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## PRESENTATION

# Debating Black slavery in management and organizational studies from decolonial and afro-diasporic perspectives

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### Abstract

This special issue, generously accepted and published by Cadernos EBAPE.BR, emerges from the daily life-preserving struggles in Brazil and other parts of the Global South against the radical invisibility of colonial and racial oppressions at a time of the double pandemic of COVID-19 and white supremacy. This collection of articles that we have the pleasure to share with you embodies our decolonizing and deracializing response to normalization of necropolitics, of deciding who may live and who must die. This normalization can be seen in the false idea of impunity of law enforcement officials, such as the Minneapolis police officer who killed George Floyd in the USA. It is important to highlight that George Floyd's death would have been yet another mere statistic if not for the courage and determination of the 17-year-old Black teenager who filmed it with her cell phone. Inspired by the attitude of this Black girl, we brought together eight provocative and insightful articles which will help us to reflect on the struggles faced by marginalized communities and the impact of the domain of Eurocentric perspective on the understanding of management practices and organizations' dynamics. These papers cover topics such as the role of accounting in the slave-owning system, contemporary forms of slavery in Brazil, and the intersectional experiences of Black women in labor exploitation. Our goal is to challenge existing narratives and shed light on hidden histories to contribute to the decolonization and deracialization within and outside the field of Management and Organizational Studies.

**Keywords:** Black slavery. Decolonization. Management and organizational studies. Afro-diasporic perspective.

### *Debatendo a escravidão negra nos estudos em gestão e organização a partir de perspectivas decoloniais e afrodiaspóricas*

#### Resumo

Esta edição especial, generosamente aceita e publicada pelo Cadernos EBAPE.BR, surge das lutas diárias pela preservação da vida no Brasil e em outras partes do Sul Global e contra a radicalização da invisibilidade das opressões coloniais e raciais em um momento de dupla pandemia, a da COVID-19 e da supremacia branca. Essa coleção de artigos que temos o prazer de compartilhar com você, incorpora nossa resposta decolonizadora e desracializadora a uma normalização da necropolítica, de decidir quem pode viver e quem deve morrer. Essa normalização pode ser vista, por exemplo, na falsa ideia de impunidade de agentes da aplicação da lei, como o policial de Mineápolis que matou George Floyd nos EUA. É importante destacar que o assassinato de George Floyd teria sido apenas mais uma estatística se não fosse a coragem e determinação da adolescente negra de 17 anos que filmou aquela ocorrência ordinária com seu celular. Inspirados pela coragem negra, reunimos oito artigos provocativos e perspicazes que nos ajudarão a refletir sobre as lutas enfrentadas por comunidades marginalizadas e o impacto da perspectiva eurocêntrica na compreensão das práticas de gestão e dinâmicas organizacionais. Esses artigos abordam temas como o papel da Contabilidade no sistema escravagista, formas contemporâneas de escravidão no Brasil e as experiências interseccionais das mulheres negras na exploração trabalhista. Nosso objetivo é desafiar narrativas existentes e, ao iluminar histórias ocultas sobre a escravidão negra por meio de perspectivas decoloniais e afrodiaspóricas, contribuir para decolonização e desracialização dentro e fora do campo da Gestão e dos Estudos Organizacionais.

**Palavras-chave:** Escravidão negra. Decolonização. Gestão e estudos organizacionais. Perspectiva afrodiaspórica.

### *Debatiendo la esclavitud negra en los estudios organizacionales y de gestión desde perspectivas decoloniales y afrodiaspóricas*

#### Resumen

Este número especial, generosamente aceptado y publicado por Cadernos EBAPE.BR, surge de las luchas diarias por preservar la vida en Brasil y otras partes del Sur Global y contra la invisibilidad radical de las opresiones coloniales y raciales en tiempos de doble pandemia, la de COVID-19 y la de la supremacía blanca. Esta colección de artículos que tenemos el placer de compartir con usted encarna nuestra respuesta descolonizadora y desracializadora a una normalización de la necropolítica, de decidir quién puede vivir y quién debe morir. Esa normalización se puede ver, en la falsa idea de impunidad de los agentes del orden, como el policía de Minneapolis que mató a George Floyd en EE.UU. Cabe resaltar que la muerte de George Floyd hubiera sido una mera estadística más si no fuera por el coraje y determinación de la adolescente negra de 17 años que lo filmó con su celular. Inspirados por el coraje negro, reunimos ocho artículos provocativos y perspicaces que nos ayudarán a reflexionar sobre las luchas que enfrentan las comunidades marginadas y el impacto del dominio de la perspectiva eurocéntrica en la comprensión de las prácticas de gestión y la dinámica de las organizaciones. Estos artículos abordan temas como el papel de la Contabilidad en el sistema esclavista, formas contemporáneas de esclavitud en Brasil y las experiencias interseccionales de mujeres negras en la explotación laboral. Nuestro objetivo es desafiar las narrativas existentes y, al iluminar las historias ocultas sobre la esclavitud negra a través de perspectivas decoloniales y afrodiaspóricas, contribuir a la descolonización y la desracialización tanto dentro como fuera del campo de los Estudios de Gestión y Organización.

**Palabras clave:** Esclavitud negra. Descolonización. Estudios de gestión y organización. Perspectiva afrodiaspórica.

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## POSITIONING THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

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Over the past two years we have experienced this special issue as an awakening. Life-preserving project encouraged by global collective struggles to breathe, struggles that seek to move us all beyond the Eurocentric socio-epistemic pandemics initiated by Christopher Columbus when he landed in the Bahamas in 1492 and set loose biological diseases from Europe that infected this part of the world, a genocidal moment in the lasting doctrine of discovery (Gordon, 2022).

Isolated from each other and suffocated by the digital walls of epistemic death through which growing number of academics work nowadays as digital slaves, this special issue aimed to debate Black slavery within our field from decolonial and Afro-diasporic perspectives. It also embodies our engagement with the many 'others' who continue their relentless struggle to preserve/protect lives in conditions of (im)possibility which might lead to a new humanity envisaged by Frantz Fanon (Fanon, 1965).

These others, who remain excluded from neoliberal systems of higher education worldwide, have encouraged us to join other academic colleagues continuing to resist from within and outside a predominantly anti-Black/indigeneity management education system (Nkomo, 2020), and to position ourselves as rehumanizing scholars/activists against the accelerated dissemination of the COVID-19 pandemic as lethal weaponry against the lives of Black and indigenous peoples, chiefly in Brazil (Faustino, 2021a).

## THE PANDEMIC IN BRAZIL

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In the largest Black nation outside Africa embodying the myth of racial democracy and benevolent colonization (Gonzalez, 2020; Moura, 2020) that was replaced by a contested Afro-nationalism project inaugurated in the early 2000s (Smith, 2016), we mobilized this academic project as a means to blackly express our liberating anger (Lorde, 2012) toward the massive popular support given in Brazil to the state-driven reinstallation of a lasting pandemic regime of extermination and enslavement. In other words, this project embodies and gives continuance to multiple everyday struggles, within and outside academy, against the antidemocratic support given to a populist fascist project that celebrated the Eurocentric matrix of colonial power, being and knowledge denounced in the early 2000s by decolonial theorists from Latin America (Dussel, 2000; Mignolo & Ennis, 2001; Quijano, 2000).

The dual pandemic of COVID-19 and white supremacy in Brazil took place within a *longue durée* of the country's configuration along racialized, patriarchal, and heteronormative violence (Bento, 2022). It forced our heterogeneously privileged non-white bodies under threat to always keep in mind that the Eurocentric project of modernity which erased and appropriated all other universes (Krenak, 2019) and divided us into humans and non-humans (Maldonado-Torres, 2007) is "an interminable war on life [...] and it is far from over" (Mbembe & Shread, 2021). Since we, as academic professionals, internalize this project, our questioning bodies forced us to constantly remember Franz Fanon (Fanon, 1963a), who argued in the heat of everyday decolonizing struggles in Algeria against the Eurocentric pandemic of raciality/coloniality that the "wellbeing and the progress of Europe have been built with the sweat and the dead bodies of Negroes, Arabs, Indians, and the yellow races" (Fanon, 1963b, p. 96) and that the main desire of the colonized (including of those who decolonize) is to occupy the position of the European colonizer.

This academic project is not only a special issue on Black slavery. It is a life-preserving project that can make all of us remember all the time and everywhere that matters which matter for people whose lives do not matter do not have the right to exist within the segregating modes of operation inaugurated by the plantation system and reproduced by Westernized universities (Dear, 2018) and academic journals (Barros & Alcadipani, 2022). Encouraged by forces of decolonizing resistance and re-existence mobilized by the liberating wretched of the earth, this life-preserving project has re-united us, the coeditors, with each other and with you, the reader and all non-readers who share the desire to (re)create possibilities, in conditions of impossibility, for the construction of a re-humanizing field of Management and Organization Studies (MOS). These forces have crossed our bodies and helped us to re-member the agendas of decolonization and anti-racism scholarship (Bernardino-Costa & Grosfoguel, 2016; Bernardino-Costa, Maldonado-Torres, & Grosfoguel, 2018) systematically dismembered, forgotten, distorted, coopted, and hierarchized by existing anti-blackness and anti-indigeneity systems of knowledge (Wynter, 2003).

Brazilian management studies have followed the historically dominant and global trends of the field, namely ignoring racial difference as a significant topic of organizational study and practice. At the same time, the few opportunities offered to engage with racial difference, when available within MOS, can encourage affirming forms of racial assimilation that do not credibly change the unequal grounds of racial body-politics. Despite these silences, Brazil continues to offer a unique opportunity to study racial differences and compare African racial difference across multiple settings, in the interconnected settings within Latin America (Carrillo, 2021; Telles, 2014) and Afro-Latin-America (Gonzalez, 2020). It is, after all, a country with a long history of racial differentiation, one shaped by the early adoption and persistence of slavery/enslavement (Brazil was the last country in the Americas to abolish Black enslavement, although this formal act was followed by different forms of human trafficking and enslavement).

More particularly and accordingly, this special issue has enabled us to resist the life-destructive election of a conservative far-right government in Brazil which embraced the COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity to weaponize further the colonial face of racialized capitalism and dismantle the social and political rights previously obtained by the unwanted wretched who could not breathe (Faustino, 2021a). It was the wretched re-surfing from within this double pandemic (Faustino, 2021b) who encouraged us to resist by reimagining rehumanizing possibilities beyond the colonial imaginary that we professional critical academics also internalize (Ortega, 2017). They encouraged us to decolonize our embodied minds through a life-preserving engagement with rather forgotten, silenced, and dismembered liberating legacies of Black slavery (Davis, 2016; Gomes, 2015; Gonzalez, 2020; Moura, 2021, 2020).

## ENGAGING LEGACIES OF BLACK ENSLAVEMENT

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Over these double-pandemic years we have witnessed a rising concern with ‘risks’ to the modern world system of capitalist accumulation by dispossession and extraction against the lives of the majority worldwide generated by the expansion of ‘modern slavery’, chiefly on the Southern side of global value chains (Stringer & Michailova, 2018). These concerns have been publicly espoused by academics and institutions of an increasingly unequal, heterogeneous, and discriminatory Global North (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018), which, in the aftermath of the fall of twin towers in New York, started to frame itself as a civilization ‘under siege’ (Hage, 2016).

The North-South uni-direcionalidade of narcissistic global value chains led by monopolistic capitalist corporations (Trautrim, Schleper, Cakir, & Gold, 2020) and long structured by the modern capitalist world-system embodying coloniality and raciality (Suwandi & Foster, 2022) has been increasingly transformed and reframed by rising powers from the South (Horner & Nadvi, 2018), who are systematically framed as major threats to the future of human history and global civilization (Pieterse, 2011). During the construction of this special issue, we, as non-white Southern academics, started to view ourselves as ‘problematic’ members of the global value chain of management knowledge structured by the same matrix of capitalist raciality/coloniality (Ibarra-Colado, 2006) commanded by a diversity-driven racist system of business schools (Dar, Liu, Dy, & Brewis, 2020; Nkomo, 2020) increasingly ‘threatened’ by its own benevolent mechanisms of inclusion of darker others across the North-South line (Jammulamadaka & Faria, 2023).

We invite you, the reader, to see this special issue as a dialog, one coproduced and published by members of the Global South seeking to be heard and heeded, including those who live on the darker side of global value chains (Stovall, 2022), where slavery of the past has made a return. Northern institutions reported in the 2010s that over 30 million people in the modern world system can be described as enslaved (International Labour Organisation [ILO], 2012). Recent estimates suggest there are more than 40 million people, mainly in and from the Global South, in some form of slavery and the United Nations has committed the world to ending this problem by 2030 (Landman & Silverman, 2019). These Northern bodies reaffirm the lasting denial of global structures of raciality, coloniality and dependency experienced, resisted, and transformed by Southern darker peoples struggling for a new humanity for all.

However, academics who argue that this number has risen dramatically with the current COVID-19 pandemic promote a renewed managerial theorization of modern slavery that ultimately silences the theories-practices enunciated and embodied by darker peoples from the Global South. In opposition to Southern liberating legacies for the abolition

and dismantlement of the capitalist matrix of coloniality, raciality, and dependency, a rising literature reproduces and expands a growing consensus that modern slavery, with its victims, exploiters, large corporations, and consumers, has been, is, and will likely continue to be a business (Phung & Crane, 2018). Modern slavery includes slavery, human trafficking, forced labor, bonded labor and other forms of exploitation that allegedly need to be responsibly solved by leading institutions of Western modern capitalism (Kara, 2017).

As we write this editorial, a growing population of darker people experience not 'modern slavery' to be overcome by a self-corrected and self-generated Eurocentric modernity (Habermas, 1996), but the radicalization of a lasting capitalist structure of anti-Black/indigeneity extermination, enslavement, and imprisonment (Gonzalez, 2020) that makes possible the planetary catastrophe inaugurated in 1492 (Krenak, 2020). With the contested support of existing anti-blackness/indigeneity systems of knowledge (Wynter, 2003) this view of 'slavery' that denies the permanence of colonial and racial differences within and across the North-South line of re-dehumanization is being institutionalized by the global North as an emerging challenge of humanity to be overcome by modern capitalism (Bales, 2005)

A growing MOS literature frames modern slavery as a 'global topic' heterogeneously observed in the Global South (Crane, 2013; Phung & Crane, 2018), with the support of a Northern agenda grounded in the contested notions of sustainable development and human rights (Voss et al., 2019). This narcissistic distortion reaffirms the epistemicide of undesirable Southern theory-practices such as Critical Race Theory and the dominant idea in the US and other countries in the West (Baptist, 2016) that Black slavery is a matter of the colonial past, which remains in the irremediably backward parts of the darker Global South.

Since January 2021, the republican states of the United States have enacted 137 laws that basically censor teaching in schools, especially subjects such as those related to slavery and segregationist laws. [...] They prohibit teachers from discussing topics in the classroom such as race, racism, Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Melo, 2022).

Such authors frame modern slavery as a managerial problem for organizations and supply chains triggered by the globalization of modern capitalism in crisis (Gold, Trautrim, & Trodd, 2015; New, 2015). This managerial agenda embodies contested claims of civilizational superiority of the West/North in relation to the 'rest of the world' (Davis, 2011; Gonzalez, 2020; Wynter, 2003).

## OUR REHUMANIZING RESPONSE TO PANDEMIC HOPELESSNESS

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For the rehumanization of MOS in conditions of (im)possibility, our special issue invited academics from South and North to embrace decolonial and Afro-Diasporic perspectives. These racialized epistemic contributions that embody liberating legacies of Black slavery and pluriversal cosmologies could reframe the contemporary expansion of 'modern slavery' and other life-destruction forms of exclusion and extermination on a global scale (Dussel, 2013) as a continuation of the *longue durée* of colonial/racial/patriarchal slavery capitalism inaugurated in the XVI century with the 'discovery' of the Americas by Eurocentric conquerors (Marable, 2015; Mignolo, 2011).

We invite colleagues around the world to consider modern slavery as a capitalist project triggered by the resurgence of de-westernization, decolonization, and de-racialization movements on a global scale. The denial of anti-blackness/indigeneity slavery or enslavement as a constitutive dimension of modern management and capitalist organizations and academy has been highlighted by critical authors (Cooke, 2003), Afro-Diasporic voices in general (Nkomo, 1992) and, in particular, decolonial authors from the South engaged with the co-construction for a new humanity that reframes raciality and coloniality as constitutive dimensions of modern capitalism and Eurocentric MOS (Abdalla & Faria, 2017; Ibarra-Colado, 2006).

In our view, this renewed phenomena of 'modern slavery' puts at risk a growing, heterogeneous, and unequal population of the enslaved on the planet by denying the constitutive relationship between capitalism and Black slavery highlighted by decolonial and Afro-Diasporic literature. After all, is it mere coincidence that in Latin America "the people who descend, partially or totally, from the populations colonized by the Europeans are, in their vast majority, dominated and discriminated against wherever they live?" (Quijano, 1993, p. 205).

We propose that by denying both the long duration of Black slavery and contributions of decolonial and Afro-Diasporic epistemologies and ways of being/living/knowing to social justice at large, academia tends to perpetuate racist, colonialist, and patriarchal MOS and business schools in both the South and North (Abdalla & Faria, 2017; Dar et al., 2020; Jaime, Barreto, & Oliveira, 2018; Rosa, 2014). We hope this special issue will promote dialogues with other movements, inside and outside MOS, engaged with everyday transformations for a new humanity within a pluriversal world in which different worlds coexist. We expect the participation of academics, professionals and 'general public' to recover and co-construct possibilities that continue to be denied and appropriated contained by enslaving systems that reaffirm colonial and racial differences.

## RACIAL DIFFERENCE

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How does racial difference interact with Management practices and their study? And what are the ways in which racial difference is a point of engagement in Brazilian management studies? This special issue engages with these questions by presenting a set of papers that consider racial difference and its interplay with management practices in Brazilian workplaces.

## RACE AS A FLOATING SIGNIFIER

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While it is tempting to define race in terms of an unchanging unacknowledged essence, such a view runs the risk of lending legitimacy to views supportive of racial inequality by naturalizing such inequality. However, and in the same spirit, critical views can simplistically assert, as an alternative, tokenistic forms of racial assimilation, such as through diversity training (Mayorga-Gallo, 2019).

As a quality of social interactions, race is properly understood as racial difference that is profoundly shaped by its relational nature. Stuart Hall (2017), the British Caribbean theorist, described race as a sliding or floating signifier. In using this phrase, he pointed to the socially constructed qualities of racial difference and steered away from any effort to essentialize racial identity. What was at issue to Hall (2017) was *how* racial difference is constructed and what purposes are served by such difference. Similarly, what is at issue to us in this special issue is *how* racial difference remains constituted in workplaces and the material and ideological purposes served by such constituted difference.

## RACE IN MANAGEMENT HISTORY

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What is at issue are the organizational practices and social structures that maintain racial inequality in Brazil. Such organizational practices have been greatly shaped by the presence of racial inequality within the histories from which management knowledge originated. But this is a presence that is rarely acknowledged. Management concepts emerged from practices in a variety of organizational workspaces historically. While these included well-known locations such as multinational companies, iron and steel mills, and armies, they also included sites of severe cruelty and direct oppression, notably, slave plantations. In a remarkable essay, Cooke (2003) questioned the dominant tendency to trace Management concepts to industrial workplaces without also noting the indebtedness of these concepts to the work experiences of plantation slavery. As he observed, these included Taylor's description of work practices in steel mills, infused with words derived from plantation work such as *soldiering*.

The enormous profits in Europe and North American that relied on business models and work organizations and the management concepts underlying them, also, in turn, relied on racial difference. Racial difference was the basis for increasing value appropriation; stated simply, skin color became a basis to justify harsher forms of labor exploitation.

The indentured labor from the Indian subcontinent that spread slowly through the Caribbean and Guyana intermingled with the Africans brought earlier, and each showed ways of exacting privation and deprivation in the name of greater profits and productivity.

But it was not only that profits were made through racial exploitation. It is also *how* these profits were made. Caitlin Rosenthal (2016) has tracked how accounting books in the United States soon standardized ways to value labor. This standardization also made it easier to calculate what rewards and penalties were needed to raise productivity. She shows that managers quickly learned how to move output standards upward, through the right mix of rewards and penalties. Such calibration meant how long to whip a slave as an example, which slave to reward for meeting a quota, how to raise these quotas. These accounting practices, the ways in which work was valued monetarily, the necessity for negative as well as positive inducements, were all shaped by the work lives of plantation slaves.

Racial difference did not function solely as a silent signifier in Management studies. It also served as a means of asserting hierarchical difference in early workplaces in the United States. Takaki (2000) described it in terms of a racial matrix, and one that played an important ideological role in establishing racially cohesive categories of labor in the workforce, while claiming, spuriously, that using these categories had a meaningful effect on the quality of work performed. As Roediger and Esch (2012) show, work gangs were defined by national origin and pressed to compete with one another on the basis of ethnic pride. In such matrices, African American, Hispanic American, and Asian American labor occupied the lower ranks while European migrants jostled with one another and with the established White classes for the middle and higher ranks. Such racialized competition dominated early industrial workplaces and their management. These labor gangs, spurred to outperform each other, were motivated to compete through the threat of racial opprobrium – the worse they performed, further they would go down the matrix, running perilously closer to those at its bottom.

## RACE AND VALUE EXTRACTION

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Hall (2017, p. 119) observed that “it is the exploitation of difference – the taking advantage of differentials, and not the standardization of economic variables – that pushes the story of capitalist modernity remorselessly onward [...] differences have been gendered, sexualized, and classed as well as being ethnicized and racialized as a condition of the functioning of the world market.” And indeed, it was Chinese and Mexican labor that built the railroads in the United States, just as Japanese labor offered the backbone of Brazil’s coffee industry, dramatically expanding the wealth in these countries. Meanwhile South Asians lived side by side with Africans, working on plantations throughout the Caribbean.

Today we think of this period as past, unimportant. But wage differentials based on skin color remain present in workplaces. These forms of labor exploitation remind us that racial difference remains a crucial vector for extracting value from labor. In doing so, Management studies still rely on historical techniques shaped by the slave plantations where they were perfected, extracting more value through coercion, threats, and other forms of symbolic violence.

The time has come for us to more successfully question foundational ideas in Management studies. In doing so, we also resituate these core concepts, so that they speak more clearly to the unequal, unfair and fragile world we currently inhabit, a world of sharp political division, and massive inequality. It is only by having Management ideas speak more clearly to our racially divided world that we can begin asking the hard question: how can we create Management concepts that do not perpetuate racial exploitation, that generate racial justice? Because ultimately, as the political thinker A. Sivanandan once said, “Black is not just the color of our skin. It is the color of our politics” (Asian Dub Foundation, 2000).

## INTRODUCING THE PAPERS OF THIS SPECIAL ISSUE

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As already mentioned earlier, this special issue discusses the legacy of the underestimated (and many times silenced) colonial and slave-owning regimes in MOS today. Eight researchers contribute to this debate, providing provocative, insightful papers that engage with MOS.

The paper “**Accounting records and slavery in 19<sup>th</sup> century Brazil: a historical approach**” opens our special issue and presents an analysis of the role of Accounting in the slave-owning system in Brazil. Jacira Pontinha Vaz Monteiro and Victoria Puntriano Zuniga de Melo conducted a thorough exploratory and qualitative study. They analyzed the purchase and sale records as well as the slave-trade inventory stored in the Slave Voyages database and in the Historical and Geographical Institute of Pernambuco. One of the most striking findings of this paper is how the “bureaucratic” Accounting process helped to naturalize the enslavement of Black bodies, one that was beneficial to the main stakeholders of the colonial and slave-owning economic system, farm gentlemen and slave traders. This paper is a breakthrough in studies on the role of Accounting in the maintenance of slavery system in Brazil, as most of works on the matter focused on the reality of US slavery system (Araújo & Carneiro, 2020). Besides, Jacira and Victoria’s critical perspective helps us reflect on how Management practices can be used to legitimate illegal, unethical, and inhuman practices.

The second article, by Fernanda Cavalcante Gama, Priscila Thayane de Carvalho Silva, Fabiane Maia Garcia, and Audriele Santos de Jesus, entitled “**Works analogous to slavery: an analysis of slaves in the 21<sup>st</sup> century in Brazil**”, offers us a chance to reflect on the employment of slave-like labor for profit maximization. The authors describe recurrent reports and labor lawsuits against several Brazilian companies and individuals, such as the case of Madalena Santiago da Silva (TV Bahia & G1 BA, 2022), who was rescued in 2021, after working 54 years for an upper-middle class family in Salvador, as well as the flagrant reliance on work analogous to slavery by some of the most traditional and renowned companies of the Brazilian wine industry, the wineries Salton, Aurora and Garibaldi (Hailer, 2023). In the latter instance, thanks to the reports of three workers who fled, a joint action between the PRF (Federal Highway Police), PF (Federal Police) and the Ministry of Labor and Employment rescued 206 people working in degrading conditions in the companies’ wineries in Bento Gonçalves (RS). In their qualitative research, the authors adopt a historical-dialectical materialist approach, in which they conduct a bibliographical and documental analysis of reports of work analogous to slavery registered from 1995 to 2022 in the Ministry of Labor and Social Security data base, as well as in news articles. According to the authors, some causes of the persistent use of this inhuman and retrograde business practice included the ineffectiveness of public policies and the fragility of the Brazilian penal legislation.

The third article also discusses the enduring employment of slavery in contemporary business practices. In this qualitative research paper, Rodrigo Martins Baptista, Maria Tereza Saraiva de Souza, Mariana Lima Bandeira, and José Ricardo Baptista propose “**The modern slavery wheel as the new theoretical framework**” that systematizes the institutional factors sustaining modern slavery. These factors are: institutionally favorable conditions, recurrence, enticement, and the “truck system” in which workers are tied to a job due to a supposed debt they owe. As we are on the eve of the deadline for meeting of the 2030 UN’s sustainable development goals (United Nations, 2015), the “The Modern Slavery Wheel” offers an insightful contribution to Management studies and practice since it sums up the main organizational and institutional dynamics that need to be redesigned to eradicate slave labor in modern society and generate credible human rights.

The fourth paper “**Intersectionalities of contemporary slavery of Black women under decolonial thought: work, social determinants, and social inequalities**” addresses contemporary slavery, but through the perspective of intersectionality, focusing on the overlapping of social oppression that naturalizes the labor exploitation of Black women, making their suffering invisible. The contributions of Ibarra-Colado and Maria Lugones, inspired the work of, Cássius Guimarães Chai, Vitor Hugo Souza Moraes, Karine Sandes de Souza, and Fernanda Franklin de Costa Ramos that conduct a theoretical study in which they conclude that in order to fight modern slavery, it is imperative to address the singular nature of Brazilian work conditions, specifically the social position of working Black women, whose social status is a reflection of a retrograde Brazilian patriarchal system. In fact, they make up most of the contingent domestic labor (Vilela, 2022), and remain on the margins of the most promising jobs in the digital world of the 20th century, representing only 11% of professionals in technology (Lacerda, 2022).

Such numbers bear out the significance of the work of Cassius and colleagues, and their contribution to a wider movement to advance race and gender equality.

Cooke (2003) points to a poignant denial of Black slavery in narratives about the historical evolution of Administration and management practices. For example, when we study General Theory of Administration in business schools and Administration courses, we see the theories of Frederick Winslow Taylor and Henry Ford as a historical landmark in the emergence of systematization and standardization of work supervision, which ignores the fact that foremen in American plantations were the first salaried managers, acting in a role very similar to that played by supervisors of factories structured under the Taylorist-Fordist paradigm (Cooke, 2003). Fortunately, the fifth article in this call, **“We need to talk about Taylor: evidence of racism in scientific management?”** written by Geruza de Fátima Tomé Sabino and Daniel Calbino Pinheiro, goes against the grain of the North Global’s narrative dominance in Administration teaching, presenting a critical analysis of management theories. After conducting an analysis of Taylor’s work, the authors argue that the scientific theory of Administration was conceived on a racist basis of work organization since it was developed amid a historical context marked by eugenic elements, apparently ignored in his works. This article invites practitioners and scholars to analyze administrative theories from a more critical and holistic perspective, considering the role of Management practices in the reproduction of racism and other ills inherited from the colonial period of slavery.

Racist manifestations are being more significantly fought by society, especially in times when, fortunately, there are more reporting mechanisms and people can use their cell phones to denounce acts of discrimination and violence. Almost every week, we see news of people who post videos on the Internet to defend themselves (or others) against racist acts, as did Professor Samantha Vitena, a Black woman who was expelled from a Gol flight for, allegedly, refusing to check in a carry-on bag (Souza, 2023). However, as the authors Ana Flávia Rezende and Luiz Fernando Silva Andrade show in the paper intitled **“Racism, sexism, and remnants of slavery in job advertisements”**, it is very common to find job advertisements with racist elements, camouflaged by narrative euphemisms such as “good looks” and “good hygiene”, a practice that perpetuates structural racism in the Brazilian labor market. From a decolonial perspective, the authors analyzed 285 job advertisements extracted from four classified websites and affirmative action programs for Black people published on LinkedIn. Their work indicates that the white ideal is still rooted in the labor market, specifically, in domestic work, which hinders the insertion and ascension of Black men and women in the labor market.

In 2012, the Quota Law – Law 12.711/2012 (Lei nº 12.711, de 29 de agosto de 2012) – was enacted to give public high school students access to federal universities, a law that has been the center of heated debates in public opinion, especially during the Government of Jair Messias Bolsonaro (2019-2022), when criticisms about the legitimacy of the law intensified, which brought to light the dispute about narratives regarding racial equality and historical reparation to populations enslaved during the colonial period (Blacks/browns and indigenous people). Although the decree of this law symbolizes advances in the Black and civil rights movements, several politicians, scholars and members of civil society have claimed the improvement of affirmative action public policies, based on the fragility of inspection and validation processes for fraud prevention in ethnic-racial declarations, the difficulty of retaining quota students and the low representation of Black people in public tenders, especially in competitions for better paid positions (Dias, 2022). This last aspect is also pointed out in the paper **“Structural racism and quotas in legal careers: the decolonial perspective”**, by Amanda Carolino Santos, Fatima Bayma de Oliveira, Gustavo Guimarães Marchisotti, and Ana Celano, which analyzes the effects of racial quotas on legal careers. From a decolonial perspective, the authors carried out qualitative research, in which they analyzed notices and results of competitions and interviewed eleven Black professionals who work in top hierarchical positions in the legal sector – prosecutor, judge and public defender. Their findings indicate that the establishment of quotas alone has not been efficient in increasing the representation of Blacks in positions of power in the Judiciary, as pointed out by other scholars on the subject.

The article that closes our special issue brings a profound and provocative analysis of the work of Clóvis Moura (1925-2003), a Brazilian sociologist, journalist, historian, and writer who, supported by the work of Karl Marx (1818-1833), analyzed the slave system from a critical and combative perspective, questioning Gilberto Freyre’s view of the structure of Brazilian society and its relationship to its colonial and slave history. In his paper **“The contributions of Clóvis Moura’s interpretation of slavery in Brazil and its possible dialogues with organizational studies”**, Ricardo Mello Duarte relates the main contributions of Moura’s work to Organizational Studies. According to Duarte (2023), Moura’s work can contribute to the decolonization

of Organizational Studies by providing a less passive view of initiatives to implement diversity and inclusion in organizations. From this less passive perspective of MOS in dialogue with decolonial and afro-diasporic perspectives, affirmative action practices can be inspired by the revolutionary movement known as *quilombagem* to resist the reproduction of structural racism and the overexploitation of minority labor in organizations.

## CONCLUSION

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In conclusion, this special issue has made a substantial contribution to our understanding of the enduring legacy of colonialism and slavery, which continues to shape our society in the present day. Through a collection of thought-provoking articles, this issue has brought to light the historical and contemporary manifestations of slavery, emphasizing its impact on various aspects of society.

Moreover, the issue explores the persistent structural racism within the labor market and advocates for affirmative action policies to rectify historical inequalities. While acknowledging the progress made through initiatives like quotas, the articles highlight the challenges of implementation, fraud prevention, and the underrepresentation of Black individuals in positions of power. These findings underscore the importance of ongoing efforts to improve affirmative action policies and promote equal opportunities for marginalized groups.

Overall, this special issue has provided a comprehensive and multifaceted exploration of the legacy of slavery, colonialism, and their ongoing impact on contemporary society. It serves as a powerful reminder of the continued struggles for justice, equality, and the eradication of modern slavery. By amplifying diverse perspectives and calling for critical reflection, this issue intends to contribute significantly to historic struggles for a new humanity and to collective efforts focused on creating a more inclusive and equitable rehumanizing world in which diverse worlds coexist, collide, and coalesce.

In conclusion, we are proud of the significant results achieved by this special edition while being aware that it reproduces the capitalist matrix of coloniality/racality that we have internalized in this “endless war against life”. It not only addresses the lack of studies on slavery within the Brazilian MOS academy but also provides a platform for voices and perspectives that are often silenced, tackling taboo issues head-on. By delving into neglected areas, challenging prevailing narratives, and expanding academic boundaries, this issue tries to keep paths open for a more inclusive and comprehensive understanding of our history, even if under an insufficient perspective of decolonization and deracialization for the majority radically excluded by the existing systems of knowledge.

The incorporation of theories from the contested field of MOS in search of decolonial liberations in conditions of (im)possibility (Ibarra-Colado, 2006) rooted in the complexity and diverse reality of the Global South transcends geographical limitations. By embracing a global perspective and amplifying marginalized voices, although reproducing colonial structures of exclusion of racialized bodies that became even more radical in the context of the double pandemic, this issue offers fresh insights and alternative frameworks that contribute to a sufficient holistic and transformational understanding of predominantly dehumanized organizational and academic dynamics.

Aware of its potential use for renewed anti-life retaliation in this context of the double pandemic, we do hope that this issue stands as a valuable resource for scholars, practitioners, and policymakers, providing a solid foundation for further research, critical analysis, and action in the rehumanizing, incessant and solidary pursuit of social justice, dignity, equality, and multiple liberations.

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