


The agrarian question in São Paulo, Brazil: the debate over the end of the *colonato* and the appearance of the *boia- fria* in agriculture

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The agrarian question in São Paulo, Brazil: the debate over the end of the *colonato*¹ and the appearance of the *boia-fria*² in agriculture

Abstract

This paper presents the debate over the *colonato*, a widespread form of labor in the West São Paulo coffee plantations, grasping an interpretation of the process of capital autonomization and of the application of this systematic colonization within Brazil. Therefore, a colonization which required the mediated cession of the means of production to the worker. It deals with certain classic theories on the process of limitations to the *colonato* on the coffee farms. Then, it focuses the analysis on an academic controversy between Verena Stolcke and José Graziano da Silva, about the modernization of agriculture and the end of the *colonato*. Thus, it aims to explain the differences in interpretation of the same process and analyses the contradictions.

Keywords: Colonato. Boia-fria. Agriculture modernization. São Paulo. Rural worker.

A questão agrária em São Paulo: debate sobre o fim do colonato e o surgimento do boia-fria na agricultura paulista

Resumo

O artigo discute o colonato, modo de trabalho da cafeicultura paulista do Oeste Paulista, propondo interpretá-lo como parte do processo de autonomização do capital e de aplicação da colonização sistemática no Brasil, necessitando,

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- 1 Colonato is the name given to a coffee *plantation* system which employed several colonos or sharecroppers, who were responsible for cultivating a certain area with food and coffee and delivering the coffee production to the owner, keeping the food for their own consumption, apart from receiving money wages for their work.
 - 2 *Boia fria* literally means cold meal. This name was given to one who worked in mid 1970s São Paulo rural areas, with no formalized employment relationship or guarantee of permanence in the service, who eats the cold meal on site that he brings from home.

pois, da cessão mediada de terras para o trabalhador. Também aborda algumas teorizações clássicas sobre o processo de limitação da existência do colonato nas fazendas cafeeiras paulistas e, finalmente, recupera um debate acadêmico travado entre Verena Stolcke e José Graziano da Silva sobre a modernização da agricultura e o fim do colonato. Com isso, procura explicitar as divergências nas interpretações do mesmo processo e analisa essas perspectivas como realces de aspectos próprios de um objeto contraditório.

Palavras-chave: Colonato. Boia-fria. Modernização da agricultura. São Paulo. Trabalho agrícola.

La cuestión agraria en São Paulo, Brasil: el debate acerca del fin del colonato y el surgimiento del “boia-fria” en la agricultura

Resumen

El artículo presenta el debate acerca del *colonato*, trabajador de la cultura del café en Oeste Paulista, proponiendo una interpretación de ello como parte del proceso de autonomización del capital y de aplicación de la colonización sistemática en Brasil, necesitando, pues, de la cesión mediada de tierras al trabajador. Posteriormente, se enfoca algunas teorizaciones clásicas sobre el proceso de limitación de la existencia del colonato en las haciendas cafeteras paulistas. Por último, se centra el análisis en la recuperación de un debate académico hecho entre Verena Stolcke y José Graziano da Silva, acerca de la modernización de la agricultura y el fin del colonato. Con ello, se procura explicitar las divergencias entre las interpretaciones del proceso y se analiza esas perspectivas como realces de aspectos propios de un objeto contradictorio.

Palabras clave: Colonato. Boia-fria. Modernización de la agricultura. São Paulo. Trabajo agrícola.

Introduction

In 1958, there were about 640 thousand *colonos* (the workers of the colonato system) in the state of São Paulo, who, with their families, took care of the main coffee plantations in the country. At that time, coffee production was still the flagship of the national economy, but a profound transformation was underway, to the point that ten years later this production

and its workforce had disappeared. Who these workers were and, above all, how they ceased to exist in such a short period of time is what this article is concerned with, through the study of important academic debates. In the first part, we briefly present the colonato and some of its canonical interpretations, suggesting one that covers the contradiction of the particularity of a worker who, besides receiving a salary, had partial access to the means of production. In the second part, we study a debate about the end of the colonato and the emergence of the so-called “boia-fria”. The third part is based on classic authors of rural studies in Brazil, focusing the analysis on the divergences of interpretation of the processes in question, explained in the argument between Verena Stolcke and José Graziano da Silva.

Thus, we cover in this article, relevant aspects for a critical agrarian geography, of the changes in the social relations of production in the countryside of São Paulo, surrounding the particularity of the colonato system, and outline a critical review of classical interpretations of the development of capitalism in Brazil, presenting important debates held from the 1960s to the 1980s, therefore, at the moment when the colonato ceased to exist.

Difficulties of the interpretation of colonato in São Paulo’s coffee culture

Those responsible for the main source of Brazilian national wealth from the second half of the 19th century until the 1960s were, above all, free workers, immigrants, known then as colonos. Clearly distinct from a slave and even allowing for a real alternative to slavery, the colono was a free individual. He was remunerated for the portion of coffee trees he took care of, for the sacks of coffee he harvested, and for the extra daily work he did. Also, he received the right to cultivate for his own use certain parts of the farm, rear animals for himself, and have a house on the same property. Thus, he was considered sometimes a wage worker by important intellectuals such as Caio Prado Jr. (1979) and Pierre Monbeig (1998), and sometimes a peasant by others, no less important, such as Ignácio Rangel (1986), José de Souza Martins (2004), and Ariovaldo Umbelino de Oliveira (1987). Certainly a free laborer in the production of agricultural goods, but also a free laborer with partial access to the means of production, not fully monetized and not individualized, as labor was undertaken by the family collectivity. Here is the first difficulty of a theoretically understanding of the coffee colono.

As for considering him analogous to the “peasant”, Martins (2004, introduction) resumed a Marxist tradition, derived from the analysis of Rosa Luxemburg (1985) on the need for capital to replenish a primitive colonial accumulation in order to “close the accounts” of central capitalist accumulation. Differing from Rangel’s (1986) perspective, who approached the colono and the peasant in a conception of “feudalism” based on the colonization of Brazil, Martins (2004) elaborated a theory of history and suggested the resumption of the conditions of peasantry, contradictorily to capitalism itself. Naturalizing the mediation of the commodity³, however, this interpretation hypostasized the exchange of commodities made by the peasant – in this case, the colono – as the foundation of a simple reproduction of the family unit, contrasting it with the

3 Explained in this formulation by Oliveira, A. (1987, p. 30): “What we can assume from these statements is that the first stage of the development of capitalism was not necessarily a stage in which specifically capitalist relations of production predominated, but rather a stage mainly of commodity production”.

exploitation of capital – in this case, that personified by the coffee farmer – who subsumed the surplus of the peasant families' coffee crop, subordinating their work only partially⁴.

This list of free and monetary bonds and the familiar character of the colono's work do not allow the definition of the relations of production of the colonato regime as capitalist. The presence of money in these relationships has obscured its real character for researchers. By producing a significant part of their livelihoods, in a family labor regime, the colono subtracted his work from the market laws and somehow made it impossible for these livelihoods to be defined in accordance with the requirements of capital multiplication (Martins, 2004, p. 85).

Ontologizing work⁵ through family work (relatively isolated from the expanded reproduction of capital, or from the “laws of the market”, as a separate totality, “subtracted” from it), the analysis lost part of the path of the constitution of the social form posed by the process of world expansion of capital, which also determined the historical formation of labor itself as such. In this particular case, the availability of the worker was produced historically, and family work was selected by the subsidized immigration system, to guarantee the coffee-growing region of West of São Paulo a supply of labor, while guaranteeing the lowering of the loss of this workforce in the adverse conditions of capitalist accumulation (Boechat, 2014). By the way, Martins (2004) did not fail to point out these mechanisms, even though it reinforced his understanding of a non-capitalist relation of production in the *colônia* (village), especially due to access to the means of production and the foundation of family work. To that extent, we must partially agree with this perspective, while criticizing an ontological foundation of the work it presupposes and reiterating a critique of patriarchy, constituted and reinforced simultaneously with the constitution of work during the colonato. However, the contradiction of the process allows for different understandings.

Among them, we can resume the emblematic position of Caio Prado Jr. (1979) in *The Brazilian Agrarian Question*. There, the monopoly by a class of owners over the land base of practically the entire national territory forced the population to sell their labor in a labor market.

4 In Martins' terms: “In this relationship, work is not fundamentally considered as a social and abstract work, but as commodity form, work materialized in use values and exchange, with the character of personal work” (Martins, 2004, p. 80). Now, this understanding of the commodity form ends up attributing to it a precedence to the capital form, allowing it to “naturalize” a material dimension of a concrete work in opposition to the real abstraction of work brought by capitalism. The contradictory internal unity of the commodity tends to be lost as an aporetically historicized opposition. For a critique of this procedure, see Kurz (2015, ch. 2).

5 It is important to state, however, that the authors do not equate this labor to supposedly natural labor, as in pre-capitalist relations of production, but formed by the movement of capital itself as being non-capitalist: “This is what allowed me to develop the analysis of the colonato regime on the coffee farms, constituted by labor relations that were historically created in the very replacement of slave labor, according to the needs of capital, without ultimately defining a wage labor regime in the coffee plantations. In the same way, this process did not recover pre-capitalist relations of production” (Martins, 2004, p. 3). Even so, labor appears though as something in itself, as a totality apart, in the exploitation a relation made by capital, to compose another totality, from which income is extracted from the land: “We are, therefore, now facing a distinct process in agriculture: we are facing the subjection of land income to capital. This is the basic mechanism of the process of capital expansion in the countryside. This process occurs either through the purchase and sale of land, or through the subordination of peasant production” (Oliveira, A., 1987, p. 13). Finally, peasant production is done by peasants, with their families and acquaintances, in another relationship with land and time, and its product tends to be appropriated by capital, even if income in labor and in money are other variations of this extraction, thus maintaining a certain integrity of that relation vis-à-vis this one (see Oliveira, A., 1987, p. 76-78).

But the author himself admits that this “leasing of service” did not only occur through typical wage-earning, but also through other forms that he considered accessory, which included the cession by the owner of part of the product or part of the land for the worker to cultivate for his own use.

Exposing it in this comprehensive way, the author made it possible to compare different types of employment in the labor force, and at first this non-generalization of wage-earning did not imply its categorization as pre-modern, feudal or non-capitalist. Thus, settlers were compared to other systems of residence and labor in the sugarcane plantations of the northeast, to cotton sharecroppers in São Paulo and in the northeast, and to cowhands in the northeastern backwoods who received the “fourth” (Prado Jr., 1979, p. 61). In all cases, Prado Jr. saw a kind of leasing of services, in which the criteria of “partnership” (with cession of products or means of production) were considered as one way of keeping the worker employed.

This is the case with the concession of land for the worker’s own crops, which is clearly nothing more than a means of fixing this worker to the property and thus making the provision of services that the owner needs more stable and secure. This is also the case when the worker receives a portion of the product (Prado Jr., 1979, p. 62-63).

This need to fix the worker on the farms would be the greatest evidence of the absence of relative overpopulation formed in this context. Even so, for the author, there was no peasantry in the strict sense, but something different, which he considered much closer to wage-earning, or even disguised wage-earning, that could become explicit in times of expansion of the agricultural enterprise (Prado Jr., 1979, p. 63-64). In this way, the author states that, in a coffee plantation in crisis, such as that of Minas Gerais at the time, the recourse to shareholding indicated an individual solution, with greater partial transfer of the product to the worker, while in a prosperous coffee plantation, such as the pioneer front, at the time in Paraná, several tasks were performed by day laborers and wages earned (Prado Jr., 1979, p. 64). Thus, Prado Jr. concluded by affirming the existence of a *disguised wage earning*, even though with the appearance of not being so:

[...] certain labor relations present in Brazilian agriculture, although formally dressed in characters that resemble institutions found in European feudalism where the designation was found, are nothing but payment modalities that correspond to the salary. That is, they are forms of remuneration for services rendered in which, for one reason or another – but always circumstantial reasons – the payment in cash is replaced by services of another nature (Prado Jr., 1979; 66).

Different, therefore, from Martins (2004) conception, we have in Prado Jr. (1979) a reiteration of wage-earning as a generalized form of social relation of production in Brazilian agriculture, even though occasionally it does not even appear as being exactly wage-earning. In this sense, Prado Jr. (1979) seems to force an interpretation of particular cases into a given explanatory model, perhaps reducing the particularities too much.

In order to avoid the mere dualist dispute over the colonist’s framing in one or another categorization given a priori, we can think that the modern social categories themselves are in a formative process, throughout the period discussed. That is, going back to Boechat (2009, 2014)

and Heidemann, Toledo and Boechat (2014), it is about the formation of the autonomous markets of land, labor and capital, so that the colonist ended up “merging” more than one of these categories, behaving, in our contemporary eyes, simultaneously as a worker, a peasant and even a small capitalist who sells his products in the local market. However, these are categories imputed to him, so that their simultaneous constitution would deny the modern need for the appearance of an autonomous existence of the same in different markets. Note, however, that even where this appearance of separation or autonomy between categories is noticed, it must be criticized as a fetishistic conception of the social relations of production: “Capital, land and labor! However, capital is not a thing, but rather a definite social production relation, belonging to a definite historical formation of society, which is manifested in a thing and lends this thing a specific social character. (Marx, 1986, p. 269).

Going a little beyond the colono, we can see a similar issue for the farmer himself, often a colonel of the National Guard, personifying land ownership, capital and even the national state in formation, in addition to establishing friendly relations with the workers. Thus, this particular reproduction of the social relations of production refers to Francisco de Oliveira’s (2008) theorization about the political-economic region⁶, indicating a *region of colonato* (Boechat, 2009). This region was nevertheless dynamic and critically expanded, promoting not only the possibility of a capital market, through the partial support of national industrialization, as well as the formation of a labor market, fostered by a policy of mass immigration, and that of a *land market*, incorporated by the expansion of coffee growing and partially blocked to workers, who had to access to them from inside the coffee farms, with the condition of working in the coffee production.

With regard to the constitution of a land market, whose national mark is Law n. 601, from 1850, we can observe the motivation to create an “artificial” monopoly (captivity) in the vacant lands, as the blocking of their free access, allowing the transition from slave to free labor (Martins, 2004), following the model of EG Wakefield’s “systematic colonization” (Marx, 1985, ch. 33). According to article 19 of that Land Law, enacted almost at the same time as the prohibition of the slave trade, vacant lands should be sold to finance the “importation of free colonos”. However, as we know, vacant lands at first would not be officially discriminated against from those already occupied or even sold, but rather systematically “grabbed” by Colonels and their peers (Boechat; Leite; Toledo, 2017). Thus, the systematic colonization practiced in the colonato would make use of mediated access to “remaining” lands inside the coffee plantations. As long as there was coffee expansion on “virgin” land, there would be, at least logically, land to be transferred⁷.

6 “A ‘region’ would be, in short, the space where a special form of reproduction of capital and, consequently, a special form of class struggle are dialectically imbricated, where the economic and the political merge and assume a special form of appearance in the social product and in the assumptions of replenishment” (Oliveira, F., 2008, p. 148).

7 Pierre Monbeig (1998), however, was not enthusiastic about this expansion and saw a process of wasting installed productive capacity, since the “advantage” always shifted to the pioneering front, leaving behind coffee plantations with falling productivity, decaying cities and farms converting to cattle ranching or breaking up into small, unproductive farms. In this scenario, he observed farmers always looking for the initial fertility of newly opened land settlers, looking for the best conditions for intercropping, railroads enabling new expansion and estate agencies selling sites, farms and lots. The population was not stabilized, and coffee overproduction was repeated. For the French geographer, it was an expansion modified by the crises brought about by itself. These changes should, at some point, lead to a retaking of the old, almost abandoned areas, once the frontier and the pioneer front of the coffee plantation found the geographical limit, in the post-war era, that was approaching. It is in the context of these crises that farms gradually stopped producing coffee exclusively, even though cattle rearing had commonly occupied lands of non-preferential quality for coffee growing since the first major coffee crisis, in the early years of the 20th century. Cotton, sugarcane, citrus and above all cattle rearing appeared as alternatives, to coexist with coffee, especially after the 1929 crisis; the sale of parcels of the farms themselves and the large real estate deals also mitigated the impact of the crisis. Simultaneously, the crisis would impose changes in labor relations.

What is proposed here, was a process of capital accumulation that could not even apparently do without the use of extra-economic violence, personified by the colonel and the patriarch. This process, at the same time, progressively created the conditions for its demise through the formation of relative overpopulation, articulated by the state, which would represent the possibility of a positivization of work, different from colonial slave labor. It can be argued that, for this reason, there was a primitive accumulation, to which the concept of *delayed modernization* (Kurz, 2000) would emerge as more appropriate, in the “race” of modernizing policies for updating themselves with the parameter given by the European so-called “central”, economies giving state incentive to unemployed populations (surplus, expropriated and impoverished) from there to emigrate to “regions” like São Paulo. Delayed modernization, therefore, was already in relation to a central primitive accumulation carried out, at least in England (Marx, 1985, chap. 24), even though there were still processes analogous to primitive accumulation. This contradictory simultaneity promoted the expansion of the commodity form, articulating the logic of value with forms of violent imposition of work. At the same time, the movement of a fragmented concrete totality (Scholz, 2010) is constituted, in which the settlement is inserted as an equally contradictory particularity.

The coffee farm itself expressed a “contradictory unit” (Franco, 1984), for being a *place of residence and a place of work*, not even having the explicit spatial distinction between production and reproduction. There were coffee plantations and production areas of the colono, as well as colonias and sometimes schools, social clubs, soccer fields and chapels. Often, the proximity between the farmers families, foremen, colono and colleagues implied personal ties that reinforced the establishment of a *commodity-producing patriarchy* (Scholz, 2010), through which “*coronelismo*”⁸ also reproduced itself. In the colono’s family, however, the work was coordinated by the patriarch:

The organization of work - the allocation of the different members of the family at work - was up to the man. Being simultaneously head of the family and of work, his power reached all members, transforming children and his wife into practically his workers. [...] As we have seen, the head of the family presents himself to his wife and children as the personification of the owners’ demands - as the true “boss”, the supervisor and the foreman. Male power centered on the father-husband-boss figure. [...] This authority was not just about work. It permeated the entire social fabric, in such a way that women and children were subject to a set of social norms and values that reinforced the dominance and power of men (Silva, M., 2004, p. 466-467).

The colonato appears, therefore, as a contradictory and simultaneous formation of the family and the “work” category, which does not dispense with the extra-economic violence of patriarchy as it internalized a discipline and the morality of abstract work. Thus, while we characterize it here as

8 A political-social practice in Brazil, typical of rural areas and small towns in the interior, which flourished during the First Republic 1889-1930 and which configures a form of authority in which an elite, emblematically incarnated by the rural owner, controls the means of production, holding local economic, social and political power.

a particular form of systematic colonization, we understand this social relationship of production as part of the *process of autonomization*⁹, which is the very formation of the appearance of autonomy in modern social categories, promoting a peculiar occupation of the land base to allow free work in favor of the production of goods for the world market and reiterating its expansion through the appropriation of land, coordinated by *coronelismo*, and by the supply of workers mobilized in Europe, supported by the immigration policy, in addition to of course, the controls of stocks and prices by coffee valuation policies. Thus, we associate the conditions of social reproduction of the colonato with the possibilities of mediated land transfer. We are, therefore, dealing with a broad process of formation of modern categories in a particular reality and manner, which, in this treatment, are neither ontologized nor abstractly deduced and imputed to the colono.

However, the question remains: what happened after the war, especially in the 1960s, to interrupt this particular form of social reproduction? How do we interpret this passage that culminates in the end of the colonato and in the rise of other forms of *labor mobility* (Gaudemar, 1977)? Although in another study on coffee growing post-1929, Martins (1989) had indicated the limitation of food crops as the cause of the historical limitation to colonato, he does not develop the broader process of how it effectively ended there. Prado Jr. (1979), dealing with the promulgation of the Rural Worker Statute, politically explaining the wage-earning that for him was already there, did not make major considerations about the end of the colonato either. Other authors, then, have to be activated for this understanding. This resumption begins with a recovery of the study by Verena Stolcke (1986), articulated with the research of Maria Conceição D’Incao (1979) and Vinicius Caldeira Brant (1976), which we take here as the starting point of a debate between the author and José Graziano da Silva about the fundamentals of the modernization of agriculture in São Paulo, although with divergent historical perspectives that allow us to recover the process of rupture in the colonato region.

Introduction to the balance of interpretations of the end of the colonato

Verena Stolcke’s (1986) remarkable book, *Coffee Planters, Workers and Wives*, seeks to encompass the almost 100 years of existence of the colonato, dedicating its sixth chapter precisely to the abrupt extinction of this social relationship in the 1960s. The modernization of the “agricultural structure of São Paulo” is pointed out as the cause, and the non-resident, salaried and casual worker appears as a consequence:

Between 1964 and 1975, the state’s agricultural labor force decreased by 35%, and the number of rural workers residing on properties decreased by 52%. As a result, the proportion of non-resident labor in the state’s total agricultural labor

⁹ Returning to the “Genesis of capitalist ground rent” (Marx, 1986, t. 5, chap. 47), there is a kind of fusion of ground rent, capitalist profit and worker wages in the product of peasant family work, before and during primitive accumulation – which would break the population’s ties with the land base and place the worker “free as a bird”, the owner only of his labor. The accumulation of capitalist relations, which is also equivalent to the accumulation of expropriated workers, was what would enable the emergence of workers available in the market to be hired by the same “peasant” not yet expropriated, giving rise to the tenant, on the one hand, and the capitalist on the other. Over time, the personification of these categories took place with distinct agents (“domination without subject”) according to Kurz, (2000): capitalist, landowner and worker. The consolidation of autonomization, through the generalization of the commodity form, stipulated what was presented by Marx in the “Trinity Formula” (1986, v. 3, cap. 48).

force more than doubled, increasing from 15.8% to 35.8%. When the families typical of the colonato disappeared, a new figure emerged on the political scene in São Paulo, the itinerant or occasional salaried worker, who lives off agriculture but lives in the city. [...] The disappearance of the colonato on coffee plantations, and its replacement by occasional salaried workers, is just one example of a more general transformation of the agricultural structure of São Paulo, which began sometime in the 50s, and varied according to culture (Stolcke, 1986, p. 179-181).

Carrying out a vast bibliographical review to understand the final passage of the colonato, the author would divide the current analyzes into two blocks: one that would attribute the changes to the Rural Worker Statute, enacted in 1963, which would have burdened the farmers and encouraged the expulsion of resident workers; another would think of the changes as the advance of capitalism in the countryside, or as the penetration of capitalism in agriculture. Attributing to the former an ideological bias stemming from the claims of the farmers themselves, Stolcke (1986, p. 182) focuses mainly on the authors who made up the second block, some of which we have started to study.

One of these authors would be Maria Conceição D'Incao (1979), who, in the classic "Bóia-fria: acumulação e miséria", emphasized these transformations in an area of "Alta Sorocabana"¹⁰, close to the municipality of "Presidente Prudente"/SP, indicating how extensive cattle raising has transformed production relations within the local farms, stimulating migration to the cities and questioning the colonato as its base. Workers who remained in rural activities during the transition period, from the 1940s to the 1960s, had their working conditions modified by the agricultural partnership, including sharecropping, or they became small tenants, leading to the formation of large pastures, in the same way as Martins (2004) has already described what formed the coffee farms. Although, regarding the cases analyzed, one could consider, like the author, the establishment of relations that are not specifically capitalist, or of *capital formation*¹¹, D'Incao (1979) developed the interpretation of Caio Prado Jr. (1979), understanding these forms as ancillary to wages in times of crisis, allowing for a lowering of the monetary wage, maintaining the production of goods and minimizing the subdivision of land ownership. The agricultural partnership was presented as a variation of salaried work, in a period of crisis, in which the farmer shared the risks of the activity with the worker himself, having, therefore, to also share the gains more advantageously with them in case they occurred. The essence of wage earning, however, remained:

Deprived of any and all independence in his action, and earning the minimum necessary for his survival, the partner is nothing more than an employee in disguise.

10 This regionalization of São Paulo state refers to the way in which the railway companies determined the expansion of coffee plantations and, consequently, the occupation and settlement of the interior of the state. In this case, Alta Sorocabana referred to the area granted by the state government for the installation of the Companhia Sorocabana de Estradas de Ferro- a railway line. Part of this line known as Alta Sorocabana was in the area that extended to the geographical limits of the territory, on the banks of the Paraná River. Given the importance of this development, Monbeig (1998) recognized that it was the maximum regional identity that the expansion process had managed to take root – that is, belonging to the areas of this or that railway company

11 The concept of "capital formation" appears more explicitly in the study by Ariovaldo U. de Oliveira (1987), which closely follows the theorization and theoretical bases of José de Souza Martins (2004).

[...] In general terms, the Partner and the Lessee of large agricultural entrepreneurs can be placed in the category of disguised wage earners. In the semi-salaried category, there are sub-tenants and small tenants, whose working conditions condemn them to a miserable standard of living (D'Incao, 1979, p. 65-66).

The workers' remuneration varied: it could be in cash, part of the product and even the right to use the land with their own cultivation or rearing animals. Thus, taking up a study by Octávio Velho, D'Incao (1979) tested a gradation in the studied area that ranged from the peasantry to the proletariat, according to the conditions of scarcity or abundance of land and labor force and of greater or lesser integration in the national system. His study would indicate that livestock had a decisive role in making the land relatively scarce for its use by workers in Alta Sorocabana. Unlike during the expansion of coffee growing when the supply of work would have been scarce, it would have gradually become abundant. The important conclusion of D'Incao (1979) was that the crisis of the colonato represented not the success, but the coffee crisis associated with it, not directly resulting in generalized explicit wage-earning, but, above all, in agricultural leases or partnerships, although he agreed that these forms were much closer to a disguised wage-earning than to a proper peasantry. Thus, there would not have been a direct transition from the colonato to the "boia-fria", wage earners in precarious conditions resulting from the modernization of agriculture, although this still appeared as a trend: "The scarcity of land, the abundance of labor and the high level of integration in the national system allows us to conclude that there is a tendency towards an increase in the number of rural workers" (D'Incao, 1979, p. 53).

When taking stock of the theories about the end of the settlement, Verena Stolcke (1986, p. 185) points out in the study by D'Incao (1979) elements similar to her own formulation, with a defense of the characterization of a limited mechanization of agriculture in the Alta Sorocabana, due to the existence of sufficient workers – a supply made abundant also by the spread of cattle rearing that required relatively less labor than coffee production.

To return to the terms we used in the previous section, it was as if the systematic introduction of the colonato was completed in a social and economic crisis, fostered by the very dynamics of colonato that had led to the overproduction of coffee, even though we know that the 1929 crisis also occurred, on a global scale, affecting the colonato's links with the international market. In any case, the critical reproduction of coffee plantations led to an increase in the transfer of land and the sharing of the product of labor in favor of the worker, reinforcing aspects of the contradiction of the worker that allowed it to be interpreted in different ways, although the author was proposing an interesting gradation between peasant and rural wage earner (or from the disguised wage earner to the explicit wage earner), according to the degree of expropriation or access to the means of production¹².

12 What would represent peasant autonomy would be their right to access and use the land. In the categories analyzed by D'Incao (1979), according to the criteria of the Land Statute of 1964, the gradation was a form of lease in which the tenant paid the lease in cash and had full autonomy to use the land for themselves, in which you paid with a portion of the product and in which the form of work in production was also partially controlled and sometimes a partner whose activities were all managed by the owner. One tenant approached the figure of a small business owner, using family work to carry out his enterprise, a few tools and access to expensive credit, while the others approached more and more a proletarian without any autonomy. Thus, in general, the agricultural partnership was characterized as a disguised wage-earner (D'Incao, 1979).

Another important study from the 1970s on the end of the colonato and which would be incorporated into Stolcke's (1986) recovery of the historical foundations of the modernization of agriculture in São Paulo was Vinícius Caldeira Brant's "Do colono ao bóia-fria". Brant (1976) also studied the transformations that occurred in an area of Alta Sorocabana. It divided the occupation of land in Assis/SP into three periods: up to 1929 with an initial occupation of a supposed territorial "void" by the coffee plantation; after the crisis, with a diversification of crops (mainly cotton and cattle raising), with a progressive increase in production and planted area; and in the 1940s, a depletion of the frontier, with the expansion of production inside the farms, through the occupation of idle areas and the use of colonos, and by the increase in productivity. In this way, he understood the colonato as having the function of guaranteeing the labor force for the farm in the absence of relative overpopulation that would supply a continuous contingent of workers when needed. Thus, in the relative abundance of available land, the colono had access to part of the farm to carry out his own cultivation. The depletion of the frontier would mean the simultaneous constitution of this relative overpopulation, partly driven by the local expansion of cattle rearing, partly by migration. Finally, the productive use of land inside the properties would block the essential scheme of the colonato, accelerating the process of wage-earning in the countryside and unifying a simple labor market in the countryside and in the city.

The emergence of "bóias-frias", unlike other situations of rural unemployment, does not immediately result from changes in the land ownership structure (expropriation of peasants, etc.), nor from the appearance of population surpluses due to the scarcity of means of subsistence (falls in agricultural production, cataclysms, etc.). The new industrial reserve army is the result of changes in capitalist agricultural companies that get rid of their resident labor force, with no possibility of other forms of permanent rural employment in regions where land occupation has been completed. Later the Capitalist agriculture penetrated through large plantations, or those in which a process of concentration of land ownership had preceded the intensification of agricultural production. One way or another, however, these regions showed the future of the others (Brant, 1976, p. 40).

The trend towards the homogenization of regions through the unification of a salaried labor market is formulated at the end of this quote, thus referring to the conception of Francisco de Oliveira (2008). In turn, the explicitness of the theoretical framework of the industrial reserve army as the foundation of the "general law of capitalist accumulation", as exposed in chapter 25 of *Capital* (Marx, 1985), constitutes a theoretical development of Brant (1976) of the theory found in Caio Prado Jr. (1979) on the auxiliary forms of wage-earning. However, Brant (1976) sees as conditions for the existence of the colonato the non-use of all the land inside the farm by the capitalist enterprise itself. That is, he resumes in part the arguments presented already of a conjugation of production due to the existence of surplus land and time, and that the modernization of agriculture would turn against this relative "surplus"; however, it does not articulate with the forced mobilization of work coordinated by coronelismo, as we saw in the previous section:

By formally taking control of the cultivation of food consumed by workers, the agricultural company transfers part of the subsistence costs of the labor force out of the current wage labor relations in the coffee plantations, without therefore enabling the development of subsistence agriculture that reduces workers' dependence on wages (Brant, 1976, p. 50-51).

In short, we recover the process described by Brant (1976) for the end of the colonato as having three phases. In the first, until 1940, there was the fixation of the worker to the land, concomitant with the occupation of the land base. In the second, between 1940 and 1960, there was a rationalization of employment, individualizing the use of the labor force and demanding for the company the full use of the property's land. In the third, after 1960, there would be a reduction in the rural population in absolute and relative terms. With the overpopulation of the colonato there was a gradual release of the surplus labor that lived on the farm and a separation of the way of organizing production in large and medium-sized properties in relation to small properties. With this process, surpluses were directly and quickly expelled, and food production was spatialized and restricted to small producers, the small farmers.

As for Brant's (1976) work, Stolcke (1986, p. 184) praises his systematic analysis of the colonato, but questions his assertion that it is a system with low productivity, characterized as "underemployment"¹³. Above all, she criticized his indication that the colonato was a way of securing a scarce labor force with low productivity on the farm. Stolcke (1986) repeatedly rejects this explanation, not seeing a shortage of workers once the mass immigration policy takes effect. The expansion of the frontier, with the opening of new farms, constituted, it is true, a continuous increase in the demand for new colonos, but the control carried out by the state would be the solution to the problem. Thus, with this, the author seems to be emphasizing that capital commands the frontier expansion process, controlling the supply of workers through the state. However, in contradiction, if this demand is supplied with an immigrant labor force, Brant's (1976) explanation for the lack of a relative overpopulation formed internally is also correct. In any case, the power of these farmers in the west of São Paulo would not only lie in their relative monopoly over the means of production, but also in that over immigration policy.

It is a point to be emphasized, with the exception that the author does not characterize this state much either. In our view, they related to colonels who capillarized them and in tension with them, allowing us, however, to indicate a "regional" moment, so to speak, of a state in formation (Boechat; Leite; Toledo, 2017; Heidemann; Toledo; Boechat, 2014). In this way of being of the state, the importance of the direct personification of extra-economic violence by the capitalist is evident, which also personifies the state and thus mobilizes work (Gaudemar, 1977) and controls the region (Oliveira, F., 2008). However, this would not be the path taken by authors who, even so, established an important debate on the terms of the modernization of agriculture in São Paulo.

13 "As observers have repeatedly noted, this work system was incompatible with mechanized coffee cultivation, as this would make the workforce idle for part of the year. Therefore, it is true that, with the exception of processing, labor productivity was lower than it would have been in the case of mechanized coffee cultivation, it is wrong to consider the colonato as a form of 'disguised underemployment'. On the contrary, this system of labor exploitation was an extraordinarily efficient way of appropriating the surplus labor of contracted families" (Stolcke, 1986, p. 184).

The debate between Verena Stolcke and José Graziano da Silva

In a way, the maintenance of the colonato on the farms would seem irrational if there were a relatively abundant contingent of workers available to be employed only in times of greater demand for work, such as during harvest. Why pay more than necessary to treat the coffee plantation throughout the year, when you could support fewer families, spend less, and hire other workers only in the harvest, which demanded more work? Wouldn't the colonato really be a way to keep the number of workers needed for the harvest on the farm throughout the year, even though there were periods of relative idleness? These are the questions that José F. Graziano da Silva (1987) would direct to the analysis of Verena Stolcke (1986), in a review of her work.

Verena rejects Vinícius C. Brant's thesis that the settlement was a way found by coffee farmers to secure labor that was scarce and of low productivity. His argument is that the colonato "was an extraordinarily efficient way of appropriating the surplus labor of the contracted families". Now, one thing is not opposed to the other: on the contrary, Verena's counterargument serves to support Brant's thesis, rightly recognized by the author as "possibly the only author who tries to take into account the political implications of proletarianization and, in particular, the reactions of landowners to the Rural Worker Statute" (Silva, J., 1987, p. 177).

The way the author understands the settlement, however, "twists" this explanation, pointing to a negligible payment for the maintenance of the worker, and the combination with food production is the nexus that allows for this lowering of wages, lowering even more the monetary values spent, in step with a constant negotiation for the area made available for the cultivation of the colonos themselves. In some way, this position of the author brings her closer to Martins analysis (2004, p. 85), that the presence of money would not be the main point for the mobilization of the colono's work and that it obscured what really mattered.¹⁴ Finally, Stolcke (1986) is emphasizing that colonato was more advantageous to the farmer than salaried employment, with an incredible elasticity that ensured the farm's profitability even in the most difficult times. But we agree with Silva, J. (1981) that this explanation does not nullify the suggestion that it was also an effective way of "fixing" the worker on the farm. This was, for the author, something so advantageous for the farmer that it remained for practically a hundred years, in the midst of acute crises. But if the colonato was so advantageous for capitalist accumulation, why should it have been abolished?

In Stolcke's (1986) explanation for the way the colonato was questioned, here similar to Martins (1989), the separation of food production in relation to coffee production, previously combined, would be the main point to question the colonato scheme. This separation would have been brought about by the policy of crop diversification, which, in the 1960s, took the

¹⁴ Martins (2004), by the way, considers that the unimportance of money and monetary wages relativizes the relationship established as being of value. That is, the socially necessary labor time becomes, in a way, incalculable. This is a relevant issue, which unfolds in the difficulties of rationalization of the coffee company pointed out by the author regarding the precarious accounting of farms. However, we claim that there was an abstract time gestation; for example, the monetary part of the settler's income was not negligible in its reproduction, intermediating its access to credit in local warehouses, in addition to scrutinizing the activities carried out by the colono and when they should be done (Boechat, 2009,2014).

form of a program to eradicate low-productivity coffee plantations, with payment per eradicated coffee tree, and encouraging the entry of new productive activities with similar profitability to coffee growing. The technological changes at the time contributed to the process as a whole. All of this makes up a scenario of questioning the transfer of land inside the farm for the worker's cultivation. Land that is unsuitable for coffee growing gradually starts to provide desirable "profits", and its transfer to the worker starts to be calculated as a cost or part of the salary, which could hardly have been before.¹⁵

Thus, in the first part of her book, the author would seek to understand a process in which the parcels of land given by the farmer to partners and households will be gradually included in capitalist production, especially through the chemical transformation of the soil composition and new techniques of conservation. The result was an ever-increasing limit on the possibility of assigning land within the properties. If this scenario had been taking shape in coffee growing since the 1920s, due to the tendency to prohibit the cultivation of food inside the coffee plantations (Martins, 1989), it would have become generalized with the possibility of introducing new profitable crops. Then, the prohibitive legislation of the 1960s would require that these forms of "cession" be counted as part of the salary, which could be seen as an institutional block to the forms of "systematic colonization", which were simultaneously becoming relatively unnecessary (Boechat, 2014). However, the author's preferred target is the causes of this "institutional blockade".

On the other hand, the classic study by José F. Graziano da Silva (1981), at first, could be read as referring to practically the same arguments presented so far. Its emphasis lies above all, however, on the possibility of a transformation in the technical base of the productive process in the field, given by the country's industrialization process, which would have constituted a Department I, producer of capital goods, which developed into an industry of implements and supplements from the 1950s to the 1970s. With the contribution of a rural credit policy, mechanization and the use of fertilizers and herbicides would become accessible to farmers. The impact of these changes was felt in the seasonality of agriculture in São Paulo, freeing a contingent of workers and allowing an even more radical change in production relations, even if an understanding of an incomplete modernization is made explicit in the final passage below, as in that the trained seasonal worker is not conceived as a fully paid employee:

This process of industrialization of agriculture leads to the formation of an urban-rural labor market, that is, in the formation of a general reserve army, from which the capitalists of the city and rural area will be supplied, thus completing the process

15 Once again, the question of the articulation between the rationalization of social reproduction and wage earning returns here, which, through monetization, would make it possible to quantify the socially necessary work time. It is important to remember, however, that, at the same time that it makes explicit how much is paid to the worker, the wage obscures what is not paid, a decisive element for capitalist accumulation (Marx, 1985, chap.4). In the colonato, for example, there is a certain explanation of the difference between necessary and surplus labor, materialized in the difference between the colono's food crops and the coffee plantations. Even so, we reiterate that the relationship of value was already being managed in the way in which a certain monetization of the activities of treating the coffee plantations and the coffee harvest was taking place. In this case, the account could be made, albeit precariously, for the costs of production to include the expenses with the payment of workers and to blur the distinction between necessary work and surplus work. Martins (2004) and Stolcke (1986) seem to minimize this aspect of the on-screen contradiction.

of reunification of these sectors. [...] This partial modernization accentuated, rather than attenuating, the seasonal variations typical of agricultural activities, which made an intermittent employment relationship - such as that of the itinerants - to be more advantageous (from the owner's point of view) than hiring permanent employees. But this type of mobile worker who has an intermittent employment relationship is not the final, finished product of the peasant's proletarianization process. This is only a transitory form, which prevails while organizing the urban-rural labor market of "unskilled" labor. From then on, the "fixed group" of itinerant rural workers, as well as the "semi-skilled" workers (especially machine operators) began to replace the very reproduction of capital in the rural area, especially in crucial moments of peak services, such as at harvest time (Silva, J., 1981, p. 4-5).

The work of the "boia-fria" is seen as a result of a partial "peasant proletarianization", suggesting that formal wage labor is the end of the process, which indicates a certain idealization of a formalization of labor relations that was increasingly less consistent with the then current reality. It is evident, on the other hand, that for Gaudemar (1977), the main mechanism of the "mobilization of work" is the technical innovation applied to agricultural production, constituting an "industrialization of agriculture" that would have occurred, however, only partially, though still reiterating a "general reserve army". But this explanation would place other variables as secondary, constituting a problem in the view of Stolcke (1986) arising from the lack of a rigorous analysis of the policy determinations in this process:

Graziano da Silva considers phenomena such as the extension of labor legislation to rural workers, changes in the use of agricultural area, the massive eradication of coffee plantation in the early 1960s and its replacement by pastures and temporary crops, such as soy and wheat, and the increase in the value of land as accessory factors that only served to accelerate a process essentially determined by technological change! (Stolcke, 1986, p. 186-187).

Thus, the main terms of Stolcke's (1986) analysis should include elements of the political dispute over modernization, which the author considers minimized by Silva, J. (1981). The Brazilian exchange rate policy, from the 1940s, would be one of the points highlighted by her, since, by instituting a particularly onerous exchange rate for coffee, it allowed directing part of the foreign exchange obtained in the sector towards modernization policies, including structural reforms within a comprehensive industrialization plan, or import substitution, as advocated by Cepal at the time. The so-called "foreign exchange confiscation" encouraged the obtaining of "profits" in activities other than coffee and was only accepted, according to the author, in view of the permanent threat of expanding labor legislation to rural and agrarian reform. It was in the wake of this social pressure for the so-called basic reforms that the Rural Worker Statute, of 1963, and the Land Statute, of the following year, would appear to farmers as a lesser evil than agrarian reform, even being propellants of the changes of the time.

This changes in production relations in agriculture, which necessarily also led to changes in the forms of domination, cannot be understood without examining the events and political confrontations at the time. Farmers' own perceptions of the economic and political circumstances in which the transition to casual wage labor occurred, and workers' experiences and reactions to their changing living and working conditions are an integral part of this historical process (Stolcke, 1986, p. 187-188).

As can be seen in this quote, Stolcke does not fail to point out the influence of “technical progress” on the changes of the period, but the author's emphasis is precisely on the choice of farmers to do away with the work system that she considers efficient, as a reaction to the enactment of labor legislation for the rural area in the 1960s. As a result, the hiring of itinerants would have led to a kind of productive disorganization that would have driven technical progress as a way to rationalize production and eventually replace the use of workers by produced means of production. In short, political choice appears before technical progress as the cause of changes. In turn, in a rejoinder to Stolcke and after praising his efforts to carry out a political economy of coffee, Silva, J. (1987) seems to suggest a process similar to that pointed out by Rangel (1986) of recruiting the workforce within the family of colonos, precisely because of the inexistence of a rural labor market:

Verena establishes a unidirectional relationship between technical progress and labor relations: she wants to prove that “the greater seasonality in the use of labor does not necessarily make the settlement unfeasible. Farmers could have adapted the hiring of colono families [...] by employing additional temporary labor for the coffee harvest” (op. cit., p. 197). Well, that's exactly what farmers did in the 60s. They just didn't do it before because there really wasn't this possibility of only hiring salaried workers simply because this job market was still in the making. And this was, at the same time, a result and a necessary condition for the change of labor relations and the technical basis of production (Silva, J., 1987, p. 177-178).

In this reading, Silva, J. (1987) first criticizes the appearance in Stolcke (1986) that the colonato was extinguished overnight, highlighting the procedural nature of this liquidation, to which the author apparently agrees. He also criticizes the failure to understand the difference between a worker who is not always salaried and an itinerant, who is permanently salaried, but both being always temporary. In this, he understands the gestation of the temporary worker taking place since the 1950s, concomitant with what he calls the “long agony of the colonato”. So he agrees with Stolcke (1986) that this agony was related to the limits of food planting, in what he conceives of as an expropriation process that led to salaried employment in the form of the itinerant. Finally, he sees the itinerant as only appearing generally from the mid-1960s onwards. Thus, for Silva, J. (1981, 1987), the rural labor market was in fact constituted in the nineteenth century with the policy of mass immigration, something that Stolcke (1986) has already cited:

In this controversy, an obviously central question is the one concerning the existence or not of a labor market, as this affects both the options of farmers and the reactions of workers. My most general argument is that a labor market had been created in São Paulo agriculture at the end of the 19th century, with massive subsidized immigration. In fact, it is hard to deny that, under the colonato system, workers were forced to sell their labor on the market. But the constitution of a labor market does not necessarily mean that occasional shortages of labor do not occur. Graziano, on the contrary, argues that, even in the 1950s, an agricultural labor market was still “in gestation”, which seems to extrapolate the partial mechanization of agriculture. However, if we consider the evolution of agricultural wages, which is one of the possible indicators, it seems that at least there was no shortage of labor in the 1950s. In that decade, the monetary wages of colonos declined in real terms, as well as those of temporary workers. For the same reason, at the time, it was a real alternative to hire temporary labor on harvest occasions (Stolcke, 1987, p. 7).

Thus, we see an affirmation of the existence of a labor market, constantly promoted by the state and in which the worker is not completely expropriated from the means of production. Stolcke’s denial of Silva’s argument of a process of “gestation” in the labor market is based, however, on a quick analysis of wage levels that should have increased and not declined in the 1950s if there was a shortage of workers. Now, the same author had already pointed out that monetary wages were only a part of the colono’s income and that the system itself was an effective way of keeping monetary wages low, especially in times of crisis. Finally, for her, it was only in the 1950s that a “real alternative” for the harvest appeared in the hiring of temporary work. At that time, “mass subsidized immigration” had already been modified into a policy of subsidizing internal migration, in the 1930s and 1940s, until it was completely abolished in the late 1940s (BoeCHAT, 2009).

If the state modifies the target of the worker to be mobilized to areas within its territory, there is an indication of a management of the migration issue that only seems possible with the political centralization and the presupposed process of rupture of the regions, now articulated by a state nationally centralized. On the other hand, if the state withdraws from promoting (i)migration and if the “real alternative” of hiring temporary work only appears in the 1950s, it is assumed that the state was an integral part of a distinct labor market forming then. It seems perfectly appropriate, therefore, to corroborate the thesis of “gestation” of a labor market by Silva, J. (1981) based on the information provided by Stolcke (1986).

What both miss is to think about how the centralization of the state goes through a transformation of its *coronelist* way of being, whose milestones can be found throughout the 1920s and 1970s, including the end of the National Guard, the Electoral Code, the reinforcement of the national army, the disarmament of the backwoods, the creation of communication channels, the institutionalization of technical standards of regional planning through the constitution of universities, the centralization of a credit system, etc. In this process, the “opening” of the region and the “national integration” corroborate the formation of a national labor market or the

promotion of an internal market in general and can be thought of as part of the autonomization of the categories of capital.

For the colonatos point of view, these processes culminate in the mobilization of members of the colono's family for increasingly individualized work in the work groups, receiving either per day or based on productivity. The salaries of its members can be observed, albeit intermittently and without formalization, simultaneously with the limitation of the ceded areas inside the farm, culminating in a tendential categorization of these former colonos only as rural workers. The contradictory unity of the farm seems to dissolve, with the migration of its residents to the cities of the interior of São Paulo or to the capital, becoming only a place of work. The production that passed through the land ceded inside the farm or through credit mediated by the farm in the local warehouses will have to go, increasingly, through the money received in exchange for work that allows access to goods purchased in the urban market, including housing, education and leisure (Boechat; Giavarotti, 2015). The relationships between employers and employees themselves have become more distant and contractual. Even politics tends to take place in terms more guided by exchanges and spectacle (Boechat, 2014).

There will be the possibility of migrating to other agricultural frontiers, in the Center-West or North of the country, and certainly the discussion about the replacement of peasantry and coronelismo and the entire debate presented here will make sense again, although the frontier will also come to relate with the territoriality of the national state formed and with the urbanization, industrialization/scientization and financialization processes that this territoriality presupposes and allows (Boechat; Pitta; Toledo, 2019).

Final considerations

We have presented so far, a debate on the difficulty of interpreting the colonato, a difficulty that is transmitted to the analysis of its end and the rise of the "boia-fria" work in agriculture in São Paulo. We quote a series of emblematic authors of rural studies in Brazil looking for disparate elements that, as we understand, could be articulated to explain the contradiction inherent in this particular form of reproduction of the social relations of production during the post-colonial coffee period. Then, we focus the analysis on the differences between Verena Stolcke and José Graziano da Silva, who, in the 1980s, discussed the colonato and modernization of agriculture in São Paulo, and we note that the authors did not disagree so much about the factors involved in the process of the end of the colonato, as we have been showing, but rather as to the importance that should be given to them and the historical order of the changes.

We believe that understanding the colonato as a social relationship of particular production can avoid the shackles of political economy – thus developing a critique of political economy – and incorporate dimensions of a concrete totality (Scholz, 2010), such as those sought by Stolcke (1986), without prejudice to the economic dynamics that transcended the colonato region itself, while also affecting it. The path of analysis as a process of autonomizing the categories of capital was not exactly followed by the authors covered, and its unfolding into a labor crisis would not need, as Silva, J. (1981) wanted, to resume the dualism that points to an incomplete modernization in the work of the boia-fria, not totally modern, according to the author.

Furthermore, this process would express itself in a crisis within the working family. In the view of Moraes Silva (2004), the work of the colono's family was coordinated by the "father-husband-boss". Stolcke (1982, p. 87) followed a similar path by pointing out that the "colonato was a work system based on the exploitation of family work". The mobilization of family members to work in the "boias-frias" groups would lead to their individualization through salaried work, which, for the authors, induces a gradual questioning of paternal authority, as the father/husband ceases coordinating the work of the family as if he were the boss of his wife and children. The consequent increase in domestic violence is indicative of the reiteration of extra-economic violence in a context of crisis, which could be thought of as the encroachment of patriarchy (Scholz, 2010), but different from the productive articulation it had during the colonato:

For obvious reasons, the victims of intra-family physical violence are women and children. It is precisely at times when men acutely feel the precariousness of their situation that they seem to try to reaffirm their dominance and authority through the use of violence (Stolcke, 1982, p. 86).

Thus, we understand colonato as the systematic colonization that aimed precisely to generate a labor market (simultaneously with the constitution of the land and capital market), but we read the Marxian formulation, presented in chapter 33 of *Das Kapital I*, emphasizing the "necessary extra-economic violence" to the mobilization of work in the context of open borders and absence of a formed relative overpopulation. Obviously, however, this extra-economic violence, personified in coronelismo and its regional control and by the *pater familias*, differs substantially from that which reiterated the slavery of colonization of the old regime: we are facing a contradictory free work, which, moreover, should not be encouraged only coercively, but above all through the partial transfer of the means of production.

The fact that this formation of the land, labor and capital markets, as well as the state, culminated in a "liberation" of the colono from his condition as a colono exactly at the emergence of a military dictatorship only underscores a contradictory aspect of the worker's freedom. Free to move between different types of work, exchange your life time for money and choose the goods he will consume, in a supposed positivity of these choices, but equally "free" from the means of production and, thus, never free from having to work to mediate their social insertion. To this classic formulation of contradictory freedom, we add the question: to what extent do male and female workers become free from patriarchy?

In addition, the work will also be constantly rethought and remade through the scientificization of production processes and the industrialization of the means of production. This national industrialization, little mentioned by the authors discussed here, is related to the over accumulation of capital promoted by the war economy, which stimulated the Fordist expansion to world levels in the first half of the 20th century. Its expansion to a peripheral country like Brazil reveals a critical character of its reproduction. Gradually, also in agriculture, the increased organic composition of capital relativized the need to hire and use living labor, tending to produce its obsolescence and desubstantialize its value (Kurz, 2015). The increasing

productivity of industry leads to the expulsion of live labor from the production process, undermining by capital itself its base for extracting surplus value and thus eroding the substance of value. For Silva, J. (1981), the incompleteness of modernization could be observed in the precarious and informal work of the “boia-fria”, but it would rather be the expression of a delayed modernization that was carried out, albeit critically, under increasingly difficult conditions to try to reach international productivity standards - increasing labor productivity and its objectification in dead labor. In a nutshell, the “boia-fria” would be the expression of the labor crisis that was becoming more generalized. A crisis that strikes, as we pointed out, within the family. Family and capital are, therefore, co-constitutive faces of a concrete totality in crisis.

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