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Brazilian democracy and the dilemma between the culture of private and public interest: political approaches based on the Protestant Reformation

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Abstract: The political history of Brazil reveals a patriarchal and personalist formation that dominates society and the State, permeating all political models and regimes adopted since the colonial period. The confusion between the public and private spheres is observed by authors such as Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1994), Darcy Ribeiro (1991) and Roberto DaMatta (1991). This situation is motivated, in part, by a culture dominated by the political-economic structure of the sugar mill, part of whose foundation lies in the worldview of Iberian Catholicism. This article is based on the sociological arguments of the above-mentioned authors and is a comparative discussion of the Brazilian society and the notions that are constitutive of Protestant theology as conceived by Luther (1520). Based on this discussion we suggest, with Terry Eagleton, that the search for the common good can only occur upon the foundation of the separation between State and Church, since in this separation resides the possibility of viewing the *res publica* as having dignity and independence, outside of the authoritarian desires of the sugar mill masters.

Keywords: Brazilian State; Protestant Reformation; Democracy; Church and State.

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Resumo: A história política do Brasil revela uma formação patriarcal e personalista, que domina a sociedade e o Estado, cruzando, desde o período colonial, todos os modelos e regimes políticos adotados. A confusão entre as esferas pública e privada é observada por autores como Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1994), Darcy Ribeiro (1991) e Roberto DaMatta (1991). Essa situação é motivada, em parte, por uma cultura dominada pela estrutura político-econômica do engenho, que tem parte de seu fundamento na cosmovisão do catolicismo ibérico. Esse artigo toma como base as argumentações sociológicas dos autores acima mencionados, e realiza uma discussão comparativa da sociedade brasileira e das noções constitutivas da teologia protestante, como concebida por Lutero (1520). Como resultado, podemos observar que, enquanto não há separação dos interesses individuais e coletivos no horizonte político brasileiro, para a base constitutiva do protestantismo, que tem a separação entre Estado e Igreja como base, é essencial que tal separação ocorra para que uma administração pública responsável seja implementada em busca do bem comum.

Palavras-chave: Estado Brasileiro, Reforma Protestante, Público e Privado, Igreja e Estado.

1 INTRODUCTION: DEMOCRACY AS A PROBLEM

In recent decades Brazil has undergone a process of democratization after a period of military rule. During the dictatorship, as in all regimes of this type, human rights were violated. The targets were, in particular, critical opponents of the regime, such as politicians, trade unionists, teachers or professors, artists and intellectuals, who were concentrated in the main urban centers. Some of the documents about this period were widely published in the work entitled *Brasil: nunca mais [Brazil: never again]* (ARNS, 1985), which denounces the traumas of people who suffered torture performed by the Brazilian State during the period from 1964 to 1980. Democracy returned in 1984-1985, through a civil government elected by the Brazilian Congress.

This aspect needs to be seen in the context of the history of Brazil's formation, which was intrinsically linked to the privileges of large landowners. These landowners were the masters of the big houses, and their slaves lived in spaces of extreme poverty called *senzalas* [slave quarters]⁴. The governments, also the military, reproduced the old and ever present model of exclusion of the enslaved population in its different aspects. The democratization process brought the population extraordinary benefits, such as free speech, access to voting, popular political representation, among others. However, in the fundamental issues the population is still excluded from the benefits that a democratic regime should provide to its citizens.

Fernando Gabeira, a militant of the Brazilian left, in exile during the military regime, describes in the form of a diary the political relations of favors and privileges in the daily life of the Brazilian Congress in recent years. According to Gabeira, there is a continuation of the old structures of the *Casa Grande* and *Senzala* [literally: Big House and Slave Quarters; *The Masters and the Slaves* is the title of the English translation] of the Colonial Period (see GABEIRA, 2017). An understanding of the dynamics of democracy in Brazil has long been sought. In the colonial tradition, the government has developed mechanisms of State

⁴ In the colonial period, particularly between the 16th and 19th centuries, the big landowners had farms in which sugar cane and coffee were the main crops. These owners lived in wealthy houses called *casa grande* [big house] and were also masters of black slaves. The latter lived in inhuman conditions and precarious houses called *senzalas* [slave quarters]. This is the basis for the use of the binomial "big house and slave quarters" to characterize the formation of Brazilian society its social structures that resist up to the present.

control over the consciousness and freedom of citizens. This generates legal formalism and casuistry, with more laws and more control, generating the illusion that, with the expansion of the presence of the State's authority, we will fight corruption and promote material development.

This, however, has had the opposite effect. The bigger the State, the more bureaucracy and ways to escape from the webs of control instituted by it. Thus, we have a circle that feeds itself again and again: carelessness leads to transgression, the latter leads to corruption, and finally, all this generates impunity (see REGA, 2000). The Brazilian philosopher Renato Janine Ribeiro (2000, 144) points to the excessive formalization of the Brazilian legal system: "The excessive legal formalism of our culture makes us, many times, reduce the means to formulas, or even forms, and leave entirely aside what the *ends* of public management are."

The contradictions of Brazilian democracy have long concerned politicians, sociologists, anthropologists and theologians. Darcy Ribeiro, one of Brazil's leading anthropologists, points to the attempt made by many scholars who seek to understand the enigma that is Brazil. It is Ribeiro who, in the Preface of one of his main works, says the following:

Many cubic meters of books and articles try to understand Brazil's past and present. They essentially ask why such a populous nation – the largest of the Latin nations and the second largest in the West – and one of the richest in natural resources, remains underdeveloped and is only capable of promoting a prosperity of minorities, which cannot be generalized to the majority of the population. (RIBEIRO, 1991, p. 9).

We have no answers to these problems. We can, however, look at plausible hypotheses that could help us understand the dynamics of Brazil's democracy and society.

2 DEMOCRACY BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE: POLITICS IN DISARRAY

According to the analysis by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, since the early days of Portuguese colonization, political partisanship and ideological factions were organized around the center of power and influence of the patriarch, who had functions of family and political leadership. The patriarchs sustained their power in the mills, which are large farms where sugar cane is cultivated, or coffee plantations. The biological and sentimental ties of this closed family structure determined the partisan association of Brazilian politics. Because of this, parties were not defined by theoretical conceptions or political ideas and deviated from the interest in the common good of society (see HOLANDA, 1994, p. 47-48). Social relations were determined by the interests of the master of the sugar mill, since the latter constituted a kind of economically independent republic. The society resulting from this domestic model suffered, to a great extent, interference from the private consciousness of a privatizing and antipolitical nature in the public sphere of the State.

Manual labor was reserved for slaves and poor free men. The masters and their families were concerned with the exercise of "intelligence", which did not mean an instrument of knowledge and action but was, for them, an occupation of the elite, who did not need to get their hands dirty and tire their bodies in toil. The graduation ring and the bachelor's degree became, therefore, symbols of intellectuality equivalent to the coats of arms of nobility. The activities of the spirit, unlike manual labor, were seen as belonging to the nature of the noble and free.

This context has given rise to the so-called Brazilian "cordiality". According to Buarque de Holanda, some consider it a contribution of Brazilian culture to world culture. According to this view, in the cordial human being a whole psychological universe is exteriorized with multifaceted manifestations in the daily lives of Brazilians (see HOLANDA, 1994, p. 106-107). These emotional expressions do not fit in with the formalism and social conventions

existing in politeness and good manners, for example. It is also important to emphasize that this cordiality is not always synonymous with sincerity, hospitality and generosity, because the cordial feeling can also be found in a relationship of enmity (KARNAL, 2017).

3 THE DEMOCRACY OF FAVORS: REFLECTIONS ON ASPECTS OF POLITICS AND CORDIALITY

Cordiality fails to set solid standards for coexistence in politics and society. This dynamic of family and friendship relations could be observed, in its continuity, in the vote on the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff on April 17, 2016. At that session, the majority of deputies voted in favor of the impediment, saying they were in favor of the family, their grandchildren and God, but little was said about the accusations directed at the impeached president.

French Positivism was grasped in Brazil through a “bacheloresque” lens or point of view. The apostles of Auguste Comte ended up assigning to the State the duty of leading the scientific and technological progress, along the lines of a religion. The public demands, therefore, ultimately became subordinated to the interest of the intellectual elite that had ordered the motto “Order and Progress” to be embroidered on the national flag. Continuing the “bacheloresque” tradition, the positivists saw in the university graduation ring, in the diploma and in a frivolous relationship with books the path to the nation’s construction. These intellectuals were useful elements for the perpetuation of the aristocracy of rural society that lived from the cordiality of political favors.⁵

For Holanda (1994, p. 137-138), democracy can only triumph when the personalist relations of the political caudillos, who perpetuate the existing power relations, as was the case in the republics controlled by the logic of the sugar mills, are eliminated. In his words, “democracy in Brazil was always a lamentable misunderstanding” (HOLANDA, 1994, p. 119). The cordial relations of life at the sugar mills today have been replaced by exchanges of favors between federal, state and municipal administrations and their shady relations with large companies, preferably contractors.

The conveniences and cordialities of personal favors lie in the way of the theoretical statutes and the set of ideas that should give support to the political parties. The alleged struggle between ideological principles is actually a mask to disguise the struggle between different oligarchic personalisms. Personal relations are put above coherent and systematically ordered common interests (DaMATTA, 1991, p. 68-69). Victory in the Brazilian elections means not the success of one ideological principle, but the triumph of one “aristocrat” over the other. Roberto Da Matta’s statement (1991, p. 68) is illuminating: “The citizen is the entity that is subject to the law, whereas the family and the webs of friendship, the networks of relationships, which are highly formalized politically, ideologically and socially, are entities strictly outside the law.”

3.1 Democratic representation

In Brazil’s political tradition it is very difficult to understand that the family, the home, the State and the street are totally different and even opposite realities. Public positions become a means to achieve benefits, without connections to the training of their occupants.

⁵ The German biologist Olaf Breidbach analyzed the quasi-religion of scientific positivism in Brazil. According to him, in this context, “... in Brazil, for example – at that time still offered an explicit worship around 1900, in which Christ appeared metamorphosed by reason and Mary by rationality.” [“... etwa in Brasilien – dann auch noch um 1900 einen expliziten Kult offeriert, in dem Christus zur Vernunft und Maria zur Rationalität metamorphosiert erscheint]” (BREIDBACH, 2014, p. 125).

The private domain of the cordial relations of families has exerted much influence on the public sphere (see HOLANDA, 1994, p. 105-106).

The current political discourse is identified with modernity, which seeks technological and sustainable development, quality education, economic growth. However, in practice, the criterion of favoring is applied and, thus, Brazilian society is not able to dissociate itself from the traditional structures of the sugar mill. Da Matta (see 1991, p. 25-54) establishes an opposition between the private domain of the “home” and the public domain of the “street”. According to him, in Brazil it is not possible to escape the networks of relations of friendship. This has become a matter of survival for those who are in the realm of the “street”. The “street” is the place of struggles between strangers, and this public space is defined by denial, so that a human being becomes a subcitizen.

The Brazilian citizen, therefore, is lost in the encounters and confrontations between the public and private spheres. This citizen, who should have space to claim common rights for themselves (see Da MATTÁ, 1991, 57-60), cannot identify with the *res publica*, and demonstrates their condition through contempt directed at the public good, through graffiti, for example. Historian Evaldo Cabral de Mello (2001) states that “Brazil became an empire before becoming a nation”, and, in this same sense, the conclusion of Darcy Ribeiro (1991, p. 19) is cogent:

In fact, Brazil was not born as an ethnic group and was structured as a nation as a result of the sum of the purposes of its creators. On the contrary, it emerged as a kind of unwanted and surprising by-product of a colonial enterprise, whose purpose was to produce sugar, gold or coffee and, above all, to generate exportable profits.

3.2. The Protestant Reformation and democratic thinking

In the context of this discussion, it should be highlighted that one of the most striking characteristics of Brazil’s formation is the aristocratic contempt for work, as well as well as assigning it to individuals considered racially or socially inferior. Unlike the Iberian culture, the work ethic in the Protestant tradition has suppressed the dichotomy between body and soul, while in the Iberian Catholic tradition we find the appreciation of the soul over the body, of the person over the individual (DaMATTÁ, 1983, p. 178-179). The authors mentioned here, based on their interpretation of Max Weber, point out the difference existing in countries of Protestant tradition and in Brazil. There is a resignification of the religious meanings in the Brazilian political field which goes against the demand for secularization of the model of countries with a Protestant orientation.

In the Brazilian political space there is an appropriation of religious and mystical discourses, which cannot be separated from the history of the country. By approaching a religion or a church, a politician also ends up approaching a large portion of the population, which still maintains considerable adherence to these institutions. Thus, the President elected in 2018, Jair Bolsonaro, appears alongside the leader of one of the largest Neo-Pentecostal institutions in the world, and former President Luís Inácio Lula da Silva relies on favorable public utterances by important Catholic national personalities. One can thus see how progressive, reactionary and conservative individuals adopt the colonial political thinking and transfer power relations to the religious space, as a form of domination over society (see BOFF, 1994)⁶.

From Luther’s writings it is possible to understand that the law is there to preserve creation, not to destroy it. Thus, politics and society are situated in the context of the law as God’s instrument for life to be marked by honesty, consciousness of the common good,

⁶ Leonardo Boff analyzed the relations between Church and State since the Constantinian period. In the Middle Ages the State was to a large extent controlled by the Church.

and responsibility in public administration. Culture thus seeks to restrain the destructive human forces that threaten creation. The first use of the law, which is seen in Luther's theology as a political or civil use, has a positive function, which is to create a society in which life is possible, a culture as a *Weltanschauung* consisting of economy, education, *Bildung* and administration of the *res publica*. Its negative function is to be a security device to impose limits on evil. As a result, Luther grants dignity to education, marriage, manual labor, music, feasts and joy. Although Luther does not use the word culture, we can say, based on his writings, that it is seen as an expression of people's humanity, and a demonstration of God's care for God's creation (see ELIAS, 1997; KOERRENZ, 2011). Thus, Luther summarizes this relationship as follows:

If this were not so, men would devour one another, seeing that the whole world is evil and that among thousands there is scarcely a single true Christian. No one could support wife and child, feed himself, and serve God. The world would be reduced to chaos. For this reason God has ordained two governments: the spiritual, by which the Holy Spirit produces Christians and righteous people under Christ; and the temporal, which restrains the un-Christian and wicked so that [...] they are obliged to keep still and to maintain an outward peace (WA 11 [1523], 251, 12-18; LW 45, 91).

According to Darcy Ribeiro, the Protestant Reformation considered the laziness of the masters as a denial of virtues and discovered that work ethics is a divine vocation, thus breaking with the old feudal system (see RIBEIRO, 1991, p. 149; HOLANDA, 1994, p. 113-115). Max Weber (1930) and Quentin Skinner (2004) presented the relationship between modernity and Protestant consciousness. According to them, modernity, democracy, basic education and modern universities are the products of Protestantism. The focus on work and progress is an expression of a secularized dimension of Protestantism. Secularization is a consequence of justification by faith, as found in Martin Luther's theology. The Reformer (1520 [1958]) writes that

A man does not live for himself alone in this mortal body to work for it alone, but he lives also for all men on earth; rather, he lives only for others and not for himself. To this end he brings his body into subjection that he may the more sincerely and freely serve others [...].

In "To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation" ("An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung"), the Reformer harshly criticized the Church's interference in affairs of the State (1520, WA 6, 406, 35-40), which in turn claimed the right to control people's consciences through threats of punishment (see LUTHER, 1517 [1958]). Therefore, in Protestantism we have the distinction between Church and State as a consequence of the biblical interpretation of the distinction between the two Kingdoms, i.e. the Kingdom of God (Church) and the Kingdom of the world (State). Kant interprets the Kingdom of the Church as a community of faith and the Kingdom of the State as an ethical community. According to Habermas' interpretation, Kant "translates the idea of a universal and invisible church, which is inscribed in all religious communities, into the concept of 'ethical community'" (HABERMAS, 2008, p. 225). We can summarize this relationship between State and religion as follows:

Luther's view on justice and toleration starts from the perspective that the common good must be pursued and that rational responsibility for people's good is part of God's good creation. In this way the world is preserved through tolerance and the protection of the rights of the weak (WESTPHAL, 2019, p. 8).

Although the concept of the secular State is anchored in the idea of transferring the dynamics lived and the values experienced by the community of faith, the State assumes the function of caring for all its citizens. In this process of secularization, we can say that “Government has the role of providing the possibilities and conditions for human cultivation, which is a space of the experience of spirituality without religious references” (WESTPHAL, 2019, p. 77). The Enlightenment, thus, presents itself as a consequence of the understanding of the justification by faith of Protestantism, as discussed by Schneewind (see 2001). Norbert Elias (1997, 95) corroborates this by saying that

Max Weber [...] called it a ‘Protestant consciousness formation’: the construction of a mechanism of self-control, with the help of which a person, completely by themselves, was able to direct their own actions – regardless of what people say – to decide for themselves and be accountable only to their conscience and their God.

We must remember that it was Protestant theology itself that enabled this process of secularization, which is technical modernity, political democracy and freedom of conscience. The Enlightenment of Protestant tradition, represented by Kant, Hegel and others, took the “spiritual dispositions”, that is, the conception of “*Bildung*”, from the Protestant communities to think about the modern State. The conception of the two kingdoms provided the conditions and possibilities so that the State and society did not need God, but reason, which is constituted by “*Bildung*”, and so that citizens could live in the best possible world (WESTPHAL, 2018, p. 464-465).

Protestantism and modernity, with their proposal of secularization, are processes that condition each other, according to Carlos Eduardo Sell (2006, p. 187-204, 244-245). Similarly, Paul Tillich (1992; 1948) calls modernity and secularization the “Protestant Era”, in the whole Western culture of economic progress. For Luther (1958, p. 29-34), secularization is part of Christian life in the sphere of society:

This is what makes caring for the body a Christian work, that through its health and comfort we may be able to work, to acquire, and lay by funds with which to aid those who are in need, that in this way the strong member may serve the weaker, and we may be sons of God, each caring for and working for the other, bearing one another’s burdens and so fulfilling the law of Christ.

In this way, work has the function of care and of meeting the needs of the neighbor. Thus,

[...] a joyful life happens in the perspective of eternal salvation, anticipating eternal hope, which becomes concrete in the living of worldly joy. The joyfulness of Christian salvation and the eschatological hope were assumed by the politics of the state, when promising their citizens the best livable world possible (WESTPHAL, 2018, p. 468).

In Darcy Ribeiro’s interpretation, people of Lusitanian origin, unlike the Protestant culture, in their individualistic tradition stemming from the value structures inherited from the nobility were unable to establish a disciplined, persistent and methodical relationship with work ethics. There is a disturbed relationship with work, and there is a dichotomous posture between manual work and erudition. Brazilian intellectuals, in their sterile relationship with knowledge and their mania for noblemanship, unthinkingly imitated what was produced in Europe (see RIBEIRO, 1991, p. 149; HOLANDA, 1994, p. 64-65, 85-87).

According to Gabeira (2017), the left-wing parties, like PT, had as their objective to push forward a revolutionary process of Marxist inspiration in Brazil, in order to radically break away from archaic structures by incorporating them into the program of real socialism. However, what we see is that the parties of the left have not been able to overcome the tradition of the caudillo, that is, the patriarch who holds power and distributes privileges. They still expect benefits for their parties, because the favored individual has the obligation to pay back. Modernity requires ethical coherence, but in Brazil being modern is to disobey ethics, not to be punished, and to take advantage of the crimes committed. This criticism is shared by Brazilian sociologist Vladimir Safatle. In his words, “the **Brazilian left** knows only one horizon of action, which we would currently call ‘**left-wing populism**’” (SAFATLE, 2020).

The tradition of the Neo-Pentecostal evangelical churches is also situated within the culture of favors. Initially they were spaces of mission and conversion in peripheral and marginalized corners of Brazil, but with the democratic reopening in the 1980s the Pentecostal and Neo-Pentecostal milieu changed its view on action in the world, from an eschatological hope to political action, adopting the famous “brother votes for brother” motto (see FRESTON, 1993) and favoring the occupation of political positions by leaders of the aforementioned churches. Evangelical pastors, so called by their churches, assimilated the conception of nobility and of the patriarchs of the “sugar mill”. Nowadays, the sugar mill could also be an analogy that represents a congregation or denomination. The use of the media as a form of personal promotion of leaders, as well as the acquisition of television channels and networks through political influence and favors, attests to the relationship between the “sugar mills masters” of religion and local political bosses (formerly known as “colonels” in Brazil) of the traditional Brazilian political scene (see BELLOTTI, 2010, p. 279-324).

Regarding the first use of the law, the Reformers assigned priority to the common good and not to the church. In the writing entitled “To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation Concerning the Improvement of the Christian Estate” (1520), Luther says that the Catholic Church had surrounded itself with walls, and the first of them was interference in secular power. For the Reformer, secular power is distinct from religious power. Both must exist to serve the common good. By serving the people they will be serving God.

In contrast with what the Protestant Reformation proposed, today Christian groups are calling for a rechristianization of society. The campaign slogan “Brazil above everything and God above everyone” of President Jair Bolsonaro reveals this superposition of the religious onto the secular sphere. Luther, in his criticism of the Church’s dominance over the State, said “Let God be God”. As a result of the first commandment, “I am the Lord your God”, the State must be governed by the laws of reason and not by the Gospel. Thus, Christians must live in the world as if God did not exist. In this way, the Gospel frees believers to live an inner-worldly a-theism (WESTPHAL, 2019, p. 69-70).

The exchange of favors between politicians and pastors, between the public and the private, between Church and State, breaks with the real intentions of the Protestant Reformation (see THROUP, 2011). Thus, the exchange of favors in political relations is, in a way, an extension of the exchange of favors between God’s blessings, understood as material success, and human merits. It is also unwise to turn the project of a political party into the project of a church. The Protestant Reformation claimed that Christians should act in the world so that life would be possible and evil would be fought and overcome. The political use of the law has the task of placing security devices on the destructive forces of human nature. For Terry Eagleton, culture and State are these devices, which equalize our “disruptive drives within [and] anarchic forces without” (EAGLETON, 2000, p. 15).

3.3. The “clericalization of the laity”⁷ through culture

Terry Eagleton uses a religious metaphor when he says that we are “clay in our own hands, at once redeeming and impenitent, priest and sinner in one and the same body” (EAGLETON, 2000, p. 16). He also ponders that our nature is not able, by its own power, to pass from the natural and inherent deleterious capacity of human being to the grace of culture. As a result, the power of the clergy is transferred to the laity, and the sacred power, claimed by the Church, is attributed to the secular power of the State, and the function of God’s grace, which transforms human beings, is assumed by culture. It is thus the clericalization of the laity.

For Eagleton, if there is history and politics hidden in the word culture, there is also a theology inherent in culture. Based on these considerations, it is possible to argue that the modern State is an expression of a secularized theology, from which society builds its spiritual dispositions, as security devices so that life in society is possible. According to the English philosopher, “For the state to flourish, it must inculcate in its citizens the proper sorts of spiritual disposition; and it is this which the idea of culture or *Bildung* signifies” (EAGLETON, 2000, p. 16). In civil society, people live with opposing interests, in antagonisms, but the State assumes a role of transcendence to reconcile these divisions harmoniously. Culture might be seen as a kind of ethical pedagogy, which enables us to exercise politics as citizens, liberating the ideal of each person or even encouraging the collective being that exists in individuals, which finds “its supreme representation in the universal realm of the state” (EAGLETON, 2000, p. 17).

CONCLUSION

Based on these reflections, we conclude that the State would then be the very theology incarnated by culture, lived through spiritual dispositions so that life is possible in society, overcoming the ties of the favors of cordiality, which feed both right-wing and left-wing populisms with their messianic claims.

Since the origin and in the various periods of Brazil’s history, including both democratic and dictatorial regimes, the slave-holding model of public administration is repeated and aggravates the negligence of the common good. Cordiality does not express only attitudes of kindness but is materialized in the forms of favoring shaped by relationships of friendship and family ties against the public interest.

The Protestant Reformation made a significant contribution to the distinction between Church and State and the separation between the *res publica* and the private realm. For this reason, the churches cannot enjoy the State’s favors. The State’s proper role is to care for the population’s good so that people can live in the best possible social context. To make this possible, human beings must necessarily go through the process of *Bildung* as the construction of the webs of meanings and spiritual dispositions so that law and justice become feasible in a society. In this sense, *Bildung* would be the cultivation of the human qualities for a harmonious coexistence in society.

On this basis, the dignity of the *res publica*, summed up by honesty, concern for the common good, responsible administration, education and professional training, was seen by Luther and Eagleton as cultural devices to guarantee life in society. Political power and life in the context of society cannot be imposed on the basis of the Gospel. Although the modern state derives from the message of grace, the preaching of the Gospel confirms the separation between these structures. In this process of secularization persons and institutions live from the Reformation’s theological references without necessarily mentioning its theological construction that is expressed in the democratic State and the guarantee of the citizens’ rights.

⁷ A concept we borrowed from from Villey, 2003.

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