

RUTH CORRÊA LEITE CARDOSO
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By Gilberto Velho (UFRJ/PPGAS)

Dr. Ruth Cardoso's academic work was always related to concerns with social policy of one kind or another. She carried out research on the minority of Japanese origin and its incorporation into the state of São Paulo, maintaining a long term interest in cultural and ethnic minorities. Together with Dr. Eunice Durham she introduced the study of urban anthropology into the university of São Paulo. She was concerned to understand the diversity of different urban areas and communities, and carried out systematic research on the social conditions of the urban poor. She also coordinated projects on young people, processes of social change and conflict, and new forms of social networks and communication. Without theoretical arrogance she was permanently active in discussing questions of method and research. Like most of her generation she participated in groups for the study of Marxism, yet she also was a careful and systematic reader of the work of Lévi-Strauss and of other anthropological traditions, not least the Chicago School. During her long career as a teacher at the University of São Paulo, she promoted interdisciplinary research. Trained as an anthropologist, she spent a long period in the Department of Political Science and her dialogue with sociologists and political scientists was intense.

Combining research and teaching she wielded great influence in Brazilian social science from the 1950s through the 1990s. This was made the greater by her true gift as a superb academic supervisor, overseeing a vast number of theses, coordinating and researching in a wide range of research groups, seminars, congresses and other academic meetings. She was particularly active in the Brazilian Anthropological Association (ABA), the National Association of Post Graduate Research Institutions in the Social Sciences (ANPOCS), and the Brazilian Society for the Progress of Science (SBPC).

Ruth Cardoso dedicated a great part of her career to the study of social movements, carrying out research on the dynamics of contemporary society. She was among the most important social scientists to have turned her attention to feminism and gender studies, contributing to the legitimation of this field of study. One of the basic characteristics of her academic reputation was her interest in world issues, fighting against prejudice and dogmatic positions. While she attached great importance to the debate with her colleagues

and her students, her kindness and understanding did not impede the firm defence of her points of view. I had the opportunity to see her participate in heated debates without ever losing her composure and elegance. Together with her husband, sociologist Fernando Henrique Cardoso, she visited universities and research centres all over the world. She was visiting professor in diverse institutions within Brazil and abroad. The course which she gave in Brazil's National Museum at the beginning of the 1980s is still remembered.

Ruth Cardoso was renowned for opening doors and creating spaces of dialogue. And it was for this reason that she maintained a position of leadership in the university; always discrete but with carefully pondered positions. Her many students came under her influence not just academically but in personal terms also. This meant learning to respect other people's opinions and positions and a belief in the importance of collective action which could lead to meetings, dialogues and common discoveries without ever crushing their individuality.

This accumulated social and academic capital accompanied Ruth Cardoso on the other side of her existential trajectory. Her husband followed a political career which led to two periods in office as president of the Brazilian republic. During the first years she remained active both in the University of São Paulo and the Brazilian Centre for Analysis and Planning (CEBRAP), where she played a key role. As wife of the president of the Republic she reinvented the role of "First Lady" through her work in the area of social policy through her presidency of the Community Solidarity programme (*Programa Comunidade Solidária*), which concentrated its efforts on the promotion of citizenship. Moving away from paternalism and clientism, she encouraged creativity and innovation. When Fernando Henrique Cardoso left the presidency in 2002, she continued to work for the Non Governmental Organization *Communitas*, which she founded in 2000 to lend continuity to the Community Solidarity programme. She also participated actively in initiatives designed to promote the democratic fight against inequality, corruption and the abuse of power. In this way, Ruth Cardoso led an exemplary life, suddenly and shockingly cut short. Her work and her example remain as points of reference not only for our social science community but also for the Brazilian nation as a whole.

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