

THE CORONELISM OF VICTOR NUNES LEAL AND THE CONSERVATIVE MODERNIZATION: INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS | *EL CORONELISMO DE VICTOR NUNES LEAL Y LA MODERNIZACIÓN CONSERVADORA: COLOCACIONES INICIALES* | *O CORONELISMO DE VICTOR NUNES LEAL E A MODERNIZAÇÃO CONSERVADORA: COLOCAÇÕES INICIAIS*

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ABSTRACT | The Brazilian State has, in its formation, peculiar characteristics that somehow can still be detected. Among them, there is patrimonialism, i.e., the disregard for the separation between public and private. In spite of the current understanding that this form of State was superseded with Getúlio Vargas, this paper proposes an understanding that signs of patrimonialism persist and can be related to the category of conservative modernization. One of the celebrated works of the Brazilian sociopolitical thought that concerns patrimonialism is *Coronelismo, enxada e voto: o município e o regime representativo no Brasil*, by Victor Nunes Leal. By this book, there could be further investigation on how it is possible to apprehend the process of conservative modernization. The methodology was literature review, reaching, at the end, the understanding that Leal's work is revealing in the way Brazil was modernized and how the State was consolidated.

KEYWORDS | Brazilian state. Coronelism. Conservative modernization. Brazilian social thought.

RESUMEN | *El Estado brasileño tiene, en su formación, características peculiares que, de alguna manera, aún son detectadas. Entre ellas, se apunta el patrimonialismo, es decir, el desaprobamiento por la separación entre público y privado. A pesar de la comprensión corriente de que esta forma de Estado fue suplantada con Getúlio Vargas, en el presente trabajo se propone la lectura de que persisten signos de patrimonialismo que pueden ser articulados a la categoría de modernización conservadora. Una de las obras célebres del pensamiento sociopolítico brasileño que trata del patrimonialismo es *Coronelismo, azada y voto: el municipio y el régimen representativo en Brasil*,*

de Victor Nunes Leal. Por ese libro, cabe investigar de qué manera es posible comprender el proceso de modernización conservadora. La metodología fue la revisión bibliográfica, alcanzando, al final, el entendimiento de que la obra puede revelar el modo en que Brasil se modernizó, así como el Estado se consolidó.

PALABRAS CLAVE | *Estado brasileño. Coronelismo. Modernización conservadora. Pensamiento social brasileño.*

RESUMO | *O Estado brasileiro tem, em sua formação, características peculiares que, de alguma maneira, ainda são detectadas. Dentre elas, aponta-se o patrimonialismo, isto é, o despreço pela separação entre público e privado. Apesar da compreensão corrente de que esta forma de Estado foi suplantada com Getúlio Vargas, no presente trabalho propõe-se a leitura de que persistem sinais de patrimonialismo que podem ser articulados à categoria de modernização conservadora. Uma das obras célebres do pensamento sociopolítico brasileiro que trata do patrimonialismo é Coronelismo, enxada e voto: o município e o regime representativo no Brasil, de Victor Nunes Leal. Por esse livro, cabe investigar de que maneira é possível apreender o processo de modernização conservadora. A metodologia foi a revisão bibliográfica, alcançando, ao final, o entendimento de que a obra pode revelar o modo pelo qual o Brasil se modernizou bem como o Estado se consolidou.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE | *Estado brasileiro. Coronelismo. Modernização conservadora. Pensamento social brasileiro.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Studying the ways in which Brazil was constituted, as well as the paths taken to reach the configuration of the current institutions, is of profound importance to analyse the contemporary Brazilian reality. It should be noted that the relevance is also given due to the formation of the Brazilian State having specificities and particularities that demand revisits to classic studies in order to try to reveal new approaches and enrich the debate.

The term “conservative modernization” was imported from the USA, as Barrington Moore Jr., an American sociologist, in his work *The social origins of dictatorship and democracy: lords and peasants in the construction of the modern world*, introduced it into the human sciences to understand the processes which Germany and Japan went through in the development of capitalism. Despite this, it has been commonly used in the national literature as a lens for understanding the Brazilian reality.

This concept refers to the way in which some countries modernized their socio-economic structures, having transformations from above as a hallmark, without effective popular participation and under the command of landlords, to use the expression of the aforementioned sociologist.

This path of development of capitalism, which takes place with agreements at the top, refers to the work *Colonelism, hoe e Voto: o Município e o regime representativo no Brasil*, by Victor Nunes Leal, in which the Brazilian particularity is explained from the perspective of the concept of colonelism, that is, a political system of exchange of favors between decaying local colonels and the public power. Through this concept, therefore, there is promiscuity between public and private power, as well as weak popular participation. Together, the State becomes a vehicle, an instrument by which private interests are shaped and materialized, despite maintaining the appearance that it is responsible for public affairs and the realization of the common good.

Therefore, on this occasion and based on a bibliographical review, the aim is to reveal how it is possible to apprehend the process of conservative

modernization in the work of Victor Nunes Leal. From the reading of colonelism presented by this author, it is exposed that the concept is a compromise system that links the public power to the private power. It is a phenomenon of the republic in which, while institutions are strengthened and the power of the “colonels” is weakened, colonelism reinvents itself, because the agrarian structure that sustains it is not confronted. In the same way that conservative modernization has as its crucial point the agreement from above by those who hold power and command the State, with the exclusion of the population, colonelism also presents itself in this way.

The present article begins with an explanation of the concept of conservative modernization and its reception in Brazil, given that its origin is American, to then delve into the work of Victor Nunes Leal. At the end, aspects of the analyzed work will be brought in which evidences the conservative modernization imbricated in colonelism and, therefore, in the way the Brazilian State has been molded.

2. CONSERVATIVE MODERNIZATION: NOTES ON A CONCEPT

In an accurate study of bibliographic review, Murilo José de Souza Pires and Pedro Ramos show the history of the emergence of the concept of conservative modernization as well as the way and paths by which it was introduced in the social sciences in Brazil. As already mentioned, the term was first used by Moore Jr.¹ when analyzing the bourgeois revolutions of Germany and Japan, that is, the way in which the transformation of the economy in these countries took place. Early on, the authors, Murilo José de Souza Pires and Pedro Ramos, assert that:

[...] the root of the phenomenon proposed for investigation is a sociopolitical manifestation with economic implications, since it expresses the conservative political pact woven between the nascent bourgeoisie and the landlord oligarchs. (2009, p. 412). (Translated).

1 José Maurício Domingues (2002) also assumes, in his text, that it was Moore Jr. who introduced the expression “conservative modernization” to social theory and considers it to be one of the most successful theories regarding the analysis of the transition to modernity.

The term, therefore, appears to reveal the political pact between the elites of the mentioned countries when they transformed their economies into capitalist ones, that is, Germany and Japan did not pass through the classic model² as the United States, France and England, because, according to the authors, anchored in Moore Jr., the two countries did not effectively break with the previous structures. Therefore, there was a deepening of “political ties between landowners and the bourgeoisie, excluding the proletariat and peasants from the full right to democracy and citizenship” (2009, p. 412).

In that sense, Moore Jr. (1975, p. 503) points out the possibility of other factors influencing the form of development of capitalism and consequent modernization³. In some places there may be a “rough coalition between the influential sectors of the landed classes and the emerging commercial and industrial interests.” Anchored in Marx and Engels, despite not being fully aligned with them, the author understands as:

[...] decisive ingredient: a commercial and industrial class too weak and dependent to seize power and rule in its own right, and which therefore throws itself into the arms of the landowning aristocracy and royal bureaucracy, exchanging the right to rule for the right to earn money. (MOORE JR, 1975, p. 503). (Translated).

Sectors of the bourgeoisie renounce revolutionary force, reconciling and allying themselves with traditional sectors to maintain their position and their own economic interests. The transformation takes place from above, preserving the socioeconomic structure which, in Brazil, as will be seen in more detail below, is expressed by the strong influence of the agrarian sector, called agribusiness a few decades ago, as well as by the very low density of democratic participation.

2 For a better understanding of the paths of development of capitalism, cf. Mazzeo (1997).

3 Antonio Carlos Mazzeo (1997) deals with the paths of development of capitalism, focusing on the way it took place in Brazil. He argues that the Prussian-colonial path was developed here, that is, the historical specificities of the formation of Brazil are decisive in the way in which institutions and the State in Brazil were developed and consolidated. The author understands that there is conciliation with the archaic, both in production relations and in social relations, limiting the action of the bourgeoisie and, consequently, of the people.

When dealing with the same theme of modernization, Raymundo Faoro (1925-2003)⁴ points out that among the characteristics that mark a backward country and those that reveal the paradigm of a developed country:

[...]the phenomenon called modernization is located - which in the past, keeping the differences in time and historical structure, would constitute Europeanization or Westernization. Two nations, in the first half of the 20th century, after a surge that made them stand out in the world, were exemplars of modernization: Germany and Japan. The two countries would have, by industrializing, assimilated and incorporated into their development the technology of the paradigmatically advanced countries, skipping stages, without paying, in social and economic terms, the high and distressing price that the British paid for gaining leadership. (1992, p. 07). (Translated).

For Faoro, conservative modernization in Brazil takes place, in this way, “in a consortium between the bourgeois, the landowner and the banker”, and this conciliation from above promoted “popular enfeudation, excluded the less well-off, middle class and workers, of the role of arbiter of the disagreements of the great ones” (1992, p. 14). For the jurist, modernity only rises on the ruin of rupture and that there are no shortcuts to citizenship.

In the same way pointed out by Faoro about the paradigm of the English, French and American bourgeois revolutions, which occurred with the effective structural rupture of the old regime, Pires and Ramos recall that:

[...] the bourgeois revolutions that took place in these countries manifested themselves with violent changes that determined a break with the political and economic structure of the old regime, thus removing rural landowners from the center of political power, given that they were the main responsible for political decisions in the period of pre-industrial society. (2009, p. 413). (Translated).

In this understanding key, it can be inferred that, contrary to what was pointed out about Germany and Japan, the United States, France and England were successful in displacing from the center of power and decision those who

4 Raymundo Faoro, a polymath, stood out mainly for his work *The Owners of Power: Formation of Brazilian Political Patronage* and for his work at the head of the Brazilian Bar Association, between 1977 and 1979, when the amnesty law has been edited.

represented the old political, social and economic structure. economy and, from that, managed to build a democratic capitalism (MOORE JR, 1975).

Pires and Ramos (2009), based on Moore Jr., announce that the model of modernization in Germany and Japan was successful in terms of modern industrialization, aligning with the paradigm, but remaining in a conservative, conducive political structure. to nazifascism.

With regard to Brazil, Carlos Nelson Coutinho summarizes the problem in the sense that:

[...] the process of socio-economic modernization in Brazil followed a 'Prussian path' or a 'passive revolution'. Let us remember the central characteristics of the phenomenon: the transformations that have taken place in our history have not resulted from authentic revolutions, from movements coming from the bottom up, involving the whole population, but have always been processed through conciliation between the representatives of the economically dominant opposing groups, conciliation that is expressed under the political figure of reforms 'from above'. (2000, p. 50, griffin ours). (Translated).

The author then recalls that, in the decisive moments of the history of Brazil, both in the Empire and in the Republic, the solutions found were "Prussian style", excluding the people, so that "the conciliation from above never hid the intention explicit way of keeping marginalized or repressed - in any case, outside the scope of decisions - the 'below' classes and strata" (2000, p. 51).

Pires and Ramos highlight the need to remember the Brazilian particularity, because, here, there was a conjugation "in the same space and time of a modern economy and an archaic economy" (2009, p. 416), and, unlike the so-called developed countries, here, the "ruling elite created obstacles to access to citizenship and democracy, since the lower classes were and continue to be excluded from the advantages provided by modernization" (PIRES; RAMOS, 2009, p. 416).

The first to bring this concept to the study of Brazilian reality was Alberto Passos Guimarães (1908-1993)⁵, in 1977. According to Pires and Ramos, the self-taught had an economic reading, and thus reduced, of conservative modernization, since “characterizes the process as the penetration of technical progress in the agricultural exploration unit without any fragmentation in the national land structure” (2009, p. 416).

On the other hand, Pires and Ramos invoke the study by Fernando Antônio Azevêdo⁶, which, in their understanding, brings the theme:

[...] to the political sphere, indicating that it is within the State that the compromises between the new and the old dominant elite are woven, in order to remain in power and, with this, obstacles to access of social classes to the center of power are created through State decision. (2009, p. 417, griffin ours). (Translated).

Pires and Ramos (2009) demonstrate that the reading of conservative modernization becomes more complex, thus involving the State. It is, therefore, through State institutions that the elites, young and old, negotiate and make political decisions; it is in the State that the weakness of the relationship between public and private takes place.

Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that Pires and Ramos return to Ignácio Rangel, who, despite not dealing with conservative modernization because he has Vladimir Lenin as a reference, points out that the national elites create difficulties for “any democratic attempts of access to political power by the other social classes” (2009, p. 417).

The review by Pires and Ramos is, as previously stated, quite careful, and, in their text, there is also their reading of the thought of Florestan Fernandes⁷ (1920-1995), in the sense that the Brazilian particularity of conservative modernization resides in capitalism dependent, that is, the

5 Despite his importance in the national political intelligentsia, he had no academic training, and was therefore self-taught.

6 He is a social scientist and professor of Political Science at the Federal University of São Carlos (UFSCar).

7 Renowned social scientist, he was also a federal deputy, including acting in the National Constituent Assembly of 1987-1988.

privileged classes benefiting from socioeconomic inequality are aligned with international interests, thus excluding the majority of the Brazilian population (PIRES; RAMOS, 2009, p. 418).

Dependent capitalism, in the understanding of Florestan Fernandes, is an agreement between dominant sectors, national and international, which maintains socioeconomic inequality and does not promote the realization of democracy, which is why the author states that Brazil has a restricted democracy. Capitalism is a global system, and:

[...] dependent capitalism generates, at the same time, economic underdevelopment and social, cultural and political underdevelopment. In both cases, he unites the archaic and the modern and raises both the archaization of the modern and the modernization of the archaic.. (FERNANDES, 2009, p. 66). (Translated).

What happens is the extraction (depletion, in the words of the aforementioned sociologist) of the riches of countries in this conformation with constant over-appropriation and over-expropriation of the dispossessed. The national bourgeoisie is subject to international dynamics, preventing full development, including its own, and effective modernization in the country.

For Miriam Limoeiro-Cardoso:

[...] dependent capitalism materializes through over-expropriation and autocracy, characterizing what Florestan Fernandes calls savage capitalism. It combines dependent economic growth with despotic misery and exclusion, in addition to the absence of rights outside the dominant social sectors. (1996, p. 05). (Translated).

If there are numerous extensive studies that seek to reveal the Brazilian particularity and agreements from the top, it is also possible to use the literature to understand such characteristics. This is the case of Jorge Amado (1912-2001), a shrewd critic, capable of synthesizing this agreement reached from above at the end of Gabriela, Clove and Cinnamon: Chronicle of a Countryside

City⁸. In addition to the romance between Nacib and Gabriela and the murder of Sinhazinha by her husband, Colonel Jesuíno Mendonça, the novel, as announced in the title, deals with issues of the interior cities. In this, in particular, Jorge Amado explores the dubiousness between the traditional practices of the colonels - backward, in the view of some -, centered on Colonel Ramiro, and the so-called new practices that lead to progress, embodied in Mundinho Falcão, now considered an “outsider” (2012, p. 61), sometimes a “blessing from heaven” (2012, p. 66). Thus, in this commitment to reveal reality through literature, at the end of the book, when the port is finally ready to receive large ships, the author points out that:

[...] in a symbolic ceremony, the laughing idea of João Fulgêncio, Mundinho Falcão and Stevenson, exporters, Amâncio Leal and Ribeirinho, farmers, carried a bag of cocoa to the end of the bridge where the ship had anchored, the first bag of cocoa to be shipped directly from Ilhéus abroad. (2012, p. 320). (Translated).

The Bahian writer captures the Brazilian reality of conciliation between the elites, as he portrays, at the moment of the beginning of direct export from Ilhéus abroad, the action between farmers (traditional or archaic) and exporters (progress or modern), being absent the local population.

Simon Schwartzman admits that the conservative coalition between the rural oligarchy and the State prevents a “policy of better-defined interests representation, and a greater opening of the political system to other social sectors, as apparently happened in capitalist countries where this type of coalition does not exist”. gave” (1988, p. 98). What is understood by this author is that the way in which representativeness was organized in Brazil is due to the “falsification of representation” (CARVALHO, 2012, p. 18), preventing the restriction of democracy pointed out by Florestan Fernandes and, consequently,

8 This book is a classic work with a profound ability to reveal the Brazilian reality in the same period as the work analyzed in this article, as well as the intricate bargaining system that involves the spheres of the Union, States and Municipalities. For this reason, excerpts will be used to support the argument of the article, although it is possible, on another occasion, to focus on a more accurate and specific dialogue between these two works of breadth.

the exclusion of a considerable portion of the population in decision-making processes.

Thus, from the reading of these authors, it is explained that conservative modernization, although initially used by an American author regarding other realities, can contribute to the understanding of the Brazilian reality, as well as saying that it is the distinctive sign of this society in the economic, social and political aspects. It can be seen that it is wide⁹ the understanding that the maintenance of the basic land structure¹⁰, since the colonial condition of the country, it is the particularity that keeps the subordinate social classes excluded, keeping them in a state of alienation from the political and economic decisions of the country.

For Raymundo Faoro (1992) “Brazilian modernizations never left, prisoners of an economic structure, intangible [...]” to the action of the ruling class, that is, modernization in Brazil is covered by “progress within the order” (1992 , p. 16), so that:

[...] civil society, already suffocated by the modernizing project, lost all political function, and, therefore, also economic function. This was, in fact, the limit of modernity: it barely allowed the autonomy of the upper classes, contrary to modernization, which imprisoned and directed them, but, in common with both, excluded the people from the social pact.. (FAORO, 1992, p. 16). (Translated).

For the jurist, the people are excluded, and decisions have historically been decided from above. Also for Victor Nunes Leal there is a pact based on the history of exclusion and “the subjection of a huge mass of salaried workers, partners, squatters and tiny landowners to the small minority of farmers” (LEAL, 2012, p. 233), as they hold power to decide the country's political and economic paths.

9 It qualifies as wide and not as settled or unanimous because there are disagreements about overcoming or not the conservative modernization. Domingues (2002), for example, understands that in Brazil in recent decades there has been a new order, and conservative modernization no longer prevails, with an important and in-depth maturation of modernity.

10 According to economist Marcos Fava Neves (2018), agribusiness has not been affected by the economic crisis and remains on the rise. Agribusiness is responsible for 30% of GDP and 100% for the favorable trade balance.

As stated at the beginning, this article, based on the concept of conservative modernization, intends to reflect on its relationship with the concept of colonelism worked by Victor Nunes Leal, and, from the next item, the main points of this author's work will be presented.

3. “CORONELISMO, ENXADA E VOTO: O MUNICÍPIO E O REGIME REPRESENTATIVO NO BRASIL”: THE EXPRESSION OF COMMITMENT BETWEEN COMPADRES

Victor Nunes Leal was born in Carangola, Minas Gerais, where he remained until completing his secondary studies. This experience in an inner city¹¹ in the first half of the 20th century leads to the understanding that the predominantly rural environment, rooted in the agrarian structure and the resulting relationships, is the reason for choosing the theme colonelism for the thesis of the competition in the chair of Political Science at the National Faculty of Philosophy of University of Brazil¹².

The author graduated in Law in 1936, at the age of 22, at the Faculty of Law of Rio de Janeiro. He worked as a lawyer and held public office until he was appointed by the then President of the Republic, Juscelino Kubitschek, to the Federal Supreme Court, in November 1960. Given his political position, he was compulsorily retired on January 16, 1969 as a result of Institutional Act No.5¹³ with two more ministers, Evandro Lins and Hermes Lima. In solidarity, Minister Gonçalves de Oliveira resigned from his post.

Victor Nunes Leal took an active part in the creation of the University of Brasília (UnB), organizing the base curriculum for the courses in Law, Business Administration and Economics, which would later form the Faculty of Applied Social Studies. He taught the discipline of Introduction to Political Science and

11 According to estimated data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) in 2018, Carangola has 32,988 inhabitants and can be considered a small town.

12 This is the understanding of Alberto Venâncio Filho when prefacing the third edition of the book.

13 Institutional Act n° 5, issued on December 13, 1968, was the hardest blow to the civil-military regime (1964-1985). This instrument considerably increased the powers of the President of the Republic, allowing him to decree the recess of the National Congress, Legislative Assemblies and City Councils, suspend political rights for 10 years and guarantee habeas corpus. It was the act that initiated a period of intense persecution and violence.

Constitutional Law until he was also withdrawn from the National Faculty of Philosophy at the University of Brazil. With the compulsory retirements, he began to practice law, remaining in academic life with the publication of several books and articles.

About the analyzed work, it is worth mentioning that José Murilo de Carvalho considers it “the first modern work of political science in our country” (2012, p. 14), while Alberto Venâncio Filho says that it is “a fundamental landmark of political studies” (2012, p. 35) and Barbosa Lima Sobrinho qualifies it as a “fundamental work for understanding the Brazilian reality” (2012, p. 42).

Its original title is “The municipality and the representative regime in Brazil: contribution to the study of colonelism”, but, for publication purposes, in 1949, it was changed to Colonelism, hoe and vote: the municipality and the representative regime in Brazil. The book is divided into seven chapters in which there is a very interesting movement: the author begins by exploring the concept of colonelism and, after covering in-depth themes about the municipality such as administration, taxation and police and judicial organization, returns to the central theme to conclude your reflection.

José Murilo de Carvalho (2012) recalls that the exact understanding of Victor Nunes Leal's work rejects the idea that colonelism presented there is confused with bossism. The originality of the book, for the commentator, lies in the demonstration that it is a system “between colonels, governors and the president, in a game of coercion and co-optation exercised nationally” (2012, p. 12).

“Colonelism”, according to note 1 of the book, is an old expression registered in the key of “Brazilianism” in the national language and refers to the colonels of the National Guard, a Brazilian military force that existed between 1831 and 1922, which in its composition only had members from of the elite. For Victor Nunes Leal, it was the “modernized revival of the Ordenanças” (2012, p. 201), that is, “a third-line military reserve, which included the entire male population between eighteen and sixty years old, not yet enlisted in the line

troop". or in the militias" (2012, p. 199). It is, in short, an armed force that has developed outside the law.

The coroneis, as a rule, were the richest farmers or merchants who exercised this function and, thus, dominated the local scene. It took root in such a way that, even when it was extinct, the lucky ones were indistinctly named as colonels without having the title, just by being holders of political and economic power. Jorge Amado, on the use of the patent, points out that "the custom remained: the owner of a field of more than a thousand arrobas would normally use and receive the title that there did not imply military command, but rather the recognition of wealth" (AMADO , 2012, p. 27).

With that, and from the work examined, Victor Nunes Leal clarifies the way in which colonelism is conceived, being the "result of the superimposition of developed forms of the representative regime to an inadequate economic and social structure" (LEAL, 2012, p. 43). Further on, he complements by stating that it is "an exchange of benefits between public power, progressively strengthened, and the declining social influence of local chiefs, notably landlords" (LEAL, 2012, p. 44).

In view of this, the author assumes that colonelism is a bargaining system between the public and the private, a promiscuous relationship between the private universe of land property holders and the public that had been organized, especially since the Proclamation of the Republic. Colonelism, highlights José Murilo de Carvalho¹⁴, is a relationship that intertwines all spheres of the Federation that:

[...] arises at the confluence of a political fact with an economic conjuncture. The political fact is the federalism implemented by the Republic in replacement of imperial centralism. Federalism created a new political actor with broad powers, the state governor. (CARVALHO, 1997). (Translated).

14 José Murilo de Carvalho is a reference in the studies of this theme, having prefaced the seventh edition of *Colonelism, hoe and vote: the municipality and the representative regime*, as well as published articles on the subject.

It can be said that it is an agreement between compadres that feeds back, that is, an arrangement of private interests with a public interest guise. Even if the local colonels were in decline, or no longer in the opulence of yesteryear, their financial situation was seen by the mass of the population, which was in penury, as being of plenty and prosperity. As highlighted by Leal, “the human mass that derives their subsistence from their land lives in the most deplorable state of poverty, ignorance and abandonment. In front of her, the 'colonel' is rich” (2012, p. 46).

The asymmetry in the socioeconomic condition allowed the colonels to be seen as benefactors by rural workers (LEAL, 2012, p. 47), as it was they, the colonels, who provided improvements in the urban space, enabled access to products and services and provided credit for the acquisition of goods for subsistence and planting. Jorge Amado, in an attempt to construct the contradiction between backwardness and progress in the figures of Colonel Ramiro and Mundinho Falcão, shows that, with the arrival of the latter, who represents modernization, the embellishment provided by the former, who represents the archaic, lost its luster and was put in check. Colonel Ramiro, at a given moment, asks himself: “Why did everyone start doing what they wanted, on their own, without listening to him, without waiting for him to give orders? What was happening in Ilhéus that he no longer understood and no longer commanded?” (AMADO, 2012, p. 64). It is an expression that, in the manner established until then, the colonel is the one who decides without being questioned because he is “a polarizing socioeconomic element, which served as a point of reference for knowing the distribution of individuals in the social space, whether they were his peers or his inferiors” (QUEIROZ, 1997, p. 136).

Victor Nunes Leal draws attention to the fact that the colonels did not necessarily hold public office, but their influence in the municipality and their connections with state representatives and the president allowed for a connection that gave them benefits and prevented an effective separation between public and private¹⁵.

15 Jorge Amado, by placing Colonel Ramiro as a typical character of the colonel who commands and decides, demonstrates that he is the one who defines the final result of the election by saying, several times, that Mundinho Falcão will not assume the mayoralty if elected. He also shows his power by establishing that his eldest son is a career politician, despite preferring medicine, and that

As the author starts from the understanding of the system, he brings to the discussion the idea of land concentration and, consequently, income, in the hands of a minority. Based on studies by some authors, among them Caio Prado Junior, Victor Nunes Leal exposes the concentration and the damage resulting from it, demonstrating the persistent socioeconomic inequality.

The author states that “considered the problem as a whole, the concentration of property is still, nowadays, the dominant fact in our rural life” (LEAL, 2012, p. 47). Caio Prado Junior (1907-1990), in *História Econômica do Brasil*, presents a reading of the formation of the country since the arrival of the Portuguese, in which there is a distinctive mark that is perpetuated, although, depending on the historical moment, there are adjustments to meet the needs of the period. This author states that Brazil is, “ultimately, in the same organization inherited from the past: large land ownership and exploitation” (PRADO JR., 1973, p. 224). In his understanding, it is the nature of the colonial economy that is reinstated today, keeping the due differences, without shaking the initial structure that keeps the country in a condition of “peripheral complement and simple appendix” (PRADO JR., 1973, p. 330) of the core countries. Furthermore, Caio Prado Jr. understands that this economic formation conditions the social formation, that is, the settlement takes place:

[...] alongside a small minority of white leaders, the vast majority of other dominated and enslaved races, Indians and black Africans, whose function was none other than to work and produce sugar, tobacco, cotton, gold and diamonds that European markets demanded.. (1973, p. 118). (Translated).

Caio Prado's understanding is that there is a structure that maintains strong socioeconomic inequality and, therefore, land ownership¹⁶ and income¹⁷. Likewise, in the work examined: Victor Nunes Leal asserts that the agrarian

his youngest son runs the Notary Office of Ilhéus, even though he is uncommitted to the world of work and is more interested in good healthy life.

16 According to OXFAM Brasil, the concentration of land in Brazil reaches the figure of 45% of the rural area belonging to less than 1% of owners. With regard to gender (in)equality, 94.5% of the land is in the name of men (2016).

17 Also according to OXFAM, in a report released in 2018, “A stagnant country: a portrait of Brazilian inequalities”, the country still occupies a prominent position with regard to income concentration, behind Qatar (GEORGES, 2018).

structure keeps rural workers in “a situation of lack of culture and abandonment” (LEAL, 2012, p. 232) and that “we are, in this particular, legitimate heirs of the colonial system of large agricultural exploitation, cultivated by slave labor and producer of raw materials and foodstuffs, intended for export” (LEAL, 2012, p. 232-233).

Leal dedicates a chapter to the study of the revenue sharing system among the federated entities and highlights the limited resources of the municipalities compared to the responsibilities assigned to them. Given the decay of local power and the lack of financial solidity, the municipality is not politically emancipated. In this way, the bargain is translated as a means to obtain improvements in the locality with the control of the colonels¹⁸.

What he indicates is that “without financial solidity, the municipality cannot have political independence” (LEAL, 2012, p. 108) and that in Brazil the concentration of power, federal and state, has been at the expense of the weakening of municipal power. .

About the electoral process, Victor Nunes Leal points out that “the municipality is, in Brazil, the basic piece of electoral campaigns” (2012, p. 137) and that the representative system is the food of colonelism. If, in given circumstances, depending on what national and, consequently, international politics and economy demanded, the electoral process is suspended - as it had happened in the Vargas era -, it does not mean that colonelism disappeared. Indeed, what one sees in the face of the eventual discontinuation of the electoral-representative regime is the accommodation of the system in order to survive. In the words of the author: “call the people to the polls, as happened in 1945, and ‘colonelismo’ will rise from the ashes, because the sap that feeds it is the country’s agrarian structure” (LEAL, 2012, p. 139).

18 The Constitution of the Republic of 1988 innovated and raised municipalities as federal entities. In any case, there is doctrinal divergence on this aspect. José Afonso da Silva, for example, makes severe criticisms and claims that this meets the claims of classic municipalists (SILVA, 2012). It should be noted that, even with this relocation of the municipality in the country's legislative structure, it continues with reduced autonomy. On this topic, cf. Giroldo and Kempfer (2012).

It is noticed that, although there are changes, there is a recomposition of the previous forms without effective break with the structure that feeds colonelism. As István Mészáros teaches:

[...]given the determinations of the social order, which are inseparably structural and historical, the 'traditional' continues to play a crucially important role in all conceivable social formations, however advanced. Indeed, in the dialectical relationship between legally articulated normativity and traditional forms of socially effective normativity, primacy is the latter, and remains with it even under the conditions of capitalist 'modernity'... (2004, p. 88, griffin ours). (Translated).

In the process of conservative modernization in Brazil, there are readjustments, rearrangements within the order, but no break with the agrarian structure, which represents the traditional. In this sense, Leal recalls that colonelism is a constitutive phenomenon of the republican regime in which despite “various elements that help compose the picture of 'colonelism' [being] of frequent observation during the Empire and some of them in the colonial period itself” (2012, p. 234).

What Victor Nunes Leal reveals is that there is a replacement of social forms¹⁹, even when there are attempts to break with the previous ones, as occurred in the period of the so-called Vargas Era and in the so-called redemocratization in 1945/1946, the final period addressed by the analyzed work²⁰.

The concentration of land and income, the pyramidal bargain between powers, the promiscuity between public and private powers and the alienation of the people allow, in this way, to observe the approximation between conservative modernization, presented in item 1, and colonelismo, now presented, having as central points that interconnect them the agrarian

19 In the same key of understanding about accommodation and replacement of social forms cf. Queiroz (1997, p. 153-190).

20 Despite not being the object of this article, it is understood that, even in the periods after the work and keeping its specificities, since the issue of the agrarian structure in Brazil has not yet been faced, the way of acting and the compromise between elites to lead the country, dismissing and excluding the majority of the population.

structure and the transformations coming from above, without popular participation.

4. CONSERVATIVE MODERNIZATION AND CORONELISM: THE IMBRICATION OF TWO CONCEPTS

In this item, we move towards the outcome of this article by articulating the concepts worked on in the previous topics, conservative modernization and colonelism. In order to reinforce the discussion, it is worth repeating that conservative modernization:

[...] was done without altering the structure of rural property, it had, in the words of economists, 'perverse effects': property became more concentrated, income disparities increased, rural exodus increased, the rate of exploitation increased of the labor force in agricultural activities, the rate of self-exploitation in smaller properties has increased, the quality of life of the working population in the countryside has deteriorated. (PALMEIRA, 1989, p. 87). (Translated).

Alongside the maintenance of the agrarian structure, not breaking with the archaic, and in line with what was previously discussed, the issue of the socioeconomic structure in Brazil - land ownership and income concentration - is what sustains the rigidity of socioeconomic inequality, the fragility of citizenship and restricted democracy experienced in the country.

For Bolívar Lamounier, “the lordship that was formed from landowning agriculture was, in our history, a powerful delaying factor in the modernization of the country” (1999, p. 291), and colonelism, in his understanding, “is a web of favors and reciprocity” (1999, p. 291) that takes root:

[...] in the superposition of developed forms of the representative regime to an inadequate economic and social structure. That is, the economic decline of the farmer would find, in the republican regime, an attenuation with the appreciation of his political role, mainly derived from the source of votes under his control. (LAMOUNIER, 1999, p. 279). (Translated).

It is worth mentioning this passage to mark the idea that colonelism is an agreement between compadres and, in the mold of conservative modernization, a pact made from above by those in power with the aim of commanding the political and economic decisions of the country, directing them and aligning them to meet private interests. As already announced elsewhere: it is a promiscuous relationship between public and private.

From this, considering the conservative modernization a reduced or amputated modernity, it can be affirmed that in Brazil there was not - and there is not - participation of a wide margin of the population in the decision-making processes. Colonelism, a hallmark of our history, is an agreement between colonels who, to pursue their own interests, protect the poor, preventing the promotion of self-determination and effective popular participation²¹. With this, it can be inferred that conservative modernization and colonelism are sides of the same coin or elements of the same way of achieving modernity. Colonelism is, to a certain extent, the Brazilian particularity regarding the understanding of conservative modernization.

As pointed out by Victor Nunes Leal, the sore point of the concept worked on by him is that “this political system is dominated by a compromise between decadent private power and strengthened public power” (2012, p. 231). Colonelism expressed itself more prominently in the period 1889-1930, the so-called Old Republic, based on practices from previous periods, the Empire and Colonies, and was preserved with the emergence of the bureaucratic State in the so-called Vargas Era, in view of maintaining of the central elements of the concept. As Leal points out, the exclusionary ties of the

21 As an example, we can mention Presidential Decree n° 8.243/2014, which instituted the National Social Participation Policy (PNPS) and the National Popular Participation System (SNPP) with the aim of consolidating social participation as a method of government that should be used by all bodies and entities of the federal public administration, direct and indirect. However, there was strong resistance to the implementation of these systems in the sense of accusing the then President of the Republic of changing the government regime by means of a decree, since, in the opinion of her opponents, Brazilian democracy must be exercised primarily in a representative manner. On October 28, 2014, two days after the President's re-election, the Chamber of Deputies approved legislative decree No. 1,491/2014, which halted the aforementioned presidential decree. The expansion of social participation along the lines of the decree, in reality, would be an opportunity to redefine/reframe citizenship, the foundation of the Constitution of the Republic, as well as deepening, rooting and sedimenting democratic values in Brazilian society. It would perhaps be a gateway to the expansion of democracy hitherto restricted to the ruling classes.

mass of the population remain, as “it has, on the contrary, contributed to consolidate the system, guaranteeing the leaders of the official State machine a more substantial share in the bargain that configures it” (2012, p. 235) .

Boris Fausto, admitting that the Estado Novo “did not represent a radical break with the past” (2001, p. 201), points out that:

[...]the authoritarian current assumed, with all consequences, the perspective of what is called conservative modernization; that is, the point of view that, in a disjointed country like Brazil, it was up to the State to organize the nation to promote economic development and general well-being within the order. (2001, p. 195, griffin ours). (Translated).

In this sense, Vargas' attention was not turned, for example, to confronting labor relations in the countryside, which corroborates Victor Nunes Leal's (2012) understanding that labor legislation did not advance beyond the gate of each farm. Regarding this period, Maria Helena Capelato observes that “the ideologues of power, who organized the State from above, were concerned with gaining the support of the elites, considered important pieces in the construction of a new country” (1998, p. 137), ignoring the popular sectors.

Victor Nunes Leal points out that Getúlio Vargas, in an attempt to break with patrimonialism and impose a bureaucratic State, may have managed to make some adjustments, but, nevertheless, because he did not face the agrarian structure, colonelism “which adapts, here and there, to survive, abandoning the rings to keep the fingers” still lives (LEAL, 2012, p. 237). In the words of Victor Nunes Leal, “just as the agrarian structure still in force contributes to the subsistence of 'colonelism', 'colonelism' also contributes to the conservation of that same structure” (LEAL, 2012, p. 238), because, in addition to , patrimonialist practices remain “culturally rooted in the Brazilian public ethos” (NOHARA, 2012, p. 227).

In a perspective that seems optimistic and contradictory about the Brazilian reality, Victor Nunes Leal points out that the arrival of the 1946 Constitution could be able to put an end to the colonelista system (2012, p.

238). But, if colonelism is a system rooted in the agrarian structure that still has not been effectively transformed, perhaps it is possible to state that, keeping the due differences of historical periods, colonelism persists concealed in new features, as in the disputes for vacancies in the Legislative Houses.

In the same way that “the end of the oligarchic system cannot be confused with the end of oligarchies” (FAUSTO, 1976, p. 110), the end of coronéis does not impose the end of colonelism. Barbosa Lima Sobrinho, in preface to the second edition of Leal's work in 1975, admits that there was an important urbanization in the country with the fall of the influence of the “coronéis”, but, at the same time, he asserts that it does not mean that colonelism has ended. He questions and sentences:

What does it matter that the ‘colonel’ became a doctor”? Or that the farm has been turned into a factory? Or that your assistants have become advisors or technicians? The underlying reality does not change in the areas to which it has been confined. The phenomenon of 'colonelism' persists, even as a reflection of a situation of income distribution in which the economic condition of the proletarians is barely distinguishable from extreme poverty. (LIMA SOBRINHO in LEAL, 2012, p. 41). (Translated).

Later, the preface says that not even the mass media, television and radio, were able to dethrone the “colonels”, because “it will be with these local leaders that the federal and state powers will have to understand, for the compositions policies, on which they will depend” (2012, p. 42).

Carlos Nelson Coutinho notes that “anti-popular elitism” (2000, p. 56) is at the root of the Brazilian particularity, as historically changes have been made to keep power in the hands of the elites. He brings, to compose this assertion, the phrase of Antônio Carlos, Minas Gerais politician active in the Vargas Era, who declared: “let's make the revolution before the people make it” (2000, p. 57). In the same way, he brought Evaristo da Veiga who, in the Empire, defended the Constitution saying: “Change our social pact, but preserve the

essence of the adopted system. (...) Do everything that is necessary, but avoid the revolution” (2000, p. 57)²².

Simon Schwartzman (1988, p. 20) asserts that, also in the period of redemocratization that culminated with the 1988 Constitution, there was a negotiated transition between political and economic sectors with the military in order to hand over power to someone considered trustworthy. The idea of finding a balance between State and society in a conciliatory pact was maintained.

What is seen is that, on one side or the other, conservative modernization or colonelism, one can find strong points of contact that show how institutions were being forged in Brazil. Both categories bring up the structural issue of the economy, as Brazil was shaped from the ground up and remains so: agribusiness, today, is the flagship of the Brazilian economy. Another common point that still remains is the large mass of dispossessed people and the consequent weakness in popular participation in political and/or economic decisions in the country.

The centralization of power, in spite of the legal structure granting autonomy to the municipalities, preserves its pettiness and maintains the system of exchange of favors serving private interests. As Victor Nunes Leal points out, in addition to the agrarian structure that guarantees colonelism, the representative system (2012, p. 233) and federalism make a decisive contribution to this. In his words:

[...] the federative regime also contributed, significantly, to the production of the phenomenon: by making the state government entirely elective, it allowed the assembly, in the old provinces, of solid electoral machines; these stable electoral machines, which determined the institution of the “policy of

22 On overhead agreements, one can mention Law No. 6683/1979, which began the transition period for the country's redemocratization. As the understanding of the law was in the sense that State agents were also covered by it, the Order of Lawyers of Brazil filed a lawsuit for non-compliance with a fundamental precept (ADPF 153) in order to redesign it, recognizing the possibility of investigating and punish state agents, as happened in Argentina. However, in spite of the decision of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights having decided that the aforementioned Law violates the rules of the regional human rights system, the STF decided for the constitutionality of Law n° 6683/1979 in the sense of maintaining the agreement that exempts agents from the State for the crimes committed.

governors” rested precisely on the colonelist commitment. (2012, p. 233). (Translated).

The author understands that, in addition to being characteristic of the representative system and federalism, the “phenomenon studied is characteristic of the republican regime” (2012, p. 233). This intricate set of elements configures the country and deserves careful investigation in order to overcome it. In this way, it is possible to find the conservative modernization, considered as a political pact from above between sectors of the elites, in the work *Colonelism, hoe and vote: the municipality and the representative regime in Brazil*, by Victor Nunes Leal.

5. CONCLUSION

Dealing with reality in an attempt to understand and apprehend the way in which institutions were shaped is the task of researchers attentive to Brazilian social thought. Thus, given the dynamism of the historical process, revolving themes allocated in the early period of the Republic, such as colonelism, contributes to the understanding of more recent periods. Therefore, it becomes valuable to revisit the work of Victor Nunes Leal in view of his ability to reveal the Brazilian particularity, in particular, with regard to colonelism and, as we intend to demonstrate here, its connection with the concept of conservative modernization.

To do so, it began with the explanation of the concept of conservative modernization, working with a bibliographical review of authors who focused on the subject and who contributed to the understanding of the Brazilian reality from this perspective. Conservative modernization was initially elaborated by sociologist Moore Jr. in his research on Germany and Japan and introduced for the first time in Brazil by Alberto Passos Guimarães, having been followed by other intellectuals, including expanding and complexifying the reading.

After explaining what conservative modernization is about, the concept of colonelism was brought up from the classic work of Victor Nunes Leal. For

this author, the concept refers, in short, to a system that intertwines the private power of the so-called colonels with the public power, excluding, from this bargain, the great mass of the population as well as their interests. Moreover, it is a phenomenon that is strengthened in the Republic, but that brings elements from previous periods, Empire and Colony. It is a characteristic element of the Republic, - public thing - colonelism shows the level of contamination of private interests by institutions.

At the end and with the bibliographical review presented, it is considered that Victor Nunes Leal captured the conservative modernization when he leaned over and scrutinized the concept of colonelism, being possible to affirm that it is still expressed in Brazil. Even if not in the exact mold of the period studied by him in view of the socioeconomic transformations that occurred in the decades after publication, it is possible to identify the presence of the founding elements presented in his study and, therefore, for not having been overcome, the work, classic, remains current for the deepening of investigations surrounding Law and Political Science.

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