

ARTICLE

The contributions of Clóvis Moura's interpretation of slavery in Brazil and the possible dialogues with organization studies

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Abstract

This study retakes some important points of the oeuvre of Clóvis Moura and delineates ways for its use in organization studies. Based on a perspective that places the racial issue at the center of social formation, it is possible to take some distance from approaches that relate “backwardness” in the periphery of capitalism to faulty administrative practices. The elements selected from Moura’s work were the emphasis on the role of the enslaved rebellion as an element of the slavery system erosion; the criticism of contemporary techniques of professional, cultural, and political selection; the role of dynamic social praxis; and the relationship between racial issues and economic dependence. The study identifies bridges between these ideas and organization studies, making it possible to i) question contemporary readings that place those that dominate as the protagonist of eventual social transformations by recognizing the potential of those who are dominated to recover their autonomy; ii) analyze how organizations are decisive spaces for inequality reproduction, pointing to the idea of promoting diversity in companies as a component of the myth that hides social reality; iii) reflect on how contemporary resistance movements, inspired by *quilombagem*, can be thought of from their capacity to erode the current system from connecting marginalized groups; iv) reflect on how the super-exploitation of work, allied to state economic austerity and police and parastatal violence, shows how the legacy of slavery adapts to continue reproducing and coordinating the dependent capitalism in the face of new artifacts and organizational arrangements.

Keywords: Clóvis Moura. Slavery. Racism. Praxis. Organization studies.

As contribuições da interpretação de Clóvis Moura sobre a escravidão no Brasil e seus possíveis diálogos com os Estudos Organizacionais

Resumo

O objetivo deste texto é retomar pontos importantes da obra de Clóvis Moura e apontar possíveis diálogos dessas contribuições com a área de Estudos Organizacionais. A partir de uma perspectiva que põe a questão racial no centro de nossa formação social, é possível se distanciar de abordagens que relacionam o “atraso” na periferia do capitalismo a práticas administrativas defeituosas. Para isso, recorre-se à obra de Moura, da qual foram discutidos os seguintes elementos: a ênfase no papel do escravizado rebelde no desgaste do escravismo; a crítica às técnicas contemporâneas de seleção profissional, cultural e política; o papel da práxis social dinâmica; e a relação entre problemática racial e dependência econômica. Com base nessas ideias, foram apontadas pontes com o estudo das organizações, abrindo possibilidades para: i) questionar leituras contemporâneas que colocam o dominante como protagonista de eventuais transformações sociais, por intermédio do reconhecimento do potencial dos dominados de recobrar sua autonomia; ii) analisar como as organizações são espaços decisivos de reprodução das desigualdades, apontando a ideia de promoção da diversidade nas empresas como um componente do mito escamoteador da realidade social; iii) refletir sobre como os movimentos contemporâneos de resistência, inspirados na *quilombagem*, podem ser pensados com base em sua capacidade de desgastar o sistema vigente a partir de uma articulação de grupos marginalizados; iv) refletir como a superexploração do trabalho, aliada à austeridade econômica do Estado e à violência policial e paraestatal, demonstra que a herança da escravidão se metamorfoseia para continuar se reproduzindo e sustentando o capitalismo dependente diante dos novos artefatos e arranjos organizacionais.

Palavras-chave: Clóvis Moura. Escravidão. Racismo. Práxis. Estudos Organizacionais.

Los aportes de la interpretación de Clóvis Moura acerca de la esclavitud en Brasil y sus posibles diálogos con los estudios organizacionales

Resumen

El objetivo de este texto es retomar puntos importantes de la obra de Clóvis Moura y señalar posibles diálogos entre estas contribuciones y el área de estudios organizacionales. Desde una perspectiva que sitúa la cuestión racial en el centro de nuestra formación social, es posible distanciarse de enfoques que relacionan el “atraso” de la periferia del capitalismo con prácticas administrativas defectuosas. De la obra de Moura se discutieron elementos como: el énfasis en el papel del esclavo rebelde como elemento de desgaste de la esclavitud; crítica de las técnicas contemporâneas de selección profesional, cultural y política; el papel de la praxis social dinámica; y la relación entre cuestiones raciales y dependencia económica. A partir de estas ideas, se identificaron los siguientes puentes con el estudio de las organizaciones, que abren posibilidades para: i) cuestionar las lecturas contemporâneas que sitúan al dominante como protagonista de eventuales transformaciones sociales a partir del reconocimiento de las potencialidades de los dominados para recuperar su autonomía; ii) analizar cómo las organizaciones son espacios decisivos para la reproducción de las desigualdades, apuntando a la idea de promover la diversidad en las empresas como componente del mito que encubre la realidad social; iii) reflexionar sobre cómo los movimientos de resistencia contemporâneos, inspirados en el *quilombagem*, pueden ser pensados desde su capacidad de erosionar el sistema vigente a partir de una articulación de grupos marginados; iv) reflexionar sobre cómo la superexplotación del trabajo, aliada a la austeridad económica del Estado y la violencia policial y paraestatal, muestra cómo el legado de la esclavitud se metamorfoseia para seguir reproduciéndose y soplandole respuestas al capitalismo dependiente frente a nuevos artefactos y arreglos organizacionales.

Palabras clave: Clóvis Moura. Esclavitud. Racismo. Praxis. Estudios organizacionales.

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INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to reflect on important contributions from the work of Clóvis Moura, a thinker from Piauí, Brazil, seeking to highlight their relevance to research in the field of Organization Studies (OS). Therefore, this article does not intend to dissect Moura's work and thoughts, nor provide a theoretical essay on the detrimental effects of enslavement on the morphology of Brazilian society. Likewise, the text does not delve into a discussion of Moura's appropriation of Marxism or the intersections between race and class. The objective of this paper is to revisit key points from Moura's work and suggest paths for their utilization in the study of organizations.

Amidst a prolific body of literature, Clóvis Moura reveals how racial relations encompass all aspects of Brazilian formation, from the repercussions of the slaveholding world to the emergence of free labour. In other words, he investigates how the "[...] materiality of 'race', rooted in social organization and the structure of historical processes, is interdependent with the form of capitalist accumulation and the political struggles that enabled the emergence of Brazilian modernity" (Queiroz, 2021, p. 257, own translation).

Dominant approaches in organizational research fundamentally assume that the "backwardness" of poor countries is largely related to flawed domestic administrative practices – typically perceived as inefficient, nepotistic, and influenced by other social logics that diverge from economic rationality (Alcadipani, Khan, Gantman, & Nkomo, 2012). In other words, the notion that peripheral nations are imperfect expressions of central capitalist nations has found significant resonance in Organizational Studies (Ibarra-Colado, 2006).

This paper turns to Clóvis Moura's work as an alternative approach to analysing relevant issues in the study of organizations. His contributions are valuable to the field of OS as research in this area also involves the cultural, economic, political, and social specificities of these spaces (Thiollent, 2014), encompassing not only businesses and public institutions but also organized social life and various organizational practices (Carrieri & Correia, 2020). Although Moura's work gained more attention after the 1980s, with some studies analysing the relevance of his contributions to understanding Brazilian reality (Mesquita, 2003), this article seeks to establish a promising connection with Organization Studies.

The next section briefly presents some biographical aspects that can better contextualize Clóvis Moura's thinking. Subsequently, important highlights from Moura's work to reflect on Brazilian reality are presented. Then, these contributions are explored in greater depth to establish possible debates with OS, followed by some final considerations.

CLÓVIS MOURA, AN AUTONOMOUS INTELLECTUAL

Clóvis Steiger de Assis Moura was born on July 10, 1925, in the city of Amarante, Piauí (Queiroz, 2021). He passed away in São Paulo in 2003, leaving behind a prolific body of work on Brazilian reality, particularly on the Black population and the centrality of race in understanding the country's formation. He simultaneously worked in the press and as an author of books and articles, earning a living through his professional involvement in newspaper editorial teams, where he had the opportunity to create and strengthen intellectual and political ties (Malatian, 2019). His thinking served as the basis for the development of political projects by various entities in the Black movement (Oliveira, 2020).

Coming from a lower-middle-class family, Clóvis was the son of a Black father and a White mother; he was the great-grandson of Prussian Baron Ferdinando von Steiger and also from a slave called Carlota (Mesquita, 2003). Until the early 1950s, he lived in various cities such as Natal, Salvador, and Juazeiro. In the latter, "[...] with limited financial and investigative resources but in intense intellectual exchange through letters with renowned researchers and professors," Clóvis completed the first version of "Rebeliões da Senzala" in 1953 (Queiroz, 2021, p. 258, own translation).

During this endeavor, he wrote to Caio Prado Júnior, sharing his plans to conduct research on the history of Black revolutions in Brazil. However, the “academic” advice he received in response suggested he should focus on describing the situation in the backlands of Bahia since the region where he lived had not played a significant historical role in slavery, and he would face difficulty accessing the necessary sources for his project (Buonicore, 2020). Fortunately, Clóvis decided to undertake the challenging and unpromising task anyway, and his efforts culminated in the publication of “Rebeliões da Senzala: Quilombos, Insurreições e Guerrilhas” in 1959.

Despite his pioneering work (Mesquita, 2003) and its relevance, the scant literature on Clóvis Moura, with few exceptions, “[...] does not delve into his thinking, his analytical categories, and his appropriation of Marxism” (Oliveira, 2011, p. 46, own translation). Among the reasons for the lack of proper recognition of Moura’s work, one can mention the discomfort that the reading of Brazilian social history causes among the dominant classes and the fact that the author was an autonomous intellectual, unconcerned with pursuing an academic career and dissatisfied with the hegemony of the social sciences in the country (Mesquita, 2003). According to Assunção and Trapp (2021, p. 242, own translation), Moura is placed “[...] on the margins of what could be called an ‘interpreter of Brazil,’” as the geopolitics of knowledge is “[...] averse to his status as a Black, Northeastern (from Piauí), communist, and self-taught individual.”

These biographical elements help us interpret his work. It is from this subaltern position that the author understands Brazil and based on it that he envisions alternatives for the country.

CLÓVIS MOURA AND THE CENTRALITY OF THE RACIAL QUESTION IN UNDERSTANDING BRAZIL

Prior to the publication of “Rebeliões da Senzala”, the struggle of enslaved individuals was often interpreted as a mere clash of cultural patterns, in other words, manifestations of anti-cultural movements that relegated the issue of struggle to a secondary role (Moura, p. 9, 1988). This perspective overlooked the class struggle within the slave system, which, according to Moura, was the fundamental contradiction driving these movements.

While acknowledging the cultural differences among the various ethnicities brought here, Moura emphasized that the practical situation of being enslaved was the determining factor for individuals’ behaviour, whether passive or rebellious¹. Similarly, the behaviour of the ruling class was primarily shaped by their position as slaveholders. Thus, the dynamics of the period revolved around the actions of rebellious slaves and the measures taken by the ruling elites to suppress them. Moura argued that it was crucial to examine the types of behaviour that contributed to the stagnation and preservation of the slave production relations, rather than focusing solely on exceptional cases or judging individuals as heroes or villains (Moura, 1988).

While Brazilian cities were modernizing throughout the 19th century, the most relevant social institutions² remained archaic, reflecting the ideological, legal, and customary order of the ruling class, which legitimized the fundamental form of property ownership at the time: the possession of other human beings (Moura, 1988). This prevented radical change unless the dominant institutions and power structures were neutralized, allowing for a harmonization between the character of the productive forces and the relations of production. However, this did not occur, resulting in a persistent contradiction from the early formation of the Brazilian nation: “We achieved Independence while maintaining slavery, and we achieved Abolition while preserving the latifundium.” Consequently, the fundamental elements were not dismantled, hindering significant institutional progress, and creating social, political, economic, and cultural voids (Moura, 1988, p. 24).

¹ Moura (1988) argues that in class-divided societies, the consciousness of antagonisms does not reach all individuals. The author suggests that in slave societies, social dynamics revolve around the opposition between slaves and masters, which means that the entire ideological, administrative, and military machinery was set up to maintain social equilibrium, which would only be possible through a containment structure capable of achieving it. Thus, there was social collaboration from the slaves and even some “understanding” from certain masters. However, these relationships did not typify the ones that give substance to social dynamics. If that were the case, such social inertia would indicate a disruption in the course of history.

² It is worth noting the author’s caveat that the appearance of wage slaves did not signify the emergence of modern aspects in an embryonic form, such as a supposed condition of quasi-free individuals moving towards wage labor. Essentially, even in the case of wage slaves, the relationship between the groups had not changed, and the enslaved individual continued to be simultaneously a productive force and a commodity, whose freedom extended only as far as and when the master granted it.

The process of slave labour's decomposition in Brazil occurred during the rise of monopolistic capitalism. This influenced not only the approach to abolition but also the negative consequences of this compromised solution, which preserved the latifundium-oligarchic structure. Moura's periodization of slavery in Brazil distinguishes between the "Early Slavery" and the "Late Slavery" periods. In the former, slavery was ascending until the Eusébio de Queirós Law of 1850 abolished the international slave trade. During this phase, when slavery was a solid and recognized institution, the struggle was solely led by the enslaved individuals who, in various ways, undermined the oppressive system. Only after 1850, in the "Late Slavery" period, did other entities and figures join the defence of the end of servile labour. In this phase of decomposition, various radical abolitionist movements collaborated and operated alongside those who rebelled against their own conditions (Moura, 2020).

Quilombos, insurrections, guerrillas, assassinations, fires, thefts, abductions, and suicides were all manifestations of resistance against the slave mode of production (Moura, 1988). These actions caused economic and institutional injury in the transition from slavery to free labour. Moura (1988) generally argued that the enslaved individuals lacked the conditions to consciously rebel against the oppressive order since they were isolated from the dynamic process of technological advancement of their time. Therefore, their struggles aimed to undermine the material foundations and, consequently, the existing labour relations between masters and slaves, without seeking to seize state power (Moura, 1988, p. 33).

Thus, if it was not a political movement in terms of the individual's awareness of historical facts, it was in the sense that the enslaved person was "[...] the material element, the human mass capable of propelling, albeit without self-consciousness, the historical-social process with respect to its fundamental contradiction" (Moura, 1988, p. 34). In other words, in *Rebeliões da Senzala*, the argument is that even though their actions did not have a political character, they had political consequences (Queiroz, 2021).

Therefore, it becomes evident that Moura's intention was to study the enslaved person as an active contributor to the historical process of transformation, rather than as a passive and conservative element of the regime. That is, he sought to understand the enslaved person as a negation of a system that required the establishment of an entire scheme of subjugation to assert itself.

These manifestations, even in the condition of slavery, constituted "[...] concrete experiences in which Black people had the opportunity to deny themselves as mere property, to perceive themselves as owners of their own bodies, and to become increasingly aware of the inhumane nature of the slave system" (Silva, 2021, p. 57).

According to Moura, the notion of praxis is a key category in the appropriation of Marxism from the perspective of Black people. It is considered an element for the Black person to move from being an object of history to reappear as a human agent and dynamizing element of the social order (Queiroz, 2021, p. 261). Initially, praxis manifested as acts of rebellion and violent resistance to slavery, conferring agency to Black people and making them subjects (Oliveira, 2011). *Quilombagem* was the movement of permanent rebellion, organized and directed by the enslaved themselves, whose dynamics expressed the fundamental contradiction of the time and had a radical character without any mediation between its radicality and the interests of the ruling class (Moura, 1992). This is the most evident historical example of a process of raising consciousness on the part of Black people "[...] regarding their condition within a racist sociability and, in that, of collective organization, survival, and resistance," seeking to mitigate the effects of subordination through forms of defence against obstructive mechanisms (Costa & Mendes, 2022, p. 526). Dialectically, when they find themselves subjugated, obstructed, differentiated, they deny such movements, affirming themselves in and/or through their differences (Costa & Mendes, 2022).

In other words, *quilombagem* was a constellation of protest movements by the enslaved, in which the quilombo emerged as the most representative module, as the organizational centre, although other forms of manifestation were also present, such as guerrillas and individual protests. Therefore, it was a comprehensive and radical movement that included not only fugitive Black people but also "[...] persecuted indigenous people, mulattos, *curibocas*, people pursued by the police in general, bandits, tax debtors, deserters from military service, unemployed women, poor whites, and prostitutes" (Moura, 1992, p. 24). Thus, it was within *quilombagem* that this marginalized population, composed of those persecuted by the colonial system, socially reconstituted itself in an articulation that spanned the entire slave system (Moura, 1992).

This revalorization of the historical past of Black people in the slave system shows their participation in movements that brought about major social changes in the country, but it also demonstrates their subsequent political isolation by ruling centres. The formerly enslaved Black person is involved in social and political change movements, but after their participation, they are marginalized by their leaders (Moura, 1983). Thus, Moura (1983, p. 29) argues that it is not possible to judge, “[...] like certain armchair Marxists, the problem of the Brazilian Black people as a simple class problem, although it is embedded in it and is an integral part of it.” Therefore, Moura distances himself from a merely functional appropriation of Marxism, aimed solely at resolving the problem of overcoming racism within the broader struggle against capitalism (Oliveira, 2020).

Moura (1977) sees that the role of Black people in the emancipation of Latin America – a dynamic, contradictory, complex, and ongoing sociological process – will never be top-down, but rather according to a perspective of becoming, that is, dynamic-radical. Initially coming from a position of enslaved individuals, the alternative for liberating themselves from this status was through engagement in emancipation movements or through their own mobilizations. Although they almost always did so to address their specific problems as slaves, they were capable of influencing various levels of society, especially the political and economic spheres, with their divergent behaviour. Yesterday and today, Black people have acted and continue to act as a dynamic social force in Latin America. Yesterday, seeking to modify the colonial slave system. Today, seeking to break down the barriers of dependence in their respective countries (Moura, 1977).

In this line, Clóvis Moura also provides us an interesting contribution by demonstrating the effects of the slave system on the formation of this dependent capitalism. It is well known that slave labour, organized at different levels of extracting surplus labour, enabled the development of the colonial system. In this context, Moura (2020, p. 70) observes that the level of subordination of the Brazilian economy to the exploitative-buyer centre did not allow for the possibility of “[...] accumulation of surpluses and internal capital in sufficient proportions to open an independent path of development.” Moreover, the strangulation was not only economic but also fiscal, as it was determined that “[...] almost nothing remained in the Colony for technical reinvestment and capitalist accumulation” (Moura, 2020, p. 70).

A closed circuit of subordination of colonial economies was formed, where even the slave-owning class did not maintain control over the commercialization of the product or the price of enslaved people. Despite the arrival of the Portuguese Court in 1808, the fundamental form of labour that continued to produce all the value of this economy remained preserved. It was only with the Eusébio de Queirós Law (1850) that the embryo of a superficial and belated bourgeoisie emerged, which could not perform the dynamic functions attributed to a classic bourgeoisie in European models. It was a conditioned bourgeoisie, dependent and collaborator of the interests of buyers, sellers, or investors from overseas (Moura, 2020).

Therefore, the arrival of the Portuguese Court and the subsequent Independence did not create any structural crisis in the slave system from the perspective of the production. They only marked the end of the colonial system and the establishment of a mercantile slave economy. The exploitation of enslaved people's surplus labour continued through economic and extra-economic forms: gruelling workhours, corporal punishment, negative birth rates, and extremely high mortality rates. In an economy dependent on the slave trade to maintain balance, the internal accumulation of capital that could promote economic change and transform fundamental production relations was compromised (Moura, 2020).

Thus, the process of “modernization without change” began in various aspects of slave society. This means that there were economic, technological, cultural, and other forms of progress within the structure, without a corresponding modification in the relations of production, i.e., the infrastructure. Consequently, contradictions arose, leading to clashes, asymmetries, and conflicts resulting from this difference. In an intense intersection of capitalist relations on a slave-based foundation, “[...] the modern came to serve the archaic” (Moura, 2020, p. 82).

Slave owners took advantage of the modernization and dependency process to maintain their class privileges and survive the transition from late slavery to free labour. Despite their dependence on modernizing economic forces, they managed to employ political manipulation tactics that relied on the modernizing-subordinating process while preserving their interests based on archaic rural relations. Even after losing enslaved people, many of whom had become burdensome, they retained land ownership and resorted to the alternative solution of bringing in immigrants (Moura, 2020).

The numerical significance, duration, and manner in which abolition took place are elements of Brazilian slavery that shaped the model of dependent capitalism in the country. In addition to preventing the formation of a national bourgeoisie in the classical sense, these aspects allowed for the penetration of monopolistic capital in strategic sectors of the economy and “[...] reshaped a reflective ideology of slave production relations: racism” (Moura, 1988).

Indeed, slavery is seen as a decisive phase in the formation of the Brazilian ethos. It acted as a hindrance to the internal development of society, being the institution that allowed the colonial-type economy to reach the levels of exploitation observed, perpetually draining the sectors that could have constituted an internal consumption economy in favor of a colonial export economy (Moura, 1983).

In this process, the fundamental institutions of dependent capitalism coexisted with the late slavery that had been abolished. The unresolved issues surrounding May 13th left remnants and channelled negative forces that still influence our social history today (Moura, 1988). In his work *“O negro: de bom escravo a mau cidadão?”*, Clóvis Moura (1977) points out that the ruling classes, which determined the subsequent stages of the country's socioeconomic development and its human composition, acted to hinder the equal emergence of Black people in the new labour market that was emerging, limiting their opportunities for integration into this emerging capitalist society (Moura, 1977).

By discussing the underlying meaning of the expression “from good slave to bad citizen,” Moura (1977) reveals how notions of goodness and badness are created by a social class that has the power to establish the meaning of good and bad according to dominant values and ideas. In the case of Black people, the ethnocentric values of the ruling classes would represent an ideological barrier whose function is to prevent massive vertical mobility of the lower strata. The radical and the marginalized would be presented as models of the bad Black citizen, juxtaposed with the image of the good slave of the past.

Clóvis Moura (1977) begins his explanation by arguing that slavery as a system of production engendered structural limitations that prevented Black people from having a significant interest in the commodity they produced, which radically separated them from the produced goods and excluded them from the process of exchange (as they themselves were commodities). In addition to this alienation, slave labour was highly routine, and the slaveholders themselves did not seek technical improvement and investment, which prevented former slaves from achieving effective engagement in the labour market. Lastly, the compromised solution of Abolition, which preserved the latifundium and favoured foreign immigrants, did not provide a policy for the readaptation and integration of this mass of former slaves into the emerging system (Moura, 1977).

With the influx of immigrants, for whom there were directed policies and integration plans, the ex-slaves were displaced from the centre of the production system to its periphery, and the economic premises for their marginalization were created. In the nascent industry and coffee plantations, there was a rational effort to settle the immigrants, while the Black population fluctuated as an industrial reserve army, playing the role of a latent threat against stronger claims from foreigners. Despite regional differences in the country, Moura points out, “[...] there is a constant in this historical-social process: Black people were forcibly thrown into the lowest strata of society, whether they were marginalized or integrated into an economy of misery” (Moura, 1977, p. 35).

Moura (1983) understands that dependent capitalism paradoxically requires large marginalized layers of people in order to economically balance its structure. This mass is considered incapable of work so that they are permanently discarded in the selective process. At the same time, they are kept on the margins to establish the model's equilibrium. As a corollary, “[...] there is a need for a highly authoritarian and repressive state apparatus to maintain this social balance” (Moura, 1983, p. 10).

As noted by Queiroz (2021, p. 275), Clóvis sought to emphasize that discriminatory practices were not exceptional or dysfunctional to the logic of the free market and the republican state, but rather structuring. This divergent perspective emerges against the interpretative paradigm present in national narratives that claim there was no directed and objective agency in the exclusion of Black people from the country's project (Queiroz, 2021).

Despite the “equality before the law” after May 13th, this principle was nothing more than a protective myth to conceal ethnic, social, and economic inequalities. Thus, Moura (2020, p. 215) states:

The Black individual was forced to contend for their social, cultural, and even biological survival in a racially oppressive society, where techniques of professional, cultural, political, and ethnic selection are employed to keep them immobilized in the most oppressed, exploited, and subalternized strata. We can say that issues of race and class are intertwined in this process of competition for Black individuals because the interest of the dominant classes is to see them marginalized in order to lower wages for the working class as a whole.

Therefore, he concludes that Brazilian racism is “ambiguous, sticky, and sweet, but highly efficient in its objectives” in its strategy and tactics (Moura, 2020, p. 215). For him, there could be no racial democracy in a country without complete economic, political, social, and cultural democracy; a country with one of the highest concentrations of land ownership in the world, governed by backward and stubborn oligarchies, and with millions of abandoned, deprived, or criminalized minors. Racial democracy would only be achieved through the democratization of production relations, the decentralization of power centres through land redistribution, and finally, the end of a savage society of competition and conflict for the emergence of a society of planning and cooperation (Moura, 2020).

In summary, we have revisited from Clóvis Moura's work several propositions that can be grouped around four interconnected main ideas: i) understanding the active role of Black individuals in their emancipation; ii) the concept of modernization without change in the post-Abolition period, which kept the Black population in the most oppressed layers; iii) the idea of dynamic social praxis as the only way to reverse the situation of oppression; iv) the relationship between slavery and dependent capitalism. In the next section, we outline some contours of how these ideas can be related to relevant debates in the field of Organizational Studies.

DISCUSSIONS AND FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Organization Studies offer texts that can be considered diverse and varied, not only in terms of content but also in terms of theoretical and methodological approaches (Westwood & Clegg, 2003). While recent decades have shown a retreat in the engagement of the field with its constituent disciplines, the pressure of external events demands a return to interdisciplinarity, understanding that complex social problems are best addressed with integration of multiple approaches and methods (Vidal, Adler, & Delbridge, 2015).

In this context, Marxist perspectives can play an important role, both by providing a view of human history and the dynamics of capitalist development, and by offering a powerful interdisciplinary approach that unfolds the social core of economic relations (Vidal et al., 2015). The various versions of Marxism, besides being an entry point for the demands of the working class in Organizational Studies, are vehicles for the sustenance of human emancipation as an authentic horizon (Cunha & Ferraz, 2015). In this sense, when Clóvis Moura “blackens Marxism” by employing the perspective of radical praxis, he offers a solution that is not only subjective for the “Black dilemma” but also objective, as the political significance of Black praxis is human emancipation that would occur with the overcoming of bourgeois society (Oliveira, 2011, p. 62).

From this perspective, four interrelated contributions were discussed in the previous section, identified as capable of supporting contemporary studies in organizations. The first one concerns the reclamation of the role of rebellious slaves in Brazilian abolition, highlighting the intertwining of race and class as a fundamental explanatory mechanism of our present and future reality. This materialist explanation for society and, consequently, for the current context of organizing collective practices, would imply recognizing the potential of the oppressed to regain their autonomy, serving as a counterpoint to readings that place the dominant as the protagonist of change. In the specific case, while demanding a widespread anti-racist stance, it would mean questioning the role of the “white saviour” that, implicitly or explicitly, is reproduced within organizations.

The second selected contribution – the process of conservative modernization analyzed by Moura – contains additional possibilities to reflect on how other features of this phenomenon continue to shape the functioning of organizations and organizational practices. It is understood that, based on the Mourean perspective, it is possible to expand analysis regarding how organizations constitute decisive spaces for the production and reproduction of racial inequalities. It is observed that, in the realm of work, race-related issues are often addressed under the umbrella of diversity (Machado, Bazanini, & Mantovani, 2018). Moura can help us reflect on how the instruments discussed within this “paradigm” are insufficient – if not impediments – for a mass upward mobility of oppressed groups.

The term in question dates back to the mid-1980s and redefined the understanding of differences in organizations by portraying them as strategic assets capable of generating competitive advantage (Zanoni, Janssens, Benschop, & Nkomo, 2010). The logic of business has guided much of the academic research on diversity, a broad term under which any individual characteristic could be subsumed, reducing the risk of intergroup conflict between the majority and minorities (Zanoni et al., 2010).

Drawing from Moura's thinking, it would be possible to contribute to the critical literature on diversity in Organizational Studies through a perspective of historical-dialectical materialism. In this sense, our author can provide elements to analyse how discourses and practices related to the idea of promoting diversity in companies contribute to the concealment of social reality, that is, they do not address its fundamental contradictions.

According to Arciniega (2021), “diversity professionals,” by asserting that it is not possible to promote diversity without doing business, end up performing economic rationality and market logic by institutionalizing “diversity management” practices. According to the author, the separation between economics and morality reproduces a view of (racial) capitalism as “white economy,” which reinforces financial and neoliberal logic. Thus, these instruments, more focused on the market than on societal demands (Saraiva & Irigaray, 2009), allow for the selection of isolated representatives from oppressed groups but may act as impediments to mass upward mobility in practice.

In other words, organizations, with their professional selection techniques, play a significant role in the reproduction of racial asymmetries. Social inequalities, largely resulting from the structure and dynamics of the labour market, are produced and reproduced within organizations, where these “[...] patterns of inequality are perceived through their symbolic and subjective elements that, at times, crystallize and justify the very structure of social inequality” (Helal, 2015, p. 264).

For Clóvis Moura, the solution to this situation can only arise through dynamic social praxis that transcends the belief in integration within a competitive society and promotes human emancipation (Silva, 2021). Therefore, the “[...] overcoming of the denial of the functionality of racism to capitalism” (Silva, 2021, p. 56) would be an important reflection, based on Moura's thinking, to be addressed in OS. As noted by Prasad (2021), a significant predisposition among scholars in the field is to consider racism in organizations as a problem of individual or group mentality, which could be remedied with measures such as training, mentoring, and identity representation of non-white groups. Even when recognizing a structural dimension of racism, its intimate connections with capitalism are rarely analyzed (Prasad, 2021).

As highlighted throughout Moura's work, black freedom and the confrontation of racism are necessary conditions for democracy in Brazil. Drawing on the concept of *quilombagem*, contemporary resistance movements can be seen as having the ability to erode the existing system through the articulation of marginalized groups in their various conditions. Whether in the corporate environment or in other social spaces, the challenge remains for resistance movements to become an organizational centre from which different forms of rebellion converge or emerge in an intersectional perspective.

For example, in the case of the war on drugs in Brazil, black individuals are the subject of such conflict. Therefore, a militant and revolutionary praxis in this context would have to be anti-prohibitionist, making the black population “political subjects” in the criticism and overcoming of the issue, linking the anti-prohibitionist struggle to class struggle, with an orientation towards an anti-racist and anticapitalist horizon (Costa & Mendes, 2022). Another issue that can be considered from this perspective is food security, considering that hunger is intertwined with various forms of inequality and has racial implications in Brazil

(Rede PENSSAN, 2022). In addition to the glaring issue of access to employment and income, barriers to education and formal schooling, as well as obstacles to the exercise of the right to leisure, can be addressed. All these social ills can be approached from an antiracist and anticapitalist perspective that manifests in diverse forms and fronts of collective struggles.

Furthermore, we have sought to demonstrate how Moura's work offers interesting contributions to the study of dependent capitalism in Brazil. Thus, there are insights that can contribute to the ongoing debates seeking dialogue between dependency studies and organization studies (Wanderley, 2015). Similarly, there are indications about the superexploitation of labour – the core of dependency – that present potential for investigation in OS (Misoczky, Abdala, & Camara, 2015).

According to Marini (2000, p. 126), the essential characteristic of superexploitation lies in the fact that workers are denied the necessary conditions to restore their labour power. In the condition of dependency, the mechanisms of transfer between economies lead to a portion of the surplus value produced in the periphery being appropriated and accumulated in the centre; dependent countries seek to recover it through the superexploitation of labour instead of increasing productive capacity (Marini, 2000).

In recent Brazil, the capitalist dynamics based on superexploitation, which generated high rates of accumulation during the so-called "economic miracle," underwent a process of productive restructuring with the victory of neoliberalism from the 1990s onwards (Antunes, 2014). Elements such as flexibilization, deregulation, new forms of capital management, outsourcing, new modes of exploitation, and relative technological advancement have brought changes in the context of contemporary labour without altering the framework of superexploitation (Antunes, 2014).

Moura (1983) argues that dependent capitalism, paradoxically, requires large marginalized layers of individuals to be discarded while being kept on the margins of society. This understanding can be useful for reflecting on the current scenario of intensified precarization of work, threats to social rights in general, increased police and paramilitary violence, the advance of conservative agendas and religious fundamentalism, elements that mix and impact a whole layer of the population.

In this scenario, the working class can be understood as the totality of those who, increasingly integrated into global production chains, sell their labour power as a commodity in exchange for wages, regardless of whether they perform predominantly material or immaterial activities, in a financialized and informational capitalism marked by a symbiosis between the productive and the unproductive (Antunes, 2014). Thus, the condition of these individuals oscillates between the heterogeneity of their being (gender, ethnicity, generation, space, qualification, nationality, etc.) and the homogenization resulting from the precarious condition in different forms of work (Antunes, 2014).

We can then reflect on how racial heterogeneity acts upon precarious homogenization, marginalizing the black population to intensify the exploitation of workers as a whole - lowering wages, demanding longer working hours, subjecting them to more intense work rhythms, etc. Additionally, we observe increasingly sophisticated devices from the financial system that link the working class to various schemes of debt and subjugation.

Given these new forms of work organization, it is worth reflecting on how algorithms, fuelled by racist datasets (O'Neil, 2017), can intensify the machinery of superexploitation. What can we expect from selection tools, career progression in companies, and work management when they replicate the inequalities of their datasets (Köchling, Riazzy, Wehner, & Simbeck, 2021)? These are pertinent questions about how the legacy of slavery metamorphoses to continue reproducing and maintaining dependent capitalism in the face of new artifacts and organizational arrangements.

Finally, the contesting position of our author regarding theories uncritically imported from the centre of knowledge can serve as another important source of inspiration, as well as his struggles against academic hermeticism that deflect us from urgent problems. This perspective aligns with the reading of Milton Santos (2000), who believes that the tyranny of money and information, stemming from the concentration of capital and power, has generated an unprecedented convergence of norms, leading to the construction of a unipolar space of domination. However, as an alternative to the "globalized West," which is inaccessible to many in its pure form, the peripheries would mobilize the uniqueness of techniques to think about "another globalization" (Santos, 2000).

Similarly, in Organization Studies, there has been an increasing mobilization of perspectives concerned with questioning the geopolitics of knowledge, seeking to think from the periphery (Louredo & Oliveira, 2022). By denaturalizing the persistence of Anglo-Saxon models of knowledge construction (Mignolo, 2020), new possibilities emerge to historicize OS and to give them geographical grounding (Wanderley & Barros, 2018).

In conclusion, it is worth remembering that in the field of Organization Studies, even though positions in favour of radical transformations may be a minority, they continue to produce their critiques (Faria, 2009). The aim of bringing contributions from the work of Clóvis Moura to this space is to reinforce this type of perspective. Refusing to diminish the role of slavery in the country's formation and refusing to diminish its proper influence on present reality brings us closer to a better understanding of the past and, consequently, to more transformative future projects.

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