Race and racism, junctions and disjunctions

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Racism came to be conceptualized, and thus became an object of scientific investigation, only when it represented a threat to the unitary identity of national states[1]. In Europe, mainly through anti-Semitism; in the case of the United States, when racial segregation also threatened the national myth based on the idea of equal rights and formal freedom. The same goes for the young Latin American nations, when they felt the need to seek greater social equality between their original peoples, the formerly enslaved and European migrants. In its reflective journey on racism, sociology has taken two distinct paths, which I examine in the text.

The first, which I have adopted in my previous works, takes up the historical and analytical conceptualization of the links between the idea of race and racism, starting with the early *insights of* the American sociologist W. E. B. Du Bois. It is in this tradition that concepts such as racialization, institutional racism and structural or systemic racism were developed. The second, by rejecting the concept of race as foreign to the sociological canon, favours the emergence of analyses that use categories such as *class racism*, *intelligence racism*, *cultural racism* or racism *without races,* thus dissociating *races* from *racism,* and treating the latter as a simple form of essentialization and naturalization of social relations.

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1. This article was discussed by many colleagues, including Magali Bessone, Nadya Guimarães and Ana Cláudia Lopes. Part of it, still unfinished, was published on the *Novos Estudos Cebrap* blog. It was first translated in DeepL and revised by Karl Monsma and the author.

As we know, since its inception, sociology has focused on metropolitan national societies, while anthropology has dedicated itself to the study of colonial societies. Perhaps for this reason, social life in the metropolis and in the colonies have always been analyzed separately. In both sociology and anthropology, the discussion about the biological or social existence of human races was a privileged theme for their constitution – but the analytical status of races in the social sciences was not problematized – races would figure among the biological limits for social action, or they would be the product of the non-scientific imagination, and could guide such actions; or even, in a more structuralist view, they would be outside our scientific field.

In making this argument, I will defend the thesis that there is no racism without races, just as there is no racism without human agency. Although this thesis may seem like a commonplace, it means that what we understand by racism, whether structural, institutional, or systemic, does not do without agency, and that agency must be made explicit at the risk of the concept becoming a hollow petition of principles.

Social sciences at the beginning of the 20th century

Anyone who takes the trouble to revisit the classics of the social sciences in search of the concept of racism, or even the word, will find neither. Let's start with the social sciences that developed in the United States, the country where a Department of Sociology was first established at the University of Chicago in 1892, and where The Philadelphia Negro was published by W. E. B. Du Bois *in* 1899, a pioneering book on empirical sociology. In the *Introduction to the science of sociology*, *from* 1921, organized by Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, there are chapters on "historical races", showing the influence of Du Bois, and "racial differences" and, in *Anthropology and modern life*, from 1928, Franz Boas stresses the need to discuss racial consciousness even if there are no natural human races. Neither book mentions the word "racism", just as Du Bois did not mention it in his pioneering work. However, although the social sciences were not interested in racism, the term had already appeared in common parlance and had been recorded in the *Oxford English dictionary*, according to Gene Demby (2014), and in the *Historical dictionary of the French Language*, according to Magali Bessone (2013), meaning, respectively, segregation of races in human societies, or the theory of the hierarchy of races.

Why did journalism and politics talk about "racism" while the social sciences ignored the term? Sociology treated such practices as arising from the formation of social groups, social isolation and segregation. Interestingly, however, the word 'race' was incorporated into scientific language to refer to groups or communities that were popularly referred to as such, in other words the scientific community adopted

the term to designate "historical or social races". The belief in human races was not a problem in itself for sociology. The problems were the discrimination, prejudice, isolation, segregation and social conflict that fed or arose from such a belief.

In France, where Durkheim founded the journal *L'Année Sociologique* at the University of Bordeaux in 1898, sociology underwent a different theoretical development, more realistic in the philosophical sense of the term, refusing to borrow concepts from common sense and therefore removing "historical races" from its area of concern. More importantly, perhaps, the banishment of the preoccupation with "races" was part of the political project of shaping French society according to the principles that a modern society should have – a state based on a single community, the nation, whose bonds of solidarity develop through organic complementarity in the division of social labor. In this national ideal, feelings of religious, tribal, ethnic, and racial belonging, which were still prevalent in European societies and therefore threatened modern society, such as anti-Semitism, would be overcome as things of the past. In France, therefore, the social sciences were not concerned with race or racism.

We can see, therefore, that sociology in France was geared towards studying the modern world as it developed in its metropolises. The same happened in England. The "pre-modern" societies of other continents, on the other hand, were considered the object of anthropology. European social sciences therefore refused to understand that modern society was also a product of the imperial world, of metropolis-colony ties, in which races existed. These populations were racialized by Europeans and concepts such as clans, tribes and ethnicities were developed to study them. From this cradle come two errors that still persist: the assumption that national societies can be studied in isolation from their international ties; and the assumption that each particular society will follow the historical development of European nation-states. In this way, the claim to the universality of sociological knowledge is founded without colonial relations being properly studied. These errors have also contaminated American sociology, which has as its object a society in which the colonial fact was internalized through the enslavement of Africans, the subordination of indigenous Amerindians, and the prominence of race and racism as structuring social relations.

This *status quo* of sociological knowledge was only shaken in the 1930s with the establishment in Europe of state and national policies of discrimination, segregation and physical annihilation of races within nations, in other words, with the development of Nazi-fascism. Only when applied to the metropolis itself, threatening the modern nation-state, does the belief in the hierarchy of races become a theoretical problem for sociologists. To put it another way, racism is theorized when it threatens the national unity built up among white people in European countries and the United

States. While the hierarchy involved only the separation between Europeans and their descendants, on the one hand, and colonized or enslaved peoples, on the other, the belief in the hierarchy of races, although denied by the social sciences, reflected in a way the real world as it was structured and as it was perceived by social agents.

In 1938, the first edition of Magnus Hirschfeld's book *Racism* appeared in English, analyzing the Nazi doctrine of the racial superiority of the Aryans and its justification for the extermination and subjugation of the other human races. The social sciences, like other sciences, became involved in the war effort against Nazi-fascism and only then did the belief in the existence of human races and their hierarchy, referred to by the term "racism", become a theoretical problem for the social sciences, encompassing not only doctrines (racial inequality as natural), but attitudes (prejudices and values) and behaviors (discrimination, segregation and other social practices).

However, at this point too, the sociological *mainstream* makes a lasting mistake: it takes races as if they were just a belief and racism a doctrine. From the logical, clear and precise statement that "without races, there is no racism", it was believed that prescribing and not stating the word "race" would have the virtue of extinguishing racism. There was a failure to understand what, sociologically, races and their beliefs were, as well as what racism meant.

Race and racism in Brazilian social sciences

The Brazilian social sciences became institutionalized precisely in the 1930s, when the non-existence of natural human races was already well established from a scientific point of view, and when the belief in races threatened European democracies, as we have seen. Our social sciences, in their infancy, closely followed those of Europe and the United States, the former in banning the word race, but neither in relation to racism. This peculiar development is worth explaining.

The political situation in Brazil in the 1930s was marked by the influence of Nazi-fascism on local political doctrines, such as integralism, and by criticism of representative democracies, such as communism. There were many regional tensions: separatism in São Paulo, the loss of power of regional oligarchies to the colonels of the hinterland, the development of ethnic pockets in the southern states, the strengthening of racial awareness among Afro-descendants, etc. The great challenge was to reorganize the state, starting with the formation of a modern nation, whether democratic or authoritarian. This was a world marked by authoritarian political doctrines and racist states, both in Europe and the United States. The Brazilian national challenge was also the challenge of the social sciences that were

becoming institutionalized, first in São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and then in the other regions: to help build a modern Brazil, leaving behind the racial theories that, at the beginning of the 20th century, flourished in medical and law schools. In addition, it was also seen as necessary to avoid the formation of ethnic and racial sentiments among Afro-descendants and those descended from European, Middle Eastern or East Asian immigrants.

From the modernist efforts in the arts and politics emerged two national ideals that would be elaborated and merged in Vargas' Estado Novo: that of hierarchical racial democracy, proposed by São Paulo artists such as Cassiano Ricardo (Campos, 2006); and that of social democracy, also sometimes called ethnic, but predominantly *mestiça*, democracy by Gilberto Freyre and the northeastern regionalists.

Sociology, in turn, developed in four institutions, where reflection on social races would flourish in Brazil: the Faculty of Sociology and Politics of São Paulo, where the theories of the Chicago school would gain a strong influence; the Faculty of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences of the University of São Paulo, where French sociology, more structuralist, would flourish; the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Brazil, with a varied matrix, and the Faculty of Philosophy of Bahia, where the influence of the social anthropology of Columbia University would be more influential. The names of these founding fathers of reflection on social races in Brazil are well known: Donald Pierson, at FSPSP; Florestan Fernandes and Roger Bastide, at USP; Arthur Ramos and Costa Pinto, in Rio de Janeiro; Thales de Azevedo, in Salvador.

Roughly speaking, the problematic of Brazilian social sciences around race, in this formative phase, can be summarized in the following questions: Are there social races in Brazil? Is there racial prejudice in Brazil?

Donald Pierson (1942), the first to conduct an empirical investigation into the subject, in a way set the agenda for subsequent debate. His conclusions were: there are no races in Brazil, as social groups, since these presuppose closed groups, like castes, and what were sometimes called races in Brazil would be open social groups, like classes. As a result, prejudices against members of these groups were more properly diagnosed as class prejudices and not race prejudices. Other authors, both Brazilian and foreign, followed the same direction, albeit with important nuances. Franklin Frazier (1942), for example, did not find race prejudice in Brazil, but he did observe color prejudice, i.e. based on physical appearance, not on family ancestry; Oracy Nogueira (1998) distinguished racial prejudice of origin, typical of races in the United States, from racial prejudice of physical appearance, found in Brazil. Thales de Azevedo (1956) broadly followed Pierson's conclusions, but in his theory, racial prejudice in Brazil was closer to that developed by status

groups than class or caste prejudice. Marvin Harris (1964), in turn, admitted the existence of racial prejudice, but in the absence of properly racial social groups he predicted that segregation, isolation or racism would not develop in Brazil (Guimarães, 1999).

Florestan Fernandes (1948) and Costa Pinto (1946), on the other hand, criticized the concept of "class" used by Pierson and the scholars from Chicago or Columbia, and conceived of classes as structuring social relations – and not just as open social groups. For them, racial prejudice in Brazil was typical of slave society, but it persisted in the present day, mainly nurtured by the dominant classes, in contradistinction to the capitalist and competitive order that was being formed. The *ethos of* these dominant classes, in a way, influenced the general social praxis, especially of the middle classes and descendants of European immigrants, generalizing practices of racial prejudice and discrimination. The big difference between Fernandes and Costa Pinto was the way they assessed the formation of black organizations in Brazil. For Fernandes, it was a phenomenon typical of the insubmissive New Negroes who established themselves in the industrial and modern urban centers; while for Costa Pinto, it reflected the alienation of the black middle classes, who, wanting to integrate into class society, did not understand the meaning of political struggles in capitalist societies.

To summarize, we can say that, in general, for nascent Brazilian sociology, races did not really exist as social groups, except in an incipient way. However, racism – understood as attitudes and behaviours motivated by the belief in the existence of a moral and cultural hierarchy of human races – did exist, but it was restricted to isolated individuals or small groups. We must point out, however, two brilliant exceptions to this tendency.

In *O negro no Rio de Janeiro*, Costa Pinto defines racism as "the belief in the innate inferiority of certain ethnic groups". He also talks about white cryptoracism, in other words, veiled, secret and publicly denied racism. In Costa Pinto (1953, p. 296), we also find another conceptual precision: "[...] the invocation of biological factors to explain a specific attitude of an ethnic group towards social life is the heart and core of racism in any variant or modality".

For Bastide and Fernandes (1955), on the other hand, racism is an ideology and a set of attitudes and preferences based on race or color prejudice. Bastide even paraphrased Sartre (1948) and theorized the anti-racist racism of blacks: "A provisional and mitigated racism, which is necessary. A racism that is a technique for overcoming racism" (Bastide and Florestan, 1955, pp. 167-8).

It is worth noting that in the empirical studies carried out for the Unesco project, by Thales de Azevedo (1953) and René Ribeiro (1956), the term "racism" only ap-

pears in quotes from informants or sources, with the same meaning that was then current in journalism and politics.

But racism, as a concept that involves more than ideology, behaviors and attitudes, as it refers to social practices inscribed in the social structure of modern, capitalist Brazilian society, was first studied only by Carlos Hasenbalg in his 1979 doctoral thesis, going beyond the vision of Florestan's early studies, in which racism was not functional to the capitalist order, and did not have racial groups as its foundation. After Hasenbalg, a series of historical, anthropological and sociological studies developed rapidly, seeking to uncover the social construction of races in Brazil and racism as a structural phenomenon, in the sense that its operation takes place in the practices of Brazilian organizations and institutions (Munanga, 1999; Schwarcz *et al.*, 1996; Guimarães, 1999; D'Adesky, 1997).

However, we must recognize that these studies did not reach the *mainstream of* Brazilian sociology and anthropology, and did not circulate widely outside the circle of black intellectuals and activists. More influential among Brazilian social scientists were European studies that theorized a *racism without races*, a racism of *class,* a racism of *intelligence*, a *cultural racism,* thus dissociating *races* from *racism*. This justifies turning once again to 20th century French sociology.

Race and racism in 20th century French social sciences

In a way, it can be said that not only the military defeat by Germany in 1940, but especially the racism that dominated French institutions and politics between the two wars, was responsible for the downfall of the Third Republic and the alignment of the Vichy government with Nazism. It is not surprising, therefore, that the concept of (biological) race used by fascist racial theories, which had already been overcome and abandoned by the social sciences in the 20th century, was completely banished from the scientific lexicon in the post-war period throughout Europe, especially in France and Germany. If race was not a scientific or analytical concept (as defined by philosophy), nor was it even claimed by any social group or political grouping, it could not have any status in either academic or political discourse. Only American sociology could make emic use of this category to any avail, reflecting the political formation of blacks in the United States, who assumed the term "race" to define themselves.

The Fifth Republic, born out of the aftermath of the French colonial world, sought to revive the humanist ideals of equality between human beings, a tradition dating back to the Enlightenment. In this imaginary, the social sciences would play an important role in educating young people and politicians in the construction of

a post-racial world. Challenged by the Algerian war of liberation and accusations of racism by Algerians, humanists sought to explain and combat racism without reviving the word race, so tragically loaded with negative values. However, racism was then theorized in an exemplary way as colonial and systemic by Fanon (1952), Memmi (1973), Sartre (1956, p. 1386)[2] and others, but for most French people, racism was part of a world far removed from metropolitan France. Fanon was the only one to draw attention to the persistent racialization of Africans and Jews in the republican order (Fanon, 1952, p. 129). In general, therefore, racism was studied and combated as if it depended solely on the biological belief in human races, in other words, it depended on an illusory concept, which was not worth critically transforming into an analytical tool, since it was part of the repertoire of individuals who could be conveniently educated by the various socialization apparatuses set up by the Republic.

On the other hand, the post-war French economy went through an expansionist *boom* that led to the development of a thriving welfare society, with well-regulated rights, a society of classes and social categories, very well portrayed and analyzed in books that would become classics of sociology, such as Bourdieu (1979), Boltanski (1973), Desrosières and Thévenot (1992) and many others. Maghreb and sub-Saharan immigrants from the former colonies seemed to be able to integrate into the working class, even if they had to overcome some xenophobic and racist barriers (Beaud and Pialoux, 2003). In fact, the French school system seemed, at the same time, to integrate and socially hierarchize these immigrants without major conflicts, to the point of resembling functional reproduction (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970).

However, after the first thirty years of the post-war period, several historical processes completely altered the French social world, such as the new immigration of North African and sub-Saharan workers from the former colonies, accompanied by the fragmentation of industrial production around the world, the reorganization of international capitalism, the advance of new microelectronic technologies, the precariousness of work and the disorganization of workers' unions. These changes, catalogued and studied under different labels – globalization (Boyer *et al.*, 2001), neoliberalism (Bourdieu, 1998), precarization (Linhart, 2016) – have reignited the debate on racism in France since the late 1970s.

Nonetheless, the French republican orientation remained, woven around the refusal to admit any identity community other than the nation. Although strained throughout the post-war period by the eruptions of racism caused by the Algerian war, the tense reception of Muslim immigrants, and the continuity of antisemitism,

2. "[...] colonialism is destroying itself. But it still contaminates the atmosphere: it is our shame, it mocks our laws or caricatures them; it infects us with its racism [...]."

this orientation would be updated at each more conflictive moment, by analyses that used categories such as *class racism* (Mauger, 2011), *racism of intelligence* (Bourdieu, 1980; Croizet, 2011), *cultural racism* or racism *without races* (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1991; Balibar, 2013) etc. These terms sought to dissociate *races* from *racism,* accusing those who used the word "race" of reifying a vulgar term, and treating racism only as a way of essentializing and naturalizing the social world.

Since the "thirty glorious years" (Fourastié, 1979; Pawin, 2013), i.e. the continuous growth of the French economy, the construction of the welfare state and the stabilization of the rules for resolving labor disputes between 1945 and 1975, only two gaps were open for conceptual reflection on race to develop in France, always in dialogue with the English-speaking social sciences. These were feminist studies, reflecting on natural conceptions of power, sex and race (Guillaumin, 1972, 1978); and studies on discrimination in the labor market (De Rudder *et al*., 1987; De Rudder *et al*., 2000). Later that century, in historical studies on the continuities and discontinuities between 15th century anti-Judaism and 20th century anti-Semitism (Schaub, 2015), the need to theorize race also emerged.

In the 21st century, these three gaps are responsible for the emergence in France of a plethora of empirical and theoretical studies on racism and the theoretical status of races. Sabbagh (2022) recently published a very illuminating review of these new studies. However, there has been a not insignificant reaction against them on the part of the sociology originally established under the leadership of Pierre Bourdieu (Beaud and Noiriel, 2021) and the Marxist authors who elaborated the framework of French sociology in the 20th century.

Below, in order to draw some theoretical conclusions from this debate, I will critically examine the thinking on racism in France today, starting with a Marxist author who tackled this issue and who wrote from within one of the most fertile traditions in French sociology. I will use much of his thinking to advance more precise definitions of racism and race.

Races, racisms, racialization[3]

In 1991, the Marxist philosopher Étienne Balibar, reflecting on the incidents and frequent accusations of racism that were spreading across Europe, involving foreign minorities and their descendants who were already citizens and native Europeans,

3. In this item, I return to what I originally developed on the *Novos Estudos Cebrap* blog, https://novosestudos.com.br/racismos-comentando-balibar/#gsc.tab=0. I have now corrected my interpretation of Balibar on several points, especially with regard to his use of the expression "racism without races". I have also added a new conceptualization for *racial formation*.

used the anthropological concept of "total social fact", first employed by Marcel Mauss in his *Essay on the gift* ([1922] 2003), to reflect on racism[4].

Racism as a "total social fact" would be a constellation of social practices (discrimination, violence, humiliation, segregation); of attitudes, in the sense of social psychology (prejudice, intolerance, affections, preferences); stigmas and charismas of otherness, in the sense given to it by Nobert Elias (names, phenotypes, marking, stereotypes, and cultural habits); and social structures, as understood by sociology (laws, regulations, institutional rules that result in biased results in the acquisition of goods and services, as well as limitations on life opportunities).

In fact, there is no fact, offense, prejudice or result referred to as racist by the press or by individuals that does not fit into this all-encompassing, and therefore very useful, definition. However, it is necessary to clarify two points that have been left open and which could lead to inaccuracies.

The first is that it is not clear whether or not the definition presupposes the idea of race. Apparently not, from the use of the expression. However, the truth seems to be exactly the opposite, as suggested by Balibar's (2013) later interview on "racism without races", in which he dealt with the fact that the new racists did not use the word "race", but rather repudiated it, preferring to attribute their intolerance to the new immigrants' refusal to integrate into a secular society. But for Balibar (2013, p. 15), even if the word disappears, the idea of race is present: "[...] the idea of 'race' is recomposed, even becoming invisible: for example, in what has been called 'differentialist racism' or 'culturalist racism' and which I called some time ago a 'racism without races'".

The second is that it is also unclear whether the possible occurrence of practices, attitudes, stigmas or structures, in isolation, that is, occurring without the presence of the others, could still be called racism. For example, the unequal treatment of people in market or social situations, but without the active presence of a doctrine or discourse, or in the absence of state legislation or discriminatory customary practices.

4. "Racism – a true 'total social fact' – is inscribed in practices (forms of violence, contempt, intolerance, humiliation and exploitation), in discourses and representations that are intellectual elaborations of the phantasm of prophylaxis or segregation (the need to purify the social body, to preserve 'one's own' or 'our own' identity from all forms of mixing, crossing or invasion), and which are articulated around stigmas of otherness (name, skin color, religious practices). Racism therefore organizes affections (their psychological study has focused on describing their obsessive character and their 'irrational' ambivalence), giving them a stereotyped form, which concerns their 'subjects' and their 'objects'. It is this combination of practices, discourses and representations in a network of affective stereotypes that allows us to explain the formation of a racist community (or a community of racists, between whom there are bonds of 'imitation' at a distance) as well as the way in which, like a mirror image, the individuals and communities who are victims of racism (its 'objects') are constrained to see themselves as a community." (Balibar, 1991, pp. 17-18; my translation).

Could we still talk about racism? Or would it be necessary for all social facts to be present in order to speak of racism?

In another text, I argued that we should only talk about racism when it can be demonstrated that the idea of race guides social action and its structuring (Guimarães, 1999). Otherwise, it would be more appropriate to talk about sexism, xenophobia etc.

The concept of race I used at the time was of a Weberian nature. It referred to a social action subjectively guided by the idea of race. The sociological concept of race would therefore serve us to deal with behaviors, attitudes and social institutions in which the idea of race was present, albeit concealed by tropes, or in a systematically latent way. But how to define race? At the time, I didn't need to go any further than referring to all the instruments mobilized by the pseudo-scientific racial theories developed in the 19th century and still present in the social imagination. The authors who carried out ethnographic work in Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s were unanimous in documenting the existence of these ideas and doctrines in Brazilian society (Wagley, 1952; Nogueira, 1998; Harris, 1956; Hutchinson, 1957), as well as documenting that the word "race" was not commonly used, but rather "color", or "quality", to refer to these beliefs.

However, at the same time, historians and social scientists (Murji and Salomos, 2005; Mattos, 2009) were expanding the use of the concept of "racialization", i.e. the transformation or reduction of people or groups into races, even if they were classified on the basis of different characteristics. This now allows us to define "race" more precisely. Thus, I am moving towards a clearer definition by observing that the idea of race we are dealing with is made up of four defining elements: a) it connotes the hereditary transmission of intellectual, mental and behavioral characteristics; b) it seeks to explain history and social life as if it were part of a natural order; c) it establishes somatic and cultural markers in political discourses; d) it is used to designate, maintain or reverse social hierarchies.

These defining elements also allow us to tackle the distinction proposed by Appiah (2014) and Machery and Faucher (2005) between racialism and racism. While the former is the belief in the natural division of human beings into races (elements *a* and *c*), the latter involves the belief in a moral and intellectual hierarchy between races (elements *a*, *b*, *c* and *d*). We should therefore only speak of racism when practices and discourses mobilize all these elements of race, explicitly or not, in concrete historical situations, as in the case of Jews converted to Catholicism in the 15th and 16th centuries, and referred to as *New Christians*; in the anti-Semitism of the European 20th centuries, when Jews were transformed into a race; or the descendants of Africans enslaved in the Americas, at any time, referred to as "blacks" in the post-abolition period etc.

In other words, following Appiah or Machery and Faucher, the belief in races does not necessarily lead to racism, although racism cannot do without the idea of race.

W. E. B. Du Bois, for example, considered that the only way for black Americans to counter racism would be to accept the mission of fully developing their civilizing potential as blacks, i.e. as a race. This would put them on an equal footing with other races and civilizations (Du Bois, 1897; Bessone and Renault, 2021).

Before moving on, it is worth highlighting a crucial analytical distinction between elements *a* and *c* of our definition. Jean-Frédéric Schaub and Silvia Sebastiani have convincingly argued that race, as the hereditary transmission of qualities and virtues, as well as defects, can be traced back to the notion of noble blood, nurtured by the medieval aristocracy; a charisma that was later turned into a stigma by the Iberians' doctrine of blood purity, used to negatively discriminate against New Christians (Schaub and Sebastiani, 2021). In other words, they establish, without leaving any room for doubt, that the prejudice of origin, inherent in the idea of race, was already present in the European imagination before the African slave trade; therefore, and more importantly, origin must be treated in an analytically separate way from the physical or cultural markers that identify race socially.

The distinction between racialism and racism is crucial for the study of racism in the Americas because here resistance to racism, the struggle for civil rights and even the guarantee of political rights came about through the development of racial consciousness among those oppressed by race, who moved away from the humanist ideal of simple rejection of race, and consequent integration into nation-states, to form communities of great social solidarity and unity of political purpose within nations. We therefore have two functional uses of race coexisting in our societies – one to oppress and justify social hierarchies, the other to organize and lead resistance to oppression. The simple, humanist and individualist way of defining racism as a way of conceiving or treating an individual not as an individual with universal rights, but as a member of an inferior racial group, has historically proved incapable of leading the anti-racist struggle, even and despite the efforts to build the imaginary of mixed-race nations in Latin America or the republican, secular and individualist order in Europe.

We could ask ourselves to what extent the resistance of many European social scientists today to using the term "race" in the social sciences, preferring the term "ethnicity", does not stem partly from the fact that the communities of origin to which race historically referred in Europe, until the 15th century, were all actually demarcated by ethnic or national symbolism and discourses – French, German, Jewish races, etc. After all, this fact preceded the use of the term "white" to refer to

all European peoples, identified on the basis of physical markers, in contrast to the peoples of other continents.

Another observation about Balibar. What we call structural cannot do without human agency, nor can it be recognized only by its effects, otherwise it will become a *black box that* hides rather than reveals processes. Not only are institutions the result of political actions and interactions, such as norms, rules, regulations, laws, etc., but they also require human intervention and decisions in their interpretation and application. An extensive bibliography on bureaucracies deals with this subject, but I will only refer to Lipsky (1980).

To sum up, we have so far defined two notions of race that make up a properly scientific concept: one refers to subjective social action, i.e. the universe of agents; the other refers to the logic of political power and its reproduction. And we also have two self-designations of "race", one by the oppressor, the other by the oppressed.

Returning to Balibar's quote, understanding racism as a total social fact does not, however, prevent us from talking about its manifestations in unique ways: police racism, everyday racism, environmental racism, structural racism, etc. While the first two uses refer to manifest behaviors – for example, the way in which police violence is preferentially meted out to black people, or how they are treated differently in social relations – some can only be ascertained statistically – black people, for example, may be more exposed to risks of environmental contamination as a result of their racial situation, in a chain of causes that is difficult to determine other than statistically; likewise, public and private institutions, which structure social life, can end up generating forms of selection and operation that prove to be racially biased.

We can therefore conclude that racism, as a total social fact, can also manifest itself in a partial way, depending on the concrete situation in which the social forces of racism and anti-racism find themselves. In the post-war West, until very recently, the idea of race was not tolerated in public discourse, so that racial discrimination and prejudice were normatively curbed, sometimes even legally. In the case of Brazil, strict racial etiquette made it unacceptable to use the term "race" or even to refer to the color of a black person. In other words, racism only operated institutionally through the biasing of results or life chances, or through tropes or *profiling of* characteristics associated preferentially with black people. In fact, at no time in the history of the West have we failed to hear voices and read writings opposing the operation of racism. Such opposition could be made from outside the oppressed groups or by the oppressed groups themselves. There is no racism without anti-racism.

The idea of race only as a community of ethnic belonging is therefore also mobilized in anti-racist discourses, that is, in discourses, practices and institutions that oppose situations and structures of exploitation and oppression. I return once again

to Balibar. In his writing, the idea of race used by the subaltern can be understood as an alienated mode of reaction, delimited by the dominant use of the oppressor. It would therefore also be a subaltern use with no libertarian future, trapped in the anti-humanism of racism itself. This would be the way to read it within the Marxist tradition of the 1960s. But should the fact that they are trapped in the lexicon of racism in their struggle for liberation, what Balibar refers to as an embarrassment, mean that they are confined in a vicious circle? We should remember that trade union struggles since the 19th century have been limited to the logic of reproducing the relationship of wage exploitation, without the workers' struggle being considered alienated. In the Marxian philosophy of praxis, the struggle itself as a practice is capable of clarifying political choices. In the case of the anti-racist struggle, we should also assume that the humanist ideal of a nonracialized world can also be outlined through the struggle in which racial forms are used.

The assumption that anti-racism must necessarily be based on a refusal to use the concept of race is untenable for scientific and political reasons.

Scientifically, because it prevents us from studying how the idea of race permeates social and political life, regardless of the fact that the concept has no natural existence, i.e. it cannot be used by the natural sciences without causing confusion about its social use. However, the human sciences have as their object facts that are socially constructed, that guide social action and that allow the reproduction, in whole or in modification, of the social order and its institutions. It is therefore impossible to ignore the fact that the idea of race is used on a daily basis in the social order and has structuring effects.

Politically, because it would be wrong to assume that the political forces of antiracism always do without the idea of race. Certainly, in some racist constellations, such as anti-Semitism, the fight against it can be organized politically from religious or secular organizations, from Judaism to Zionism, dispensing with and rejecting the idea of race, since it is a question of giving full existence to a people, a religion or a nation. In the case of anti-black racism, this strategy is more difficult, since there is no national, religious or ethnic commonality among the racialized, apart from racialization itself. The common experience of enslavement, or the experience of colonization, or the fact that they are universally referred to as "black" are commonly used as agglutinating references for their political organization.

Of course, we should not read Balibar from a Marxist tradition in which anti-black racism would be a consequence of the expansion and operation of mercantile, industrial and financial capitalism and its colonialism and neo-colonialism, rather than a concomitant historical unfolding of new power relations – colonial or national – and old ethnic mental structures. The perspective that capitalism operates

as an ontologically alienating mode of production generally leads to the conclusion that the anti-capitalist struggle is better organized without the idea of race, since it would be about building a radically egalitarian society, without capitalist alienation. This anti-racist strategy, unfortunately, although capable of drastically reducing racial inequality, has so far not been effective in eradicating racism, even in countries that have experienced or are experiencing socialism in a lasting way (De la Fuente, 1995; 2013).

We suggest the hypothesis that abolishing the concept of race is ineffective in combating racism, just as establishing equal opportunities alone is insufficient if we disregard the way in which these opportunities are socially hierarchized. On the contrary, it seems necessary for the groups that suffer racism to be able to organize and act in all spheres of social life so that they themselves are the agents of their political commitments and decisions.

There are uses of race that seem to refer to analogies rather than racialization processes, such as "class racism" or "intelligence racism". Gérard Mauger (2011), Pierre Bourdieu (1980) and Jean-Claude Croizet (2011), who use these expressions, only seem to want to draw attention to the fact that certain social groups are treated or socially erected by claiming a charisma of superiority. Bourdieu, for example, uses "racism" in a particularly loose and functionalist way: "there are as many racisms as there are groups that need to justify the way they exist, which constitutes the invariant function of racisms". In such cases, it would be better to admit that the class hierarchy can be rigid, and that dominant groups tend to develop an ethos of social superiority, without great mobility or social proximity, to the point of allowing, for example, bourgeois or middleclass sectors to think of poverty as arising from the culture of the poor, and to nurture a series of stigmas in relation to the popular classes or those who do not possess Western erudite knowledge. As Elias and Scotson (1994) have shown, stigmatization can be employed within the same class so that one part of it monopolizes social charisma to the detriment of the other.

But what about religious intolerance towards relatively homogeneous groups in cultural terms, or even phenotypically, such as the Arabs? Is what is called Islamophobia a type of racism? Are we dealing with racism without races, or cultural racism?

Just as medieval anti-Judaism evolved into antisemitism, which attributed hereditarily transmitted characters and personalities, wouldn't this also be the case with European Muslims? If so, then we would have formed a (social) race. I believe that this is, however, a question for empirical investigation. In Modood's (2018) definition, which seems correct to me: "Islamophobia is the racialization of Muslims, on the basis of physical appearance or biological ancestry, as members of a community, attributing to them cultural or religious values and characteristics, used to defame,

marginalize, discriminate against, or demand assimilation, and thus treating them as second-class citizens". In this case, therefore, the word "race" may disappear from the racist vocabulary, replaced by "culture", "civilization", or "religion", but the idea of race remains. In other words, many European authors in the 21st century have retained the term "racism" to refer to forms of racialization that do not operate with a doctrine that preaches the existence and hierarchy of races. They would therefore be institutional, behavioural or attitudinal forms of racism that do not require racial doctrines, but work with national, religious or civilizational discourses. The important thing for these authors, with whom I also agree, is that the idea of race is a central marker for the definition and identification of the group by others. Most of the time, however, these groups treated as races do not define themselves in this way, which prevents the social relations between racializers and racialized from effectively stabilizing into race relations. Racism is, by definition, one-sided. These conflicts evolve into forms of cultural and religious intolerance that are no less aggressive and deleterious than doctrinaire racism.

It remains to be seen what we mean by racialization and racial formation[5] . The term is used in different ways by different authors. Their different meanings, however, cannot be established by organizing the authors into clusters (Felix, 2024), since most authors explore its different meanings, and can speak of heteroracialization, autoracialization, deracialization, etc. One way out seems to me to be to look at the dimensions or analytical axes in which we are using the concept of racialization. Are we analyzing at the level of the individual or the collective? Is it a person who is being subsumed into a particular group through the use of the idea of race, thus dehumanized, as Fanon noted? Or is it a group that is being formed by racial naming? Are we or are we not analyzing the implications of this nomination for the social structure, in terms of hierarchization, exploitation, oppression? And how does the struggle against the dehumanization, oppression or exploitation of those who have been racialized take place historically? By denying or affirming race as a form of identification? There is no reason, in principle, to say that one definition of racialization is correct and can encompass all the concrete possibilities, because what is at stake is always a given historical conjuncture, or a given social situation. For this reason, because it encompasses the concrete and

5. In other articles (Guimarães, 2016, 2017) I think I have used *racial formation* in the sense that Przeworski (1977) gave to *class formation*, i.e. the historical development of a class-for-itself. Now, I prefer to use it with the primary meaning given by Marx (2008) to an economic-social formation: a unity of systems of exploitation, oppression and ideology. In our case, *racial formation* as the unity in historical time of various forms of racialization. In other words, racial oppression and emancipatory struggle as they occur in a historical period.

historical dynamics of racialization, I use the concept of *racial formation*, coined by Omi and Winant (1994).

Challenges for empirical research

To conclude, I will assess the main challenges that the concepts of racism and racialization pose for empirical research in the social sciences (see also Campos or Gato, in this issue).

To begin with, the definition of racism as a total social fact, whose manifestations may or may not occur simultaneously in various spheres of social life – discourses, values, behaviors, institutions, social structures –, poses a great difficulty for observation: how are these different spheres articulated in space, time and in a particular institution? Furthermore, if not all discourses or attitudes of essentialization and naturalization of social life are racist, that is, they can occur and be effective without reference to the notion of race, how in each specific case can institutional and bureaucratic consequences be called racist and what role do these forms of essentialization play in characterizing an institution as racist?

Let me take two recent examples of excellent research dealing with racism in correctional or judicial institutions (Vinuto, 2009; Marques, 2023). Both authors analyze discourses, whether scholarly or common sense, that essentialize the criminal or deviant behavior of juvenile offenders, in the case of Vinuto, or of those imprisoned for theft or robbery, in the case of Marques, but neither of them manages to demonstrate that the category of race plays a preponderant role in this specific discourse, which is peremptorily denied by the subjects. Certainly, there is a vulgar biology in the justifications and arguments; a notion of a bandit or criminal nature is present in the discourses, but there is no explicit reference to racial nature; on the contrary, it is as if a genetic lottery chose these individuals. And yet, both authors manage to statistically establish the racial selectivity of both the object of the essentializing discourse and the incarcerated population.

In conversations with socio-educational agents, police officers or legal professionals who use essentializing discourses, even those of a biologizing nature, the term "race" is not considered legitimate or much less accepted. Are these agents contaminated by ideologies that deny actual racism, such as "racial democracy", or are they constrained by political correctness? Both authors flirt with such explanations for the self-deception of social agents.

There is, however, another possibility, which clearly appears in Luiz Gamboa

Marques' thesis. The explanation may lie in the articulation between an ideology of "dangerous classes" (Guimarães, 1982), on the one hand – that is, marginalized,

vulnerable and feared populations (the unemployed, the miserable, young men) – and a generalized suspicion of this population, which would be more prone to crime, especially against private property; and, on the other hand, social selectivity in the composition of this population in racial or ethnic terms. The discourse justifying suspicion falls on these "dangerous classes" – they would be people prone to criminal and illegal behavior, or adolescents with a supposedly perverse and irreversible nature.

In terms of the theory of racism we outlined above, systemic racism would be responsible for racial selectivity in the composition of the "dangerous classes"; while essentializing discourses – which treat what is proper to the social order as belonging to the natural order – would justify placing people in these classes. The first, systemic racism, can only be perceived statistically, as it arranges individuals' life opportunities by race or ethnicity; while the second, the attitudinal or behavioral racism of the agents, can be observed through discourse or behavioral analysis.

Whatever the arrangement between the various dimensions of racism, it can only be determined by empirical analysis, case by case. In other words, if we want to avoid the vice of taking as given what must be demonstrated (racism), we must separate what can be diagnosed as systemic or structural from what is attitudinal, discursive or behavioral. It is possible for a racist structure to be coupled with a non-racist essentializing discourse.

Another empirical difficulty arises when it comes to historical and social processes by which groups that are defined by others as races (racialized) and are therefore victims of racism, but in order to combat it, also define themselves in racial terms. In this case, we may (or may not) be dealing with racial discourses and structures, but not necessarily regimes of hierarchy and oppression, but only regimes of struggle for racial equality. There is no *a priori* assumption that these collectives that assume themselves to be races are groups with oppressive attitudes and behaviors, or about the scope and effectiveness of the racialist system they constitute.

As far as research into racialization processes is concerned, Brazilian historians have made steady progress when it comes to the post-abolition period. In this period, theories of human races and their hierarchy gained wide circulation in the dominant and literate classes, and historical research consists of demonstrating how individuals previously classified as freedmen, free people of color, etc. are reclassified as members of a single "black race" (Albuquerque, 2009; Gato, 2020). For other historical periods, however, Colony or Empire (Mattos, 2009), prior to the popularization of theories about human races, the task for historians is more arduous – it consists of demonstrating that the regimes of essentialization and naturalization of the social world are based on ideas of race, even if they don't necessarily use physiognomic traits as markers (Shaub and Sebastiani, 2021).

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Abstract

Race and racism, junctions and disjunctions

In this article, I explore the reasons why the need to conceptualize *racism* has developed in this century within the social science tradition, as well as the reasons why this conceptualization is still highly controversial today. This leads me to discuss the relationship between *racism* and *race,* and the development of the *analytical* use of the term race in the social sciences. In making this argument, I will defend two simple but radical theses: that there is no way to conceptualize racism without reference to race, just as there is no racism without human agency.

Keywords: Race; Racism; Sociology of racism; Racialization.

Resumo

Raças e racismos, junções e disjunções

Neste artigo, exploro as razões para que se tenha desenvolvido no presente século, no interior da

tradição das ciências sociais, a necessidade de se conceituar o *racismo*, assim como as razões por que tal conceituação é ainda, nos dias que correm, fortemente controversa. Isso me leva a discutir a relação entre *racismo e raça*, e o desenvolvimento do uso *analítico do termo raça* nas ciências sociais. Ao fazer essa discussão, defenderei duas teses simples, mas radicais: a de que não há como conceituar racismo sem referência a raças, assim como não há racismo sem agência humana.
Palavras-chave: Raça; Racismo; Sociologia do racismo; Racialização.

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