

Revisiting the Cordial Man: A Critical Analysis of Sérgio Buarque De Holanda's Conception

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to conduct a critical analysis of the concept of the cordial man by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, as presented in his work *Raízes do Brasil*. Initially, the text explores the concept of a cordial man, which refers to the figure of a Brazilian characterized by cordiality in social relations, but who, at the same time, carries a trait of submission, resulting from Portuguese cultural heritage. This concept, according to the author, would be at the root of corrupt practices in Brazilian politics, where voters and politicians share mutual responsibility for corruption. By associating corruption with the poorest population, predominantly made up of black and mixed-race people, the concept of the cordial man obscures the broader dimensions of racism in Brazil, making invisible the role of elites and businesspeople in maintaining structures of power and oppression. Disguised racial prejudice thus becomes a form of hidden segregation, validated by the social construction itself that marginalizes certain groups in the name of "cordiality." The cordial man not only diverts attention from the responsibilities of the elites but also perpetuates a distorted view of Brazilian social reality, hiding structural racism and its disguised forms. To carry out this study, the hypothetical-deductive approach method was adopted, which allows starting from situations previously formulated and tested through a critical analysis of existing literature. Bibliographical research is used as the main research technique, enabling a grounded and contextualized reflection on the issues raised.

Keywords: Slavery; Corruption; Cordial man; Multidimensional racism; Oppression.

INITIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Brazil, with its strong slave-owning past, it still bears the legacy of a system that perpetuated the exploitation and dehumanization of millions of black people. This legacy is not limited to the historical field, but continues to shape the social, political, and cultural dynamics of the country, perpetuating racist practices that often manifest themselves in veiled and subtle ways. The relevance of this article lies precisely in investigating how racism, deeply rooted in Brazilian society, adapts and presents itself in the most subtle and disguised forms, making it difficult to recognize and confront. In this context, a critical analysis of the concept of the cordial man, as proposed by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, becomes an important tool for deepening the discussion on racism in Brazil.

The present work seeks to prompt readers to reflect critically on the dynamics of social relations. Thus, it seeks to promote a deeper analysis of our own contributions to the maintenance of these practices and, based on the identification and understanding of these processes, to investigate how we can act effectively in combating their maintenance.

This text is structured in three sections, whose critical analysis aims to deepen understanding of the phenomenon of multidimensional racism, exemplified in the figure of the cordial man. In the first section, we will explore the concept developed by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, who describes the cordial man as a central figure in Brazilian social formation. The author attributes a dual character to cordialism: on the one hand, it reflects a relationship of human warmth, but, on the other, it manifests a predisposition to clientelism and favoritism, which become structuring elements of Brazilian society.

In the second section, the text addresses some forms of racism in contemporary society, highlighting the subtle and camouflaged forms that make it difficult to identify and confront. The text explores how structural racism, rooted in the historical legacy of slavery, continues to perpetuate itself invisibly in institutions and social relations, impacting the self-esteem and recognition of oppressed individuals, while new, more sophisticated forms of discrimination, such as multidimensional racism, emerge and consolidate.

The third section presents a critical reflection on Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's concept of the cordial man, which is a limited view that stigmatizes the lower classes, associating them with informality and clientelism, but omits similar practices among the elites.

Thus, the study aims to provide a reflection on the various manifestations of contemporary racism, with an emphasis on the transition from this form of racial discrimination, which was once expressed explicitly and ostensibly, to a more subtle, insidious, and covert racism. Over the last few decades, racism in Brazil, far from dissipating, has migrated to a more insidious configuration, in which prejudice and racial inequalities are disguised under the cloak of neutral discourse and seemingly impersonal practices.

The Cordial Man by Sérgio Buarque De Holanda

If we ask Brazilians what they consider to be one of the biggest problems in domestic politics, one of the most common answers will certainly be patrimonialism. This concept, which is present in discussions about the structural flaws in the country's political system, refers to a practice that has been ingrained since colonial times, which confuses public interests with private interests, creating a dynamic in which the state is treated as an extension of the personal assets of those in power. In other words, patrimonialism describes the close relationship between public and private power, where many politicians and public managers use the state as a tool to promote their own interests and those of the rentier elite.

On this subject, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1995) critically expresses that:

The state is not an extension of the family circle, and even less so an integration of certain groups, of certain particularistic desires, of which the family is the best example. There is no gradation between the family circle and the state, but rather a discontinuity and even opposition (Holanda, 1995).

Holanda's judgment condemns the act of appropriating the structure of the state and treating it as an extension of family or private group interests, as occurs in political systems where the government is dominated by kinship or patronage relationships.

Holanda (1995) goes on to emphasize that when the laws that regulate social coexistence and the functioning of the state are subordinated to private interests—whether family, corporate, or specific groups—equity and social justice are compromised. The consequence of this, according to Holanda, is that society is condemned to face constant crises, which can be more or less serious and prolonged, since social relations become unstructured and unequal.

According to Holanda's interpretation, the confusion between public and private property can be attributed to the evolution of the family and social institutions themselves. For the author, public institutions are descended from a continuity of family organization, and the State, as a public entity, only emerged from the transgression of this domestic order. The formation of the State, therefore, was not an abrupt rupture, but a consequence of the transition from family authority to the public domain.

The transition from this family intimacy, which previously ensured a certain continuity between the private and public spheres, contributed to the modernization of work and the advent of the division of labor.

This process of division of labor, typical of modernity, meant that activities that were previously carried out in the family space were now distributed among different sectors of society. Work ceased to be an activity of intimate, family interaction and became mediated by impersonal relationships linked to broader economic and institutional interests.

The social distancing introduced by new forms of work relations in the commercial environment, marked by the division of labor necessary for the professionalization and efficiency of economic relations, does not seem to have effectively reached the public sphere, which, according to Holanda (1995), continues to be permeated by the logic of private relations, individual interests, and emotional ties:

In Brazil, where the primitive patriarchal family structure has prevailed since ancient times, the development of urbanization—which is not only the result of the growth of cities, but also of the growth of the media, drawing vast rural areas into the sphere of influence of cities—has led to social imbalance, the effects of which are still felt today.

It is not easy for those in positions of public responsibility, shaped by such an environment, to understand the fundamental distinction between the private and public spheres (Holanda, 1995).

The personal characteristic mentioned above, strongly influenced by family ties and cronyism, contributed to the formation of an administrative system where interests are often rooted in this type of relationship. This dynamic tends to favor personality, which, in turn, can hinder the implementation of an impersonal administrative order based on objective criteria.

In this context, Holanda (1995) emphasizes that Brazil's contribution to the relationship between public and private, although not exclusive to us and subject to critical analysis later on, is strongly rooted in cordiality. This cultural characteristic gave rise to the concept of the cordial man, which does not necessarily refer to kindness or friendliness, but to the way in which interpersonal relationships influence public spaces, blurring the boundaries between the personal and the institutional:

The friendliness, hospitality, and generosity so praised by foreigners who visit us represent, in effect, a defining trait of the Brazilian character, at least to the extent that the ancestral influence of patterns of human coexistence, informed by rural and patriarchal environments, remains active and fruitful. It would be a mistake to assume that these virtues can be equated with "good manners" or civility. They are, above all, legitimate expressions of an extremely rich and overflowing emotional background (Holanda, 1995).

According to Holanda (1995), informal modes, derived from the impersonality characterized by the figure of the cordial man, are present in various spheres of social life. An example of this is the intimate, and even disrespectful, relationship with the saints, characteristic of the ancient Catholicism brought to Brazil. This behavior is illustrated by the figure of the Baby Jesus, seen as a playmate for children, which ends up distancing him from the notion of divinity. Another example pointed out by Holanda (1995) refers to the way nobles and commoners address sacred creatures and God as if they were close friends, thus reinforcing an informal attitude.

Such practices, like those mentioned above, would contribute to the distancing of formal behaviors typical of formal and impersonal relationships. This phenomenon reflects a cultural trait deeply rooted in Brazil, according to Holanda (1995), where the boundaries between public and private, sacred and everyday tend to blur. It symbolizes a tendency toward social interaction that favors emotionality and personal ties over rigid formalities.

Holanda (1995) attributes several harmful effects to the habits of the cordial man, highlighting their impact on the political, social, and commercial relations of the Brazilian people.

In religious social life, the author points to the demonstration of little respect in situations traditionally marked by solemnity, such as receiving communion from the bishop's hands, a gesture that should symbolize reverence and devotion, but which, from the perspective of the cordial man, takes on an informal and unpretentious character.

In the commercial sphere, the author mentions criticisms made by some Europeans who visited Brazil and highlighted the difficulty in establishing commercial connections with Brazilians, attributed to the absence of prior intimate ties. In this context, the culture of the cordial man privileges personal and affective relationships

over impersonal and pragmatic rules, hindering the development of commercial relationships based on contracts and objective commitments.

Thus, we have that the cordial man, a figure created by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1995), which represents a characteristic rooted in the people, the object of analysis in this text, is a construct that allows us to understand traits deeply linked to Brazilian identity.

In Holanda's analysis (1995), a notable exclusion of the bourgeois class from the criticism directed at the vices attributed to the figure of the cordial man stands out. The author restricts the defects resulting from this cultural trait to the general population and, correlatively, to the politicians who emerge from it. Thus, a logical connection is established: since workers are governed by the passions that shape their decisions and behaviors, the politicians they elect would also inevitably be imbued with the same vices.

Political decisions, in this context, would be marked by an absence of impersonal rationality and by the predominance of emotions and favoritism, the result of the cordiality described by Holanda. This characteristic is not limited to isolated individuals, but reflects a collective pattern, where personal passions and particular interests override universal values and institutional norms.

Thus, both the general population and the political class—guided by a universe ruled by the "profane world," where emotions and disorderly instincts prevail—become central figures in this critique. They lack the formality and impersonality that characterize more balanced and fair political and social practices. Curiously, the bourgeoisie is left out of this critical analysis, being, in a way, spared by Holanda. This omission suggests that the evils associated with the cordial man are seen as an expression of the people, except for the groups that hold economic power, which raises questions about the limits of this approach.

This perspective reinforces the view that the cordial man, as a social construct, manifests itself as a profound and exclusive trait of Brazilian culture.

In the following sections, we will discuss how structural racism remains rooted in contemporary society, albeit disguised in subtle ways that often make it difficult to identify, both for the oppressor and, above all, for the oppressed.

Finally, a relationship will be drawn between the figure of the cordial man and the perpetuation of structural racism, highlighting how the hidden face of this "cordiality" contributes to the maintenance of these dynamics.

Multidimensional Racism

The central question about racism in our society is no longer whether it exists, but rather how it manifests itself. Nowadays, racism reveals itself in disguised forms, taking on subtle characteristics that make it difficult to identify and confront. This disguise hides it in social structures, interpersonal relationships, and even cultural narratives, often making it invisible to both the oppressor and the oppressed. This section seeks to reposition these hidden layers, demonstrating how racism has not disappeared, but has transformed, adapting to the contemporary context and perpetuating itself in ways that challenge critical perception and collective action.

In a country like Brazil, where slavery was practiced for centuries—first on indigenous peoples and then on Black people trafficked from Africa—structural racism remains deeply rooted in our society. This historical legacy is noticeable in various contemporary manifestations and is echoed in the outburst of Cida Bento (2022), who reveals:

Once, when my son Daniel Teixeira was ten years old, he came home very upset, saying he would not go back to school because he did not want to participate in history classes about slavery. The person responsible for that behavior was a white classmate who, while walking home with Daniel, pointed to some black boys cleaning windshields at a traffic light in exchange for a few coins, and said mockingly, "Those boys are also descendants of slaves! It's a shame, isn't it?"

Upon hearing this account, I remained silent, pondering. That day, I slept tormented. Even after a history class on the subject of slavery, the boy said it was shameful to be a descendant of enslaved Africans. Even after hearing about the violence and incessant abuse suffered by Black people, seeing pictures of slave ships crammed with human beings in brutal conditions, their bodies branded with iron, reading that the work they did when they arrived in Brazil was forced labor, the white boy said that being Black was a reason to be ashamed (Bento, 2022).

Although Cida Bento's testimony does not cover all forms of racism, it offers clear evidence of how deeply rooted racism is in our society, functioning as an indelible mark that spans generations and perpetuates inequalities.

The experience of Cida Bento's son explicitly illustrates the manifestation of racial prejudice, highlighting how the attacks committed by the white boys were directly related to the race of the black boys who cleaned the windshield.

However, Jessé Souza (2021) alerts us to the various ways in which racism manifests itself, a phenomenon he calls "multidimensional racism." Souza (2021) establishes a connection between racism and social recognition, arguing that racial prejudice is not limited to acts of explicit discrimination, but also permeates the social, economic, and symbolic structures that regulate access to dignity, respect, and opportunities in the pursuit of recognition:

Racism destroys the moral core of the individual, that historical and contingent creation of the West, and their ability to obtain social recognition, the most basic need of every human being. It achieves this by preventing the development of the minimum forms of existential security that provide self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-respect—which are prerequisites for any healthy social interaction, whether in the private and intimate sphere or in the public life of politics and productive activity in all its dimensions (Souza, 2021).

The author not only establishes a connection between racism and the search for social recognition, but also deepens his analysis by examining the impacts of racism on oppressed individuals. He goes beyond merely acknowledging the existence of racism, emphasizing the importance of understanding how this unequal dynamic erodes the subjectivity of the oppressed, compromising their self-esteem, self-confidence, and ability to establish healthy social relationships.

Although explicit manifestations of racism still persist, those in which discrimination is directly linked to skin color, as exemplified by Cida Bento's account (outburst), this type of racism has diminished in public spaces over time, especially since the abolition of slavery in 1888. However, as Jesse Souza observes, it is essential that we broaden our view to include the more subtle and invisible forms of racism, which often escape the perception of the less attentive.

In this sense, Bento (2022) draws our attention to the concept of "Institutional Racism," one of the many ways of concealing racial prejudice that is deeply ingrained in social relations:

In the actions of institutions, the worldview, concepts, work methodologies, and interests of the segment that occupies positions of decision-making and power are manifested in the structures.

Rules, processes, norms, and tools used in the workplace silently favor and strengthen those they consider "equals," systematically acting to transmit the group's secular heritage in a phenomenon we have come to call narcissistic pacts.

According to Bento (2022), racism in institutions, especially in recruitment and selection processes, is often not clearly identified, as it is not explicitly mentioned as a formal criterion in hiring policies. In many organizations, the meritocratic system is used as a justification for choosing candidates, masking discriminatory practices.

What we observe, albeit implicitly, is the manifestation of white supremacy rooted in those considered "white," which establishes a relationship of domination of one group over another. This power dynamic can be

partly explained by fundamental human needs, such as the search for social recognition and narcissism, as discussed earlier. The means used to satisfy these primitive demands is often the practice of humiliating and reducing the other, in this case Black people, to an inferior condition, devoid of human rationality, as discussed by Holanda. By being dehumanized and reduced to an almost animal-like state, the oppression imposed on this group is justified in a distorted way.

We see that the value of human beings, or rather, the low value attributed to human beings by a certain social class, is at the root of the hidden manifestation of racism.

Regarding the value of human beings, Adela Cortina (2020) teaches us that in a contractual society, if a certain social group has nothing to offer in return, it deserves to be rejected, repressed, and mistreated: unfortunately, in a contractual and cooperative society of exchange, the stranger is radically excluded, the one who does not enter into the game of exchange, because it does not seem that they can offer any benefit in return. This is the poor in every sphere of social life.

The poor are those who do not have the possibility of giving in return in a world based on the game of give and take. Thus, it seems that taking them into account implies losing biological and social adaptive capacity, since it is the well-off who can help them survive and prosper.

Complementing Cortina's (2020) study, Jesse Souza (2024) analyzes the connection between value and empathy, stating that "when we do not see another human being as an equal, we cannot develop empathy towards them." This assertion by Souza (2024) deepens our understanding of aporophobia by highlighting how the devaluation of others, especially when they are in a situation of socioeconomic vulnerability, prevents the construction of empathetic relationships.

Throughout history, racism has adapted and evolved, taking on increasingly sophisticated and difficult-to-detect forms. While explicit manifestations of racial prejudice have become less socially acceptable, a new type of racism has emerged: multidimensional racism.

According to Souza (2021), social recognition, an innate human need, can be obtained in two different ways. The first is through collective learning, which enables the growth of both individuals and society as a whole. Multidimensional racism, another path in search of social recognition, destroys the oppressed's sense of self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-respect. It perpetuates the oppression of the most vulnerable, reducing their ability to contribute to the common good.

It should be noted that all manifestations of racism discussed, both those that are explicitly evident and those that are disguised, the latter being particularly pernicious, are decisive in maintaining a context and a narrative that obscure the perception of the domination exercised. This process results in the internalization of oppression, causing the subjugated individual to passively accept their condition of subordination. All these forms, whether clear or veiled, constitute expressions of social exclusion, perpetuating and consolidating the structures of domination and subordination present in society.

Complementing the practice of subjugating the most vulnerable, so that they accept their condition as inferior beings and thus justify the racism they suffer, George Orwell, in his work entitled 1984, although it is a fictional dystopian world, has elements of similarity with the real world today:

And if everyone else had accepted the lie imposed by the Party, if all records told the same story, then the lie became history and became truth. The Party slogan said: "Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past."

Elsewhere, Orwell (1984) adds about social manipulation:

To know and not to know; to be aware of the full truth while telling meticulously constructed lies; to hold simultaneously two opinions that cancel each other out, to know that they are contradictory and to believe in both; to use logic against logic; to repudiate morality while upholding it [...] It was the ultimate subtlety: consciously inducing unconsciousness and then, once again, becoming unconscious of the act of

hypnosis you yourself had just performed.

In both fragments, the author presents a reflection on the manipulation of truth. Racism, like the control tactics described in Orwell's work, can operate in a hidden and systemic way, creating a distorted reality in which victims are led to accept their subordination as something natural or inevitable.

The manipulation of perceptions described by Orwell, in which "lies are accepted" and subordination is internalized, reflects how racism goes beyond explicit violence, infiltrating social structures and the construction of identities.

The concept of the cordial man, as proposed by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, describes a cultural trait of Brazil, in which personal and emotional relationships are intertwined with the public sphere, creating confusion between the public and the private. This confusion, in Holanda's view, is one of the roots of corruption, as cronyism and favoritism, often driven by personal ties, undermine the objectivity and impartiality necessary for the proper functioning of public institutions.

This view is selective, attributing passions and emotions exclusively to the working classes as motivators for choosing their leaders. The bourgeoisie, or business elite, is often exempt from this accusation of irrational emotionality in their choices, suggesting a distorted and reductionist view of social and political dynamics. Essentially, while voters from the lower classes are stigmatized for their "emotional decisions," the business elite, often involved in practices of power, profit, and influence, is presented as rational and calculating, free from personal ties that could compromise their public actions.

This selection of culprits is, therefore, an ideological mechanism that contributes to the maintenance of a distorted narrative of "blame" and "virtue," in which the ruling class is spared from critical reflection on its own practices and its contributions to the maintenance of an unequal and corrupt power structure.

The Hidden Face of Cordiality

The search for social recognition, in the context of class struggle, reveals a mechanism rooted in the power dynamics between the ruling elites and the popular classes. The elite, in order to maintain their position and legitimize their domination, constantly seek to delegitimize the political and social choices of the popular classes. This strategy includes stigmatizing the masses as irrational, driven by primitive passions and emotions, as opposed to the rationality and "wisdom" attributed to the ruling class.

By associating a lack of rationality with the popular classes, the elite not only denies the legitimacy of their choices, but also justifies unequal and oppressive treatment, considering that individuals who are not seen as "rational" do not deserve a voice or respect. This devaluation of the decision-making capacity of the popular classes contributes to perpetuating a narrative that makes them susceptible to exploitation, marginalization, and mistreatment, since, according to this logic, their subordination is "natural" and their condition of inferiority "deserved."

The concept of the cordial man, proposed by Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, offers a critical analysis of Brazilian cultural practices, especially with regard to corruption and the depreciation of minorities.

This concept focuses on the less privileged classes and ignores the practices of power and corruption of the elites, who also use equally disguised and concealed forms of manipulation and control, but which are often normalized or even justified within the system.

The selectivity present in this conviction leads to the masking of racist practices, as warned by Souza (2021): "what is produced 'culturally' in Brazil is the reproduction, with new masks, of neglect and the slave-owning pleasure of humiliating and oppressing."

On another point, the same author highlights that:

[...] people in Brazil, for example, have the same abilities and weaknesses as human beings everywhere else. It is not the model of human being that is produced culturally in a specific way, as our colonized intellectuals told us in the nonsense of the "cordial man" or the "Brazilian way" (Souza, 2021).

The cordial man, as outlined by Holanda, is nothing but flaws and negativity. It is possible to draw a connection between passions and emotions, understood as profane feelings, and the soul, considered a divine and sublime attribute. The distinction between these two poles – the profane and the divine – becomes a key point for the construction of social and moral hierarchy between classes.

Considering that passions and emotions are attributed to the realm of the profane, that is, to the earthly and material world, and that the soul is a reflection of the divine, the difference between social classes also becomes a difference in nature.

In this context, Souza (2021) points out that:

[...]Buarque actually constructs a culturalist version of Brazilians that is closely linked to the previous biological racism of the "mestizo" and the black person as the scum of history. After all, what is the difference between the "cordial man," as pure negativity and animality, and the "sickly mulatto" of explicit racism[...] (Souza, 2021).

Analyzing the concept of the cordial man from the perspectives of what is said and what is omitted allows for better reflection and its implications.

Of what is said, two aspects stand out: the first refers to the characteristics attributed to the cordial man, the second concerns the social class to which the figure of the cordial man was linked.

As discussed, the cordial man is deeply marked by informality and personal and emotional relationships. Instead of acting according to impersonal and objective rules, he tends to act based on emotional ties, often prioritizing friendship and personal loyalty.

In turn, this image is, according to Holanda (1995), linked to the lower classes, especially the working classes, in order to stigmatize them.

This association has a double effect: first, it marginalizes the working classes by reducing their actions as being "inferior" or "uncontrolled." Second, it serves to reinforce the idea that these classes are, in some way, more susceptible to corruption, patronage, and manipulation, thus making them liable to be treated with paternalism.

What is not said in Sérgio Buarque de Holanda's conception of the cordial man is precisely the omission of criticism of the elite, who also share the same practices of informality, clientelism, and personal relationships that he restricts to the lower classes.

This omission ends up reinforcing a kind of duality where informality, patronage, and cordiality become almost an exclusive characteristic of the lower classes, ignoring their presence and role in maintaining the power structures of the ruling classes. The view of the cordial man is incomplete and selective, as it does not analyze how elites use and benefit from these same practices to sustain their privileged position in society.

As Friedrich Engels and Karl Marx (2022) assert, "the government of the modern state is nothing more than a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeois class." Engels and Marx's statement reveals the essential structure of the modern state: it serves to perpetuate inequalities and ensure the maintenance of power by the elites. Even if the working class exerts its influence in elections and politics, the system is still structured in such a way that the interests of the bourgeoisie prevail, whether through laws, public policies, or the maintenance of economic structures.

The false relationship between popular "cordiality" and political corruption ignores the fact that the government, in the end, always serves the interests of the elite, regardless of appearances and social dynamics

that attempt to mask this reality.

Criticism of the Brazilian elite's behavior in relation to public resources and their misappropriation is echoed in the words of Souza (2021), who highlights the ruling class's contempt for investments that could benefit the poorest segments of society. According to Souza (2021), "for the elite, any expenditure of public funds on this 'rabble' should be freely avoided, as public funds are paid for, for the most part, precisely by black and poor people."

We can also relate the characteristics and selectivity of the cordial man as a strategy not only to delegitimize the decisions and choices of the popular classes, but also to prevent the oppressed from becoming aware, as Paulo Freire (1987) explains:

Until the oppressed become aware of the reasons for their state of oppression, they fatalistically "accept" their exploitation. Moreover, they are likely to assume passive, detached positions regarding the need for their own struggle for freedom and affirmation in the world (Freire, 1987).

We see, then, that the concept of the cordial man contributes, albeit indirectly, to the suppression of independent thinking, because by emphasizing the importance of personal and informal relationships, the cordial man tends to favor adherence to social harmony at the expense of criticism and deep reflection on power structures.

Racism, in its many forms, is intertwined with this concept by masking the oppressive practices of the elites, especially with regard to the treatment of black and marginalized populations. By associating informality and clientelism exclusively with the popular classes, criticism of the elites who also resort to these same practices to maintain their position of power is omitted. In the racial context, the cordial man hides a structural prejudice, a hierarchical and naturalized view that, as Souza (2021) observes, reproduces racism, disguised as superficial affection, where black and poor populations are stigmatized as irrational and, therefore, "deserving" of unequal treatment.

This vision of cordiality prevents the oppressed from becoming aware of their own situation of exploitation and oppression, as Paulo Freire (1987) points out, suggesting that the oppressed, without a critical understanding of their reality, passively accept their subordination. In other words, the cordial man serves as a control mechanism that not only marginalizes the popular and black classes, but also blocks their ability to break with the power system that subjugates them.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This article represents a modest attempt to deepen understanding of the multiple manifestations of racism, with particular emphasis on its most subtle and covert forms.

Racism, as one of several tools of oppression, has as one of its main objectives to demoralize and delegitimize certain social strata, with a special focus on black and impoverished populations.

In its various manifestations, racism has been, over the centuries, and continues to be, in Brazil, the main instrument in the struggle for social recognition, taking the form of a constant struggle between divergent social classes.

Under no circumstances do the cases presented here exhaust the plurality of contexts and manifestations of racism in its vast complexity. However, they aim to encourage readers to reflectively examine the issue more deeply. The figure of the cordial man, the subject of this analysis, offers a paradigmatic illustration of how we are often misled in a process that leads the oppressed to naturalize their subordination, conceiving it as something intrinsic to their condition or, in an act of resignation, as deserving of their inferiority.

Therefore, it is essential that we all submit to a continuous and rigorous examination of conscience in order to reevaluate our attitudes and omissions in relation to this issue. It is essential that we be able to identify in our daily behaviors the practices that, often unconsciously, perpetuate the maintenance of a social context with

deep historical roots, but which still reverberate in harmful actions in our daily lives.

Another reflection that the text provokes, in addition to self-assessment, concerns the question of who actually benefits from misinformation and the perpetuation of racism. By critically analyzing this phenomenon, it is possible to see that certain social classes, particularly those at the top of the pyramid, historically privileged, continue to benefit from the maintenance of racial inequalities, either through the preservation of power structures or through the perpetuation of narratives that naturalize the subordination of Black people.

Finally, it is essential to emphasize that the perpetuation of racist practices disguised as social and cultural norms not only perpetuates structural inequality but also significantly restricts the substantive capacities and freedoms of individuals. By depriving people of a truly inclusive and respectful social environment, these practices distort the conditions of their political freedom of choice, thus eroding the exercise of fundamental political freedom. Furthermore, by infringing on basic rights, these attitudes compromise the freedom of security and essential guarantees that must be ensured for all, resulting in a less equitable social environment that is more susceptible to injustice.

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