

THE POLITICAL THOUGHT OF OLIVEIRA VIANNA: LIMITING STIGMAS OF ANALYSIS OF HIS WORK

O PENSAMENTO POLÍTICO DE OLIVEIRA VIANNA: ESTIGMAS LIMITADORES DE ANÁLISE DE SUAS OBRAS

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ABSTRACT: In Brazil it is common for authors with opposing views to be discarded and forgotten in library shelves, a practice that causes great harm to the formation of new generations of Brazilian intellectuals. Oliveira Vianna is an example of this literary prejudice, since his works are characterized as "racist", "authoritarian", "fascist", among other adjectives used by those who do not know his writings in depth, thus reflecting on limiting the analysis of his contributions to the understanding of Brazilian social formation. The article aims at understanding three points: racism, instrumental authoritarianism and criticism of liberalism present in the author's works.

KEYWORDS: Instrumental authoritarianism. Oliveira Vianna. Brazilian political thought. Unauthentic liberalism.

RESUMO: No Brasil, é comum autores com visões contrárias à atualidade serem descartados e esquecidos nas estantes de bibliotecas, prática que causa um grande mal para a formação das novas gerações da intelectualidade brasileira. Oliveira Vianna é um exemplo desse preconceito literário, visto que suas obras são caracterizadas como "racistas", "autoritárias", "fascistas", entre outros adjetivos utilizados por aqueles que não conhecem com profundidade seus escritos, refletindo assim em limitadores da análise de suas contribuições para o entendimento da formação social brasileira. O artigo pretende-se compreender três pontos: o racismo, o autoritarismo instrumental e a crítica ao liberalismo presente nas obras do autor.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Autoritarismo instrumental. Oliveira Vianna. Pensamento político brasileiro. Liberalismo inautêntico.

RESUMEN: En Brasil es común que los autores con opiniones opuestas sean descartados y olvidados en las estanterías de las bibliotecas, una práctica que causa un gran daño a la formación de las nuevas generaciones de intelectuales brasileños. Oliveira Vianna es un ejemplo de este prejuicio literario, ya que sus obras se caracterizan por ser "racistas", "autoritarias", "fascistas", entre otros adjetivos utilizados por quienes no conocen sus

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escritos en profundidad, reflexionando así sobre la limitación del análisis de sus contribuciones a la comprensión de la formación social brasileña. El artículo pretende comprender tres puntos: el racismo, el autoritarismo instrumental y la crítica al liberalismo presente en las obras del autor.

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Autoritarismo instrumental. Oliveira Vianna. El pensamiento político brasileño. Liberalismo no auténtico.*

Introduction

In the critical analysis of Brazilian political and social thought, it is common for Oliveira Vianna to be the exponent of authoritarian thought, leading scholars to incur the error of cornering other aspects and concepts present in the works of said author, thus allowing only Vianna's influence on the political authoritarianism prevailing in the early twentieth century in Brazil. Racist thinking linked to anthroposociology² is also a preponderant factor for current researchers to discard the analyses of Brazilian society performed by Vianna. Both views neglect the author's vast production and his main contributions with regard to the examination of Brazilian political institutions and the understanding of the historical-structural traits of the formation of this society.

Oliveira Vianna along with Caio Prado Jr., Celso Furtado, Darcy Ribeiro, Florestan Fernandes, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Gilberto Freyre, among others, are characterized as *Interpreters of Brazil*. According to Fábio Tadeu Vyghy Hanna (2003, p. 27, our translation) in the face of structural economic, cultural and social changes in Brazil during the 1920s and 1930s, scholars "reappear who reaffirm the Brazilian intellectual "tradition" that comes from the 19th [century] that, in moments of rupture and transformation in Brazilian society, explain[s] and invent[s] Brazil, at the same time as it makes proposals for its modernization".

Otávio Ianni (1993, p. 431) stresses, focusing on Oliveira Vianna, the belonging of the thinkers mentioned above to the same intellectual scope that was formed after the political independence of Brazil that occurred in 1822. It is a Brazilian social thought clearly marked by the discussion of the national issue and the Brazilian modernization – boiling issues during the nineteenth and twentieth century – characterizing, however, a vast political concern of a nationalist nature. Thus, they are synthetically scholars who intend to interpret and, consequently, explain Brazil in the face of its social, economic, political, cultural aspects, among others.

² It is the study that links anthropology and sociology which comprises the race as means of establishing the superiority of certain peoples. It was created by the French anthropologist, Georges Vacher from Lapouge, theoretician of eugenics, and rationalism.

The expression "political thought" used here is used based on international literature that designates a set of authors or works belonging to a particular nationality (LYNCH, 2013, p. 733). According to Christian Lynch (2018, p. 10, our translation) "[...] without political thought, the political community could not be organized, nor could it exist. Therefore, the entire organized community necessarily has some kind of political thought", the author adds "[...] each [political thought] refers to the set of ideologies and discourses that confirm their respective political cultures, as they present both similarities and specificities" (p. 10, our translation).

The article intends to systematically present central points of Oliveira Vianna's political thought transposing the limiting polemics of his work. Analyzing issues such as: authoritarianism, racial question, regional types, criticism of liberalism, focusing on three central points: the racial issue and regional types, the instrumental authoritarian and the inauthenticity of liberalism. Understanding the importance of the author's works for the understanding of Brazilian national formation.

The racial issue and the different regional types

Francisco José de Oliveira Vianna was born in 1883 in the city of Saquarema, in the state of Rio de Janeiro, was a jurist, sociologist and historian, being an important critic of the idealism of the reformers of the Brazilian state from 1910 to 1940. According to Carvalho (2002), he was theoretically fed by European writers such as Sociology of the School of Le Play, Social Psychology of Le Bon and Anthroposociology of Lapouge, and national references such as Euclides da Cunha, Silvio Romero, Alberto Torres. He graduated in Law from the Faculdade Livre de Ciências Sociais e Jurídicas, now the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), in 1906. He had a strong political presence as a member of the government of Getúlio Vargas, as: Legal Consultant of the Ministry of Labor (1932-1940); member of the Special Committee responsible for the preliminary draft of the Constitution (1933); member of the Law Review Committee of the Ministry of Justice (1939) and was Minister of the Court of Auditors of the Republic from 1940 until his death in 1951.

Author of a vast set of works, covering various branches of sciences such as History, Psychology, Anthropology, Sociology, Politics, Economics. He published, still in life, thirteen books, among them, *Southern Populations of Brazil* (1920), *Evolution of the Brazilian People*

(1925), *The idealism of the constitution* (1927), ³*Brazilian political institutions* (1949). After his death, four works were published.

Vianna's political thinking cannot be limited only in stereotypes such as "authoritarian", "conservative", "racist". According to Lynch (2018, p. 11, our translation), it is inappropriate to "mechanically use analytical categories extracted from theory produced in countries such as France, England and the United States, such as "fascism", "authoritarianism" and "conservatism", often employed by their analysts". His works intend to centrally infer the analysis of the formation of the Brazilian people and the understanding of the inadequacy of liberalism instilled in Brazilian political institutions.

Given the conceptual and intellectual richness of Oliveira Vianna's texts and their importance as an *Interpreter of Brazil* for the knowledge of Brazilian political thought, his writings became classic texts. According to Norberto Bobbio, we can characterize, as a rule, classical texts as those that are actually retaken as objects of "re-readings and reinterpretations", since they offer us "model theories from which we serve continuously to understand reality" (BOBBIO, 2000, p. 131, our translation). Incorporating into the concept of classic, Saviani and Duarte (2010, p. 16, our translation) states that

classic is what has stood the way for time, having a validity that goes beyond the moment it was formulated. It is defined, therefore, by the definitions of permanence and reference. Since, even at birth in certain historical conjunctures, it captures nuclear issues that concern the very identity of man as a being that develops historically, the classic remains a reference for the following generations who strive to appropriate the human objectifications produced over time.

Throughout his career, Oliveira Vianna became involved in several controversies both with socialist intellectuals, on the left who accused him of fascist, and with right-wing intellectuals, linked to liberalism, who accused him of socialist. However, after his death, accusations of racism limited certain groups of intellectuality to a deep analysis of the author's concepts and works.

The superiority of race and peoples is a constant in the work of Oliveira Vianna, but one cannot disregard his contributions on the Brazilian national formation, a conservative and racist view. His work reflects the political thinking of the right of his time; however, it is not worth characterizing that all political thought in Brazil during the twentieth century was one, this is at least anachronistic. Thus, we intend to analyze in this topic the racial issue present in

³ There is a publication of part of this work in the book *On the margins of the history of the Republic*, organized by Vicente Licínio Cardoso and published in 1924.

the thought of Oliveira Vianna, which is why these points influence the author's view of authoritarianism.

At the beginning of the 20th century, race relations in Brazil gained notoriety in scarce studies on Brazilian society, "probably for two complementary reasons: on the one hand, the problem of the integration of free black people into society as citizens was posed; on the other hand, racist theories gained much influence in Europe from the 19th century" and, consequently, Brazilian intellectuals influenced by racist European theorists began to analyze Brazilian society from a racial perspective (PAIVA, 1976, p. 60, our translation). Vianna, influenced by theorists such as Gobineau, Vacher de Lapouge and Gustave le Bon, is clearly linked to Arianism, a philosophy of history that attributes the moral and material acquisitions of humanity to the almost exclusive influence of the Aryan race, that is, the superior and pure race, without any kind of miscegenation. For the author there were great points of distinction between whites and blacks,

The white race is [...] the most intelligent, the most beautiful, the strongest, the noblest; only she was able to create a culture, a higher civilization, a worthy history – that is, a history of conquests and domination over other peoples and a social order founded on respect for hierarchy and authority. The black race, on the contrary, would have characteristics of animality, little intelligence, avidity of sensations, mood instability. Blacks brought, according to Mr. Vianna, the "contingent of greater confusion and disagreement", in addition to the repulsive ugliness of pure black types, serving as agents of crime and turbulence. (PAIVA, 1976, p. 63, our translation).

Thus, Vianna communing with Silvio Romero and Cipriano de Abreu desired the "bleaching of the nation". There is in Vianna's work the association of the mesological theses of The Anthropogeography of Frederico Ratzel in which they admit that natural laws condition human society. Then occurs the structuring of geographical determinism, leaving aside the existing socioeconomic conditions, subjugating the lower classes in an eternal fixism in which there was no form of political expression of these classes, and that economic subordination did not come from material factors, but from the superiority of race, climate, geography, among other aspects. However, the environment influences the development of the social.

The method used by Vianna for the study of Brazilian society is ethnographic, characterized by "long direct observation of [social] life and caregiver description of her daily life" (CARVALHO, 2011, p. 159, our translation). According to the author, in order to "establish the social characterization of our people as close to reality as possible"; the same

does not study the Constitutions that he characterizes as true frauds, because they are emanating from the liberal ideal do not represent the true Brazilian society; in opposition it goes "directly to the matrices of our own social and historical formation", dedicating itself to elaborate a "concrete and realistic study" of real Brazil ⁴ (VIANNA, 1938, p. 283, our translation).

Studying Brazilian society, Vianna proposes to "build regional types based on social facts" (CARVALHO, 2011, p. 160, our translation), with this, Brazil would not be studied as a unit, but based on the different regional groups that form it. Vianna divides Brazil into three different groups with social criteria, historical factors, the environment and work.

we have at least three different histories: the one in the north, the south-central, the extreme south, which generate, in turn, three different societies: the humming, the forest, the pampas, with its three specific types: the *sertanejo*, the *matuto*, the *gaúcho*. It is impossible to confuse these three types, as it is impossible to confuse these three historical ones, as it is impossible to confuse these three habitats. (VIANNA, 1938, p. 16, our translation).

In her work *Brazilian Political Institutions*, Vianna, in line with regional types, presents the relationship between race, environment and culture, as Fernanda Xavier da Silva points out

To Oliveira Vianna, the knowledge of a society requires the knowledge of how and what elements of culture are assimilated and executed by man, not only of the culture itself. Moreover, it recognizes that culture should not be taken as the only explanatory guide or as a social system that finds an explanation in itself. Like racial theory and physical theory, it depends on other factors and contains only a portion of the truth. Therefore, "instead of a single cause – just, race alone, or culture only – proposes, like what would have been happening in modern science, a multiple, eclectic, conciliatory explanation: RACE + MEDIUM + CULTURE" (IPB: 58). It studies culture not only in its oenographic aspect, but as a mechanism that human societies build under the conditioning of the medium and history. (SILVA, 2013, p. 27, our translation).

Authoritarianism in Oliveira Vianna

The authoritarian character of the author's thought is characterized as "instrumental authoritarianism", that is, the institutions of the authoritarian State ordered at different moments of his work are understood as "means" or "instruments" for the realization of certain

⁴ Oliveira Vianna distinguishes the "real Brazil" from what he seeks to understand, that is, the reality of the Brazilian people of the "ideal Brazil" that idealized by the country's elites, without actually knowing the reality.

purposes, in which such instruments are transitional, having to be abandoned after the full realization of the desired ends.

For Silva (2002, p. 30, our translation), the ideology present in Vianna's political thought is that of the authoritarian state that is characterized as an ideological system, which legitimizes a structure of domination that establishes "the a) preeminence of the State over civil society; b) the preeminence of the executive power over the Legislature and even on the judiciary; c) the preeminence of technical elites over political elites".

Wanderley Guilherme dos Santos (1978) distinguishes three currents of authoritarian thought from the 1930s, being: the first current authoritarianism with historical-structural reasons, present, for example, in the political thought of the writer Azevedo Amaral and the jurist and professor Francisco Campos; the second current based on naturalistic and ethical arguments (such as the ultranationalist, embodied, fascist, far-right Catholic group, the Brazilian Integralist Action) and, the third current that is different from the first two, saw in the "authoritarian political system" only a mediating instrument to reach a "liberal society", it is in this current that Vianna is located.

Santos (1978, p. 93, our translation) notes that only "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 without a liberal society." For the author, in opposition to doctrinal liberalism that advocates the implementation of liberalism in Brazil via legal measures, Vianna points out that Brazil, because it has a society based on "parental, clan and authoritarian", would have the implementation of the liberal political system in the country performed inappropriately, also, in line with this, there is "a natural path by which Brazilian society can progress from the stage in which it is until it is liberal" (SANTOS, 1978, p. 93, our translation). With this, it is pertinent to implement an authoritarian political system "whose economic and political program is able to demolish the conditions that prevent the social system from becoming liberal" (SANTOS, 1978, p. 93, our translation).

Vianna considers that "the analysis of the people points to the absence of traditions that could found self-government [...] Brazilian society must follow a *sui generis path*": authoritarianism (BASTOS, 1993, p. 409, our translation). Therefore, the authoritarian political system would be a phase of transition, because by promoting centralization, it overcomes the tragedy resulting from the misstep of our legal framework with customary law, builds on the people the other conditions to "gradually achieve full democracy" (p. 409, our translation). Thus, "the authoritarianism advocated by the author is a byproduct of both the

diagnosis of the people and their utopia over society. [...] Instrumental authoritarianism, because it is a vehicle for the guarantee of freedoms" (p. 409, our translation).

The goal of the authoritarian state in Vianna's political ideology is the reach of political freedom, which would culminate in the self-government of citizens by the conscious and autonomous exercise of political freedoms, including the positive freedom of suffrage. Superficial analyses can generate doubts, since many find an incoherence between authoritarianism and freedom and even the relationship between authoritarianism and democracy. Therefore, it is necessary to understand the inseparable ideal of authoritarianism as an instrument of transition. This perspective of instrumental authoritarianism believes that

the authoritarian exercise of power is the fastest way to build a liberal society, after which the authoritarian character of the State can be questioned and abolished. The perception of authoritarianism, as a transitory political format, establishes the dividing line between instrumental authoritarianism and other non-democratic political proposals" (SANTOS, 1978, p. 103, our translation).

Since the authoritarian state is a transitive mechanism to reach liberal democracy, it was necessary for elites to know the Brazilian social reality. But what was Oliveira Vianna's understanding about democracy? For democracy to exist, it was necessary for the State to go unrestrictedly through defined steps that would be: State/Village, state/Empire and then reach the State/Nation. In Brazil, due to our specificity in the formation, we did not have the state/village stage, starting with the State/Empire. With this, we have no democratic basis, according to Vianna's thought, because in the first stage is the moment when the people build and consolidate their culture and sacrifice their personal interests for collectives. Thus, it is concluded that we are destined to authoritarianism by our history of socioeconomic exploitation, by the people of agricultural responsibility and by the landowner territorial organization.

Ricardo Silva (2008, p. 256-257, our translation) (Our translation) explains that

the idea of democracy is systematically mobilized in the texts of Oliveira Vianna, although rarely as a positive value when associated with the idea of political liberalism. In general, democracy appears, in association with liberalism, with a negative connotation, as in the numerous passages in which the author is concerned with demonstrating the inadequacy of this association to the Brazilian social reality [...] However, the term democracy also assumes a positive dimension, representing a true ideal of political organization of the nation. The important – and decisive – point to be highlighted is that Oliveira Vianna carries out an operation of disassociation between democracy and political liberalism, when he performs the praise of democracy "appropriate" to Brazilian society.

For Oliveira Vianna, the ideal type of democracy for Brazil would be "corporatist democracy", also expressed as "professional democracy", "true democracy" and "authoritarian democracy", a system that is distinguished from the liberal democracy until then present in the country. The characterization of this form of democracy is that "to the state decision-making process, the power of each particular corporation does not exceed the ability to communicate to the de facto rulers – the elites of the Executive Power – their longings and needs" (SILVA, 2008, p. 258, our translation). These longings and needs are treated as "technical information by the rulers, in order to obtain greater realism, objectivity and effectiveness in the production and implementation of public policies" (idem). Thus, the elite would know the social reality of Brazil not remaining in its entirety out of "real Brazil".

Thus, we conclude that Oliveira Vianna cannot have his authoritarian thought compared to European authoritarian thought, because in Europe the authoritarian mechanism reaps the freedoms and perpetuation of the authoritarian state have other purposes, different from instrumental authoritarianism that is structured as an instrument for different purposes.

The inauthentic character of Brazilian liberal thought

Oliveira Vianna highlights the inauthenticity and ineffectiveness of the liberal ideal in Brazilian political institutions, because the elite is unaware of the reality of the country evidenced in the bowels of constitutional letters since 1824. However, can we infer that Vianna is an anti-liberal? So that we can understand the inauthentic character of liberalism in the Brazilian context of Roberto Schwarz.

Schwarz stresses inauthenticity as an explanatory key to understanding Brazilian political thought and Brazil in its various faces. He considered that the "impropriety of our thought" (SCHWARZ, 1973, p. 160-161, our translation) is a mark of the country, evidenced mainly by the disparity between liberal ideals, copied from central capitalist countries and professed since the Constitution of 1824, and the slavery regime maintained until 1888. Under this aspect Marcelo Moreira (2016, p. 177, our translation) (Our translation), clarified that

as proof of this inauthenticity of Brazilian liberalism, the author [Schwarz] asserts that "favor" – not rights – ended up being the central operator of social mediation between free men (these, yes, endowed with rights) and their descendants. Schwarz estimates that, curiously, in 18th-century Brazil, the reality test didn't seem to matter at all, because if there was no compatibility between liberal and slave reality, the problem, for the intellectuals and politicians of the country, should be in the first.

Together with this, there was in Brazil the incompatibility between social, economic, cultural and political idealism on the other side with liberal and positivist bases. In his work *The idealism of the Constitution*, Vianna "asserts that one of the main problems of Brazil is that, here, the idealists for whom the experience has no value at all dominate" (MOREIRA, 2016, p. 179, our translation). For the author, the failure of the constitutions promulgated in Brazil until 1934 had their source of loss, because "[...] none of these constitutions was based on bases mortared with clay from our living reality" (VIANNA, 1939, p. 14, our translation).

The damage caused by the idealism of our elites gain expression in Vianna's writings, but according to the author, not all forms of idealism⁵ are bad. His central argument is that we needed laws and political institutions based on our social and national reality, in which men with organic idealism would seek inspiration for ideas and laws, briefly observing our forms of sociability and not looking at foreign social forms.

With the end of the Brazilian Empire, politicians linked to liberal ideals resume the front of the political process and, under the guidance of their utopian idealism, energetically restored the Americanist, federative and oligarchic model present in the Regency period.

The liberal-republican ideals, of foreign origin, when transplanted unrestricted to the Latin American continent ends up producing the opposite of what he preached: "not the freedom of the citizen, but his continuous submission to the private power of the electoral clans; not order, but violence among families vying for local power" (MOREIRA, 2016, p. 181, our translation).

In his first book *published Southern Populations of Brazil*, the author demonstrates that in view of our peculiar social formation it was necessary to investigate our society in order, from the analysis of reality, to create laws and institutions. The fascination of the Brazilian elite is to observe foreign institutions and the desire to transplant the model in our reality, being disinterested in knowing our society and, "under this inescapable fascination, lose the objective notion of real Brazil and create for their use an artificial Brazil, and pilgrim, a Brazil of customs manifesto, *made in Europe*" (VIANNA, 1974b, p. 19, our translation).

Liberalism would constitute itself as the great evil of the nation, since it was inauthentic, artificial, alienated and anti-national. Vianna adds that liberalism built an immense ditch, in which on one side were the legislative and constitutional forms and, on the other, the mass people, uneducated, democratically desperate and under the rule of the elites.

⁵ Oliveira Vianna differentiates two forms of idealism: utopian and organic. Organic idealism results from "[...] organic evolution of society itself and is nothing but early visions of a future evolution" (VIANNA, 1939, p. 11). While utopian idealism consists of "[...] any doctrinal system, any and all set of political aspirations in close disagreement with the real and organic conditions of society" (VIANNA, 1939, p. 10, our translation).

The liberal Republicans imagined that there was in Brazil an Anglo-Saxon society, "with organized opinion, regimented and militant" (VIANNA, 1927, p. 43, our translation).

The outcome

"[...] there had been political dispersion, the hegemony of provincial oligarchies, an anarchic system of federal interventions, and an exacerbated state patriotism, with which the Republic undermine the arduous work of national construction operated by the monarchy. That's what everyone came to naked eyes. In the Empire, the Moderating Power would serve as a centripetal axis of national life; with the Republic, that director center had disappeared and, with it, the national meaning of our political existence" (LYNCH, 2018, p. 14, our translation).

In view of Oliveira Vianna's criticism of the inadequacy of the liberal-democratic constitutional model in Brazil, we can highlight three main points of weakness of this model. Firstly, by defining the federative principle, the organization of the Brazilian State that attributed a large portion of autonomy to state governments, the liberal base model would prevent the elaboration and implementation of an organic policy focused on national interests, even allowing the central executive to remain in a position of submission to the benefits of the most powerful regional oligarchies. Vianna accused

the error of always putting the political problem above the administrative problem – and seeks its solution in the Federation. This, for Brazil, is the least advisable form of decentralization – and this is because – because of our unmeasured territorial extension, our dissemination and demographic dispersion, the peculiarity of our colonization by 'jumps', by the clonic structuring of our parties [...], political decentralization will have to result fatally in *mandonismo*, in *coronelismo*, in regulation, in satrapism, in dissociationism, in separatism. (VIANNA, 1974b, v. 2, p. 148, our translation).

The role of assemblies in the state decision-making process in the face of constitutional organization inspired by political liberalism is the second main point of Vianna's criticism. This role attributed to assemblies is characterized as incompatible with the transformations in the social and economic environment of modern societies, whose administrations required quick and complex decisions. Thus comes the proposition that legislative functions should move from independent parliaments to technical councils gathered in the central Executive branch.

The legislative framework in modern nations should be instructed to the imperatives of technical reason overcoming the grand parliamentary discussions that suffered interventions by lay politicians in the matters on which it would be appropriate to legislate. Vianna stressed "the technical inability of the political-party elites to carry out the work of administration and

government", which is why "everywhere technical competence is replacing parliamentary competence" (VIANNA, 1974a, p. 119-121, our translation).

The liberal democratic model would allow the apoliticism and irrationality that prevailed in popular behavior, which is the third point of Vianna's criticism, to be transferred to the state decision-making spheres. In this respect, in line with the conservative European thought of the late nineteenth century and the first decades of the twentieth century, the author categorically opposes the reforms aimed at the expansion of political citizenship and systematized in the institution of universal suffrage.

The transformation of the condition of the people into a constitutional sovereign would be, according to Vianna, the main cause of the national disorder and disorganization and the climate of "riots" and "propelias" in the elections. The irrationality and political incapacity of the Brazilian people, according to the author, would have come to dominate the public sphere since, at the time of independence, the universality of suffrage was instituted. Thus, he lamented "the formidable anarchy born of, or with, the universalism of suffrage" (VIANNA, 1974b, v. 1, p. 264, our translation), and the end of the "serious and peaceful physiognomy of electoral meetings", attributing this phenomenon to the fact that they became voters, on an equal footing with the former "nobility of the land" – all residents of the Colony, over 21, "even the illiterate, even the half-breeds. All the peonage of the cities. All the peonage of the rural areas. All this incoherent population of infixed browns, *cafuzos* and mamluks, who then roamed the domains" (1974b, v. 1, p. 260, our translation).

In order to understand Oliveira Vianna's criticism of universal suffrage, we need to understand that, according to the author, the basis of Brazil's social formation is fixed in four centuries of history, forming a 'cultural complex'⁶. The basis of our formation is rooted in the great property of the land and in the dominion of the farmer under his territorial space, in the social condition of "sir", being able to control the population inhabitant in the land nearby.

On the basis of Brazilian political formation would be, according to the author, two institutions of private law: the feudal clan and the parental clan. Characterizing the feudal clan as involving "the most combative elements or more read to the owner, residents within their demarcations, the male population with fighting capacity, the small owners and small vicinal merchants, the free men located in lands close to the domain" (GIMENEZ ⁷*et al.*, 2018, p. 4,

⁶ The author removes this concept from the sociology of culture, among which he mentions Bernard, Wissler, Lumley and Hankins. Vianna Olive. *Brazilian Political Institutions*, p. 94.

⁷ Caio Prado Jr. compacts in parts with regard to the first political institutions created during the Brazilian colony with the thought of Oliveira Vianna, calling it a patriarchal clan. Cf. Caio Prado Jr. *Formation of Contemporary Brazil*, São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1981, p. 287.

our translation). In addition, it has a hierarchical structure, with defense and attack schemes focused on expanding the territorial and political domains of the great owner.

The parental clan is a derivative of the manor family, but it can exceed its limits in times of conflict. It is structured on the basis of a "solidarity of blood, encompassing educated offspring and protégés such as children, godchildren, spurious sons of the Lord or close relatives, relatives by civil affinity (son-in-law and brothers-in-law)" and relatives by "religious affinity (*compadres* and godchildren) and relatives by adoption (boring kids and brats)" (GIMENEZ *et al.*, 2018, p. 4, our translation).

Based on this organization of political institutions, for Vianna, there would be no possibility of the development of the collectivity, however, they formed uses, customs, social types and institutions with predominance of individualism, privatism and personalism. However, only two forms of social solidarity were built under the economic and social structure of the colonial period: "1) solidarity around the lord of the "fief" [...] which is characterized by a relationship of dependence of the mass people to the landowner" and the second form of solidarity "around the great family of the landowner, characterized by bonds of consanguinity or compute" (GIMENEZ *et al.*, 2018, p. 4, our translation). Synthetically, the central power is under the aegis of the "lord of dominion" and the mass people subjugated in a relationship of subordination.

With Independence, clans are led to the process of regrouping into political parties, with the purely defensive characteristic. The association of clans into parties did not meet criteria of an economic, social or religious nature; was of a "political" nature, for exclusively electoral purposes. In this period of our history arises, according to the author, the electoral clans, with feudal clan structure and the parental, but with municipal, regional and even national expansion.

With the structuring of the electoral clan, political practices emerge related to family collective responsibility, collective banditry, nepotism and religious fanaticism, since this clan reflects the political and partisan dominance of certain families linked to large properties. The mass people without the necessary assistance of the State begins to add submissively to the domain of these clans, being part of public life and to be valid as a numerical force, to the extent that the majority criterion becomes a measure of electoral disputes.

For Oliveira Vianna there are two categories in Brazilian society: the elite and the mass people, which according to the author are "two civilizations and two entirely distinct cultures". The elite comes historically from the great landowners who possessed under their political and social domain the mass-people.

It is absolutely impossible to understand the history of Brazil's noble leaders' classes, without always taking into mind this essential distinction. The antagonism that we emphasize exists, in 'Brazilian Political Institutions', between the culture of the mass people and the culture of the elites, is not only assimilated modernly, comes from afar, is at the very root of our people, and is revealed from the first days of our formation and settlement. (VIANNA, 1974b, p. 186-187, our translation).

We can observe that the author opposes universal suffrage, because the mass people would be used only as a "maneuvering instrument" for the interests of the elite, or rather, of the electoral clan of which he "belonged" in the dominated order. Given the above, Vianna criticizes the parliamentary system established from the Republic, because the mass people would not have historical conditions to freely exercise their political decisions, that is, after leaving the elite domain it was necessary to organize these individuals in unions with the role of corrective agents or rectifiers that create forms of social solidarity.

There is a kind of "quixotism" in the Brazilian economic elite and in the Brazilian intellectual elite" (MOREIRA, 2016, p. 182, our translation). The conflict between the "clan spirit" and Latin quixotism is responsible for the failure of our political institutions. For Oliveira Vianna, quixotism was present in all constitutions until 1934, but his greatest criticism is addressed by the Constitutional Charter of 1891, which "put an end to a stable political government [...] As believers in the mystical power of laws, [republicans] believe that by decree they would create a democracy in Brazil."

In conclusion, according to Vianna, the national elite tries to implement an inauthentic liberalism, because the national quixotism.

[...] it is a direct consequence of the way in which our elites were educated, that is, by religious without any objective and positive training of science. Educated abroad, they want to organize the country according to European ideals, not according to the real provisions of the Brazilian people. They know foreign evils deeply, but they are "illiterate" when it comes to their country. For Vianna, even if there were important exceptions to these unrealistic (such as Viscount of Uruguay, Baron of Rio Branco, Alberto Torres, etc.), it was this type of idealism that flourished in the country, extending to the Republic, including because of the dissemination of such ideals through the national press. (MOREIRA, 2016, p. 183, our translation).

As a result of the proposed theme, can we come to the conclusion that Oliveira Vianna is an anti-liberal? We admit that Vianna is contrary to the way liberalism is expressed and present in Brazilian politics, because it did not know the reality of the country, because it suggests the use of the authoritarian state as a transition route to liberal democracy.

Final considerations

The aim of this article was to present three of the main points of Oliveira Vianna's work that generates controversy in the academic environment, which are: the racist, authoritarian and critical character of liberalism in his works. Issues present in a dissociated way in some articles. This controversy motivated many academics who study the government of Getúlio Vargas or even who wish to understand the formation of Brazilian society to discard the contributions of Vianna, in addition to other contemporary writers, imprisoned in the intellectual fallacy for not having read what they do not agree, thus resulting in their superficial and impoverished analysis of references.

Oliveira Vianna reflects much on what proclaims the conservative thought of the early twentieth century, not deserving of having been an author who intended to understand the formation of Brazilian society, and the first that managed to systematically carry out writings about this process of constitution, of formation of the Brazilian social environment. With this, in to understand in its entirety it is necessary the analytical look that advances under the limiting stigmas.

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