasil," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. I, no. 41 (March 1943), 30. The report listed "infections" as the leading cause of infant mortality, amounting to 50% of the total number of deaths. "Congenital" disorders and "undetermined causes" amounted to 10% and 8% of the total infant mortality rate respectively according to *DNCr* statistics.

impoverished regions. In a 1942 interview, a department official reinforced inadequate nutrition and food supply as the main causes of infant mortality in Brazil. He then described how government-sponsored initiatives sought to mitigate these problems using mobile food banks that provided both prepared meals and food staples for children.³⁸⁶ Clearly, puericulturists sensed that wartime austerity could further exacerbate nutritional deficiencies among Brazil's youngest generations.

Reacting to this perceived threat, the *DNCr* devoted National Children's Week celebrations in 1945 and 1946 to the theme of child malnutrition and the need for increased agricultural production. Propaganda for the celebrations included posters that urged children to plant victory gardens and encouraged citizens to avoid waiting in ration lines by planting their own crops.³⁸⁷

Figure 5.3: Examples of posters used in the *DNCr*'s 1945 Nation Children's Week Celebrations



Bottom left poster reads, "Avoid lines by planting in your own backyard"

"Plant for Victory"

Boletim Trimensal do DNCr (March 1946), np. Biblioteca Nacional

³⁸⁶ "Entrevista ao DIP sobre as actividades do Departamento de Puericultura do DF" (15 April 1942), Audiovisual Collection, Arquivo Nacional, FC126(side A, minute 340).

³⁸⁷ "Cartazes e folhetos," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano V, no. 24 (March 1946).

Likewise, puericultural publications featured images and discussions of starving children in Europe as premonitory propaganda to reinforce the need for adequate and abundant nutrition at home. War brought about discussions of how to protect children as particularly vulnerable citizens and how to foster their roles in the reconstruction of post-war society. Dr. Martagão Gesteira, head of the *Instituto Nacional de Puericultura*, detailed these objectives in a speech entitled, "For the Child in the War Zone and in Brazil," at the National School of Medicine's 1943 commencement address. Using European children as cautionary examples, Gesteira reaffirmed the need for the Brazilian government to provide basic nutrition and care and to increase budgetary spending to ensure stable growth and development.³⁸⁸ Puericulturists used such discourse to maintain focus on the medical and social needs of Brazil's children at a time when international media overwhelmingly focused on the plight of war-torn populations.

In order to publicize the nation's continued child welfare problems, *DNCr* officials incisively used the metaphor of war to stage what they considered a more detrimental battle against children in the homeland.³⁸⁹

An article appearing in a 1942 *DNCr* bulletin explained,

We are disheartened daily to read about the little victims of war that are dying in droves [in Europe]. But here at home, all around us, countless Brazilian children are hungry...a chronic hunger that extends across our vast territory.³⁹⁰

Another departmental bulletin article in 1943 lamented that, although it escaped mention in newspaper headlines, a more serious and violent war was being waged against Brazil's

³⁸⁸ Dr. Martagão Gesteira, "Pela criança na Guerra e no Brasil," Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, GC266f.

³⁸⁹ On the *Estado Novo's* use of military style parades, civil-defense drills, boy scouting, and propaganda as a way of staging war in Brazil, see Williams, *Culture Wars*, 8-11.

³⁹⁰ "Semana da Criança de 1942-11 a 18 de outubro," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano II, no. 10 (September 1942), 11.

children. The article went on to claim that infant mortality due to malnutrition exceeded 53% in certain "northern capitals" of Brazil.³⁹¹ Continuing the war metaphor, *DNCr* affiliate Dr. Odilon de Andrade Filho used a radio address to urge citizens to let soldiers fight the European war and concentrate on a "more ferocious" enemy within our borders. He explained that the domestic warriors against hunger and infant death would not receive medals for their valor, but would feel the satisfaction of fulfilling their duty to the nation.³⁹² *DNCr* officials used such discourse to argue that, although the nation seemed to flourish economically by supplying strategic raw and manufactured materials effort for the Allied cause, Brazil's children continued to languish in another kind of "war."

Puericulturists continued to use the war metaphor in to imagine post-war Brazil as well. References to the "*após-guerra*" period served as a discursive space for *DNCr* officials to express their utopian visions of world peace, political stability, and economic prosperity. Not surprisingly, the nation's children figured prominently in puericulturists' prognostications of life following the war. In a 1944 article on the state of child welfare, *DNCr* official, Dr. Almeida Gouveia, described how Brazil would embark upon a new phase of civilization after the war. He claimed that a new generation would arise, one that was of "healthy body and pure spirit."³⁹³ It was within this rhetoric that ideas of children as immigrants and agriculturists emerged. Federal officials and medical professionals agreed that subsequent generations of Brazilians would literally cultivate

³⁹¹ "Visita o Departamento da Criança a Directora do Children's Bureau de Washington," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano III, no. 13 (June 1943), 2. The article claimed that out of 1,000 live births 530 children died before reaching one year of age in "some capitals of the North." *DNCr* publications often reported infant mortality rates without citing census data or referring to specific investigations done to determine such statistics.

³⁹² Dr. Odilon de Andrade Filho, "Despertar pelo Brasil!" (radio address) text printed in *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 19 (December 1944), 39.

³⁹³ Dr. Almeida Gouveia, "Ampara a criança." *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 19 (December 1944), 55.

the utopia. Agricultural education, they reasoned, would prepare children for the "battle" bestowed upon Brazil of supplying food for the hungry and malnourished in the homeland and beyond.³⁹⁴ The domestic "war" against hunger, malnutrition, and death incentivized puericulturists to articulate precisely how their health and welfare campaigns could turn Brazil's children into farmers, settlers, and harbingers of development.

While Brazil's involvement in the war drew international attention to the nation, puericulturists urged the government and populace to represent themselves and the nation as civilized and forward-moving. For them, children best represented this ideal because they embodied energy, potential, and growth. The *Estado Novo* administration concurred and routinely enlisted children in its public events. Children were often prominent figures in public expressions of wartime nationalism. For example, school children marched in civic parades and were used to fill stadiums for the *Estado Novo*'s patriotic rallies. In Rio de Janeiro, children marched in the *Estado Novo*'s *Dia da Raça* (Day of the Race) and *Dia da Pátria* parades. They participated in other civic manifestations by standing in formation, singing, carrying flags, and/or simply lending their presence, usually dressed in uniforms³⁹⁵

³⁹⁴ "Onde centenas de meninos se preparam para as lides do campo," in Ministério de Agricultura, *Riquezas de Nossa Terra*, no. 19 (January/February 1945), np. The article referred specifically to the *Aprendizado Agrícola Benjamin Constant*, a technical school for agricultural training aimed at poor boys.

³⁹⁵ For examples of these types of representation see, "Parada da Raça-Dia da Pátria," in Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol II, no. 16 (May 1939), 15-16; "Gustavo Capanema, Getúlio Vargas e outros durane manifestação cívica no Vasco da Gama(1939), Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, Gcfoto177; "Gustavo Capanema, Getúlio Vargas e outros por ocasião da cerimônia de comemoração da Semana da Pátria" (7 September 1941), Collection Gustavo Capanema, CPDOC, Gcfoto 227 and in Daryle Williams, *Culture Wars*, 8-9.

Figure 5.4: "Parada da Raça"- Rio de Janeiro (1939)



Criança (September 1939), Biblioteca Nacional

The depiction of children in motion, either exercising or marching, reified the administration's interests in capturing the energy of Brazilian youth. In the opinion of one Rio de Janeiro-based puericulturist, children's participation in civic demonstrations represented "a source of reinvigoration of national energies."³⁹⁶ *Estado Novo* officials concurrently promoted physical activities and fitness among children to fortify the bodies of the young for their maximum labor output in adulthood.³⁹⁷ Action and movement served as key tropes to buttress development-oriented policy and symbolized Brazil as dynamic rather than inert player in the concert of nations. The use of children in ceremonies and parades exposed an enduring paradox within the *Estado Novo's* political

³⁹⁶ Dr. Jose de Albuquerque, "Getúlio Vargas e a política eugenica," *Visão Brasileira*, ano III, no. II, vol. 1 (September 1940), 15. Dr. Jose de Albuquerque, a Rio-based urologist, was the initiator of a sex education campaign in the late thirties. He was also a child welfare advocate, affiliated with the *DNCr*, and published a 1937 work entitled, *Assistência às mães não casadas e seus filhos*.

³⁹⁷ Much has been written on the *Estado Novo's* use of sports and fitness to literally shape the body politic. See in particular, Nicolau Sevcenko, *O Orfeu estático na metrópole* (São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1992); Vitor Monteiro, "Esportes, masculinidade, e identidade nacional: A Revista Nação Armada, (1939-1947) in Francisco Carlos Teixeira and Ricardo Pinto Santos, orgs, *Memória social dos esportes: futebol e política: a construção de uma identidade nacional* (Rio de Janeiro: Mauad Editora/FAPERJ, 2006) and Lucília de Almeida Neves Delgado and Luciana Silva Schuffner, "Esporte, Trabalho e Juventude no *Estado Novo*: O Caso do Minas Tênis Clube," *Locus: revista de história*, v. 13, no. 2 (2007), 215-226.

platform. Federal officials and puericulturists consistently referred to Brazil's children as soldiers, "armies marching to progress," and "the vanguard of Brazil's defense," in addition to using them as physical embodiments of militarism in public events.³⁹⁸ They emphasized physical fitness and labor as children's major contributions to national defense. However, domestic policies reinforced peace, harmony, and unity. Vargas and his chief propagandists promoted the administration as benevolently paternalistic, portraying the leader as "father" and "friend." This paradox revealed a keenly-constructed rhetorical compromise that allowed the *Estado Novo* to prepare for war while dictating peaceful social relations.³⁹⁹

The *DNCr* also began to articulate precise actions that would foment a positive international opinion of Brazil as the war had drew to a close. First and foremost officials acknowledged that a lowered infant mortality rate was the most profound marker of development. In his 1944 radio address, the *DNCr* representative Dr. Odilon de Andrade Filho stated that in order for Brazil to truly assume the position it deserved among the great powers, "we must show the world we have civilized ourselves and nothing expresses this better than low infant mortality."⁴⁰⁰ Brazilian elites desired to raise the national profile at mid-century and devised ways to use their country's involvement in the Allied victory to this end. It was an effort to move away from Eurocentric conceptions of Brazil's economic and social value and to demonstrate that the nation had set its own agenda for development. In the years following the war,

³⁹⁸ Slogans identifying children as armies, soliders, and as a civil defense force appeared in *DNCr* bulletins in the 1940s, see *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 19, 6; ano IV, nos. 21 and 22, 12 and DIP, *Getúlio Vargas: amigos das crianças* (Rio de Janeiro: DIP, 1940), 13.

³⁹⁹ Daryle Williams' work further explores this paradox, see Williams, *Culture Wars* 8-11.

⁴⁰⁰ Dr. Odilon de Andrade Filho, "Despertar pelo Brasil!" (radio address) text printed in *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 19 (December 1944), 39-40.

Brazilian officials and intellectuals could for the first time make downward comparisons to the inhumanity and atrocities witnessed on European soil with the hope of redefining their nation as the vanguard of civilization on the other side of the Atlantic. By decentering Europe as a model, Brazil's ruling elite placed increased rhetorical and symbolic focus on healthy, productive children as the foundations of the nation's future.

Puericulturists also utilized the atrocities of war in Europe to provide a scale for understanding the enormity of infant mortality in Brazil. For several years following the Allied victory, medical professionals articulated high infant mortality in relation to war casualties in Europe. An article appearing in the *INP's* "Suplemento de Puericultura" column estimated that more children under the age of one died each year in Brazil than were killed during German-led bomb raids across Europe.⁴⁰¹ Although many Brazilian intellectuals had assuaged European models of population health, namely eugenics, by the post-War period, they quickly adopted foreign metaphors for understanding children's roles in cultural, economic, and social regeneration. Brazil had not endured a prolonged conflict as its counterparts in Europe had, yet the idea of rebuilding the nation from within resonated with federal officials and doctors who aimed to spur economic development, construct national identity, and fortify the country's demographic profile.⁴⁰² With the ideological inspiration from abroad, elite powerholders began to characterize the Brazilian child as a regenerative force capable of propelling the economy by colonizing the uninhabited territories and extracting untapped natural resources.

⁴⁰¹ "A Hecatombe," in "Suplemento de Puericultura," *Diário de Notícias* (Rio de Janeiro) (October 10, 1948), 3rd section, pg. 8.

⁴⁰² For perspectives on the roles of children in post-war Europe see, Heide Fehrenbach, *Race After Hitler: Black Occupation Children Children in Postwar Germany and America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005); Laura Lee Downs, Downs, *Children in the Promised Land: Working-Class Movements and the Colonies de Vacances in France, 1880-1960* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002); Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900-1948* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008).

As a key part of this nation-building project, puericulturists devised a plan of action, in conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture, to rear the youngest generations to revere and utilize the land. Propaganda produced for this purpose used the slogan "Hands to Work!" as a rallying cry for Brazil's children and urged them to put aside rest and recreation in favor of production.⁴⁰³ This initiative promoted the federal government's desires to mold children into productive workers, as well as its drive to augment commercial agriculture as a means of settling the interior. Most importantly, puericulturists argued that raising children in close proximity to the land and among the processes of cultivation would instill in them critical knowledge about good nutrition and healthy living. Puericulture now provided both the ideological and practical link between national development and children. *DNCr* officials and medical professionals propagated the idea that puericulture was both preventative and constructive.⁴⁰⁴ For them, constructing a prosperous and productive body politic predominantly hinged upon stable child health and welfare.

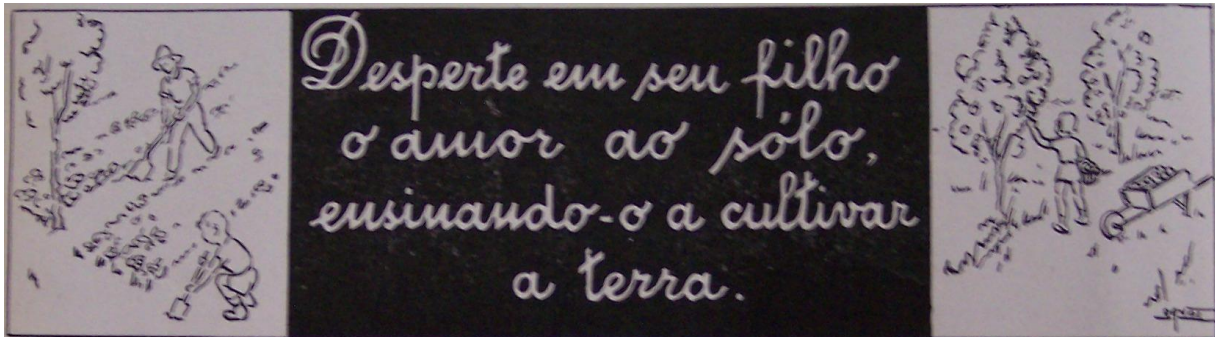
One of the ways puericulturists attempted to disseminate their prescriptions for improving the health of the body politic through agricultural activities involved publishing textual and visual propaganda in parenting magazines. The *INP* publication, *Puericultura*, provided some of the strongest endorsements for the inculcation of farming skills along with an appreciation for nature, proper nutrition, and hygiene. In the early forties, articles and imagery appeared in the magazine that urged parents to teach their children to cultivate the land for their own health and prosperity, as well as the nation's.

⁴⁰³ "As crianças contribuem para a vitória-o auxílio da S.I.A. e a LBA," *Riquezas de Nossa Terra*, no.6 (November/December 1942), 2.

⁴⁰⁴"Puericultura e economia," in Dr. Hermes Bartolomeu, *Um sistema regional de proteção á infância e á adolescência* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1943), 4.

Figure 5.5 contains a piece of visual propaganda appearing in a 1941 volume of *Puericultura*. The images and text compelled readers to "awaken" their child's love for the land by teaching him how to cultivate it.⁴⁰⁵

Figure 5.5: Agricultural Education Propaganda: "Awaken your child's love for the soil by teaching him to cultivate the land."



Puericultura (1941), Biblioteca Nacional

The accompanying article described how parents could promote good nutritional habits by allowing children to grow their own food. Puericulturists reasoned that agricultural education would entice children to consume healthy foods by integrating them into the production process. This habit, in turn, would bring the added benefits of disease prevention, environmental hygiene, and would ultimately combat the childhood health concerns that contemporary doctors perceived as detrimental to Brazil's development. Puericulturists promoted what they envisaged as the *dupla aplicação*, or dual functioning, of child-focused agricultural education. *DNCr* officials devoted two consecutive National Children's Week celebrations in 1945 and 1946 to the theme of "Nutrition and Children's Agricultural Activities." These public forums, as well as articles and propaganda printed in federally-endorsed parenting magazines, forged a comprehensive campaign to generate both children's interest and parental compliance.

⁴⁰⁵Dr. Henrique Borchert, "Desperte no seu filho um amor ao solo ensinando-o a cultivar a terra," *Puericultura*, ano I, no. 2 (November 1941), 24.

Implicit in such imagery and discourse was the assumption that nascent generations of children would be raised with stronger ties to the soil. Brazilian children's "love of the land," officials and medical professionals presumed, would draw them away from cities and into agricultural production in adulthood. This assumption allowed contemporary child advocates to portray agriculture as recreation during childhood and as a strategic form of labor during adulthood. Such ideological gymnastics allowed officials and puericulturists to avoid characterizing youth farming activities, even on a small scale, as a form exploitative child labor which had been deemed illegal for children under the age of twelve by the 1927 Minors' Code.⁴⁰⁶ This legislation specifically prohibited minors under the age of eighteen from performing hazardous and/or strenuous labor, as well as work in insalubrious environments such as mines, quarries, and mills.⁴⁰⁷ In the context of such legal protections over children's labor, puericulturists and ministry officials emphasized the recreational aspects of agricultural work. Central to their propaganda and programming was the notion that such recreation would influence the young to pursue agricultural labor when they surpassed legal working age. While these nation-building elites prescribed agricultural activities as healthy and pleasurable part of Brazilian childhood, their discourse consequently characterized children as both present and future commodities that would propel economic advancement.

Commodifying Brazil's Children

Perhaps as an ideological prelude to discussions of children as immigrants and farmers, puericulturists routinely articulated the economic value of nascent generations.

⁴⁰⁶ For historical perspectives on child labor in Brazil see Irene Rizzini and Irma Rizzini, *A criança e o adolescente no mundo do trabalho* (Rio de Janeiro: Amais Livros e Editora, 2006).

⁴⁰⁷ Articles 104 and 105 of Código dos Menores-Parte Geral, Capítulo IX-Do Trabalho dos Menores (1927). Available online http://www.ciespi.org.br/media/decreto_17.943%20A_12_out_1927.pdf.

The medicalization of children's bodies through puericultural interventions beginning in the early twentieth century lent to their commodification by the state as a part of national development. Anthropologist Meira Weiss describes the intersections of these processes in her assessment of how and why Israeli state physicians managed the children of Yemenite Jews who migrated to Israel after 1948. She argues that the manipulation of children's health, parental roles, and, in some cases, the staged disappearance and adoption of Yemenite infants, imprinted children with an "exchange value."⁴⁰⁸ In the Brazilian context, state-led prescriptions for child health and parental behavior put increased emphasis on the children's bodies as both demographic and capital resources. Thus, interrelated processes of medicalization and commodification provided the foundation for Brazilian elites to articulate children's specific roles as workers in the expansion of the national economy. Puericultural initiatives, institutionalized in 1940 with the inception of the *DNCr*, fueled the notion that children could immigrate, populate, and cultivate the interior territories of Brazil. Puericulture reified the logic that the Brazilian man, by virtue of his labor, was the country's most valuable resource and that only strong, healthy children would produce a prosperous nation.⁴⁰⁹ In the words of one *DNCr* physician, "the nation was not interested in sick, weak, or disabled children" that would "weigh heavily" on its finances.⁴¹⁰ Children's economic value served as a key impetus for expanding puericultural practices and state welfare services in the first three decades of the twentieth century.

⁴⁰⁸ Meira Weiss, "The Children of Yemen: Bodies, Medicalization, and Nation-Building," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 15:2 (June 2001), 207.

⁴⁰⁹ Dr. Orlando Seabra Lopes, "A delinquência infantil do Porto Alegre," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano III, vol. 15 (December 1943), 23.

⁴¹⁰ Dr. Valle Mancini, "Exame pré-nupcial," *Criança: revista para os pais*, vol. III, no. 27 (December 1941), 23.

Expressions of children as capital emerged in various forms in the half of the twentieth century. Some medical and social thinkers relied on abstract and moralistic notions of children's worth by associating child protection with modernity. For them the healthy, well-cultivated children were markers of civilization and the economic potency of Brazil's youngest generations lain in their eventual citizenship. Other twentieth-century elites engaged in child and public health advocacy made more precise estimations of children's values. Dr. Júlio Alfrânio Peixoto, physician and director of Rio's Department of Education (1917-1922) first calculated the value of the Brazilian man as 9:000\$000 *reís* in 1918. In 1941 puericulturist Dr. Martagão Gesteira extended this calculation by adding that the 182, 687 infants who died in Rio de Janeiro since 1906 robbed the nation of approximately 1.6 million *reís*.⁴¹¹ Less than a decade later, an article appearing in Rio de Janeiro's newspaper, *Diário de Notícias*, adjusted the value per capita and for the impact of infant mortality had on the burgeoning economy. The text's author argued that the Brazilian child was worth twenty thousand *cruzeiros* and the national economy lost a total of twelve billion *cruzeiros* annually due to high infant mortality.⁴¹² Both generalized and specific articulations of children's monetary contributions to the nation fomented the development of agricultural education campaigns. In implementing such programs, puericulturists and other officials commodified Brazil's children by ascribing their economic input a defined space and function.

Puericulturists and federal officials also compared children to other natural resources. Such associations directly intersected with concurrent considerations of children as critical mechanisms of development, specifically in agricultural production.

⁴¹¹ "Valor económico da puericultura," *Puericultura*, ano I, no. 1 (October 1941), 21.

⁴¹² "Mortalidade infantil-inimigo público no. 1 do Brasil," in "Suplemento de Puericultura," *Diário de Notícias*, (Rio de Janeiro) (14 August 1949), 3rd section, pg. 8.

An article commemorating National Children's Week in 1942 provided yet another means of calculating the value of Brazil's youngest citizens. The author claimed that, if born on the same day, a coffee seedling had a better chance at survival than a child and urged readers to eschew their offsprings' sentimental values in favor of economic ones.

Brazilian children, the article stated, fared much worse than other primary products, such as coffee, cattle, and sugar.⁴¹³ This comparison provided both moralistic and economic justifications for the improvement of child health and welfare in the forties.

One way puericulturists attempted to ameliorate the plight of children involved the use of techniques seemingly drawn from agriculture. Through the application of such practices, officials and professionals construed children as natural resource commodities. For example, puericulturists claimed that children required structured exposure to sunlight in order to grow and maintain their health. *DNCr* publications featured articles advocating that the young required a daily regimen of "heliotherapy," and physical exercise.⁴¹⁴ Images of children sunbathing in well-organized *banhos de sol*, or sun baths, were also common in puericultural publications. Photographs found in parenting magazines and departmental bulletins consistently depicted rows of boys and girls lying prone on the ground or in cots in the presence of adult supervision. Puericulturists additionally advocated the use of synthetic sunlight in the form of indoor ultraviolet lamps. In his childcare guidebook, Dr. Martinho da Rocha advised the use of artificial

⁴¹³ "Semana da Criança em 1942," *Puericultura*, ano I, nos. 12/13, (September/October 1942), 5.

⁴¹⁴ "Helioterapia." *Rápida notícia sobre o Instituto de Proteção e Assistência á Infância do Rio de Janeiro-Boletim do 1937*(Rio de Janeiro: Typografia Lyra, 1938), 11.

light therapy during winter months and in the case of certain prolonged illnesses, such as rickets and anemia.⁴¹⁵

Figure 5.6: A daily "sun bath"



1.000 crianças na colônia de férias-Estado do Rio de Janeiro, (1942)
Ernani Amaral Peixoto Collection, EAP 101
CPDOC

Figure 5.7: An ultraviolet "light bath"



Guia Para Criar o Bebê (1947)

By prescribing routine sun and/or light therapy and administering it in such an ordered fashion, puericulturists seemed more like farmers tending to the growth of their crops. Other images more directly associated children with agricultural production by having them pose next to fruits and vegetables. In the photograph below (Figure 5.8), young students at a rural education school in Rio de Janeiro state were staged as the roots of an enormous tobacco plant. The image suggests that the energy and toil of child farmers resulted in a plentiful crop.

⁴¹⁵ Dr. José Martinho da Rocha, *Guia para criar o bebê: puericultura elementar* (Rio de Janeiro: Livraria Editora Zelhio Valverde, S.A., 1947), 223. Da Rocha stipulated that ultraviolet light therapy should be exclusively administered by a medical technician and not in the domestic setting by parents.

Figure 5.8: Students at a rural school in Magé, Rio de Janeiro



Ernani Amaral Peixoto Collection, EAP017, CPDOC

Other comparisons of children to livestock emerged more tacitly in the Ministry of Agriculture's propaganda magazines, *Riquezas de Nossa Terra* and *Brincar e Aprender*, in the forties. Photos of children and articles about their contributions to national development appeared alongside images of prize-winning cattle and other species of livestock. Such visual representations reinforced the idea that children required the same good breeding, rearing, and nutrition that farmers ensured in their stocks. Discursive and symbolic analogies between agriculture and puericulture found new resonance in direct comparisons between livestock and children in these publications. Puericulturists and industrialists shared similar concerns over the health and reproduction of the capital they perceived as the bases of national development. This point was further substantiated by annual robust/healthy baby competitions, many of which were held during National Children's Week, from the first decade of the twentieth century through the 1970s.⁴¹⁶ Images of doctors inspecting infants and toddlers in such

⁴¹⁶ Rio de Janeiro pediatrician Dr. Moncorvo Filho and his father, Dr. Arthur Moncorvo, credit themselves with organizing the first competitions in 1902. Some of the most well-organized and highly publicized competitions were sponsored by the São Paulo philanthropic organization, *Cruzada Pró-Infância* beginning in the thirties. These types of competitions were subsequently sponsored by the Johnson and Johnson corporation in the forties and transformed into GB Bebê (Gerber Baby) competitions sponsored by Nestle in the sixties and seventies. See, Dr. Moncorvo Filho, *Histórico da proteção á infância no Brasil, 1500-*

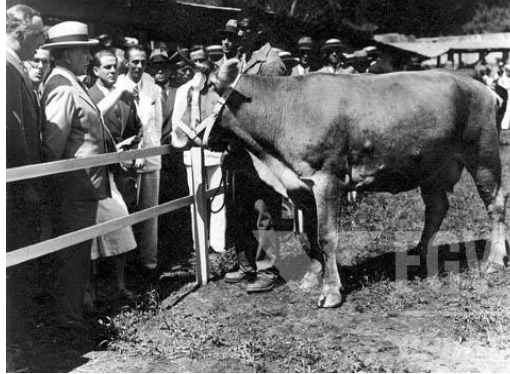
contests were reminiscent of the ways judges scrutinized animals' bodies in livestock competitions.⁴¹⁷

Figure 5.9: Robust Baby Competition Judging
National Children's Week, Rio de Janeiro, 1944



Boletim Trimensal do DNCr (December 1944)
Biblioteca Nacional

Figure 5.10: Livestock Exposition
(President Getúlio Vargas at left in hat)



Getúlio Vargas Collection, fotoGV 013, CPDOC

Brazilian puericulturists involved in these annual events, like specialists in animal husbandry, discussed specific aspects of contestants' bodies like weight, height, skin, and teeth to judge their "robustness" in competitions. Such contests, imagery, and other media were important precursors to *DNCr* conceptualization of children as immigrants and farmers in the forties. The identification of children's bodies as commodities through comparisons with agricultural products provided a basis for envisioning children as both natural resources in their own right and key extractors and cultivators of other Brazilian products.

1822, 2nd ed., (Rio de Janeiro: Paulo Pongetti e Cia., 1927), 156.; Mott, Botelho Byington, and Fabergé Alves, eds., (2005); "Bases do concurso de robustez infantil-Cruzada Pró-Infância-Semana da Criança," in caixa *Semana da Criança*, CPI archive, Museu de Emilio Ribas; "Bebes-concursos," PH/foto652, Arquivo Nacional.

⁴¹⁷ Historian Alisa Klaus makes a similar argument in her work on robust baby contests in the early twentieth-century United States. The author contends that baby and livestock competitions were held concurrently and used similar physical criteria for judging at state fairs and Western stock shows. See, Alisa Klaus, *Every Child a Lion: The Origins of Maternal and Infant Health Policy in the United States and France, 1890-1920*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 148-149.

In the Vargas era, puericulturists who weighed in on the importance of child well-being on economics had classified Brazil as an "anti-economic" nation on multiple grounds. One *DNCr* official claimed that "anti-economic" status signified a high birth rate combined with a high death rate, while another argued that it meant having more "deficient agents" than "producers."⁴¹⁸ Despite these conceptual differences, medical thinkers agreed that the Vargas administration would be instrumental in the improvement of both overall child welfare and the domestic economy. They viewed federal child protection and health care efforts and demographic and economic development as a collaborative project. Therefore, Getúlio Vargas' transition to power in 1930 also catalyzed the commodification of Brazil's children. His regime mobilized the first major state-led reform of child welfare and health programs in the twentieth century. New rhetorical and political emphasis on the well-being of nascent generations was intricately tied to national development. Child-focused medical professionals in particular praised Vargas for his insights into how the protection of the young affected Brazil's economy. They perceived his administration as the first to link high infant mortality with reduced labor and economic growth and to the first to use state power to mitigate such effects. As one puericulturist argued, "Vargas was the first leader to understand children's values within the national economy."⁴¹⁹ A visual homage to Vargas (Figure 5.11) appeared in the *INP's* parenting magazine, *Puericultura*, in 1943 and reified his role in this regard.

⁴¹⁸ Dr. Cleto Seabra Veloso, "Construindo gerações," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no. 19 (December 1944), 41 and "Puericultura e economia," in Dr. Hermes Bartolomeu, *Um sistema regional de proteção á infância e á adolescência* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1943), 4.

⁴¹⁹ "Semana da Criança em 1942," *Puericultura*, ano I, nos. 12/13 (September/October 1942), 5.

Figure 5.11: Illustration in honor of Getúlio Vargas

*Puericultura* (September 1943), Biblioteca Nacional

The illustration by Orval, the *DNCr's* official artist, captured the advances in industry, infrastructure, transportation, and the arts achieved under Vargas' leadership. Two children sit reading at the center of the drawing with the national flag (not completely visible in this copy) of Brazil planted next to them and rising into the sky. Vargas sets his gaze on the representations of progress before him, embodying a sense of paternalistic authority that was consistently propagated by his propagandists and ministry officials. As focal points of the image, the boy and girl and their positioning as the anchors of Brazil's most important national symbol suggest their preeminence in pantheon of Vargas-era achievements. The soil around the children is also flowering, which represents their connection to and positive effect on the land. Open books in their hands also signal both the puericulturists and federal officials' reinforcement of education as part of comprehensive child welfare. Ultimately, the illustration depicts precisely how the *Estado Novo* regime and child-focused policymakers situated children in the national economy. Other representations of progress and economic prosperity radiate out from

the children at the center of the image. Most significantly, the drawing connects children with other key commodities and situates them prominently within the context of Vargas-era economic development.

The *DNCr*'s slogan, "children are our best immigrants," emerged alongside these discursive and visual commodifications of children's bodies and images. The slogan itself provided intriguing insights into puericulturists' interests in the national economy and how they understood the value of the Brazilian child in reference to agriculture and land. When examined amidst the concurrent promotion of agricultural education and children's engagement with the soil, the immigrant analogy becomes even more salient. With this characterization, puericulturists asserted a new, seemingly non-economic impetus for human migration in Brazil. Their attempts to awaken an *amor à terra*, or "love for the land," within the youngest generations represented a departure from conventional wisdom about human migratory flows.

In the case of Brazil, ruling elites had observed how state policies had both encouraged and restricted the entry and movement of foreign immigrants with varying degrees of success. State-subsidized transportation and services facilitated the arrival of some laborers, while quotas and discriminatory practices constrained others. Established ethnic, national, and religious networks likewise determined the ultimate demographic contours of foreign immigration to Brazil. By the forties officials engaged in the *Estado Novo*'s colonization and immigration/migration programs understood how economic, political, and socio-cultural forces affected the labor distribution and settlement. Puericulturists' commentaries on the adverse effects of urbanization also demonstrated their awareness of how market forces impacted human movement. Thus, the promotion

of children as immigrants and the implementation of agricultural education offered a way to sidestep market forces, politics, as well as social and cultural factors.

According to *DNCr* and Ministry of Agriculture officials, children's inherent sentimental connections to the land and their agricultural expertise would comprise the sole impetus for migration, settlement, and cultivation in Brazil's interior. Nascent generations' love for the land could also create new socioeconomic dynamics in rural areas. Children as potential farmers and settlers possessed the power to restructure the traditional patron-client relations that had created what urban elites considered backwardness and economic stagnation in the hinterland. Puericulturists and other officials bestowed great responsibility on children to connect with the land, reap its resources, settle uninhabited areas, and stimulate the Brazilian economy. Furthermore, they hoped interest in cultivation and reverence for nature would improve the health, nutrition, and lifestyles of upcoming generations. In the words of *INP*-affiliate Dr. Henrique Borchert, "the well-nourished child would become a well-nourished citizen, capable of determining his own destiny."⁴²⁰ *DNCr* puericulturists and other officials viewed the benefits of child immigrants as crucial for the national collective and for the improvement of individual lives. Puericulture therefore provided a unique ideological forum for discussions about children's specific contributions to the national economy and for articulating the role of the state.

An analysis of the agricultural programs and rhetoric regarding children's roles also adds new dimensions to conventional thought on immigration and development in the twentieth century. In 1940s-Brazil, medical professionals engaged in child health

⁴²⁰ Dr. Henrique Borchert, "Desperte no seu filho um amor ao solo ensinando-o a cultivar a terra," *Puericultura*, ano I, no. 2 (November 1941), 24.

campaigns devised a pragmatic sidestep to state-led and market-driven immigration flows. Puericulturists' theories about human interaction with the land as a potential determinant of settlement and labor patterns provide a new lens for viewing the history of immigration in Brazil and beyond. Their discourse and imagery also broaden the category, "immigrant," and challenges scholars to reconsider the formulation of such labels and how they have been used the historiography of human movement.

To Learn and Play: Children's Agriculture Schools and Clubs in the 1940s

By the early forties, the *DNCr*, Brazil's Ministry of Agriculture, and other collaborating organizations began a related campaign using public events, recreational clubs, educational programs, and publications that simultaneously renounced rapid urbanization and promoted children's interest in nature and agriculture. Brazil's *Legião Brasileira de Assistência*, or Assistance League, was a key collaborator and financial sponsor of the agricultural clubs initiative. It had been one of the major organizers of wartime food production and supported soldiers' families through its charitable donations. First lady Darcy Sarmanho Vargas headed the *LBA* from 1942 to 1945.⁴²¹ Specifically, these federal entities organized agricultural schools, clubs, small-scale entrepreneurships, and competitions hoping to incite children to appreciate the land. In 1942, the Ministry of Agriculture's propaganda magazine, *Riquezas de Nossa Terra*, delineated the purposes of such programs. One of the principal objectives was to "show the dangers of urbanization and the abandonment of the countryside."⁴²² Officials clearly envisioned children as the most crucial collaborators in their efforts to redeem rural living.

⁴²¹On First Lady Darcy Vargas' leadership of the *LBA*, see Ivana Guilherme Simili, *Mulher e Política: a trajetória da Primeira-Dama Darcy Vargas (1930-1945)* (São Paulo: Editora Unesp, 2008), Chapter III.

⁴²²Ministério de Agricultura, "As crianças contribuem para a vitória-o auxílio da S.I.A. e a LBA," *Riquezas de Nossa Terra*, no.6 (November/December 1942), 4.

In addition to stemming the effects of urbanization, children's agricultural education campaigns aimed to overhaul the cultural, social, and economic textures of rural life to spur colonization. At the First National School Health Conference in 1941, Dr. Leonel Gonzaga delivered a poignant speech that summarized the foundational goals of agricultural education and activities. He stated,

It is indispensable to instill in children a love of their native land, teaching them its history, its resources, its beauty, the origins of its songs, dances, and national festivals, its crafts, exalting them with the pride of its virility and the aptitude of the Brazilian people...doing this, it seems to me, will fulfill Getúlio Vargas' salvatory "March to the West" motto.⁴²³

Federal officials also intended agricultural clubs and rural technical schools to improve aesthetics, habits, and the consciousness of rural living. According to its stated objectives, participants would improve their communities by planting flowers and trees, propagating good fiscal habits, and spreading knowledge about hygiene and sanitation.⁴²⁴

With children at the center of these programs, *DNCr* and ministry sponsors hoped engagement with the land and interest in natural living would improve health and nutrition in subsequent generations. As one *DNCr* puericulturist claimed, the cultivation of their own gardens and nurseries would replace thoughts of chocolate bars that filled children's dreams.⁴²⁵ Such logic underscored what puericulturists perceived as the intrinsic relationship between agricultural activity and healthy, hygienic lifestyles.

DNCr and Ministry of Agriculture publications reveal insightful information about the operations, locations, and objectives of agricultural schools and clubs. The Ministry of Agriculture's Documentation Service in particular collected data and images

⁴²³ Dr. Leonel Gonzaga, "Aditivo ao relatório sobre o Tema II," *Anais do 1o Congresso Nacional de Saúde Escolar-São Paulo 21-27 de abril 1941* (São Paulo, 1942), 207-208.

⁴²⁴ Ibid

⁴²⁵ Dr. Filgueira Filho, "Mística da terra," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano VI, no. 24 (March 1946), 27.

related to the operation of rural schools and clubs. Its propaganda magazine, *Riquezas de Nossa Terra*, featured abundant information about two principal types of agricultural education: *escolas típicas rurais*, rural schools (hereafter, *ETR*) and *clubes agrícolas*, agricultural clubs.

Ministry of Agriculture documentation and *DNCr* reports provide information about rural schools in São Paulo state and Rio de Janeiro state. The ministry intended *ETRs* to inspire a "rural mentality" among participants by teaching them to love and cultivate the land rationally.⁴²⁶ They also served as community centers where families could participate in weekly seminars, games, sporting events, and expositions. Schools also possessed small lending libraries containing agriculturally-oriented materials. According to Ministry of Agriculture propaganda, *ETRs* were further obliged to awaken a sense of *brasilidade* in their students and participants as "schools of nationalism."⁴²⁷ However, the primary function of *ETRs* was to organize children's cultivation of produce gardens, nurseries, as well as the reproduction and care of small farm animals. Supervisors organized the harvesting of crops and animal husbandry. Most of the goods were distributed among the students and school staff, but students also operated small markets where they sold their products to profit the center.

ETRs provided a unique space for female educators to gain employment. Ministry documentation and *DNCr* bulletins reveal that women served as the primary teachers at several rural schools in the states of São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. This fact is further substantiated by imagery published by these two federal institutions in which

⁴²⁶ Ministério de Agricultura, "Para uma vida melhor no campo," *Riquezas de Nossa Terra*, no. 19 (January/February 1944), np.

⁴²⁷ "43 escolas típicas rurais criam uma nova mentalidade ruralista," *Riquezas de Nossa Terra*, no. 19 (January/February 1945), np.

women appear alongside the schoolchildren engaged in agricultural activities. The enlistment of female teachers reveals a paradox within the ideological foundation of these programs. At mid-century puericulturists and *Estado Novo* officials reinforced the importance of women's domestic work as mothers and homemakers rather than in professional careers. This attitude was echoed in the federal government with Minister of Education and Health, Gustavo Capanema (1934-1945) explicitly suggesting hiring preferences for men and the official restriction of women's labor outside the home.⁴²⁸ Officials clearly capitalized on the experience trained female teachers brought to the rural setting. These benefits provided a means for subverting the inherent paradox in the employment of women outside the home. For puericulturists, the *ETR* represented a modified domestic sphere in which children reaped the benefits of female educators' maternal influences. Indeed women were charged with overseeing the civic, health, social, and technical education of their students. One female professor, Helena Perissé Turon Campos of the *Escola Santa Rita* in Rio de Janeiro state reported that she even promoted reforestation projects by going house to house asking landholders to allow students to plant trees on their properties.⁴²⁹ Through such programs, puericulturists actively encouraged the integration of children's agricultural activities, hygiene, nutrition, and healthy living with women as the most proximate authority figures. In theory, *ETRs* effectively mimicked the ideal home environment *DNCr* officials prescribed for families across Brazil. Seen in this light, the interaction of female professors and students at rural

⁴²⁸ Correspondence, Gustavo Capanema to President Getúlio Vargas, 12 June 1939, Gustavo Capanema Collection, CPDOC, GC Rolo 60, foto 768 and "Restrições do emprego das mulheres," GC Rolo 60m foto 768.

⁴²⁹ "A terra e a criança," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano IV, no., 17 (June 1944), 2-3. The professor noted that most landowners initially responded to her requests with "bitterness", but that her persistence resulted in some favorable responses.

schools resembled the scientific and artful mother and child relationship promoted by contemporary puericulturists.

Clubes agrícolas (Agricultural Clubs)

In conjunction with the *DNCr* and the *Legião Brasileira de Assistência*, the Ministry of Agriculture also organized children's agriculture clubs. Some clubs operated in tandem with *ETRs* while others were organized by the Ministry's regional directors and school district officials.⁴³⁰ Officials envisioned the technical instruction and recreational activities organized by these clubs to be completely integrated into the primary school curriculum in each district. Agricultural clubs invited children to participate in small-scale crop cultivation, animal husbandry, tree planting, as well more specialized practices like raising bees and silkworms. The Ministry of Agriculture and the *LBA* supplied rural schools with seeds and other equipment to sustain their operations. First Lady Darcy Vargas, president of the *LBA* from 1942-1945 promoted clubs in association with the planting of wartime victory gardens. Photographs of her amidst the young club members appeared frequently in *Riquezas de Nossa Terra* in 1945 and 1946.

With the fall of the *Estado Novo* in 1945, the Ministry of Agriculture ceased to sponsor the *Serviço de Hortas e Clubes Agrícolas* that had served as the federal organizing body for clubs across Brazil. In response, the *DNCr* sent a report to the new Minister of Agriculture to extol the benefits of children's agricultural activities and make a case for continued federal support. Additionally, the *DNCr* repeated the theme of the 1945 National Children's Week celebration, "Nutrition, the Child, and Agricultural Activities," in 1946. In the face of regime change, puericulturists remained committed to

⁴³⁰"Clube Agrícola Rio da Prata," Ministério de Agricultura, *Riquezas de Nossa Terra*, no. 17 (September/October 1944), np.

agricultural education as a viable promoter of child welfare and health in Brazil. In 1946, Dr. M.C. Braga Neto, director of the *DNCr*'s, Child Protection Service, wrote to the new Minister of Agriculture. He described the accomplishments of the *DNCr* child nutrition campaign, agricultural clubs, and the positive effects of children's proximity to the land. Braga Neto appealed to the new regime's developmentalist agenda and explained how Brazil's future economic success hinged on continued support of child-centered agricultural programs.⁴³¹ Subsequent editions of *Riquezas de Nossa Terra* demonstrated that the new federal administration, now under President Eurico Gaspar Dutra, accepted the *DNCr*'s supplication and continued to sponsor agricultural clubs, at least in the short term. The *DNCr* reprised its 1945 "Agricultural Activities" theme in the October 1946 celebration of National Children's Week. Furthermore, the abundance of reports, photographs, and statistics regarding agricultural clubs in *Riquezas de Nossa Terra* and *Brincar e Aprender* attest to their endurance and popularity across Brazil. In 1945, the Service of Agricultural Information announced that 70,000 Brazilian children participated in *clubes agrícolas*. The report provided the following data in reference to six states,

⁴³¹ Ministério de Agricultura, "Os clubes agrícolas no programa da proteção á infância," *Riquezas de Nossa Terra*, no. 22 (March/April 1946), 14.

Table 5.1 : 1945 Report on Distribution and Membership of Agricultural Clubs⁴³²

<i>State</i>	<i>Number of Clubs</i>	<i>Number of Members</i>
Federal District	100	11,500
Minas Gerais	90	11,300
Pernambuco	90	6740
Rio de Janeiro	245	15,300
Rio Grande do Sul	120	6490
Santa Catarina	140	7570

As the chart demonstrates, *clubes agrícolas* remained most prevalent in the Federal District and in the State of Rio de Janeiro. Pernambuco stood out as the only state outside Brazil's center-south region that reported club activities. As was the case with other federally-sponsored programs during the *Estado Novo*, agriculture clubs proved unsustainable outside the federal capital and Brazil's major metropolises due consistent funding, infrastructural, and manpower limitations. It was also likely that agricultural clubs failed to attract sufficient interest among populations in Brazil's interior. The Ministry of Agriculture and *DNCr's* narrow conceptualizations of what incentivized children to participate and learn from such activities may have compromised the nationalization of *clubes agrícolas*. The organization of these clubs had been based on the participation of urban children whose limited knowledge and contact with nature and cultivation made it a novelty. On the other hand, rural children acquired farming and animal husbandry skills more naturally as a part of their family's livelihood. The

⁴³² Ministério de Agricultura, "70 mil crianças nos clubes agrícolas," *Brincar e Aprender*, ano IV, no. 20 (December 1945), 1-2.

presentation of such activities as extra-curricular or pleasurable may not have enticed them to participate at the same level as their urban and suburban counterparts.

Agricultural clubs dissipated by the end of the decade, as did the rural education initiative more generally. Such programs enjoyed fleeting success as a part of the *Estado Novo's* development agenda and the commodification of children as potential immigrants and farmers. However, the ideological underpinnings of such programs fueled new formulations of *brasilidade* based on the characterization of children as the stewards of agricultural development and territorial unification. Propaganda published by the Ministry of Agriculture and *DNCr* provided a space for policymakers and medical professionals to conjure utopian visions of Brazil's future. Although the promise of agricultural education remained unfulfilled, it opened a space for elites to imagine the social and economic transformations that comprehensive development could bring.

Inventing the 'Little Farmer': Images of Race and Nation in Child-Focused Agricultural Propaganda

Ministry of Agriculture propaganda and *DNCr* publications provided a forum for officials to conjure images of children that reflected their own values. Official documentation was replete with photographs of children planting, harvesting, and otherwise engaged with the farming landscape. One article in *Riquezas de Nossa Terra* exalted the image of the agricultural club members, proclaiming, "how lovely to see children coming here from school, straw hats on their heads, watering cans in their hands, tilling the soil and producing for the prosperity of Brazil!"⁴³³ Agricultural clubs organized in conjunction with public schools and *ETRs* created glimpses of children's activities in this arena. These images featured children in both natural and posed scenarios. One of

⁴³³ "As crianças contribuem para a vitória-o auxílio da S.I.A. e a LBA," *Riquezas de Nossa Terra*, no.6 (November/December 1942), 2.

the most striking features of such representations was the pairing of black and white children as the focal points in various publications. The four images below (Figures 5.12-5.15) come from a *DNCr* parental education pamphlet, a rural school in Rio de Janeiro state, and two Ministry of Agriculture publications.

Figures 5.12: Ministry of Agriculture propaganda



Riquezas de Nossa Terra (1942), Biblioteca Nacional

Figure 5.13: Little Farmers



Brincar e Aprender (March 1945)
Biblioteca Nacional

Figure 5.14: Little Farmers



DNCr pamphlet: "Cuidemos da Criança!" (1948)
Clemente Mariani Collection, Cma10f, CPDOC

Figure 5.15: Little farmers at a rural school, Rio de Janeiro (c. 1937-1945)



Ermani Amaral Peixoto Collection, EAP foto 017, CPDOC

These images demonstrate the *DNCr* and Ministry of Agriculture's desires to forge *brasilidade* based on the ideal of racial democracy. The concept of Brazil's inherent harmonious race relations originated in the work of sociologist Gilberto Freyre in the early thirties. Freyre asserted that more intimate and benevolent master and slave relationships in Brazil, coupled with the pre-colonial Portuguese legacy of miscegenation, gave rise to a veritable racial utopia in the modern era. Although his theory was largely dismissed as myth in the latter part of the century, it provides a platform for understanding how *Estado Novo* administrators formulated children's symbolic roles in the construction of national identity.

As represented here, *DNCr* and Ministry of Agriculture officials used images of children strategically. Not only do the photographs depict children as 'little farmers' happily engaged in agricultural activities, but they portray Brazil's young as a source of social integration and national unity. White and black children appear side-by-side toiling the land. Composed in such a way, these images suggest that racial harmony would be forged through cooperative agricultural labor. Likewise, the photos forecast the

future of the Brazilian social fabric; one in which white and non-white citizens possess equal status and equal stakes in national development. The partnering of the *DNCr* and Ministry of Agriculture provided an opportunity to reframe how Brazil's ruling elite perceived race in the construction of national identity. Their cooperative campaigns also allowed puericulture to become a tool for shaping children's social and moral development. By the mid-forties, healthy child rearing expanded to include a reverence for nature and agricultural activities. Such practices directly supported the state's development agenda and served as an important forum for promoting a symbiotic relationship between Brazil's black and white children, economic advancement, and national unification.

Rather than envisioning the nation's future through the lens of "whitening" as their predecessors had done, officials engaged in the child-focused policymaking of the forties rejected racial assimilation in favor of egalitarianism. They reaffirmed Gilberto Freyre's racial democracy theory by centralizing children as social mediators. Through departmental propaganda, these institutions supplanted earlier preoccupations with eugenics as the foundation of modern Brazilian society. Instead, they cast Brazil's youngest citizens, specifically Afro-and European-descended children, as harbingers of the nation's economic prosperity and the linchpins of its social cohesion.

Other contemporary documentation produced by the *DNCr* and puericulture-focused organizations reified the social utopian ideologies promoted in children's agriculture programs. The weekly puericulture column (1946-1955), *Suplemento de Puericultura*, in the Rio de Janeiro daily newspaper, *Diário de Notícias*, included anti-racist lessons for its child readers. In a trivia feature called, "What is Wrong?," the

writers urged children to identify hygiene, nutrition, and behavioral mistakes shown in an illustration. The answers were provided during the weekly radio program, *Reino de Alegria* (Kingdom of Happiness), a program sponsored by the Ministry of Education, in a song that reinforced each lesson. Among the regular illustrations that dealt with common health myths and errors, one image stood out as a divergence from such themes.

Figure 5.16: "What's Wrong" educational cartoon



Diário de Notícias, RJ (May 1949)

In a May 1949 edition, the featured illustration depicted an interaction between two children, one white and one black.⁴³⁴ The white child declares, "my mother does not want me to play with black kids," while pointing to the other child. Below the cartoon, instructions explain that the image contains a "puericultural error" and urges the readers to tune into to the following day's radio show for the correction. The obvious color differentiation in the drawing and the prejudicial dialogue aimed to provoke young readers to contemplate racism as socially undesirable. Even without hearing the musical response, the illustration evoked the conclusion that the white child's behavior was

⁴³⁴ "Que está errado?" in "Suplemento de Puericultura," *Diário de Notícias* (Rio de Janeiro) (May 15, 1949), section III, pg. 8.

unfavorable. The association of white skin color with racism echoed the centuries-old racial hierarchy in which European-descended Brazilians oppressed non-white populations. In the context of the late 1940s, the image rearticulated racism as a puericultural issue and a social convention that could be corrected through the education of young generations. Furthermore, the dialogue suggested that the racist sentiment originated with the white child's mother, with the boy performing as a mouthpiece for an older generation. This dynamic reinforced the idea that social prejudice was not inherent, but learned.

Responding to the post-World War II intellectual climate, Brazilian puericulturists reformulated the whitening ideal by proposing the eradication of racial prejudice through child-focused initiatives. Unlike social thinkers in previous decades who obscured historical racial differences by celebrating miscegenation, puericulturists blatantly confronted the issue as a part of a broader platform of welfare and health improvements. For them, racism extended into the world of the Brazilian child and was thus a social ill that could be corrected, through structured interventions, alongside conditions such as poor nutrition, unhygienic lifestyles, and health care disparities. During the mid and late 1940s, the ideology and practice of puericulture expanded to include social and moral guidance. Although Brazilian medical professionals and child advocates had discussed race relations as a part of child rearing and education in previous decades, the post-War period witnessed a more concerted, albeit rhetorical, drive to shape social interactions among nascent generations. An article appearing in a 1937 edition of the child advocacy magazine, *Infância*, produced by the *CPI*, served as an important precursor to the connection between puericulture, children, and racial attitudes in Brazil. Dr. Raul

Briquet, a São Paulo based pediatrician, argued that Brazilian parents needed to instill the idea that all men are equal despite their color, origin, and/or ethnicity.⁴³⁵ This work prompted further efforts to characterize puericulture as a field for promoting harmonious social interactions among the young. Puericulturists prioritized children's health and wellbeing over preoccupations with the extant social taboo of acknowledging racism in Brazil. Images such as the aforementioned cartoon and agricultural propaganda photos demonstrated that puericulturists aimed to promote children as harbingers of a perceived social utopianism that would emerge in subsequent generations.

However, the production and reception of such imagery requires careful assessment before reaching the conclusion that puericulture initiatives fomented social egalitarianism in the forties. Considerations of the intended audiences of such publications provoke questions about who medical professionals and government officials envisioned as the targets of their social lessons. Puericultural publications, either parenting magazines or newspaper columns, presupposed an audience comprised of literate, most likely middle and upper class readers. The connection between print media and radio broadcast further substantiates the assumption that children and adults reading the publications owned or had access to radios. As such, they produced didactic material with what Benedict Anderson describes as an imagined community of readers bound together by an implicit understanding of social and cultural norms.⁴³⁶ In the context of mid-twentieth-century puericulture campaigns, this fictive community comprised a circumscribed group of urban, educated, and predominantly white Brazilians. For example, the *Suplemento de Puericultura* illustration above supported

⁴³⁵ Dr. Raúl Briquet, "A criança e a raça," *Infância* (August 1937), 20 and 24.

⁴³⁶ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).

this supposition as it is the white child who commits the error and is thus the beneficiary of corrective information provided by the radio program. Meanwhile, the black child embodied the silent reception of racist remarks, appearing as a taciturn victim rather than the target of the puericultural lesson. The image clearly circumscribed the black child's role as the passive receptor of the white child's (or his mother's) prejudicial remarks. By designing print media sources in this way, puericulturists tacitly reproduced social hierarchies that subjugated non-white Brazilians. Singling out white children and parents as targets of puericultural lessons reemphasized the very racial divisions that child advocates and puericulturists attempted to supplant in the post-World War II era.

Seen in the context of concurrent efforts to promote social cohesiveness through puericulture, the agricultural propaganda produced in the late *Estado Novo* era and beyond becomes more complex. At first glance, the images project the ideals of racial democracy proposed in the thirties as a means of celebrating Brazil's diversity and rejecting European and North American racial mores. However, the model of racial democracy formulated by Freyre in the 1930s was predicated upon the inclusion of Brazil's three predominant racial categories: the indigenous, the European, and the African. Ministry of Agriculture and *DNCr* obfuscated the role of the indigenous by depicting the white and black child as Brazil's "best immigrants." Their cooperative initiatives presupposed the absence of indigenous peoples in the re-colonization and cultivation of the interior. For puericulturists and ministry officials engineering programs to instill a "love of land" among Brazilian children, indigenous populations remained marginal. Ministry officials and medical professionals reasoned that urban children born in the coastal metropolises, both black and white, would serve as civilizing agents and

settlers in the interior. This model of colonization *sui generis* disregarded the potential demographic and capital contributions of countless indigenous groups residing in Brazil's hinterland. The continued absence of indigenous children from the body of representations conjured by federal administrators demonstrated the shortcomings of puericulture as a mechanism of social unity. In a logistical sense, *DNCr* child-focused health initiatives had proven difficult to sustain in remote regions with high concentrations of indigenous peoples. In spite of efforts to install rural puericulture posts and augment state and local-level branches of the *DNCr* in the forties, puericulture failed to transform child rearing practices and health care among the indigenous located outside the state's institutional reach. Likewise, indigenous children did not fit the aesthetic of modern childhood propagated by elites engaged in national identity construction and child-centered.

It is important to note that *Estado Novo* propagandists utilized a single image of Getúlio Vargas holding a Karajá baby dressed in traditional attire in government-generated publications in the forties. The image (see Chapter VI) exuded the paternalistic tone of indigenous policy during Vargas' dictatorship by depicting a lone infant as the official icon for a diverse and profuse segment of Brazil's population. Furthermore, the photograph reified the exclusion of the indigenous from the state's child-centered development strategy. Despite the fact that indigenous children maintained stronger ties to the land than their urban counterparts, they were notably absent in contemporary media that promoted agricultural education and the characterization of the young as Brazil's 'best immigrants.' Instead, the image of Vargas embracing the Karajá child suggested that elite officials envisaged nascent indigenous generations as objects of colonization

rather than agents in the modernization of Brazil's interior regions. The partnership between black and white urban-born children supplanted the role of the indigenous as labor resources and demographic commodities in the *Estado Novo's* nation-building agenda. By selecting black and white "little farmers" to represent the panoply of races in Brazil, Ministry of Agriculture and *DNCr* officials reinterpreted the legacy of Brazilian racial democracy to fit the *Estado Novo's* geopolitical prerogatives.

Conclusion

In 1939 Getúlio Vargas called upon state-level policymakers to support puericulture as a tool for national development. He described children as some of Brazil's most important economic commodities and portrayed their health and welfare as the pillars of his 'March to the West' agenda that aimed to unify the country's disparate regions and stimulate domestic production. Vargas' nationalistic policymaking coincided with concurrent medical ideology that predicated demographic stability on the redemption and protection of the child. Puericulturists began to commodify children and create analogies between healthy child-rearing and agriculture. Their efforts to stem high infant mortality and expand health care services coalesced with the regime's drive to extend the reach of state authority into previously disconnected regions. These overlapping objectives produced various campaigns centered on the supposition that healthy, well-parented children could fuel development *sui generis*, from within. Children became key symbols of economic promise, as well as social and civic transformations that would solidify Brazil's status as a modern nation in the mid-twentieth century.

Agricultural education initiatives and propaganda emerged to counter rapid urbanization and to instill a "love for the land" among nascent generations. Officials reasoned that this natural affinity for cultivation would entice children to colonize Brazil's interior and harness its resources. Clubs and schools organized for to promote these imagined outcomes failed to bring about development on a measurable scale. Rather, such initiatives created a compelling body of visual representations and rhetoric in which puericulturists and government officials rearticulated Brazil's legacy of racial democracy. Photographs of black and white 'little farmers' demonstrated the complexity of racial egalitarian ideology as a mechanism in twentieth-century national identity construction. The exclusion of indigenous children from such representations revealed the continued subjugation of these populations and the negation of their contributions to national development. Finally, the characterization of children as Brazil's 'best immigrants' in the mid-forties opened a new chapter in the nation's demographic history.

For the first time, elite powerholders articulated a domestic alternative to Brazil's centuries-long reliance on foreign laborers. The promotion of children as colonizers and farmers provided a new model of development that satisfied the interests of fervent nationalists, influential medical professionals, and child advocates. While the latter circles of elites hoped to standardize pre-and post-natal health care and lower infant mortality nationwide, the former, mostly *Estado Novo*-era propagandists, envisioned children as a key labor force and as symbols of future prosperity. Likewise, medical professionals and federal officials engaged in child-focused development shared a vision for creating a new Brazilian man who would become an asset to the national body politic and economy. Although the agricultural education programs and child-focused

propaganda campaigns initiated by federal institutions did not result in the mass migration of a generation of Brazilians, the plan's geopolitical logic prevailed well into subsequent decades. The *Estado Novo's* 'March to the West' development framework was an important prelude to the construction of a new national capital, Brasilia, in the interior during the presidency of Juscelino Kubitschek (1956-1961) and subsequent resource extraction and industrial projects.

In the second half of the century, elites moved away from projecting the nation's children as the central protagonists of development. The imagined mass exodus of urban children into Brazil's hinterland no longer served as a viable solution to the ever-intensifying urban migration and socioeconomic disparities that characterized the latter decades of the century. Brazilian elites and policymakers conceived new symbols of modernity and progress after mid-century. Industrial capital, infrastructure, and natural resources replaced the child as the predominant icons of Brazilian prosperity. Joel Wolfe's 2010 monograph argues that the extension of government-maintained highways into Brazil's interior stood out as one symbol of territorial, and consequently, national unification. During the fifties and sixties, massive road-building projects, such as the TransAmazonian Highway, integrated previously disconnected peoples and resources, as well as the country's less-developed swaths of land. Thus, as Wolfe argues, cars, trucks, and other modes of transportation became Brazil's greatest tools for making itself into a modern nation.⁴³⁷ Unlike the imagined mass exodus of urban children into the farmlands of the interior, transportation-based development projects brought about measurable changes in Brazil's economic landscape and demographic profile. Despite the

⁴³⁷ Joel Wolfe, *Autos and Progress: The Brazilian Search for Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), 150.

shortcomings of child-focused agricultural development in the forties, the notion that Brazil could fuel economic and social advancement from within, either by man or by machine, remained an important political metaphor for elite powerholders who strove to keep the nation's growth apace with other modern nations.

Today the largest percentage of Brazil's child labor force works in the agricultural sector. An estimated 2.4 million children provide manpower for the production of such primary products as coffee, sugar cane, timber, and tobacco.⁴³⁸ Although the Brazilian government officials began protecting the young from labor exploitation in the late nineteenth century and have continued to legislate on their behalf, cultural, economic, and social forces have perpetuated child work as a sustainable part of the national economy. From 1932 to 1988, federal legislators redefined the age limits on child labor numerous times, usually shifting it between twelve and fourteen years.⁴³⁹ Consistent regime change partially explains the overall lack of consistency in child labor protections at the federal level. However, cultural traditions and the evolution of the domestic labor market have certainly shaped social and economic considerations of children's work. Particularly within rural farming families in Brazil's agricultural regions children's unpaid labor contributions remain essential, creating somewhat of a legal loophole allowing parents to bypass the age restrictions and remuneration mandates. In urban environments, the form and severity of *trabalho infantil* has also transformed since the early industrial era of the nineteenth century. Prostitution, weapons dealing, and

⁴³⁸ AnaClaudia Gastal Fassa and David Wegman, "Special Health Risks to Child Workers in Brazil," in Hugh D. Hindman, ed., *The World of Child Labor: an Historical and Regional Survey* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2009), 349.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, 358.

narcotrafficking have become some of the most persistent forms of exploitative child labor as a result of neo-liberal development policy.

Puericulturists and ministry officials who advocated children's agricultural activities could scarcely imagine the trajectory of Brazil's development before mid-century. They designed agricultural education programs and child-centered propaganda with short-term demographic, economic, geopolitical, and population health outcomes in mind. Their projects responded to immediate exigencies such as intensifying urbanization, high infant mortality, and the myriad health and welfare problems facing Brazil's youngest citizens. Rather than conveying children as passive victims in this context, child-focused medical professionals and officials recast them as key protagonists of progress and *brasilidade*. The healthy and happy 'little farmers' and 'immigrants' they envisaged bore little resemblance to the faces that would come to characterize child labor in Brazil's agricultural sector by the end of the century. Nonetheless the development strategies formulated by these elites forged new understandings about how Brazilian children could contribute to the nation's future as both symbols and mechanisms of prosperity.

CHAPTER VI

**Getúlio Vargas: Reflections on the
"Friend of Children" and His Era**

*President Vargas feels an attraction to
the little ones, of whom he is a friend
and comrade.*

-*Criança*, parenting magazine (1940)

*In the streets he smiles at the people,
in the playground he embraces the children,
not as a statesman, but with his heart,
making the ultimate gesture of human solidarity.*

-DIP, *Vargas, a mociedade, e a pátria* (1945)

Long before Brazil's National Children's Department made its own mark on the nation's history, its legacy was inextricably subsumed into the politics and persona of Getúlio Vargas. Although a circumscribed group of early twentieth-century doctors and social reformers had pioneered both its institutional framework and the health and welfare campaigns that would comprise the *DNCr* after 1940, the president and later dictator became the figurative purveyor of child-centered policymaking from 1930 to 1954. Official histories of the department's origins overwhelmingly credit Vargas for decisively identifying and rectifying Brazil's manifold child problems in the first half of the twentieth century. *DNCr* documents and other contemporary governmental publications cite Vargas as the first head of state to legislate in favor of the child since Independence leader José Bonifácio declared maternal and children's protection a priority of the fledgling state in 1823.⁴⁴⁰ Vargas was heralded as the first leader to face the

⁴⁴⁰Dr. Martagão Gesteira, "Sumário," *Boletim do Instituto de Puericultura*, ano I, no. 1, (1938), 23; Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Exposição de Puericultura, 1943* (Rio de Janeiro: Imprensa Nacional, 1943), 10-11, CPDOC, Gustavo Capanema Collection, GC1294f; A. Saboia Lima, "A criança no estado nacional," *Puericultura*, ano I, no. 1 (October 1941), 7; Dr. Orlando Seabra Lopes, "A obra do Presidente Vargas no campo social," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano II, no. 8 (March 1942), 35-36. On the social legislation introduced by José Bonifácio to the Constituent Assembly, see

nation's child welfare and health concerns without "crossed arms."⁴⁴¹ In fact, Vargas' propagandists actively cultivated images of Vargas embracing the nation's most vulnerable citizens with 'open arms.' The resonance of Vargas-era child-centered statecraft evokes a multitude of questions about the manifestation of Brazil's "century of the child" after 1930 and the role Vargas' paternalistic persona played in the intensification of pro-child politics thereafter. Primarily, it spurs inquiry into the political prerogatives and socioeconomic realities that allowed the Brazilian child's symbolic ascent to prominence during Vargas' reign. As a final reflection on child-centered nation-making in twentieth-century Brazil, this chapter deconstructs one of Vargas' lesser-known legacies by analyzing documentation generated by his administration and other contemporary sources.

The potency of Vargas-era statecraft blurred the fact that previous regimes had made legal and social reforms, as well as child-centered cultural production in the first decades of the twentieth century. Brazilian elites, particularly pedagogues and social reformers, recognized the "century of the child" as it was characterized in 1900 by Swedish writer Ellen Key and consequently formulated their own interpretations of its significance for the nation. As state authority crystallized during the First Republic (1889-1930), officials consistently debated children's education, as well as social services and public health improvements. Most notably President Washington Luís Pereira da Souza (1926-1930) endorsed the restructuring of colonial-era child labor laws, penal

Edson Passetti, "Crianças carentes e políticas públicas," in org., Mary del Priore, *História das crianças no Brasil* (São Paulo: Editora Contexto, 1999), 347-375.

⁴⁴¹Dr. Orlando Seabra Lopes, "A obra do Presidente Vargas no campo social," *Boletim Trimensal do Departamento Nacional da Criança*, ano II, no. 8 (March 1942), 35.

practices, and state-sponsored protections in the 1927 Minors' Code.⁴⁴² Vargas and his child-focused political agenda indeed evolved out of late-nineteenth-century social reform in which both religious and secular power-holders championed children's causes to ensure economic prosperity and social order.

During the first decades of the twentieth century, there had also been vibrant debate regarding children's health and welfare among public authorities, philanthropists, and medical professionals. The emergence of redemptive, or "child-saving," attitudes in the twenties and thirties coincided with international pro-child movements.⁴⁴³ Brazilian doctors participated in numerous domestic and international dialogues focused on the plight of children. These forums, particularly the 1922 Pan-American Child Congress held in Rio de Janeiro, drew attention to Brazil's enduring infant mortality crisis and to the evolution of related state and medical interventions. Rio de Janeiro-based pediatrician Moncorvo Filho founded and personally funded a Children's Department in 1919. He and other local medical professionals and reformers had also lavishly celebrated Brazil's first century of child health and welfare innovations at the 1922 Independence Centennial Exposition. The Children's Museum displays were the first to conceptualize and project the Brazilian child as a national icon that embodied the country's prosperity and development potential. Outside the federal capital, doctors and socially-conscious elites formulated their own campaigns in favor of the child. Pre-and

⁴⁴²For a comprehensive overview of child-focused legislation from the sixteenth to the late-twentieth century, see Irene Rizzini, Francisco Pilotti, and Eva Faleros, *A arte de governar crianças: a história das políticas sociais, da legislação, e da assistência à infância no Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro: IIN/EDUSU/Amais, 1995).

⁴⁴³Hugh Cunningham's work identifies a child-saving "moment" that first emerged in Protestant countries of Western Europe in the mid-nineteenth century and influenced elites in the Americas soon after. See Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (London: Longman Press, 1995) and Irene Rizzini, "The Child-Saving Movement in Brazil: Ideology in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," in Tobias Hecht, *Minor Omissions*.

post-natal hygiene education had been one of the goals of the sanitarian movement of the 1920s, a program that nurses and doctors on missions throughout Brazil, but predominantly in large urban centers. Most notably, a group of Bahian physicians founded the *Liga Contra Mortalidade Infantil* (League Against Infant Mortality) in 1926. In fact by 1933, Moncorvo Filho's Children's Department registered over 11,000 institutions, mostly hospitals, child care facilities, and private charitable organizations, devoted to children's needs throughout Brazil. The documentation provides no information regarding the geographical distribution of these services and institutions. Following the pattern of medical and public health infrastructural development, it is likely that the majority of those represented were concentrated in the Federal District and within other large cities in Brazil's Center-South region.⁴⁴⁴ Yet, the 1930 Revolution and Vargas' subsequent emergence as the arbiter of modern child welfare discourse, consecrated by his 1932 "Christmas Message," quickly obfuscated this longer history of child-focused social and political consciousness.

From the wealth of photographs and illustrations that portray Vargas alongside children, this chapter examines four photographs that convey key aspects of his relationship to the nation's children. All of the images originated during the *Estado Novo* dictatorship period (1937-1945) in which the regime's propagandists most actively publicized Vargas' persona as 'friend of children'. Two of the images, one of Vargas ascending a staircase holding a child and one of him holding an indigenous baby, originated in the *cartilha*, *Getúlio Vargas: O amigo das crianças*, published by the Press

⁴⁴⁴Departamento Nacional da Criança, *Rápida Notícia sobre o Departamento da Criança* (Rio de Janeiro: Typografia Lyra, 1934), anexo no. 1.

and Propaganda Department, in 1940. The remaining three come from the federally-endorsed parenting magazines, *Criança* and *Puericultura* in 1939 and 1942 respectively.

This examination reveals that Brazilian children and their health, wellbeing, and potential, as well as their perceived symbolic value, remained key political priorities for Vargas' and his administration throughout its eighteen-year rule. Using the Brazilian child as the explicit object of its reforms, the regime was able to launch a multitude of development initiatives related to public health, education, cultural patrimony, and agricultural, industrial, and military expansion. Puericulture, the set of French-inspired child rearing and health practices adopted and reformulated by Brazilian doctors, not only promoted the fitness of the body politic in its nascent stages, but the Vargas administration imagined it as a medium for diffusing state authority and spurring modernization. In particular, children's agricultural education programs and the characterization of the young as Brazil's "best immigrants" became important elements of Vargas' 'March to the West' agenda. The *DNCr*'s extension of federal health and medical services through rural puericulture posts also purported to integrate distant peoples and regions. However, the child-centered programs instigated from 1930 to 1945 proved both ideologically and practically inconsistent and ultimately unsustainable like so many of Vargas' social welfare and development projects. The principles and practice of hygienic child rearing, as well as models of sustained medical intervention that had been innovated among Brazil's urban populations did not resonate with rural families. Likewise, the promotion of children's rural education and the propaganda that characterized the young as Brazil's 'best immigrants' fell woefully short of their intended objectives. Consequently, the imagined generation that Vargas and his allies had hoped to raise and

the youthful energies they hoped to harness faded into obscurity after his suicide in 1954. Subsequent decades of military rule would further erase the legacy of child advocacy that flourished during the first half of the century and had buttressed the political persona of Brazil's most influential and enigmatic leader.

Recent historiography has questioned Vargas' personal contributions to the political culture and policymaking ushered in during his long administration. Jens Hentschke's 2006 edited volume in particular portrays Vargas as a figure head and more of a participant in the institutional and bureaucratic juggernaut that was his regime. The contributors to this volume effectively deconstruct the Vargas façade as it was generated by his propagandists to reveal poignant weaknesses in Vargas' leadership prowess. On the whole the authors find that many of Vargas' seemingly decisive political strategies had been heavily influenced, if not conceived, by his closest advisors. Although it is difficult to reduce him to a mere pawn, which he was unequivocally not, it is important to examine critically the ideas and actions attributed to Vargas within the context of a highly propagandistic and image-conscious political culture. Most importantly, the authors in Hentschke's volume, as well as a number of other scholars of twentieth-century Brazil, raise the crucial methodological issue of dealing with sources produced by the regime and its proponents.⁴⁴⁵ Analyses of regime-derived sources tend to downplay reality in favor of rhetoric and often conflate discourse and action. Consequently, some researchers have depicted a myth rather than the man himself.

⁴⁴⁵Other works that engage with Vargas-era documentation include: Simon Schwartzman, et al, *Tempos de Capanema* (São Paulo: EDUSP, 1984); Williams, *Culture Wars*; Davila, *Diploma of Whiteness*; and Hentschke, *Reconstructing the Brazilian Nation: Public Schooling in the Vargas Era* (Baden Baden: Nomos, 2007).

The images and texts that document child-centered politics during the Vargas-era likewise require critical consideration to avoid interpreting the regime's propaganda as evidence of substantive policymaking. Taken at face value, these sources indeed portray Vargas as the 'friend of children' and as the supreme harbinger of state protection, legal reform, civic programming, and health and welfare services for the young. Numerous images of Vargas engaging with Brazilian youngsters further solidify his amicable persona. The medical professionals and child advocates that comprised national-level departments and institutes corroborated this characterization of Vargas from the early thirties onward. Although these officials never directly identified their motives, their complicity in this political project secured mutually beneficial relations with federal administrations and served as a means of lobbying for continued subvention of their public health and educational objectives. The *DNCr* and *INP* consistently heralded Vargas for his ingenuity and generosity in the area of child welfare and health promotion. Publications and public expositions produced by these entities featured many an homage to Vargas and frequently reproduced photographs of him alongside children. Ironically, the doctors heading these organizations essentially credited Vargas for the very projects they had engineered in the preceding decades. They publicly attributed the federalization of child welfare and health services through the *DNCr* as Vargas' brain-child rather than construing it as a project born out of their own medical and social welfare prerogatives.

Patronage to Vargas and his administration became a central part of puericulturists' discourse particularly after the Christmas Message in 1932 and more intensely after the *DNCr*'s foundation in 1940. The co-optation of departmental officials and medical professionals served as another example of Vargas-era clientelism. This

enduring power dynamic between high-level federal officials and institutional leadership also reflected regional nepotism that pervaded Vargas' political career. Vargas' assumption of the presidency after the 1930 Revolution solidified a power shift from the formerly dominant states of Minas Gerais and São Paulo, to Rio Grande do Sul. The transition ultimately infused a strong *gaúcho*, a generic label for southern Brazilian men, influence into national-level policymaking as Vargas appointed many of his regional allies to positions of power within his expanding federal bureaucracy. For example, the most prominent figure among Brazilian puericulturists and pro-child policymakers, Dr. Olympio Olinto de Oliveira, hailed from Vargas' home state of Rio Grande do Sul and was a professor of medicine at the University of Pôrto Alegre during Vargas time as a law student there from 1903-1907.⁴⁴⁶ Olinto de Oliveira went on to serve as head of all federal child welfare agencies from 1930 to 1945, including the *DNCr* and its predecessor institutions.

These regional alliances and power dynamics within the federal administration must be weighed in the analysis of *DNCr* and other federal documentation pertaining to Vargas' pro-child politics and persona. The sources must not be read as evidence of Vargas' unwavering commitment to improving child welfare and health in Brazil as his propagandists would have liked. Rather, these documents illustrate the administration's prevailing preoccupation with cultivating a positive image of Vargas during a phase of political turbulence touched off by his 1930 coup. Official sources construed the president/dictator as a humanitarian whose supposed natural camaraderie with the

⁴⁴⁶Vargas earned his Bachelor of Law degree in 1907 and Olinto de Oliveira served as professor of pathological anatomy (1903-1905) and head of pediatrics (1906-1917) before moving to Rio de Janeiro. See Ronald Hilton, ed., *Who's Who in Latin America, Part IV: Brazil*, 3rd edition (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1948), 178 and 257.

nation's children characterized Vargas as a civilian rather than militaristic leader. With the rise of the *Estado Novo* after 1937, the propagation of this genial public persona helped soften the impact of his more oppressive political maneuvering which included the dismantling of constitutional rule and partisan politics, as well as state-sponsored violence and censorship. Vargas' 'friend of children' façade and representations of his physical and emotional proximity to Brazil's most vulnerable citizens juxtaposed these authoritarian measures. Finally, federal officials, particularly in the *DNCr*, *MES*, and Ministry of Agriculture, cleverly translated Vargas' public avowals of his commitment to children into nation-building projects. Their integration of child-focused rhetoric and imagery subsequently bolstered Vargas' persona and established children as key commodities in his regime's development plan.

Head of State and Head of Household: Vargas as 'papã'

Vargas' idealized relationship with the nation's children and his overall patriarchal image reflected his own life experiences to some extent. He was a father of five children, the youngest of which was just ten years old when Vargas came to power in 1930.⁴⁴⁷ Thus, his affections and concerns for his own children shaped his perspectives on child health and welfare policy. Although little direct evidence exists, it was rumored that his youngest son Getúlio Vargas Filho, nicknamed Getulinho, suffered from a debilitating disease in early adulthood. Getulinho died at the age of twenty-three in 1943 and his reported cause of death was polio or complications from "infantile paralysis."⁴⁴⁸ Doctors in São Paulo flew an iron lung from a Rio de Janeiro hospital to extend Getulinho's life,

⁴⁴⁷There are differing records of Getúlio Vargas Filho's birth date that vary between 1917 and 1920. Due to this inconsistency in the available evidence, Getúlio Vargas Filho's age at death is reported as occurring "in his early twenties" as a part of his father's biography in the CPDOC archive. See Verbete: Getúlio Vargas.

⁴⁴⁸"Son of Brazil's Vargas, Hopkins Graduate, Dies," American newspaper clipping found in CPDOC, Alzira Vargas do Amaral Peixoto Collection, AVAP vpr mf 1929. 12.20, documents 4 and 6.

and, simultaneously transported the vice-president of Johnson and Johnson, Andrew Rohlffing to Brazil to help operate it.⁴⁴⁹ The family and Vargas' administrators had kept Getulino's illness out of the press and instead boasted his promising career as chemical engineer. During the *Estado Novo* years public disclosure of Vargas' personal family information was tightly controlled. However, Getulino's death and funeral services received much publicity in the domestic and foreign press.⁴⁵⁰

Polio epidemics had raged through Brazil's major cities in the first half of the twentieth century, particularly Porto Alegre, Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo, in the late 1930s. Although Brazil's top biological and medical research center, the *Instituto de Oswaldo Cruz* (Oswaldo Cruz Institute), would lead the way in polio eradication research thirty years later, Brazilian doctors had little recourse for prevention and treatment in the forties.⁴⁵¹ Getulino died from respiratory failure only ten days after experiencing the initial symptoms of polio. Following Getulino's death, one of his attending doctors wrote to a sympathy letter to Vargas and lamented that "medical science continued to have limits" in Brazil.⁴⁵² Getulino's death indeed shed light on the enduring inadequacies of public health services and medical science in twentieth-century Brazil. The event exposed the fallacy of Vargas' ongoing efforts to modernize the nation through the

⁴⁴⁹"Brazil: Emergency in São Paulo," *Time* (February 8, 1943), np. Available online: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,774181,00.html>

⁴⁵⁰See, "Informativo do João José da Silva das homenagens a Getúlio Vargas Filho, pela Rádio Porteira, por ocasião da sua morte," CPDOC, Getúlio Vargas Collection, GV1943.01.04/2. U.S. news media outlets covered Getulino's death as it occurred a few weeks following a meeting between Franklin see "Getúlio Vargas President's Son: Brazilian Dies of Infantile Paralysis in São Paulo 10 Days After Illness," *New York Times* (February 3, 1943), Section 1, pg. 19; ⁴⁵⁰"Son of Brazil's Vargas, Hopkins Graduate, Dies," American newspaper clipping found in CPDOC, Alzira Vargas do Amaral Peixoto Collection, AVAP vpr mf 1929. 12.20, documents 4 and 6 and "Brazil: Emergency in São Paulo," *Time* (February 8, 1943), np. Available online: <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,774181,00.html>.

⁴⁵¹Hermann G. Shatzmayr, et al, "Erradicação da poliomielite no Brasil: a contribuição da Fundação Oswaldo Cruz," *História, Ciência, e Saúde-Manguinhos*, 9:1 (January-April 2002),11.

⁴⁵²"Correspondência sobre a recusa dos médicos para receberem os honorários referentes ao tratamento do Getúlio Vargas Filho e contendo os agradecimentos de Getúlio Vargas para seu trabalho," CPDOC, Getúlio Vargas Collection, GV1943.02.07, document 6.

construction of a healthy, productive body politic. Indeed, the expansion of health services, infrastructure, and educational campaigns had been a cornerstone of Vargas' development strategy since the early thirties. By the mid-forties his administration had made important strides in advancing this agenda, such as the creation of federal-level institutions to address population health concerns. However, many of the initiatives that Vargas-era officials and medical professionals had devised proved inadequate and unsustainable due to resource and personnel deficiencies. Getulino's death likewise demonstrated that epidemic disease was capable of infiltrating what some elites imagined as social and regional barriers that buffered the ruling class. Finally, the loss of a member of the country's most prominent family tarnished Brazil's image as a modern, progressive nation, a façade that Vargas-era propagandists had so keenly constructed.

Vargas' first-hand experience the consequences of a fatal, communicable illness spurred him to further promote public health and disease prevention state priorities. In fact, Vargas endorsed the foundation of a pediatric hospital, located in Niteroi, that carried his son's name in 1954. However, the intensifying political turmoil that eventually toppled the *Estado Novo* in 1945 compromised the fledgling public health and welfare projects that had been initiated by federal officials years earlier. Brazil had also joined the Allied forces by declaring war against Germany and Italy just six months before Getulino's passing. His death also coincided with the rise of the *Estado Novo's* National Youth Movement in the early forties. This program aimed to fortify the young through physical and civic training for the purposes of national security. Getulino certainly typified the energy and potential that comprised the Youth Movement, thus his death revealed undercut the idea that Brazil's youngest generations were healthy and

capable of defending the nation. In the context of *Estado Novo*-era nation-building his life and death ultimately epitomized the promise and precariousness of youth in twentieth-century Brazil. On a symbolic level, Vargas' role as father to a sick child extended into his political life and bolstered his compassionate persona. Yet, Vargas' image as the grieving father did little to stem growing political opposition. Getulino's death ultimately revealed the prevalence of child health and welfare problems that persisted well into the twentieth century and even affected Brazil's most prominent family.

The "Friend of Children" Emerges

Historical documentation and scholarship pertaining to Vargas and his era have overwhelmingly characterized him as the 'Father of the Poor.'⁴⁵³ Emphasis on this persona has overshadowed other equally important dimensions of Vargas' political personality. His propagandists cultivated an imagined relationship with the nation's children at an opportune moment in which social and medical preoccupations with their health and welfare coalesced with accelerating economic development and the construction of Brazilian national identity. During his authoritarian-corporatist regime (1937-1945), Vargas' explicit characterization as "friend," not "father," of Brazil's children served to soften his image as dictator and mitigate public perception of his oppressive political strategies. Most strikingly, this constructed relationship helped disguise the regime's purported militarization, physical training, and civic inculcation of

⁴⁵³Works on this aspect of Vargas' political persona include, Robert M. Levine, *Father of the Poor?: Vargas and His Era* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and Joel Wolfe, "Father of the Poor or 'Mother of the Rich'? Getúlio Vargas, Industrial Workers, and Constructions of Class, Gender, and Populism in São Paulo, 1930-1954," *Radical History Review*, 58 (1994): 80-111.

the nation's youth through the "National Youth Organization" programs beginning in 1938.⁴⁵⁴

To address these questions, this chapter analyzes a cross-section of the rhetoric and imagery that intertwined Vargas and his development strategies with Brazil's children. *Estado Novo*-era propaganda provides some insights into these questions. Specifically, a 1940 *cartilha*, or didactic manual, produced by the Press and Propaganda Department (*DIP*) is perhaps the best source of information on the Vargas administration's child-centered political vision. In Brazil, the twentieth-century genre of *cartilhas* evolved from colonial Catholic catechism primers and juridical pamphlets written to impart civil and criminal legal codes to laypersons. In both the colonial and modern contexts, the government officials who authored these texts used simple language and imagery to educate the public on a variety of topics ranging from penal codes to hygiene. Vargas-era *cartilhas* were replete with images that celebrated Vargas as a pivotal figure in Brazil's history. According to the work of Leonardo Pinheiro Mozdzenski, *Estado Novo*-era *cartilhas* served to obfuscate the regime's repressive actions by burying legislative and juridical information under patriotic clichés and nationalist symbols. Mozdzenski argues that *Estado Novo* officials relied on this genre of publications to legitimate state authority and difuse the regime's political ideology to both literate and non-literate Brazilians.⁴⁵⁵ Entitled, *Getúlio Vargas: O amigo das crianças* (Getúlio Vargas: The Children's Friend), the book encapsulates the evolution of

⁴⁵⁴The National Youth Organization was inspired fascist youth mobilization in Italy, Germany, and Portugal during World War II. In Brazil early manifestations of this civic and military-oriented campaign emerged during the tenure of Minister of Justice Francisco Campos. For works on the youth movement during the *Estado Novo* era see, Simon Schwartzmann, Helena Bomeny, and Vanda Maria Ribeiro Costa, *Tempos de Capanema* (São Paulo: Terra e Paz, 1984), Chapter IV.

⁴⁵⁵Leonardo Pinheiro Mozdzenski, "A formação sócio-histórica do gênero cartilha jurídica,"

Vargas' "proverbial predilection" for the nation's young and contains numerous images of the leader interacting in this role.⁴⁵⁶ This publication provides an official summary of the Vargas administration's pro-child policymaking, as well as institutional and infrastructural achievements. The document also emphasizes the mobilization of Brazilian youth as a part of the *Estado Novo's* promotion of civic participation and militarization. Quoting Vargas the pamphlet summarizes the purported objectives of the youth movement by supplicating children and adolescents to actively "defend the homeland, preserve the Brazilian race, and safeguard its traditions."⁴⁵⁷ The *cartilha* features over fifty photographs of Vargas engaging with Brazilian children in a variety of contexts. Published a few months after the federalization of Brazil's *DNCr* in 1940, the document further legitimated Vargas' commitment to the nation's youngest citizens and clearly articulated the regime's child-focused nation-building prerogatives.

An analysis of the language and imagery comprising the work reveals yet another layer to Vargas' enigmatic political persona. The pamphlet asserts that the president's natural affinity for children served as the fulcrum for his nation-building projects. Most significantly, it demonstrates that the regime perceived Brazilian children as potential political allies and economic resources whose energies and minds urgently needed to be integrated into Vargas' national development plan. As with other documents produced by the *DIP* and other governmental entities during the *Estado Novo*, the *cartilha* offers a myopic narration of how Vargas acquired the moniker 'friend of children.' The publication exclusively credits Vargas for placing the Brazilian child under the auspices of the state. Not surprisingly, the work patently ignores the concurrent international

⁴⁵⁶ Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda, *Getúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças* (Rio de Janeiro: DIP, 1940), 2. CPDOC, Getúlio Vargas Collection, GV149f.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 13.

movement in favor of children, as well as the myriad Brazilian doctors, philanthropists, and social reformers who had championed child welfare in prior to 1930. Despite this inherent bias, the document provides valuable insights into the regime's integration of Brazilian children into its political agenda by simultaneously endearing Vargas to them and using their images as national symbols.

While the rhetorical and representational connection between Vargas and Brazil's children certainly intensified during the *Estado Novo*, the crux of his pro-child agenda predated the rise of the dictatorship in 1937. In fact, the administrators in charge of crafting Vargas' paternal image described child welfare as an intrinsic part of his emergent political career as a state-level official in Rio Grande do Sul. It would be during this phase of his political life (1909-1921) that Vargas proclaimed the destiny of the child to be the destiny of the nation.⁴⁵⁸ Then, as provisional president following the 1930 Revolution, Vargas characterized himself, as did his advisors, as a paternalistic benefactor for the nation's youngest generations. For his advocates, as well as for some contemporary medical professionals aligned with his child-focused agenda, Vargas' rise to power marked a crucial transition in which the care of the nation's children shifted from the private philanthropic groups and religious entities to the state. What is striking is that his child-focused rhetoric changed very little over the course of his more than two-decade tenure as head of state. He began his rule with a pledge to expand the role of the state to improve children's health and welfare as a means of modernization and to bolster Brazil's demographic profile. In his first presidency (1930-1937), Vargas' discourse placed the child at the center of a "patriotic crusade" that required the cooperation of state

⁴⁵⁸Departamento de Imprensa e Propaganda, *Getúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças* (Rio de Janeiro: DIP, 1940), 3. For more on Vargas' early political career in Rio Grande do Sul see, Joseph Love, *Rio Grande do Sul and Brazilian Regionalism, 1882-1945* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1971).

and municipal-level leadership for the construction of a modern, prosperous nation.⁴⁵⁹ With the rise of the *Estado Novo* and a more corporatist political agenda, Vargas' propagandists more explicitly portrayed the child as the provenance of their idealized new Brazilian *man*. This revised metaphor shifted the imagined outcome of child-oriented policymaking to signify the regime's reconstruction of the Brazilian body politic through a series of social and cultural projects. However, the rhetorical role of the patriarchal state and the perceived value of the child remained consistent throughout Vargas' reign as president and dictator.

It is difficult to argue that Vargas and his closest advisors premeditated the child-focused agenda that unfolded following his touchstone speech on Christmas Day in 1932. On that day, Vargas first publicly equated the redemption of the child with Brazil's prosperity and vowed to augment federal support for the pro-child cause.⁴⁶⁰ Thus, it is a fallacy to interpret the rise of child welfare and health institutions in the thirties and forties as products of Vargas' unique brand of social reform. As this work has illustrated social concerns and public consciousness for child welfare and health did not erupt with Vargas' assumption of power following the 1930 Revolution. Doctors, philanthropists, and intellectuals across Brazil had been discussing issues such as infant mortality, disease, abandonment, delinquency, and child hygiene for decades. Their ideas and initiatives had even materialized into state and municipal-level agencies, albeit with limited resources and authority. Social reformers and medical professionals in the capital had begun to articulate the nation's economic potential using healthy children to represent

⁴⁵⁹Ministério de Educação e Saúde, *Conferência de Proteção à Infância, 17-27 setembro 1933, atas e trabalhos*, vol I (Rio de Janeiro: MES, 1933), 4.

⁴⁶⁰Dr. Martagão Gesteira, *Pela criança na Guerra e no Brasil* (1943), CPDOC, Gustavo Capanema Collection, GC266f, 14-15.

capital gains and labor inputs by the twenties. Many of the individuals engaged in Brazil's early pro-child initiatives went on to direct national-level institutions.

Vargas and his administrators indeed cultivated a public image of benevolent patriarchy particularly for Brazil's poor and working-class masses. His propagandists devoted a specific niche of political rhetoric, symbolism, and civic tradition to the nation's children. Print media and governmental sources regularly captured Vargas engaging with youngsters in a playful manner that seemed unbecoming of his office. After the creation of the *DNCr* in 1940, Vargas' personal relationship with the nation's children became a key centerpiece of departmental propaganda. *DNCr* parenting magazines and exhibitions served as forums for solidifying Vargas' 'friend of children' persona, most explicitly through the use of photographs and illustrations. The department's official illustrator, Orval, produced one of the most compelling of these images in 1943. Figure 5.11 (Chapter 5) depicted artwork that featured children as central objects of Vargas' development agenda in a scene filled with symbols of Brazil's industrial, agricultural, and military prowess. Vargas' propagandists clearly relied on images of children to symbolize Brazil as a nation in development and to emphasize the regime's enduring commitment to its most vulnerable citizens. Depictions of Vargas' personal connection to children also reinforced patriarchal authority and softened the dictator's public persona. As the following analysis reveals, images of Vargas alongside children derived from well-orchestrated encounters and photo opportunities. Rather than evolving out of Vargas' purported intrinsic affinity for the nation's children, his propagandists keenly selected images of interactions that promoted his imagined persona and political agenda. The photographs illustrate various aspects of Vargas' role as the 'friend of children' by

capturing him in both staged and candid interactions. A sample of these images demonstrates the nuances of Vargas' political character, as well as the diverse representations of children used in his regime's nation-building propaganda.

The first two images appeared in the didactic pamphlet, *Getúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças*, published by the *DIP* in 1940. Out of the more than fifty photographs included in the *cartilha*, only four were printed on full pages with no accompanying text. One of these images featured Vargas holding an indigenous baby adorned in traditional attire (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1: Vargas with a Karajá baby (1940)



Getúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças (DIP 1940), CPDOC

Vargas gazed at the child smiling, yet he held him tentatively with one arm as if to keep him on display. The presence of a lit cigar in his other hand suggested Vargas' engagement with the child was fleeting, perhaps solely for the purposes of the photograph. Vargas' white dress shirt and sun hat created both a visual and cultural juxtaposition with the baby. His attire symbolized the encroachment of modernity and state power into the lives of Brazil's previously disconnected indigenous peoples where traditional ways of life prevailed. Furthermore, Vargas' monochromatic and full-coverage clothing contrasted sharply with the child's nudity and the eclectic mix of tones, textures, and accessories comprising his adornments. Vargas' striking size diminished the indigenous presence in the photograph and created a powerful allegory for the state's paternalistic policy towards Brazil's Indians. The president's physical enormity next to a diminutive child also gave a false impression of Vargas' stature. Vargas was a noticeably short and paunchy man, a characteristic made obvious in contemporary photos that captured him next to both Brazilian and foreign statesmen. However, this image, shot from below with a subject of starkly contrasting size, embellished his height. By capturing a lone Karajá baby in traditional dress, the image overtly infantilized the Indian as an object of state control and presented his culture as antithetical to the modernization process.

The use of an indigenous baby rather than an adult also reflected the regime's intensifying obsession with the nation's youth and the cultural contributions of its native populations. Propagandists consistently utilized children as markers of Brazil's development potential and to convey both cultural and social mutability. However, the predominant imagery used federally-sponsored media and public forums featured

children of ostensibly European descent in the thirties and forties. Here, the depiction of Vargas 'befriending' an indigenous child rather than the archetypical white child explicitly celebrated Brazil's heterogeneous racial heritage. The image not only captured an unprecedented act by a Brazilian head of state, but it likewise challenged the aesthetic conventions of contemporary national identity construction.

Historian Seth Garfield's work reveals that a *DIP* cameraman captured this photograph during one of Vargas' excursions into Brazil's hinterland during the *Estado Novo* era. In August 1940, three months before the publication of the *DIP cartilha*, Vargas visited a village of Karajá Indians located on Bananal Island in central Brazil. During the visit, the Karajá performed rituals and sang the national hymn for the head of state and his entourage. As Garfield's analysis shows, *DIP* personnel capitalized on these interactions to promote Vargas' political image and the regime's authority among other remote populations. He finds that during the early forties the federal Indian Protection Service (*SPI*) distributed copies of the photograph to its posts in indigenous communities throughout Brazil to spur support for the dictator and his development campaigns.⁴⁶¹ In fact, Garfield's work references the Karajá baby photograph as a part of an undated *DIP* publication entitled *Rumo ao Oeste* (March to the West) rather than citing it as a part of the 1940 child-focused *cartilha*. Considered within the context of Vargas' pro-Indian agenda, the photograph embodied the cultural renaissance of Brazil's indigenous roots which had become a cornerstone of state-sponsored national identity construction. As one of the few images of Vargas disseminated among indigenous communities, this photograph also presented him as a physically formidable man. Thus, the Karajá baby

⁴⁶¹Seth Garfield, "'The Roots of a Plant That Today Is Brazil;' Indians and the Nation-State under the Brazilian *Estado Novo*," *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 29:3 (October 1997), 748-749.

served as an opportune symbolic foil that reinforced the well-crafted image of Vargas as pro-indigenous and pro-child. *DIP* propagandists deftly captured a rare moment in which Vargas truly embodied *Estado Novo*-era political culture that masqued autocratic rule as benevolent social concern.

As a part of his 'March to the West' geopolitical strategy, Vargas made several highly-publicized and unprecedented trips to Brazil's rural and indigenous regions. The encounters provided a forum for Vargas to forge political alliances with these constituencies, consolidate federal authority, and solidify his persona as 'Father of the Poor' and 'Friend of Children.' Thus, *Estado Novo* propagandists utilized the image to convey two distinct political personas during the early forties. The photograph simultaneously projected Vargas as a proponent of Brazil's indigenous populations and as a child advocate who both literally and figuratively held the nation's young in his arms. A phrase from the 1940 *cartilha* claimed that Vargas was a 'friend' to all the nation's children, from the banks of the Amazon to Southern Brazil.⁴⁶² Such rhetoric reinforced the *Estado Novo*'s corporatist political style that aimed to integrate, unify, and modernize Brazil's disparate populations and territories. This type of discourse and imagery also symbolically blurred regional divisions and further consolidated the central state's control by depicting Vargas as an amicable and egalitarian leader. By publishing and distributing the photograph in multiple public forums, administrators effectively fused two of Vargas' political personalities. The brief moment captured on film became a powerful representation of the regime's paternal authority over the nation's children and its indigenous populations. For *Estado Novo* era propagandists the Karajá baby embodied *brasilidade* by exuding both the promise of Brazil's future and the richness of its past.

⁴⁶² *DIP, Getúlio Vargas: O amigo das crianças* (1940), 30.

Another compelling photograph appeared on the final page of the 1940 *cartilha* (Figure 6.2). At the center of the shot, Vargas is seen carrying a little girl up a flight of stairs flanked by two male officials and a young boy.

Figure 6.2: Vargas during a 1940 public appearance



Getúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças (1940)
Getúlio Vargas Collection, GV149f, CPDOC

A text featured below the image urged readers to reflect well on the scene and the relationship it suggested. The caption posed the following rhetorical questions:

Isn't this a snapshot of an exceptional moment in our nation's history?
Isn't that your caring President climbing the staircase to the future?⁴⁶³

By depicting Vargas and Brazil's children as the unequivocal forerunners on the path to the future, the photograph affirmed the symbolic power of the alliance between the state and its youngest citizens. Vargas' physical support of the girl and not the boy reflected

⁴⁶³DIP, *Getúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças*, 32.

the enduring gender norms of twentieth-century patriarchy. Since the early nineteenth century, medical professionals and government officials had promoted specialized health and welfare protections for women and children. Twentieth-century gender-specific puericultural policymaking and paternalistic cultural traditions further solidified a social environment that perpetuated what male elites perceived as the inherent vulnerabilities of these groups. Yet the photograph above revealed another layer to this gendered and age-based social logic. Despite sharing a similar age and physical size with the girl, the boy ascended the staircase independently without direct support from the 'father' of the nation and the 'friend of children.' In fact, the boy appeared to be leading the group, suggesting the role of male youth as the nation's future leaders. This visual dynamic illustrated a loophole through which boys defied the strictures imposed on them as children and exercised more autonomy in comparison to female children.

Finally, the image tacitly reiterated the gender division of labor as it was articulated by the Vargas-era doctors and policymakers. An accompanying text compelled young readers to fulfill their duties to the nation by contributing their unique strengths and energies.⁴⁶⁴ However, only the male child captured in the photograph appeared to be capable of contributing in such a way. During the thirties and forties, the precepts of puericulture consistently defined female work as exclusively domestic and maternal, while males contributed to family welfare by laboring outside the home. Healthy children and a prosperous nation, puericulture advocates reasoned, depended on the practice of scientific motherhood. For Vargas-era officials and doctors, such maternal obligations precluded the possibility of waged labor outside the home. Despite granting women suffrage in 1932 and endorsing female labor as an economic imperative for

⁴⁶⁴Ibid, 32.

development, Vargas and his administrators viewed women's work as "complementary" to men's.⁴⁶⁵ The photograph echoed such idealized gender roles. Here, the boy exhibits independent physical effort while Vargas protected the girl from the exertion of climbing the stairs. The photograph also presented an allegory of these gender roles by situating the boy as part of the adult male cohort of military officials and statesmen, rather than associating him more closely with the girl and childhood.

The overt gendered dynamics portrayed in the *cartilha's* final image reflected the idealized social norms imagined by *Estado Novo* propagandists and child advocates. In this and many other contemporary visual sources the roles ascribed to children served as key symbols of the metaphorical 'order and progress' elites hoped to instill in Brazilian society. Gender inequalities pervaded in the twentieth century as a result of continued state and medical interventions into private and public life that aimed to regulate the roles male and female children would assume in society. However, the symbolic thrust of the photograph pertained to Vargas and his relationship to the nation's young. The image suggested a compelling power hierarchy in which Vargas wielded both direct authority and protection over the female child. Pictured at Vargas' side, the boy exuded an independence and equal footing with the dictator and the male powerholders in tow. Ultimately, the photograph reified the imagined partnership between Vargas and Brazil's youngest generations. As demonstrated by the image, Vargas' style and degree of paternalism extended both literally and figuratively into lives of the future stewards of the nation.

⁴⁶⁵Susan Besse, *Restructuring Patriarchy: The Modernization of Gender Inequalities in Brazil, 1914-1940* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 132.

The following photograph (Figure 6.3) captured a rather odd interaction between Vargas and a group of school children in 1942.

Figure 6.3: School children visiting the presidential palace in 1942



Puericultura (1942), Biblioteca Nacional

A group of local elementary school students visited Vargas in the Palacio Guanabara during his recovery from a recent car accident. The president suffered minor injuries and clearly maintained his affable personality during his brief convalescence. A caption appearing alongside the photograph revealed that the students had "ardently desired" to visit Vargas as an act of tribute for his continued role as the 'Friend of Children.'⁴⁶⁶ Standing at Vargas' bedside the children appeared stiff and uncomfortable with their surroundings. Most strikingly, the girl closest to the president gazed at the ceiling with her body turned away from the bed. Her expression and posture sharply contrasted other

⁴⁶⁶ "O Amigo das Crianças," *Puericultura*, ano I, no. 9 (June 1942), 5.

contemporary images that depict children with more jocular body language engaging with Vargas. Another girl at the center of the group also averted eye contact by staring at the floor. The two male students appeared to be the most interactive visitors although their positions behind the girls provided a spatial buffer between them and the president.

Unlike other images picturing Vargas among young Brazilians, this photograph conveyed a strikingly unnatural relationship. None of the children look into the camera, suggesting that it was a candid shot. During the thirties and forties, Vargas' propagandists tended to publicize imagery that depicted the leader in close physical proximity to children. Likewise, most candid photographs captured children in playful, smiling exchanges with Vargas. Conversely, this image revealed a moment in which Vargas' presence alienated a group of youngsters. The photograph countered the propaganda, both visual and textual, that emphasized Vargas' inherent rapport with and affinity for Brazil's children. Additionally, the photographers depicted the president in a vulnerable position, a side of Vargas' that sharply contrasted his role as head of an authoritarian dictatorship. Lying in bed recovering from minor injuries, Vargas appeared weak. His friendly demeanor with the children coupled with his vulnerability served to soften his public image and convey him as a human, relatable figure rather than the face of an oppressive regime.

The blatant lack of chemistry between Vargas and the schoolchildren also exposed the 'Friend of Children' persona as a cultural and political construction. Vargas' recovery was undoubtedly an inopportune time for a visit and his bedroom seemed an inappropriate venue for a photo shoot. However, the photograph illustrated an important alternative view of Vargas' pro-child personality and his role as a civilian dictator. It

evoked the idea that real Brazilian children were not universally complicit in the propagation of Vargas' 'Friend of Children' image. His day to day interactions with children varied and presented much more complexity than contemporary official sources suggested. Most significantly, the photograph illuminated Vargas' attraction and empathy for Brazilian youth as a well-designed form of statecraft that offered narrow insights into the president's public relations acumen.

The final image (Figure 6.4) depicts yet another dimension of Getúlio Vargas' 'Friend of Children' persona. At a 1939 "Parada da Raça" (Parade of the Brazilian Race), the president received an honorary diploma from a young "sportsman."

Figure 6.4: Vargas receiving an honorary diploma during a 1939 Youth Parade



Criança (September 1939), Biblioteca Nacional

Held in Rio de Janeiro's *Vasco de Gama* soccer stadium, the parade took place during the annual *Semana da Pátria* commemorations that incorporated civic gatherings and patriotic festivities. Beginning in 1938, similar events were staged throughout Brazil each year during the first week of September. At the commemoration in the capital, thousands of local children performed a variety of physical demonstrations including bicycle riding and choreographed marches for the president and other government and military representatives. Seemingly endless swarms of children packed the venue wearing school uniforms and waving miniature flags. Military and police bands played patriotic songs. Vargas and his cadre of civil and military officials observed the fanfare from an intricately decorated pavilion adjoining the playing field. The parade simultaneously celebrated Brazil and the *Estado Novo* as the purveyor of national unity.

Published in a 1939 edition of the *DNCr* parenting magazine, *Criança*, it appeared as part of montage of images taken during event. Adjacent photographs depicted uniformed children marching in formation, demonstrating what the caption identified as "civic emotions."⁴⁶⁷ On the surface, the photograph above captured a symbolic gesture between an adolescent boy and the president. However, it represented a more profound and intensifying connection between Vargas and the nation's youth in the late thirties. As an extension of Vargas' 'Friend of Children' persona, the president endorsed the *Organização Nacional de Juventude*, or National Youth Organization (*ONJ*), later called simply *Juventude Brasileira*, beginning in 1938. Although the tone and purposes of youth mobilization shifted throughout the *Estado Novo* years, children and adolescents remained central protagonists in Vargas' statecraft and civic rituals. The 1940 *DIP cartilha*, *Getúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças*, defined the national youth initiative as

⁴⁶⁷"Parada da Raça-Dia da Pátria," *Criança: revista para os pais* (September 1939), 15-16.

an effort to "synchronize the pulse of every patriots' heart" and as a "great, permanent civic celebration" in which the young united to defend Brazil.⁴⁶⁸ Youth-centered public events and propaganda also reinforced the regime's symbolic construction of a new body politic. Children exhibiting strong, healthy physiques, engaged in tightly coordinated movements embodied elite imaginings of the 'new Brazilian man.' Their regimented marches served as an allegory for the collective consciousness and social order the administration hoped to instill in the youngest generations. According to the *DIP*, the young participants understood that they forged a new destiny with each synchronized footstep.⁴⁶⁹

Inspired by similar youth movements emerging in Europe, the Brazilian variant originated in the early thirties within the nationalist and civic rituals of the *Ação Integralista*, or Integralist political party. In this context, the physical contributions of Brazilian youth, most notably through military drills, represented the revitalization and unification of the nation. Officials within the president's cabinet and within the Ministry of War also envisioned this discipline and training as a national defense strategy. Minister of Justice Francisco Campos formulated the founding principles and objectives for Brazil's National Youth Movement based strictly on European models, particularly those evolving in Germany, Italy, and Portugal. In his plan, children aged 8 to 18 would participate in military training and organized public demonstrations such as parades, flag drills, and choreographed exercise. Campos envisioned this combination of ritual and discipline as the foundation for a domestic militia comprised of adolescent 'soldiers.'

⁴⁶⁸ *DIP, Getúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças* (Rio de Janeiro: DIP, 1940), 13.

⁴⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 15.

Other *Estado Novo* officials offered dissenting perspectives on Campos' plan after its introduction in 1938. Minister of War Eurico Dutra viewed the organization of a youth paramilitary force as a threat to military hegemony and advised Vargas to concentrate on public education as a means of ordering Brazil's youngest citizens. Dutra argued against the rigid application of European models of youth mobilization as they proved incongruent with Brazil's social, cultural, and defense exigencies. Brazil, he contended, faced no permanent threat of war on the domestic front and faced more pressing problems such as widespread illiteracy.⁴⁷⁰ Minister of Education and Health Gustavo Capanema sided with Dutra and advised the president that the preparation of military reserve forces should remain under the auspices of the War Ministry rather than fall to the National Youth Organization (ONJ). Capanema proposed that youth mobilization be confined to physical, moral, and civic education.⁴⁷¹ Capanema's strategy ultimately won Vargas favor; however, the regime's interest in the *Juventude Brasileira* initiative waned by the early forties.

World War II raised fears about the radicalization of youth movements and the roles youth mobilization might play in fascist social control. Civilian officials voiced their concerns about the *ONJ's* transformation into a replica of Hitler's Youth Armies and sought to distance the Brazilian initiative as more of an educational campaign. However, some military officers heralded the Nazi youth effort and urged the President to increase his support for adolescent paramilitary training at home.⁴⁷² Brazil's youth movement

⁴⁷⁰ Correspondence Eurico Gaspar Dutra to President Getúlio Vargas, "Organização Nacional da Juventude," CPDOC, Gustavo Capanema Collection, GC1938.08.09, Rolo 51, foto 762-764.

⁴⁷¹ Correspondence Gustavo Capanema to President Getúlio Vargas, CPDOC, Gustavo Capanema Collection, CG1938.08.09, rolo 51, foto 818.

⁴⁷² For a detailed discussion of the debates surrounding the formation of Brazil's National Youth Movement in the context of WWII see, Chapter IV of eds., Simon Schwartzmann, *Tempos de Capanema* (São Paulo: Paz e Terra, 1984).

indeed borrowed certain symbols and rituals from its German counterpart. Young men and women wore uniforms and insignias, the Greek symbol Σ (sigma), and donned armbands in public commemorations and parades. Likewise, male and female participants were often segregated in marches and parades as they were in the Nazi context. Historian Helena Bomeny has analyzed the ways in which the division of activities between boys and girls within the youth movement echoed the contemporary gender division of labor and social mores. She argues that the organization's framers viewed youth military training as the duty of male participants while female adolescents would receive instruction in domestic life and scientific motherhood.⁴⁷³ In this way, the youth initiative mirrored the *DNCr's* puericulture campaign that reinforced social order by prescribing gendered structures for Brazilian parenthood and childhood. Boys and girls participated in public demonstrations in equal measure despite the gendered stipulations that theoretically shaped their obligations to the movement. *DNCr* print media and other child-focused publications produced by the regime routinely reproduced images of girls and boys engaging in patriotic festivities organized by the *ONJ*. The gender balance exhibited in public forums may have countered the stated objectives of the youth movement as Bomeny's work contends, but it ultimately conformed to the norms of child-centered statecraft during the *Estado Novo*.

The Brazilian movement, however, did not explicitly prohibit the participation of certain races, ethnicities, and/or classes as Hitler's Youth Army notoriously did. The

⁴⁷³ Helena Maria Bousquet Bomeny, *Organização Nacional da Juventude: a política da mobilização da juventude no Estado Novo* (Rio de Janeiro: CPDOC, 1981), 38.

photograph shown in Figure 6.5 captured a group of indigenous boys marching in a youth parade during the *Dia da Pátria* commemoration in Porto Alegre.⁴⁷⁴

Figure 6.5: Indigenous children participating in a youth parade in Porto Alegre during the *Estado Novo*



O Ministério de Agricultura no Governo Getúlio Vargas (1945), Arquivo Nacional

Despite more egalitarian participation standards and the apparent inclusion of non-white youth, government propaganda overwhelmingly showcased healthy, white youths as the predominant figures of the Brazilian Youth Movement. The image shown above suggested that, although non-white children engaged in civic demonstrations during the *Estado Novo*, they did so separately. Photographs published in *DNCr* print media and other official texts also depicted only white children marching in parades and performing exercises. The 1940 *cartilha*, *Getúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças* contained numerous photographs of youth parades, all of which present white children. The photograph shown in Figure 6.4 reinforced this trend by portraying a white boy as the liaison between Vargas and Brazil's youth. Thus, the exclusion of social groups occurred more tacitly through the standards and conventions imposed on youth

⁴⁷⁴ *O Ministério de Agricultura no Governo Getúlio Vargas* (Rio de Janeiro: Serviço de Documentação do Ministério de Agricultura, 1945), 375.

participants in public parades. In the early forties, the Ministry of War and *MES* published manuals that stipulated dress codes and hygiene requirements for all children and adolescents marching in parades. Participants were required to wear clean uniforms in good repair and exhibit sound personal hygiene.⁴⁷⁵ Whether or not local and state officials enforced such guidelines, the articulation of these standards revealed an implicit bias toward middle class and elite children whose physical health and *boa aparência*, good appearance, would uphold the *Estado Novo's* visions of Brazilian national identity.

Despite consistent ideological debate over its purposes and principles, youth mobilization complemented Vargas' political agenda and persona in the late thirties and early forties. Displaying the physical prowess of Brazilian youth became a key metaphor through which *Estado Novo* propagandists advanced national unity and exhibited the promise of 'order and progress.' Children and adolescents also embodied the energy and momentum the regime hoped to harness as a part of its economic development strategy. Thus, the emergence of the youth movement and Vargas' endorsement of it revealed another dimension to child-centered statecraft during the *Estado Novo* era. For Vargas and his administrators, the emphasis on Brazil's rising generation signified the fortification and preservation of the national security in both an economic and geopolitical sense. Images of youth marching in formation and parading through the streets waving the national flag demonstrated Brazil's domestic military preparedness, while simultaneously showcasing well-ordered civic engagement. Overall, the national youth movement demonstrated that elites and officials conceived children as more than demographic and labor resources in the mid-twentieth century. They strategically

⁴⁷⁵"Juventude Brasileira-ante-projeto para a sua organização-apresentado em comemoração do 1 lustro do Estado Novo-pelo official administrativo aristoteles Xavier do Ministério da Guerra" (Rio de Janeiro: Ministério da Guerra, 1940), 10. CPDOC, Gustavo Capanema Collection, GC996f, 10.

construed the young as defenders of national unity and civil stability in Brazil's ongoing development.

Brazil's youth movement and the civic demonstrations staged by its organizers tapered off by the mid-forties. The domestic militia envisioned by the organization's framers within the Ministry of War and Ministry of Education and Health never materialized. By the culmination of World War II, Brazil's child-focused officials and intellectuals had restructured their perceptions of children's contributions to the nation. As concern over national security waned these elites began to view upcoming generations in terms of their labor potential rather than their paramilitary service. As Chapter V illustrated children ministry officials and puericulturists collaborated to promote children's agricultural training as a means of spurring economic growth and to stem what they perceived as the adverse effects of rapid urbanization. By 1945 the emergence of rhetoric and imagery conveying children as farmers, ideal immigrants and domestic colonizers effectively replaced previous associations between youth and military mobilization. Eurico Dutra's ascent to the presidency in 1946 further solidified the shift in children's imagined roles that had begun during the *Estado Novo*. As Minister of War during the dictatorship, Dutra had opposed the *ONJ*, viewing it as a divisive force that could weaken the integrity of Brazil's military.⁴⁷⁶ Consequently, the post-dictatorship and post-war period witnessed new articulations of children's roles as citizens and symbols of national identity.

As they had done with other *Estado Novo*-era projects, propagandists credited Vargas as the sole author of Brazil's national youth movement.⁴⁷⁷ Yet, save for numerous

⁴⁷⁶Schwartzmann, et al., *Tempos de Capanema*, 15.

⁴⁷⁷DIP, *Getúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças*, 14.

public appearances at youth parades and his rhetorical support of youth mobilization in the late thirties and early forties, Vargas had little direct involvement with the organization. Despite the *ONJ*'s limited impacts and duration, Vargas's symbolic role as the commander of Brazil's evolving youth militia ultimately complemented and expanded his 'Father of the Poor' and 'Friend of Children' personas. Imagery associating Vargas with Brazilian youth proliferated during wartime and ultimately showcased his legitimacy, as well as the state's, as protector of the Brazilian "family." For example, government-sponsored parenting magazines, *Criança* and *Puericultura*, frequently featured photographs that captured children marching and performing military drills while the head of state and his top military personnel looked on approvingly. Such visual propaganda simultaneously portrayed Vargas as the defender of the nation against foreign antagonism in the present and as guardian and friend of Brazil's future generations. Again, the propagation of this side of his public persona served to quell public discontent with the *Estado Novo*'s oppressive means of social control. Although it was highly publicized, Vargas endorsement of the youth movement did not become a formidable part of his overall legacy. Vargas' image as the impassioned, civilian patriarch of the Brazilian people ultimately overshadowed his engagement in this particular military endeavor and his role in authoritarian social control during the dictatorship.

Conclusion

Getúlio Vargas death by suicide in 1954 dramatically punctuated a period of child-focused policymaking and statecraft that had persisted for over three decades. Apart from the political chaos that preceded and followed his passing, the nation endured

the loss of its symbolic 'father.' Vargas and his administrators had carefully conceived and propagated his paternalistic image using various forms of public media such as magazines, pamphlets, exhibitions, civic celebrations, and radio programs. Not surprisingly, the most patent examples of this style of statecraft originate in official sources. Specifically, the Department of Press and Propaganda's *cartilha*, *Getúlio Vargas: o amigo das crianças* and the government-sponsored parenting magazines, *Criança* and *Puericultura* provide clear examples of how Vargas' pro-child façade emerged and transformed from 1930 to 1945. These print media sources, intended to educate Brazil's literate population about Vargas' pro-child platform and garner support for his political agenda, featured compelling visual and textual propaganda. Close analysis of the photographs and language found in these volumes reveal insights into Vargas' public persona as the so-called 'friend' and 'father' of the nation's young.

Containing both staged and candid interactions between Vargas and the nation's children, the 1940 *cartilha* exposes key aspects of the processes of national identity construction, development, and state consolidation. Likewise, the pamphlet reveals the ways in which *Estado Novo* propagandists utilized child-focused iconography to convey political prerogatives. Specifically, the collection is a window into the state's idealized conceptualizations of modern Brazilian society in terms of region, race, ethnicity, class, and gender. The *cartilha* exemplifies the contemporary use of children as visual and rhetorical markers of an imagined Brazil, one conjured by the same medical professionals and government officials who comprised the vanguard of child-centered politics in the thirties and forties. An image of Vargas holding an indigenous baby, for instance, illuminated the compelling power dynamic between the state and Brazil's Indian

population. The photograph characterized Vargas as the 'father' and 'friend' of all Brazilian children regardless of racial ethnic, and/or regional origins. Seth Garfield's work also revealed that the photograph was further circulated to bolster Vargas' image as a trustworthy leader among disconnected indigenous groups. Ultimately, the photograph generated support for the *Estado Novo's* "March to the West" development plan that depended on both the complicity of indigenous groups inhabiting the hinterland and on the co-optation of Brazil's youngest generations as future laborers, immigrants, and colonizers.

Other photographs contained in the 1940 *cartilha* elucidate the nature of Vargas' relationship with the nation's children and the ways propagandists wielded children as allegories for the social values and norms propagated by the *Estado Novo*. For example, Figure 6.2 provides an insight into the ways in which Vargas-era officials conceptualized children's gender roles. Vargas' endorsement of *puericultura* as a means of improving Brazil's demographic profile and advancing development also clearly established a division of labor between male and female children. Adherence to puericultural practice entailed women's return and confinement to the domestic realm and required men, particularly husbands and doctors, to oversee the process of child rearing. The photograph depicting a passive, dependent young girl and a self-reliant young boy correlated with puericultural principles that ascribed paternal authority over women and children and positioned them as subordinates in the Brazilian gender hierarchy.

Figures 6.3 and 6.4 provide intriguing counterpoints to the decades-long conceit that characterized Vargas as the 'friend' and 'father' of Brazil's youngest generations.

Although propagandists did not intend for such photographs to undermine Vargas paternalistic authority, certain candid interactions caught on film cast doubt on the authenticity of his natural rapport with children. These kinds of photographs also exposed the ways in which contemporary officials staged interactions between Vargas and groups of youngsters. A scene captured in the president's bedroom (Figure 6.3) depicted an awkward exchange between Vargas and local schoolchildren. The children's body language and disengaged appearance called the integrity of Vargas' persona into question. Likewise, the image of Vargas observing a youth rally represented an illusory exchange between the head of state and a young boy. Vargas' symbolic role as the commander of a burgeoning youth militia and the militarization of Brazil's youngest generations seemed at odds with images of him as an avuncular, civilian leader that had been propagated since his assumption of power in 1930. In reality Vargas had little direct involvement in the foundation and activities of Brazil's short-lived youth military organization. Staged moments captured on film portrayed Vargas as highly-engaged with the National Youth Movement and with the military's agenda in general. However, he and his key ministry officials remained ambivalent about the purpose of the *ONJ* and support for youth militarization quickly dissipated in the post-war period.

Child-centered images provide unique windows with which to understand the construction of Brazilian national identity, as well as the construction of the myriad political personas attributed to Getúlio Vargas. Candid and staged photographs elucidate Vargas' public relations acumen and offer insights into his personal life. Most significantly, such imagery showcases the role visual propaganda played in shaping Vargas public image and exhibiting his political agenda as it evolved from 1930 to 1945.

The proliferation of government-sponsored photographs and publications demonstrates the centrality of public media in twentieth-century Brazilian politics and culture. Such evidence challenges scholars to separate the myth from the man and seek to analyze propaganda as only one dimension of Vargas' legacy.

Although much scholarship focuses on Vargas, his image, and his era, historians have yet to unravel his ties to one of Brazil's most deplorable child welfare institutions. Vargas endorsed the organization of the *Serviço de Assistência aos Menores, Minor's Assistance Service (SAM)* in 1941. The *SAM*, initiated in the capital, was conceived to coordinate the education, protection, and reform of abandoned and delinquent minors. However, the institution quickly transformed into a youth penal colony, rumored to not only exploit and mistreat children, but churn out a generation of criminals. Despite mounting critiques from educators, parents, and social reformers, the *SAM* remained in operation until 1964 when it was replaced by *FUNBEM*. Vargas' relationship to the *SAM* and the institution's implications for twentieth-century child welfare in Brazil have not been fully explored. Institutional documents provide little evidence of the day to day operations of the *SAM* and the atrocities endured by the children who passed through its doors. Further archival research, complemented by oral testimonies, would provide a much needed counterpoint to more favorable interpretations of Vargas as the 'friend' and 'father' to the nation's children.

CONCLUSION

Within a few steps of the *Palácio de Gustavo Capanema* in downtown Rio de Janeiro, two young Brazilians lurk in the shadows. They are quite unlike other youngsters in the area seen selling candies to passersby. A pair, this boy and girl present a striking image standing several meters high with stoic expressions. They represent an archetype of youth formulated over a half-century ago rather than the reality ambling about below them. Like other historical monuments found in downtown Rio de Janeiro, the *Monumento á Juventude* (Monument to Youth) exudes the aesthetics and imaginations of the past. Ironically, its designers regarded the stone structure as a symbol of Brazil's future.



Figure c.1: *Monumento á Juventude*, Rio de Janeiro
Photographed by author

In 1944, Minister of Education and Health, Gustavo Capanema, inaugurated the Monument to Youth in front of the recently-constructed *MES* headquarters. The building and its surrounding courtyard represented the vanguard of modern Brazilian art and architecture. Famed French architect Charles LeCorbusier along with Brazil's own Oscar Niemeyer and Lúcio Costa had designed the ministry building in 1936. As the primary beneficiaries of the *MES* reforms in the *Estado Novo* era, children were logical accessories to the building's ideological symbolism. In fact, *MES* officials hoped the homage to Brazilian youth would capture *brasilidade* eternally "in development." By monumentalizing children whose faces and bodies remained in formation, designers projected an image of Brazil that only future generations could determine.

The Monument to Youth emerged a few years after a highly publicized debate between artists, politicians, and other influential elites over another *MES* monument. That sculpture, a rendering of the imagined 'Brazilian Man,' never graced the *MES* gardens due to intense disagreement over his racial identity.⁴⁷⁸ Minister Capanema proposed a miscegenated type whose qualities represented a racially evolved Brazilian not yet in existence in the late 1930s. As historian Jerry Davila's 2003 work argues, contemporary officials and social thinkers generally assumed the Brazilian man embodied in stone would reflect European ancestry rather than indigenous or African.⁴⁷⁹ A version of the statue sculpted by artist Celso Antônio created controversy as it portrayed a rural, mixed-race, and physically unfit man. After weeks of debate within

⁴⁷⁸ The Brazilian Man statue was to be one of four monuments *Estado Novo* officials projected to decorate the grounds of the new *MES* building. Monuments to the Brazilian Man, Woman, Adolescence, and *Moça*, or Young Woman, were slated to be installed. See DIP, *Exposição do Estado Novo* (Rio de Janeiro: DIP, 1939), 23.

⁴⁷⁹ For a complete discussion of the Brazilian Man Monument controversy and contemporary ideologies of race and national identity see, Davila, *Diploma of Whiteness*, Chapter I.

elite circles and the Rio de Janeiro media, Capanema abandoned the effort to forge the Brazilian man from stone. However, he rearticulated his vision in 1944, this time selecting younger subjects to depict an evolving national image. The tense battle over Brazil's imagined racial typology in 1938 directly affected the commissioning of the *MES* children's monument.

Bruno Giorgi, a sculptor from São Paulo, began drafting images of the Monument to Youth in 1942. His initial drawings (Figure c.2) depicted more adult figures rather than the younger adolescents he eventually rendered from clay. However, Capanema desired children on the cusp on adolescence to capture the ideas of growth and transformation. Unlike the fixed racial and social identities that could be ascribed to adult subjects like the 'Brazilian Man', the children he proposed represented nebulous, yet undefined characteristics.

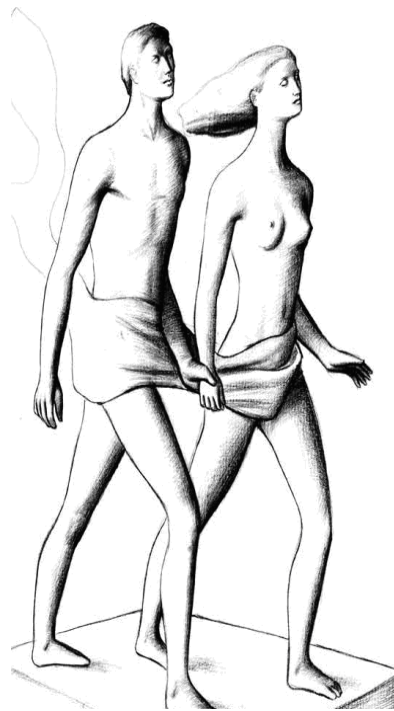


Figure c.2: A sketch by sculptor Bruno Giorgi-Monumento á Juventude (1942)
Gustavo Capanema Collection, GCfoto499, CPDOC

In the final statue (pictured in Figure c.1), the boy and girl's bodies appeared to have not fully matured, signaled by budding breasts, undefined musculature, and shorter statures. Healthy and strong, the children embodied the ideals puericulturists and *Estado Novo*-era officials envisaged for Brazil's upcoming generations.

Capanema himself commented at length on the purpose and symbolism of the Monument to Youth at its inauguration in 1944. He argued that the monument did not represent any group, political party, corporation, or even the youth of a particular country. Rather, he hoped the statue would not provoke the "always unfortunate" ideological quibbles over objects of art.⁴⁸⁰ He compared the Monument to Youth's ambiguous identity to what he perceived as the U.S. Statue of Liberty's neutral appearance and pointed out that the children did not bear uniforms or insignias of any kind. To him, they simply embodied eternal childhood, a lifestage he associated with "poetry, enthusiasm, and hope." The *MES* celebrated the addition of the monument to its grounds on April 19, 1944, sharing the date with President Getúlio Vargas' birthday. On that day Gustavo Capanema imparted the following words to a crowd of fellow officials and onlookers:

The monument, whose foundations are laid today, is first and foremost a work of art; that is to say, a pure work, whose symbolism is very accessible to popular sensibilities, unaffiliated with any movement, or any institution. It is a symbol of life and spirit, a symbol of beauty, of youth, of hope, and of faith.⁴⁸¹

A Rio de Janeiro's women's newspaper, *Momento Feminino*, also covered the implications of the Monument to youth three years after its installation. Although its

⁴⁸⁰ Gustavo Capanema, "Monumento á Juventude" (Abril 19, 1944), CPDOC, Gustavo Capanema Collection, GC Rolo 7: foto 743.

⁴⁸¹ *Ibid.*

contributors openly criticized the legacy of the Vargas dictatorship, the article praised the *MES* for promoting such a paragon of true Brazilian art. The author observed that *cariocas*, natives of Rio de Janeiro, had generally ignored the sculptures scattered throughout the city's plazas, but found that the Monument to youth finally piqued public interest in national artwork. According to the article, the children genuinely represented Brazil's young with their "feet firmly planted in the soil, heads held high, pure and human sentiments, and trust in their nation's destiny."⁴⁸²

Whether or not the Monument to youth raised public awareness of Brazilian children and their contributions to the nation as Minister Capanema had hoped, it undoubtedly embodied the spirit of contemporary artistic expression. Likewise, the monument's ultimate appearance reflected an ideological compromise between artists and government officials. Capanema's experience with the negative publicity and political tension that surrounded the Brazilian Man statue clearly shaped his formulation of the Monument to youth. As a result the children do not exude any particular aspect of *brasilidade* in their expressions or physical forms. Present-day onlookers may interpret the monument's artistic qualities as uniquely Brazilian and evocative of a generation of twentieth-century artists. However, the complex political and ideological debates that influenced its ultimate form typify larger history of how elite ideals and institutions shaped national identity around the image of the child in the thirties and forties.

The Monument to youth also provides an appropriate metaphor for understanding child-centered national identity construction and policymaking in twentieth-century Brazil. In the sculpture, as in the realm of child health and welfare discourse, children symbolized an ideal imagined by elites preoccupied with defining 'modern' Brazil..

⁴⁸² "Monumento artístico," *Momento Feminino*, no. 7(14 November 1947), np.

Heavily influenced by European and North American ideals, contemporary doctors, intellectuals, and government officials envisioned Brazilian children as both real and symbolic fulcrums of modern prosperity. For these nation-builders, Brazil's youngest generations could propel the nation in both real and symbolic ways. Although many of the child-focused institutions and policies that evolved over the three decades examined in this work made few lasting impacts, the proliferation of images and rhetoric demonstrate a consistent interconnectivity between the concepts 'child' and 'nation.'

For a specific group of medical professionals, social reformers, and government officials calling themselves *puericultores*, Brazil's ascent to modernity revolved around resolving what they perceived as enduring crises of child health and welfare. Although foreign standards of living and cultural norms influenced their approaches and self-conceptualizations, they faced environmental, infrastructural, and social challenges that were unique to post-colonial Brazil. In particular, a persistently high infant death rate, hovering around 200 (per 1,000 live births), disqualified Brazil from claiming its place in the modern 'concert of nations' that included Western Europe and the United States. Although precise estimations of nationwide infant mortality remained unavailable for much of the twentieth century, puericulturists reasoned that if medical science and the state could curtail this perceived demographic crisis and its related population health problems Brazil would advance both economically and culturally. Thus, infant mortality and the debates surrounding its resolution provided elites with a conceptual framework for understanding Brazil's deficiencies and imagining its future. The pursuit of demographic stability also thrust the salvation and valuation of the young into the state's

political agenda and into the consciousness of elite medical professionals and social thinkers.

Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's capital until 1960, quickly became the proving ground upon which elite social reformers experimented with new approaches to ensuring healthy procreation and childhood. By the early thirties, *puericultura*, or puericulture, became part of the federal government's geopolitical agenda that sought to integrate the nation through the standardization of child health and rearing practices, as well as through the expansion of medical services and infrastructure. As both a medical specialization and a health policy approach, puericulture served as an ideological and practical sidestep to the genetic determinism inherent in contemporary eugenics theory, which had so heavily influenced early twentieth-century Brazilian intellectuals. While some medical professionals continued to use science to justify racist social policies, others downplayed the role of genetics in shaping future generations and began to articulate more egalitarian views the relationship between race and population health. Using parenting magazines as a forum, puericulturists even warned Brazilian parents against raising children to tolerate racial prejudice, arguing that such social divisions hindered Brazil's progress.

Bringing their theory into practice, doctors judging "robust baby" competitions in the twenties, thirties, and forties privileged overall health over a contestant's race, ethnicity, and class. Not only did children from different races and ethnicities participate alongside one another, but evidence suggests that doctors often selected non-white contestants as winners; a trend that distinguished Brazilian baby contests from the segregated competitions held contemporaneously in the United States. However, visual propaganda and print media sources crafted by government officials in the thirties and

forties continued to favor white children as the aesthetic archetype of Brazilianness. White babies and children exclusively graced the covers of government-sponsored parenting magazines in this period. Finally, puericulturists exhibited their more egalitarian visions of race and population health by championing the expansion of state-sponsored pre-and post-natal health services into the largely non-white populations concentrated in impoverished urban zones and remote regions of Brazil's interior. Although the standardization of child and maternal health care envisioned by these medical professionals proved untenable by mid-century, the puericulture and its adherents can be credited with the foundation of Brazil's first national child health and welfare institution, the *DNCr*, in 1940.

Part of the institutional juggernaut of Getúlio Vargas' *Estado Novo* regime (1937-1945), the *DNCr* evolved out of a unique coalescence of medical and political prerogatives that had been set into motion in the early thirties. Like other federal institutions created by this regime, the department aimed to standardize and expand state services and manage resource allocation for child protection and health care. The puericulturists directing the department initiated a public education campaign that consisted of public exhibitions and print media that they hoped would disseminate their prescriptions for healthy reproduction and child-rearing across the country. The *DNCr* also aimed to expand medical services and infrastructure as a means of modernizing and unifying Brazil's disparate populations. Despite concerted efforts on behalf of network of federal and local advocates, both the *DNCr* educational and infrastructural campaigns fell short of their intended objectives as financial support dissipated and logistical difficulties hindered the advancement of campaigns across Brazil's expansive territory. Parents and

children in Rio de Janeiro and its surrounding suburbs received the majority of *DNCr* services and educational materials. The department, however, provided a foundational model for federal child health and welfare management in the twentieth-century. In many ways, the *DNCr*'s organizational structure was ahead of its time. Puericulturists' visions for comprehensive, modern public health infrastructure far exceeded the manpower and funding allocated to the department in the forties. Consequently, public exhibitions and departmental publications emerged and became key forums by which puericulturists figuratively "mapped" the modern child health and welfare services onto the Brazilian landscape.

Resource and personnel limitations at the institutional level did not prevent child-focused medicine and politics from transforming Brazil's youngest generations into key symbols of national identity. Within the carefully-constructed statecraft and propaganda created during Getúlio Vargas' reign (1930-1945 and 1951-1954), the child and the idea of a new Brazilian generation flourished. In theory, Brazil's imagined "century of the child" had begun with the dawn of the twentieth century, but Vargas and the well-designed persona he embodied provided a substantive platform for child-centered nation-making. With the rise of the *Estado Novo* dictatorship in 1937, Vargas assumed the fictive role of the nation's patriarch, known popularly as the 'Father of the Poor' and the 'Friend of Children.' These façades lent themselves well to emergent child-focused social reform and medicine. The convergence of puericulture, Vargas' paternalistic image, and the regime's development agenda proved a fertile ground for children to become the predominant icons of *brasilidade*. Not only did a federally-endorsed annual holiday venerate the young beginning in 1937, but a host of artwork, public exhibitions, print

media, political propaganda, educational campaigns, and advertisements characterized the child as *the* essence of an emerging, modern Brazil. According to the images propagated by federal officials and medical professionals, particularly those within the *DNCr*, the rising generation would embody the health and civic spirit necessary to fulfill the promise of "Order and Progress" emblazoned on the national flag.

During the *Estado Novo* years, officials not only perceived children as idealized representatives of national character, but also as essential commodities. *DNCr* officials, along with Ministry of Agriculture representatives, envisioned children as key mechanisms in the exploitation of Brazil's natural resources in both the present and future contexts. Healthy, well-parented children represented a dynamic labor force that was not only capable of working and settling untapped swaths of land, but offered a viable alternative to Brazil's centuries-long reliance on foreign manpower. Puericulturists disseminated the slogan, "children are our best immigrants," as a part of a larger initiative to spur hygiene and agricultural education among the young. Publicized images of children as little farmers and colonizers likewise underscored the state's development prerogatives. With the initiation of agriculture clubs and schools, *Estado Novo*-era officials and medical professionals demonstrated that they had moved beyond abstract understandings of how children's health and welfare contributed to national security and economic prosperity. Although child-focused agricultural programs proved unsustainable and urbanization continued to accelerate in the mid-twentieth century, this model of development *sui generis* advanced the idea that the keys to unlocking the nation's potential lay within its borders. Yet, federally-endorsed development initiatives disregarded the presence and potential contributions of Brazil's indigenous groups in

favor of an imagined generation of native immigrants. The continued absence of indigenous children from the body of representations conjured by the *DNCr* and other government agencies revealed the aesthetic and cultural boundaries of the modern national identity. The indigenous, as well as many other racial and ethnic groups that comprised the urban and rural masses, remained on the periphery of the national identity construction process. Not surprisingly, these groups also often occupied spaces considered 'outside' the state's institutional reach and their continued detachment from medical, social welfare, and educational services served as reminders that Brazil had yet to fully modernize.

Brazil's figurative "century of the child" eclipsed with little fanfare. The cherubic faces that had once predominated in the media and in various public forums vanished and had been replaced by more sinister images of child poverty, violence, and exploitation. In the latter part of the twentieth century, uneven development fomented by a neoliberal economic climate, as well as the process of re-democratization following two decades of military dictatorship (1964-1985), exacerbated many of the health and welfare problems facing Brazil's youngest citizens. Just a few blocks from the Monument to youth in downtown Rio de Janeiro another piece of public artwork projects a contrasting image of modern Brazilian children. The body outlines of eight street children slain in the 1993 Candelária Massacre adorn the plaza in front of one of the city's most ornate colonial churches (see Figure c.3).

Figure c.3: Candelária Victims' Memorial, Rio de Janeiro



Photo courtesy of Glen Goodman

Mourners gather each year at the site to remember the victims who were, according to witnesses, shot by off-duty police officers. A survivor of the incident eventually perpetrated one of city's most notorious crimes that involved the hijacking of a public bus in 2000. His life story and footage from the actual hijacking were later captured in the award-winning documentary, *Ônibus 174*.

Ultimately, the massacre, its memorial, and the film, all of which have received significant international attention, have transformed the ways in which Brazilian children represent the nation. Unlike the pro-child symbolism crafted in the first half of the twentieth century, much of the child-centered iconography of the new millennium offers a dystopic impression of Brazilian society and culture. Photographs of young drug users, criminals, street gangs, and prostitutes have become the archetypes of childhood in

twenty-first-century Brazil. A recent exception to this characterization emerged in 2009 during Brazil's bid to host the 2016 Summer Olympics. Images of Brazilian child athletes proliferated in advertising campaigns that aimed to showcase the nation as a bastion of health and energy, an ideal venue for an international sports competition. Whether the apparent upsurge in child-centered media effectuates changes in child health and welfare policy remains to be seen. The 2016 Olympics will certainly shed a light on the nation, bringing to the forefront its accomplishments and shortcomings in the realm of child welfare. Future generations of historians will bear the responsibility for analyzing the impacts of this symbolic return to "pro-child" nation-making as it unfolds in twenty-first-century Brazil.

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