

10. Completely Other Formation

Oliveira Vianna (1883-1951) wrote the first volume of *Populações Meridionais do Brasil* (Meridional Populations of Brazil, henceforth PMB) in 1918, being published in 1920; the second volume was published (unfinished) in 1952, a year after his death.³⁴⁴ This "essay" comprises an effort to "investigate, from the dust of our past, the seeds of our current ideas" (PMB1, p.13). PMB is devoted to "the interpretation of our history and the study of our national *formation*. All my intent is to establish the social characterization of our people, as close to reality as possible, in order to put into relief how different we are from other peoples, especially from those great European peoples, due to the particular and original history, structure, *formation*" (PMB1, p.15, italics added). The centrality of the concept of "formation" can be seen already in the titles given to the parts that divide the first volume of PMB: the first part is called "Historical Formation"; the second, "Social Formation"; the third, "Political Formation".³⁴⁵

The history of Brazil is "short" compared to those such as "the English, the French, the Portuguese" histories; here, the "historical march" has less than five centuries and it has produced an "extreme" and "singular" people, different from "all the [other] nations of the Earth" (see PMB1, pp.13-4). Through the comparison Oliveira Vianna proposes between "our people [*gente*]" and the "great peoples, who are our masters and paradigms", he claims to "evidence many deficiencies of our social and political organization" (PMB1, p.19); this is a way he wants to unveil how "we live in a perfect illusion of ourselves" (PMB1, p.19).³⁴⁶ This illusion affects mainly those who have been governing the country since the Independence, fascinated as they are with "the great democratic movement of the French revolution; the English parliamentary turmoil; the liberal spirit of the institutions that govern the American Republic" (PMB1, p.19).

³⁴⁴ In 2005, the 22nd edition of PMB came out. Here, the first volume will be identified as "PMB1", while the second by "PMB2".

³⁴⁵ Completing this first volume, there is an introduction, called "The Rural Aristocracy", and a fourth part, called "Political Psychology".

³⁴⁶ He even says that "our political history can be well defined as the history of the evolutions of a people around a Fiction" (IPB1, p.14, italics in the original).

This fascination constitutes the worse kind of mistake that has been reproduced by the ruling elites in Brazil, that is: they "lose the objective notion of the real Brazil and create an artificial and peregrine Brazil to their use, a Brazil... *made in Europe*" (PMB1, p.19).³⁴⁷ To Oliveira Vianna, those who prevail in the "international competition" are "the peoples that organize themselves under objective criteria", "races nourished by the sense of realities", "men that make use neither of theories nor of fictions", while those that live under their own illusions are "condemned to perish" (see PMB1, p.20). In sum, there is a "real Brazil" and a "legal Brazil" in conflict. Because of that, the elaboration of a non-idealist, objective, methodology has always been a central pillar to him, as one can see in PMB and in the other text I will discuss later, published almost 30 years after PMB, *Instituições Políticas Brasileiras* (Brazilian Political Institutions).³⁴⁸

Despite finishing his historical investigation in the end of the Empire, PMB, as well as *Instituições Políticas Brasileiras*, are not providing histories of an already-gone past. To Oliveira Vianna, "*the past lives within us*, latent, obscure in the cells of our subconscious. It is this past that drives us until today through its invisible, but ineluctable and fatal, influence" (PMB1, p.13, italics added).³⁴⁹

The historical effort in PMB led Oliveira Vianna to be opposed to the "current preconception of the uniformity of our people" (PMB1, p.15). Instead, what is seen is an internal diversity composed of regional differentiations, from

³⁴⁷ "Made in Europe" is in English in the original.

³⁴⁸ As he puts in the *Addendum* added in 1938 to the fourth edition, he says that, methodologically, "instead of studying laws and Constitutions, we went straight to the matrices of our own "social and historical *formation*" (PMB1, p.283, italics added). In 1931, in text called "The Sociological Studies in Brazil", Oliveira Vianna attests the "inferiority" of the "social research" (he uses the expression in English) in Brazil, claiming for a more frequent resort "to scientific methods of research, a more systematic concern with the objective problems. In sum, a kind of move to the concrete from those spirits that are dedicated here to the studies of social sciences" (Vianna, 1991 [1931], p.93). Oliveira Vianna has always criticized the importation of political ideas and institutions to Brazil, as I will discuss at length below; this does not mean, however, that he himself has not constantly resorted to external theoretical sources to his interpretation of Brazil. On the contrary, instead of refusing to mobilize external thinkers and theories, the modernization of social research he defends involves an inevitable catch-up with what has been produced in other intellectual environments. The claim, therefore, is not against importation, but against the negligence of our reality in this process. Moreover, many aspects in his interpretation are indebted to some Brazilian thinkers, as he himself sometimes observes. In sum: external and internal sources must be adequate to internal reality. This is true for his conception of science as it is for his conception of political institutions, society and people.

³⁴⁹ To Oliveira Vianna, after the Abolition in 1888, "our people enters in a phase of profound and general disorganization, unparalleled in all its history. All the guidelines of our collective evolution have since then become completely fractured and diverted" (PMB1, pp.18-9). The Republican period, to him, shows itself highly disturbed by "social, economic and political crises of greater relevance" (PMB1, p.19), deserving, therefore, a separate study.

which he identifies "three different histories", "three different societies", each with its "specific type": in the North, he identifies the *sertanejo*, an inlander or country person; in the Mid-south, the *matuto*, a variation of a rustic type of person; and, in the far South, he identifies the *gaúcho* (see PMB, pp.15-6).³⁵⁰ As Gildo Marçal Brandão (2007) points out, the title of the text already says a lot, since the plural in "populations" and the very fact that one reads "populations", not "elites", indicate the main concern to be developed.

The focus of the text is put on the rural populations and types. The urban populations and types are considered by him "reflexes or variations" of the rural environment (see PMB1, pp.17-8).³⁵¹ Moreover, the historical period approached ranges from the first colonial centuries until the end of the XIX century. Oliveira Vianna says that the rural aristocracy found in the South and in the North of Brazil, mainly in the states of São Paulo and Pernambuco during the first centuries of colonialism, could be described as a "nook of European court transplanted to the middle of the American wildness" (PMB1, p.23). According to him, the men that formed these aristocracies were highly cultivated and learned (see PMB1, p.25). In opposition to those that defended that the Europeans that came to Brazil from the Peninsula were criminals and degraded people, he claims that "we have *formed* our people from the most excellent elements of the Peninsula" (PMB1, p.29, n.8, italics added).³⁵² Nevertheless, the environment in the colony was incompatible with these men, that is, this transplanted European court, since it was massively rural, while this court had essentially urban behaviors. Hence, the colonial period witnessed a

³⁵⁰ It is not my point here to characterize each of the "types" identified in PMB; the most important thing here is to have in mind the triple differentiation through which Oliveira Vianna has come to interpret Brazil. The first volume of PMB "is entirely dedicated to [the *matuto*]", who is the most "national" of the types, in a "situation of incontestable preponderance over the other two regional types" (PMB1, p.17), since he is placed exactly at the epicenter of the national politics since Independence, in 1822.

³⁵¹ It is worth having in mind that Oliveira Vianna stated that by that time the rural population in Brazil was formed by more than twenty million people, while the total population was around twenty five millions (see PMB1, p.18).

³⁵² The role of large land properties is differently evaluated according to the historical period in question: in the colonial period, it is identified as the instrument of adaptation of the noble Portuguese to the tropics; in the independent period, however, it is not so much that the aristocracy turns into a problem, but the isolation of large land properties becomes a problem to the national unity as envisaged by the nation-builders (for some takes on this different evaluation, see Carvalho, 1993, pp.29-30; Ferreira, 1996, p.231; Ricupero, 2008b, p.65; Ricupero, 2010, p.83). Although it has already been much contested the statement that the Portuguese that came to the American colony were "excellent elements", it is not my point here to propose a counter-historical narrative, but to interpret how his account of the past is relevant to the uses of "formation" in Oliveira Vianna's interpretation. I will get back to that later.

conflict between, on the one hand, "the old European tendency, characteristically centripetal", therefore attracting superior classes to the cities, and, on the other hand, "the new American tendency, characteristically centrifugal", therefore impelling these classes to isolation in the countryside (PMB1, p.28).

The centrifugal tendency has showed to be adequate to the American environment, and prevailed in this antagonism (see PMB1, p.32). This solution has marked the formation of Brazilian people, "our national psychology": "the Brazilian is always, always reveals himself, always affirms himself as a man of the countryside in the old way. The urban instinct is not part of his temperament; nor are the urban customs and habits" (PMB1, p.36).³⁵³ This rural temperament results from the "American *formation*", it comes from "the combined action of many of our particularities, particularities of our environment and of our history" (PMB1, p.36, italics added). Moreover, it is expressed at its supreme form in the farmer, the owner of large lands and of slaves; after the Independence, these farmers begun to rule the country (see PMB1, p.37, p.45). This aristocracy contains the "Arian elements of our nationality"; its qualities "form until today the best of our character" (see PMB1, p.47).³⁵⁴

³⁵³ The first phrase is in italics in the original.

³⁵⁴ A digression needs to be made in this aspect. The Arianism in PMB leads to statements such as the following: the national nobility is defined as "genuine whites", "almost entirely Arian", possessing a "moral highness", "purity of blood and purity of character", "superiority of character", "social and moral superiority" (PMB1, pp.98-9). At the same time, Oliveira Vianna recognizes the "subaltern condition" imposed upon the hybrid people [*mestiços*] by the "prejudices" that permeate the formation of Brazilian people (see PMB1, pp.99-100). Overall, he is clear enough: "[t]he prejudices of color and of blood that rule in a supreme way in the society of the I, II and III centuries [that correspond the XVI, XVII and XVIII centuries] have thus a truly providential function. They are admirable selective apparatus that prevents the inferior hybrid people [*mestiços*] from ascending to the ruling classes" (PMB1, p.103). And he continues: "[t]he superior *mestiços*... that win or ascend in our environment during the long period of our national *formation* do not win or ascend as *mestiços*. Instead of remaining as such when they ascend..., they only ascend when they transform themselves and lose these characteristics, when they no longer are *psychologically mestiços* because they are Arianized" (PMB1, pp.108-9, italics added only in "formation"). It is not my purpose here to discuss the racial elements in PMB from the historical moment in which the text was written; more precisely, I do not intend to assess Oliveira Vianna's racial conceptions in relation to his time, however relevant this may be to another kind of interpretation of his text. Gildo Marçal Brandão (2007), for example, proposes that the political dimension of his text can be separated from the sociological dimension, this one very marked by racist conceptions (Brandão, 2007, pp.70-1). Although it is a valid point that PMB's political dimension importantly contributes to the problematization of contemporary Brazil, it also seems helpful to address the racial and racist aspects of the text without the assumption that they have no other value than a historical one. Let me just note in passing two things. Firstly, Oliveira Vianna has later abandoned the conception he holds, for instance in PMB, according to which a specific race, the Arian or *dólico-louro*, is superior to the others; and, although he has not completely abandon the racial aspect in his interpretation, it has been attenuated (see Madeira, 1991, p.8-10; Madeira, 1993, pp.200-1; Almeida, 1999, p.297, n.3; Brandão, 2007, pp.90-1). Secondly, he explicitly positioned himself against Nazi Pan-Germanism, arguing that the state ruled by Adolf Hitler was based on ethnicity, and not on a territorially

After the transference of the Portuguese Crown to Brazil, in 1808, Brazil's ports, until then under a colonial pact that permitted commercial relations only with Portugal, were opened to other nations. Oliveira Vianna says that this created a bourgeoisie composed of merchants, a "new class" with "a purely urban origin and character", standing in contrast with the land nobility. But this new class would soon be defeated by the land nobility, who would then rule the independent country (see PMB1, pp.41-5). Until the half of the IV century (XIX century), large lands had been "forced to live by themselves, from themselves and to themselves" (PMB1, p.113), since no other kind of organization was able to be developed, including the commercial bourgeoisie, the industrial class or the urban corporations (see also PMB1, pp.117-9).³⁵⁵

The large land properties isolate men from each other, being "essentially anti-urban", as Brazilians themselves are. There is, after all, a certain symbiosis between Brazilian people and the American (local) environment: "[w]e *are* the large land properties", big families that absorb the entourage "as if society did not exist" (PMB1, p.48, italics added).³⁵⁶ This rural property is "essentially our creation, *essentially Brazilian*" (PMB1, p.73, italics added) and it performs two major functions. Firstly, they support the "social power" of the land nobility, being the "main condition of authority and rule" (PMB1, p.60). Secondly, it promotes the hybridization of the "three races that form our people", that is, the African blacks, the Portuguese and the Indigenous peoples; in other words, these hybrid people [*mestiços*] are a product of these large lands whose function becomes, then, "one of the greatest in our history, since there lie the genesis and the formation of nationality itself" (PMB1, p.69).

circumscribed nation, which leads to the ambition of extending sovereignty over to other states, being a potential threat even to Brazil (see Vianna, 1991b, pp.98-102, pp.112-22). For Oliveira Vianna's positions in relation to Nazism, see the series of six articles published between March and May, 1943 in the newspaper *A Manhã*, and that are reproduced at the end of the second volume of the edition of PMB have been using here.

³⁵⁵ When Oliveira Vianna indicates the centuries, he refers to the XVI century as I century, as if Brazilian history had begun with colonization.

³⁵⁶ It should be already clear that this social formation is linked to Portuguese colonization, but gets modified in American soil; in PMB's words, the family formed in the farms is an "[i]nheritance of the Portuguese family profoundly transformed by the rural habitat, by the insulation of the large land properties, by the demographic dispersion in the countryside, by the necessity, in the first centuries, of the solidarity in the [daily] struggle" (PMB1, p.49). This "profound rural *formation*" (PMB1, p.54) is what constitutes "our people"; the large land properties are the "great shaper [former, *medalhador*] of national society and temperament" (PMB1, p.54).

Commenting the passage "we are large land properties [*nós somos o latifúndio*]", Francisco Weffort (2006) says that, "[o]bviously, in the intention of the sociologist [Oliveira Vianna], this does not mean an apology of the *status quo*, but a judgment on reality" (Weffort, 2006, p.261). I am not so sure. I do not *intend* to uncover Oliveira Vianna's *intentions*, but in my view it is plausible to say that this statement brings, not only a "judgment on reality", but also other angles of his interpretation of Brazil. Defining in such a way the "reality" of Brazilian people, he is bringing to the fore, firstly, a defense of a certain methodology of study; secondly, a position against the transplantation of ideas practiced by Brazilian political elites; and, thirdly, a political stance in relation to the institutions that he considers the most adequate to this reality.³⁵⁷ Hence, if it is, indeed, the case that he proposes to describe "what we are", this is not a neutral description; once this phrase is read as part of a whole - here, as part of PMB -, it gains a more complex implication, as I will keep discussing below.³⁵⁸

The formation of Brazilian people, constituted by this essentially Brazilian land arrangement, has led to a singular creation in America. In this background of large lands isolated from each other, the class relations are not stable, but fragile, incapable of forming a pattern of solidarity. In addition to that, the simplification of the rural society formed in Brazil is deepened by what Oliveira Vianna considers to be one of the worst "flaws in our collective organization: the inexistence of a middle class in the European sense of the term" (PMB1, p.125). Brazil has become a singular nation in this aspect of class formation and class relation; "[w]e are entirely different from the European societies. Nothing that exists there... takes place here: we are completely *other*" (PMB1, p.119, italics in the original).³⁵⁹

³⁵⁷ According to Luiz Guilherme Piva (2000), PMB sets a conjugation of an "agenda" and a "diagnosis": the diagnosis of the Brazilian formation is accompanied by a modernizing agenda (see Piva, 2000, pp.90-1). According to Gildo Marçal Brandão (2007), PMB is a "symbiosis of a study dense study of the Brazilian historical formation with a project of national salvation" (Brandão, 2007, p.74). On that same line, see also Ferreira (1996, pp.240-2) and Ricupero (2008b, pp.56-7).

³⁵⁸ To be clear: I am not saying that whenever one defines this "we" - "Brazilians" - metaphorically as "large land properties", this will necessarily raise the same implications I am raising in relation to PMB. Suffice to say that a similar statement has been proposed by figures as intellectually, politically different as Gilberto Freyre, Caio Prado Jr, not to mention more recent debates on the necessity of land distribution and agrarian reform in Brazil. What does seem to be obvious is that this metaphorical definition is not exclusively based on the unequal material distribution of land property, but is also inseparable from an interpretation of the social and political implications of this inequality in contemporary Brazil.

³⁵⁹ The comparison PMB mobilizes here is with the class relations in England, where the rural worker and the middle and high classes supposedly stand in a relation of "complete reciprocity" (see

This otherness has been produced since the feudal hierarchy was transplanted to Brazil in the beginning of colonization. This transplantation would soon be transformed into this new, essentially Brazilian, creation. In this process, feudalism has not been stabilized in the tropical America: "the feudal hierarchy transported here in the first days of colonization is disarticulated, disintegrated, dissolved, and a new society is *formed* with an entirely new structure. Feudalism is order, dependence, cohesion, stability: the fixity of man to land. We are incoherence, disintegration, indiscipline, instability: the infixity of man to land" (PMB1, pp.129-30, italics added). In other words, feudalism is not formed here and colonial society is defined by what it lacks. "Complete social arrangements", "defined social classes", "organized social hierarchy", "middle class", "industrial class", "commercial class", "urban classes": none of these are present in Brazil; our rural society reminds Oliveira Vianna of a "vast and grand building... incomplete, not solid" (PMB1, p.130).

This incomplete building is constituted by a number of big families that own large land properties. There is no trust that any social institution or agent can produce solidarity or can provide inferior classes with protection. Brazilian "irregular formation" place them in face of a "surrounding anarchy" (PMB1, p.142).³⁶⁰ No social institution shelter those that are not land owners, except the patriarchal shelter from the large land owner himself. This arrangement constitutes another of our particularities: "[w]hat neither the physical environment nor the economic environment can create in a stable *form*, in a similar way to what takes in place in the Occident, is created [in Brazil] by the political patronage, [that is,] the solidarity between the inferior classes and the rural nobility" (PMB1, p.144)³⁶¹ This solidarity establishes a regime of clans in a situation of complete absence of "agents of social synthesis", as one can otherwise see in the "*formation* of European societies" (PMB1, p.150, italics added; see also p.154-5). These clans do not cooperate with each other, while "[i]n England or in America, all the social interests

PMB1, pp.119-22). Talking about the owner of small land properties, Oliveira Vianna compares Brazil to "Europe" and "America", that is, United States (see PMB1, pp.125-7).

³⁶⁰ To affirm that, Oliveira Vianna mobilizes another comparison, by saying that "[i]n all regularly *formed* societies, be them barbaric or civilized, there are, indeed, certain social institutions" that provide the weak individuals with "means of protection from, or reaction against, the surrounding anarchy", while in Brazil there is no such protection (PMB1, p.142, italics added).

³⁶¹ I have added italics to "form" and suppressed from " the solidarity between the inferior classes and the rural nobility".

that are beyond the state action are promoted by the private initiative" through social cooperation (PMB1, p.156).

All that said, Oliveira Vianna stipulates the "laws of the formation and organization" of the bases of Brazilian nationality: rural classes are disarticulated, joining the class formed by the owner of large land properties; this disarticulation and further adhesion to this land owner is processed under patriarchal clans; therefore, solidarity is only possible within these clans, but not among them; and, finally, this internal solidarity locks rural society in the patriarchal phase, incapable of advancing socially and politically (see PMB1, pp.157-8).

In terms of the political formation, Oliveira Vianna notes that, if by the time he finishes writing the text (1918), there is a diffusion of the "tutelary action of the public power", this was not the case during the colonial period, a moment of "general anarchy" (PMB1, p.159, p.160). This anarchic condition is linked to the process of colonization in Brazil. More precisely, it is linked to the "disparity between the colonizing expansion and the expansion of the public power - a disparity entirely particular to our history" (PMB1, p.178). The public power has always moved behind the social dislocation in Brazil, while "[i]n Occident, this political abnormality would not be possible" (PMB1, p.179), since the colonizing process there has never provoked the loss of contact between the public power and the colonized areas.³⁶² The central authority has gained prominence in Brazil only with the transference of the Crown, in 1808, when the Empire has triumphed in the "secular conflict between the caudillo [land owner] and the Nation, between the locality and the center" (PMB1, p.206). The King performed a crucial role in the "peaceful and safe accomplishment of the consolidation of the national power in the IV century [XIX century]" (PMB1, p.210). This consolidation has enabled the central power initiative to form the population, since collectivity, in Brazil, has not spontaneously formed it; population was a construction "from outside and above" (PMB1, p.221).³⁶³ Therefore, we have not even had "a proper political evolution,

³⁶² Specifically, Oliveira Vianna compares here the colonizing movement in Brazil to the one in "North America". Later in the text, he reinforces that in Brazil the political organization has come before the social organization: "[p]opulation is born already under administrative prescriptions" (PMB1, p.220). Arno Wehling (1993) details what he sees as Oliveira Vianna's "six theses on the colonial state", including the specific exercise of power, the social and regional differentiation, the fragmentation of public power, the centrality of the rural clan, the restricted power of the municipal institution, and the strength of the local and the clan (see Wehling, 1993, pp.64-8).

³⁶³ Here Oliveira Vianna compares Brazilian formation with the Medieval organization (see, for example, PMB1, p.222, p.252). He also adds the "Orient" to the comparison, saying that both in the

in the true sense of the expression. It is not verified here that series the evolutionists establish to the historical transformation of forms of government" (PMB1, p.245).³⁶⁴ State, in Brazil, has not yet acquired its "abstract and impersonal form", blurring the boundaries between the public power and the individuals that occupy this position; the clear separation of the public from the private and the consolidation of this impersonal state exposes a stage of evolution that, unfortunately, "we have yet been able to accomplish" (see PMB1, p.247).

To Oliveira Vianna, decentralization is a threat to the country, since it can promote a backslide to the anarchic phase of the first centuries of colonization.³⁶⁵ That is why he says that "[o]ur great nation-builders... always look for, as the supreme objective of their politics, the consolidation and the organization of the nation through the systematic strengthening of the national authority" (PMB1, p.191). Those nation-builders are opposed to the "apostles of liberalism", whose ideas are totally disconnected from Brazilian reality. The "liberal institutions, extremely fruitful in other climates, do not serve here democracy, freedom or law, but only our irreducible instincts" (PMB1, p.192); that is to say, they support dispersion and isolation of the patriarchal clans formed during colonization.³⁶⁶ As a corollary, Oliveira Vianna states that the Monarchic power was crucial to our "civilization", even if there is still nowadays an "anarchic reminiscence" in northern areas of the country (see PMB1, pp.196-7).³⁶⁷ To put it differently, against

"Orient" and in the "Occident" one sees cooperation and solidarity, contrary to what takes place in Brazil (see PMB1, p.225). Moreover, he also compares Brazilian pacific evolution with the violent one witnessed in the other countries of South America (see PMB1, pp.251-2). He says that the political and administrative organization that is constituted with the transference of the Crown is not a bottom-up construction, that is, it does not "emanate from society", being a "*malformed* carapace, coming from outside, imported" (PMB1, p.245, italics added).

³⁶⁴ This evolution, according to PMB, would begin with Monarchy, transforming into Aristocracy and then into Democracy, in an ascending curve of complexity in terms of public power organisms and functions (see PMB1, p.245).

³⁶⁵ Oliveira Vianna points out the occurrence of a decentralizing move in the first half of the XIX century, but that would soon be tamed (see PMB1, p. 188-197, p.210-1)

³⁶⁶ As he puts later, "[l]iberalism, among us, means, in practice and in fact, nothing more than local or provincial caudillismo [*caudilhismo*]" (PMB1, p.212, all in italics in the original).

³⁶⁷ This anarchic trace exposes the regional diversity produced throughout the centuries in the formative process. In general terms, this diversity puts, on the one hand, the North and the Center parts of the country, where the public power has encountered isolated territorial land owners, and, on the other hand, the South part, to which Oliveira Vianna ascribes a more favorable condition, prone as it supposedly is to solidarity-building, due to the necessity of collective defense against common enemies (see, for example, PMB1, p.203, p.237). The second volume of PMB is more dedicated to Southern populations; according to Oliveira Vianna, neither the Northern nor the Mid-southern populations of Brazil exhibit the level of "skills towards public life" that the Southern have (see, for example, PMB2, p.125). This does not mean, however, that they have reached the level of "spontaneity" and "perfection" of the capacity the "Anglo-saxon citizens" have to organize

liberalism in Brazil, the principle of the "personal power of the Monarch" shows to be "the most adequate to our character and our political civilization" (PMB1, p.213). That is why it is unfeasible to be established in Brazil the English parliamentary system, "the beautiful regime that has made the glory of the English nation and that still today guarantees its stability" (PMB1, p.217); and this is also the reason why "local solidarity" and "self-government" have not been formed here. Hence, the state is the only salvation for the consolidation of the nation: "a sovereign, irresistible, centralized, unitary state, capable of imposing itself upon the whole country by the fascinating prestige of a great national task" (PMB1, p.249).³⁶⁸

Again: "[i]n this aspect, as in many others, as in almost all the others, we are perfectly unmistakable and unique" (PMB1, p.231). In Brazil, as well as in the other "young nationalities" of the region, one sees the constant attempt at solving grave problems by "adopting solutions given to them by the old peoples and the old civilizations of the Occident" (PMB1, p.274). This "illusion" and "fatal mistake" derives from the unwillingness on the part of the ruling elites to recognize the "entirely new state of affairs created with the transplantation of the European civilization" to American societies (PMB1, p.274). All that problem is exposed in the way these societies deal with the relation between authority and freedom. In Oliveira Vianna's interpretation, in the "European world", the problem of authority preceded the problem of freedom, in a way that freedom has been put as a limit to authority.

The situation in the "new societies" is completely diverse. The reproduction of the "European" ideas through the adoption of the "liberalism" has the side effect of sacrificing two "vital principles", the principle of authority and the principle of national unity. Authority was sacrificed in face of "anarchy", while national unity was sacrificed in face of "separatism" (see PMB1, p.275). Nevertheless, unique as it is, Brazil escaped from both threats, anarchy and separatism. This uniqueness can

power (see PMB2, p.129). To him, the South of Brazil has a "regional history" and a "mentality" that is different from the other Brazilian regions (see, for example, PMB2, p.162, pp.167-9). I will not get into the details of why this higher level of solidarity and public organization was possible in the South of Brazil, but I just want to note that Oliveira Vianna emphasizes in the second volume of PMB that this results from the wars in the region and the corresponding necessity to fight common enemies, as he had already pointed out in the first volume.

³⁶⁸ All the phrase is in italics in the original. "Self-government" always comes in English in the original. He adds: "the central power, the great oppressor of the local and individual liberties in the European peoples, has performed here an entirely opposite function. Instead of attacking them, it is the central power that defends those same liberties against the territorial caudillos that assault them" (PMB1, p.253).

also be seen in the moral character of the people. In Brazil, disorder does not prevent order or even progress. There is, according to PMB, "an innate spirit of equity, justice and moderation" in Brazilian people, making possible a regime in which "everyone commands and no one obeys" (PMB1, p.256). That is why Brazil has not seen "cruel tyrants" as the ones that have risen in the "Hispanic-American republics" (see PMB1, p.257). In other words, the "fatal mistake" is the same in Brazil and in the Hispanic republics, the major and crucial difference relying on the morality of "our people" more than on the historical and political circumstances; Brazil has become "the radiant and solitary example of order, stability and peace in this part of the world, so frequently shaken by the turmoil of revolutions" (PMB1, p.279).³⁶⁹

Still with respect to "revolutions", PMB states that in Brazil they have always been "inconstant, superficial and ephemeral", since they have relied on "foreign ideas and doctrines", devoid of national content, and they have not integrated the people. In other words, these "civil revolutions" are "extra-national" in their origin, since the ideas they contemplated are formed abroad, and they do not have the participation of the people (see PMB1, pp.259-72).³⁷⁰ To Oliveira Vianna, liberalism and the parliamentary system are not bad in themselves; on the contrary, they are great achievements... but in other countries. The point is that Brazil has a different formative process, "essentially Brazilian", with different laws of formation taking place. As a consequence, "European" and "North American" forms of social and political solidarity have become here "either merely artificial or exogenous entities or simply doctrinal aspirations, without effective reality in the subconscious psychology of the people" (PMB1, p.233, p.240).

It is important to note that "revolution" performs a double comparative role in PMB, as the two previous paragraphs exemplify: on the one hand, it is mobilized to differentiate the "civil revolutions" in Europe from the ones that have taken place in Brazil; on the other hand, it is mobilized to differentiate Brazil from the Hispanic

³⁶⁹ Bernardo Ricupero (2008b) points out a certain ambiguity in PMB: on the one hand, approaching the colonial period, Oliveira Vianna ascribes to the environment a crucial role in the formation of the law-custom, therefore of the general social condition of the country; on the other hand, accounting for Brazilian uniqueness in Latin America, he brings the moral character of the people as the main reason why Brazil has kept its national unity (Ricupero, 2008b, p.68).

³⁷⁰ They are, after all, revolutions conducted by "an intellectual minority" that, incapable of including into the movement most of the population, end up resorting either to the latter's lowest layers or to armed forces (see PMB1, p.272).

republics. These two comparisons establish a certain hierarchy in PMB, since the European revolution is part of the best formative process, while the Hispanic revolution is the worst case. Brazil is in the middle: not as good as Europe, but at least it has kept national unity, escaping from anarchy and separatism. Brazilian formation is completely other.

In 1932, more than 10 years after PMB was published and as a consequence of the 1930 Revolution that put Getúlio Vargas in power,³⁷¹ Oliveira Vianna assumed the position of Juridical Consultant of the Ministry of Labor, Industry and Commerce (henceforth, Ministry of Labor), and became active in the juridical discussion during Getúlio's government.³⁷² In his point of view, the 1930 Revolution renewed the formation of the political elites that had been crystallized in the previous 10 years (see Vianna, 1991a, p.225) and raised the "social question" to a problem of the state (see Arruda and Mendonça, 2006, pp.4-5).

Years before having supported the establishment of *Estado Novo* in 1937, Oliveira Vianna collaborated, for example, with the draft to the 1934 Constitution. He agreed with the proposed decentralization (or, in his terms, "organized de-concentration"), but said that its extension should be moderated, privileging the "supreme task of any central government", that is, the consolidation and preservation of the national unity (see Vianna, 1991a, pp.203-4).³⁷³ He also reiterates that Brazil "is the country of the lack of solidarity and of the absence of the spirit of association" (Vianna, 1991a, p.209), which means that the formation

³⁷¹ The "1930 Revolution" refers to the establishment of the "Provisional Government", under the rule of Getúlio Vargas, marking the end of the Republican government (1889-1930). It should be noted that the very identification of the event as a "Revolution" is far from consensual, as Angela de Castro Gomes notes (see Gomes, 2013a, p.24).

³⁷² The Ministry had just been created by Getúlio, who ascribed it a central role in his administration. Oliveira Vianna was its consultant until 1940, when he became minister of the *Tribunal de Contas da União* (National Court of Audit); in 1937, he had been elected to the *Academia Brasileira de Letras* (Brazilian Academy of Letters) (see Almeida, 1999, p.313; Ricupero, 2008b, p.52; Gomes, 2009, pp.149-50). A more detailed account of Oliveira Vianna's texts during the intervening years separating PMB from IPB, focusing on his period at the Ministry of Labor, is given, for instance, by Gomes (1993), Costa (1993), Vieira (1993) and Arruda and Mendonça (2006).

³⁷³ Oliveira Vianna also proposed an amendment to one of the articles, stating that only the central power possesses sovereignty, while the states are only autonomous (see Vianna, 1991a, p.207). Moreover, positioning himself against direct vote in presidential elections, he claims that "government is a function of the elites", so they should be responsible for the election of the rulers, since they are the only ones that "have the consciousness of the great interests of nationality and that hold the deep feeling of its historical destine" (see Vianna, 1991a, p.220, p.223).

of classes and, more generally, social integration can only take place over time, not artificially produced by a formal law.

In 1942, Oliveira Vianna says that the 1937 Constitution expresses the regime of "authoritarian democracy", or "a moderated form of Authoritarian State", in which primacy is ascribed to the Executive Power and the major preoccupation is with "unity and cohesion" (see Vianna, 1991 [1942], p.154, p.171).³⁷⁴ According to him, this authoritarian democracy reduces the subjective rights of citizens, in order to make them compatible with the public interest; this "Modern State", contrary to the liberal or parliamentary democratic regimes, is not transcendent in relation to society, but immanent, incorporated into the "Nation" (see Vianna, 1991 [1942], pp.154-5).³⁷⁵ By that time, Oliveira Vianna said that the diffusion of this kind of authoritarianism was a tendency in the world, "regrettable... but inevitable" (see Vianna, 1991 [1942], p.167).³⁷⁶

If, in PMB, Oliveira Vianna has a certain pessimist tone - for instance, when he says that "[n]owadays... [the patriarchal family] is strongly shaken in its highly solid structure" (PMB1, p.49) -, in 1943, he showed a certain optimism with the process of unionization in the country, "the first step towards the social organization of our people", being "the most efficient, the rapid and the safest process to the creation and development of these forms of active social solidarity" that have always been absent in Brazil (see Vianna, 1991 [1943], p.273).³⁷⁷ The unionization

³⁷⁴ The 1937 Constitution was promulgated by president Getúlio Vargas on November 10, also when the *Estado Novo* dictatorship was established (remaining until 1945). This name, *Estado Novo*, was inspired in Portugal's fascist regime *Estado Novo*, led by Antonio Salazar. The 1937 Constitution considered labor a "social duty", which was an inspiration from the Italian legislation; established the single-union, controlled by the state; declared strikes and lockouts perverse to work and capital; and kept almost the same social rights already present in the previous, 1934 Constitution (see Arruda and Mendonça, 2006, p.6). It comes from this period, too, the identification of the republican period from 1889-1930 as *República Velha* (Old Republic), and not as "First Republic", in a way to legitimate the authoritarian government to the detriment of the "oligarchic" rule established by the "liberal character of the 1891 Constitution" (see Mattos, 2012, p.128; Gomes, 2013a, p.30). Oliveira Vianna was one of the fiercest critics of the 1891 Constitution.

³⁷⁵ Oliveira Vianna affirms that this concentration of power in the hands of the head of the state is a tendency that can be observed even in the liberal-democratic regimes, including the United States (see Vianna, 1991 [1942], p.155, pp.160-7).

³⁷⁶ Oliveira Vianna makes a distinction between the "moderated form of Authoritarian State", such as the one established by the 1937 Constitution in Brazil, and the "Totalitarian State", such as in Germany and in Italy (see Vianna, 1991 [1942], p.171). It is worth noting that the defense of an authoritarian form of politics and of the central role of the elites in national construction was not exclusive to Oliveira Vianna; suffice to mention interpreters of Brazil such as Alberto Torres, Azevedo Amaral, Francisco Campos. Not is it a position of an exclusively historical interest, by the way.

³⁷⁷ "Nowadays" here refer to the Republican period established in 1889. In 1927, Oliveira Vianna also lamented the decline of big families in Brazil, and celebrated the fact that the state of São Paulo

taking place under the *Estado Novo* had a corporatist fundament, inspired by, but not simply emulating, the Italian Fascist labor legislation and the American *New Deal* corporations (see Gomes, 1993, pp.44-57; Arruda and Nascimento, 2006, pp.14-8; Gomes, 2009, pp.155-8; for a different view, see Carvalho, 1993, pp.26-7).

Oliveira Vianna was an active participant in the formulation of this legislation, defending that it should be original, reflecting "our economic, professional and anthropo-geographic peculiarities" as well as the "principle of strong authority that characterizes the new regime [*Estado Novo*]" (Vianna, 1991c, p.280).³⁷⁸ This claim for originality should be understood as a way to specify the institutional characteristics under construction in Brazil in the midst of an external background of contestations of liberal democracies around the world, such as Fascism, Nazism or Socialism; and of an internal background in which the "social question" had become an issue to be dealt with by the state (see Arruda and Mendonça, 2006, pp.4-5). Authoritarianism in Brazil, however related to those contestations, expresses singular traces that Oliveira Vianna has struggled to stress (see Almeida, 1999, p.295; Gomes, 2009, pp.153-8).

Let me recall that, in the beginning of PMB, Oliveira Vianna states that after the abolition in 1988 it takes place "a phase of profound and general disorganization, unparalleled in all its history"; the Republican period in Brazil, deeply disturbed by various "crises of greater relevance", allegedly needed a separate study (see PMB1, pp.18-9). In my view, Oliveira Vianna's interpretation of Brazilian Republic (1989-1930) is an *absent presence* in PMB, since his negative

was "a beautiful exception to the fate" that was destructing aristocracies (see Vianna, 1991 [1927], p.72). A year before, in 1926, he had joined the *Instituto Histórico e Geográfico Brasileiro* (Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute, IHGB), a prestigious institution created during the Empire, and had been integrated to a group of intellectuals dedicated to "think Brazilian nation, diagnosing the causes of its diseases, that is, of its 'backwardness'" (Gomes, 2009, p.149)

³⁷⁸ The unionization law was promulgated by the *Estado Novo* in 1939, establishing a model of labor union organization based on a corporatist state (see Gomes, 2009, p.154, n.3). Angela de Castro Gomes (1993) stresses, however, that, despite being active in the formulation of the corporatist unionism project in the Ministry of Labor, "it was not his utopia of a 'good corporate society' that ended up prevailing from the disputes the project had to pass through" (Gomes, 1993, p.44, p.47, p.53). In any case, in a document from 1937 by the Ministry of Labor, the relation between the state and the trade unions is clearly delimited: "[t]he trade union is justified due to the economic weakness of the worker, element that is devoid of protection when is isolated; from the union comes the force of resistance in enough amount to create new values and make them effective; to discipline those currents and give them the direction they should follow, that is the function of the State" (*Bulletin of the Ministry of Labor, 1937 apud Cohn, 2000, p.391*). For other accounts on the relation between Oliveira Vianna's conceptions and the reforms that were actually implemented in Brazil, see Costa (1993, pp.141-2), Odalia (1993, pp.154-5) and Silva (2008, pp.260-7).

perspective on the Republic permeates his positive perspective in relation to Monarchy's capacity to preserve national unity through a centralized power.³⁷⁹ In this sense, it seems plausible to interpret his transition from a pessimist position in PMB to a more optimist one later also, but not exclusively, from the way he experiences the 1930 Revolution and its aftermaths.³⁸⁰

I am certainly not saying that a certain "context" has caused, in a unidirectional and inevitable way, his "texts". The point is not to presume specific real events, in order to see how they lead to specific textual articulations. Nor am I retrospectively reading PMB as anticipations of what would take place in the following decade, as if the text is prescient in relation to future historical events and institutional designs, or even to the engagement Oliveira Vianna would have in face of his time. Instead, I am proposing, on the one hand, that PMB and the other texts I have briefly mentioned are expressions of how Oliveira Vianna has experienced a certain "reality" - internal and external -, analyzing *and* judging it. On the other hand, these texts are interventions in part of the internal "reality", both in the way they select, deliberately or not, parts of it through analysis and judgment, and in the way they seek to change it.

Oliveira Vianna's uses of "formation" expose certain traces that are constitutive of his interpretation of contemporary Brazil: (1) a matrix of Brazilian nationality is projected on Brazilian social and political formation, in a way that it becomes the starting point and the regulative ideal of his political project; (2) the incompleteness of the nation is associated to a series of absences in the formation of Brazil, such as the lack of solidarity; (3) this formation also exposes regional differentiations and different types of Brazilians; (4) the diagnosis and the political project are built also from a constant comparison with other formative processes,

³⁷⁹ As Francisco Weffort (2006) points out, Oliveira Vianna advocated for "the restoration of the central[ized] state he considered to have been destroyed by the Republican federalism" (Weffort, 2006, p.266). Gildo Marçal Brandão (2007) even states that "it is against the Republic, its methods and ideologues that the book was written" (Brandão, 2007, p.312). Evaldo Vieira affirms that the idealism espoused by Republican elites "is an almost permanent theme to Oliveira Vianna" (Vieira, 1993, p.162). See also Carvalho (1993, pp.19-30).

³⁸⁰ Gabriela Nunes Ferreira (2010) seems to go in another direction, when she claims that "Vianna seems to be more skeptic, [in *Instituições Políticas Brasileiras*, Brazilian Political Institutions, 1949], on the possibilities of transformation from state action" (Ferreira, 2010, p.68). I will interpret this text from 1949 below, but let me just note that this decline in optimism Gabriela identifies relates to the scope of change Oliveira Vianna sees as possible to come from state action, while the increase in optimism I have identified in the 1940s refers to how he was interpreting his own time (in face of the increasing unionization, for example).

mainly those of the advanced countries and those of the other Latin American countries; and, finally, (5) social and political formation in Brazil expresses a particularity, both in its configuration (diagnosis) and in the model to be desired (political project). These traces remain constitutive of Oliveira Vianna's uses of "formation" in the text he would publish in 1949, to which I now pass.

In the note to the fourth edition of PMB, written in 1938, Oliveira Vianna states that that "theses defended [in PMB] and the conclusions arrived at in this objective study of our social and political *formation* have had - here and elsewhere, in the agitated epoch in which we live - splendid and integral consecration" (IPB1, p.12, italics added). More than 10 years later (almost 30 years after the first edition of PMB), in 1949, he would publish *Instituições Políticas Brasileiras* (Brazilian Political Institutions, henceforth IPB), also in two volumes.³⁸¹ Oliveira Vianna announces that IPB is part of his return, after a decade of "forced interruption", to the studies of "our *formation* and our historical and social evolution" (IPB1, p.60, italics added);³⁸² he notes as well that in all his "long march", his methodological preoccupation has always been attached to "national *formation*" (IPB2, p.65, italics added). IPB, according to Oliveira Vianna, "[reconfirms] previous ideas developed since 1920 - since *Populations* [PMB]" (IPB1, p.23; see also IPB2, pp.69-70). By the time he writes IPB, he finds in "our political life" the same elements he had found in those "first essays": the rule of the owners of large lands (*domínio senhorial*) and the parental clan (*clã parental*) (see IPB1, p.254).³⁸³ To sum up:

³⁸¹ In 1999 came out the 21st edition of IPB. I will follow the same pattern, and will refer to the first volume as IPB1 and to the second as IPB2.

³⁸² This "forced interruption" refers to the period of institutional engagements.

³⁸³ In IPB, Oliveira Vianna reaffirms that his interest in PMB had been the study of "the social *formation* of Brazilian people and its capacity to public life under a regime of representative and federative democracy in a Anglo-Saxon style - English or North-American" (IPB1, p.252, italics added). It is not my purpose here to go into the details of confluences and divergences between these two texts - PMB and IPB. If I have noted Oliveira Vianna's effort to give a retrospective coherence to his oeuvre, it was not to judge whether this coherence is, indeed, plausible or not, but in order to highlight the centrality the concept of "formation" keeps in both texts (not to mention in other of his texts that I will not deal with here). This self-ascribed coherence does not mean that Oliveira Vianna has never explicitly changed his conceptions, as it can be seen for instance in relation to his ideas on race (see Madeira, 1991, p.8); neither it means that his conceptions have not been interpreted through the supposed changes they have gone through (see, for instance, Carvalho, 1993, especially pp.29-33; Wehling, 1993, pp.71-2; Bastos, 1993b; Iglesias, 1993; Piva, 2000, ch.4; Gomes, 2009, pp.149-51; Silva, 2015). My purpose, however, is not to discuss his entire oeuvre. For Oliveira Vianna's reassessment of PMB in IPB, see, for instance, IPB1, pp.252-4; for his overall assessment of his oeuvre in IPB, see, for instance, IPB2, pp.69-73.

contemporary Brazil still exposes the life of the past within the present, conditioning future possibilities and impossibilities.

The cornerstone of IPB is the distinction Oliveira Vianna establishes between the law created by the mass (law-custom, *direito-costume*) and the law created by the elites (codified, written, formal law, *direito-lei*),³⁸⁴ or, as he puts in the beginning of the second volume, between the "written law", or the "realm of the abstract norms", and the "alive society", or the "realities of social life" (see IPB2, p.28; and also p.91). The problem he addresses is the importation of "foreign political regimes, through the imitation of their Charters or of their system of constitutional norms" (IPB1, p.65).³⁸⁵ The comparative dimension also operates in his text, since the relation between law-custom and formal law in Brazil is contrasted to the relation both keep in "Anglo-Saxon countries".³⁸⁶ While in the latter the law-custom is searched for when the formal law is designed, in countries such as Brazil, "not ruled by the law-custom", the law elaborated by the elites, the formal law, is considerably different than the "law elaborated by society", the law-custom (see IPB1, pp.15-60).

From the distinction, the problem and the comparison mentioned above, Oliveira Vianna outlines the main themes discussed in IPB: firstly, the existence of a public law formulated by the elites and expressed in the Constitution; secondly, the divergence between this law and the public law formulated by the people ("people-mass", *povo-massa*, as he calls); finally, he says that "all the dramatic character of our political history is placed in the unfruitful effort of the elites to oblige the people-mass to practice this law elaborated by them, but which this people-mass ignore and refuses to obey to" (IPB1, p.21).³⁸⁷

Since their Independence, Latin American countries, according to Oliveira Vianna, have persistently borrowed from England, France or United States "a part, or even the whole system, of their political institutions" (IPB1, p.65). This transplantation is the responsible for the divergences between norms and behaviors

³⁸⁴ As both "direito" and "lei" are translated into English as "law", "direito-lei" would be "law-law". I will opt for "formal law", as opposed to "law-custom" ("*direito-costume*").

³⁸⁵ In the original, "Charters" and "constitutional norms" are in italics.

³⁸⁶ "Anglo-Saxon" in IPB stands for England, United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Rhodesia (a former British Colony) (see, for example, IPB1, p.142, p.143).

³⁸⁷ Oliveira Vianna defines IPB as a study of public and constitutional law following juridical and political sciences and discussing problems of culture (see IPB1, p.21). Hence, what one sees is not a simply treatise on law, but also a cultural interpretation of Brazil.

that underlie the "cultural conflict" between the people-mass and the elites (see IPB1, pp.65-6). The comparative history mobilized in IPB works as a way to attest that these foreign institutions are incapable of modifying the people.

Oliveira Vianna suggests that, in principle, the parliamentary democracy is the best political regime. Nevertheless, this regime requires, for its success, an "evolved" political culture, otherwise it produces the gap between norms and behavior I have already mentioned. The criterion of "political culture" sets peoples in a scale of evolution: the political culture that is adequate to a parliamentary democracy is one that "has only been fully realized until today among the Anglo-Saxon peoples"; moreover, the English and the American, following IPB, are "maybe the only civilized peoples that in the world that do not imitate anyone, any other people" (IPB1, p.70). The Latin American peoples, however, as well as the other "peoples that imitate", suffer from an "inferiority complex" in relation to the "European and the Anglo-American cultures" (see IPB1, p.71; and IPB2, p.73).

It is necessary to clarify a certain aspect of this "inferiority complex". It refers, in IPB, to the obstinate practice of transplanting foreign institutions to Brazil, which causes the main problem the text addresses. At the same time, it is plausible to say that, in terms of "political culture", countries are, in fact, differentiated by IPB in a scale of superiority and inferiority. Accordingly, Oliveira Vianna says that it is a mistake to think that the "political capacity" of the "Anglo-Saxon" peoples is at hand to any other people (see IPB1, p.72). Hence, the inferiority complex also corresponds in a certain sense to an actual inferiority of Latin American peoples (but not only them) in face of European and Anglo-American peoples. And it is not unambiguous, in my view, whether this inferiority can be surpassed, in order for these current inferior peoples to become as evolved as the ones they imitate. I will get back to this point below.

According to IPB, there is a "political evolution of the European humanity [*sic*]" comprising the following stages of increasing complexity: "agrarian villages" have evolved into "cities" (for example, the Roman *civitas* and the Greek *polis*), then into "big state organizations, already of a national type, that is, Empire-States" (IPB1, p.87);³⁸⁸ after that, with the French Revolution, came the "Nation-State", associated with the rise of the "great European democracies" (IPB1, pp.90-1). This

³⁸⁸ In the original, "national" and "Empire-States" are in italics.

historical evolution has marked "the origins of all of those European modern peoples" (IPB1, p.87).³⁸⁹ Oliveira Vianna remarks that some Nation-States, such as England, conserve old institutions, such as the aristocratic component of the Empire-State; in addition to that, he says that the "perfect type of Nation-State, of a democratic basis" is given by France and the United States, the latter being the only country in the world where the "People is really sovereign", therefore where democracy has no contrast (see IPB1, p.91).³⁹⁰ In other words, the criterion IPB establishes to define a democratic regime is the degree of sovereignty possessed by the people, which is also the degree of compatibility between the institutional framework and the cultural traditions.

Oliveira Vianna is giving here his interpretation of the rise of the modern peoples around the world, irradiating from "Europe" to the rest of the "civilized peoples" (see IPB1, p.139). This modernity is intimately linked to the emergence of democratic regimes and, in what regards the other, non-European, parts of the world, to the political capacity of imitation. This capacity was realized almost perfectly in the United States, where the fundamental precondition for the democratic regime to be successful - that is, the "national consciousness", as opposed to an exclusively personal interest - is observed (see IPB1, pp.139-40). It is this precondition - or "cultural complex", in IPB's words - that enables the establishment of the Nation-State, and not the other way around (see IPB1, p.143).³⁹¹

As I have noted, in Latin America this democratically-based political organization has not been successfully established. And, in the case of Brazil, the kind of colonization and the way it was populated have set it apart from the other American countries, including the Latin American ones, since, in Brazil, the community has not been developed because the agricultural work has isolated people from one another. In sum: "Brazilians are fundamentally individualist; even

³⁸⁹ João Quartim Moraes (1993) discusses the concept of "democracy" and the evolution of state structures exposed in IPB (see Moraes, 1993, pp.87-105) and Ricardo Silva (2008) provides a detailed discussion of the concept of "democracy" in Oliveira Vianna's texts.

³⁹⁰ In this sense, the French Revolution is held responsible for replacing the "Empire-State" by the "Nation-State", which means the elevation of the people-mass to the sovereign condition, replacing the King (see IPB1, p.138); but it is in the United States that a perfect compatibility between the institutional framework and the cultural traditions is identified by Oliveira Vianna (see also Moraes, 1993, pp.96-8).

³⁹¹ As Maria Hermínia Tavares de Almeida (1999) remarks, the notion of "culture" in IPB brings the aspects of particularity (to a specific group), permanence (long-term duration and resilience) and the impossibility of transplantation (see Almeida, 1999, p.296).

more, way more, than the other Latin American peoples" (IPB1, p.110).³⁹² As a result of this "social and economic *formation*", Brazilians are characterized, for instance, by "the lack of concern with the collective interest" and "the absence of public spirit" (IPB1, p.110, italics added). Oliveira Vianna reinforces in IPB what he had already stressed in PMB, that is, the anti-urban character of Brazilian people.

The central aspect to be taken into account in this sense is that, while the political institutions are importable, therefore the transplantation can and do take place throughout the formation of other-than-European (democratic) peoples, the "cultural traditions" and the "lines of behavior" are not imitable (see IPB1, p.146). In this scenario, the "irradiative imitation" (IPB1, p.139) - an expression Oliveira Vianna ascribes to the importation of "European" political institutions into other "civilized" parts of the world - is actually a process constituting an encounter of the (foreign) formal law with the (local) law-custom. To put it differently, it is an encounter between two preexistent "cultural formations": one preexisting in Brazil since the colonial period and expressed in the law-custom (or customary public law), and the other one, expressed in the formal law, preexisting in Europe, but absent in Brazil before this encounter starts taking place through importation.³⁹³

According to IPB, until Independence, in 1822, the "Empire-State" was the only regime in place, which means that the municipal political representation excluded the people-mass, to the benefit of the elites (see IPB1, pp.113-8).³⁹⁴ After 1822, the people-mass kept not being "an autonomous and independent entity, [that is,] an organized democratic force" (IPB1, p.129)³⁹⁵, even if it begun by then to take at least some part in the political administration. The point is that 1822 found a

³⁹² The last phrase is in italics in the original.

³⁹³ It is worth noting that IPB also highlights that this customary public law has not evolved in the same path everywhere in the country: amongst the Northern local groups, it is said that it has evolved "less rapidly or less completely" than amongst the Southern and mainly mid-Southern local groups (see IPB1, p.214; and IPB2, pp.74-94). In this sense, IPB reinforces the notion of internal diversity also exposed in PMB: while in the latter, as it was seen above, the internal diversity is linked to the social types and regional differentiations in the social and historical formation of the country, in the former it is linked to the traditional cultures and the corresponding law-custom in each region. From a cultural perspective, "Brazil does not yet seem to be, in my view, a constituted unity, but a unity *to be constituted*" (IPB2, p.82, italics in the original).

³⁹⁴ Oliveira Vianna even distinguishes the "people-mass" from the "people-elite" (*povo-elite*), the latter being the only one represented in the municipal administrations of the colonial period. When IPB affirms that there was an "Empire-State" in the colonial period, that does not mean that an Empire, in the usual sense of the term, was in place until 1822; "Empire-State" stands here just as the historical characterization IPB proposes to assess the political evolution of the countries.

³⁹⁵ "Organized democratic force" is in italics in the original. Later, he states: "it is a lack of historical truth to speak of democracy during the colonial period" (IPB1, p.135, all the phrase is in italics in the original).

country in a "purely feudal condition... without any *popular* institution that made us slightly similar to the 'village communities' or the 'city communities' of the old Europe" (IPB1, p.218, italics in the original). This feudal condition survived even the proclamation of 1822, in a way that contemporary Brazil, following IPB, expresses a coexistence of an independent country with a feudal society.

Let me recall that, already in PMB, Oliveira Vianna had stated that "the past lives within us". It is plausible to interpret this reminiscence, however, from different angles. On the one hand, the presence of the past in the present is a generalized condition of the different formative processes in the world: in "Europe", the past conditioned the formation of a political capacity adequate to the establishment of a genuine democratic regime, replacing the old, aristocratic one, in which people did not have yet the sovereignty; in Brazil (but also in the respective particular configurations of other parts of the world), the past lives in the present due to the feudal traces of the lack of solidarity remaining in the independent country. In other terms, if, *there*, the past conditioned a contemporary condition of democracy, *here*, the past puts obstacles to the accomplishment of this democratic, fully modern, regime due to the contemporary coexistence of the feudal and the modern.

The contemporary relation of past and present, which also conditions future possibilities and impossibilities, can also be interpreted through the different periodizations of the political evolution in Europe and in Brazil. *There* the formation is a process constituted by a sequence of periods replacing one another in a progressive linear process, while *here* there was "[n]o difference between one period and another - the period of the old feudal society, apparently dead, and the one of the new democratic society, apparently nascent" (IPB1, p.240).³⁹⁶ It is not argued that there was not feudalism in Europe, but that the European feudal domain constituted a "social whole, juridically organized", while in Brazil feudalism stands for the lack of solidarity and the profound isolation of different clans (see IPB1, p.246). In sum, "by no means the Brazilian feudal domain has been organized in

³⁹⁶ Few pages later, he says that "public life in Brazil - at least in its local expressions - has not suffered any deep modification with the establishment of the Democratic Regime [that is, the Independence], with the foundation of the Empire and of the Constitutional Order... It is felt *that the public life of the Empire has been made with the material and the mentality that the three colonial centuries have prepared for us: the Brazil of the Empire (Nation-State) has continued the Brazil of the Colony (Empire-State), or, the latter has been projected upon the former*" (IPB1, p.248, italics in the original).

the way the European feudal domain has: *the latter, unlike what is [often] thought, was an institution of democratic character*" (IPB1, p.246, italics in the original; see also IPB1, pp.257-67). As a consequence, Oliveira Vianna does not consider citizenship in Brazil to be at the same level as that of fully modern societies: "[o]ur 'citizen'... was, from the beginning, due to his cultural *formation*..., exactly the opposite of this model of citizen [*cidadão-tipo*] idealized in [Jean-Jacques] Rousseau's *Social Contract*. It is even possible to say that he is - analogously to what is said about the Anti-Christ - the Anti-Rousseau" (IPB1, p.261, italics added).³⁹⁷

A Brazilian play of present and absent formations is at the heart of IPB: the *presence* of a certain law-custom makes this type of democracy only a codification of the formal law, therefore practically *absent* ... and impossible. At the same time, the persistent *presence* of the efforts, coming from the idealist elites, towards the importation of foreign institutions constitutes a persistent *absence* of compatibility between the formal law and the law-custom. It is this formative play of presence/absence that constitutes contemporary Brazil according to IPB.

Oliveira Vianna says that "[a] return to the past,... to the centuries of our history, will show us... that the feeling of the '*Nation* community', the 'democratic complex of the *National* state', has not been *formed* in our people-mass, and neither could it be *formed*" (IPB1, p.284)³⁹⁸. The lack of national consciousness has always defined Brazilian people, which means that it does not have the awareness of its historical task in terms of its "destine as people" (see IPB1, pp.284-5). Once more, a comparison is mobilized between Brazilian people and those peoples that have elevated themselves, "through successive integrations of their collective consciousness, to the conditions of true Nations", for instance, the English, the German, the Japanese and the North American peoples (IPB1, p.285).³⁹⁹ Overall, it

³⁹⁷ In the continuation of this paragraph, Oliveira Vianna says that, "[f]rom a pragmatic point of view and in an objective contrast", the citizen in Brazil "was exactly the opposite of another kind of citizen, but this one alive, concrete, of flesh and bone: the British citizen, who is, in turn, the forming cellule of this other exceptional class, the British gentry... Citizen and gentry are indeed the two most admirable institutions of the political world that man [*sic*] has ever created" (IPB1, pp.261-2; "citizen" and "gentry" are in English in the original).

³⁹⁸ I have added italics to both occurrences of "formed"

³⁹⁹ These "successive integrations" are also called by Oliveira Vianna "*the institutionalization of the consciousness of nationality*" (IPB1, p.285, italics in the original), which is lacking in Brazil: "[Whose] fault? Not of such men, but, first of all, of our own history, of the conditions under which our social and political *formation* has been processed - as I have already said in a well-known book [he is likely to be referring to PMB]" (IPB1, p.286, italics added). The lack of this institutionalization

is an interpretation that works in a double move, identifying modern nations thorough as a progressive formative process *and* identifying contemporary Brazil through the formative play of presence/absence.

It is important to have in mind that, to Oliveira Vianna, the formative process in Brazil does not run independently from the formative process in the modern European and North American countries. The "irradiative imitation" means that some countries are exporters or providers of political institutions, therefore their formation is supposedly independent from what takes place in countries to which their institutions are exported. The countries of destination of this transplantation, on the contrary, expose formative processes that depend, in a certain sense, upon the formation in the former. Two notes are relevant here. Firstly, it does not seem plausible to say that Oliveira Vianna's interpretation of Brazil exposes the material relations between modernity and colonialism. If colonialism does play a role in his interpretation, this role is not as an expression of conditions of exploitation between colonizers and colonized, after all Brazilian formation is so peculiar that not even the Portuguese institutions were capable of being successfully and fully transplanted to the country.⁴⁰⁰ Nevertheless - this is the second note -, the formation of Brazil is dependent, in another sense, of the formation of "fully modern countries", since this process is profoundly marked by the importation of the institutions that have been successful there - but not here.

Brazilian elites constantly attempt to imitate in Brazil what they think - and Oliveira Vianna accompanies them on that - are the great modern institutions. Oliveira Vianna parts company with these elites, however, in what regards the possibilities and impossibilities they see to the success of this imitation - or, in the opposite direction, in the possibilities and impossibilities they see in the capacity to

corresponds to the lack of "agents of national integration"; among them, the most important in the "formation of the soul of the current great peoples" is "*the struggle against the foreigner in defense of the invaded territory*" (IPB1, p.290, italics added to "formation"). Let me recall that Oliveira Vianna had already discussed in PMB the absence in Brazil of "agents of social synthesis", producers of "social solidarity", as the ones supposedly found in Europe (see PMB1, p.150, p.154-5); in PMB he also notes that Southern populations in Brazil are the ones that have the highest level of "skills towards public life", since they have lived through wars in the region and through the corresponding necessity to fight common enemies.

⁴⁰⁰ As Gildo Marçal Brandão (2007), the comparative aspect of PMB works not only when the formation of Brazil is compared to other formations (in Latin America, in the United States and in Europe), but also in the way it conceives the formation of Brazilian feudalism as an "internalization, adaptation, selection and creation of new behaviors, habits and norms" that takes place in the tropics and makes society and people here different from the colonizer's (Brandão, 2007, p.85).

change the previous social and political organization, the law-custom, in Brazil. In this aspect, he is clear enough: "the Nation-State, in the pure English or American style, that is, relying on popular and democratic foundations - of the sovereignty of the people-*mass*, and not of the people-*elite*, as in the colonial period -, was [in Brazil] more than a mistake: it was a practical impossibility, a legislative artificialism, an unachievable utopia" (IPB1, p.269, italics in the original). According to Oliveira Vianna, this utopian idealists are "marginal men" in that they live "in-between two 'cultures': one, *of their own people, form* their collective subconscious; the other, *the European or North-American*, give them ideas, the guidelines to think, the constitutional paradigms, the criteria of political judgment" (IPB2, p.17).⁴⁰¹

Nevertheless, this problem does not concern the elites Oliveira Vianna categorizes under this "utopian idealism". They neglect "the *deforming* influence exerted by the social conditions of the people-mass... upon the execution of the 'borrowed' or 'granted' political Charts" (IPB2, p.15, italics added), which means that they neglect reality itself. As opposed to this approach to reality, Oliveira Vianna defends one that believes neither "in the universality of the constitutional and political types" nor in the "restructuring omnipotence of the State"; his is an approach that "believe[s] in, or recognize[s], the creative capacity of the people-mass and accept these creations as natural facts in their social and organic life" (IPB2, p.29).⁴⁰² As I have observed in the beginning of this text, Oliveira Vianna's interpretation of Brazil is deeply concerned with the proposition of an alternative methodology that avoids the serious mistakes he sees in the "apostles of liberalism", as he puts in PMB, or the "utopian idealists", as he puts in IPB. In addition to that, he claims that this "scientific methodology" must target "our social reality" and must be guided by a "supreme goal": the search for "the solution to all the problems of our social and economic organization and of the political and administrative direction of the country" (IPB2, p.66).⁴⁰³

⁴⁰¹ I have added italics to "form". Oliveira Vianna continues by quoting himself (from another of his texts, *The Idealism of the Constitution*, first published in 1927): "[o]ur idealisms, we have been forming them without any contact with the realities of our environment... In this aspect, we are *déracinés*: our ideals are not fed from our sap, are not rooted in our life, are not embedded in our reality, are not immerse in our history" (IPB2, p.18, "*déracinés*" is in French in the original).

⁴⁰² "Natural facts" is in italics in the original.

⁴⁰³ The whole quotation is in italics in the original. The modernization of social sciences had already been his concern in PMB and it is also articulated, for instance, in the already-mentioned text published in 1931 on the study of social sciences in Brazil (see Vianna, 1991 [1931]).

Two kinds of change are outlined in IPB to account for the future possibilities and impossibilities of Brazil: the endogenous, or organic, and the exogenous, that come from outside. The endogenous are changes that take place through gradual and imperceptible disintegrations of cultural complexes. In proposing his problem-solving methodology, Oliveira Vianna states that the progress of the country requires the future disintegration of the "backward complexes" inherited from the colonial period that still exist in the interior; this disintegration, in turn, depends on the march of the "coastal civilization" to the interior (see IPB2, p.93).⁴⁰⁴ In relation to the possibility of progress, it seems plausible to say that a pessimist tone present in PMB gives place to a certain optimism. In PMB, as I have already mentioned, this pessimism comes, for instance, when Oliveira Vianna laments the threat he was witnessing to the "solid structure" of the big and aristocratic families (PMB1, p.49). In IPB, he is more optimistic: "our society has been transforming itself, and improving, and progressing: its old 'cultural complexes' have been disintegrating and evolving" (IPB2, p.94). But he warns that this process is gradual, slow, and will not be attained through revolutions or from abrupt promulgations of laws and sudden formulations of political programs (see IPB, p.94).

The other kind of change is "prepared by the State, or forced by it, using coercion, by means of law or by means of coups de force" (IPB2, p.96).⁴⁰⁵ But, if Oliveira Vianna is somehow optimistic about the endogenous changes, this other kind makes him skeptical about. To him, the "State can subvert, transform or modify, in its political action, certain traces of the historical psyche of the peoples" (IPB2, p.99); but, even in this case, change takes place slowly. The reforms can be successfully undertaken on the condition that the "alive traditions", that is, the law-custom, of the people is observed (see IPB2, p.101).⁴⁰⁶ IPB discusses two techniques of reforms: the liberal (IPB2, ch.VI) and the authoritarian (IPB2, ch.VII). The former have always tried to "Anglicize" or "Americanize" political life in Brazil, but have not succeeded because they are not compatible with the law-

⁴⁰⁴ One can see here a reiteration of the problem of internal disparity to the formation of contemporary Brazil.

⁴⁰⁵ "Prepared by the State", "forced by it" and "coercion" are in italics in the original.

⁴⁰⁶ In his words, "no social or political reform has the possibility of practically succeeding and being realized if it has no foundation on the traditions of the people-mass, or if this reform obliges people-mass to an attitude clearly contrary to the attitudes consecrated in its customs" (IPB2, p.106, all the quotation is in italics in the original).

custom here. The alternative is, thus, the authoritarian technique. Here, Oliveira Vianna reiterates what he had been insisting in almost all his texts and his institutional engagements:

The big mistake or big illusion of our reforms is to want people to change - by means of State policy - its traditional behavior of public life within *liberal regimes*. When a change expressed in the new law has not yet been manifest in the *customs*, but refers instead to *a new attitude to be undertaken under the action of legal dictates or Constitutional Charters*, the means to get people to change would be to make these dictates or Charters be accompanied by penal sanctions; that is, it would be a matter of *making this change effective by coercion*. Once the liberal technique fails for being inoperative, the new modality of behavior, *still not objectified in the customs*, could only be achieved through authoritarian means. This was the path undertaken by Russia - and logically so (IPB2, p.110, italics in the original).

This paragraph condensates a 30-year span of writings and/or institutional engagements related to Oliveira Vianna's interpretation of contemporary Brazil. In PMB, the absence of social solidarity, common to all Latin American countries, is accompanied by the fact that, in Brazil, and peculiarly so, the threats of anarchy and separatism have not been consummated, mainly because of the innate character of Brazilian people. Accordingly, Brazil has been able to be an example of order, stability and peace in the midst of a region agitated by revolutions. In IPB, Brazil is depicted as having escaped from "disorganization", "disorder" and "generalized anarchy" because of the King, "with his centripetal power and his charismatic authority" (IPB1, p.293). The Empire in Brazil witnessed the formation of a national elite - "the men of 1,000 [*os homens de 1.000*]"⁴⁰⁷ -, not of popular inspiration, but of a charismatic source: "men formed by the Emperor" (IPB1, p.299).

I have also discussed that, in PMB, decentralization is conceived as a threat to Brazil, and our "great nation-builders" are those that have always worked towards

⁴⁰⁷ Oliveira Vianna borrows this expression from Gospels (see IPB1, pp.293-6; see also Almeida, 1999, p.303, n.16).

the strengthening of the national authority, being opposed to the "liberals", totally disconnected from Brazilian reality. Oliveira Vianna states, then, that the Monarchy has performed a crucial "civilizing" role. In IPB, these "liberals" are categorized as "utopian idealists", and centralization remains conceived as a "beneficial and organizing force" in Brazil, where the "enemy of freedoms has always been the Local Power" and their conservation, the "Central Power" (IPB2, p.42; see also p.84 and p.135, n.8).⁴⁰⁸

By the time IPB was published, Oliveira Vianna had already left the institutional position that led him to be one of the "state-makers" in Brazil.⁴⁰⁹ The encounter between the theoretical discussion and the accounts on social and political reforms leads Oliveira Vianna to endorse the authoritarian technique as the only one suitable for Brazil, since it is the only one capable of producing compatibility between formal law and law-custom, between norms and behavior, between political institutions and cultural traditions of the people-mass. It is as if this technique enables a balance between, on the one hand, the limits of what the state can do, and, on the other hand, the limits of the potentiality of change inscribed in the people.

In this aspect, for instance, however admirable it is, the English-type of democracy is simply unfeasible in Brazil: "we will be condemned to never be English" (IPB2, p.124), due to the fact that between "us and [them], there is... a very big difference of *formation* and evolution" (IPB2, p.137, italics added; see also p.155). This is true exactly because of both, interrelated, limits I have mentioned above. The disintegration and elimination of Brazilian kind of feudalism and of the

⁴⁰⁸ The last phrase is in italics in the original. In 1935, Oliveira Vianna states, in different words, something he had already stated in PMB, more than fifteen years earlier, and he would reiterate in IPB, almost fifteen years later: "[t]he phenomenon of unity in the Portuguese America cannot be explained only by this identity of language, religion and racial formation. Our unity is not a work of unconscious factors of history and of environment; on the contrary, it results from a plan, a program, consciously deliberated and executed; it is a work of enlightened elites - and nothing else" (Vianna, 1991 [1935], pp.363-4). This unity is an achievement of the elites during Independence, strengthened after the establishment of the Empire, but disturbed during the de-centralization of the Republican regime (see (Vianna, 1991 [1935], p.365). Nevertheless, it is worth reminding that the preservation of national unity, to Oliveira Vianna, is not the same thing as the construction of the nation, as I have discussed in my interpretation of PMB and IPB. In 1932, he makes this point clearly again in a text that would be reproduced, slightly modified, in IPB: the absence of a deep national consciousness in Brazilian people results from "our own history, from the conditions under which our social and political *formation* has been processed" (Vianna, 2013 [1932], p.93, italics added) and it makes the program established in 1822 still unfinished. This is a task to be completed in Brazil by the state, responsible for giving a final form to our national formation.

⁴⁰⁹ The English word "state-makers" is used to refer to Oliveira Vianna by Angela de Castro Gomes (see Gomes, 2009, p.155).

clans observed in contemporary Brazil is a precondition to the achievement of "freedom", "democracy", "peace", "public tranquility", "progress". In this direction, the successful laws in Brazil have all a shared trace, that is, the use of authoritarian techniques and a of a certain level of coercion, in order to neutralize, as far as possible, these characteristics (see PB2, pp.126-9).⁴¹⁰ But this authoritarianism does not exclude the realization of democracy - although Brazilian reality does exclude the English-type of democracy. According to IPB, the "only *form* of democracy possible in Brazil" is one in which the oligarchies are transformed into "Enlightened oligarchies" (IPB2, p.137, italics added); in this Brazilian democracy, people is sovereign only in so far as it "silently and admirably" reacts against the "marginal men" and the illusions observed in the way they rule the country (see IPB2, p.164).

The corporatist legislation Oliveira Vianna drafted during his time at the Ministry of Labor expressed "possible democracy", since it conceived the state as the agent to shape society following the authoritarian technique of reform and the conception of gradual change - that, in Brazil, must be a top-down change, because of the lack of solidarity and democratic spirit in the people. As Francisco Weffort (2006) puts, the state corporatism is "the organized submission of society to the State" (Weffort, 2006, p.271), through which Oliveira Vianna hoped to neutralize the obstacles to progress and democracy in Brazil.

With this discussion of "Brazilian democracy" - or, the relation between authoritarianism and democracy in Brazil -, we reach what is perhaps the most controversial aspect of Oliveira Vianna's interpretation of Brazil (an aspect, it was seen, constitutive of both his intellectual texts and his institutional engagements).⁴¹¹

⁴¹⁰ The authoritarian technique proposed as a solution by Oliveira Vianna combines "a principle of *national* unity and *national* political authority with the imperative of *administrative decentralization*, imposed by our huge territorial extension" (IPB2, p.135, italics in the original). João Quartim de Moraes (1993) argues that this technique has the purpose of creating from above the institutions that will fight "the authoritarian evil of our culture of clans and feudalism [*cultura clânico-feudal*]" with a good deal of enlightened authoritarianism" (Moraes, 1993, p.101). My only remark in relation to this argument is that the major difference between the "evil" and the "enlightened" authoritarianism is that the former threatens national unity and authority, while the latter promotes both through a centralized state; in sum, it is not exactly authoritarianism that is the evil, but anarchism and separatism.

⁴¹¹ A longer discussion will lead me to approach this aspect - democracy and authoritarianism - together with Oliveira Vianna's approach of the racial formation in Brazil, the other majorly controversial dimension of his texts, not disconnected from the first one. His conservatism and his authoritarian conception of the state have sharply decreased his popularity in part of the intellectual environment in Brazil. It took some decades before his texts were re-approached by some thinkers in less negative tones. For some comments on the interpretations to which Oliveira Vianna's texts

My purpose here is not to bring to the fore all the interpreters that have positioned themselves with and/or against his conceptions. Instead, I will mobilize some of these interpreters, in order to clarify my own interpretation of this "Brazilian democracy" in Oliveira Vianna, namely Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos, Luiz Werneck Vianna, José Murilo de Carvalho and Luiz Guilherme Piva.

In 1975, Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos pointed out that the "bourgeois order" was the "paradigm" behind every interpretation of the 1930s, be them "authoritarian" or "liberal" (Santos, 1978 [1975], pp.53-7).⁴¹² The authoritarian thinkers did not fully agree, however, in relation to the function the public power should have towards the promotion of the bourgeois order in Brazil. Wanderley states that, to Oliveira Vianna, the "authoritarian regime is transitional, while the new order is not completely mature, capable of governing itself" (Santos, 1978 [1975], p.54). But it is in the text *A Práxis Liberal no Brasil: Propostas para Reflexão e Pesquisa* (The Liberal Praxis in Brazil: Propositions towards Reflection and Research) that Wanderley further develops this interpretation. As this is the major reference for the discussion that will continue with Luiz Werneck and José Murilo, let me quote it at length:

In 1920, Oliveira Vianna expressed for the first time, as clearly and completely as possible, the dilemma of liberalism in Brazil. There is no liberal political system, he would say, without a liberal society. Brazil, he continues, does not have a liberal society, but, on the contrary, a society

have been submitted, see Carvalho (1993, pp.13-5); Wehling (1993, pp.72-80); Oliveira (1993, pp.241-2); Faria (1993, pp.274-8); Weffort (2006, pp.258-9); Ricupero (2008b, pp.69-72); Gomes (2009, pp.146-8); and Silva (2015). Lúcia Lippi Oliveira (1993) reminds that he has already been interpreted as "[r]acist and authoritarian, elitist and centralizer, committed to rural and to colonialist interests... [but also as] notable sociologist, objective, scientific, architect of the labor legislation, first-class essayist, social historian with acute perception of national problems" (Oliveira, 1993, p.241). It is not my scope here, however, to address the controversies surrounding Oliveira Vianna's texts.

⁴¹² In passing, I want to note that, in *Ordem Burguesa e Liberalismo Político* (Bourgeois Order and Political Liberalism), a collection of writings published in 1978, Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos is providing not only lines for a research project and for the interpretation of the history of social and political ideas in Brazil, but also a crucial intervention in the contemporary formation of social sciences and political-institutional conceptions in the country. I will leave to another occasion a more detailed discussion on the disciplinary aspect of his text, mainly contrasting Wanderley's efforts, focused on the consolidation of "Political Science", to Florestan Fernandes', focused on the consolidation of "Sociology", and to Antonio Candido's, focused on the demarcation of "Literary Critique".

that is parental, formed by clans, and authoritarian. As a consequence, a liberal political system will not show an adequate performance, producing results that are always opposed to what the doctrine intends. Besides that, there is a *natural* path through which Brazilian *society* can make progress from the current state towards becoming liberal. Thus, Oliveira Vianna would conclude, Brazil needs an authoritarian political system whose economic and political program is capable of demolishing the conditions that prevent the social system from becoming liberal. In other words, it will be necessary an *authoritarian political system*, in order to construct a liberal society. This diagnosis of the difficulties of liberalism in Brazil, presented by Oliveira Vianna, provides a reference point to the reconsideration of two of the most important traditions of Brazilian political thought: the doctrinaire liberalism and the instrumental authoritarianism (Santos, 1978, p.93, italics in the original).⁴¹³

Besides the doctrinaire liberalism, the history of ideas in Brazil, as interpreted by Wanderley, also shows three forms of authoritarianism. The first form is the *Integralistas* (Integralists), who claim that men are naturally unequal in terms of their capacity to rule, therefore only the naturally best should govern; the second group claims that historical conditions, and not natural ones, have led to this inequality among men's capacity to govern. Despite their differences, both groups share one crucial point: "authoritarianism is not a transitional situation deriving from situational causes. To the contrary, as society progresses, the more necessary

⁴¹³ I have suppressed some words and slightly adapted some phrases. Some pages later: "Doctrinaire liberals are... the successive factions of politicians and analysts that, since mid-XIX century, have held the belief that the political-institutional reform in Brazil, as in any other place, would naturally follow the formulation and execution of adequate legal rules" (Santos, 1978, p.97). Tavares Bastos (1839-1975) is mentioned by Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos as the likely pioneer of this tradition, fascinated as he was with the American system). Nevertheless, after 1945 (with the end of the *Estado Novo*), Wanderley continues, these liberals have breached the commitment prescribing exclusively legal means of change, opening the possibility of the use of force in order to reach power. I cannot develop de argument here, but one should note that Wanderley is writing during the military dictatorship in Brazil, therefore his history of social and political ideas are directly linked also to an effort to interpret the dynamics that led to the civil-military coup in 1964.

will be the authoritarian regimes. And it is precisely here that relies the difference between them and the group I have named instrumental authoritarians" (Santos, 1978, pp.102-3).

According to Wanderley, two aspects distinguish this third group from the other two, as well as from the liberals (see Santos, 1978, p.103). First, they do not hold the belief that societies have a natural form of development, which means that decision-makers are the ones that orient and define the paths to be followed. As a corollary, it becomes legitimate and adequate the comprehensive regulation and administration of social life by the state. Second, they defend the position that the authoritarian rule of power is the quickest form towards the formation of a liberal society, after which it becomes possible even to abolish this authoritarian form of the state. These two aspects mark the line that separates this form of authoritarianism from non-democratic ones. Oliveira Vianna is considered by Wanderley the most clearly articulated expression of instrumental authoritarianism.

Luiz Werneck Vianna, in *Americanistas e Iberistas: A Polêmica de Oliveira Vianna com Tavares Bastos* (Americanists and Iberists: the Polemic of Oliveira Vianna with Tavares Bastos), has a different interpretation. In his view, the centralized state, in Oliveira Vianna, is responsible for the construction of an order conducive to the realization of "Western civilizing ideals", including freedom (see Vianna, 1991, pp.167-8). The notion that Brazilians are singular in relation to other peoples has a positive connotation, expressing a proud declaration of our Iberian provenance (see Vianna, 1991, p.163). But this Iberism does not refer to a cultural inheritance, as if, for example, a patrimonial state would have supposedly been transplanted from Portugal to its colony; it refers, instead, to a "political construction" and a certain kind of social solidarity (see Vianna, 1991, pp.145-7; Carvalho, 2004, pp.18-9). In this scenario, the Iberian option does not exclude the realization of the American ideals. Luiz Werneck stresses, however, that Oliveira Vianna's conception of the Anglo-Saxon political culture is not defined by utilitarianism and individualism, but by a common ground of national community, submitting the individual to the collectivity (see Vianna, 1991, p.171, p.173, p.175). This definition "solves the puzzle": "the Iberian autocracy is not an end, but a means - *instrumental Iberism* -, since the end is the Anglo-Saxon political culture, whose realization here derives from the educating and civilizing action of the state"; or, as he puts later, "the Anglo-Saxon political culture was not to be understood as an

overcoming of Iberism, but as a particular form of its realization" (Vianna, 1991, p.171, p.176, italics added). In this sense, the peculiarity of Brazil would be associated with a peculiar democracy, in which the state prevails over civil society, and the public over the private, not because of an inherent and unchanging cultural trace imported from the Iberian peninsula, but due to an alternative modernization: "Oliveira Vianna... wants to achieve the Anglo-Saxon modern political culture - to him, [defined by] corporatism and technical and scientific administration of social life - skipping the liberal 'stage' and getting an 'advantage' from the social backwardness of our people-mass... The *backwardness* results in an advantage; the *singular* does not necessarily impose a minority status to national order" (Vianna, 1991, p.177, italics in the original). To put it differently, the instrumental Iberism is not a means to its opposite, the individualist and utilitarian Americanism, but to the achievement of a "modern Iberia" where order and hierarchy prevail.⁴¹⁴

A third interpretation I want to bring comes from José Murilo de Carvalho's *A Utopia de Oliveira Vianna* (Oliveira Vianna's Utopia). To him, there is an important difference, besides the similarities, between Oliveira Vianna and the "conservative liberals" of the XIX century in Brazil. The latter endorsed a liberal utopia that considered authoritarianism a means to the realization of liberalism, especially in its Anglo-Saxon modality; these liberals "can be properly called instrumental authoritarians" (Carvalho, 1993, p.22). According to José Murilo, Oliveira Vianna is not one of those, since his inspiration and his corresponding utopia come not from liberalism, but from Iberism:

Iberism can be understood, negatively, as the refusal of the central aspects of what came to be called the modern world.

⁴¹⁴ Luiz Werneck Vianna also identifies Tavares Bastos as one of the counterpoints to Oliveira Vianna. But, instead of a differentiation between doctrinaire liberalism and instrumental authoritarianism, as in Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos, here one gets the differentiation between variations of Americanism and variations of Iberism (for another contrast between Oliveira Vianna and Tavares Bastos, see Rêgo, 1993). As I have showed, Wanderley and Luiz Werneck have different interpretations of Oliveira Vianna. If, on the one hand, it would be implausible to say that they have entirely subscribed to the positions they have identified in his work, on the other hand, it remains to be discussed how these different interpretations have led, not only to specific conclusions on Oliveira Vianna's texts, but also to alternative developments in terms of their own interpretations of contemporary Brazil and of modernity. In this direction, one can take, for example, Wanderley's texts *Razões da Desordem* (Reasons of Disorder, 1993) or *O Ex-Leviatã Brasileiro* (The Ex-Brazilian Leviathan, 2006), and Luiz Werneck's *A Revolução Passiva* (The Passive Revolution, 2004), not to mention their many texts addressing more directly the party-politics and other conjunctural aspects in Brazil. I will leave this to another opportunity. The same exploration perhaps could be thought of in relation to José Murilo de Carvalho.

It is the negation of the individualist utilitarian society, of the contractual politics, of the market as the orderer of economic relations. Positively, it is the ideal of a society based on cooperation, incorporation, prevalence of the collective over the individual interest, regulation of social forces in function of a communitarian objective (Carvalho, 1993, p.23).

The model of society that guides Oliveira Vianna in José Murilo's interpretation is framed by a secular Iberian perspective of Catholic inspiration. Following that, his vision of "community, harmony, integration and maybe hierarchy" becomes associated to a certain vision of the state as "promoter of social harmony" (see Carvalho, 1993, p.25).⁴¹⁵ In this line, political authoritarianism is not incompatible with social democracy.

José Murilo claims that Oliveira Vianna's period at the Ministry of Labor has been decisive to his complete articulation of the model of organization he wanted to see in practice: "[c]orporatism, unionism, social legislation came with the solution" towards the construction of a "harmonious and democratic society" that would escape from the capitalist industrialization and from individualism (see Carvalho, 1993, pp.31-2). Needless to say, it is to the state that this task is ascribed, and social rights now occupy the priority in relation to civil and political rights - this priority is what José Murilo sees as the crucial aspect of Iberism (see Carvalho, 1993, p.32 and p.38, n.19). In other words, Oliveira Vianna's Iberism is linked to what he expects from the state in this utopia of a Brazil that is neither liberal individualist nor totalitarian.

From Wanderley, Luiz Werneck and José Murilo, one gets different interpretations of Oliveira Vianna's texts.⁴¹⁶ More precisely, it would be possible to

⁴¹⁵ Oliveira Vianna's position should not be conflated with other Catholic-inspired thinkers', who Elide Rugai Bastos calls "Catholic militants" (see Bastos, 2010, especially pp.281-7), that have also opposed themselves to liberalism during the 1920s and 1930s.

⁴¹⁶ Elide Rugai Bastos (1993a; 1993b) and Antonio Paim (1999 [1982], pp.27-32) agree with Wanderley's interpretation of Oliveira Vianna as an "instrumental authoritarian". Francisco Weffort (2006) seems more ambiguous: he first claims that the centralization of power in Oliveira Vianna "[w]as, no doubt, an authoritarianism, but that it was proposed as provisional, destined to fade away when its objective was reached", that is, when the people becomes well-educated and organized enough by the state to exercise democracy (Weffort, 2006, p.259); but, close to the end of the text, perhaps without noting the contradiction, he follows José Murilo de Carvalho in stressing Oliveira Vianna's catholic-Iberian inspiration (see Weffort, 2006, pp.270-1). As Luiz Guilherme Piva notes (2000), the "exaggeration" of identifying in Oliveira Vianna an "instrumental authoritarianism"

say that they provide three visions of how Oliveira Vianna relates past, present and future in his interpretation of contemporary Brazil. It is possible to say that all of these three agree that in the XIX century in Brazil one can see an "instrumental authoritarianism" endorsed by some thinkers. Nevertheless, their divergence comes in what regards Oliveira Vianna's position. As I have showed, Wanderley considers him to the most clear articulation of this form of authoritarianism, according to which, once the liberal society is formed, it becomes possible even to abolish the authoritarian form of the state. In other words, authoritarianism is a political form that drives from the above a social formation that, once consolidated into a form, can dispense with the political form that has led to it in the first place.⁴¹⁷

Luiz Werneck and José Murilo have a different means-ends interpretation.⁴¹⁸ To the latter, Oliveira Vianna does not aim at a liberal society, but

whose final aim is a plain democracy, comes not only from "some benevolence" in relation to the interpreter, but also, and mainly, from the acceptance of Wanderley's interpretation (see Piva, 2000, p.94; and Silva, 2015, pp.135-6).

⁴¹⁷ João Quartim de Moraes (1993) states that Oliveira Vianna's admiration for United States' political institutions comes from the fact that, to his eyes, "they realize, through liberal methods, the authoritarian ideal of a profoundly stable social order, in which there is no schism deriving from interests and political passions in dispute" (Moraes, 1993, p.98); in the case of Brazil, however, "a future democratization requires the renunciation, in the *present*, of democratic methods of government" (Moraes, 1993, p.118, italics in the original). Hence, João sheds light on the play of forces between the democratic ends and the authoritarian means; nevertheless, when he ascribes to Oliveira Vianna the same fascination for the Anglo-Saxon democracy that he had criticized in the "utopian idealists" in the very first place (see Moraes, 1993, p.121), he seems not to pay enough attention to how Oliveira Vianna stresses the force that derives from the resisting lines of the people-mass. Ricardo Silva (2008), discussing the variations upon the "instrumental authoritarian" interpretation (among them the ones provided by João Moraes, Antonio Paim and Wanderley Guilherme), argues that "Oliveira Vianna performs a dissociation between democracy and political liberalism whenever he praises the democracy that is 'adequate' to Brazilian society" (Silva, 2008, p.258); this Brazilianized democracy is variously named, for instance as an "authoritarian democracy", which, according to Ricardo, "has nothing in common with the content observed in the different elaborations of the liberal democratic model" (Silva, 2008, p.258). Although Ricardo's interpretation of Oliveira Vianna is profoundly insightful, I do not follow his final claim that the acceptance of the notion of "authoritarian democracy" would imply in a "cognitive and political backsliding" for the democratic theory (see Silva, 2008, pp.266-7). On the contrary, I think that the problematization of this now oxymoronic expression can still be very fruitful to rethink the relation between democracy and authoritarianism, even beyond contemporary Brazil. To be clear: I am not endorsing it as an advantageous political position; my suggestion is that it can shed light in contemporary practices in ways that a dichotomous view of democracy and authoritarianism neglect. One could perhaps understand along those lines the current debates on the (il)liberal or even authoritarian practices of so-called liberal democracies. I am unable to develop the point here, but I will suggest it again at the end of this text.

⁴¹⁸ Explicit references to one another's texts do not help much in tracing these differences. After agreeing with José Murilo's identification of "instrumental authoritarians" within the governmental elites of the Imperial period, Luiz Werneck Vianna says that "in this article, however, I set a distinction between 'instrumental authoritarianism', that wants the ends of the Anglo-Saxon matrix, and 'instrumental Iberism', that conceives this matrix a means to the realization of Iberia and refuses its utilitarianism" (Vianna, 1991, p.184, n.50). José Murilo does not mention Luiz Werneck's text in the version of *A Utopia de Oliveira Vianna* (Oliveira Vianna's Utopia) published in 1993; in a later, almost unmodified, version, he just adds a footnote in which the text is cited and Luiz Werneck is

at a harmonious and democratic society promoted by an authoritarian state through a formative process that, in utopian terms, would realize the Iberian form. To Luiz Werneck, in turn, Oliveira Vianna is an "instrumental Iberist", since it adopts an Iberian option that, instead of being opposed to the Anglo-Saxon political culture, realizes it at the same time that refuses its individualist and utilitarian aspects. Very briefly, I think that the line that separates their interpretation from each other is exactly in how much they see Oliveira Vianna endorsing "Anglo-Saxon" principles. While, on the one hand, the "instrumental Iberist" interpretation claims that these principles are not attached to individualism and utilitarianism and, therefore, can become ends realized by means of the Iberian option; on the other hand, in the catholic-inspired Iberism José Murilo sees in Oliveira Vianna, "the concept of civism, of good society.. was not the one from Anglo-Saxon societies" (Carvalho, 1993, p.27).⁴¹⁹

But the line that separates José Murilo and Luiz Werneck can be seen from another angle. In the continuation of the quotation above, one reads that, according to José Murilo, Oliveira Vianna's rejection of Anglo-Saxon principles is clearly expressed in subsequent texts, where "his model of society was not that of industrial capitalism" (Carvalho, 1993, p.27). Well, neither in Luiz Werneck's interpretation this industrial capitalism was his model. The point is that this refusal was not a wholesale refusal of "the Anglo-Saxon political culture", which should, then, be pursued by means other than the Americanist ones (individualism and utilitarianism).

I am not claiming that the divergence between José Murilo and Luiz Werneck results merely from the supposedly unimportant fact that they ascribe different names to the same utopia: an Iberian form of modernity. I hope it is already clear that Oliveira Vianna defends neither a purely authoritarian ideal nor a merely instrumental authoritarianism leading to a liberal or capitalist society. Hence, the

considered "[t]he one among us who has been more dedicated to explore the concept of Iberism, contrasting it to the concept of Americanism" (Carvalho, 1999, p.214, n.20).

⁴¹⁹ A more detailed discussion of confluences and divergences between Luiz Werneck's and José Murilo de Carvalho's interpretations of Oliveira Vianna could be advanced in terms of how both see the relation between the latter and Alexis de Tocqueville. Luiz Werneck says that Oliveira Vianna is both an "anti-Tocqueville, since it is in centralization that the path to freedom is indicated" and a "Tocquevillian", since he sees the provenance of despotism in Brazil in the lack of social solidarity (see Vianna, 1991, p.168). José Murilo, in his turn, says that "[i]t is symptomatic that Oliveira Vianna never cites Tocqueville, despite certainly knowing his work... Tocqueville's values were not his" (Carvalho, 1993, p.23).

link between, on the one hand, the ends of a stable order and of a future democracy, and, on the other hand, the admiration for the United States allows the interpretation of Oliveira Vianna's Iberian option, or utopia, as raising a potentially alternative path to modernity that Brazil would expose. To Luiz Werneck Vianna, this opens up the possibility of an Iberian formation of the Anglo-Saxon cultural form in Brazil "where public virtues and the general interest prevail over the culture of individualism and over the particular interest" (Vianna, 1991, p.171); to José Murilo, this political project, being very different from the Anglo-Saxon principle of good society, calls for a state that is no different from the "great, benevolent, Patriarch guarding the well-being of the new big Brazilian family" (Carvalho, 1993, p.33).⁴²⁰ Ultimately, one gets at least two plausible views from Oliveira Vianna's means-ends interpretation: the Iberian option of an Anglo-Saxon cultural basis and the (also Iberian) utopia of a new-but-still-Patriarchal state. The first one seems to overestimate the democratic dimension of his project, but it has the merit of putting into relief his resistance towards a specific path to modernity; the second one seems to pay less attention to this resistance, but it grasps the balance Oliveira Vianna wants to obtain between authoritarianism and democracy.

In other terms, ultimately it is the problematization of the form Oliveira Vianna wants to see realized through the formative process driven by this project. Or, from a different point of view, it is on the table, firstly, Oliveira Vianna's interpretation of the Anglo-Saxon culture; secondly, whether he thinks this form of modernity is desirable; and, thirdly, if desirable, whether he thinks that it is feasible in Brazil taking into account its social and political formation. In sum, this means-ends relation is, indeed, the problematization of the relation between past, present and future in contemporary Brazil.

⁴²⁰ In this quotation, "new" refers to the fact that José Murilo claims that, after his institutional engagements in the 1930s, Oliveira Vianna saw that the educating and ordering action of the state should not be targeting the rural clans, as in the Monarchic period, but "the new big Brazilian family", composed of unions, corporations and civil organizations (see Carvalho, 1993, pp.31-2). It would be interesting to trace the connection, if any, between, on the one hand, José Murilo's dissociation of Oliveira Vianna's values from Anglo-Saxon principles of good society, and, on the other hand, José Murilo's own long-standing mobilization of the formation of the United States as an external parameter to interpret the formation of Brazil (for example, in his account of citizenship and of the state).

It is exactly on this aspect that Luiz Guilherme Piva (2000) is extremely helpful.⁴²¹ To him, there are two dimensions in Oliveira Vianna's interpretation: one of them idealizes the past (more precisely, the moral values that got lost or corrupted by the elites' idealism and its institutions); and the other, proposes political-institutional measures to overcome the problems identified (see Piva, 2000, p.96). Luiz Guilherme, then, argues that:

the future must be originated from reality, but the characteristics of our past that would admonish or derail a certain conception of the future (the desired, Anglo-Saxon one) and would lead to another configuration (the undesired, localist one), require the strong state to cancel them out, at the same time that it expresses them, so that the desired order gets created (Piva, 2000, p.105).

Luiz Guilherme says that, to Oliveira Vianna, the task of politics is to "extinguish anarchy", which, as a consequence, "will enshrine, or, even more than that, optimize the positive elements of the great colonizers' grandeur" (Piva, 2000, p.121).

The crucial aspect here is that the past comprises both the negative and the positive dimensions that must be taken into account in the political project driven by the state action.⁴²² The negative ones refer to the centrifugal force of the clans and the corresponding threat of anarchy; the positive, to the innate values observed in the aristocracy (formed by the owners of large land properties) favoring the action of the state. Hence, the modernizing agenda has the goal of creating "the national organization that reverses our incapacities and explores the potential of our qualities, so that a public/Nation that assures our future greatness is constructed" (Piva, 2000, pp.90-1). This national organization is to be built by a strong state,

⁴²¹ Luiz Guilherme's interpretation of Oliveira Vianna is a chapter of his *Ladrilhadores e Semeadores* (Builders and Sowers) published in 2000. He does not deal in this text with IPB, and I will refer here only to his interpretation of PMB.

⁴²² I have mentioned above that, in PMB, Oliveira Vianna gives a different interpretation to large land properties according to the historical period in question, the colonial or the independent. Now I hope to make clear how this difference operates. Although they do not develop this point as carefully as Luiz Guilherme Piva, Antonio Brasil Junior and André Botelho (2010) touch upon the issue at stake when they say that, in Oliveira Vianna, "the authoritarian intervention should fight the 'spirit of clan', but not necessarily the world that gave it life and support"; this spirit, or "political culture", is an inheritance that should be eliminated, without eliminating "the whole of the social relations generated in the large land properties [*latifúndio*]" (Brasil Junior and Botelho, 2010, p.256, p.258).

producing the best possible model, which is not the one from advanced liberal societies.

My remark, perhaps a complement, to Luiz Guilherme's interpretation is that the notion of anarchy in PMB seems double-faced. On the one hand, there is a "surrounding anarchy" that results from the lack of trust in any social institution, or agent, as a possible producer of solidarity and provider of protection to inferior classes (see PMB1, p.142); on the other hand, Brazil is said to be "the radiant and solitary example of order, stability and peace" in the midst of the horrors of the "[Latin] American anarchy" (see PMB1, p.279). The external parameter is mobilized to identify Brazil as anarchical in comparison to advanced societies, but not-anarchical in comparison to the other Latin American countries. This double-faced anarchy, constitutive of our formative process, enables and constrains state action and the form that can be consolidated in Brazil. In sum, it establishes a certain relation of past, present and future.

All that said, I will go back very briefly to Oliveira Vianna's texts. I want, first, to recall the vectors at play in his interpretation of Brazil. In one direction, the force of a political project that ascribes to the state the task of building the nation; in another direction, the force of the cultural traditions of the people-mass. As I have said above, Oliveira Vianna endorses the authoritarian technique as the only one capable of producing compatibility between political institutions and these cultural traditions. This technique would provide the enabling conditions for the *formation* of the possible democracy in Brazil. The *form* he wants to achieve - or, may I say, his utopia - is one of a balance between forces that result from, on the one hand, the limits of what the state can do and, on the other hand, the limits of the potentiality of change inscribed in the people.

This second force - deriving from cultural traditions of the people-mass - should not be seen as if it must be eradicated by the state. Not only this force ultimately cannot be completely eradicated, it is also not desirable that it totally fades away. In this sense, Oliveira Vianna claims that the rational action by the state should work towards the disintegration of Brazilian feudalism and its clans, but he also stresses, in PMB, that the "innate spirit of equity, justice and moderation" of our people enabled Brazil to prevent the anarchism and separatism observed in other Latin American countries, preserving, therefore, authority and national unity. In the preface to PMB, he says that the comparison between Brazil and the great

peoples, "our masters and paradigms", bring to the fore "many deficiencies of our social and political organization"; few pages later, he completes, by saying that "[o]nly this way, in the forced contact with these great peoples that are invading and dominating the globe, we can - through the prescient [farsighted, *previdente*] reinforcement of our less resistant lines - conserve untouched, in this inevitable clash, our personality and our sovereignty" (PMB1, p.21).

In IPB, he highlights an "inferiority complex" of Brazilian political elites, in their relentless attempts to transplant foreign institutions to Brazil. This transplantation appears as not only unfeasible, but also harmful, since it takes into account neither the fact that in Brazil one does not have the same level of "political capacity" that the Anglo-Saxon have, nor the potentiality inscribed in the people-mass. To Oliveira Vianna, the compatibility of formal law and law-custom enabled Anglo-Saxon peoples, through their political institutions, to achieve social and political solidarity and to build a Nation-State that relies on popular and democratic foundations. But this kind of democracy is not his utopia to Brazil - let me recall that in IPB he says that this form of democracy is here "an unachievable utopia" (IPB1, p.269) and that "man's personality has a limit in the extent to which it can be modified" (IPB2, p.116).

Gildo Marçal Brandão (2007) says that PMB sets a "political project" opposed to Brazilian liberals' idea that external political institutions could be reproduced in Brazil. To Gildo, PMB is stressing that "all attempts at transplanting those institutions to an environment that is hostile to them only reinforce our most negative characteristics" (Brandão, 2007, p.68). Thus, the political project prescribes, among other policies or reforms, a centralized state, going back to the agrarian roots of social life, fostering the education of oligarchies and refusing liberal and representative democracy. In sum, it privileges the construction of order over freedom and it aims at forming a civilized society through the rational action of this centralized state (see Brandão, 2007, pp.100-2). This seems also to be the case to IPB, when Oliveira Vianna affirms that, while the political institutions are importable, therefore the transplantation can and do take place through the irradiative imitation to other-than-European (democratic) peoples, the "cultural traditions" and the "lines of behavior" are not imitable, therefore the form to be achieved in these societies will simply not be the same as those of the peoples from which institutions are imitated (see IPB1, p.146). As Angela de Castro Gomes

(1993) puts, he has always refused to turn Brazil into a copy of any external experience, that is why "laws and institutions had to be modified, '*deformed*'; in sum, they had to be 'Brazilianized'" (Gomes, 1993, p.45, italics added).

Oliveira Vianna's utopia to Brazil proposes an alternative kind of democracy, one that is enabled, and not hampered, by a centralized state and a corresponding authoritarian technique. I see here neither a kind of convert or concealed justification for authoritarianism, nor its defense as nothing more than a transitional period towards liberal democracy. Instead of trying to make Oliveira Vianna fit in one, and only one, side of the current dichotomy between authoritarianism and democracy, my attempt was to claim that his interpretation of Brazil fits both at the same time. It is a play of forces of the both/and, of this authoritarian democracy. Oliveira Vianna sets a political project to realize a Brazilian utopia, escaping from Latin American tyrants, Nazi and Fascist authoritarianism, and capitalist individualism and utilitarianism; but this utopia does not envisage the realization of the best possible form in all the political and social history of the world. In that sense, he can be said to hold, abstractly, the values he identifies in the popular-based democracies, particularly the French, the English, and most of all, the American ones; concretely, however, this is not his utopia to Brazil, due to the enabling and constraining reality of its cultural traditions that require a centralized political architecture. In other words, the social and political *formation* of Brazilian people limits the scope of what the rational centralized state intervention can produce, in a way that the possible utopia here is the consolidation of a unique authoritarian democratic *form* from a balance between these two forces. Past, present and future are not articulated in a linear way in Oliveira Vianna's interpretation, and this opens up the problematization of contemporary Brazil and of modernity.