

NEOLIBERAL USE OF TERRITORY AND CONDEMNED PEOPLE OF THE EARTH: PERMANENCE OF INJUSTICE AND INEQUALITY SITUATION IN BRAZILIAN TIME-SPACE

Uso neoliberal do território e condenados/as da terra: permanência da situação de injustiça e desigualdade no tempo-espaço brasileiro

Uso neoliberal del territorio y condenados de la tierra: permanencia de la situación de injusticia y desigualdad en el tiempo-espacio brasileño



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ABSTRACT

The main purpose of this writing is to discuss the neoliberal use – a trend reactivated by the current capitalism dynamics – of Brazilian territory, not only expanding, but, at the same time, aggravating the condition of land's condemned to people belonging to indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, riverside dwellers and their descendants. Under the critical approach to geography, which studies society through the category of territory used permanently within the scope of the global historical process, we notably use the methodological procedures of literature review and the superposition of maps designed to represent the phenomena discussed here, in its transversality relationships. This choice was made due to its relevance to understanding space as a complex totality in permanent historical movement. The continuity of the coloniality of power and knowledge, based on Eurocentrism, has contributed to the maintenance of injustices and social inequalities in Brazilian time-space, condemning these people to the condition of sub-citizenship and denial, despite social achievements in terms of emancipation that occurred during the course of the historical movement. However, the civil society has taken advantage of the loopholes in the colonial-modern-racist capitalist system, some of which remain and/or are opened by the condemned of the earth in order to re-exist in the search for the construction of another rationality capable of rescuing lost humanity.

Keywords: Coloniality; Historical-territorial formation; Empty space; R-existence; Brazil.

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RESUMO

O objetivo principal do presente escrito é discutir o uso neoliberal – tendência reativada pela dinâmica atual do capitalismo – do território brasileiro, não somente ampliando, mas, ao mesmo tempo, agravando a condição de condenados/as da terra às pessoas pertencentes aos povos indígenas, africanos escravizados, ribeirinhos e seus descendentes. À luz da abordagem crítica da geografia, a qual estuda a sociedade pela categoria território usado permanentemente no âmbito do processo histórico global, utilizamos, notadamente, dos procedimentos metodológicos da revisão da literatura e da superposição de cartas elaboradas para representar os fenômenos ora tratados, em sua transversalidade. Esta escolha aconteceu em função da sua pertinência para compreender o espaço como uma totalidade complexa em permanente movimento histórico. A continuidade da colonialidade do poder e do saber, calcada no eurocentrismo, tem contribuído para a manutenção das injustiças e desigualdades sociais no tempo-espaço brasileiro, condenando as referidas pessoas à condição de subcidadania e de negação, não obstante as conquistas sociais em termos de emancipação ocorridas no curso do movimento histórico. Contudo, a sociedade civil tem-se aproveitado das brechas no sistema capitalista colonial-moderno-racista, algumas das quais ficam e/ou são abertas pelos/as próprios/as condenados/as da terra no sentido de r-existirem na busca da construção de uma outra racionalidade capaz de resgatar a humanidade perdida.

Palavras-chave: Colonialidade; Formação histórico-territorial; Espaço vazio; R-existência; Brasil.

RESUMEN

El principal objetivo de este escrito es discutir el uso neoliberal – tendencia reactivada por la dinámica actual del capitalismo – del territorio brasileño, no sólo expandiendo, sino, al mismo tiempo, agravando la condición de condenados y condenadas de la tierra a personas pertenecientes a pueblos indígenas, africanos esclavizados, ribereños y sus descendientes. A la luz del enfoque crítico de la geografía, que estudia la sociedad a través de la categoría de territorio utilizado permanentemente en el ámbito del proceso histórico global, utilizamos notablemente los procedimientos metodológicos de revisión de literatura y la superposición de mapas diseñados para representar los fenómenos aquí discutidos, en su transversalidad. Esta elección se hizo debido a su relevancia para entender el espacio como una totalidad compleja en permanente movimiento histórico. La continuidad de la colonialidad del poder y del saber, basada en el eurocentrismo, ha contribuido al mantenimiento de injusticias y desigualdades sociales en el tiempo-espacio brasileño, condenando a esos pueblos a la condición de subciudadanía y negación, a pesar de los logros sociales en términos de emancipación que se produjo durante el transcurso del movimiento histórico. Sin embargo, la sociedad civil ha aprovechado las grietas del sistema capitalista colonial-moderno-racista, algunas de las cuales permanecen y/o son abiertas por los condenados de la tierra, para volver a existir en la búsqueda de la construcción de otra racionalidad capaz de rescatar a la humanidad perdida.

Palabras clave: Colonialidad; Formación histórico-territorial; Espacio vacío; R-existencia; Brasil.

1 INTRODUCTION

The permanence of inequalities and social injustices that still are manifested in Brazilian time-space results from the process of historical-territorial formation marked by moments of exploitation and dispossession of Nature, surrounding and exterminating populations belonging to Indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans and riverside dwellers,

among others, who become the principal victims of this ominous process.

Under the parameters of the primitive accumulation of capital in Europe, the Brazilian space was placed in the International Division of Labor (IDL) as a supplier of tropical products and minerals, accumulating most of the wealth generated, especially outside this space. This territorial organization established as a harsh reality imposed on the colonies and, in turn, on their populations, imposing on them with the condition of condemned to the land.

The condemned of the earth, according to Fanon (2022), comprised the disinherited mass of men and women from territories colonized by the violence of Eurocentrism. In Brazil, these are people belonging to Indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, and riverside dwellers, as well as the most precarious and vulnerable segments of the current working class.

Therefore, the condemned of the earth resulted from the process of colonial exploitation, which imposed on men and women of the occupied territories – mainly Indigenous and Black peoples – a life marked by aspects of inhumanity and invisibility. Nowadays, the neoliberalism inherent in modern capitalism have reinforced such elements.

Brazil's political-administrative emancipation changed its status from Colony (16th-19th century) to Empire (19th century) and, later, to Republic (20th century). However, the logic of use and occupation of the territory remained tied to Eurocentric interests, aggravating the aspects of inhumanity and invisibility of the subjects. Thus, the Brazilian space has consolidated itself as an integral part of the global network that expands the processes of production and circulation of goods, reconfiguring the spatial arrangement aimed at maximizing accumulation.

If the commodity is an instrument to subjugate Indigenous peoples, it also has its return, its counterpart. At the same time that it destroys or modifies tribal societies, it creates a channel for vivifying social relations, and it throws the Indian into the contradiction of the market society, in which the commodity enriches and impoverishes simultaneously (Martins, 1986, p. 16).

Moreover, when we conceive the territory as an empty space to be permanently conquered and filled with spatial/fixed objects to enforce the expansion and consolidation of capitalist relations, the ruling classes continue to organize space, disrespecting and destroying Nature and the socio-cultural relations of peoples, thus reaffirming the denial of others.

We add that, within the scope of the contradictory and dialectical logic of the use

and occupation of the territory in Brazil, the contradictions perceived as unjust raised tensions and socio-political conflicts that took advantage of the gaps of the colonial-modern-racist capitalist system, as the space capitalist valorisation produced and aggravated social injustices and inequalities, imposing to population the condition of condemned of the earth.

In this respect, there are alternatives for rehumanizing the world, valuing the richness of the diversity of the territory. Consequently, we must emphasize the diverse ways of the use and occupation of the territory as forms of resistance from the peoples of *Abya Yala* – the original name of Latin America – in the opposite of the colonial-modern-racist capitalist system.

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to discuss the neoliberal use and occupation – capitalism current trend – of the Brazilian territory, which expands and aggravates the condition of the condemned of the earth to the Indigenous peoples. This has increased the human diversity's forms of denial, imposing on it the extreme and challenging violence that needs to be overcome.

The methodology chosen for this discussion was based on the critical approach to geography, which seems better for understanding and explaining space as a complex totality in permanent historical movement. From this perspective,

[...] when we want to define any part of the territory, we must consider the interdependence and inseparability between materiality, which includes nature, and its use, which includes human action, their work, and politics. In this respect, we only face the living territory, living. Where we must consider the fixed, i.e., what is immobile, and the flows, i.e., what is mobile. The fixed elements are generally constituted of public or social order, while the flows are formed by public or private elements [...]. The territory also reveals past and present actions, but frozen in the objects, and present actions constituted in actions (Santos and Silveira, 2001, p. 247).

Considering the territory used as a category of analysis, we reviewed publications on the delimited problem – mainly in works produced in academia and in articles from websites of institutions that combat the siege of Indigenous lands and work lands. We also utilized a superposition of maps¹ made to represent phenomena treated as an inseparable and dialectical result of the interrelationship between technosphere and psychosphere.

¹ According to Guerra (1987), maps are graphic representations of the Earth's surface and the physical and human phenomena that occur on it. They are made, above all, to make it easier to visualise geographic space and everything that happens in it more precisely.

The **technosphere** is adapted to the rules of production and exchange and thus often translates distant interests; however, as soon as it is installed, it replaces the previous natural or the technical environment and becomes a local fact, adhering to the place like a prosthesis. The **psychosphere**, the realm of ideas, beliefs, passions, and the place where meaning is produced, is also part of this environment, this surrounding of life, providing rules for rationality or stimulating the imagination. Both – technosphere and psychosphere – are local, but they are the results of a society much broader than the determined place (Santos, 1997, p. 204, our highlights).

This study brings three sections that aim to: highlight the re-production and situation of condemned of the earth for significant segments of Brazilian society; reflect on the conquest of rights not effected, making the historical issue of sub-citizenship and/or mutilated citizenship remain, which makes it hard to overcome the condition of condemned of the earth, bringing to attention the unfair and unequal character of Brazil historical-territorial formation and the constancy threats to people due to the perversity of the referred process; and at last final considerations.

For Santos (1987), the condition of sub-citizenship and/or mutilated citizenship refers, in general, to precarious access to civil, political, and social rights, even though they are historically acquired, leaving the population to their own fate. Thus, it is a "make-believe" as laws that guarantee citizenship, including those established within the social struggles are not affected, and harm to human beings continues.

2 THE RE-PRODUCTION AND SPATIAL SITUATION OF THE CONDEMNED OF THE EARTH

Considering the critical approach to geography, first, we highlight the historical-geographical basis on which the Brazilian territory was formed, pointing to the facts resulting from capitalist use and occupation of the territory process. The nature of this process has been guided by its speculative rationality, expanding the continuous re-production of injustices and socio-spatial inequalities.

Next, we discuss the permanent perversity in the Brazilian time-space inherent to the speculative nature of the use and occupation of the territory in Brazil, considering the situation of the people who resisted and still resist the pressures and threats of continuing in the condition of condemned of the earth.

The re-production and situation of condemned of the earth present in space

because of the perverse rationality of use and occupation of the territory leave deep marks of inequalities and social injustices. Understanding this process, therefore, involves analysing the current stage of rationality that imposes on society the condition of sub-citizenship as well as its exploitation, subalternation, and oppression.

2.1 An unfair and unequal historical-territorial formation

From the sixteenth century, European countries guided by predominantly speculative interests launched themselves into the oceans to conquer lands to be used and occupied as means of the primitive accumulation of capital. What Dussel (2012) called the “cover-up of the other” began, denying peoples and cultures that did not immediately interest in that accumulation.

América no es descubierta como algo que resiste distinta, como el Otro [la bestia, masa rustica “des-cubierta” a ser civilizada por el “ser” europeo de la “Cultura Occidental”, pero “en-cubierta” en su Alteridad], sino como la materia a donde se le proyecta “lo Mismo”: “encubrimiento” (Dussel, 2012, p. 45-47).

As capitalist interests expanded worldwide, areas of Africa, Asia, and America were incorporated into European colonial empires, which were, in fact, nothing more than entrepreneurial centres established to extract and export tropical agricultural products and minerals to Europe. According to Ribeiro (2013, p. 3), this process resulted in a Colonial-Slavery formation subordinated to a Mercantile-Salvationist Empire.

Few countries have brought together, like Brazil, such divergent components in their constitution process; few have also experienced vicissitudes that show so clearly the ways in which a nation can be constituted not to serve itself, but to serve the interests of others. Effectively, Brazil was not born as an ethnicity and just became a nation because of a design by its creators. Unlike, it emerged as a kind of unwanted by-product of a colonial enterprise, resulting from the Mercantile Revolution, whose purpose was to produce sugar, gold, or coffee, and, above all, to generate exportable profits.

Therefore, Brazil was integrated due to the supply of wood extracted from the Atlantic Forest (Brazilwood), products from the Amazon Forest (rubber, et cetera), tropical agricultural articles produced on plantations (sugarcane, cotton, coffee, cocoa, et cetera), and minerals (gold, diamonds, iron, et cetera). These activities have been performed through practices of exploitation that lead the environment to exhaustion, disrespecting and

destroying the ecosystems.

By supplying Europe with these products, through the Portuguese colonial administration, Brazil's role in the IDL was constituted, which was established during the expansion of capitalist production relations in the world. Thus, as Prado Junior (1983, p. 31) argued, the Brazilian space was used and occupied according to the meaning of its role in the IDL.

Taken as a whole, and analysed on the world and internationally levels, the colonization of the tropics takes the form of a vast commercial enterprise [...] aimed at exploiting the natural resources of a virgin territory for the benefit of Europe. This is the true meaning of the tropical colonization, which Brazil is one of the products; and it will explain the fundamental elements, both economically and socially, of the historical formation and evolution of the American tropics.

Hence, Brazil's historical-territorial formation process was based on the economic valorisation of everything that could be exploited and sold to Europe. To this end, the environment was impacted by a series of dehumanizing and disrespectful actions, among which we mention: the encouragement of animosity between Indigenous peoples, in some regions, in others the extermination of ethnic groups, and destruction of Nature.

This historical-geographical process of denial produced the structure of a society forged in exiles because everything we have here is the result of another land, another continent, or another people, as signalled by Holanda (1995), and for a socioeconomic organization established in significant disparities, contradictions and antagonisms that separated men – and women – from their own experiences in the territory.

According to Moraes (1997), such actions took place from the perspective of empty space, which considered space as a blank slate to be permanently filled with the spatial/fixated objects necessary for the use and occupation of the territory to fulfil its role in the IDL.

Thus, the Latin American colonial pattern of valuing space implied a gradual relative impoverishment of the territories where it was installed, a destruction of natural wealth without an aggregation of value to the soil compatible with the wealth taken. [...] The colonial territory is seen as a “space to be gained,” a “civilizing” submission of a raw nature that encompasses the native populations – which in the eyes of the colonizer appears as another natural resource of the colonized area (Moraes, 1997, p. 37).

This Eurocentric view of the world has remained so solid that, according to the author mentioned, the elites of Latin American countries continue to think and practice the

territory as a space to be gained/conquered in an inexhaustible perspective of exploiting “resources.” Thus, the denial of Nature – forests, rivers, soils, animals, et cetera. – and of Indigenous people amid their cultures – was established in *Abya Yala*, and, consequently, it was an inhumane way of using and occupying the territory.

This situation, supported by the colonial-modern-racist capitalist rationality that persists today, not only created but, at the same time, aggravated the contradictions inherent to capitalism. These contradictions – masked by the ideology of Eurocentrism, whose hegemony passed, especially from the third decade of the twentieth century, to the United States – are represented by the different forms of injustice and social inequalities that insist on remaining in Latin America and Brazil.

Within these contradictions lies the concomitant creation of wealth and poverty, as Galeano (2021) stated when he claimed that, due to its purely speculative basis, producing wealth in Latin America has always been associated with the creation of poverty. In Brazil, after the peak of each cycle of economic-territorial growth that notably benefited the European and Brazilian ruling classes, there was a period of poverty and misery that affected the condemned of the earth.

It is no wonder, then, that on April twenty-third, two thousand and twenty-four, the President of Portugal (2024) stated that reparations had to be made to recognise the crimes committed during the colonial period: "We have to pay the costs (for slavery). Are there any actions that have not been punished, and those responsible have not been arrested? Are there goods that have been looted and not returned? How can we fix this?" This is the least that can be done to seek concrete compensation for the damages caused and, notably, to make effective the process of Brazil's independence from the rationality of the colonial-modern-racist capitalist system.

2.2 Permanent perversities and threats

Eurocentrism, as a dimension of the psychosphere, was developed and disseminated in such a convincing and efficient way to maintain capitalism's expansion worldwide that, even after the political and administrative emancipation of the colonies from Europe, the local ruling classes continued to use and occupy the territory to serve the speculative interests previously under the hegemony of Europe and then the United States.

Even after the process of political-administrative emancipation – after, above all, the first two decades of the nineteenth century – the use and occupation of the territory of Latin

American colonies continued to happen, according to Quijano (2005), under the parameters of the coloniality of power and knowledge intrinsically linked to Eurocentrism.

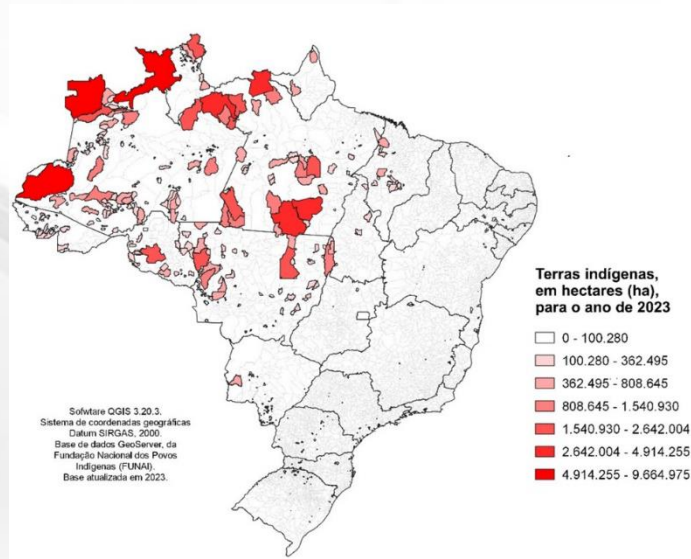
Capitalist relations of re-production of speculative interests continued to expand, permanently, threatening everything that stood in their way: Nature, Indigenous peoples, enslaved and freed Africans, and riverside dwellers who continued to be deprived of any rights.

In this context, Freyre (1985, p. XII)² criticized how monoculture-slavery-latifundium disrespected Nature, from the coastal zone of the Northeast region of Brazil where sugar mill was installed, opening "[...] in our lives, landscapes, and personalities the deepest wounds", which resulted in the devastation of their forests, the degradation of their waters, the impoverishment of their soils, the extermination of animals and the denying of man as a human being.

With a continuous process of taking over Indigenous territories, Figure 01 shows that these peoples are mostly concentrated in the North and Midwest regions, while there is a much smaller number of these territories in the Northeast, Southeast and South regions of Brazil. At the same time, it is clear that these territories along the Atlantic coast are rare, especially in the last two regions mentioned. Several Indigenous peoples lived in these regions when the Europeans invaded *Pindorama* – the land of palms, for the Indigenous people. From their perspective, they are both part of the land, and the land is part of them.

² Despite the undeniable contribution of this thinker to understanding Brazilian's reality, it is necessary to recognize some of the critical positions regarding the content of his work, among which we cite the ideas that, in Brazil, there was a racial democracy, as well as that the process of formation of the *casa grande-senzala* system happened, to some extent, without resistance from black peoples, condemning them to a condition of passivity and invisibility. Clovis Moura's work makes these positions truly clear. From his work we cite "Rebeliões da Senzala" and "Racismo e luta de Classes no Brasil." In this regard, it is worth mentioning that "History in Brazil is a problematic area of the social sciences. It is not because of conceptual or methodological imprecision but because of the cultural and political borders that pressure and hinder its legitimacy. There is an immense distance between the historical truth that it is up to the historian to record and the need and demands that the ruling classes impose on 'official' historians, such ideologues of the values, interests, and needs of the current society" (Moura, 2020, p. 5).

Figure 01 – Spatial distribution of Indigenous lands in the Brazilian territory.



Source: Data from GeoServer, National Foundation of Indigenous Peoples – FUNAI, 2023.
Drafting: The Authors, 2023.

In fact, the last three regions mentioned, notably the Northeast, compose the spaces that have been explored by Europe since the sixteenth century, with exceptions such as the presence of these territories in Maranhão, as well as in other federated states of Brazil due to resistance processes associated with the preservation of Nature.

According to the Indigenous Missionary Council (CIMI, 2008), since 1500 – the official year of the invasion of *Abya Yala* by the Europeans – until 2008, in Brazil, there was a reduction from 1,700 to 235 Indigenous peoples, knowing that 77% of them live in the Legal Amazon. According to the parameters highlighted, during the process of use and occupation of the Brazilian territory, these peoples faced a fast decimation, especially between the end of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century, with the extraction of rubber and the consequent opening of roads, expanded this last century.

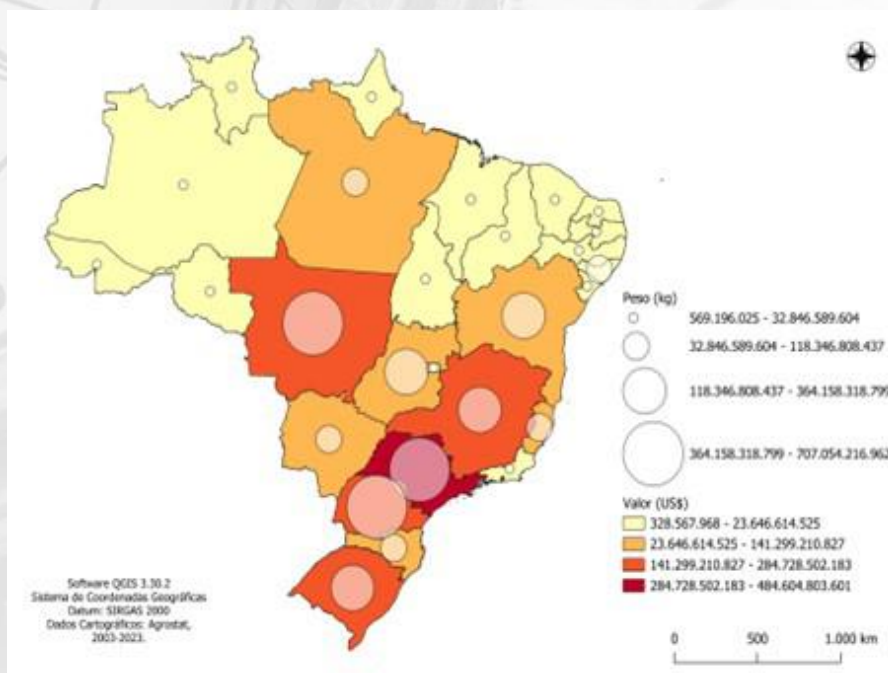
In 1910, the Indian Protection Service (SPI acronym in Portuguese) was established, and later, in 1967, it was replaced by the National Indian Foundation (FUNAI acronym in Portuguese). Economic and commercial interests were so preponderant in the process of use and occupation of the territory that, despite the creation of these two institutions to, in theory, solve the Indigenous issue in Brazil, they ended up enabling the large state projects of national "integration". For this reason, according to Valverde (1989), these institutions were also part of the *destruction planning*.

At the same time, we must consider that, notably since the 1980s, national legislation has been instituted to guarantee the right of Indigenous peoples to remain on their lands. However, this right has not yet been fully implemented due to the alternation of governments that are more or less sensitive to the Indigenous issue. According to Article 231 of the Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, promulgated in 1988,

Indigenous people shall have their social organization, customs, languages, creeds, and traditions recognized, as well as their original rights to the lands they traditionally occupy. The Union is responsible for demarcating such lands, protecting, and ensuring respect for all their property (Brasil, 1989, p. 168).

Despite the significant presence of Indigenous territories in the North, Midwest, and some federated states of the Northeast, compared to the other Brazilian regions, their situation in the second region is much more threatened than in the first. The Midwest constitutes a space with a significant presence of agribusiness activities (Figure 02), which have expanded disrespecting and destroying Nature, as well as socio-cultural relations of the people who live there – including Indigenous peoples, quilombolas, and riverside dwellers –, condemning them to expropriation.

Figure 02 – Spatial distribution of agribusiness, by weight and price of exported products, from 2003 to 2023.



Source: Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply, Agrostat – Statistics of international trade of Brazilian agribusiness. Drafting: The Authors, 2023.

Thus, we noticed that in Brazil agribusiness is concentrated in the most economically dynamic regions of capitalism, where the South and the Southeast form a significant nucleus – with São Paulo as a nucleus of concentration and dispersion of the privatizing interests of modern agriculture.

In the course of history, fronts for the use and occupation of the territory have been established from these two regions, heading towards the Centre-West - Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, and Goiás - and the North - Pará - extensively conquering areas to fill them with spatial objects to strengthen the economy and, in turn, to destroy those areas.

We also emphasize that agribusiness strength is so significant that it opened another border between the Midwest and Northeast regions – more specifically, comprising portions of the federated states of Maranhão, Tocantins, Piauí, and Bahia, well known as MATOPIBA. This region, defined by Alves (2020, p. 3) as Cerrados of the Center-North of Brazil, is a new area that arouses international and national capital interest in the production of "[...] agroforestry monocultures and cattle ranching using planted pastures, causing changes in various human and natural dynamics of the region". Brandão, Castilho, and Moraes (2017) emphasized that the regional dynamics of these areas were changed to become spaces for the expansion of agribusiness based on the territory's productive use, aiming at economic growth. This expansion is linked to the preponderant global commodity market interests to the detriment of local interests. Therefore, for Alves (2020), such changes constitute serious socio-environmental impacts translated into the expropriation, above all, of traditional populations – Indigenous people, quilombolas, riverside dwellers, babassu coconut breakers, gerazeiras, et cetera. – who have inhabited this region for immemorial times.

As agribusiness expanded through the territories mentioned above, conceiving them as “empty space,” Indigenous, quilombola, and riverside territories were eliminated, even when their mobilizations and struggles began to strengthen them to actively resist and claim to insert their rights into federal legislation.

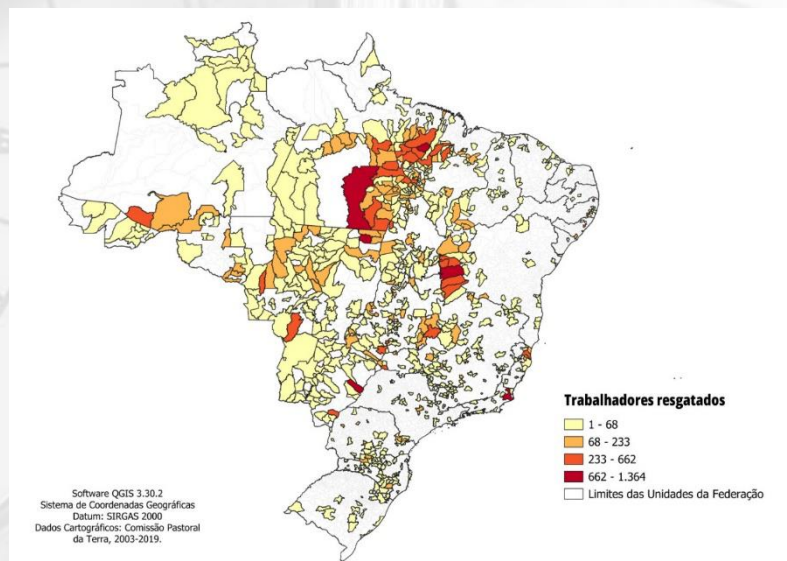
However, despite all achievements, these people continue to be threatened by frequent attempts to modernize agriculture and livestock in their territories and territorialities. The state of Pará, in the North region, recorded the highest number of conflicts caused by agribusiness activities surrounding Indigenous territories, although practices of resistance sustained in local traditions continue to occur.

In this context, the idea of the new is not always immediately clear. On the one hand, capitalist advance in the countryside has clearly promoted the rupture of old dependence, loyalty, and submission relations. It is easy to see the process of progressive emancipation of rural workers. On the other hand, workers in many regions still seek traditional relations, such as joint effort, as a reaction to expulsion and violence in the countryside (Martins, 1986, p. 103).

Still in the North region, the states of Amazonas, Rondônia and Roraima have a significant density of Indigenous territories, precisely because, in their areas, agribusiness is not yet noticeable. However, this does not mean that there are no conflicts in those locations that threaten Indigenous territories since the danger there comes from mining activities.

Comparing Figure 02 with Figure 03, we note the permanence of the coloniality of power and knowledge regarding not only the continuity of an extensive model of the expansion of modernized agricultural activities but, simultaneously, the type of labour relations close to what was used – legally – before the definitive abolition of slavery.

Figure 03 – Spatial distribution of workers used as slave labour in the Brazilian territory.



Source: Pastoral Land Commission (CPT acronym in Portuguese), 2013-2019.
Drafting: The Authors, 2023.

It is known that in Brazil, the abolitionist movement was slow and painful. It was not at all peaceful, as they wanted us to believe. Several laws against slavery were enacted. The best known are: Eusébio de Queirós Law (1850), which prohibited the slave trade; Law of the Free Womb (1871), which guaranteed the freedom of children born to enslaved women; Sexagenarian Law (1885), which guaranteed the freedom of enslaved people over

60 years old; and, finally, Golden Law (1888), which, theoretically, extinguished slavery in Brazil.

However, these laws were contradictory. The first was accompanied by the Land Law, which gave some privileges regarding access to land; the second one was not effective enough because the children, as dependents on their mothers, ended up working for the landowners; the third turned out to be a fallacy because, at the age of sixty, the person had already been so exploited during his existence which ended up being late to enjoy freedom, especially at times when life expectancy at birth was very low. Finally, even though the last law mentioned extinguished slavery in Brazil, the guarantee of freedom of the body of black men and women was not accompanied by other guarantees for inclusion and social mobility, such as the right to land – nullified by the Land Law (1850) –, as well as education and participation in society, reinforcing the social problem of land use and occupation in Brazil.

The annulment of these rights resulted in problems explicitly revealed in the 1880s by abolitionists, among whom we highlight Joaquim Nabuco in his work *O Abolicionismo* (2003). In fact, according to Ribeiro (1995), because of the hatred they had for the Indigenous and African peoples who constituted the Brazilian working class, the annulment of historically conquered rights was intrinsically related to the ruling classes' intention of keeping them away from the spaces consumed by them, preserving coloniality within the social relations.

According to Quijano (2005, p. 120), the world pattern of power was established by the articulation of all “[...] historical forms of labour control [unpaid imposed on colonized *racas* – Indians, blacks and mestizos, etc.] around the capital-wage labour relationship, and thus under its domination”, thus dealing, according to this same author, with the permanence of labour control under the moulds of the coloniality of power and knowledge defining the geographical distribution of each of these forms integrated into world capitalism.

Hence, slavery continued to occupy such a strong centrality in use and occupation process of the territory in Brazil, which, to this day, influences – sometimes implicitly, sometimes explicitly – the social relations established within the colonial-modern-racist capitalist society. Thus, for Schwarcz and Starling (2015, p. 92),

If the Big House delimited the boundary between the social and the service area in the past, the same symbolic architecture remains present in houses and buildings, where, until today, the service lift is not just for cargo but also, above all, for employees who keep the marks of the African past on their skin.

In addition, in the context of labour relations, we reiterate that the ruling classes continue to try to maintain their absolute dominance over these people, exploiting, subordinating, and oppressing them, also using the inhuman mechanisms introduced by the conquerors of *Abya Yala*. About how slavery happens in the context of labour relations in the twentieth century,

The so-called *peões-do-trecho*, temporary migrants from poor peasant regions, are taken to the pioneering fronts by contractors to cut down the forest and open new farms. They often fall into a web of slave relations, the so-called *peonage*, a kind of debt slavery that leaves them completely unable even to return home when they manage to free themselves (Martins, 1986, p. 60).

Slave labour, as explained in an article from the Legislative Assembly website of Goiás – one of the areas of agribusiness in Brazil – (ALEGO, 2023), is a result of a series of elements linked to the enslaved people's social vulnerability situation – by unemployment and hunger. In this context, we can mention the debts contracted with the employer and/or his agent through frauds, such as retaining contractual or personal documents and salary, and violence.

For this reason, the ruling classes in Brazil, considered by Souza (2017) as "elites of the backwardness" even today, do what they can to keep the working class – constituted, depending on the region in which it is located, by descendants of enslaved African, Indigenous and riverside peoples, among others – separated and under its halter.

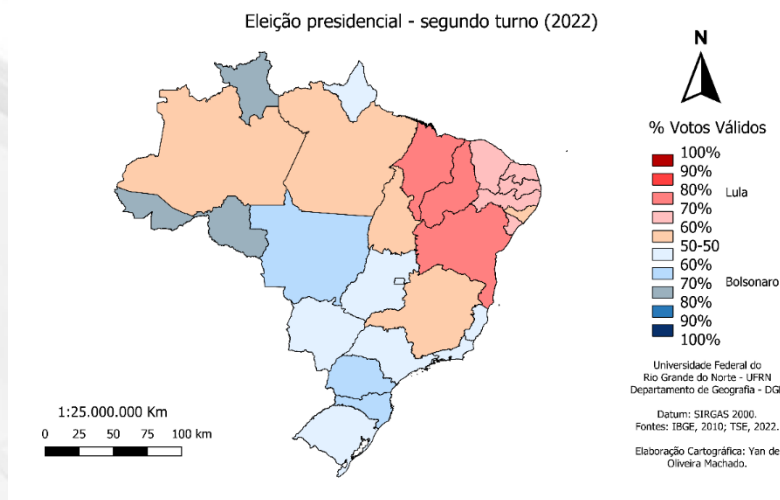
Thus, modernity continues to be offered with the slogan "agro is pop" to overcome the ills of modernization in a vicious cycle that, as a farce, is widely reproduced as capital through injustices, devastations, and tragedies in this modern/colonial world-system that governs us (Porto-Gonçalves, 2006, p. 153-154).

At the psychosphere level, the discourse elaborated and propagated of the technosphere modernization to enforce the realization of economic activities has supported the election of executive and legislative candidates to defend the purposes of the ruling classes.

The result of the presidential elections held in October/November 2022 represented the relations mentioned above by the attempt of the backward elites to maintain their colonialist interests in the face of the interests of the working class, denying the experiences of resistance of the latter social class. In this connection, Figure 04 represents a coincidence

between the economic-political oligopolies linked to the agribusiness sectors' situation and workers rescued workers from conditions "analogous to slavery."

Figure 04 – Distribution of valid votes in the presidential elections in Brazil.



Source: Superior Electoral Court (TSE acronym in Portuguese), 2023.
Drafting: The Authors, 2023.

These working conditions showed, in general, high rates, especially in regions where the far-right candidate had a percentage of votes between 50% and 90%. Even in Brazil's Northeast in its north-eastern portion, the far-right candidate obtained an expressive vote, which attests to the strength of the modernization discourse based on the coloniality of power and knowledge, maintaining the agro-export structure that supported Brazil's secular position in the IDL, imposed by Eurocentrism.

2.3 The condemned of the earth

The re-production situation of the condemned of the earth is a result of the continuous colonial violence of use and occupation of the territory. This is the most current phase of technical expansion aimed at accumulation, imposes a socio-anthropological organization that denies any form of existence contrary to the hegemonic logic.

According to Fanon (2022), capitalists, as war criminals, promoted massacres, forced labour and slavery to expand their wealth. For this reason, to this author, the popular masses should continue struggling against the same secular situation of misery they are living.

Thus, the colonial-modern-racist capitalism structure was based on a social

arrangement, territorial and imagined, centred on violence. This arrangement, in Brazil, tries to disarticulate Indigenous peoples, destroying their respective environments, as well as expropriating and exploiting enslaved African peoples and their descendants.

So, Brazil's historical-territorial formation continues to happen as, according to Ribeiro (1995), a *terrible mill to grind people*. In fact, Indigenous and Black peoples introduced in the mills of the colonial period or current farms can only remain as human beings through the unimaginable effort of self-reconstruction within the process of undoing.

The perpetuation of this logic, linked to social injustices and inequalities, resulted in the expropriation, dispossession, and denial of Nature, men and women who constituted the basis of society, making them condemned of the Earth. Thus, for Ribeiro (1995), in the context of the colonial slave enterprise, many people would be ousted from themselves, they would no longer be themselves, becoming a thing and then ethnically transfigured.

Despite reducing the human person to the condition of being condemned of the earth due to the destruction caused by the conquerors, their territorialities could not be denied, based, according to Mariátegui (2007), on the organization of collective work aimed at predominantly community purposes.

A considerable part of Latin American peoples today, living on stilts, riverside areas, and slums, among others, exist/survive under precarious conditions, without fundamental rights for their existence as human beings on Earth. The condemned of the earth's condition results from the persistence of past processes that subvert the current territory's uses and occupation. This perspective allows us to point out that to read and understand this reality, it is necessary to start from the assumption that the current historical context of use and occupation of the territory has its genesis in the instrumental rationality of colonial/modern-racist capitalism.

The fundamental problems of Latin America resulted from the association process between modernity and coloniality, are still present since the coloniality of power created a structure of permanent domination: "[...] the coloniality of power produced the mis/match between our historical experience and our main perspective of knowledge, and frustrated [...] attempts to efficiently solve our problem (Quijano, 2005, p. 23).

In Brazil, coloniality was established by the power to impose the material and immaterial imperatives of colonial-modern-racist capitalism system. For this, the coloniality of power was associated with "a racial division of labour" (Quijano, 2005, p. 118). At the same time, it destroyed Nature and territorialities, dictating the structure of domination and

conservating social and economic relations that deny peoples from existing in their diversity.

The pattern of social and economic domination, linked to the global productive sectors, imposes aggressive modes of destruction of subjectivities and individuals' denial, violating their ways of life, expropriating, and exploiting their territories, confirming the historical process of uprooting and perversity:

[...] the violent and traumatic uprooting, the experience and violence of racialization and slavery implied a no less massive and radical destruction of previous subjectivity, previous experience of society, power, the universe, earlier experience of primary and societal relations networks (Mignolo, 2017, p. 18).

Krenak (2019) argued that modernization had driven Indigenous peoples and peasants to live in favelas and urban peripheries to be exploited as labour force to dominant interests, uprooting these peoples from their respective communities; it is the reason why, according to this same thinker, the ancestral memory that guarantees identity has to be recovered.

However, there are other modes of existence that distance these peoples from the condition of misery and perversity imposed by the colonial-modern-racist capitalist system. In this way, the condemned of the earth can open – and/or take advantage of – gaps in this system to achieve diverse and plural territories. The condemned of the earth is, thus, the one who re-exists, pursuing the construct of another rationality capable of rescuing destroyed humanity.

3 RIGHTS GUARANTEED BUT NOT IMPLEMENTED: HISTORICAL ISSUE NOT YET RESOLVED DUE TO THE SLOW AND PAINFUL NATURE OF SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION IN BRAZIL

In Brazil, even today, the formation of the citizen's space has not yet been completed. Thus, people belonging to Indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, and riverside dwellers continue to suffer (Castilho, 2023) due to their condition of mutilated citizenship.

If, on the one hand, the Brazilian State was pressured by popular movements promoted by underprivileged peoples to conquer laws that guaranteed their rights. On the other hand, the effectiveness of such rights ended, to a certain extent, being annulled by the resistance of the coloniality of power and knowledge, which colonizes minds and sustains the interests of the ruling class, according (2020), violently repressing and massacring

popular movements.

In fact, according to CIMI (2008) – instituted within the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil (CNBB acronym in Portuguese) in 1975 –, around the 1970s, Brazil's Indigenous peoples began, articulately and actively, their mobilization to conquer and ensure their rights, where the right to land has been the most important. In this regard, in the 1980s, still, according to CIMI, these peoples created organizations that influenced their destinies, such as the Magna Carta, Article 231, promulgated in 1988 (CRFB, 1989).

Hence, following Ailton Krenak's idea that “Indigenous people in movement” must be understood, Scarparo (2023) stated that these peoples have always been on the march to defend their lives, and this is a fact that we must consider understanding the complexity of their historical movement.

Article 231 guaranteed, since the 1990s, the demarcation of territories, respecting the entirety of the traditionally occupied lands. Consequently, amid a series of achievements, CIMI highlights the visibility of the Indigenous issue, the conquest of territorial rights, and their recognition as a historical subject with cultures, the growth of the Indigenous population, reversing the trend towards total extermination, and appreciation of its ethnic identity.

In the 2000s, according to CIMI (2008), Indigenous peoples established institutions to reinforce their struggles: Forum de Defesa dos Direitos Indígenas (FDDI), in 2004, which supported the Mobilização de Abril indígena, promoting the Terra Livre Camp, at Esplanade of Ministries in Brasília, in this camp, emerged the Articulação dos Povos Indígenas do Brasil (APIB).

This process is so active and fruitful that, according to Scarparo (2023), the number of Indigenous organizations increased from 50 in 1985 to 100 in 1990 and 300 in 2002 to combat and overcome the historical moments of retreat social achievements obtained. Thus, after finishing the four years of the far-right government in Brazil, elected in 2018, Indigenous peoples won the right to have their ministry closer to their needs: Ministry of Indigenous Peoples. Led by an Indigenous woman, it is composed of several Indigenous peoples occupying crucial functions within the Brazilian State.

Finally, due to this protagonism, according to Barros (2023), the movement of Indigenous peoples is today the most organized social movement in Brazil because of its ability to keep many people mobilized and active in the Federal Capital, pressuring the State to meet their demands.

Regarding the struggle against slave labour, we emphasize, according to Alego

(2023), that the movement began with the creation of the National Day to Combat Slave Labour Day – January 28 – with the purpose not only of reinforcing awareness of the permanence of slave labour in Brazil but also combating it by legal means.

At the same time, according to the Comitê Nacional do Ministério Público de Combate ao Trabalho em Condições Análogas à de Escravo e ao Tráfico de Pessoas (CONATETTRAN), there are several channels for reporting the situation of slave labour in Brazil, which should be – and have been – used to combat it more quickly (Escravo, nem pensar, 2024).

Rocha and Brandão (2013) pointed out that there were some phases during the combat of this working condition. After the phase referring to slave labour as a “discredited issue”; the phase of the “beginning of the action of social movements” was established, linked to the actions of the Basic Ecclesial Communities (BEC) and the Pastoral Land Commission (CPT acronym in Portuguese), among others. Then the “recognition of the issue and the beginning of actions to confront it.” According to the same authors, in this last phase there was a social mobilization and articulated actions by the CPT, CNBB, International Labor Organization (ILO), Movimento dos Sem Terra (Landless Rural Workers Movement – MST), and Brazilian Lawyers Organization (OAB acronym in Portuguese), among others. Later was “the issue as a priority in the Government's human rights agenda” phase.

However, the struggle against slave labour had a trajectory, according to Rocha and Brandão (2013, p. 7), “[...] marked by the *lobbying* of large economic groups and by the battle of civil society that has been struggling for decades to give visibility to the theme”.

Such as, for example, a greater systematization in crime repression and an increase in the inspection of work in areas that are difficult to access geographically. Also noteworthy is the increase in economic sanctions and the greater demand for a socially responsible stance by the companies that benefit from this crime. Public and private banks are following recommendations not to grant credit to legal entities on the infamous “dirty list”, as well as the intensification of actions for collective damages (Rocha and Brandão, 2013, p. 7).

In this context, Indigenous peoples' mobilization to conquer their territories and recognize their territorialities, as well as the struggle against slave labour as a crucial goal of the anti-racist struggle, do not constitute actions restricted to Indigenous and anti-racist movements. Instead, they must be assumed, simultaneously, by the other sectors of civil society committed, as a whole, to build citizen's space in Brazil. Finally, for Santos

(1996/1997, p. 133), being a citizen

[...] it is to be like the State. It is to be an individual endowed with rights that allow him not only to confront the State but to affront the State. The citizens would be as strong as the State. A complete can understand the world and their situation in the world, and who, if they are not yet a citizen, knows what their rights could be.

Earlier historical experiences have shown that it is only through the intersectorality and transversality of the various social struggles that had been possible to give visibility to several issues to be solved, to give effect to rights guaranteed by the relevant legislation and the joint articulated social mobilization. Finally, far from the perspectives of the exacerbated individualization and fragmentation of postmodernity, the struggle constitutes a joint task, strengthening global strategies to give effect to rights. These rights, as part of the right to the city,

[...] it is in books and official speeches, but it is still way from implementation. What about, for example, the brutal changes in the landscape and the environment without the slightest consideration for people? The law is the law of the production process, whose results offend, expel, and uproot people, and not the law that guarantees the right to the city or at least the right to its surroundings. When ecology is the talk, the discourse to most claims refers to a localized, enraged, and impoverished ecology rather than the fight [...] that takes problems back to their original roots. These are confused with the production model adopted and that [...] disrespect many values from the gifts of nature to men's lives (Santos, 1987, p. 47-48).

Actions that led, also according to Santos, to the privatization of public spaces, raising the urgent need to recover them. Thus, the struggle for land – to use and occupy it as a shelter and protector territory – has been, for Martins (1986, p. 11), one of the fundamental tools of popular struggles in Brazil.

It is in this sense that the fence does not close but opens. It opens consciousness to the injured right, it opens the struggle for rights, and it opens the struggle against the right built on injustice. [...] Therefore, the massive capitalist expansion in the countryside in the last twenty years was also an expansion of contradiction. It sowed the seeds of companies, farms, land grabbing, injustice, and brutality. And it also sowed resistance, sowed new meanings for old acts, new acts for old meanings, new acts, and new meanings.

The alternation that has taken place in social conquests has followed the historical vicissitudes due to the reconfiguration of social interests in countries where the coloniality of power and knowledge continues to influence the use and occupation of the territory. In this respect,

[...] el Estado entrega aquí con una mano lo que ya retiró con la otra [...] El polo modernizador estadual de la República, heredera directa de la administración ultramarina, permanentemente colonizador e intervencionista, debilita las autonomías, irrumpe en la vida institucional, rasga el tejido comunitario, genera dependencia, y ofrece con una mano la modernidad del discurso crítica igualitario, mientras con la otra ya introdujo los preceptos del individualismo y la modernidad instrumental de la razón liberal y capitalista, jointly con el racismo que somete a los hombres no blancos al estrés y a la emasculación (Segato, 2013, p. 73-74).

However, as closed and cohesive as it may seem, the colonial-modern-racist capitalist system has, as Walsh (2015) stated, loopholes which, when they are perceived, are used by the exploited, subalterns and oppressed people to resist the expropriation imposed on them by the condition of being condemned to the land. Nevertheless,

[...] more than resistance, which means reacting to a previous action and, thus, always a reflexive action, we have r-existence, that is, a way of existing, a specific matrix of rationality that acts in the circumstances, even reacts from a *topoi*, in short, from its own place, both geographical and epistemic. In fact, it acts between two logics (Porto-Gonçalves, 2006, p. 165).

The struggle for effect historically conquered rights must, therefore, continue when it comes to solving the problem related to the condition of citizenship mutilation in Brazil, notably for the descendants of Indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, riverside dwellers, et cetera, reverting their condition as condemned of the earth.

At the same time, replacing these problems can contribute to developing new approaches, emphasizing that the passivity of black peoples, as argued by Moura (1981, p. 12), and Indigenous peoples, among others, were, in fact, “a myth created by the dominant classes to justify their criteria of repression”.

4 CONCLUSION

The discussion about the process of use and occupation of the territory in Brazil, in the light of the critical approach of geography, demonstrated that the nature of the colonial-

modern-racist capitalist system imposed on Indigenous and black peoples the condition of sub-citizenship and/or mutilated citizenship, among others, making them condemned to the earth.

However, as the historical-territorial movement of men and women is dynamic and continuous, Indigenous and Black peoples have never ceased to resist and struggle for their social emancipation, influencing the creation of institutions and laws that contributed to the effective achievement of their citizenship.

In this perspective, Indigenous and Black peoples have never ceased to resist in a more visible and combative way – mainly during the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s – in the face of Brazil's historical-territorial formation process that was clearly perverse, unjust, and unequal. This process expanded, aggravated, and consolidated the condition of the condemned of the earth for these peoples.

Despite the numerous and varied advances made in terms of achievements regarding the rights to their territory and, in turn, their respective territorialities, Indigenous lands – millenary used and occupied – and the work lands of workers in the countryside – by agribusiness – and in the city, continue to be surrounded by hegemonic interests unrelated to the local experiences of use and occupation of the territory. This makes it difficult to use and occupy the territory as shelter and protection for people.

Finally, we argue that only through the intersectoral and transversal articulation of the resistance of Indigenous peoples, enslaved Africans, and riverside dwellers, with the support and engagement of civil society – taking advantage of loopholes opened within the colonial-modern-racist capitalist system – they will be able to effective the rights conquered from the perspective of citizenship for all.

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