

Capitalism, Racism, and Inequalities in Brazil

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Abstract What is the historical origin of racial inequalities in Brazil? Several studies have highlighted the existence of structural racial inequalities in health, education, access to land and housing, as well as in the Brazilian labor market. Far from being a simple legacy of slavery or an epiphenomenon of economic inequalities, these inequalities reflect the place of racism in class exploitation in the country. Drawing on the Marxist and anti-racist theory of Frantz Fanon, this paper argues that the specificity of the colonial situation is characterized by naked violence, driven by the super-exploitation of labor, democratic fragility, and the ontological dehumanization of colonized peoples. In this scenario, racism played a fundamental economic role by imposing a racial distribution of class contradictions.

Keywords Capitalism. Colonialism. Racism. Class struggle. Inequalities.

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1 Racial Inequality in Brazilian Social Thinking

When investigating the dynamics of racial relations in Brazil, it is observed that inequalities are not merely a historical legacy of a slave-holding past, but above all, a social problem that updates itself in the present. Several studies have highlighted the existence of structural racial inequalities in healthcare (Oliveira et al. 2024; Costa et al. 2025), education (Manequinha 2025), access to land and housing (Benini et al. 2025), as well as in the Brazilian labor market (Sousa et al. 2025).

In the present study, I present a specifically Fanonian perspective on racial inequalities in Brazil. Although Frantz Fanon's thought is claimed by diverse theoretical traditions - such as culturalist/post-structuralist (post-colonial, decolonial, counter-colonial, Afropolitan, queer theory, etc.), Afrocentric, and Afro-pessimist - this analysis engages in dialogue with a broad Brazilian Marxist tradition ranging from Clóvis Moura (1925-2003) to Florestan Fernandes (1920-1995), including thinkers such as Caio Prado Jr. (1907-1990), José Chasin (1937-1998), and Lélia Gonzalez (1935-1994)

Racial relations are an old theme in Brazilian social sciences. The country has always been perceived as multi-racial and diverse. However, there was resistance to recognizing the inequalities between whites, blacks, and indigenous people. From Donald Pierson's romantic notion of a "multiracial class society" ([1942] 1971) to the critical recognition of racial prejudice in Florestan Fernandes' *The Integration of Blacks into Class Society* (Fernandes 1965), there has been intense debate about the specificity of race relations and, therefore, of Brazil's social formation itself (Iasi 2019).

If Pierson ([1942] 1971), an important proponent of the Chicago School in Brazil, contributed to strengthening the myth of racial democracy based on the idea that racial prejudice did not exist in Brazil, Fernandes (1965), contributed to demystifying this ideology by using qualitative and quantitative data that demonstrated the existence of prejudice. However, he interpreted prejudice as a kind of remnant inherent to the backward nature of the bourgeois revolution. A remnant that could disappear with progress or democratic revolution. This position would be revised decades later (Fernandes 1989).

However, it was with Argentine sociologist Carlos Hasenbalg's sociology of stratification that inequalities between blacks and whites begin to be measured and analyzed as the result of the type of economic development - characteristic of dependent capitalism - rather than its stagnation (França 2024). In *Discriminação e desigualdades raciais no Brasil* (1979), the Argentine sociologist demonstrates that racial discrimination does not stem from democratic stagnation, but from a specific model of political - and, at times, democratic - evolution that updates and intensifies racial inequality.

By observing what he called social stratification and the societal mechanisms that reproduce inequalities, Hasenbalg, in harmony and collaboration with important black intellectuals - notably Lélia Gonzalez - offered important theoretical and empirical contributions to the denunciation of racism and, above all, the complex relationship between capitalism, racism, and sexism in the Brazilian context (Gonzalez 1982; 2020).

Even so, despite this evidence, the so-called “myth of racial democracy” persisted - and still persists - serving on disqualifying complaints about racism in Brazil, demobilizing and delegitimizing the struggle for racial justice. The main focus of the Unified Black Movement Against Racial Discrimination (MNUDCR, now MNU), created in 1978, was to denounce racism, given the depth and scope of the myth of racial democracy in all Brazilian social sectors. The following decades were marked by intense theoretical, political, and ideological struggles that paved the way for the proposal and demand for public policies of equality (Ribeiro 2014).

Since then, Brazil has undergone significant changes in social perceptions of race relations (Silvério 1999; Rios, Maciel 2013). Gradually and with great difficulty, the fetishized paradigm of a supposed racial paradise is increasingly being challenged by a broader, but far from consensual, awareness of the historical and structural inequalities that have accompanied us since the period of slavery. In addition, new interpretive paradigms have begun to influence the debate on racism, some of which are in direct tension with the paradigm of racial inequalities that has dominated the field of race relations.

The studies by Silvério (2004), Costa (2006), and Silva (2007), each in their own way, are emblematic of a tension with the field of race relations by shifting the focus of analysis from racial inequalities to culture, subjectivity, and imagination. This shift in focus will take place in dialogue with the anti-racist reception of the philosophy of difference and post-structuralist thought in Brazil through the arrival of theoretical-epistemic traditions such as *postcolonial*, *decolonial*, *Afro-pessimist*, *Afropolitanist*, etc., but also from the production of its own matrices, such as *contracolonial thought* and *black feminist poetics* (Faustino 2022).

In this essay, I align myself with another tradition - composed of names such as Jacob Gorender (1923-2013), Clóvis Moura (1925-2003), and Lélia Gonzalez (1935-1994) - which also emphasizes the empiricist and sociometric dimension of studies on inequality, recognizing the relevance of the cultural and subjective dimensions of domination, but strives to position these dimensions within the dynamics of class struggle in Brazil.

This movement, however, implies situating the Brazilian and Latin American class struggle within this historical context in which capitalism was consolidated through colonization rather than

through the endogenous development of its own productive forces. The particularity of the colonial situation is naked violence, marked by the superexploitation of the workforce, democratic fragility, and the ontological dehumanization of colonized peoples. It is a scenario in which racism, as an ideological weapon of domination, plays a fundamental economic role.

The question that drives this study is: What is the role of racism in a country like Brazil, where social cohesion, in its tortuous path to capitalism, came about through colonialist slavery?

2 Racism, Equality, and Inequality in the Universalization of Capital

It is true that the structural inequalities constitutive of capitalism have prevented the promised freedom and equality from being substantially achieved by the subordinate classes in the central countries. Only through intense struggles by the working class have certain civil, social, and political rights been relatively universalized in these countries. Even so, the consolidation of bourgeois civil society implied not only the recognition of the individual as a natural political subject, but also the construction of certain mechanisms of protection and social cohesion that legitimized the monopoly of state violence.

According to Karl Marx ([1867] 2013), the original expropriation that freed peasants from feudal servitude, condemning them to the inescapable clutches of abstract labor, transformed them into free subjects compelled to sell their labor power (or starve to death) in any corner of the world. At the same time, abstract labor would not be feasible without the legal and formal construction of an abstract subject: the citizen, free and equal before the law. But there is, according to Marx, another side to this equation that has not been revealed: colonialism and slavery.

The colonial system was a form of expropriation indispensable to what Marx called “the so-called primitive accumulation of capital”. In Chapter 25 of *Capital*, entitled “The Modern Theory of Colonization”, the German philosopher discusses the importance of colonies for the universalization of capital and, above all, for European metropolises’ access to the raw materials necessary for the development of capitalism:

The colonial system nurtured trade and navigation like plants in a greenhouse [...] The colonies provided a market for the growing manufacturing industry and enabled accumulation through market monopoly. The treasures plundered outside Europe directly through looting, enslavement, and murder flowed back to the metropolis and were transformed into capital there. [...] Hence the preponderant role that the colonial system played at that time.

[...] This system proclaimed the production of surplus value as the ultimate and sole purpose of humanity. (Marx [1867] 2013, 835-50)

In the same vein, Martinique psychiatrist Frantz Fanon stated – almost a century later – that it was “the sweat and corpses of blacks, Arabs, Indians, and Asians” in territories outside Europe that allowed class exploitation to be accompanied by strategies of control and cohesion, which presuppose, at the very least, the recognition of the humanity and relative “well-being” of the exploited (Fanon, [1961] 2022, 116-17). He therefore argued that Europe is “literally the creation of the Third World. The riches that suffocate it are those stolen from underdeveloped peoples” (Fanon, [1961] 2022, 122).

There are important consequences to be drawn from these conclusions: the dialectical relationship between capitalism and colonialism and, above all, the relevance of racism to the development and consolidation of capital. Karl Marx, aiming to exemplify the social character of value production, stated that “a black man is a black man. It is only in certain relationships that he becomes a slave” (Marx, [1867] 2013, 161). Frantz Fanon goes further by suggesting that it is only in certain circumstances that someone is seen as black. In other words, “it is the white man who creates the black man (*nègre*)” (Fanon 1959, 32), at the very moment when he does not recognize his humanity (Faustino 2013).

Colonization and racism allowed for the universalization of violence, exploitation, and capitalist expropriation without having to universalize political, civil, and social rights: if slaves were recognized as having the attributes that the European liberal bourgeoisie defined as “human”, they could not be slaves. Thus, ethics, politics, and aesthetics, as well as the bourgeois premises of law, specific to the modern social contract, are suspended. Those who are considered colonized, black, Arab, gypsy, terrorist, drug trafficker, etc., automatically lose their status as unique individuals and, above all, as generic humans, and can be displaced, imprisoned, or exterminated without causing an ethical crisis (Faustino 2021).

This Eurocentric universalism allowed, for example, the Enlightenment bourgeoisie to continue defending freedom and equality as ontological human attributes while becoming astonishingly wealthy from real slavery in the colonies. Slavery and democracy, therefore, emerge as different sides of the same modern coin.

At a first level of analysis, Frantz Fanon emphasizes how racism and racialization – implicit in the colonial situation – are part of a larger process of domination: the violent and unequal expansion of capitalist relations of production into the non-European world: “racism is not a whole, but the most visible, most everyday, and, at certain moments, the crudest element of a given structure” (Fanon 1964, 35). For this reason, it would be incorrect to believe that the social forces that

wage colonial war do so with a mere cultural confrontation in mind. On the contrary, “war is a gigantic commercial enterprise, and the whole perspective must take this into account. The first necessity is the enslavement, in the strictest sense, of the indigenous population” (Fanon 1964, 37-8).

However, colonization is not viable without a set of ideological, cultural, and subjective elements.

Expropriation, dispossession, raiding, and objective murder unfold into a plundering of cultural schemas or, at least, condition this plundering” (Fanon 1964, 38), engendering epidermal social positions, which, marked by a racial division of labor, presuppose the place of individuals based on phenotypic and cultural markers. For Fanon, racism is therefore both a product and a process by which the dominant group seeks to dismantle the possible lines of force of the dominated, destroying their values, reference systems, and social landscape: once “collapsed, the lines of force no longer command. In their place, a new set is imposed, not proposed, but asserted, with all the weight of cannons and sabers” (Fanon 1964, 38)

This is not to say that racism is an epiphenomenon of class contradictions, much less that it would dissolve in the face of abstract solidarity among the proletarians of the world¹ but, on the contrary, it is deployed in modern society as an element that makes colonial enterprise possible, so vital, at first, to the primitive accumulation of capital and, secondly, to the uneven and combined export of the contradictions implicit in the system to its global periphery (Fanon, [1961] 2022). This practice of denying humanity was not only restricted to colonially occupied territories, but also became a structuring axis of modernity itself, as he emphasizes: “Yes! European civilization and its most qualified representatives are responsible for colonial racism” (Fanon 1952, 88-9).

On a second level of analysis, Fanon draws attention to the subjective internalization, on the part of the colonized, of the complexes arising from the colonial situation. The racialization of the colonized’s experiences marks their relationship with the world and with themselves, giving them a distorted self-image.

1 This position is clear in a critical dialogue that Fanon establishes with the French Left during the Algerian liberation struggle: “At this level, reflection allows us to discover an important particularity of the Algerian colonial situation. Within a nation, it is classic and commonplace to identify two antagonistic forces: the working class and bourgeois capitalism. In a colonial country, this distinction proves to be totally inadequate. What defines the colonial situation is much more the undifferentiated character of foreign domination” (1964, 9).

The first aspect of racialization is the epidermalization of places and social positions, that is, what is understood as race becomes the defining factor of the opportunities and barriers experienced by individuals throughout their lives. The colonized become confined to their bodies, almost always regarded as crude, rustic, savage, and emotionally unstable, in contrast to Europeans, who are always presented as the universal expression of qualities useful for controlling the world. Both the supposed Europeanization of reason or the subject and the reified objectification of the black - or non-white/Western/European - are expressions of this same process of racialization. The second aspect of racialization - without which the rest would not be possible - is the subjective internalization of this epidermalization by both the colonizer and the colonized. It is the moment when individuals cease to recognize each other as mutually human and begin to see themselves and each other through the distorted lens of colonialism.

Although white people enjoy privileges of all kinds, they are not exempt from racialized reifications, because by attributing to the "Other" human elements that are also theirs, they alienate themselves from their own humanity. The inferiority complex imposed on black people is proportionally accompanied by a superiority complex on the part of white people, but this complex is marked by a feeling of castration (Fanon 1952, 147). This "Other", cursed and inferiorized, haunts and attracts with its "superhuman" attributes - precisely those that white people fail to see in themselves - exaggeratedly mystified and animalized.

These aspects are fundamental to investigating the role of racism in Brazil's particular insertion into capitalist development.

3 The (Colonial) Roots of Racial Inequalities in Brazil

It is important to remember, as Frantz Fanon (1964) pointed out, that racism is a constituent part of bourgeois society, but it takes on particular expressions in time and space. Segregationist racism in the US differs from assimilationist racism in France. Similarly, the particular dynamics of each type of colonialism mean that racism in Algeria, a French settlement colony, is different from racism in Mali or Niger, French exploitation colonies. Similarly, the religious racism that underpinned mercantilist slavery at the beginning of the colonial experience differs from the scientific racism and eugenics characteristic of monopoly imperialism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The crisis of this ideology - made possible both by the defeat of Nazism in World War II and by the liberation struggles in the period that followed - did not result in the end of racism, but in its mutation

into a new form, more suited to the neocolonial and liberal interests of the postwar period: cultural racism. These temporal and spatial expressions of racism are related to the particular dynamics of class struggle in each context of global capitalism. Capitalism and racism, therefore, must be thought of dialectically as a historically determined part of the same complex of complexes (Faustino 2021).

The consolidation of capitalism in countries of colonial origin, such as Brazil, acquires economic and social characteristics that differ both from classic capitalist cases, such as France and England, and from more backward cases such as Germany, Italy, Portugal, and Japan.² Although Brazil is the only former colony that, for a short period, took the place of the Metropolis,³ its economic organization remained subordinated to external interests, particularly British ones.

In countries where capitalism was classically established, the relative universalization of civil, political, and social rights was conceived – even if abstractly – as a prerequisite for the generalization of abstract labor and bourgeois civil society. Therefore, as Fanon reminds us

European states achieved national unity at a time when the national bourgeoisie had concentrated most of the wealth in their hands. Merchants and artisans, civil servants, and bankers monopolized finance, trade, and science at the national level. The bourgeoisie represented the most dynamic and prosperous class. Its rise to power allowed it to embark on decisive operations: industrialization, development of communications, and soon, the search for markets “overseas”. (Fanon [1961] 2022, 116)

The result is a complex combination of labor exploitation and the rule of law – albeit fragile, temporary, and achieved through historic struggles by the working class – which has enabled important democratic advances. In European countries (and Asian countries such as Japan) where capitalism developed later, authoritarian

2 Karl Marx sought to understand the particularities of capitalism’s development in each country. In texts such as *Introduction to the Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right* (1843), *On the Jewish Question* (1844), *The German Ideology* (1845), and some articles in the *New Rhenish Gazette* (from the late 1840s), he sought to understand the particularities of German capitalism, which he saw as lagging behind the classic cases (Silva 2020).

3 This refers to the occasion when Dom João VI settled with the Royal Family in Brazilian territory in 1808, fleeing from Napoleon, transferring the seat of the Monarchy to Rio de Janeiro and triggering significant urban growth and relative political autonomy in the former colony. This metropolitan inversion sparked a series of political events that resulted in the Declaration of Independence in 1822 and the proclamation of the Empire of Brazil – governed by the direct descendants of Dom João – until the proclamation of the Republic in 1889, one year after the abolition of slavery.

political closure - in its ultra-nationalist and chauvinist appeal, systematic restrictions on individual freedoms, and theoretical and philosophical adherence to irrationalism - led these societies, under the financial-monopolistic competition of imperialism, to fascism and Nazism in the early twentieth century.

At the same time, aggressive external competition and internal authoritarianism allowed for such an accumulation of capital that enabled them to compete, more or less successfully, for political and economic leadership in the capitalist race in Europe, or at least to achieve a high level of internal economic development that did not dissolve even after the defeats of the First and Second World Wars.

In a relatively distinct path from this, the particular characteristic of Brazilian social formation is the fact that it was engendered from, and as a function of, colonialism. As José Chasin explains:

The bourgeoisie that emerged through the Colonial Way does not even fulfill its economic tasks, unlike the true Prussian bourgeoisie, which, as Engels points out, only fails to fulfill its political tasks. So, while both perspectives are completely foreign to a liberal democratic political regime, on the other hand, the Prussian bourgeoisie pursues an autonomous economic path, centered on and driven by its own interests, while the bourgeoisie produced by the Colonial Way tends not to break its subordination, remaining tied to the hegemonic poles of the central economies. (Chasin 1980, 128-9)

In the United States, colonization allowed for the creation of a dynamic economy and bourgeoisie that sought not only the development of internal productive forces and political and financial independence, but also the end of slavery. In Brazil, political independence from Portugal occurred under the control of the Portuguese court at the time when Dom João Sexto was fleeing from Napoleon. Even so, the so-called independence did not alter the relations of production in any way: a slave-based economy based on the predatory export of primary goods remained.

Brazilian decolonization was “unsteady and superficial” (Fernandes 1979, 13) and, therefore, incapable of absorbing the needs and demands of the lower classes and, above all, as philosopher José Chasin points out, of positioning itself autonomously in the international economic arena (Chasin 1982). In this type of social formation, national evolution and social progress are mutually exclusive (Chasin 1989) and the privileged “do not give up any particle of privilege and brandish, for any reason, the bladed weapons of slaughter and their ‘sacred’ flags that place private property and initiative above their religion, their homeland, and their family” (Fernandes 1986, 74-5).

The bourgeoisie that emerges from the colonial path is weak and anti-democratic, as was the Prussian bourgeoisie, but, unlike the latter, it is incapable, on its own initiative and strength, of breaking with its subordination to imperialism (Rago 2010) and, at the same time, always willing to repress with iron and fire any demand for justice coming from the working classes. It is noteworthy here how closely Fanon's description of the colonized bourgeoisie resembles that diagnosed by Brazilian economists and historians (Fernandes 1979; Moura 1994; Prado 2000). Once again, with Fanon, we see that:

The bourgeoisie in underdeveloped countries is a bourgeoisie without spirit. It is neither its economic power, nor the dynamism of its cadres, nor the scope of its conceptions that guarantee its status as bourgeoisie. [...]. If power allows it the time and opportunity, this bourgeoisie will manage to build up a small "nest egg" for itself, which will reinforce its domination. But it will always prove incapable of giving rise to an authentic bourgeois society, with all the consequences and industries that this implies. (Fanon [1961] 2022, 207)

One of the results of this colonial equation is that the main historical transformations in the country did not occur through ruptures or structural reforms "from the bottom up" that could benefit the condemned of the earth, but through what Florestan Fernandes called "transactions" (Fernandes 2014, 127), that is, high-level conciliations that continue to this day: we entered capitalism through colonization; we ceased to be a colony without breaking with slavery; we emerged from slavery without agrarian reform; we became a republic through a coup d'état that did not break with the agro-export pacts; we industrialized late under the superexploitation of labor (Marini 1996) and successive corporate-military dictatorships (Chasin 1989); we left the dictatorships without breaking with the dictators... (Fernandes 2014) and so it has been until the present moment, condemning the masses to poverty, food insecurity, and precarious work and living conditions.

In this context, anti-Black and anti-Indigenous⁴ racism plays a fundamental role not only in managing the legacy of slavery but also in maintaining the continuity of violence and labor superexploitation. As the Brazilian sociologist explains when considering the role of racism in the particular dynamics of the Brazilian class struggle:

4 There is no space here to comment on the consequences of this process for indigenous populations in Brazil. It should be noted, however, that violence against these populations continues to be expressed through a logic of genocide. This genocide has taken on unprecedented dimensions with the arrival of the pandemic in indigenous territories and communities.

Brazilian racism is not, disconnected from the country's socioeconomic and political conditions, from the position of the black population in civil society, a sphere of material relations of production and reproduction of life, which refers to the social classes that constitute this society, as well as their relations of domination and subordination, which characterize the colonial path of capitalist objectification. (Sobrinho 2025)

Racism ultimately produced both the naturalization of social relations and the racial blaming of “oppressed and discriminated non-white segments, and blacks in particular” for “social, economic, and cultural inferiority” (Moura 1988, 65)⁵ that resulted from this subordinate (colonial) stance. This is not to say that racism is specific to peripheral capitalist economies – quite the contrary, racism can be observed throughout the modern world, but also acts as one of its foundations (Fanon, [1961] 2022). But it is important to recognize its genesis and peculiar function in a sociability where “the new always pays a high tribute to the old”,⁶ that is, a modernization that “conditions and feeds on the preservation of colonial structures and dynamics” (Fernandes 1979, 13). Herein lies the genesis of Brazilian racial inequalities.

Here too, spatial and temporal dimensions are fundamental to understanding the historical roots of inequality. First, it must be recognized that Brazil was forged from genocide and the violent expropriation of indigenous lands. Even the Jesuit conversion of indigenous peoples was not intended to free them from slavery, but rather to insert them into servitude within the productive systems imposed on the colony. To this day, the country shamelessly tolerates illegal mining and predatory agribusiness on indigenous lands and other forms of ethnocide (Longhini 2023), as well as shady projects such as the Marco Temporal, which aims to restrict indigenous peoples' right to demarcation.⁷

Recognizing past and present inequalities and violence against indigenous peoples as forms of racism is a fundamental task. This similarity with anti-Black racism, however, is not without its particularities – both historical and spatial – both in the forms of colonial violence and in the diversity of cultures, strategies, and

5 See, in the same vein, the works of (Azevedo 1987; Seyferthe 2002; Skidmore 2012, Mattos 2016; Faustino et al. 2023).

6 Even recognizing the differences, the aforementioned phrase coined by Marx to describe Germany was revisited by philosopher José Chasin (2019) to describe Brazilian particularities.

7 See the Manifesto organized by the Articulation of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil (APIB), available at: https://apiboficial.org/files/2023/09/marcotemporal_cartilha_v10_tela.pdf.

tactics of struggle throughout these five centuries. Slavery was not uniform throughout the territory colonized by the Portuguese, and anti-slavery struggles such as the countless quilombos, revolts, confederations, escapes, and displacements of indigenous peoples and quilombos⁸ must also be understood in their contexts.

For Clóvis Moura (1988), the golden age of slavery - understood by him as “full slavery” - was marked by the total dehumanization of the enslaved and, at the same time, conducive to quilombola uprisings, as was the case with the Republic of Palmares. In the final period of the slave regime - which he called “late slavery” - urban dynamics had already complicated class relations, often introducing the enslaved element into the direct production of the nascent industry or into important positions in the service sector, the quilombola struggles - although they persisted - were combined with associative strategies aimed at purchasing freedom and formally ending slavery. Both racism and struggle influence and are influenced by changes in the dynamics of class struggle.

The economic decline of slavery from the second half of the 19th century onwards - but also the recent memory of a series of radical struggles such as the Haitian Revolution and the Malés Revolt - contributed to the redefinition of racist stereotypes about the black population. On the one hand, the ruling classes - especially in territories where capitalism was more developed, such as southern and southeastern Brazil - feared black and indigenous struggles (Azevedo 1987, Moura 2021), on the other hand, they envisioned a slow, safe, and gradual transition in production relations that would keep economic and symbolic power in their hands.

But to do so, they would have to move even closer to European ideals of society. Thus, Brazil replaced slave labor with free labor, but it would have to be white and Christian (Moura 1988). At the same time, these ruling classes imported racist theories such as social Darwinism, scientific racism, and eugenics to guide the organization not only of what remained backward, but also of what was most developed in the country (Goes 2018, Caires 2025). It is no wonder, therefore, that leading figures in the Brazilian national identity project, such as Nina Rodrigues, Monteiro Lobato, Arnaldo Vieira de Carvalho, and Afrânio Peixoto, found their main inspiration in scientific racism.

The curious thing, however, is that the most progressive critiques of this conservative thinking in the 20th century ended up reinforcing

8 *Quilombos* - also known in other American territories as *Maroons*, *Cimarrones*, or *Palenques* - were warrior communities founded by enslaved people who escaped colonization in Brazil. Thousands of quilombos existed throughout the colonial period, and even today, thousands of these communities persist in their territories, resisting capitalist exploitation.

other mystifying ideologies. The most illustrious case, without a doubt, is Gilberto Freyre's culturalist theory, which refutes the biological premise of race, bringing the reflection into the field of culture, but fails to recognize racism as a founding element of Brazilian sociability; on the contrary, his theory obscures it. However, it is fair to acknowledge that he did not coin the term "racial democracy" and that the notion of a racially harmonious Brazil penetrated so deeply into the national identity that it came to be shared by intellectuals from various theoretical backgrounds.

It is no coincidence that the contemporary Black Movement, created in the late 1970s, has chosen to denounce racism as its main task. A relatively successful task, but one that has not yet been fully accomplished. Decades of studies that highlight racial inequalities in every field in which they are measured are still ignored, both theoretically and politically. In a way, the place of racism in the dynamics of class struggle in Brazil and around the world is still ignored. The result of this ignorance - which is yet another expression of racism - as stated by Clóvis Moura (1988; 1994) is the inability to concretely analyze the specific situation in a country where capitalism was established through colonization and slavery. A reckoning that has yet to be made.

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