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Comtismo, Castilhismo, and Varguismo: anatomy of a Brazilian Creed

Comtismo, castilhismo e varguismo: anatomia dum credo brasileiro

Comtismo, castilhismo y varguismo: anatomía de un credo brasileño

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ABSTRACT: The author argues that polity and policies of Getúlio Vargas's Estado Novo cannot be fully understood without exploring the legacy of Rio Grande do Sul. The southern state's first republican governor, Júlio de Castilhos, had taken inspiration in Auguste Comte's multifaceted political philosophy and inculcated its authoritarian traits into political institutions. Yet, he and his followers substantially adapted Comte's positivism to the specific economic and political circumstances in their *republiqueta sui generis*. In contrast to Comte, the State merged temporal and spiritual powers to pursue evolutionary political changes, a balanced socioeconomic modernisation, and the incorporation of the *populus qua* paternalistic public policies, and all this with a strong focus on education. Changing contexts resulted in further adjustments, when Vargas became governor in 1928: an 'orderly' inclusion of the opposition into the polity, a stronger state interventionism in the economy and labor market, and an experimentation with state corporatism. These experiences paved the way for this *comtismo*-turned-*castilhismo*-turning-*varguismo* to enter the national stage two years later. Despite all the compromises with other contenders for power that Vargas had to make thereafter, he and his *gaúcho* and other co-opted protégés remained united in the strong belief in technical solutions to social problems and a quest for rational institutions to carry out transformative policies. For them, the State was to be agent of development, tutor of corporate interest groups, and now also guarantor of national security. While highlighting the significant, and still underestimated, impact of French positivism on Vargas's first 15 years in government, the

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article places emphasis on the pragmatic dimensions of its appropriation, propagation, and reinterpretation by two generations of state-builders.

Keywords: Positivism. Brazil. Auguste Comte. Júlio de Castilhos. Getúlio Vargas.

RESUMO: O autor argumenta que o sistema político e as políticas do Estado Novo de Getúlio Vargas não podem ser completamente compreendidos sem explorar o legado do Rio Grande do Sul. O primeiro governador republicano do estado sulino, Júlio de Castilhos, inspirou-se na filosofia política multifacetada de Auguste Comte e inculcou os seus traços autoritários nas instituições políticas. No entanto, ele e os seus seguidores adaptaram substancialmente o positivismo de Comte às circunstâncias econômicas e políticas específicas na sua republiqueta sui generis. Em contraste com Comte, o Estado fundiu poderes temporais e espirituais para prosseguir mudanças políticas evolutivas, uma modernização socioeconômica equilibrada, e a incorporação do povo através de políticas públicas paternalistas, e tudo isso com um forte enfoque na educação. A mudança de contextos resultou em mais ajustes, quando Vargas se tornou governador em 1928: uma inclusão "ordenada" da oposição na política, um intervencionismo estatal mais forte na economia e no mercado de trabalho, e uma experimentação com o corporativismo estatal. Tais experiências abriram o caminho para que este comtismo transformado em castilhismo e transformando-se em varguismo entrasse na cena nacional dois anos depois. Apesar das concessões que, em seguida, Vargas teve de fazer a outros concorrentes ao poder, ele, os seus gaúchos, e outros protegidos cooptados permaneceram unidos na forte crença em soluções técnicas para problemas sociais e na procura de instituições racionais para levar a cabo políticas transformadoras. O Estado deveria ser agente de desenvolvimento, tutor de grupos de interesse corporativos, e, além disso, dirigente da segurança nacional. Ao mesmo tempo em que salienta o impacto significativo, e ainda subestimado, do positivismo francês nos primeiros 15 anos de governo de Vargas, o artigo enfatiza as dimensões pragmáticas da sua apropriação, propagação e reinterpretação por duas gerações de construtores do Estado.

Palavras-chave: Positivismo. Brasil. Auguste Comte. Júlio de Castilhos. Getúlio Vargas.

RESUMEN: El autor sostiene que el sistema político y las políticas del Estado Nuevo de Getúlio Vargas no pueden comprenderse plenamente sin explorar el legado de Rio Grande del Sur. El primer gobernador republicano del estado sureño, Júlio de Castilhos, se inspiró en la polifacética filosofía política de Auguste Comte e inculcó sus rasgos autoritarios en las instituciones políticas. Sin embargo, él y sus seguidores adaptaron sustancialmente el positivismo de Comte a las circunstancias económicas y políticas específicas de su republiqueta sui generis. A diferencia de Comte, el Estado fusionó los poderes temporales y espirituales para llevar a cabo cambios políticos evolutivos, una modernización socioeconómica equilibrada y la incorporación del pueblo a través de políticas públicas paternalistas, y todo, con un fuerte enfoque en la educación. Los cambios contextuales dieron lugar a nuevos ajustes cuando Vargas se convirtió en gobernador en 1928: una inclusión "ordenada" de la oposición en el sistema político, un mayor intervencionismo estatal en la economía y el mercado de trabajo, y una experimentación con el corporativismo estatal. Estas experiencias allanaron el camino para que este comtismo convertido en castilhismo y

convertiendose en varguismo entrara en la escena nacional dos años después. A pesar de todas las concesiones que, a partir de entonces, Vargas tuvo que hacer a otros contendientes por el poder, él, sus Sul-Riograndenses y otros protegidos cooptados permanecieron unidos por la fuerte creencia en soluciones técnicas a los problemas sociales y por la búsqueda de instituciones racionales para llevar a cabo políticas transformadoras. Para ellos, el Estado debía ser agente de desarrollo, tutor de los grupos de interés corporativos y, ahora, también garante de la seguridad nacional. Al mismo tiempo que se destaca el significativo, y aún subestimado, impacto del positivismo francés en los primeros 15 años de gobierno de Vargas, el artículo pone énfasis en las dimensiones pragmáticas de su apropiación, propagación y reinterpretación por parte de dos generaciones de constructores de Estado.

Palabras clave: Positivismo. Brasil. Auguste Comte. Júlio de Castilhos. Getúlio Vargas.

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Introduction and Argument

Getúlio Vargas remains Brazil's most important statesman of the past century. His 19 years in government (1930-45, 1951-54) profoundly transformed the relationship between economy, the State, and society and provided points of reference for successive governments. The 1937 coup that established the authoritarian-corporatist Estado Novo was for Vargas a revolution "from above,"[1] ratifying his decision to take power in 1930 and allowing him to embark on a comprehensive state-led program of administrative reorganization, economic modernization, national integration, and labor legislation. For Edgard Carone (1976, 12), one of the first historians to investigate this regime, it marked the beginning of "[t]he whole process of social change" that Brazil saw during the subsequent decades. No wonder the Estado Novo, including its normative ideas, began to attract significant attention from academics (Carone 1982; Chacon, 1977; Garcia 1982; Oliveira 1982b; Schwartzman, 1983; Levine 1970). Yet, its widespread depiction as a watershed, explainable primarily by the effects of the Great Depression and the impact of totalitarian ideas, is misjudged,[2] especially if we compare its polity with that of Rio Grande do Sul, the Old Republic's deviant case.

[1] Getúlio Vargas to Oswaldo Aranha, Rio de Janeiro 7 Dec. 1937, Fundação Getúlio Vargas [hereafter FGV]/CPDOC, OA 37.11.08/2 cp, folhas 0198-0199.
[2] The concept of "depression regime" is not applicable to the Estado Novo. The 1929 world recession acted as an intervening variable in an ongoing centralization after World War I (Hentschke 1996).

My argument is that the institution-building and policies of Vargas's interwar dictatorship were influenced by a peculiar brand of French positivism that had guided the patriarch of Rio Grande's *republiqueta*, Júlio de Castilhos, and his political heirs but witnessed important adjustments during Vargas's state government (1928-30). While the influence of positivism in central Brazil waned after the military rule from 1889-94 and has usually been overstated,[3] it survived on the country's southern border. Here a modernizing and educational dictatorship was to erase frontier backwardness. When *gaúchos* assumed control in Rio de Janeiro in 1930, *comtismo*-turned-*castilhismo*-turning-*varguismo* once again impacted on state formation and policies at national level (Cortés 1974).

It is important to clear up, from the outset, possible misunderstandings. First, I do not argue that the Estado Novo was a mere transplant from Rio Grande. The "1930 Revolution" led to a crisis of hegemony that forced Vargas to bargain with other contenders for power, and, as before in his home state, he demonstrated considerable flexibility. Second, the question of whether the political centre was to shift once more from one region to another, as with Brazil's 1822 Independence and the 1889 transition from monarchy to republic, or whether political centralization and modernization of the State at national level were needed, divided *gaúchos*. Third, the Estado Novo certainly had many fathers, from António de Oliveira Salazar,[4] Benito Mussolini,[5] Mihail Manoilescu,[6] Józef Piłsudski,[7] and William Willoughby[8] to homegrown apostles of authoritarian-corporatist nationalism, such as Alberto Torres, Francisco de Oliveira Vianna, Francisco Campos, and Azevedo Amaral (Santos 2011, 9-25; Vélez Rodríguez 1997; Gentile 2016;

[3] Together with Teófilo Braga in Portugal and Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk in Czechoslovakia, Brazil's Benjamin Constant Botelho de Magalhães (1836-1891) is celebrated as one of three positivist architects of republics. The lieutenant-colonel headed a generation of cadets who, at Rio de Janeiro's Military School, were trained in Comte's doctrine, but after the establishment of a republican regime of force he was neutralized. In 1890, he moved from the war portfolio to a new Ministry for Public Instruction and Postal and Telegraph Services, the power of which did not reach beyond the, then, Federal District of Rio. The positivist-inspired education reform he initiated barely survived him. Many of his young followers quickly rose through the military ranks and gained political posts in the capital city and the states, but their long-term impact remained limited. On the role of the military in the transition from monarchy to republic, see Castro 1995. Antônio Paim (2007, 105-106) points to the myth that positivists had the intellectual leadership in the country's transition from monarchy to republic. On the differences between Portuguese and Brazilian positivism, see (Paredes 2013, 157-74).

[4] Vargas had studied the corporatism of the Portuguese Estado Novo. See Guy W. Ray to Jefferson Caffrey, Porto Alegre, 3 March 1938, National Archives at College Park, MD, RG 84, U.S. Consulate in Porto Alegre, Classified Records 1937-52, Box 1.

[5] Vargas and other *gaúchos* had also explored Mussolini's accomplishments, and their labor legislation took inspiration in Italy's Carta del Lavoro (Bak 1983, 264; Fontoura, 1999, 291; Luz 2010, 271).

[6] The Romanian Manoilescu's plea for state corporatism and protectionism for emerging industries influenced Brazilian elites after his translated works circulated in the country in the early 1930s (Love 1996, 25-98; Viscardi 2016, 218).

[7] Piłsudski's authoritarian regime, with a strong basis in the military, provided some guidance for the creators of Brazil's 1937 constitution (Porto 1937, 18-19). On the Polish regime, see also (Pinto 2014, 39-41).

[8] The Estado Novo's civil service reform was strongly influenced by Willoughby's separation between politics and administration (Wahrlich 1983, 280-91).

Oliveira 1982c, Oliveira 1991), though an article sets limits to the exploration of all the domestic and trans-Atlantic influences on post-1930 Brazil.[9] All I suggest and wish to foreground is that Castilhos was *one* of the spiritual mentors of the interwar regime, and his tutorship was significant.[10] Yet, in his classic history of ideas, João Cruz Costa (1964, 245) claims that Vargas and his allies came to power "with a very poor, not to say nonexistent, ideological program." This evaluation, explainable by the author's adherence to a historicist school in the vein of Leopoldo Zea that focused on ideas in texts and explored the regional and national particularities of intellectual production in Latin America in comparison to European models, both equally simplified, has remained a widely shared assumption. I do not claim that Vargas was intellectually consistent or even an ideologue, but I contest that, despite all his flexibility, he and some of his key *gaúcho* protégés, civilians and military men, no longer adhered to core beliefs of the political philosophy that had been so prominent in their home state and obeyed pragmatic, rather than theoretical, considerations. Fourth and finally, while we cannot deduce the transformations of the Vargas regime from these, or any, ideas, the circumstances and modes of their appropriation, propagation, and reinterpretation are important explanatory factors.

The few studies that recognize *castilhista* influences on the *gaúchos* in central government do not examine how this political philosophy contributed to the shaping of national politics beyond 1937. Notable exceptions are Antonio Paim (1994, 78-85; 2007, 102-16) and his disciple Ricardo Vélez Rodríguez, even though both are still steeped in a traditional 'history of ideas' school.[11] The latter, author of the monograph *Castilhismo: uma filosofia da República* (2010) has been attacked by orthodox followers of Comte for linking positivism with a (proto-) totalitarian regime.[12] It is therefore also important to state that, for me, the Estado Novo was not fascist, but authoritarian.

Castilhos's absence from the national pantheon is also explainable by the fact that Brazilian history has usually been interpreted from the perspective of the South East, and, as Paim insinuates, some analysts seem to have had an interest in ignoring the impact of *castilhismo* on Vargas, though

[9] The various contestatory movements in the transition from the Old Republic to the Estado Novo are dissected in significant detail in (Hentschke 1996, esp. 165-384). Yet, we still know little about how European ideas traveled across the Atlantic, directly or, as the case of Willoughby shows, indirectly, through the United States (Rogers 1998).

[10] Amongst contemporaries who clearly recognized this intellectual luggage were Themístocles Brandão Cavalcanti and Luís Simões Lópes, then leading officials in the judiciary and the administrative apparatus, respectively (Lima 1986, 47, 133).

[11] For an excellent synthesis of the historiography on positivism in Brazil, see (Alonso, 1996).

[12] For Vélez Rodríguez (2010, 247-248), ignoring the role of Castilhos for republican Brazil equates to not understanding that of Porfírio Díaz for Mexico, Juan Domingo Perón for Argentina, or Mustafa Kemal Atatürk for Turkey. For a discussion of totalitarianism, which is not without contradictions see, in the same source, pp. 273-74. An orthodox critique is (Lacerda Neto n.d.). After the 1937 coup, *A Noite* journalist Leal de Souza accompanied Vargas on his trips and later published a book, *Getúlio Vargas*, in which he linked his protagonist to Castilhos and yet compared him to Europe's fascist dictators (Neto 2012-14, v. 2, 326).

without it neither the Estado Novo nor his labor policy could be fully understood (Paim 2002, 24). In contrast, *gaúcho* historians have written extensively about *castilhismo*, but most of their analyses remain regionally confined (Pinto 1986; Soares 1998; Axt 2005). This study aims to explore how Comtism, a political philosophy or worldview, which its founder considered to be universal, was adapted, in an authentic way, to the specific contexts of Rio Grande do Sul during the Old Republic and to Brazil after 1928-30 in order to cater to the new elites' interest in socioeconomic and political modernization.[13] It investigates neither how Castilhos and Vargas's institutional arrangements worked in practice nor how their declared policies were implemented. However, I am acutely aware of the limited infrastructural power of the State that explains major discrepancies between claims and realities in social policies (French, 2004; Wolfe 1994; Hentschke 2007).

Comtismo: Search for a Viable Reorganization of Society

Visitors to Auguste Comte's grave in Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris (Figura 1) find a plaque with the words "L'eglise positiviste du Brésil a son père spirituel," reminding us of the significance of positivism for Brazil. Another plaque lists Comte's key works, the 1830-42 *Cours de Philosophie Positive*, 1848-54 *Système de Politique Positive*, and 1856 *Synthèse Subjective*, which mark the creation of a philosophy and history of science, the development of a political philosophy, and an exposition of the interrelated concepts that allow for the functioning and continuous improvement of Humanity: orderly activities, synthetic reasoning, and social sentiments.

Given the composite nature and continuous evolution of Comte's work, which is reflected in its reception in Brazil but usually overlooked in the literature, a brief elucidation is required. The Frenchman's research followed a program he had elaborated as early as 1822, namely the *Plan des travaux scientifiques nécessaires pour réorganiser la société*. The title indicates what drove him all his life. In his view, the 1789 Revolution, an inevitable event, signaled the definitive end of the organic unity of temporal and spiritual powers, or empire and papacy, which had characterized the Middle Ages but been challenged by the Reformation, the Scientific Revolution of the seventeenth century, and the Enlightenment. As a consequence, France had fallen into anarchy, Comte felt, and he set out to reorganize and unify society. The *Cours*, nowadays recognized as the Frenchman's most, if not only, important work, was meant to be no more than a preliminary study. Influenced by Nicolas de Condorcet and Henri de Saint-Simon, Comte linked the country's political crisis with the current state of the human mind. Convinced that Humanity, like nature, passed through an evolutionary process, he searched for phenomenological laws, asking for the interrelationship of facts, rather

[13] The adaptation to local conditions is a characteristic of the global spread of this scientific worldview and justifies using the term positivism in the plural (Fillafer 2017).

than the ultimate reason of historical progress. This progress, he argued, would be achieved when philosophical thought leaves behind the theological and metaphysical stages and arrives at the positive, or scientific, stage, characterized not by reliance on supernatural agents or abstract reflection, but by observation, experimentation, and comparison. The "positivization" of knowledge would be gradual, as history showed, and depend on the prerequisites and complexity of each science. It would be attained earliest in math, a foundational and instrumental discipline, followed by astronomy, physics, chemistry, and biology, with all of them being interrelated. The most intricate science, that of society, which Comte eventually called sociology, would be the last to be permeated by positive spirit. Comte's Law of Three Stages classified the sciences but also unified them, and such "positive" reconstruction was to allow for the rational control of both nature and society.

Fig. 1: Grave of Auguste Comte in Paris. Photo by the author.

In the *Système*, Comte proposed a *sociocratie*, an enlightened republican polity that was based on a new synthesis between temporal and spiritual powers, identified in the industrial-financial capital and altruistic positive philosophers, respectively. The former were to responsibly use their private property and forge material progress, but the latter, equipped with sociological know-how and barred from political offices, would act as a corrective and educate the public, thereby guaranteeing order. In his quest for social, or communitarian, cohesion, Comte replaced Catholicism with a secular religion that worshipped the benefactors of mankind. Positivist morality was to instill love in the family, ancestors, great men, social institutions, the fatherland, and Humanity. It was placed above sociology, because only when the mind served the heart and each individual lived for others would social harmony prevail. With their full development, sociology and morality could recapitulate the other sciences by applying a subjective, rather than objective,

method; they would link the whole edifice of knowledge and its application to deified Humanity, the *Grand-Être*. This was the purpose of the *Synthèse*.

Comte was a contradictory figure, and this is reflected in his *oeuvre* and its interpretations. First, he rejected the Sovereignty of the People as a metaphysical construct and, in order to replace class struggle with solidarity, stressed the need for a Caesarist or Dantonian, rather than Robespierrian, dictatorship during the transition to a positivist regime. The ruler would even be allowed to choose his own successor. Little noticed in the literature is that Comte contemplated political decentralization, or small *pátrias* of civic communities, in the long run, with unifying structures then being restricted to the (supranational) spiritual power. Yet, it was this power in which John Stuart Mill identified the despotic streak in Comtism. Its creator, in spite of defending doctrinal liberty, neglected psychology and aimed at expertly molding an individual's moral conduct to exterior reality. An unchecked positivist clergy would discipline not only the heart, but also body and mind. It was to play a role in medicine, endorsing hygiene and an improvement of the human condition, and allow for freedom of expression, rather than conscience that was conditioned by the philosophical knowledge of Humanity. Second, the indivisibility of the concept of Humanity meant that differences were explained in merely temporal terms, which left little room for cultural and ethnic pluralism, in spite of Comte's stand against slavery, colonialism, imperialism, and militarism and the abandonment of his earlier racist thought for a celebration of Africans' superior affective (read: not mental) capabilities. Third, the association of scientism with Comte is misleading. For him, sciences were a means to an end, namely to understand and serve Humanity, not to gain power, accumulate wealth, or idolize efficiency. Yet, it was precisely what we nowadays call technocrats to whom the idea of social planning would later appeal. Fourth, Comte's distrust of socially ignorant academicians and lawyers made him thunder against meaningless certificates, defend engineering and other practical subjects as the only acceptable specializations, and otherwise plea for more encyclopedic education. The proletariat, which he saw suffering under untamed *laisser-faire* capitalism and wanted to incorporate into modern society, became a natural target group for his positivist teachings and activities. He welcomed the 1848 Revolution and founded a workers' library and a Société Positiviste. This did not mean that he embraced (scientific) socialism; his approach remained paternalistic. Moreover, disappointed with France's parliamentary democracy and proletarians' lack of interest, he eventually accepted Louis Bonaparte's 1851 coup, appealed to moderate conservatives, and even sought an alliance with Jesuits. Finally, for the early Comte women were mentally inferior to men, but, after meeting his platonic love interest Clotilde de Vaux, he emphasized their higher emotional intelligence that made them ideal agents in the harmonization of heart and mind and therefore societal regeneration (though this also meant that

he wished to exclude them from the world of work). Four women, amongst them Brazilian feminist educator and writer Nísia Floresta Brasileira Augusta, were following Comte's funeral procession in 1857. Since 1985, a bronze statue of Humanity, depicting a female figure (Clotilde) with an infant that symbolize order and progress in a loving relationship but also resemble the Virgin Mary with the Jesus child, is placed behind the Master's grave. It is a donation by Brazilian positivist Henrique Batista da Silva Oliveira. For all these reasons, Comte meant different things to different people. Most followers picked those parts and connotations of his *oeuvre*, blended with other ideological tools, that suited their agenda[14].

Faced with severe socio-economic and political problems, Latin America's late nineteenth-century state-builders embraced ideas of methodical social reorganization and spoke of national reconstruction, though the recipes they suggested differed in dependence on contexts and interests.[15] Comte's promise of inevitable material progress and controlled social integration "from above" appealed to the new middle class in Brazil (Nachman 1977). The country seemed to be especially prone to "organic," that is, evolutionary, transitions, as a comparison of its imperial and republican flags evidences, and it did not even shun stressing continuities in change with regard to the Portuguese legacy.[16] Comte's religion proved to be more divisive, both in France and in the New World. His orthodox followers in the Brazilian Positivist Church, or Apostolate, established in 1881 and placed under the leadership of Miguel Lemos and Raimundo Teixeira Mendes, who was given the honor of inaugurating the positivist chapel in Paris, linked to Clotilde (Mendes 1905),[17] played a major role in the creation of a new and enduring republican imaginary (though it did not break with tradition). It included, apart from the national flag, a (white) female allegory of the new form of government and the excavation of Tiradentes, the, then, long-forgotten leader of

[14] On the founder of positivism and the multiple facets of his *oeuvre*, see the monumental biography (Pickering 1993-2009) and (Bourdeau 2021) and, regarding education, (Muglioni 1996). Good readers include (Lenzer 1998) and (Andreski, 1974) For the relationship between Comte and Nísia Floresta, see (Pickering 1993-2009, v. 3, 453-455; 548n148; Lins 1964, 19-26; Duarte 2005).

[15] This was in consonance with the differentiation of positivism itself. We do not yet have an in-depth comparative history of its impact on late nineteenth-century Latin America. Within the limits of this study, it is only possible to point to the existence of several generations of positivists and coinciding strands of this political philosophy. While in Brazil Comte was the predominant authority (Hentschke 2004b), Uruguay followed almost exclusively Herbert Spencer and his disciples (Ardao 2008; Hentschke 2016). In Argentina (Biagini 1985; Terán 1987; Hentschke 2016, 93-134) and Mexico (Zea 1968; Hale 1990; Priego 2016), both French and English positivisms co-existed. Chile, with its relatively stable post-Independence polity, witnessed, in the writings of José Victorino Lastarria, an early embracement of liberal-Idealist *krausismo* and later its unique merger with *comtismo* (Hentschke 2016, 69-87). As a consequence, Bernardo Subercaseaux (1980, 11-12), reversing attribute and noun in Leopoldo Zea's term of "liberal positivism," classifies Lastarria as a "positivist liberal." The resulting *Krauso-positivismo* also impacted on Uruguay (Monreal 1993, 122-30). In Argentina, Spencerian positivism even appealed to first-generation socialists (Adelman 1992, 214-18; Miller 2008, 77).

[16] On the political philosophy and symbolisms of the Brazilian flag, see (Paul 1997). In 1880, Brazil also commemorated the 300th anniversary of the death of Portuguese bard Luis de Camões (Costa 1964, 104).

[17] Brazilians had bought the house at 5, Rue Payenne, in 1903, two years before the inauguration, but were unaware that de Vaux's apartment, which no longer existed, was actually in the adjacent building, no. 7. The chapel still exists today (Pickering, 1993-2009, v. 2, 140n28).

the anti-colonial Minas Conspiracy (1789) as a Jesus-like martyr (Carvalho 2012; Jurt 2012).[18] However, the rigidity with which the Apostolate interpreted the Master's later *oeuvre* and employed it to mobilize Brazil's urban middle class led to the break with Comte's French heirs, Émile Littré and Pierre Laffitte, and its isolation within Brazil. After the death of Mendes in 1927, these positivists formed only a small sect. When, in 1954, Brazil's UNESCO minister, and later ambassador, Paulo Estevão de Berreda Carneiro, son of an orthodox positivist from Rio de Janeiro, founded and presided over the Association Internationale La Maison d'Auguste Comte, which took care of the Master's physical and intellectual estate, he clashed repeatedly with the positivist Church's hegemonic ambitions. In contrast to his parents, Carneiro never joined the organization (Fraiz 2000; Carneiro 2005, 4-7, 16-24, 38). Nonetheless, in Brazil active temples of Humanity have survived to the present day, one of them in Porto Alegre, built between 1912 and 1928. Comte's slogan "Love as the Principle, Order for the Base, and Progress for the Goal" is placed over the entrance and a bust of Georges-Jacques Danton in its interior.

Castilhismo: Establishment of a Republican Dictatorship in a Frontier Society

Castilhos, whose father was a typical settler-pioneer from the central plains and whose mother originated from an upper-class family on the southern border, became familiar with Comte and Littré's works during his studies at the University of São Paulo's Law Faculty from 1877-81 (Vélez Rodríguez 1982, 18-19),[19] though positivist ideas also circulated amongst the military and in literary and journalistic circles in his home state at the time (Martins 1979, 88-89). Soon after his arrival in São Paulo, then the cradle of positivism and independent from the Apostolate (Alonso 1996, 111-115), he and his fellow *gaúchos*, amongst them his future brothers-in-law Joaquim Francisco de Assis Brasil and Joaquim Pereira da Costa, and the slightly older José Gomes Pinheiro Machado, joined forces with young *paulistas* with whom they shared a profound dissatisfaction with their political marginalization in the Empire and the conviction that, if in possession of provincial autonomy, they would be able to employ scientific know-how in order to modernise the economy and instigate polity changes. In student journals and associational activities, they pleaded for the abolition of slavery, European immigration, popular education, and a federalist republic (Alonso 2002, 146-57). One of those journals, the so-far little explored *A Evolução*, which had been founded by Castilhos, Assis Brazil, and Pereira da Costa, provides an interesting insight into the positivist

[18] The Apostolate's role was not merely symbolic, though; on its campaigns for the abolition of slavery and labor legislation, see (Bosi 2004, 159-66, 169-71), and on orthodox positivists' prolific intellectual production (Prefeitura 2011).
[19] The French cultural mission to Brazil in the 1930s stressed the influence Comte still had at USP (Skidmore 2003, 348; Goertzel 1999, 11-12). A Positivist Society existed at USP until 1951 (Hilton 1973-74, 542).

formation of the young *gaúchos*. They turned against the providentialist and Natural Law convictions of their teachers and classmates and criticized the dearth of concepts that would characterize the Liberal and Conservative parties (Franco 2003, 19, 21). The journal propagated a republican form of government. Castilhos had no doubt that the monarchy would disappear, because the laws that determine social evolution were infallible.[20] Assis Brasil was the first to explicitly refer to positivism. In the second issue of the journal, he traced the gradual emancipation of Humanity to Jesus Christ, Martin Luther, the French Revolution (before its usurpation by Napoleon), and Comte.[21] Brazil, he deplored in other articles, passed through a critical period of mental anarchy and, to overcome it, republicans had to start exploring the country's political history from a philosophical point of view.[22] Then they would understand that the "constitutional and representative monarchy [was] metaphysics translated into politics"[23] and typical of Brazil's transitory state. Castilhos echoed this in a later article, pointing to the correlation between a country's institutions and its state of civilization. This he had learned from Comte,[24] whom he now praised as "the immortal creator of sociology."[25] Yet, the editors of *A Evolução* still defended the rule of law, liberty, and justice,[26] the Sovereignty of the People,[27] and "pure democracy,"[28] not a *sociocratie*. In a speech Assis Brasil (1880, 9) delivered in the Republican Academic Club on June 16, 1880, he countered the monarchists' argument that such a republic might be the most rational polity, but Brazil was not prepared for it: it would be undisputed that science penetrates the inorganic, organic, and "supra-organic" worlds gradually, but this only means that political and social institutions need to be given time and scientific guidance to mature. In addition, these young men considered it a priority for the republic to provide compulsory, lay, and free primary schooling in its double finality of literacy training and civic education.[29]

[20] J[úlio de] C[astilhos], "A evolução". *A Evolução* 1, n. 3 (15 March 1879), 17.
[21] A[ssis] B[rasil], "Os últimos serão os primeiros". *A Evolução* 1, n. 2 (30 Apr. 1879), 9-10. Indirect references to Comtism, though still mixed with liberal tenets, can also be found in Joaquim Pereira da Costa's plea for peaceful revolutions of ideas and a civic and political contract. See his "A evolução". *A evolução* 1, n. 1 (15 Apr. 1879); and "Povos e governos". *A Evolução* 1, n. 4 (30 May 1879), 30.
[22] A[ssis] B[rasil], "A crise dos espíritos". *A Evolução* 1, n. 4 (30 May 1879), 27-28; and "A evolução". *A Evolução* 1, n. 5 (15 June 1879), 33-34.
[23] A[ssis] B[rasil], "A evolução". *A Evolução* 1, n. 6 (30 June 1879), 41.
[24] J[úlio de] C[astilhos], "A evolução". *A Evolução* 1, n. 8 (30 July 1879), 58.
[25] J[úlio de] C[astilhos], "A evolução". *A Evolução* 1, n. 10 (30 Sept. 1879), 73.
[26] J[úlio de] C[astilhos], "Leão Gambetta," *A Evolução* 1, n. 1 (15 Apr. 1879), 3. Interestingly, Castilhos is sympathetic to the socialist movement that allegedly implemented the Christian idea of the equality of man in the social realm. J[úlio de] C[astilhos], "O socialismo," *A Evolução* 1, n. 2 (30 Apr. 1879), 13.
[27] J[úlio de] C[astilhos], "Os últimos reductos," *A Evolução* 1, n. 9 (15 Aug. 1879), 70.
[28] A[ssis] B[rasil], "A evolução," *A Evolução* 1, n. 9 (15 Aug. 1879), 65.
[29] [Pereira da] [C]osta, "Algumas idéas," *A Evolução* 1, n. 8 (30 July 1879), 60; C[astilhos], "A evolução". *A Evolução* 1, n. 10 (30 Sept. 1879), 75; A[ssis] B[rasil], "Últimas palavras," *A Evolução* 1, n. 10 (30 Sept. 1879), 80.

After returning to Porto Alegre, these and other *gaúchos* founded, in 1882, the Rio-Grandense Republican Party (PRR). One year later, Castilhos addressed Porto Alegre's Republican Club to commemorate the martyrdom of Tiradentes (Franco 2003, 33). In 1884, when no less than 20 such clubs existed in the state and the party began to gradually emancipate itself from São Paulo's Republicans, Castilhos propagated Comte's ideas in a more radical form in the PRR's mouthpiece *A Federação* (Castilhos 2003; Castilhos 2006). His articles focused on the immediate abolition of slavery without compensation, though he feared freed slaves' "lack of discipline" (Castilhos 2003, 27), and the critique of monarchical institutions, which prevented "national reorganization" (Castilhos 2003, 25).[30]

While Castilhos wished for an evolutionary transition to a republican regime, a violent overthrow of the monarchy remained a last resort for PRR grandees, as a manifesto signed on Castilhos's estate "A Reserva" on March 21, 1889, testifies (Vélez Rodríguez 2010, 46-47). In the end, regime change came, on November 15, through military intervention and without Rio Grande's direct involvement. Amongst the *gaúchos* who were elected to the Constituent Assembly in Rio de Janeiro and mostly voted as a unified bloc were Castilhos and Pinheiro Machado. Unable to establish a republican dictatorship at national level, both defended ultra-federalism as the precondition for Rio Grande's self-determined polity formation. *Castilhistas* expressed their dissent with the moderate draft charter that was eventually promulgated in February 1891; wished, in vain, that the Constituent Assembly would be dissolved thereafter; and lent support to the executive power, even though it would remain in the hands of the army for the first five years of the Republic (Vélez Rodríguez 2010, 56, 58-59).

While little successful at national level, Castilhos implemented his ideas in his home state. He single-handedly drafted its constitution. When it was promulgated, on July 14, 1891, "in the name of family, Patria, and Humanity" (Constituição 1891, 1) and not accidentally on Bastille Day, which republicans in Rio Grande had commemorated since 1868 (Pereira 2006, 65, 77), and Castilhos was elected president, or governor, for the first time, he began to emphasize the authoritarian traits of Comtism. These were also characteristic of his personality.[31] An enlightened republican dictatorship, he believed, provided the tools to pacify the southern frontier and subsequently instigate industrial-technical progress. Since the post-Independence Cisplatina War

[30] As Roger A. Kittleson has shown, the PRR, despite its ardent attacks on slavery, was keen to maintain the social order. The party did not focus on the human condition of slaves and ex-slaves, but on "white, skilled, male worker-entrepreneurs" (Kittleson 2006, 157, see also 126-27).

[31] As one anonymous classmate noted years later, Castilhos was both admired and feared during his student days at São Paulo. He even made his fiancé read Comte's work before marrying her in 1883, so he could live with her in spiritual kinship (Franco 2003, 24, 32-33).

(1825-28), Rio Grande had been involved in conflicts, in which internal and external fronts overlapped and ultra-federalism and eventually separatism found fertile ground. The 1835-45 Farroupilha, or Ragamuffin War, which Castilhos's maternal grandfather had helped finance (Franco 2003, 12), played a major role in republicans' and especially positivists' construction of regional identity, despite the fact (consciously ignored by the state's elites to the present day) that it was led by pro-slavery ranchers who protested against the central government's neglect of the province's economic and political interests (Zalla 2011, 54-58; Oliven 2003, 317; Vogt 2014). The Republic of Rio Grande that the Farrapos declared with the support of Italian refugee Guiseppe Garibaldi was, for the PRR, testimony to the whole population's early republican traditions, and the insurgents' return into the Brazilian family to *gaúchos'* patriotism.[32] The Farrapos's motto "Liberty, Equality, and Humanity," used since their brief expansion into Santa Catarina in 1839, had its origins in the French Revolution and freemasonry and could, in its first parts, also be exploited by the ruling Liberal Party, but it could equally be interpreted in positivist fashion. Therefore, it appeared on Rio Grande's 1891-1938 state flag,[33] one of the insignia from the so-called "tricolor pavilion" of the Farroupilha that Castilhos's charter officialized (Constituição 1891, Title VI).

What emerged during Castilhos's 1893-98 administration was a highly centralized regime. It was out of sync with the national Constitution, which stipulated cooperative, not extreme dual, federalism. However, this peculiar course was tolerated.[34] This is no wonder, given the strategic importance of securing the southern frontier for the preservation of Brazil's territorial integrity. During the Old Republic (1889-1930), almost one third of the Brazilian army was stationed in Rio Grande do Sul, with most of the personnel being *gaúchos*, and Porto Alegre had the only military academy outside Rio de Janeiro, at times with more cadets than the capital city (Cortés 1974, 3). Together with the Law School, this institution reproduced *castilhismo* and facilitated close civilian-military relations, which Castilhos had already fostered with his support of critical officers in their 1880s dispute with the monarchy over their right to publicly express political opinions.[35] He further cultivated these relations by deciding to serve, between 1890 and 1892, as *éminence grise* in various state governments headed by generals, which also secured him the support of the military executive

[32] José Francisco Dias da Costa to Lindolfo Collor, Pelotas, 12 July 1937, FGV/CPDOC, LC c 37.07.12, folha 0658.
[33] Even while still students at São Paulo, young *gaúchos* already researched the history of their home state. The year 1882 saw the publication of Alcides Lima's *História popular de Rio Grande do Sul* (with G. Leuzinger & Filhos in Rio de Janeiro) and Francisco de Assis Brasil's *História da República Rio-Grandense* (with Estante Rio-Grandense União de Seguros in Porto Alegre). (Maestri 2008, 62-65) On the freemasonry in the Farroupilha, see (Dullius 2008, 184-85).
[34] René E. Gertz (2011) speaks of a *Sonderweg*, with reference to Prussia.
[35] During the so-called "military question" (1884-89), Castilhos's articles in *A Federação* defended this right of citizen-soldiers (Castilhos 2003, 57-62, 71-72, 96, 98).

in Rio de Janeiro. Though Comte wanted to convert the army into civic militias and his orthodox followers in Brazil equally despised its politicization,[36] Rio Grande created its own Military Brigade in 1892 and used it against the opposition Federalist Party (PF), defenders of a union of federal states and a parliamentary democracy, in the 1893-95 Federalist Revolution. This was a bloody civil war for political control of Rio Grande, but Castilhos justified the employment of the Brigada with the consolidation of the Republic and the defense of the State.[37] From 1892 to 1930, the personnel of this force rose from 1,266 to 3,939, and in times of turmoil additional "provisional corps" and funding could be mobilized (Silveira 1989, 175-78). The Brigada, instilled with *castilhista* ideology (Silveira 1989, 180-81), became an integral part of the PRR's project of state building. This is just one example of the ruling party's deviation from the French paragon, despite all its positivist professions. Political interests and contexts mattered.

Castilhos's political doctrine envisaged a conservative modernization that, in the words of the sculptor of the Castilhos monument in Porto Alegre (as well as designer of the blue disc on Brazil's republican flag), Décio Villares, would reconcile liberty and authority, "according to the aspirations of Danton, Hobbes, and Frederick [of Prussia]" (cited in Vélez Rodríguez 2010, 61). While for liberals the public weal consisted of the reconciliation of individual interests in a representative democracy, for Comte it was an unverifiable metaphysical notion and for Castilhos it resulted from enlightened and ethical republican government that, through a strong tutelary State, reined in egoism (Vélez Rodríguez 2010, 115). This required, first, administrative reorganization on the basis of the principle of "*conservar melhorando*," that is, continuity in change; second, a polity that was based on a stable economy and finances; and, third, the incorporation of the *populus qua* public policies. It is these three building blocks on which the *castilhista* regime rested.

The principle of "*conservar melhorando*," or "*conserver en améliorant,*" borrowed from the later Comte (1855, xiii), translated into concentration of power in the state government and the president and "*continuidade administrativa*," administrative continuity. *Castilhistas* claimed they wanted to overcome Rio Grande's internal divisions and protect not only the interests of the southern Campanha's large-scale cattle economy, but also those of the Centre-North's less privileged ranchers; the Littoral's trade and industrial capital, service sector, and working class; and the

[36] Religious positivists developed an ambivalent relationship to Constant Botelho de Magalhães, who, between 1889 and his death in 1891, acted as their stalwart in the Constituent Assembly but remained critical of a republican dictatorship and preferred a parliamentary regime. Yet, they shared with him the wish to relegate armies and their weapons to museums. Their resistance to militarism became evident, when PRR politicians with influence in national government mobilized support for Marshall Hermes Rodrigues da Fonseca in the contested 1910 presidential elections (Mello 2011, 4-5; Axt 2002c, 44; Carvalho 2012, 41).

[37] *Castilhistas* also justified the further militarization of Rio Grande with the fact that the opposition planned an invasion from Uruguay, though the PRR itself had previously used Argentine territory as a zone of deployment (Silveira 1989, 151-52).

northern Serra's small-scale agriculture and craft industries. Thereby it appealed to a wide range of social groups that the ruling Liberal Party had so far neglected (Pinto 1986, 26, 61). The unification of Rio Grande required, in their eyes, Porto Alegre's close control over (nominally autonomous) municipalities and their potentates, for which they employed the party machine. By 1902-3, municipal charters and electoral laws had been streamlined. As Sérgio da Costa Franco's coinage of *coronéis burocráticos* highlights, local power in this frontier region did not result from the socio-economic status of an appointed *intendente*, often an outsider to the community, but his complete subordination to the PRR and the state president, though this does not mean that traditional political clientelism was eradicated (Franco 2003, 206, 215-16; also Franco 1962).[38] Rio Grande's centralized polity was complemented by a hierarchy of powers. Authority was concentrated in the executive. Closely following Comte, Castilhos also stipulated that the Legislative Assembly was to convene for only two months a year and act as little more than a chamber of finance, approving budget and taxes. Within these constraints, the president could rule by decree-law. Yet, this *executivismo centralizante* (mirrored at municipal level) was garnished with a plebiscitary element: all draft laws, except those dealing with public administration, were published and, together with a detailed exposition of motives, sent to *intendentes* who had to publicize them and return suggested amendments within three months. Of course, it was unlikely that PRR-dominated municipal councils would challenge the core of the legislation and suggestions could be neglected (Constituição 1891, art. 20-18, 32-33, 46-49, 65-66. 82§1).

The axiom of "*continuidade administrativa*" was no more than a euphemism for Brazil's chronic *situacionismo*, or the perpetuation of government. However, *castilhistas* justified it ideologically: power did not emanate from God or the Sovereignty of the People but from the competence of political leaders, and the preservation of this know-how was considered to be vital for consolidating the State.[39] In contrast to other federal units, an opposition party with a different program, the PF, was allowed to operate legally even after the 1893-95 civil war, and direct elections, though with an open ballot, were regularly held.[40] Yet, Castilhos made clear that "[w]e must always show or prove that, in Rio Grande, the Republican establishment is monolithic and does not accept the least compromise."(cited in Love 1971, 34). Engineering, but also systemic

[38] The term *coronel burocrático* term was also used by Love (1971, 79; 1975, 113). Loiva Otero Félix (1987) has criticized Franco's concept because it would imply that the *coronel* was a career official in a bureaucratic organization, when he was just co-opted by Borges. *Coronelismo, Borgismo e cooptação política* (Porto Alegre: Mercado Aberto, 1987). Franco (2002, 132-34) then defended his argument.
[39] One of the most ardent adherents of the *castilhista* polity, journalist and politician Raimundo de Monte Arraes (1980, ch. 2, esp. 41-46) from Ceará, argues this way.
[40] Gunter Axt (2001, 209-10) identifies three motives for holding elections: the PRR could demonstrate that the regime enjoyed overwhelming support, test the strength of the opposition, and, in cases where an opponent won, counter accusations that Rio Grande was a dictatorship.

fraud and violence,[41] which Comte completely rejected, secured the PRR the three-quarter majority needed for the re-election of the president, who, here in consonance with Comte, chose his successor. Castilhos's pick, Antônio Augusto Borges de Medeiros, governed for about a quarter of a century (1898-1908, 1913-28), and so would loyal ministers and municipal *intendentes*. From 1897-1937, Porto Alegre had only three mayors, while other major capital cities, like Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Belo Horizonte, and Recife, had 15-27 (Bakos 2013, 48-49). Only the 1923 civil war put an end to the re-election of the president.

While hypertrophy of the executive and centralism had been propagated long before Castilhos, for instance by positivist Luís Pereira Barreto and the Visconde de Uruguay (Paim 1981, 1-2; Rodrigues 2011, 147-48), the (officially denied) move towards authoritarianism represented a new phenomenon. The enshrining of such a regime in the 1891 charter made Assis Brasil, an advocate of presidentialist democracy, not only break with Castilhos and the PRR; it also led to his abandonment of positivism (Costa 2012, 127-35) and, until 1922, of party politics.

At this point, it is opportune to briefly digress and highlight *castilhistas'* attempt to shape institution-building at national level in accordance with their authoritarian *executivismo centralizante*. During Pinheiro Machado's 1895-1915 dominance over Rio's Senate, he wished to consolidate the Republic. In his understanding, liberal constitutionalism, which had guided the 1891 extrapolation of a representative parliamentary system from the U.S. to Brazil and led to inconsistent legal interpretations and unstable politics, undermined the republican form of government, for him the only one that was able to guarantee the public weal, that is, the supreme interests of the nation, personified in the chief executive. As long as Rio Grande was unable to occupy the highest office in the nation, Pinheiro Machado acted as power broker and kingmaker in presidential elections. In 1910, he founded the Conservative Republican Party (PRC) and, similar to Castilhos and Borges's rule over the PRR, placed it under his sole and undisputable leadership. It was to be the instrument to unite the various state parties, each with their respected particularities, behind his, and this means Rio Grande do Sul's, doctrinarian agenda. The PRC would back him, when, from 1912-15, he became the Senate's vice-president for the second time. From this position, he could support and keep in check the President of the Republic, if necessary a military officer, as with Rio Grande-born Marshal Hermes da Fonseca (1910-14), and counterbalance the fluctuations of opinions in the lower chamber of Congress and the interferences by the judiciary, i.e., play the role of *éminence*

[41] The persecution of the *castilhistas'* enemies during the early years of Rio Grande's dictatorship is documented in (Cabeda 2002). The engineering of elections in 1922 caused a civil war the following year. Borges considered himself to be elected by declaring that the required three-quarter majority referred to the number of votes cast (he won 76.7 percent of them), rather than registered voters (then he would have gained 39.7 percent) (Paim 2007, 109-10).

grise that had suited Castilhos in the early years of Rio Grande's *republiqueta* and paved his way to the governorship. Yet, though Pinheiro Machado came close to running for the presidency in 1914, he ultimately failed due to the resistance of rival oligarchies, and one year later he was assassinated and his party began to disintegrate. *Castilhistas'* ultimate control of national politics had failed for the time being (Vélez Rodriguez 2010, 120-24, 144-49; Bello 1966, 223-26, 230-31), but the two states that shared the presidency during most of the Old Republic, São Paulo and Minas Gerais, were well aware that Rio Grande do Sul was needed to guarantee the stability of the fragile decentralized political system. After 1910, *gaúchos* occupied key ministerial posts, such as Finance, Transport, and Justice, which, however, did not prevent them from intervening in the presidential successions in 1919 and 1922 (Love 1975, 117-19).

With regard to the second building block of *castilhismo*, a prosperous economy and sound finances, three priorities have to be emphasized. First, Rio Grande was keen to enhance what Laurence Whitehead (1994, 47) has called the State's "cognitive capacity," a prerequisite for scientific politics and already then associated with sociology (though Comte warned against simply quantifying social phenomena). As early as 1890, when starting to reorganize Rio Grande's public administration, Castilhos reminded his compatriots of the need for accurate statistics, without which "all politics becomes arbitrary; it has no foundations, no criteria, and causes grave harm to the people who will be the victim of the imprudent acts of those who govern without doctrine…" (Vélez Rodríguez 1982, 21). Second, *castilhistas* adhered to financial orthodoxy. Drawing lessons from the Encilhamento, a speculation fever that reached its climax in 1890-91 and severely undermined the stability of Brazil's republican regime,[42] and tackling the consequences of Rio Grande's devastating Federalist Revolution, the PRR wanted to be the guardian of the treasury by guaranteeing balanced budgets, if not surpluses, and avoiding uncontrollable debts. The gradual move from export to land taxes was to generate steady revenues and reduce dependency. The appropriation of public lands by the latifundium had always blocked the formation of smallholders (Vélez Rodríguez 1982, 34-35; Pinto 1986, 56-58, 75-76; Heinz, 2012, 69-70).[43] Third, Rio Grande's elites wanted the State to promote not only livestock farming, but also industry, at this time still considered to be artificial at national level, and produce for the regional market. For expositions

[42] Orthodox positivists in the Constituent Assembly pleaded against the further issuing of banknotes (Costa 1964, 148, 162-63). This right was also given to private banks, including one in Rio Grande do Sul. For *castilhistas* and their only minister in the national government, Demétrio Ribeiro, who resigned from his portfolio of Agriculture, Commerce, and Public Works over this matter, this was not only a violation of the federalist foundations of the Republic but also their doctrine of not favoring any branch of the economy (Kittleson 2006, 165). On the Encilhamento, see (Triner 2005, 199-225).

[43] Though *gaúcho* executives defended financial orthodoxy until the end of the 1920s, budget manipulation became commonplace with the challenges they faced after World War I. (Axt 2002a, 333-35).

with award ceremonies, the PRR liked to use the anniversary of the Farroupilha. Government guaranteed private property and did not embark on building a large-scale state sector. However, it socialized vital public utilities and services, such as ports and railways (Lins 1964, 190-91; Love 2005, 79-80; Bakos 2013, 32).

The third pillar of Castilhos's doctrine, the desired regeneration of society, implied for the regime not only increasing possibilities of social ascent for the civilian and military middle class, but also a paternalistic labor policy. While elites in other states treated the "social question" as a "case for the police" (Lopreato 2000, 209n418), *castilhistas* considered its peaceful solution to be a republican duty. They competed with their adversaries for support from working class activists (Kittleson 2006, 162-175) and crushed social movements only if they refused the State's mediation and raised political demands (in that case, the State did not shun using the Brigade).[44] Rio Grande's 1891 charter was the first in the Americas to defend the social rights of workers (Hilton 1973-74, 542; Lins 1964, 185). It stipulated: "any distinctions between permanent public servants and simple day laborers [are eliminated], and the benefits the former enjoy are extended to the latter" (Constituição 1891, art. 74). This included the right of disability retirement, with benefits allowing workers to maintain their family, for Comte the basic element of society. Six years later, Castilhos's State Ministry of Public Works regulated the working conditions of manual laborers involved in dredging lagoons, and, in 1919, Borges unified and complemented this legislation for the public sector in his Consolidation of the Organic Laws of the State.[45] Yet, respecting Comte's plea for the freedom of industry and labor, the State would not impose legislation on private capital, but only lead by example (Costa 2006, 30, 114-16).

As Sandra Jatahy Pesavento (1988, 197-238) has shown, this also influenced the PRR's policy at national level in the decade following World War I, when the "social question" gained the attention of political elites. The *gaúcho* caucus insisted that the State should regulate working conditions for all its employees in public enterprises but refrain from intervening in the free negotiation of contracts in the private sphere. This position prevented or delayed social legislation, like the establishment of a comprehensive Labor Code. *Castilhista* representatives supported only those measures by central government, like the protection of women and minors and an occupational accident insurance scheme, that were in consonance with their doctrine, pitting

[44] This politicization distinguished the 1918-19 strikes from those that had taken place one year earlier, when government considered the economic demands of workers to be legitimate and tried to arbitrate in the labor conflict (Pesavento 1988, 152-78). On the use of the Brigada in 1919, see (Silveira 1989, 179-80).
[45] The legislation, which aimed at lagoon laborers, regulated working hours, rest periods, breaks, and sick pay. It also stipulated full pay if work was cancelled because of bad weather or other circumstances, and immediate remuneration in the case of contract termination. Amongst the new laws that Borges promulgated in 1919 was the right to 30 days of vacation for all workers (Costa 2006, 126, 129-41, 147-49).

Comte's focus on social harmony and cooperation against Karl Marx's propagation of economic fatalism and class struggle and using Rio Grande as an example of how the State should focus on the common good of society, rather than individual freedom, and on preventative, rather than remedial, action.

In this respect, education represented another policy field that gained significance in Rio Grande. However, in contrast to Comte, it was not independent philosopher-intellectuals who assumed moralizing functions (Muglioni, 1996, 209-22), but the State; it merged temporal and spiritual powers. As Joseph Love has shown, Rio Grande invested more in education than other federal units; except in periods of turmoil, it ranked first in state expenditures. In 1920, these amounted to 13.6 percent of the budget; by 1930, this proportion had risen to 19.2 percent (Love 1971, 102). In addition, statistics from 1920 reveal that the illiteracy rate of Rio Grande's total population (61.2 percent) was lower than that of any other federal state, including São Paulo that ranked joint second (70.2 percent). If we compared this rate for the population above the age of 14, Rio Grande would also rank first (44.5 percent) and São Paulo joint fourth (58.5 percent) (Ministério 1929, x-xi). *Gaúchos* proudly quoted these figures in the national parliament.[46] Of course, they had benefited from the immigration of already literate Europeans who then created and funded their own parish and associational schools to provide training to their offspring. Hence, Porto Alegre's government concentrated on primary and normal schooling outside the zones of colonization. Specialized secondary and higher education was largely left to private initiative, especially religious bodies. However, even in this sector, official curricula, subsidies, and grants remained instruments of state control and restricted the proclaimed free competition of doctrines, which Comte wished to permit (Tambara, 1991, 161-62; Louro 1986, 11; Pickering 1993-2009, v. 3, 369). However, *castilhistas* followed their Master in stressing the freedom of profession; according to Rio Grande's charter, everybody could exercise any moral, intellectual, and industrial occupation in the public sector without official diploma, and state authorities were not allowed to prohibit or regulate any type of career (Constituição 1891, art. 71§5-6). Here, however, the government faced continuous resistance from doctors (Neto 2012-14, v. 1, 235).

It is interesting to look more closely at the priorities of educational reforms. Technical-vocational subjects figured prominently in primary school curricula,[47] and, in 1896, Rio Grande founded a School of Engineering, an important institution in a country with the legacy of slavery

[46] See Vargas's speech in the national Congress on October 20, 1925 (Câmara 2011, 262-265).
[47] See questions in Circular no. 2630, Secretaria dos Negócios do Interior e Exterior do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre 27 Oct. 1923, Arquivo Passivo da Escola Estadual do 1º Grau "Silveira Martins," Bagé, Arquivo do Colégio Elementar "Quinze de Novembro" of Bagé (incorporated), "Pasta Portarias-Circulares-Ofícios 1921-1929."

and therefore a depreciation of manual work. Its initial faculty consisted of Republican militants and convinced positivists with origins in, or close links to, the army. None of them had served in pre-1889 administrations but many worked temporarily in the State Ministry of Public Works (Heinz 2009). They also supported the foundation of the Institute "Júlio de Castilhos" and other dependencies that prepared future students, many from humble backgrounds and exempted from fees, for courses of engineering and other practical subjects (Pesavento 1988, 178-84). *Castilhistas* also stressed the unity of body, mind, and heart. Schools were sent the sanitary journal *Hygia*, required to offer physical instruction, and advised to hold weekly sermons to address issues of hygiene.[48] Intellectual education remained encyclopedic, but we have no indication that it followed Comte's classification of sciences. The State's focus was republican civic instruction: it was to re-educate and moralize both elites and plebeians, converting them into progressive conservative classes (Kittleson 2006, 153-54, 186-87). According to Borges de Medeiros, instruction had to aim at forming "upright people, who serve [society] with altruism […,] good citizens who defend it in all emergency situations and love its institutions" (cited in Anais 1935-36, v. 1, 403-4). The government's *intendentes* pushed this part of the curriculum.[49] Boy scouts became a vanguard who, according to their code, understood that "discipline is a necessity in the general interest."[50] For the non-obedient, school regulations offered a catalogue of penalties (Corsetti 2005, 212). Here the *castilhistas'* approach was much more interventionist and doctrinarian than that of Comte who believed in persuasion. They also departed from the Master in their collaboration with Rome's Church as an ally in the moralization of society. While Comte valued the constructive role that Catholicism had played in history, he foresaw a final battle between its adherents and positivists for control over societal reorganization and a possible conversion of the former to the cult of Humanity. To the frustration of the Apostolate, Castilhos, who did not believe in Catholic dogmas, never made this ultimate move. However, already in the national Constituent Assembly he had defended the civil and political rights of Catholics, and some of his followers had studied at the Jesuit Colégio Nossa Senhora da Conceição in São Leopoldo and shared with them an anti-individualist and anti-liberal bias. In addition, this alliance served the wooing of Catholic immigrants in the zones of German and Italian colonization (Lins 1964, 179-81; Franco 2003, 208-

[48] Circulares nos. 2.389 and 4.389, Secretaria dos Negócios do Interior e Exterior do Estado do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre 28 July 1925 and 4 Sept. 1928, resp., Arquivo Passivo da Escola Estadual do 1º Grau "Silveira Martins," Arquivo do Colégio Elementar "Quinze de Novembro," Pasta "Portarias – Circulares – Ofícios 1921-1929."
[49] Acto no. 303, signed by Intendente Carlos Cavalcante Mangabeira, Bagé 15 July 1925, Museu "Dom Diogo de Souza" of the Fundação "Áttila Taborda – Universidade da Região da Campanha/Sala do Arquivo "Jorge Reis," Bagé, Livro 469 E 1/P 9, folhas 69-70. See also the questions in Circular no. 2630 (see n.47).
[50] Ofício no. 4, by Colégio Elementar "Quinze de Novembro," sent to Secretário dos Negócios do Interior e Exterior, Dr. Protásio Alves, Bagé 2 March 1923, Arquivo Passivo da Escola Estadual do 1º Grau "Silveira Martins," Arquivo do Colégio Elementar "Quinze de Novembro," "Pasta Portarias-Circulares-Ofícios 1921-1929."

11; Kreutz 1991, 7-10; Tambara 1991, 546-47; Vélez Rodríguez 1982, 19; Vélez Rodríguez 2010, 57-58). However, one of the main functions of the public school consisted in the assimilation of "foreigners," and therefore officials warned against mass immigration, especially of "biologically and socially more alien" elements. Least suited were blacks, especially from the US where their intrinsically affective qualities, which the later Comte had praised, would have been corrupted in conflicts with the white majority.[51]

Finally, *castilhistas* employed a non-oligarchic, quasi-religious discourse (Pinto 1986, 23), always conveying that they were guided by an "immaculate purity of intentions," i.e., material disinterest, and would guide the people towards a "reign of [republican, civic] virtue" (Vélez Rodríguez 2010, 105-129). It is significant to stress that, for *castilhistas*, power and its perpetuation were indeed instrumental: a government office had to serve the community and aggrandize the State. As far as we know, none of them was corrupt, and this was acknowledged even by democratic Brazilian statesmen.[52] Rio Grande's governments did their best to keep the image of both moral and rational politics alive, and this not only at the discursive level. Following the Master from Montpellier, who had preached that the living were governed by the dead whose contributions to Humanity live on in society's memory, Rio Grande's government sponsored the construction of a pompous mausoleum and monument to Castilhos, both completed in 1913, and converted them into sites for civic rituals (Bellomo 2008, 20-21; also Silveira 2008, 123-43). The monument is crowned by a female allegory of the Republic, standing on a globe with the slogan "order and progress." Her regional "patriarch," with a book in his hands and ready to stand up and act (Comte's "savoir pour prévoir, prévoir pour pouvoir"), is surrounded by personifications of courage, prudence, firmness, and civism. Inscriptions link Castilhos to the apostles of Brazil's independence, conspirator Tiradentes, and the first imperial prime minister, José Bonifácio (Figura 2). "Great men" from Comte's positivist calendar and Brazil's history also decorate the façade and interior of Porto Alegre's public library, inaugurated in 1915. It is not by accident that, in this Comtelândia, positivist vocabulary trickled down to the popular sphere, as Nelson Boeira has uncovered: for instance, Porto Alegre had a "Pharmacy of Humanity" and a Laundry "Order and Progress" (Boeira, 1980, 54).

So strong was the *castilhistas'* hegemony in Rio Grande during the Old Republic and so underrepresented the Federalist opposition in the Assembly (it had its first deputy only in 1913 and increased the number of mandates to just four by 1921) that historians have largely ignored their

[51] Carlos Tôrres Gonçalves, the orthodox-positivist Director for Land and Colonization in the State Ministry of Public Works, in (Lins 1964, 194-96, quote from 195).
[52] Tancredo Neves, cited in (Lima 1986, 48). See also (McCann 2004, 434).

role in parliamentary debates. Its recent exploration by Eduardo Rouston Júnior (2014) demonstrates that the PFB was not submissive but used budget discussions to defend its economic liberalism against the PRR's costly policies of socialization, land taxation, and investment in the repressive Military Brigade, and to criticize the government's construction of an exclusionary state pantheon. What is particularly interesting are its efforts to reveal doctrinal contradictions between Comte and Herbert Spencer, on the one hand, and *castilhistas*, on the other, and the fact that Getúlio Vargas became a most ardent defender of Rio Grande's policies (Rouston 2014, 121-29, 143-47).

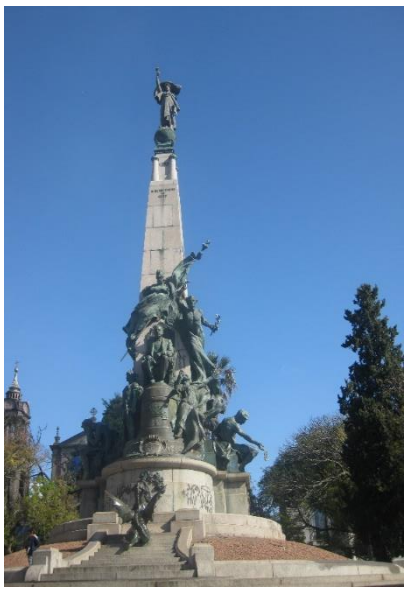

Fig. 2: Castilhos monument in Porto Alegre. Photo by the author.

Varguismo: National Reconstruction of Polity, Economy, and Society

What did Getúlio Vargas retain of *castilhismo*? The grandson of a frontiersman who had fought against the Farrapos, but, according to family legend, saved the life of Garibaldi's wife, and the son of a Republican father and a mother whose family supported the Liberal Party was born in the border town of São Borja in the western Campanha, near the Missões District. He admired the social engagement of Jesuits in the region, though he was sternly anti-Catholic and, after reading the fourth lecture of Thomas Carlyle's *On Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History*, called one of his sons after Martin Luther: Lutero. The young Getúlio devoured the writings of Saint-Simon, Comte, Spencer, Hippolyte Taine, Émile Zola, and Brazil's military engineer and critical writer Euclides da Cunha, all linked to positivism (at one point, he tried himself as a novelist, penning a few pages of a historical epos on the Farrapos, but he quickly recognized his lack of literary talent) (Neto 2012-14, v. 1, 36-37, 42, 61-62, 85, 119-21; Lima 1986, 38, 41-42; Vargas 2011, 20; Freitas, 1991, 106; Vargas 1988, 34). His brother Protásio became an early affiliate of Rio Grande's chapter of the Brazilian Positivist Church (Love 1971, 103; Lins 1964, 197), though Getúlio later declared

that Comte's paradigm attracted him as a method, not a religion (Bourne 1974, 12). Some of its tenets clearly transpire in his published, yet still largely overlooked, Law and Political Economy dissertations, written during his studies at the Free Law School in Porto Alegre after 1903. In the former, the young Vargas rejected the (metaphysical) Natural Law theory, quoting philosopher and jurist Tobias Barreto (1839-89): "The Law is not a product of heaven, but a historical phenomenon, a cultural product of Humanity" (Vargas 2003, 44); ultimately, Vargas suggested, social and moral laws would be embedded in the evolution of the Universe (Vargas 2003, 17-22).[53] In the latter, he distanced himself from doctrinal liberalism, which he blamed for overemphasizing individualism and causing the misery of modern society; socialism, which would bury individual liberty and initiative and fail to understand the natural inequality of man; and both anarchism and Spencer (otherwise an oft-quoted authority) for pitting the individual and the State against each other, instead of seeing them as allies. Vargas, influenced by positivism, already offered a solution for societal improvement: the State might have to intervene in certain circumstances, but primarily it "[m]ust protect, or better facilitate, the associational tendency and workers' cooperative societies so that they can resist capital" (Vargas 2003, 27-30, quote from 30).[54] Studies at the Military and Law Schools brought him together with other adepts of positivism and admirers of the state president. He spoke for them, when declaring, after the death of Castilhos:

> For Rio Grande do Sul, Júlio de Castilhos is a saint. He is a saint because he is pure; he is pure because he is a great man; he is great because he is an erudite; he is an erudite because, while all of Brazil is fighting in a dark night of doubts and uncertainty, …Rio Grande is the helmsman of the pátria.... (cited in Vélez Rodriguez 2010, 136)

As one analyst stressed, Castilhos resembles Maximilien Robespierre, rather than Danton whom he admired, but with the difference of not having faced a Ninth Thermidor (Franco 2003, 216). Therefore, the image of his purity and competence remained untarnished, and Getúlio called upon the young generation to follow this fighter and organizer and make him a symbol of republican glory (Neto 1912-14, v. 1, 80-81).

In 1907-8, Vargas, together with other students from the Law, Medical, Engineering, and Military Schools, among them the civilians Oswaldo Aranha and Lindolfo Collor and the cadets Pedro Aurélio Góes Monteiro and Eurico Gaspar Dutra (the latter two born outside Rio Grande but, especially in Góes's case, identifying with the state), formed the Castilhista Student Bloc in

[53] The quote is from Vargas's Civil Law thesis of Nov. 25, 1904, and the second observation from his earlier Philosophy of Law thesis on March 25, 1904.
[54] This Political Economy thesis of Nov. 10, 1906, should be read in conjunction with another in Administrative Law of December 11, 1907. Here Vargas defines reasons for subsidiary action by the State: it can and must intervene in the case of major disasters and to support abandoned children and create asylums for the insane, blind, and deaf-mutes (Vargas 2003, 127-32).

order to support the "official" Republican candidate, Carlos Barbosa Gonçalves, in the contested elections that year. This recommended him for a prominent position in the PRR machine. He rose from regional representative in the national Congress in 1909 to federal Finance Minister, one of the portfolios *gaúchos* always aimed to control, in 1926 (Love 1971, 84, 216ff). In Rio de Janeiro, he followed Pinheiro Machado in continuing to highlight Rio Grande's importance for the nation, defend its fiscal, monetary, and political interests, and praise his idol Castilhos, the "disciple of the genial philosopher from Montpellier," who had established a polity that reconciled Comte's scientific doctrine with Brazil's national charter. While being a regime of force that allowed republican governors to meet violent challenges, it would be democratic in character, enabling liberty within order, true bipartisanship, and a proportional vote (Vélez Rodríguez 2010, 232-33).[55] Yet, fully aware that Rio Grande did not control the nation, Vargas also reminded deputies in October 1925 that its *republiqueta* (well in consonance with Comte's ideas) dated back to the Farrapos who had already resisted Rio's centralization of power; hence the preservation of the 1891 federation, i.e., the guarantee of state autonomy and the prevention of central state interventionism, would remain the pledge for Brazil's economic prosperity, political stability, and territorial integrity (Vélez Rodríguez 2010, 236-37).

In 1928, Vargas and the "Generation of 1907-8," as Joseph L. Love has called the PRR's young rebels, replaced the old guard and substantially adjusted *castilhismo* to new economic and international conditions. They abandoned the dogma of balanced budgets without resorting to big spending; pursued a more interventionist policy, though moves in this direction had been noticeable long before[56]; and experimented with state corporatism as a new way, anticipated by Vargas as a student and again suggested in his farewell speech in Rio de Janeiro in 1927, to embed individual rights in collective securities. It was time, Vargas stressed, to promulgate a declaration of the rights of society (Neto 2012-14, v. 1, 265). This policy shift, influenced by the emergence of corporatist policies in Portugal, Italy, and other European countries and aimed at ending untamed competition and price-depressive "overproduction," resulted in the foundation of a state bank to provide credits for "economic development," a new term that increasingly complemented "progress"[57]; the creation of cooperatives and cartels, with the State arbitrating between them,

[55] The quote (p. 232) is taken from a speech Vargas delivered in parliament in December 1925. See also his speeches on October 29, 1924; October 20, 1925; and June 8, 1926, in (Vargas 2003, 155-56, 218-20, 272).
[56] After World War I, Vargas had criticized untamed *laissez-faire* and pleaded for more state intervention, and in 1926 he supported the reform of the national charter that led to more centralization in financial matters (Vargas 1999, 36, 153-55, 177; Abreu 2001, v. 5, 5000; Garcia 1993, 21-22).
[57] The reform of monetary and fiscal policies is discussed in (Axt 2002b, 119-40). Vargas refers to "economic development" from the early 1920s, and the term figures prominently in his programmatic speech on January 2, 1930, with which he claimed the presidency of the republic (Vargas 2011, 293-94).

trying to prop up the price of agro-pastoral products (Bak 1983)[58] and now also intervening in the labor market to mitigate social conflicts (Pesavento 1988, 233-35); and the definition of public schooling as a government priority, leading to the ambitious pre-Depression aim to eradicate illiteracy by the 1935 centenary of the Farrapos (Louro 1986, 13-14). The *castilhista* promise to unite the State was now redeemed; Vargas reached out to the opposition, since 1928 organized in the Liberator Party, which was listened to and guaranteed the mandates they had won in local elections (still a small number) (Araújo 1985, 14-15). In 1929, Vargas also organized a First Congress of Municipalities to foster collaboration between local administrations as well as between them and state government (Bakos 2013, 32). This conciliatory policy enabled the PRR's young men to win back Assis Brasil and to form a Unity Front at state level and a Liberal Alliance, rather a misnomer, at national level. On the eve of the 1930 Revolution, they reiterated their belief in an "authentic republican regime" (Pinto 1986, 100), based on authority, science, and altruism (Fontoura 1999, 283-89, 290), and committed themselves to a course of "conservar melhorando."[59] However, the reading of sociologist Oliveira Vianna's work on the origins of Brazil's patriarchal organization and the author's plea for a strong modernizing and unifying State made Vargas develop national perspectives.[60] After all, protective cartelization at regional level also had its limits. When Vargas presented the Liberal Alliance's platform, he committed to the protection of both capital and labor, emphasized technical-vocational education, and praised Rio Grande's recent experience with corporatism (Vargas 2011, 284-85, 300) – for Pesavento evidence that the "Generation of 1907-8" wished to project its political trajectory onto Brazil as a whole ("gauchizar o Brasil") (Pesavento 1988, 235-38, quote from 237). The success of this "revolution" was all but certain, as Góes conveyed, but for him it was a condition *sine qua non* for saving both country and army from further division and decay, an imperative since at least World War I (McCann 2004, 286-87).

When taking over as Provisional President of Brazil, Vargas formulated the objective of "national reconstruction" (Vargas 1938, v. 1, 41) and, only a few days later, he indicated the means to forge such a new relationship between economy, State, and society: administrative reorganization (Vargas 1938, v. 1, 124). It included the elimination of parliament, which just lasted long enough to approve the budget and government accounts, but led, still in 1930, to the almost simultaneous formation of two new ministries, one for Education and Health and the other for Labor and Industry. While the functions of the former had so far been in the jurisdiction of Justice

[58] Syndicates to control and "valorize" production were created for four commodities: rice, charque, wine, and lard, with only the first being run privately. Bak explores the conflicts between processors and producers.
[59] "Carta de Lindolfo Collor a Getúlio Vargas (12 Agosto. 1929)" (Bonavides 2002, 62-66 [doc. 174.12]). The citation is from p. 65.
[60] In 1928, Vargas invited the author from Rio de Janeiro to lecture in Porto Alegre (Vélez Rodríguez 2010, 258-59).

and Home Affairs, which neglected them, the latter resulted from a split in the Ministry of Agriculture, Industry, and Trade, indicating the recognition of the "social question" and its association with industry, rather than the agrarian-export complex. *Castilhista* Collor presided over the Ministry of Labor and Industry, and, when organizing unions by drawing on Rio Grande's recent corporatist experience, interestingly referred to Comte who, in the words of the minister, would have provided guidance in the replacement of "individualist, messy, and sterile empiricism" with "social cooperation" between interdependent classes and in the subordination of progress to order (cited in Paim 1994, 82-83). Consequently, Vargas declared on May 4, 1931: "[t]his is the time of specialized assemblies, of technical councils linked to the administration," not of a merely political State, an amorphous and outdated entity (Vargas 2011, 326).

Until São Paulo's 1932 counter-revolution, *gaúchos* predominated in government. It is true that the build-up to the crisis led to divisions amongst them, with some blaming Vargas for having become dependent on his allies in the 1930 Revolution, national-revolutionary (and in some cases, positivist) *tenentes*, or young officers, who shared his anti-liberal bias and had fought the oligarchies during the past decade, and allowing interventions even in his home state. Yet, while his critics, amongst them positivist Collor, returned to Porto Alegre,[61] Aranha, other *sul-riograndenses*, and the military officers Góes and Dutra served Vargas until 1945. The crisis of hegemony that followed São Paulo's revolt convinced Vargas and loyal *gaúchos* once more that liberal democracy prevented the country from attaining stability and prosperity. Aranha's attempts, in 1931-32, to create a network of revolutionary leagues in all states, understood as the prototype of a national party with Rio Grande (and especially the PRR) "as basis and centre," had failed,[62] and the *gaúcho* politician now appealed to a civilian "elite of order" to end anarchy and prevent a military regime.[63] In March 1934, when the country was being re-constitutionalized and liberal oligarchies were poised to return to power (despite the semi-corporatist character of the draft charter), Góes actually contemplated adopting Rio Grande's 1891 Constitution at national level, but Vargas (1995, v. 1, 279), as his diary

[61] Collor's departure from Rio was painful for Vargas. The Labor Minister had a lead role in incorporating the proletariat into the State and thereby provided the regime with legitimacy. In 1937, on the eve of the Estado Novo, Collor founded the Castilhista Republican Party in order to return to the pure doctrine of his Master. By then, Republicans were divided. The post-1930 crisis of Rio Grande's Unity Front had made the state's chief magistrate, José Antônio Flores da Cunha, respond with the formation of the Liberal Republican Party in 1932. In contrast to the "old guard" of PRR and Liberator Party, it was to support the President of the Republic. Yet, later Flores fell out with Vargas. (Abreu 2001, v. 4, 4357, 4375-80). See also "Aos republicanos castilhistas e ao povo santiaguense," manifesto signed by PRR notables, Santiago Boqueirão, 15 March 1937, FGV/CPDOC, LC pi 37.03.15, folha 0588. For Borges, Vargas became the "grave-digger" of the PRR (Araújo, 1985, 202).

[62] Oswaldo Aranha to Antônio Augusto Borges de Medeiros, Rio de Janeiro 25 March 1931, FGV/CPDOC, OA 31.03.25/3 cp, folhas 0227-0234; see also Antônio Augusto Borges de Medeiros to Oswaldo Aranha, Irapazinho 31 March 1931, FGV/CPDOC, OA 31.03.31/4 cp, folhas 0260-0264; and (Hentschke 1996, 265-311).

[63] Oswaldo Aranha to José Antônio Flores da Cunha, Rio de Janeiro 29 Oct. 1932, FGV/CPDOC, OA 32.10.29 cp, folhas 0974-0979.

reveals, discarded this proposal. Yet, the generals, including Góes, moved closer to the idea of a dictatorial and corporatist republic, if necessary with themselves at the helm. For the time being Vargas did not cater to their interests, but, after being elected as constitutional president in July that year, he sensed the tensions between state autonomists, including in his home state, which he visited for the celebration of the centenary of the Farroupilha in 1935 (Bakos 2013, 70-71), and central government. The Soviets' support for Communist barrack revolts in Brazil that same year, with the involvement of *tenentes*, and the Nazis' mobilization of German communities in southern Brazil sent warning signals to government and military. It became clear to Vargas that another coup would be necessary to reconcile order and progress, or national security and economic development. With not only Brazil, but the world, from Abyssinia, China and Spain to the Chaco, being in turmoil, Vargas and the army, led by War Minister Dutra and Army Chief of Staff Góes Monteiro, made a pact, as Frank McCann (2004, 337-43, 420-39) has shown: the president would arm and equip the military, and they would support his regime of force and program of national development. Both were united by the interest in Brazil's industrialization, especially the creation of a metallurgical industry.

Though wavering at times, Vargas once again adjusted to changing circumstances. For him, this did not equate to an abandonment of his core beliefs. According to a diary entry from February 13-14, 1936, he told Lutero, who had immersed himself in the books in his father's library, that since his student days he would have had a desire "to find, in science and philosophy, a formula to explain life and the world." Applying Darwin's theory, he would have learned that winning in politics "does not mean crushing or forcefully reducing all obstacles we find – to win means to adapt." To avoid misunderstanding, Vargas added: "to adapt is not the same as conformism or servility or humiliation; to adapt means to take on the color of the environment in order to fight more effectively" (Vargas 1995, v. 1, 486-87).[64]

No PRC was needed to stabilize the regime. The Estado Novo became a non-party state, and the Constitution, drafted behind closed doors, was to be approved by a plebiscite that Vargas never called, meaning that parliament never convened. Yet, as Walter Costa Porto (2012, 19-22) points out, this charter had many resemblances with Castilhos's, and these have barely been acknowledged so far. Parliament was meant to be in session for only four months, except if the president extended its term (art. 39). Yet, even if a legislature had been constituted, its role would have been restricted to little more than suggesting general laws, but not the regulations for their execution, or delegating their enactment to the executive (art. 11-12). Its budget-setting powers

[64] On the importance of Darwin for Vargas, see also (Frischauer 1943, 108).

were more limited than in Rio Grande (art. 67-72). With regard to the organization of government, the federal administration, and the supreme command and organization of the armed forces, the charter stipulated that the President could, within the respective budgetary limits, freely rule by decree-law; during periods when parliament was in recess or dissolved, this would also apply to many other matters that were the prerogative of the Union (art. 13-14). Moreover, though modifications of the Constitution by the executive were prohibited (art. 13), Vargas single-handedly changed it eleven times by so-called "constitutional laws." As with Castilhos's charter, he enjoyed the right to name his substitute in cases of temporary impediment or official visits abroad (art. 77) (Porto 1995, 55-109).

Just like in Rio Grande, discourses during the dictatorship conveyed the need to recuperate dignity, purity, and altruism in politics, allegedly the true sense of the concept of democracy that liberalism had distorted (Figueiredo 1984, 15-20; Gomes 1982). The official National Institute of Political Science under *gaúcho* Pedro Vergara's headship propagated that Vargas, like Castilhos, married liberty and order (Velloso 1982, 76, 96, 108n77).[65] This was also what the few remaining orthodox positivists hoped the Estado Novo could achieve; it would allow for the unleashing of socioeconomic progress.[66]

Vargas co-opted non-*gaúchos* whose ideas were compatible with the *castilhista* ideal: these combined sociological and culturological approaches to reconcile past and present with pleas for national unity, a strong government, and the re-education of elites. Almir Bonfim de Andrade, who was in charge of the dictatorship's mouthpiece *Cultura Política*, founded in 1941 and linked to the Department of Press and Propaganda, helped shape a consensus amongst intellectuals willing to accept the self-styled "authoritarian democracy," while excluding opponents. It should be said that such an institution had no place in Comte's system. Oliveira Vianna, recruited as a consultant to the Labor Court and head of the Audit Office, expressed concern about centrifugal regionalism and the lack of societal cohesion; such cohesion would have developed under the strong and welfare-oriented *castilhista* State at the militarized southern frontier. In order to forge social nationalism and prepare the amorphous masses for democracy, he studied an extensive body of academic writings and pleaded for state corporatism, as already practiced by Vargas during his administration of Rio Grande. However, another proponent of a dictatorial regime, Francisco Campos, Minister of Justice and author of the 1937 charter, went a step too far for *castilhistas* when

[65] In 1938, Collor also published his *Garibaldi e a Guerra dos Farrapos* with J. Olympio in Rio de Janeiro.
[66] In 1938, Geonísio Curvello de Mendonça sent Vargas the book *O ideal republicano de Benjamin Constant*, published two years previously. The Bahian added an eight-page dedication to the president that contained a detailed orthodox-positivist program (Museu, n.d.).

he suggested that the nation, through a corporatist National Economic Council and with only assistance by the State, should organically administer the economy and not give preference to any particular sector. This may be one reason why the plebiscite to put the charter in force and thereby establish the Council was never called. Instead, Vargas made the State the agent of industrialization and the tutor of corporate interest groups, organized in vertically structured and unified *sindicatos*, its transmission belts (Vélez Rodríguez 2010, 257-70; Gomes 2008, 93-106; Oliveira 1982a, 50-53).

Vargas's dictatorship at national level did not fundamentally depart from the three building blocks of *castilhismo* in their post-1928 refashioning but further adjusted what Ángela Alonso (2002, 334) calls *gaúcho* positivists' "state paternalism" and "benevolent elitism."[67] First, we can detect the same *executivismo centralizante* and "*continuidade administrativa*," though Vargas (2011, 384-85) declared in a radio broadcast on September 7, 1938, that these now had to be combined with the control of the nation's economic forces, a correction of class inequalities, and vigilance against subversive ideological influences that could contaminate the political organism. Central government was to unify the country. Yet, this now meant eliminating regionalism and found its symbolic expression in the 1937 *queima das bandeiras*, the public burning of state flags (which were only readmitted under the military regime in 1966, one year before the public display of Castilhos's Constitution in Porto Alegre's state assembly, where it can still be found today), and calling for new *bandeirantes* to open up, capitalize, and incorporate the hinterland.[68] No president before Vargas had visited so many states in the interior. In addition, power was concentrated in the "*chefe da nação*," portrayed as a morally responsible and supra-partisan father figure who embodied the national community that had organized itself in an authoritative modern State (Freitas 1941, 9-10; Camargo 1999, 17). However, the complete absence of an Assembly and even a regime party required other forms of control than in Rio Grande. Governance continued to be linked to sociological competence; experts in the mushrooming councils, commissions, and institutes were to find technical solutions to social problems, though patrimonialism survived (Chacon 1977, 83-84). In 1938, Vargas created the Administrative Department of Public Service (DASP) that, not without conflicts, was placed above ministries and entrusted to *gaúcho* Luis Simões Lopes. Its regional branches, the "*daspinhos*," were to both support and hold in check appointed *interventores*, and, through their mediation,

[67] Monte Arraes (1938), the *cearense* who had praised Rio Grande's institutions, now supported the Estado Novo.
[68] This ambitious project appeared in a document Vargas handed out to journalists. See Hugh Gurney to Anthony Eden, Rio de Janeiro, 6 Jan. 1938, The National Archive, London (hereafter TNA), FO 371/21422, A 223/29/6. The President referred to the seventeenth-century Luso-Brazilian slavers, treasure hunters, and adventurers who, from what would later become the state of São Paulo, penetrated the interior. Brazilians became alert to the backwardness of the hinterland and the misery of the indigenous and mestizo populations. Military positivists Da Cunha, author of *Os sertões*, an empathetic depiction of the 1897 Canudos revolt, and Cândido da Silva Rondón, the constructor of telegraph lines and head of the Service for the Protection of Indios, played a major role in raising awareness (Hecht 2013; Diacon 2004).

incorporate state oligarchies into the polity in a controlled way. In the ensuing system of compromise, the *interventor* acted as an intermediary between central and local powers, a position that was more fragile than that of a traditional *coronel burocrático* (Wahrlich 1983, 233-327; Lambert 1964).[69] Plebiscitary elements were retained through consultative processes in the organs DASP supervised: legislation, drafted by Weberian *tecnoburocratas*, including on the budget (before it would have been submitted to parliament), had to be discussed with affected parties.[70]

Second, under the conditions of a recent depression and persistent conflicts the State was to reconcile "economic development" and "national security," the new binom to mark a prosperous and consolidated State (Hentschke 2004a, 227-41). On January 2, 1931, Vargas had already declared at a banquet for the armed forces that the restoration of finances and the economy, while being primarily an administrative problem, depended on "order and internal security" (Vargas 2011, 317). The perceived disorder was tackled on different fronts. Clearly building on his *castilhista* formation, Vargas conveyed that without the knowledge of accurate statistics it would be impossible to exercise power (Senra 2014, 3). *Técnicos*, like Mário Augusto Teixeira de Freitas, worked indefatigably on an enhancement of the State's cognitive capacity. He built an administrative system that linked statistical institutions and homogenized the processing of data. This process climaxed in the foundation of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics in 1938 and the 1940 census, the first since 1920 and the most comprehensive undertaken so far (Hentschke 2007, 169-79). For guaranteeing fiscal discipline, Vargas established "efficiency commissions" and "budget sub-commissions" in each ministry (Wahrlich 1983, 58, 104, 136-37), and non-*gaúcho* positivist Ivan Lins played a leading role in the Audit Office of the Federal District. In a speech in 1940, the president praised himself for having ended financial "disorder and dissipation" (A Report 1941, 2-3; see also Vargas 1995, v. 1, 416-17). Yet, he allowed for credits to support interventionist policies. Brazil was to overcome its external dependency by tackling coffee overproduction, diversifying the economy, gaining state control over resources, and especially focusing on transformation industries (Schwartzman 1983, 10 and ch. 6; Ianni 1975, 30). By taking key industries, like the steel plant of Volta Redonda, under direct state control for reasons of national security and as part of his pact with the military (Dinius 2011; Kapstein 1988, 138-41), Vargas broke with *castilhista* doctrine. Since 1934, a Council of National Defense and national

[69] For the "organic law" on state and municipal administration, see Hugh Gurney to Edward Wood, Rio de Janeiro 23 May 1939, TNA, London, FO 371/222722, A 4017/428/6. For conflicts between ministries, see (Vargas 1995, v. 2, 350, 359). The intricate relationship between *interventor*, *daspinho*, and regional oligarchies in Rio Grande do Sul is explored in (Abreu 2007).

[70] For an account of these debates, see Edward Peacock to F. F. Powell, Buenos Aires 25 Nov. 1941 (copy; enclosure to another letter, folio 174 and dated 5 Jan. 1942, which has not been preserved), Archive of the Bank of England, Country Files Brazil, OV 103/4, 3069/3, CBP 426 v 10, folio 174a.

defense divisions (*seções de defesa nacional*) in each ministry addressed the army's concerns with Brazil's unbalanced federation, rural poverty and ignorance, and elite irresponsibility. By the Estado Novo, their name had changed to "national security divisions" (*seções de segurança nacional*) (Wahrlich 1983, 197-98, 594, 598-99, 697).[71]

Military, still under the command of Dutra and Góes, played a key role in councils, enterprises, and the school policy (Hentschke 2007, 127, 337, 341-42, 433-34), though their leaders tried to depoliticize, and this also meant "de-positivize," the officer corps. McCann (2004, 364) points out that during the 1930-45 period "the greatest number of generals from a single state came from Rio Grande do Sul (twenty-seven), which had the largest concentration of army posts."[72] Yet, the Military Brigade, once part of the PRR's political project, had become unreliable and obsolete; like other state forces, it was disbanded. Now the federal armed forces, with many of its officers trained and socialized in the *gaúcho* state but loyal primarily to their institution and increasingly subject to its corporate indoctrination, could be the shield of the national dictatorship or the agent of its downfall, as in 1945.

Finally, *castilhistas'* focus on societal regeneration "from above" was further strengthened. In Brazil's alleged "economic," "social," "functional," or "organic democracy," individual rights and class interests were to be subordinated to the public good (DIP 1942). Vargas reminded workers that the "tutelary and provident action of the State" precluded autonomous political participation and strikes, which undermined the social organism and prevented the country's economic emancipation. Yet, urban labor, pressed into official *sindicatos* and well screened, was (nominally) granted social rights, compiled in the 1942 Consolidation of Labor Laws (the functional equivalent of Borges's pioneering 1919 "consolidation"), and the State created a Labor Court and Social Security regime,[73] thereby resisting against a Darwinist battle for the "survival of the fittest." For sociologist Gilberto Freyre, positivist traits in Vargas's *trabalhismo* transpire in his references to ideas and sentiments (Freyre 1959, xxxiv), the aforementioned political and conceptual repertoire, though they were now mixed with corporatism and a good dose of populism. Regarding education, Vargas was successful in co-opting not only Catholic revivalists, but also part of the liberal New School movement. By accepting that "social discipline" was the precondition for an efficient "reform of habits which adjusts individuals to the new conditions and values of life," these *técnicos*

[71] The army's concerns are expressed in a memorandum: Pedro Aurélio Góes Monteiro to Oswaldo Aranha, Rio de Janeiro, 29 Jan. 1934, FGV/CPDOC, OA 34.01.29/2 cp, folhas 0692-0710.
[72] In comparison, during the same period only 16 generals came from the Federal District and state of Rio de Janeiro, and all the North Eastern states together had 26.
[73] See the President's speeches on the Labor Days in 1940, 1941, and 1944 (Vargas 2011, 393-96, 434-37, 480-85). The citation is from the 1940 speech (p. 395). Another testimony to this tutelary dirigisme is Vargas's self-congratulatory speech on November 11, 1940, in (Vargas 2011, 420-21).

echoed *castilhista* perspectives.[74] Vargas certainly built a national education system, but it remained dualist, reserving secondary schools with scientific subjects for future elites and vocational-technical schools for the "less favored" (art. 129 of the 1937 charter) who were needed as a qualified workforce. Primary schools were the last to be regulated, but the organic law of 1946 represented the first federal intervention in this sector since 1827. Vargas also partly re-established Rome's Church; he attended the festivities to inaugurate the statue to Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro in 1931, and Catholic religion was reintroduced as a curricular option (in 1925, he had still argued against such a proposal). Moral or civic education, high on both *castilhistas'* and the military's agenda and closely linked to hygiene and physical instruction, was to homogenize society and prevent cultural and ethnic pluralism. This was the motive for "nationalizing" so-called "foreign" schools in the zones of German and Italian colonization (suddenly perceiving them as a threat), establishing quotas for immigration, and constructing the myth of racial harmony, or democracy (Hentschke 2007, ch. 2-3, esp. 122-33, 159-60).[75] Positivists' eagerness to reconcile past and present, as part of a wider "education" of the populace, also influenced the Vargas regime's preservationist policies, in which the cultivation of the memory of Tiradentes and his conspirators gained special significance.[76]

Conclusion

For Tancredo Neves, the President-Elect in Brazil's 1985 presidential election, "politicians from Rio Grande do Sul really had what we would now call an ideological concept… Castilhos created a school. Castilhos created a team of public men, acting perfectly in consonance" (cited in Lima 1986, 47). While this is a significant overstatement, giving agency to ideas and neglecting changing contexts that led to both political and ideological shifts, and at times divisions, it is certainly true that the legacy of Rio Grande's positivism cannot be reduced to dictatorial government or the perpetuation of personal power, as we so often read. *Castilhistas*, civilians and the military, were convinced that only virtuous leaders and a tutelary State could save the nation from destructive liberalism and increase its prosperity. They believed in rational institutions and reforms that followed a grand design, such as Comte's *Plan*, rather than the Old Republic's incrementalism or post-war populists' irresponsibility. Power and its perpetuation were always

[74] Manoel Bergström Lourenço Filho, director of the National Institute of Pedagogical Studies, cited in (Carvalho 1997, 116). See also Mário Augusto Teixeira de Freitas to Gustavo Capanema, n.p. [Rio de Janeiro?] n.d. [according to a handwritten note, Sept. 1938], Arquivo Nacional do Brasil, AP 48, caixa 14, pasta 36.
[75] Another important work on various contestatory movements for education is (Horta 1994), but it fails to address the impact of *castilhismo*. On Vargas's 1925 rebuttal of a proposal to introduce exclusively Catholic religious instruction in public schools, see (Neto 2012-14, v. 1, 235; Lins, 1964, 198-200).
[76] This ideological background does not figure in (Williams 2001, 92-93, 129-31).

instrumental to the realization of transformative policies, or, as one analyst expresses it, to the "improvement of Brazil" (McCann 2004, 434). Yet, within these limits, Vargas and his protégés were always willing to compromise.

After being removed from office in 1945, Vargas accepted the post of senator for his home state with the words:

> [w]hat happened, happened. Let us shape the present and anticipate the future. I wish for my country what is written on its flag: "order and progress." Regarding Rio Grande do Sul, it has to be, by its sheer wealth, one of the granaries of Brazil and, by the harmony and cooperation of its representative elements, a shield against turmoil and anarchy (Vargas 2011, 510).[77]

His point of reference in this speech of May 31, 1946, had remained intact, and so did much of the institutional and legislative frameworks he had created.[78] Yet, as journalist Décio Freitas (1991, 102) found out, when interviewing Vargas on his ranch, he denied the influence of Comte and was silent about Castilhos, while emphasizing the inspirations he took in Saint-Simon, a utopian socialist in Marxist orthodoxy (though also one of Comte's intellectual guides), whom he had not quoted once in his student theses. The selected reference was not accidental, given his successful strategy to return to power with the support of unionized industrial workers and government employees who had most benefited from the Estado Novo. However, once again, domestic and international conditions had changed by 1951. No longer was it possible to govern by decree-law and intervene in economy and society without resistance. Faced with an impending coup, suicide seemed to be the only way for Vargas to preserve his legacy. A few days before his death, he confided in Freyre (1959, 267) that he still admired Castilhos and regretted that his idol had never made it to the presidency of the republic. The carefully crafted note Vargas left stressed again his pure intentions.

In her biography of Comte, Mary Pickering comments on the Frenchman's system of commemoration:

> Positivism guaranteed "immaterial" immortality. If an individual served Humanity well, he or she would be incorporated into this large organism. Death, in fact, "purified" our nature, allowing our "best attributes" to become more salient as the bad ones were forgotten or erased. Our "soul" prevailed only in this idealized, subjective state of existence. We could then live in perpetuity as an organ of the Great Being (Pickering 1993-2009, v. 3, 198-199).

There is no evidence that Vargas conceived of his death as a positivist act (and Comte himself was critical of suicide), but it certainly was to absolve him from all accusations and serenely pave his "road to eternity": he would give his blood, he told Brazilians, but his "soul" would

[77] He also continued to defend a "planned democracy" (Neto 2012-14, v. 3, 93).
[78] In this point, Francisco Palomanes Martinho (2016, 183, 196-97) identifies a difference from Salazar's Portuguese Estado Novo.

survive, and the people would always feel it "suffering at [their] side" (Rogers 2006, 248). Vargas had spoken at Castilhos's burial and contemplated taking his life before, and he knew about the power of memory-making. So did his friend Aranha, for whom men, like people, live through their actions based on ideas. In his funeral oration for Vargas, he reminded Brazilians of Castilhos, the "great man of History who fills all *sul-riograndenses* with pride," linked Brazilian history with that of Rio Grande do Sul, highlighted Vargas's socialization at the frontier, where progress and solidarity had begun to prosper long before 1930, and praised his idol's ability to raise awareness of the country's problems and his philosophy of love and altruism. By linking the self-styled martyr to his creed, Aranha already predicted the longevity of both (Aranha, 2017, 837-45).

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