

The Sequences of a Brazilian Political Sociology*

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ABSTRACT

Progression of a Brazilian Political Sociology

By analytically reconstituting how the ideas of Oliveira Vianna were received in later research by Victor Nunes Leal, Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz, and Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco, the article discusses the formation, from the 1920s to the 1970s, of a watershed in Brazilian political sociology oriented towards the investigation of conflict between the private and public orders in the specific configuration of political domination in Brazil.

Key words: Brazilian sociology; public and private; political domination

RÉSUMÉ

Suites d'une Sociologie Politique Brésilienne

Reprenant analytiquement l'accueil des idées de l'auteur Oliveira Vianna dans des travaux de recherche de Victor Nunes Leal, Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz et Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco, on examine dans cet article la formation, entre les années 1920 et 1970, d'un courant de la sociologie politique brésilienne orienté vers la recherche du conflit entre les ordres privé et public dans la configuration particulière de la dominance politique au Brésil.

Mots-clé: sociologie brésilienne; public et privé; dominance politique

"What I would expect for Brazil would be a supplementary activity to this pleasant toil of our social philosophers. It would be, to those who relish investigation, a more frequent appeal to the scientific methods of research, a more systematic preoccupation with objective problems".

(Francisco José de Oliveira Vianna, 1991)

"In general, the connection between scientific knowledge and the philosophy that supports it does not matter to the specialist who has lost this memory in the labyrinths of his training".

(Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco, 1970)

One of the most tenacious intellectual constructions in Brazilian social thought is the entanglement between the public and the private, viewed as social orders and as distinct principles of orientation

* This study had the support of the Fundação Universitária José Bonifácio.

of conduct, as a marker of the political culture, society, and state present in Brazil since Portuguese colonization. And as one of the main guidelines which, either permanently or intermittently, connects it to the social science produced after its institutionalization, especially in the tradition which emphasizes research into the social bases of national political life, its rural roots, and its lasting influence on the urban life which was then emerging.¹ *Populações Meridionais do Brasil* ([Southern Populations of Brazil] 1920), by Oliveira Vianna, is paradigmatic in the sense that it proved to be capable of cognitively questioning diverse later studies, even though many of these differed radically from its original political meaning. These questionings may be identified on both the theoretical-methodological and substantive planes. The former because, while manifesting a wider critique of the *status quo* of the First Republic regarding the lack of connection between “transplanted” liberal institutions and the “unique” Brazilian reality, Oliveira Vianna’s first essay advocates the thesis that the bases and dynamics of political institutions can be found in social life. Thus, in addition to his conviction of the need for an “objective” and “scientific” knowledge of the social (Bastos, 1993; Bresciani, 2005), there is also his consistent but controversial defence of the logical precedence of sociology over politics or of *homo sociologicus* over *homo politicus* (Werneck Vianna, 1993:373; Brandão, 2001). And, substantively, because his thesis on the peculiarity of the relationship between the public and the private, according to which the excessive growth of the private order and its historical supremacy over the public order are not only central elements of the rural constitution of Brazilian society but also represent persistent predicaments for its modernization, found distinct forms in later intellectual production.

This article deals precisely with the reception of Oliveira Vianna’s ideas in the production of the social sciences as institutionalized in university courses since the 1930’s, or more precisely in its role in the constitution of the “intellectual context” or “lexicon” of one of its traditions.² *Populações Meridionais do Brasil* is considered a starting point for the creation of a research agenda which, more than simply relating politics to society, attempts to specify the social bases and social dynamics of politics deriving from the rural formation of Brazil, and which precisely for this reason we are here calling “political sociology”.³ Notwithstanding recent discussion on the role of Oliveira Vianna as the “pioneer” of this tendency (Silva, 2002), since it is concerned with the constitution of an “authoritarian ideology” of the state, its possibly cognitive influence in the social sciences (although noted long ago by Santos, 1978) remained devoid of more consistent analytical treatment.⁴ In this article, we shall try to show firstly that *Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto* [*Coronelismo**, Hoe, and Vote], of 1949, by Victor Nunes Leal; “*Política, Ascensão Social e Liderança num Povoado Baiano*” [Politics, Social Mobility, and Leadership in a Bahia Village], of 1962, and *O Mandonismo Local na Vida Política Brasileira e Outros Ensaio* [Local Mandonismo in Brazilian Politics and Other Essays], of 1976, by Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz (the latter collecting studies done since the 1950’s); and *Homens Livres na Ordem Escravocrata* [Free Men in the Slave Order], of 1964, by Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco, are paradigmatic in this regard; and, secondly, that when considered together, from an analytical standpoint, these studies create, in their dialogue with Oliveira Vianna’s essay, a tradition in Brazilian political sociology.

For analytical purposes, one of the outstanding theses in *Populações Meridionais do Brasil* (not always emphasized, even though diverse aspects of it have been dealt with⁵) is the specific form in which the constitution of society produced political domination in Brazil. This was not directly determined by the class struggle embedded in the social organization of production but, in the absence of this specific form of “social solidarity” among us, it was determined in the conflict between the public and the private.⁶ In other words, for Oliveira Vianna the key to the sociological understanding of political domination was in the conflict between public and private, inasmuch as they were distinct social orders competing with one another and guided by their own principles of orientation of conducts which were only indirectly associated with the economic relations, and whose historical entanglement caused the direct, personal, and violent character of political relations. The basis of this specific form of political domination in Brazil, reiterated throughout the

* Translator’s note – Generally understood as the local rule of agrarian landowners.

constitution of the society, was the historical ambiguity which makes us unique: the same processes that made the relations of solidarity between the “seignorial aristocracy” and the “rural populace” *fragile, loose, unstable, and unnecessary* on the economic plane (and secondarily on the military or religious ones), nevertheless strengthened them for political purposes.

The origin of this ambiguity of Brazilian social solidarity was in the social forms of agrarian landownership in Brazil since Portuguese colonization. It is worth mentioning that, in his essay, Oliveira Vianna employs the notion in a normative sense (the capacity of free association) and in a more descriptive sense (forms of intersubjective identification and interaction). Their enormous magnitude, territorial dispersion, and autonomous features moulded the great landed estates as the gravitational center of colonial society, whose centripetal force caused, on the one hand, the simplification of the global social structure of society, hindering the dynamism of commercial, industrial, and urban centers, with their distinctive social actors (especially an autonomous and independent middle class, which was a crucial social base for the associational vigor of Anglo-Saxon societies and was used as a contrast to Brazilian social constitution); and, on the other hand, defined, together with slavery, the mild tropical climate, and the abundance of privately controlled land not directly associated with agrarian-exporting production based on slave labor, the very quality of the relations of social solidarity within the rural domains.

These same processes supposedly produced the organization of the diverse rural social groups that were formally free and under the leadership of the great landowner in the “rural clan”; not only the unity of society emerging since colonial times but also, and for that very reason, the “motive power” of all our political history and “the first reason for its dynamic and evolution” (Vianna, 1973:139). With no one contesting their power, the rural clans found spaces in the incipient public domain of Brazilian society and formulated and promoted programs that manifested their specific interests. This is a mechanism called “white anarchy” and it expresses the capacity of private appropriation of public institutions which ends up distorting and redefining its meaning, as shown in the essay in relation to justice, military recruitment, and local corporations. In these conditions, the fragility and partiality to which public institutions were subjected allowed diverse subaltern social groups to take refuge under the “tutelary power” of the rural clans. And it is exactly for this reason that Oliveira Vianna argues that what “[...] neither the territorial domain nor the economic domain can create in a stable and similar manner to what happens in the West, political patronage ends up doing, that is, the *solidarity between the inferior classes and the rural nobility*. We saw them disconnected; now we see them dependent and connected” (*idem*:148, emphasis in the original).

These are, in general, the social bases of political domination in Brazil for Oliveira Vianna. They are the real governing “laws” of the constitution and organization of Brazilian society (*idem*:241), which led to the difficulty or even impediment in creating instances of free association between individuals concerned for the public interest. In other words, the role performed by the self-sufficient great landed estate in the constitution of Brazilian society led to a restriction of associational practices to the private, domestic, and family-related sphere, decisively hindering the constitution of collective actions around vaster common interests, which Oliveira Vianna styled a social “unsolidarity” [*insolidarismo*] (*idem*:155).⁷ This occurred in such a way that *nation, classes, political parties, corporations, unions*, and other social forms of association were “among us either mere artificial and exogenous entities or simply doctrinal aspirations, with no effective influence on the subconscious psychology of the people” (*idem*:242). Thus, because of the threat of fragmentation of society deriving from the very process of social constitution, it became imperative to reorganize, strengthen, and centralize the state as the only actor regarded as capable of politically weakening the agrarian oligarchies and their corrupting effect on public freedoms and, in this way, correcting the flaws of our social constitution and establishing new institutional relations in society. It is, without a doubt, a normative but also teleological proposition, as if the construction of the state were nothing more than a necessary step in a developmental progression predetermined by social impasses arising out of the constitution of Brazilian society.

Tackling phenomena like “*coronelismo*”, “*mandonismo*”^{*}, and “personal domination” from a more defined historical and empirical perspective, studies by Victor Nunes Leal, Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz, and Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco analyze the political domination proposed by Oliveira Vianna. To begin with, they return to the distant or recent past of Brazilian society to show those phenomena of political domination that, as already observed in *Populações Meridionais do Brasil*, seem to persist in the transition from a predominantly rural social order to an urban one. Also, those studies try both to relate acquisition, distribution, organization, and exercise of power to the social structure on the theoretical-methodological plane (although from an empirical perspective proper to sociology), as well as situate their analyses in terms of the public-private conflict, and only indirectly in terms of relations in the world of production, thus agreeing with the thesis that the entanglement between those different principles of social coordination shapes the specificity of political domination in Brazil. These studies, just as Oliveira Vianna’s essay, see this as part of a “system of asymmetrical reciprocities” that involves material and immaterial goods, control of public posts, votes, financial resources, prestige, recognition of legal or non-legal authority etc., based on direct, personal, and violent relations engendered between the different social groups.⁸

However, with empirical emphasis, theoretical support, critical sense, and very different results, studies made by Leal, Queiroz and Franco refute the normative and teleological view of Oliveira Vianna, which allows them to progressively modify the divisive contrast of the public-private relationship in his interpretation of Brazil. Taking the thesis of social bases for action, interactions, and political institutions to its ultimate consequences, and taking up the task of investigating what exactly is the entanglement between public and private, they end up demonstrating the unsuitableness of a dualistic concept of these different principles of social coordination in Brazil. The same idea is not accepted for the same reasons in the different analyses, making it important to observe the diversity of meanings given in each study to Vianna’s thesis on the relations between public and private in the social origins of Brazilian political domination. This leads us, from a theoretical point of view, to the different concepts of society that each author assumes, which at the same time tries to make the results of each study of political domination seem more likely. With the objective of analyzing the heuristic theoretical gains produced by this tradition in political sociology, the current study explores the diverse formulations of each work on the relation between “action” and “structure” in their respective views of society – a duality that is largely formative in sociological theory in general (Domingues, 2004). And the renewed view of the social bases and dynamics of political life brought about by the studies of institutionalized sociology in dialogue with the tradition of social thought, is found to be intimately associated with the new and diverse analytical variables of society which each one ends up introducing and which allow it to reach distinct results.

The absence of incisive conventional textual evidence (since the studies by Queiroz and Franco do not even mention Oliveira Vianna, and Nunes Leal does not give him the prominence that we do) is insufficient reason to discourage the analytical recomposition of possible affinities among those studies. Affinities that have actually been noted when discussing Oliveira Vianna, Leal, and Queiroz (Carvalho, 1993; 1998), and the sociologists of the University of São Paulo and the essayist from Saquarema^{*} (Brandão, 2005). I am reminded that plausible reasons for the systematic silence that has fallen specifically on the work of this author who was a legal consultant of the Ministry of Labor and one of the main ideologues of the trade union and social corporate policies of the *Estado Novo* have already been persuasively pointed out, especially considering that the main results in terms of production of knowledge in institutionalized social science began to emerge precisely around the 1950’s, when Brazil was being re-democratized (Carvalho, 1993). Furthermore, as silence is always eloquent, it must be observed not only that the “limits of normative vocabulary available at any given time will help to determine the ways in which particular questions come to be singled out and discussed”, but also that, in the field of knowledge, authors do not limit themselves to expressly

^{*} Translator’s note – generally understood as personal and arbitrary command over the local population.

^{*} Translator’s note – the small town in the state of Rio de Janeiro where Oliveira Vianna was born.

endorsing and contesting each others' ideas, but also to controversially ignoring them (Skinner, 1999:10ff.).

The study of the cognitive profile of Brazilian political sociology does not presume, however, that the affinities identified between the different studies imply any ideological affiliations; neither does it decide the issue of the intellectual sources it feeds from, whether in the field of Brazilian social thought or in sociological theory⁹, even if it is worth exploring the wider hypothesis that Brazilian social thought has represented a "sharp instrument of regulation of our internal market of ideas in its exchanges with the world market" (Brandão, 2005:233). Equally, this does not imply assuming that studies from Leal, Queiroz, or Franco have been merely formulated as an answer to Oliveira Vianna's interpretation of Brazil, even though it was part of the intellectual debate and performed crucial roles as political culture in the relationship between state and society in Brazil throughout the 20th century.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AS A "SYSTEM"

Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto. O Município e o Regime Representativo no Brasil (The City and the Representative Regime in Brazil), of 1949, originally appearing a year before as a thesis for appointment to the chair of politics in the Faculdade Nacional de Filosofia of the Universidade do Brasil, represents a fundamental step in the modification of the public-private antinomy.¹⁰ Its main topic is the historical development of the relation between local and national power in Brazil, in a kind of dialectic between the lack of "legal autonomy" of the municipalities and the wide "extra-legal autonomy" given to pro-government local political bosses (Leal, 1997:71). Leal's analytical emphasis is on the political system and although the "*coronel*" is notable in these relations, the issue of his political leadership and influence in rural municipalities comes with the proviso that local political bosses are not always "authentic" *coronéis* (*idem*:41). The *coronel* is actually the most visible part of a more complex phenomenon. He is just a part of *coronelismo*, and not even the strongest part at that. The *coronel*, as the author clarified in later texts, "is part of the analysis because he is part of the system; but my biggest greatest concern was the system, the structure, and manner in which power relations developed from the municipality, showing that in the First Republic the figure of absolute master had disappeared completely" (*idem*:36).

To go beyond appearances and reach a systematic understanding of the problem of political control in Brazil, the chosen research material and the manner in which it is treated are essential. Nunes Leal uses many different materials, among them interpretations of other authors and especially censuses, constitutions, and legislations of diverse types, such as the qualification requirements of electors and political representatives, the distribution of taxes, and the organization of the judicial and political powers. Going through all this and making comparisons between historical periods, above all, between colonial times and the First Republic, the latter being the specific period of his study, Leal has two main interrelated objectives. Firstly to establish the significant interconnections of the Brazilian political process stemming from the municipality, and secondly to evaluate just how much the legislation over time created favorable or unfavorable conditions for the municipalities. This is because, in the reasoning behind *Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto*, the greater the decentralization and the increase in legislative, judiciary, and tributary power of the municipalities, the more conditions there would be to combat *coronelismo* and its client-patron structure (*idem*:70-74). This goes directly against Oliveira Vianna and his defense of the centralization and strengthening of the state as a crucial condition for the political weakening of the local power of great agrarian landowners.

Based on the analysis of this material, Nunes Leal reaches two fundamental conclusions which (showing the complexity of the political phenomenon and its social bases) greatly contradicted the widespread ideas regarding *coronelismo*. Firstly, that this was based on a wide network of political relations and pacts at different levels, from the local to the federal, passing through the statewide domain, the whole of which was constituted by reciprocal favors and compromises between its

different parts. In this “system of reciprocity”, as he calls it, there is the prestige of the *coronéis* as such, whose social roots are in the agrarian structure of the country, and the prestige “which their public power loaned them”, both of them “mutually dependent” on each other and functioning “at the same time as determinant and determined” (*idem*:64).

Beside this characterization of the “system of reciprocity”, already noted by Oliveira Vianna regarding the relations between the “clan chief” and his “clientele” (Vianna, 1973:148-149), the second conclusion of Nunes Leal’s analysis is that *coronelismo* is essentially a superposition of distinct political regimes: one based on the power of the *coronel* and the other of political representation based on individual voting (Leal, 1997:40). Also here, the historical-sociological *sensibility* of the politics professor is essential, because he found a way of explaining that institutional innovations of the liberal-oligarchic First Republic, especially the representative electoral regime that considerably extended the mass of voters in relation to its number throughout the Empire, did not occur in a social vacuum. What these innovations found was an already formed society within which there were social, economic and political structures and relations which they were forced to interact with – an interaction that led to the Brazilian political life of the period having its own dynamic.

After all, what society is this? For Nunes Leal, a society formed through the colonial experience based on the supremacy of a hypertrophied private power based on large landholdings, over governmental power and, even at the time of writing, based on relations of social inequality, violence, and poverty deriving from the agrarian structure of the country. An explanatory structure of the “hegemony” of landholders in relation “to those dependent on their property, which are their quota of *votos de cabresto*”* (*idem*:75, emphasis in the original). However, contradicting prevalent expectations probably based on the vulgarization of Oliveira Vianna’s ideas, it is not the power or might of the great landed estate that explains *coronelismo*, but rather its weakness and fragility. Leal argues that *coronelismo* was based on “two weaknesses: the weakness of the landowner, who is enamored with the prestige of power obtained through political submission; and the neglected and disillusioned weakness of the almost subhuman beings that go through life working on his properties” (*idem*:78).

Neither the practically uncontested power of the great rural masters remained unscathed, nor the always fragile public order. In the rural to urban transition, the great landed estates, decadent but still with enough residual power, and promising institutional and economic innovations which are still feeble, find, mix, and redefine one another. It is thus a historically circumscribed phenomenon that became possible in a very special condition. Politically, it was marked by the substitution of imperial centralization for federalism and the expansion of the base of the representative regime of the Republic; economically, by the decadence of the landowners, whose political power was more and more dependent on the state (Carvalho, 1998).

Even though it supports Oliveira Vianna’s claim that the sociological intelligibility of political control could be found in the relations between public and private, *Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto* ends up, in this sense, turning the thesis of *Populações Meridionais do Brasil* upside down. And this occurred even after remembering that, first of all, Oliveira Vianna had a relatively clear idea of this process, which he discussed in terms of an indirect and progressive “weakening” of private power in relation to the centralization of public authority occurring during the Empire (Vianna, 1973:167-262); and, secondly, that his notion of “white anarchy” (*idem*:139) attempted to explain how the rural clan extended incipient public order in Brazilian society under its own tutelary power. In relation to the first point, Nunes Leal peremptorily claims that one cannot “reduce” *coronelismo* “to the ordinary abnormal claim of private power. It is also this, but not only this” (Leal, 1997:276). As a political system it essentially involves a “relationship of engagement between decadent private power and strengthened public power” (*ibidem*). As for the issue of private appropriation of public

* Translator’s note - the traditional system of controlling political power through the purchase of votes from the poor and ignorant in poorer regions of the country.

institutions, unlike what is suggested by the unidirectional notion of “white anarchy”, that is, that private modifies public, Nunes Leal emphasizes the interdependence between these spheres, which causes the dynamic of political life. In sum, *coronelismo* is an “exchange of benefits between the progressively stronger public power, and the decadent social influence of local bosses, especially big landowners” (Leal, 1997:40).

Analytically, however, instead of remaining at an impasse, in *Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto*, public and private mutually influence each other determining the scope of possible actions in politics. Public and private are therefore in a relationship of interdependence, in the sense that neither of them can acquire a decisive role in the political process on its own, that is, neither can determine it on the basis of its specific values or interests. In this sense, Nunes Leal’s study opens new perspectives for political sociology, insofar as it suggests that it is the particular forms of historical connection between public and private that should guide analysis of political life. However, the reception of his analytical emphasis on the structure of political domination, based on the *voto de cabresto*, would find different views in studies carried out by Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz.

SOCIAL “AGENCY” BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND THE PRIVATE

Among the authors studied in this article, Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz is the only one to purposefully formulate a program for political sociology as a research field in Brazil.¹¹ Presented at the *I Congresso Brasileiro de Sociologia*, (I Conference of Brazilian Sociology) of the *Sociedade Brasileira de Sociologia* (Brazilian Society of Sociology) - SBS, at the University of São Paulo (USP) between 21st and 27th June 1954, her “*Contribuição para o Estudo da Sociologia Política no Brasil*” (Contribution to the Study of Political Sociology in Brazil) introduces and details a set of tasks, all of them fulfilled by her over 20 years or so of studies carried out at USP. The first one consisted of historically oriented sociological studies of the Brazilian political past, to provide “a background for studies about the present, allowing a vision of the continuities or transformations which have occurred in politics” (Queiroz, 1976:17). In this sense, Queiroz denies the validity of previous studies with the argument that, “in accordance with the liberal point of view” adopted by them, they were merely “histories of political ideas”; emphasizing that there was still a lack of a “history of political facts from a sociological standpoint, in which they are seen as products of group life” (*idem*:18). As already commented, Queiroz does not mention Oliveira Vianna but amongst previous studies she merely emphasizes *Evolução Política do Brasil* ([Political Evolution of Brazil] 1933), by Caio Prado Jr. as an “attempt” at interpreting our political past. An unsuccessful attempt, from her point of view, since the historian from São Paulo “did not follow the first sociological precept which is to observe before interpreting: he went to the field forearmed with an interpretation in terms of class struggle and tried to impose it to Brazilian facts, when it is only now that Brazil has awoken to such a struggle” (Queiroz, 1976:18). This is, in fact, an evaluation with which Oliveira Vianna would probably agree, from both a theoretical-methodological and a substantive viewpoint (Vianna, 1973:157).¹²

It is in this context that, in the debates at the *I Congresso* of the SBS, Queiroz also criticizes the lecture given by Alberto Guerreiro Ramos, since his proposal would mean “the study of Brazilian politics through ideas, not through reality itself” (Anais, 1955:340). A criticism that Guerreiro Ramos responds to by observing that he “tried to show in his lecture how ideas are related to a particular social situation that exerts pressure on them” (*idem*:342), an assertion that he takes up again when debating Queiroz’s lecture in the afternoon session of June 26th. Records show Guerreiro Ramos’ suggestion that the constitution of a “national market of goods and ideas” would be a decisive factor in altering “the direction and tendency of Brazilian politics, with conflict between the old powers defending their patronage politics and the new powers that try to express themselves ideologically” (*idem*: 349).

In his own lecture, “*Esforços de Teorização da Realidade Nacional Politicamente Orientados, de 1870 aos Nossos Dias*” (Politically Oriented Attempts to Theorize the National Reality, from 1870

until Today), later published in his 1957 work *Introdução Crítica à Sociologia Brasileira* (Critical Introduction to Brazilian Sociology), Guerreiro Ramos uses Oliveira Vianna's criticism of the "utopian idealism" of Brazilian elites, considering it "the most objective sociological study which has so far arisen from our midst" (Ramos, 1995:79). He did however point to the limitations of Oliveira Vianna's stance, which supposedly did not perceive that the utopian-idealistic conduct of the elites "was often less a result of voluntary imitation than an obligatory pragmatic expedient for rationalizing or justifying interests and demands from groups and factions linked to tendencies in national society which were not always illegitimate" (*idem*:80). A claim that Paula Beiguelman agreed with, as the Conference records show, emphasizing "the need to overcome Oliveira Vianna [...] not so much his work as such but his conclusions, which are often different from his premises" (*Anais*, 1955:341). An observation that was fully backed up by Guerreiro Ramos, who also observed that "Oliveira Vianna neglected the historicity of Brazilian socioeconomic development by using a psychological comprehension of the social process" (*idem*:343).

Thus, although Oliveira Vianna was not part of Queiroz's program for the constitution of a political sociology in Brazil, he was present in a far from marginal way in the context in which her program was originally presented and debated by the academic community in the 1950's in the *I Congresso Brasileiro de Sociologia*. In addition, and even more importantly, it is possible to point to a first and decisive affinity between Queiroz's program and Oliveira Vianna's theoretical-methodological proposals. The São Paulo sociologist's proposal that "political facts" should be treated as "products of group life" (Queiroz, 1976:18), is very similar to Vianna's defence of the originality of his method of analysis in *Populações Meridionais do Brasil*. After all, Vianna had already stressed that (as Queiroz would later say in relation to Caio Prado Jr.) using "political doctrines" as the starting point for understanding politics could only end in "entirely false" conclusions, which is why he had tried to make a "concrete, objective, realistic" study of political institutions "*in loco*, as practiced by the people in their daily lives" (Vianna, 1973:298).

In any case, in her future work, especially in "*O Mandonismo Local na Vida Política Brasileira*", of 1969, and "*O Coronelismo numa Interpretação Sociológica*" (A Sociological Interpretation of *Coronelismo*) of 1975, Queiroz would try to make up for this previous absence of sociological analyses of political facts. In these studies, she structures her investigation of political domination around "kinship relations" rather than around a category of "class" or any other broad form of social solidarity. For her, kinship relations were at the genesis of the structure of Brazilian political domination, involving forms of personal sociability, conduct, and solidarity in an extensive and spatially dispersed nucleus of individuals united by blood ties, spiritual relations (*compadrio*) or alliances (matrimony), economic and political relations, as well as rivalries and conflicts (Queiroz, 1976:181 e ss.). "Kinship relations" and "kin solidarity", however, are also concepts used by Oliveira Vianna precisely to circumscribe, together with "rural clan", the "only militant form of social solidarity in our people" (Vianna, 1973:149). The essayist from Rio de Janeiro emphasizes that "kinship solidarity" is "as powerful today in rural areas" as in the past (*ibidem*). Queiroz herself was also able to observe that in her field work in Santa Brígida, a district of the city of Jeremoabo, in the state of Bahia in the 1950's.

The second necessary task for the constitution of political sociology as a field of research in Brazil, according to Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz in her lecture at the *I Congresso Brasileiro de Sociologia*, was the production of "concrete" studies of the present time which, when confronted with sociological analyses of the past, could give a view of what was still the same and what had changed in politics (Queiroz, 1976:17). To achieve this second task, she actually did some field work in Santa Brígida, between 1954 and 1959, publishing her main conclusions in *Sociologia e Folclore: A Dança de S. Gonçalo num Povoado Baiano* (Sociology and Folklore: St. Gonçalo's Dance in a Bahia Village), of 1958, and in "*Política, Ascensão Social e Liderança num Povoado Baiano*", originally a lecture presented at the *II Congresso Brasileiro de Sociologia* in 1962. They were also republished in "*O Coronelismo numa Interpretação Sociológica*" as a counterpoint to the thesis of Vitor Nunes Leal on the *voto de cabresto* and a way of demonstrating her argument that, in the sphere of *coronelismo*, voting was part of a wider and more complex network of reciprocities

founded on the possession and scarcity of wealth, in which political bargaining became possible (*idem*:168).

The characterization of the relations of political domination as a network of asymmetrical reciprocities had already been formulated in *Populações Meridionais do Brasil* (Vianna, 1973:148 e ss.) and adopted by Nunes Leal to define *coronelismo* as a “system” (Leal, 1997:64). But in the studies of Maria Isaura this problem attains a new sociological form with the introduction of the dimension of “agency”, or simply, social action. Glaucia Villas Bôas (2006) suggests that Queiroz’s political sociology is marked precisely by the attempt to show that it is in associational life that one can comprehend the relations of “*mando*” and “obedience”, a concept that tries to demonstrate the “rationality of Brazilian politics”. That is why she believes that the “lived experience” of specific groups is more important than the tendency to evaluate them only through theoretical models and interpretations of global society, not to mention her emphasis on the active character of human conduct as a counterpoint to the tendency to consider social relations as forces alien to social actors, whose significance escapes their comprehension and even their control.¹³

Like Oliveira Vianna (and also Leal), Queiroz locates political domination in public-private relations. And also like her predecessors (Vianna, 1973:229-243; Leal, 1997), she recognizes the need to research the relations of political domination stemming from the municipalities, where “the political phenomenon is more violent and affects all other aspects of group life” (Queiroz, 1976:30). However, when trying to tackle the relations of political domination from the perspective of the social actors living in it, and not (as Leal) from the “social system” they supposedly form, Queiroz introduces a series of analytical and historical distinctions that allow her to emphasize the variety and multiplicity of levels in which those relations interact with diverse social, economic, and agrarian structures – aspects which, according to her, had been underestimated by Victor Nunes Leal (*idem*:165). A paradigmatic example of these analytical propositions can be found in “*Política, Ascensão Social e Liderança num Povoado Baiano*”.

Queiroz’s decision to choose the small rural community of Santa Brígida was, in fact, guided by two main sociological reasons already present in her 1954 program. Firstly, contradicting what she identified as the tendency to analyze political domination only in coastal areas dependent on monocultural exports, she tried to reveal the diversity of political behaviors according to differences “within the country itself, constituting different geographical, economic, and social zones” (*idem*:30). Her arguments about “the vote as a possession” in opposition to the “*voto de cabresto*” were based precisely on empirical research in that zone of small farmers: the social structure tended to be more “egalitarian” there, in contrast with the zones of monocultural export or of large-scale ranching, based on a more defined and rigid social stratification, where the political domination of the *coronel* was more direct and even more violent (*idem*:176). In cases in which political bargaining became possible, “*cabos eleitorais*”^{*} were essential as an intermediate level of stratification and political domination linking the *coronel* to his electorate (*idem*:166). And secondly, it is from the perspective of the *cabos eleitorais* that the study is conducted, trying to understand the possibilities of promotion to political leadership, a promotion that was considered a form of “social mobility” in less stratified communities.

Analyzing the trajectories of three *cabos eleitorais* in Santa Brígida, Queiroz concludes that if personal prestige can take one to a leadership role it is “charisma” which in a community with few internal differences seems to constitute a “real channel of social mobility” (Queiroz, 1976a:116). Such is the case of the devout Pedro Batista, a *cabo eleitoral* who was the link between pilgrims from the state of Alagoas who had settled in Santa Brígida and the local *coronel* who had attracted them. The pilgrims submitted “entirely” to the devout man who they called “godfather” due to the material and immaterial benefits they received under his leadership, in the belief that he had

* Translator’s note – A person who enlists votes for a candidate.

“supernatural gifts” proven by his “therapeutic power” (*idem*:110). In the pilgrims’ godfather there is an interweaving of two distinct principles for legitimizing domination (Weber, 1992): the “traditional” principle in his personal authority, and the “charismatic” principle, a belief in his extraordinary qualities that allowed his relationship with the electors even to “dispense with the model of giving and receiving” (Queiroz, 1976a:111).

In this way, if voting was part of a “system” of reciprocal exchanges in areas with small autonomous producers, the relations between *coronéis*, *cabos eleitorais*, and electors would be very contingent, because “leadership” did not imply a position of “superiority” nor was it in itself a sufficient guarantee of “social mobility” in these small rural communities. Therefore, with a reconstitution of the trajectories of the *cabos eleitorais*, Queiroz tries to specify the social conditions that guide individual conducts and, in this way, analyze the different responses of agents submitted to the relations of *coronelismo*’s political domination – a perspective through which, unlike the possibilities of a “systemic” investigation, it became possible for her to identify the dynamic character of the relations of political domination in Brazilian society. The social life described in Santa Brígida through her study is, therefore, an illustration of the contingency in private-public relations and the possibilities and limitations of social mobility in contexts of personal domination, a point that will be retrieved by Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco at the same time as she questions the possibilities of the “common people” denying personal political domination in general.

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AS A CONTRADICTIONARY UNITY

The first significant affinity between *Homens Livres na Ordem Escravocrata* and *Populações Meridionais do Brasil* is the refusal to treat slavery as a “mode of production” that had structured Brazilian society and was determinant in all future changes. For Franco, slavery was part of a wider socioeconomic system, “a part in which one can find, *neither more nor less* than in any other system, social relations which lead to the unification of different and contradictory elements” (Franco, 1997:13, emphasis in the original). Just as in Oliveira Vianna, the analytical emphasis falls back on the social forms brought about by the great agrarian property in Brazil, especially in its *almost* autarchic character, and in the existence of idle areas, from the point of view of export-led economically profitable agricultural production, within the great landed estates (*idem*:14). This socioeconomic structure has its origins in colonial times and created a specific social group between master and slaves, the latter being directly responsible for agrarian-export production.¹⁴

Oliveira Vianna calls them the “rural populace” and this social group, whose origin and destiny was supposedly directly associated to the social forms of agrarian property, was linked to the rural masters, as we have seen, in a “feeble” way, economically speaking, and in a “militant” way politically. The paradox of this situation is explained by “white anarchy”, that is, the ability that the “rural clans” demonstrate in appropriating for themselves the existing public institutions for the attainment of their private interests, employing if necessary extremely violent resources in this process (Vianna, 1973:139 e ss.). In Franco’s terms, they are “free men”, at once “deprived of the property of the means of production, yet still occupying it, and which were not fully submitted to the economic pressures deriving from this condition, since the weight of production, which is significant for the system as a whole, does not fall back on their shoulders” (Franco, 1997:14). Through the double expropriation to which this social group is subjected, Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco talks of “disposable men who were not part of the essential processes of society”, since “commercial agriculture based on slavery would simultaneously bring the opportunity for their existence yet leave them without a reason for being” (*ibidem*) – an aspect that was also discussed in Oliveira Vianna (1973:127 e ss.). In both cases, there were difficulties stemming from the social dynamic formed through the existence of this contingent of poor and free men, for the constitution of a class society in Brazil (Vianna, 1973:157; Franco, 1997:237).

However, unlike Oliveira Vianna, Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco peremptorily refuses any idea of “ambiguity” or “duality” to explain the social structure produced by the great landed estate and

the paradoxical situation of poor and free men directly associated to them. Actually, she uses her historical and theoretical research precisely to try and oppose this idea, and that is the main difference of *Homens Livres na Ordem Escravocrata* in relation to *Populações Meridionais do Brasil*. For Franco, in Brazil, unlike what happened in other historical contexts, the simultaneity of both “modes of production” – for subsistence and for the market – not only showed that they were “interdependent” practices, since they found “their reason for being in commercial activities”, but also that they were “constitutive” of one another (Franco, 1997:11). They were a “synthesis” or “contradictory unity” which, emerging in the beginning of the colonial system, guided with their ambiguities and tensions most of Brazilian history” (*ibidem*). That is why, in a passage that seems directed at Oliveira Vianna, she argues that “the internal organization of large establishments, *per se*, is insufficient to characterize them and make the relations within them intelligible” (Franco, 1997:197); and emphasizes that “reference to this internal organization attains explanatory content when associated with the capitalist mode of production which controlled the world markets” (*ibidem*).¹⁵

Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco’s research refers to the “old coffee civilization” of the Vale do Paraíba region in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo in the 19th century. Its empirical circumscription to the county of Guaratinguetá, ‘the poorest area of São Paulo’, was made with the intention of capturing the “connections of recurrence between stability and social change”, since “transformations stemming from coffee were felt in a milder way, conserving previous characteristics” (Franco, 1997:17). The primary research material was basically records, correspondence, and criminal lawsuits in the Guaratinguetá parliament, from 1830 to 1899. From these, she highlights the criminal lawsuits, and it is especially through the analysis of reports contained in these depositions to the police that Franco tries to retrieve the “lived situations” (*idem*:18) of poor free men.

Just like the other studies dealt with in this article, in which all follow Oliveira Vianna’s essay, Franco also believes that the poor free men gain sociological intelligibility in the sphere of control marked by direct, personal, and violent relations that constitute a network of payment of all sorts of services rendered and favors received. In this regard, however, *Homens Livres na Ordem Escravocrata* presents invaluable contributions. First of all, it shows how the violence prominent in relations of personal domination is also constitutive of the relations of social solidarity within these groups, as can be seen through a paradigmatic analysis of *mutirões** as a cooperative way of working among the “*caipiras*”** (*idem*:21 e ss.). Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz, just like Oliveira Vianna and Victor Nunes Leal, when considering this point, emphasizes for example the violence in political relations between different social groups, or as she puts it between one “half” and the other “rather than within those groups”, even though she recognizes (and refers to *Homens Livres na Ordem Escravocrata* for this point) that violence was not absent within groups as well (Queiroz, 1976:179).

Secondly, Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco’s analysis pays special attention to the sociological meaning of the intersubjective social components present in the personal relations of political domination. “Personal domination” dependent on the relations of payment for a service, is “personal”, she argues, precisely because it is founded in an identification between those who participate in them as “people”, a category that creates an appearance of social indistinction confirmed still by the simple “lifestyle” of the region since the beginning of the 19th century, when the situation of scarcity of material conditions was practically universal (Franco, 1997:115-119). That is why relations of dependence are more an “inclination of wills in the same direction, like harmony, and not an imposition of the will of the stronger over the weaker, as a struggle. Consequently, tensions within these relations are profoundly concealed, with scarce possibilities of emerging within the conscience of those being controlled” (*idem*:95). Religious sponsorship

* Translator’s note – Help that members of a community give to each other.

** Translator’s note - Understood here as rural people with little or no formal education.

(*compadrio*), for example, is a paradigmatic relation of personal domination because it allows, or even demands, an apparent rupture of social hierarchies between those who, through baptism, are ritually united in “divine kinship” (*idem*:84-86). This appearance of “equality” given by the category “people” to poor free men, unlike slaves who are seen as “property” or a “thing”, is essential because their relations with their masters are not experienced straightforwardly as a relation of domination. Not only between small farmers and large landholders, but also between the latter and their hangers-on, or even with other social categories usually less dependent on them, like muleteers and grocers, all subordinate to the same web of relations of personal loyalty (*idem*:65-114). Once more, just as the social bases of political domination were discussed in Oliveira Vianna (1973:127 e ss.), even though Franco, like Queiroz, points to the possibility of social mobility in strictly individual terms in those usually less dependent social groups (Franco, 1997:65-114).

Although Franco, differing from Oliveira Vianna, does not see in political control a counterpoint to the fragility of socioeconomic ties that link rural landowners to the vast contingent of poor and free men, she also considers politics a privileged area to observe the relations of the “dependency” of big landowners to their “smaller neighbors” (*idem*:90). More than this, she talks about the vital importance politics has in this relative submission of the landowner, leading to a series of obligations on his part, which is the main reason why there should not be a characterization of personal domination in terms of a “typical patrimonial” relation as defined by Max Weber (*idem*:91). However, just as Oliveira Vianna, for whom “the nature of social solidarity produced by political patronage is defined by its asymmetry” (Werneck Vianna, 1993:377), Franco also emphasizes the inequality of power involved in relations of personal domination, also claiming that this type of situation is not a very “favorable [social base] for the rational orientation of action” (Franco, 1997:29).

Here, Franco distances herself from Queiroz and her characterization of “rationality” in politics. Although Queiroz points out, when talking about voting, that it is “conscious, but oriented in a different way than the vote of a citizen from a diverse and complex society”. In the first case, she argues, “the vote is a commodity to be exchanged”; in the second, “it is the personal assertion of an opinion” (Queiroz, 1976:178). For Franco it is the opposite, where one of the main social effects of personal domination is precisely the “asphyxiation of political consciousness” (Franco, 1997:89), a situation in which the vote could not even find “conditions to be used as a commodity, nor could it be the result of self-determination rooted in the consciousness of autonomous interests” (*idem*:88). Approaching the characterization of elections proposed by Leal (1997), Franco emphasizes that, more than the “manipulation of the electorate” or the “attraction of converts”, the techniques used to conquer and maintain political power concentrated on the “procedure and the result of elections” (Franco, 1997:87).

Although there are significant disagreements in relation to some substantive issues, Franco’s study so far shows important methodological affinities with the political sociology program of Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz, whether in the choice of the “social group” as a starting point for analysis (chapter 1) and then analyzing its relationship with the broader society (chapter 2), or in her emphasis on the “lived” situations of common people in their daily actions. From then on, however, in an attempt to account for macrosociological problems, Franco demonstrates that “personal domination” is incorporated in a constitutive manner in public institutions (chapter 3), and in the economic transformations necessary for the integration of Brazilian agricultural production in international markets (chapter 4). I would emphasize her argument that the dynamic of society defined by “personal domination” creates and re-creates public institutions, through which the author also approaches Oliveira Vianna’s concerns with the institutional dimension of political domination and especially with the social mechanisms of private appropriation of public institutions expressed in the notion of “white anarchy” (Vianna, 1973:139 e ss.). Even though, unlike Vianna, Franco’s analysis of social processes “underlying” the constitution and consolidation of the national State and its bureaucratic apparatus in the 19th century is seen from the standpoint of how such processes were “experienced by the common man” (Franco, 1997:165).

As Werneck Vianna (1999:184) points out, using Max Weber's thesis on the uniqueness of modern Western bureaucracy as the starting point, Franco understands that the process of bureaucratic organization of the Brazilian state in the first half of the 19th century was "formally [founded] on the bureaucratic principle of obedience to an abstractly defined public power, which gains its legitimacy from the expression of rationally created and legally ordained norms" (Franco, 1997:121). For the consent of public authority, besides the employment of physical force and war, this meant concentrating the apparatus of taxation in a "group of agents trained for the methodical and depersonalized exercise of public functions" (*ibidem*). But the bureaucratization of public administration did not occur in a vacuum of social relations, and moreover it met in those same relations its own limitations. In its interaction with society, bureaucratization was rivaled by factors as powerful as the rational-legal principle that formally gave life to it. The municipal civil servant is an example of the dispute that occurs for the orientation of conducts of individuals and social groups between, on the one hand, that abstract and distant principle, and, on the other, the "strong interests and influences that enveloped its immediate life" (*ibidem*). In this dispute between social solidarities, it is the pragmatism binding the civil servant to his local society that wins.

There are two main reasons mentioned, based on the research material compiled by Franco, for the unclear demarcation between private and public activities in the sphere of state institutions. First of all, the precariousness with which administrative ordinances were established in "positive" terms, and therefore their normative fragility for the entire society, led the civil servant in his line of duty to continue orienting his daily conduct by established customs (Franco, 1997:122-125). The other decisive factor of the evolution of bureaucracy in public administration, once again relying on Max Weber and absent in Brazil in the 19th century, was according to Franco the process of "expropriation of the material means of administration from the civil servant, clearly separating governmental resources from the bureaucrat's private possessions" (*idem*:130). An absence that was due to the state's poverty and aggravated by the Empire's financial policies, marked by extreme concentration of public incomes (*idem*:128).

The poverty of public administration had led since 1834 to the reorganization of the fiscal apparatus of the state and impeded this process from happening in typically rational-legal terms. Faced with this paradoxical situation, the solution found was a "direct plea to the private patrimony of the common citizen or the civil servant" (*ibidem*). This solution was not only totally different from the normal procedures of a rational-legal order, but also reinforced personalized exercise of power and personal control of state patrimony. Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco argued that, in these conditions, instead of the civil servant progressively becoming an "executive who merely manages the means of administration, he continued to actually control them autonomously *because they belonged to him*" (Franco, 1997:131, emphasis in the original).

Therefore, the connection between the material fragility of public power, the personal use of the governmental apparatus and the personal techniques of domination led to a merging of the public and the private. And this entanglement of distinct social spheres constitutes the condition for personal domination as the more general principle of regulation of social relations in Brazil. In addition, the "contradictory unity" identified within the great landed estate, conquering society through personal domination, becomes part of the organization of the state, necessarily merging public and private (*idem*:240). In these conditions, how can one even think of a rupture by some subordinate social groups from the "personal domination" to which they were subjected, if this constituted the general principle of institutional organization of society? The demonstration by Franco that the dynamic of society recreates political institutions, and that therefore public and private also constitute a "contradictory unity" and not an "opposition" or "duality", is also the conclusion of this investigation.

FINAL OBSERVATIONS

Through an analytical look at the research agenda on political domination in Brazil, from *Populações Meridionais do Brasil* to *Homens Livres na Ordem Escravocrata*, passing through *Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto*, and diverse studies by Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz, this article has attempted to identify the main streams of cognitive continuities and discontinuities in one tradition within Brazilian political sociology *en train de se faire* between the 1920's and the 1970's. In relation to the continuities, we have argued that the studies first of all retain the central thesis of Oliveira Vianna on the unique historical configuration of relations of political domination in Brazil, founded on the conflict between the private and public orders and not directly reducible to a class struggle rooted in the world of production; and secondly, their theoretical-methodological tendency to relate acquisition, distribution, organization, and exercise of political power to the social structure in order to identify the bases and dynamics of politics in social life itself.

In relation to the first aspect of continuity between the studies mentioned and Oliveira Vianna's essay, one can say that the research agenda reconstituted here is substantively different from other intellectual traditions that are also identified as "political sociology" in Brazilian social science. Such as, for example, the one that began with the chair of Sociology I at the University of São Paulo, which was strongly marked by the association between political domination and class conflict, as well as by issues of Brazilian economic dependency and development (Sallum Jr., 2002). Undoubtedly, the analytical privilege (already present in Vianna) that Leal, Queiroz and Franco attribute to relations of political domination in Brazil does not totally exclude a connection with economic relations, although the delimitation of the economic in relation to other spheres of society takes on different forms in each one. As we have seen, Leal relates the strengthening of the public to the economic decadence of the great landed estate. Queiroz circumscribes her approach to the relations of political domination on areas of small rural farmers, also considering their differences in terms of socioeconomic configuration in relation to areas of export monoculture. And if Franco refuses to accept slavery as a mode of production, her approach only becomes intelligible through the suggestion of the simultaneous presence, within the great landed estate, of production for subsistence and for the market as practices that "constitute" each other; an issue that she develops theoretically in her thesis of *livre-docência*^{*}, *O Moderno e suas Diferenças* ([The Modern and its Differences] 1970), to the point of affirming that in Brazilian society "the non-economic criteria of categorizing individuals in society are repeatedly disrupted by criteria of social differentiation founded in economic condition" (Franco, 1970:177).

As for the second aspect of continuity in the tradition of political sociology analyzed here, one can say that the studies converge in the theoretical-methodological sphere on a specifically sociological approach to politics. This approach, in place of an autonomous institutional logic that mostly characterizes the late demarcation of political science as a subject in Brazil (Lamounier, 1982), favors the investigation of the social bases of politics, its relations with the social structure, and the social conditions of prominence of the different collective actors. That is why there is heuristic significance in this tradition in Brazilian sociology in its comprehension of the challenges of democracy. After all, by relating the social structure of the agrarian world to relations of political domination, and by dealing with the interaction between the capacity of action of individuals and groups and the conditioning of social structures, it also ends up highlighting the problem of the social bases of democracy, and retrieves a formula that has become classical in political sociology (Moore Jr., 1983).

On the other hand, in relation to the cognitive discontinuities within the various studies in this tradition in Brazilian political sociology, they diverge above all in their concepts of society by which they attempt to confer plausibility on the results obtained in their studies of the constitution, organization, and reproduction of relations of political domination. In the case of Oliveira Vianna, his characterization remains dependent on a dualistic view of relations between public and private

^{*} Translator's note – a post-doctoral title.

and, therefore, of society itself; a view which, although not necessarily leading to *consensus* in detriment to *conflict*, ends up circumscribing the latter to the sphere of relations between state and society, thus including the inequality of power which undergirds relations between different social groups, which can be observed not only through his emphasis on the need for a new overarching coordinating morality of social relations, which he sees happening in the strengthening and centralization of the state, but also in his characterization of “social unsolidarity” between individuals and social groups beyond private circles as one of the main consequences of the entanglement between public and private in Brazil.¹⁶

However, as we have already seen, Victor Nunes Leal’s analysis of *coronelismo* introduces a notion of “system” to show that the private is not entirely above the public, nor are these different principles of social coordination in a relationship of opposition; as a form of domination, *coronelismo* actually presumes a compromise between a decadent private power and a progressively stronger public power, in a relation of interdependence in the sense that neither of them can determine the political process on the basis alone of their own specific values and interests. Although the notion of “system” formed by public and private is neither static nor independent of the historical process, and also does not exclude the social actors who are a part of it, it ends up determining the scope of possible actions in the sphere of political domination in *Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto*.

Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz tries to show, in a non-voluntarist way and paying attention to structural conditions and variables based above all on field work, the possibilities and limitations of individual action within the structure of political domination of *coronelismo*, even though she repeatedly acknowledges that there were many different types. The possibilities of individual socioeconomic mobility and of the use of the vote as a “possession” for political bargaining in *coronelismo*, shows in her studies how relations of political domination, constituted between the private and the public, may produce behaviors in individuals and social groups and not only restrict and control the scope of their actions. Theoretically, the introduction of the problem of “agency” allows her to emphasize the manifest capacity of individuals and social groups to act and, in this way, react to the structures of domination they are immersed in.

Finally, Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco shows that “personal domination” as the general principle of regulation of social relations is incorporated in a constitutive way to political institutions, which can be seen fundamentally in the “personalized exercise of power”. And since it is the dynamic of society that creates and recreates political institutions, she tries to end any doubts as to the fact that, in Brazil, public and private merge to form a “contradictory unity” and not an “opposition” or “duality”. In *Homens Livres na Ordem Escravocrata* we have maybe the most consistent attempt, among the studies analyzed here, to connect the dimensions of “action” and “structure” in an analytical movement that tries to take into account both the socialization of actors within personal domination, and in its institutionalization. Even though she developed her sociological explanation of the constitution of the state from the way it was supposedly experienced by the “common man”, she argued that that connection could be achieved by putting the concept of “praxis” in the center of the analysis of relations between the “objective world” and “subjectivity”, in the attempt to overcome “old ghosts such as *individual* and *society*” (Franco, 1997:16, emphasis in the original).

In short, regarding Oliveira Vianna’s essay, the studies by Victor Nunes Leal, Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz, and Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco introduce crucial discontinuities within the analytical developments that they directly or indirectly formulate. Although they start from the thesis of the role of entanglement between public and private in the constitution, organization, and reproduction of the relations of political domination, they end up rejecting (each in their own way), the dualist perspective proposed by Oliveira Vianna as well as his assertion of “social unsolidarity” as a Brazilian ethos, a perspective that led to the hypotheses of either an intrinsic Brazilian incompatibility in relation to democracy or of the centrality of the role of the state in its establishment and direction. Although they also found differences regarding the restriction or preponderance of social solidarity in the private sphere, the studies by Leal, Queiroz and Franco do not corroborate the thesis that this would form an insurmountable impediment for the constitution

of a public order in Brazil.¹⁷ But neither do they allow the conclusion that the entanglement and tensions between public and private had no consequences for democracy. Without underestimating them, they show that Brazilian society was not – nor could it be – left hanging and waiting for purely institutional resolutions for its socially constitutive tensions, therefore contributing to a reorientation of analytical interest in political sociology towards historical, concrete, and dependent forms of connection between public and private in Brazilian society.

Finally, with this article I hope to have suggested that the comparative and cumulative analysis between essay and sociological research as an academic specialization may contribute effectively to the continuity of the knowledge of social science in Brazil on a cognitive plain. It is undeniable that the interpretations of Victor Nunes Leal, Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz, and Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco manifest and benefit from the contemporary international theoretical-methodological progress of their discipline, but the analytical emphasis given to the critical reception of Oliveira Vianna's ideas in their studies allows us to see that, in the sphere of social science, a "system of problems and contradictions" was being constituted "which did not exclude but rather filtered the international supply of social theories" (Schwarz, 1999:20). It is also true that the comparison between essay and sociological research does not necessarily lead to a comprehension of this tradition in political sociology merely in straightforward evolutionary terms. Hence, I want to argue that all the studies in this article have not only autonomy and independent validity from each other, according to their different objectives and commitments, but they are also part of an analytical grouping and as such manifest crucial heuristic cognitive conquests for sociology, without invalidating the conflicting and competitive character of their perspectives. The analytical approach proposed in this study is therefore justified because, considering the tendency in the construction of sociological knowledge to be cumulative but chronically non-consensual (Giddens, 1998; Alexander, 1999; Domingues, 2004), the constant reexamination of its past occurrences (also through the exegesis of texts) has more than a tangential role in the current practice of the discipline. This reexamination, which also takes into account that current challenges are linked to the sequence of historical development, may lead (paraphrasing Reinhard Bendix [1996:36]) to "insights obtained in the past" not being "frivolously discarded", as in the case of the political sociology reconstituted here in relation to the contemporary social construction of democracy in Brazil.

(Received for publication in December 2006)
(Definitive version in March 2007)

FOOTNOTES

1. Regarding work in Brazilian social science on national political life between 1945 and 1966, see Villas Bôas (1992).

2. By "intellectual context", I mean "the context of earlier writings and inherited assumptions about political society, and of more ephemeral contemporary contributions to social and political thought. For it is evident that the nature and limits of the normative vocabulary available at any given time will also help to determine the ways in which particular questions come to be singled out and discussed" (Skinner, 1999:10-11).

3. The issue of the expression "political sociology" in Brazil, and whether it should be a specialized branch of sociology, or an independent subject, or even whether it is different (and in what way) to political science, is controversial and non-conclusive. The many positions on this can be found in Scherer-Warren and Benakouche (2002). For the purposes of this study, I use Elisa Reis' suggestion that it is not a problem of defining the subject's borders, which are always more or less arbitrary and

unstable, but that an investigation of its “research tradition”, including its relations with its “classics”, opens effective possibilities of comprehension of political sociology and the specific challenges it tries to answer (Reis, 1999).

4. As Elide Rugai Bastos suggests, "Oliveira Vianna's thinking can be seen, sometimes in new forms, in studies of other social scientists"; he also reminds us that “those who are critical of Oliveira Vianna, regarding the interpretations and guidelines presented in his writings, are also obliged to establish an open or implicit dialogue with him” (Bastos, 1993:7).

5. See Santos (1978); the diverse studies gathered in Bastos and Moraes (1993); and, for a systematic analysis of *Populações Meridionais do Brasil*, Brandão (2001).

6. And “class struggle”, according to Oliveira Vianna, is not only one “of the biggest examples of solidarity in western peoples, but also the best school for their civic education and political culture” (Vianna, 1973:157).

7. For a detailed analysis of the issue of Oliveira Vianna's restriction of social solidarity to the private sphere, see Botelho and Brasil (2005).

8. Through this more extensive plan, other significant cognitive confluences may be identified in this tradition in political sociology, such as hindrances to collective action, the municipality as the locus of politics, the centrality of the relations of local power with the national state, violence as a social code and example of the difficulty of public authority maintaining control, appropriation of public institutions for private ends, among others.

9. Regarding Brazilian social thought, it is important to observe that, although it does not have the same analytical place or political meaning from one interpretation to another, the thesis on the entanglement between public and private is the basis of the analyses of the 1930s, especially in *Casa-Grande & Senzala* (1933), by Gilberto Freyre, *Raízes do Brasil* (1936), by Sergio Buarque de Holanda, and *A Ordem Privada e a Organização Política Nacional* (1939), by Nestor Duarte.

10. Which allows José Murilo de Carvalho to rightfully claim that the book is not directly part of the “feudalist tradition” that has Oliveira Vianna and Nestor Duarte as its “most illustrious representatives” and, among their followers, Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz and Costa Pinto (Carvalho, 1998:140). However, since the objective of the study is to sketch not only the continuities but also the discontinuities in the research agenda *en train de se faire* between the decades of 1920 and 1970, it does not seem inappropriate to highlight the “dialogue” that, once again, does not mean the agreement of Victor Nunes Leal with *Populações Meridionais do Brasil*. For a systematic analysis of *Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto*, see Lamounier (1999).

11. For a systematic analysis of Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz's political sociology, see Villas Bôas (2006).

12. Although she does suggest that the phenomenon that is actually “new” in Brazilian politics is the “disappearance of family solidarity” in relation to the recognition of “difference of interests in the various strata of the population” - even though this recognition could not be directly associated to the emergence of a “class solidarity” (Queiroz, 1976:28) -, Queiroz claims that the “line of internal continuity in our politics” is evidenced today in the emergence of a new type of *coronelismo*: “urban *coronelismo*” (*idem*, 1976:29).

13. One should observe Queiroz's analytical attraction to small rural producers, with the notion of rusticity as the distinctive feature of these groups, the emphasis on fieldwork as a way of controlling theoretical generalizations, and, above all, the tendency to value the “self-contemplation” of the groups being studied, as well as the sociological tradition of *Os Parceiros do Rio Bonito* ([Partners of Rio Bonito] 1954) by Antonio Candido (Jackson, 2002). Candido himself noted that, although it does not refer to his work, it is a movement of methodological and ethical dislocation/rotation

operated by the sociology of the University of São Paulo in relation to the “seignorial” perspective that is so characteristic of Oliveira Vianna, with the introduction of the “common man” as the basis of its analytical interest (Candido, 2004:233). For other aspects of Queiroz’s work, see Kosminsky (1999).

14. Without minimizing the importance that slavery has in the formation of the “free” population, the analytical emphasis on the agrarian issue, whilst it brings Franco’s study nearer to Oliveira Vianna, also separates it from typical studies of the so-called “São Paulo school of sociology” which considers the relations between master and slave as the basis for explaining Brazilian social constitution (Bastos, 2002).

15. In which Franco comes nearer to the interpretation of Brazil in Caio Prado Jr. and the sociological tradition of the Chair of Sociology I of USP. On the connection of the study of Brazilian society to a world historical configuration in this sociological tradition, see Bastos (2002).

16. Therein, it should be noted that the sociological characterization of *Populações Meridionais do Brasil* from the *process* of constitution of society does not agree with the dimension of social action. When, through the force of argument, it hints at constraints of different non-social orders that are not decisive to the characterization of the process, they become ingeniously employed to restrain its effective possibilities.

17. For the debate on private and public relations in the modernization of 20th century Brazilian politics, see Gomes (1998).

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Translated by Paul Freston

Translation from **Dados – Revista de Ci ncias Sociais**, vol.50, n.1, p. 49-82, 2007