

LOCAL POWER AND MODERNIZATION: THE CONTRIBUTION OF LEAL AND QUEIROZ TO BRAZILIAN POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY

PODER LOCAL E MODERNIZAÇÃO: A CONTRIBUIÇÃO DE LEAL E QUEIROZ PARA A SOCIOLOGIA POLÍTICA BRASILEIRA

PODER LOCAL Y MODERNIZACIÓN: LA CONTRIBUCIÓN DE LEAL Y QUEIROZ A LA SOCIOLOGÍA POLÍTICA BRASILEÑA



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ABSTRACT: This article analyzes two classic works of Brazilian sociological literature on local power: “*Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto*” (1949) by Victor Nunes Leal and “*Mandonismo local na vida política brasileira e outros ensaios*” (1976) by Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz. Based on the analysis of these essays and their previously selected critical reviews, this study aims to discuss the divergences and convergences in these authors' views on local power throughout Brazilian history, as well as the limits and possibilities of their contributions to contemporary sociological discussions on local power. It was observed that these works offer a solid theoretical and methodological framework for understanding local political power, grounded in the perspective of totality. However, given recent social, urban, and media transformations, there is a need to recontextualize and critically review these classic studies to better address contemporary issues related to local power in Brazil.

KEYWORDS: Local power. Municipal politics. Victor Nunes Leal. Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz. Brazilian sociology.

RESUMO: Este artigo analisa duas obras clássicas da literatura sociológica brasileira sobre o poder local: “*Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto*” (1949) de Victor Nunes Leal e “*Mandonismo local na vida política brasileira e outros ensaios*” (1976) de Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz. A partir da análise desses ensaios e de suas revisões críticas selecionadas previamente, buscou-se discutir os distanciamentos e as aproximações da discussão destes autores sobre o poder local ao longo da história brasileira, assim como os limites e as possibilidades de sua contribuição para a discussão sociológica sobre o poder local contemporâneo. Foi observado que essas obras oferecem um arcabouço teórico-metodológico sólido para a compreensão do poder político local, fundamentado na perspectiva da totalidade. No entanto, diante das transformações sociais, urbanas e midiáticas recentes, há necessidade de recontextualizar e revisar criticamente esses estudos clássicos para melhor abordar as questões contemporâneas relacionadas ao poder local no Brasil.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Poder local. Política municipal. Victor Nunes Leal. Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz. Sociologia brasileira.

RESUMEN: Este artículo analiza las obras clásicas de la literatura sociológica brasileña sobre el poder local: “*Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto*” (1949) de Victor Nunes Leal y “*Mandonismo local na vida política brasileira e outros ensaios*” (1976) de Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz. A partir del análisis de estos ensayos y de sus revisiones críticas previamente seleccionadas, se buscó discutir los distanciamientos y las aproximaciones en la discusión de estos autores sobre el poder local a lo largo de la historia brasileña, así como los límites y las posibilidades de su contribución a la discusión sociológica sobre el poder local contemporáneo. Se observó que estas obras ofrecen un marco teórico-metodológico sólido para la comprensión del poder político local, fundamentado en la perspectiva de la totalidad. Sin embargo, frente a las recientes transformaciones sociales, urbanas y mediáticas, es necesario recontextualizar y revisar críticamente estos estudios clásicos para abordar mejor las cuestiones contemporâneas relacionadas con el poder local en Brasil.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Poder local. Política municipal. Victor Nunes Leal. Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz. Sociología brasileña.

Introduction

This paper maps out the sociological debate on local political power based on two classic works of Brazilian literature: "*Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto*" (1949), by the Minas Gerais jurist Victor Nunes Leal, and "*Mandonismo local na vida política brasileira e outros ensaios*" (1976), by the São Paulo sociologist Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz. The aim is to establish a dialogue between these authors' approaches to this problem and evaluate their theoretical and methodological contribution to empirical sociological studies on local power in the context of urbanized Brazil. What motivates this research is the lack, despite its relevance, of studies on this subject, both with regard to local power as municipal power, since the 1988 Constitution delegates to municipalities a large part of the responsibility for providing basic services and implementing public policies; and local power as a structured and structuring basis for political mobilization, where subjectivities and political leaderships are built from the interaction between global cultural trends and the idiosyncrasies of spatially delimited social strata.

The return to the studies of Leal and Queiroz is not by chance, nor just because they are classic kinds of literature for the discussion of local political power, but because both inform a methodological perspective centered on totality when dealing with a specific social phenomenon, that is, *coronelismo*², avoiding analytical polarizations (Carvalho, 1980; Botelho, 2007). In Leal, *coronelismo* is analyzed from the combination of the federalist political-institutional arrangement of the First Republic and the predominantly agrarian social and economic structure (Carvalho, 1997; Marino; Pereira, 2020); while in Queiroz, the phenomenon is evaluated from the articulation between the social and economic structure and the normative meanings that social agents employ in their political practices (Botelho; Carvalho, 2011). When considered together, these works point to a fruitful methodological path for the sociological investigation of local political phenomena based on their consideration as products of the combination of political-institutional arrangements, social and economic configuration, and the normativity that sustains the social practices of individuals, without any of these elements being understood as dispensable or as irreconcilable antagonisms.

The impacts of urbanization, institutional changes, and the development of the media and mass culture observed in Brazil over the last five decades (Kerbauy, 2016), make it imperative to contextualize these studies, as well as to review the literature on the authors and the subject in question. This is necessary in order to understand the possibilities and limits of

² *Coronelismo* was a political practice, common during the Old Republic, in which colonels coerced their subordinates to vote for their candidates in order to remain in power.

applying the aforementioned methodological tool in the face of the new issues facing local political power in contemporary Brazil. Thus, this article proposes to discuss the following questions: what are the affinities and points of divergence in the discussions developed by Leal and Queiroz? What are the limits and possibilities of his contributions to the sociological analysis of local power in the New Republic?

These issues are discussed in this article based on a sociological study based on the reading of a bibliography previously collected, consisting of the writings of Victor Nunes Leal (1949; 1980) and Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz (1976), articles that critically reviewed the work of these authors (Bôas, 2014; Botelho, 2007; Botelho; Carvalho, 2011; Brasil Jr.; Botelho, 2016; Limongi, 2012; Marino; Pereira, 2020; Ortiz, 2020) and in articles on "local power", "municipal power", "mandonism", "*coronelismo*" and "clientelism" (Borges, 2010; Braga *et al.*, 2013; Carvalho, 1997; Dombrowski, 2008; Lopez, 2004; Lopez; Almeida, 2017; Ottmann, 2006; Santos, 2013). All published in social sciences scientific journals are indexed on the SciELO platform.

In the first part of this article, the aim is to briefly present the essays "*Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto*" (1949) and "*Mandonismo local na vida política brasileira e outros ensaios*" (1976), and to compare them in order to explore their theoretical similarities and differences, so that it is possible to understand the socio-political context with which Leal and Queiroz dialog. In the second part, based on the literature reviewed, we will explore the limits and possible contributions of these essays to the contemporary sociological agenda on local power.

The *coronelismo* of Leal and Queiroz

Victor Nunes Leal and Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz discussed local political power at the time of Brazil's re-democratization after the authoritarian years of the Estado Novo. Leal did so in 1948, with a thesis entitled "*O município e o regime representativo no Brasil: contribuição ao estudo do coronelismo*", presented in the competition for the chair of Political Science at the National Faculty of Philosophy, which he had held on an interim basis since 1943. As a jurist, his main concern was the administrative, political, and financial autonomy of the municipalities at a time of constitutional change. On the other hand, in Queiroz, the issue of local power was part of a research agenda presented for the first time at the First Brazilian Congress of Sociology in 1954. Documented in the proceedings of the event under the title "*Contribuição para o Estudo da Sociologia Política no Brasil* (Contribution to the Study of

Political Sociology in Brazil)", his presentation calls for a program of sociological research into Brazilian political phenomena, which understands them as products of the social totality, influencing and influenced by other sectors of social life, and whose object is the Brazilian political past, in order to make it possible to build a background for political studies on the present.

To this end, the privileged *locus* of investigation should be the municipality, which is considered to be the center of the development of Brazilian politics since the colony. One of the products of this ambitious project was the essay "*Mandonismo local na vida política brasileira*", published in 1969. In addition to the convergence in relation to the period in which these authors wrote, it is noteworthy that both Leal and Queiroz, in the aforementioned works, resort to historical analysis to emphasize what would be, for them, the constant element of Brazilian politics: the undermining of municipal autonomy and local mandonism, respectively.

Leal's historical assessment discusses Brazil's expansion and restrictions of municipal autonomy. According to him, in the early colonial years, the town councils were dominated by rural lords and were responsible for all local affairs, with no separation of powers into legislative, executive, and judicial functions. At the time, the landowners had public functions of all kinds, limited by the confusing definition of their attributions. Although the chambers were subordinate to the Metropolis, the power of its authorities was omnipotent, and the chambers were used to carry out legal and extralegal acts in the territory.

From the mid-17th century onwards, this situation began to change gradually, largely due to the divergence between the interests of the colonizers and the settlers, which intensified with the development of the colonial economy. Thus, the Metropolis began to assert state authority against the authority of the patriarchs, initiating a "process of vitalization of public authority and decay of private power" (Leal, 2012, p. 83, our translation), as well as of the municipal councils, which accelerated throughout the 19th century.

During the Empire, municipal autonomy was sacrificed in favor of strengthening the provinces in the face of the General Government. The provincial presidents, in turn, continued to be the protagonists of the provincial scene, their most important political function being "to guarantee the electoral victory of the candidates supported by the government [central power]" (p. 89, our translation). In the First Republic, the weakness of the municipalities was maintained, despite the victory of the federalist tendency. The discussion on municipal autonomy was of interest to the 1890 constituents, but the imprecise requirements of the federal

constitution left the states free to regulate this issue, and they quickly amended their constitutions to reduce the autonomy of municipalities.

In this way, the state governments began to protect the communes according to the political interests of the legislators in the concentration of power by the state. This concentration was of interest to state governments for electoral reasons. The former president of the province, appointed by the emperor, became governor of the state and invested by-election. In this scenario, the *coronelista* system came into play, as the local political bosses-controlled bundles of *cabresto*³ votes.

Before detailing the concept of *coronelismo*, it is essential to mention that Queiroz (1976) disagrees with Leal concerning the weakening of the power of rural lords in the face of strengthening central public power. His argument is that local bossism has competed with central power in all of Brazil's historical periods, but has always asserted itself as the strongest power. During the colony, central power was never able to fully establish itself; in the Empire, it intertwined with mandonism in the localism-centralism amalgam; and in the First Republic, it asserted itself as a power independent of mandonism, but could not do without it in order to act, founding *coronelismo*.

Like Leal, she asserts that, in the early years of colonization, landowners wielded complete authority over colonial territories. However, contrary to Leal's perspective, she argues that the strict and severe measures implemented by the Metropolis against the landowners proved ineffective in curbing their power during the colonial period. Furthermore, she posits that the influence of rural elites expanded during the Empire, surpassing local administrative boundaries to permeate the provinces and even the Empire itself through the presence of "professional politicians." In the First Republic, government and landowners, now referred to as colonels, remained synonymous. The key distinction was that the political elite was no longer composed of northeastern mill owners and coffee growers from Rio de Janeiro but instead was dominated by landowners from São Paulo. To sustain this dynamic, the Republic relied on *governismo*, or *coronelismo*.

What can be deduced from these trajectories is that *coronelismo* does not arise by chance. It is a phenomenon that is based on social structures built up over several centuries, especially mandonism, the systemic effect of which has been to weaken municipal autonomy. In this sense, the weakening of the chambers does not necessarily mean the weakness of private

³ The vote of *cabresto* is an electoral practice that involves intimidation or granting of favors by local power brokers, known as coronels, so that voters would vote for specific candidates.

power in relation to central public power. Furthermore, to say that mandonism has been a constant phenomenon in Brazilian political life does not mean that the concentration of political power in the hands of landowners has remained stable throughout history.

As Queiroz (1976, p. 22) argues, economic power was the mainstay of politics and, therefore, as this power shifted over time and space due to the "rise of different products and different zones", the political elite was renewed, characterizing periods of misalignment and crisis that soon settled down when the government passed into the hands of the representatives of the most prosperous economic zone. According to this thesis, the political arrangement of the First Republic was the result of the demands of the farmers of western São Paulo. This system combined the expansion of the electorate and the maintenance of the colonial agricultural exploitation model, creating a scenario in which many of the voters depended on the landowners for their livelihoods. In this sense, "universal" suffrage had the effect of increasing the number of rural voters at the behest of the political boss. Hence, Leal's (2012) famous definition that *coronelismo* is a system of power that stems from the inadequate combination of representative rule and an agrarian economic structure.

In general, the *coronelismo* described by Leal (2012) is configured as a system of "governismo"⁴, in the terms of Queiroz (1976), which articulates the relationship between the colonel, the state governor, and the President of the Republic. On the one hand, if it was the landowners who decided the outcome of the elections, the state presidents and deputies needed to court them; at the national level, the same happened in the relationship between the President of the Republic and the state presidents. On the other hand, the dependence of the municipalities on the states actually increased, as the state government had the "coffer of graces [for favors] and the power of disgrace [for persecutions]" (Leal, 2012, p. 63, our translation). So, the farmers needed to court the presidents of state.

In view of the discomfort of having the state government as opposition, the wars waged between the local bosses in the municipality vied for the preference of the state government. Queiroz (1976) argues that this system allowed the farmers of western São Paulo to exert their dominance over national politics, since it meant that the municipalities had to be in harmony with the state government in order for the political leaders elected to the municipal councils and legislative assemblies to have their demands recognized. Similarly, the state government

⁴ *Governismo* refers to a system of government that is characterized by authoritarian or dictatorial practices in the exercise of power, which may involve abuse and excessive control.

needed to be aligned with the President of the Republic in order for its federal representatives (deputies and senators) to be duly sworn in.

In the event of a disagreement between the governments, the elections were annulled. As we can see, the state government was responsible for balancing the forces of the municipal political leaders and the central government. To this end, the governors, on the one hand, supported the strongest municipal political leaders who were victorious and, on the other, constantly supported the central government. But why was it specifically the São Paulo landowners and their allies who reached the top of this power system? According to Queiroz (1976), the administrative machinery was taken over by representatives of the coffee plantations because the country's greatest wealth and, consequently, its highest population density were concentrated in them during this period. In his words, "The whole of national life revolved around coffee because coffee was the national wealth" (idem, p. 131, our translation). That's why, through *governismo*, even in the smallest municipalities in the north, only supporters of the *Paulistas* were elected.

It is also necessary to answer the questions about the interests of Leal and Queiroz when discussing local power in the First Republic. With regard to this issue, on a cognitive level, the interest in understanding the conservative nature of Brazilian modernization stands out (Botelho; Carvalho, 2011), and, on a political level, the desire for effective democratization of the country at that time of transition from rural to urban. In Leal's view, "democratization" is understood as synonymous with the elimination of the agrarian social structure, for which industrialization and urbanization were necessary steps, acting as disintegrating elements of mandonism and, consequently, of *coronelismo* in favor of adequate federalism.

Leal (2012) considers that the *coronelista* system was gradually weakened as a result of Brazil's urbanization and industrialization processes, accompanied by political changes evidenced by the decline of government influence in state elections and the implementation of the 1932 Electoral Code. The 1946 Constitution, in turn, acted in the same direction, but various aspects of this legal system worried the author about a possible return of the municipal guardianship system. In addition to these, the poverty of the people, especially the peasants, also appeared to the author as an obstacle to the expansion of the country's public and democratic spirit.

Queiroz (1976), on the other hand, is more pessimistic about the identity between urbanization and democratization. Firstly, she notes that the 1930 Revolution took place thanks to the support of the old colonels. Although it was a heterogeneous movement, its cornerstone

was the 1929 Crisis, which both devalued coffee and prevented the public policy of valuing coffee from being maintained - which culminated in the government farmers breaking their support for Júlio Prestes.

In this sense, although the 1930 Revolution was not the product of a significant change in the social and economic structure, it was also part of a gradual process of adaptation by the colonel to the new living conditions. Moreover, even if there were a transformation in the agrarian social structure, the democratization of the country would not be automatically guaranteed. Although industrialization, the emergence of small polyculture farms, and urbanization led to the disappearance of family solidarity from 1930 onwards, especially in São Paulo, this was followed by class solidarity restricted to the upper classes.

In the lower classes, modernization and "the possibilities of social ascension and escape from the stratum in which one was born (...) favor individualism" (Queiroz, 1976, p. 28, our translation); thus, "workers and settlers assume attitudes of struggle, which are revealed by their refusal to vote for the bosses' candidates, but they join, on the other hand, legitimate representatives of capitalism, as long as they believe that these are committed to defending them" (idem, p. 28, our translation). A phenomenon she accuses of "urban *coronelismo*", the core of which is the demagoguery of its representative parties.

Although the phenomenon described by the author is not exactly a type of *coronelismo*, but rather a manifestation of clientelism, as Carvalho (1997) points out, this observation allows Queiroz to understand that breaking the electorate's dependence on the large landowner, as well as the mandonism characteristic of the agrarian structure, does not necessarily result in a democratic spirit or the consolidation of citizenship. Thus, her theory comes to recognize the voter not only as a subject, but also as a social agent, an aspect that Queiroz develops with precision in her famous essay "*O Coronelismo numa Interpretação Sociológica*" (1976), in which, it should be noted, she defines the coronelista structure as a form of political clientelism.

On the topicality of Leal and Queiroz's discussion

To analyze the limits of applying Leal and Queiroz's theses to the study of local power in contemporary Brazil, it is essential to point out that *coronelismo* is a political phenomenon specific to the First Republic. In this sense, current political phenomena should not be hastily interpreted as a continuation of *coronelismo*. In fact, the institutional changes pointed out by Leal, such as the creation of the Electoral Court and the constitutional changes that favored

municipal autonomy, were effective in dismantling the coronelista system (or governista system). In this context, the 1945 election can be considered the inaugural milestone of competitive elections in Brazil, at least at the federal level (Limongi, 2012).

It should also be noted that urbanization and industrialization eroded mandonism, since, as Queiroz (1976) states, the multiplication of urban centers, together with accelerated demographic growth, complexified the internal structure of cities thanks to the expansion of old institutions and the emergence of new ones. Impersonal and indifferent relationships were replacing the personal relationships of kinship; the domination of cities escaped the colonels and became the domain of bureaucratic institutions (such as the police, the judiciary, and the city council); and, most importantly, vertical solidarity, which united kinship members with the same political interests regardless of socio-economic class, was replaced by horizontal solidarity, by "class consciousness", especially among the upper classes.

Although this process did not happen simultaneously and homogeneously in all Brazilian regions, over time, the institutions became independent. Urbanization multiplied the possibilities of alienated work and services for local bosses, demanding more sophisticated and indirect forms of political domination from them - which was no great difficulty, since the transition from boss society to urban society also took place through accommodation. Thus, it is pertinent to note that it was possible for the colonels to maintain their economic and political power in urban society, despite the exceptions. Economic power remained direct and transparent, while political power was exercised mainly "behind the scenes" (Queiroz, 1976, p. 210), through other actors who act directly on the political stage, such as their representatives.

The disappearance of the phenomena analyzed by Leal and Queiroz is, therefore, the main obstacle to using their writings for the social and political interpretation of contemporary Brazil. In addition, as Kerbaui (2016) argues, the development of the media, such as radio, television, and the internet, which accompanied the country's urbanization and industrialization process, the emergence of "professional politicians" as a result of institutional changes implemented during the military regime and the consequent break in voter isolation, led to the emergence of new mechanisms for mediating political relations between leaders and the electorate, such as mass patronage, bureaucratism, and corporatism. These new sociological phenomena challenge the hasty application of the theoretical-methodological tools used by Leal and Queiroz to analyze Brazilian politics.

However, the work of these authors cannot be considered dated. On the one hand, we agree with Brasil Jr. and Botelho (2016) that the "historically circumscribed" nature of the

phenomena investigated by these authors does not diminish the theoretical and analytical importance of their works, insofar as the specific conditions that gave rise to these phenomena make it possible to "question the effective possibilities of their persistence, in varying forms and with varying intensities" (Brasil Jr.; Botelho, 2016, p. 223, our translation), especially if we consider that the contemporary challenges of any society are linked to the sequence of its historical development. In this sense, the specificities of the Brazilian urbanization process discussed by Leal and Queiroz mean historical roughness that interacts with the institutional changes introduced in recent decades, serving as starting points for evaluating the organization of our federalism, the exercise of citizenship and the possibilities and meanings of social participation in the political sphere.

On the other hand, the issues raised by these works, especially by "*Coronelismo, Enxada e Voto*", still persist in sociological literature, which demonstrates their relevance for understanding local power. In general, the articles analyzed lack empirical research on the dynamics of political power at municipal level, which is explained by the assumption that the interpretations on this subject formulated at the beginning of the 20th century would be sufficient to explain "local politics and the pattern of intergovernmental relations between municipalities, states and the federal government" (Santos, 2013, p. 6). On the other hand, there has been a need for studies that empirically reassess the problem discussed by Leal, taking into account the structural and institutional changes that have taken place over the last few years.

Much of the recent empirical analysis of municipal power suggests the persistence of clientelism in the link between leaders and voters, especially in small municipalities (Borges, 2010; Braga *et al.*, 2013; Dombrowski, 2008; Lopez; Almeida, 2016), but at the same time, it is widely recognized by the authors that this dynamic is not synonymous with *coronelismo*. Based on these diagnoses, it is possible to state that the questions raised by Queiroz in "*Coronelismo numa interpretação sociológica*" (1976) can, at the very least, inspire a broadening of this discussion, with the aim of developing a political anthropology-focused on the sociological explanation of the structure of clientelistic relations in Brazilian municipalities. This would be done by investigating the political trajectory of local leaders, the elements that contribute to the maintenance of local political oligarchies, the meanings attributed by the electorate to the vote, and also the normative elements, as well as the agents and institutions that mediate between the political elites and the electorate.

More importantly, we can draw at least two epistemological hypotheses from the aforementioned studies. The first, which characterizes the uniqueness of "*Coronelismo, Enxada*

e Voto", is that the problems of local politics arise from the mediations between the municipal, state, and federal levels of political power and, therefore, must be analyzed as points of intersection between the whole and the local, and not as fatalistic idiosyncrasies of one municipality or another. The second issue, which becomes clearer with Queiroz's contributions to the discussion by clarifying which agents benefited from the governorship of the First Republic, i.e. the São Paulo landowners, is that issues of local power are (re)produced historically through the action of the state. In this way, they also need to be discussed as products of the relationship between the social structure and formal political decisions at municipal, state, and federal levels.

In this sense, if clientelism persists as an instrument of connection between leaders and the electorate, it is necessary to question both the normative meanings that the vote assumes for the electorate in modern capitalist societies and the sociological characterization of the groups that deliberate and benefit politically from the reproduction of the basic social structures of clientelistic relations.

Final considerations

In short, this research has shown that Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz, in discussing mandonism in Brazilian politics, reiterates a series of assessments made by Victor Nunes Leal, especially with regard to the First Republic. However, she disagrees with the author in relation to the power of the private landowners over public power, insofar as, for her, they coexisted in conflict from a particular moment in colonial history. However, the former always reaffirmed itself as the strongest, unlike Leal's conclusion, for whom the weakening of municipal councils is seen as the weakness of private power. What is clear from Queiroz's contribution to Leal's thinking is that the political interests of the landowners in the more prosperous regions testified to their power, both in relation to the landowners in the economically decadent regions and in relation to the central power, whether of the Metropolis or the Emperor. In the Old Republic, the weakening of the municipalities was brought about precisely to maintain political power in the hands of the São Paulo colonels, at that time the most prosperous in Brazil, given the economic importance of coffee on the global market.

The evaluation of the works of Victor Nunes Leal and Maria Isaura Pereira de Queiroz on local power, as well as more recent studies on the subject, has shown that the relevance of these works lies less in the possibility of recycling the concepts of "coronelismo" and

"mandonism" to revive this research agenda than in the theoretical-methodological sophistication that these authors employed in the construction and use of these concepts. This is because they overcome analytical polarizations such as "real Brazil" and "legal Brazil", "tradition" and "modernity" or "private order" and "public order" (Carvalho, 1980; Botelho, 2007), among others which, in short, express a supposed duality between society and the state. The perspective of totality observed in these studies, which translates into the recognition of mutual interdependence between the institutional-legal arrangements and the social structures present at the core of coronelismo, informs fruitful ways of investigating the local political phenomena of the New Republic.

Finally, it is worth highlighting the limitations of the research undertaken, perhaps the most important of which is the fact that the literature review was selected on the basis of certain keywords, which potentially excludes an indeterminate number of works on the discussion of local power that could respond to the gaps in the literature mentioned above.

Furthermore, considering that the main objective of this research was to find guiding questions for empirical studies on local power in inland municipalities, our discussion does not exhaust the possibilities of Leal and Queiroz's work for examining problems of heuristic value, such as the formation of Brazilian citizenship, the constitution of power inequalities between the different regions of the country, as well as the adaptation of institutional political models to the national political culture, in addition to other questions of strictly historical interest.

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