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Luiz Gama and the construction of Brazilian citizenship (1864 to 1882)

Luiz Gama e a construção da cidadania brasileira (1864 a 1882)

Thaís Budóia de Almeida Prado Ribeiro¹

¹ Mackenzie Presbyterian University, São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil. E-mail: tbapr.pradoribeiro@gmail.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8365-5613>.

Silvio Luiz de Almeida²

² Mackenzie Presbyterian University, São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil. E-mail: silviovlg@gmail.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0990-9707>.

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Abstract

In an era characterized by intellectual debates on the construction of the Nation-State, civil rights, and the abolition or preservation of the slavery society, the abolitionist, poet and certificated lawyer Luiz Gama, is examined as a social thinker and architect of a “future Brazil.” This study aims to analyze and compare Luiz Gama’s discourse regarding his path towards fostering citizenship in Brazil and shaping post-abolition public policies (which he did not live to witness). Alongside Gama, the study also includes discourse from diverse nineteenth-century thinkers, namely Marques de Queluz, José Bonifácio, José de Alencar, and André Rebouças. In contrast to these thinkers, Gama’s position is observed to prioritize key elements such as the Republic, abolition, and basic education (characterized by its secular, mandatory, and inclusive nature) in realizing access to citizenship and achieving effective democracy. Luiz Gama envisioned the implementation of a social organizational model rooted in a democratic, Republican, federative state, featuring decentralized political participation beyond the capital, and grounded in the aforementioned education for all inhabitants of Brazilian territory, regardless of origin, race, or creed. It is important to note that the author’s notion of universality is perceived as male-oriented (although he does not explicitly prohibit access for girls and women, there is no mention of them in his texts).

Keywords: Citizenship; Luiz Gama; Brazilian social thinking.

Resumo

Em um período em que intelectuais debatiam sobre a construção do Estado-nação, cidadania, o fim ou manutenção do “instituto da escravidão”, o abolicionista, poeta e advogado provisionado Luiz Gama, é analisado como um pensador social, construtor de um possível “Brasil futuro”. A pesquisa tem como objetivo analisar e comparar o discurso de Luiz Gama, sobre seu caminho para a construção da cidadania no Brasil e políticas públicas em um período pós-abolição (que não alcançou em vida). Além de Gama, os demais discursos presentes são de pensadores variados do período oitocentista: Marques de Queluz, José Bonifácio, José de Alencar e André Rebouças. Em contraste a estes pensadores, é observado como a posição de Gama para acessar a cidadania e democracia efetiva tinha como elementos fundamentais a República, abolição e a educação básica (sendo laica, obrigatória e irrestrita). Luiz Gama idealizava a implantação de um modelo de organização social de um Estado democrático, Republicano, Federativo, com



participação política da população de forma descentralizada da capital e com base na educação acima descrita a todos aqueles habitantes do solo brasileiro, independentemente de origem, raça e credo – havendo a ressalva de que este universal do é masculino (apesar de não vedar expressamente o acesso a meninas e mulheres, não as menciona em seus textos).

Palavras-chave: Cidadania; Luiz Gama; Pensamento social brasileiro.



Introduction¹

Although the term "citizenship" was already present in the Brazilian Constitution of 1824, it is observed that the access to rights of those inhabitants of Brazil that Luiz Gama dedicated his entire life to set free was not covered by it. Enslaved Black people (Africans and Brazilians) in that Brazil of the nineteenth-century were not considered citizens², only as livestock³ mentioned in inventories which could be mortgaged and placed on equal terms of property with rural animals⁴. This legal custom prevailed until the formal end of slavery, in 1888, more than half a century after the promulgation of that Constitution (1824) and after the death of the main character of this paper (1882). Not even those who were freed had the right to participate in formal politics in that society⁵. In other words, they were not allowed to vote.

Luiz Gama saw himself in a society that placed Black people (enslaved, freed and born free), in a condition unequal to other people, who had their rights guaranteed, *de facto*. The enslaved were even further away from the access to rights and the concept of full citizenship of the time, even if there were mechanisms such as *pecúlio*⁶ and the possibility of the purchase of their own freedom. More specifically, the existing scene was that "a very large portion of Brazilian population linked their reproduction of way of living to the exploitation of slave labor" (ALMEIDA; VELLOZO, 2019), which made slavery a social structure so interesting to maintain.

One of the examples of this structure that segregated the enslaved people, is the fact that the Brazilian Empire invested its criminal legal-political mechanisms more severe related to the enslaved, being important the fact that "the code sealed any kind of corporal punishment, except for slaves; in his text he set the death penalty for only two crimes, one involving slaves" (ALMEIDA; VELLOZO, 2019). This cycle of segregation that

¹ In this work, citizenship is discussed as full access of rights (civil, political and social), not only as a recognition of the Brazilian nationality to the people. One of the several problems that Brazilian Black people faced and still face is being recognized only as a "second class citizens", without full access of rights as white ones.

² The "*Constituição Política do Império do Brasil*" (25.03.1824), in its article 6th, states as citizens those "who in Brazil have been born, whether they are 'naive' or freed, even if the father is a foreigner, since he does not reside for the service of his Nation", (BRAZIL, 1824) being naïve those who were never enslaved and freed those who were enslaved but succeeded freed themselves.

³ In Portuguese: "*semoventes*". Such jurisprudential understanding can be observed in TEIXEIRA DE FREITAS, Augusto. *Consolidação das Leis Cíveis*. 3^a ed., 1876, p. 35.

⁴ "The children of slaves enter the order of natural fruits, like the offspring of animals." *Ibidem*.

⁵ Cf. Art. 94, item II of the *Constituição Política do Império do Brasil* – in English: Political Constitution (BRAZIL 1824).

⁶ A type of earning or saving that the person enslaved could raise to create a fund that could be used to buy his or her own freedom.



isolated such individuals, in that slave society or anyone who tried to be sympathetic to them, also having repercussions in the post-abolition period, is concluded. That is, a pact of all against the slaves.

In light of this context, the focus of this research is to explore and understand the perspective that Luiz Gama adopted to build his ideas and undertaking actions, with a specific emphasis on centering the enslaved, freed or free individuals in the discourse. Gama aimed to include them as citizens and ensure their status of subjects with rights. This work aims to comprehend Gama's positions, which extended beyond considering enslaved individuals only within the framework of civil law (such as the prevailing view among most of jurists of his time). Instead, Gama regarded them as citizens and rightful holders of rights.

By observing this position of Luiz Gama and comparing it with the public debate of that period (the other authors), this research brings the problem to be developed: were there ideas and solutions eluded by Luiz Gama that were related to the theme of effective citizenship, with access to rights, for enslaved, free Black people and newly liberated black people in Brazil? And if these ideas and solutions existed, what would be the difference amongst the view of other authors in contrast of the perspective of Gama?

This research conducts a bibliographic review on the subject, drawing from Luiz Gama, writings, published mainly in the press of Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, and books. In this research, the works "*Lições de Resistência: Artigos de Luiz Gama na Imprensa de São Paulo e Rio de Janeiro*", organized by Ligia Fonseca Ferreira and "*Democracia: 1866-1869*", organized by Bruno Rodrigues Lima, will be considered as the main source. I will also analyze Luiz Gama's position about citizenship construction in relation to the society of his time and other contemporary intellectuals who also discussed concepts of citizenship.

The hypothesis is that Luiz Gama, beyond his various facets already known as certificated lawyer⁷, abolitionist, Freemason, poet and political activist, also was a Brazilian social thinker and projected about ways to build citizenship, as well as a project of nation based in the access to civil rights, by all people who lived in Brazil, unrestrictedly.

⁷ On that time, Judicial Branch recognized people who had wide ranging and well-grounded knowledge about law, giving them a certificate that those people could work on Lower Courts / Courts of First Instance.



The major goal of this research is, departing from Luiz Gama's productions and analyses to understand how this intellectual can contribute to discussion about the concept of citizenship and Brazilian social thinking.

1. About the 18th century Brazilian society

To understand Gama's position, it is necessary to introduce the panorama of the society of his time and space and the ideas deliberated by intellectuals who also discussed ideas about citizenship, civil rights and the interplay between the State and the inclusion of the enslaved Black Africans and Brazilians, freed and born free.

1.1. Societal context of his time

When observing the source of influences that shaped the structure and organization of the Brazilian monarchical State during the 18th century period, particularly focusing on the years between 1864 and 1882, this research highlights the presence of liberal elements in the Constitution (1824) and the Penal Code (1830).

The very liberal characteristics for the standards of the time of the first Constitution of Brazil and its first codes are the consubstantiation in the legal-political superstructure of this large association of small, medium and large slave owners⁸ (ALMEIDA, VELLOZO, 2019).

However, it is important to note that there are academic perspectives that argue for the presence of a specific "liberalism", within a context of slavery, something that can initially be understood as a controversial⁹ viewpoint. Nevertheless, it is essential to acknowledge that these two institutes – liberalism and slavery – played significant roles in building the legal framework and the societal context of that Brazil during that specified period.

It is worth noting that the subject of "slavery" is a complex and sensitive issue that requires careful handling, as any acknowledgement and exploration of it would entail its

⁸ In Portuguese: "*As características bastante liberais para os padrões da época da primeira Constituição do Brasil e dos seus primeiros códigos são a consubstanciação na superestrutura jurídico-política desta grande associação de pequenos, médios e grandes proprietários de escravos*"

⁹ For an in-depth reflection on the discussion of the relationship between slavery and liberalism, check: BOSI (1988).



formal recognition within Brazilian Law. Therefore, legislation and legal theories deliberately omitted explicit references to slavery, while the courts relied on European jurisprudence and legal theories (particularly of Portuguese origin), to guide their decisions.

In an illustrative instance can be found in the observations made by Eduardo Spiller Pena which prompt us to read between the lines; there was a "Black Code in Footnotes¹⁰". Augusto Teixeira de Freitas, renowned jurist during the monarchy, was named for the task of consolidating Brazilian civil laws and legal theories, as part of "a preliminary project for the production of a future Civil Law Code" (PENA, 1996, p. 33.).

However, notably absent from his work, the "Consolidation of Civil Laws¹¹", laws and relevant jurisprudence to slavery, were only mentioned on footnotes. Freitas treated this matter as if it were something secondary importance within Brazilian society. Freitas' suggestion was that a separate literary work would eventually address the subject of slavery, appropriately referred to as the "Black Code", which was never produced.

Furthermore, Spiller Pena aptly points out that

This recurring omission was later remembered and criticized by Joaquim Nabuco as being an "ingenious fiction"; a legal construction designed not to hurt susceptibilities, because standardize the condition of slaves would signify recognizing, by law, the country as a slavery one (PENA, 1996, p. 34)

Additionally, it is worth noting that Brazilian Empire, was not the only nation during that historical period to present the apparent paradox of having legislation and government with a mentality inspired by liberal airs, but the feet stuck in a slavery basis. In this regard, Spiller Pena explains the similarity, at this point, between Brazil and the United States:

In constituting themselves as a nation, the United States, in its declaration of independence, also did not mention the issue [slavery], although they did not save on its expressions that would guarantee the right of all men to freedom and equality. The recollection of these rights by the American Federation did not, in turn, as in Brazil, prevent the emergence of slave-law provisions (and also of a wide jurisprudence) in several of its States. (PENA, 1996. p. 35)

In conclusion, Luiz Gama witnessed significant historical events such as the Paraguay war¹² and abolitionist movement in the United States. These events raised

¹⁰ In Portuguese: "*Código Negro de Rodapé*"

¹¹ In Portuguese: "*Consolidação das Leis Civis*"

¹² Referring to the war known in Brazil as the conflict between the union of the armies of Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil against Paraguay, fortified by the British crown, between 1864-1870.



intense debates, such as "the role of the State in the war, the national sovereignty of Brazil, the limits of political representation in parliament, as well as the expansion of the coffee business to new demands to sustain the slavery policy" (LIMA, 2021, p. 18). Within this national political chessboard, consisting of conservative monarchists, liberal Republicans and other derivations, "Afro"¹³ emerged as a prominent figure; a liberal and radical Republican leader, who articulate a vision for a prospective future to be constructed, one that would count with a Republican Brazil and the urgently eradication of the institute of slavery.

However, Gama was not the only one in his endeavors. It was during this period of debates among the Liberals themselves (between radicals and moderates) that the Conservative Party "capitalized on the crisis and returned to power assuming the leading role even of the social reforms of 'gradual emancipation' from slave labor to free labor." (LIMA, 2021, p.33). In the subsequent sections we will explore Gama's multifaceted perspectives, providing the reader a comprehensive understanding of Gama's stance within the contemporary discourse.

1.2. Ideas formulated during the period

After providing an overview of the Brazilian societal context in the 18th century which Luiz Gama was situated, it is now pertinent to briefly explore the prevailing notions and theories put forth by Brazilian social thinkers judged as the best paths for the construction of a Brazil as a nation and composition of its people and, consequently, citizens. his section aims to present the viewpoints and literary works of the period between 1864 and 1882, or those produced before 1864, but still resonated in the discussions of that historical moment. By examining the perspectives of other intellectuals who actively participated in the contemporary discourse, it becomes possible to grasp and assess the contrasting ideas of Luiz Gama and his vision for the State and, consequently, of citizenship.

¹³ One of the aliases that Luiz Gama used when works about education were published.



1.2.1. The Marquis, João Severiano Maciel Da Costa

In the realm of social thinkers and commentators on imperial Brazil, one notable figure is the Marquis of Queluz, a magistrate and Brazilian politician, who held staunch opposition to the republican ideals that Luiz Gama advocated "until their ultimate consequences" (GAMA *apud* LIMA, 2021, p. 68). Despite his noble title (which guaranteed him close ties to the Monarchy and recognition as a great politician within the prevailing governmental structure), the Marquis of Queluz occupied important political positions, serving as constitutionalist Deputy for Minas Gerais (1823-1823) and as President of Bahia Province (1825-1826).¹⁴

In his work titled "Memory On the Necessity of Abolishing the Introduction of African Slaves in Brazil: Regarding the Manner and Conditions by Which this Abolition Should be Carried Out; and the Means of Remediating the Lack of Labor that it May cause" of 1821¹⁵, Queluz builds a national development plan where he projects a monarchist Brazil, with an economy based not only on the agrarian market, but also on industrialization and with free labor force.

However, a closer examination of his justifications and methods of reaching these aforementioned objectives, especially regarding to the abolition of the introduction of enslaved Africans – and, in a long shot perspective, the eradication of the servile institute, is necessary. Although his words condemn slavery, Queluz does so out of fear of the power dynamics between the enslaved individuals and their masters. He argues that "the indefinite introduction of African slaves, both in the number and the time of duration, is contrary to the *security* and *prosperity* of the State" (QUELUZ, 1821, p. 19). Queluz also acknowledges the segregation of enslaved individuals and the society at all, stating that "All people are connected by common interests, only slaves are disconnected from any social bond and consequently pose a danger." (QUELUZ, 1821, p. 20). This concern for the *insecurity* and the *prosperity* of the State stems from the potential for a rebellion in Brazil, similar to the Haitian Revolution (1791 –1804), where the huge numerical contingent of

¹⁴ For more information about Marquês de Queluz: BRAZIL. Federal Senate. *Profile of Senators*. Brasília, DF: Senate. Available in: <https://www25.senado.leg.br/web/senadores/senador/-/perfil/1830>. Access: 25 Jul. 2022

¹⁵ Federal Senate. *Senate Library – Works of Marquis of Queluz*. Brasília, DF: Senate. Available in: http://biblioteca2.senado.gov.br:8991/F/?func=direct&doc_number=000097466&local_base=SEN01. Access: 25 Jul. 2022.



enslaved population was far exceeded that than the contingent of alleged masters and the French military forces.

In this work, Queluz comment about Haiti as follows:

[...] contemplate the Santo Domingo Island [Haiti], the masterpiece of colonial culture, the precious jewel of the Antilles, still smoking with the sacrifice of human and innocent victims... Watch without tears, if you can, two Thrones raised on the bones of legitimate Lords to serve as a reward to the avengers of Toussaint Louverture... (QUELUZ, 1821, p. 24).

Queluz attributed the absence of a unified nation and citizenry in Brazil to the institution of slavery, which resulted in a population lacking a cohesive social class that could be considered a true "people". According to Queluz Brazil was "composed of a way, that there is not a class that truly constitutes what is called a people; and this defect must unfailingly influence a lot in the method of government" (QUELUZ, 1821, p. 21). From his point of view, the end of slavery was an inevitable outcome, and that after this end, he did not envision any means by which the formerly enslaved Black population could be fully integrated into society and recognized as citizens.

The true population, which makes the solid greatness and strength of an Empire, does not consist of a herd of black slaves, barbarians by birth, education and are not wellborn, civil people, without prosperity, *without* interests or *social relations*, driven solely by the mode of punishment, and by their same condition enemies of the whites; but rather in large mass of citizens, interested in the conservation of the state and national prosperity, and born of the homeland spread, favored by wise and just laws, and by a paternal government. (our griffins, QUELUZ, 1821, p. 19-20)

As an advocate for the industrialization of Brazil, Queluz expressed the belief that industry could not "prosper" in the hands of enslaved individuals. He argued that "those in Africa are devoid of talent; in which they are inferior to our Indigenous people, who have proven skill for mechanical crafts" (QUELUZ, 1821, p. 25).

In the theoretical framework presented by Marquis of Queluz, the vision of a Monarchist Brazil emerges, mostly industrial with a complementary agricultural sector. However, notably absent from this envisioned free population were black Africans, who had been enslaved. Queluz's ideal society consisted primarily of a white European majority population with a minority composed of indigenous people and a small number of blacks born in Brazil (it remains unclear whether they are all blacks born here, or if they are only black children of white parents – it's used the term "*Crioulos*"¹⁶). For Queluz, this would

¹⁶ *Crioulos* in Portuguese, on that period and context can be understood as people who were born in Brazil and were not white. Also, in some regions, *crioulos/crioulos* was used to refer to the enslaved people (not



be the ideal project for the country constitute a people with real citizens. In this point, Queluz stated:

And will we allow this magnificent Empire of such luck to be ununited with the race of them [the Africans], that with the surrounding of the years, Brazil will be confused with Africa? [...] As faithful Vassals of the Sovereign we worship, we must use all our strength to give his Glorious Throne valiant citizens of our own blood, of the one we have received from the famous and immortal Lusitanians.... (QUELUZ, 1821, p. 35)

Regarding the end of the slavery, Queluz's viewpoint was that, in Brazil "a Kingdom of Congo" could not be created. He proposed the gradual extinction of the introduction of new enslaved Africans into Brazil, anticipating that "under the new liberal Constitution in Brazil, the white population will rapidly increase with the immigration of Europeans" (QUELUZ, 1821, p.39). For those Black Africans who already residing in Brazil, his plan involved "export blacks out of the territory" (QUELUZ, 1821, p. 36), citing that his inspiration for this proposal was from Thomas Jefferson, the president of the United States.

1.2.2. The Patriarch of Independence, José Bonifácio D'Andrada e Silva

Later, in 1825, José Bonifácio publishes "Representation to the General Constitutional Assembly and Legislative of the Empire of Brazil about Slavery"¹⁷, which proposes to "show the need to abolish the slavery traffic, to improve the fate of current captives, and to promote their progressive emancipation." (BONIFÁCIO, 1825, p. 5-6). According to Bonifácio, this gradual "emancipation" from slavery was necessary for them to "become immoral brutes into useful, active and well-mannered citizens." (BONIFÁCIO, 1825, p. 23). He argued that Brazil would not progress and civilize itself unless the government put an end to slavery. His arguments had appeal on the readers' Christian and philanthropic sentiments, as well as their "honor and pride", emphasizing that would tarnish the soil of his homeland if it existed an institute as ignominious as slavery in Brazil.

Regarding the social introduction of the newly freed Black population, Bonifacio had the idea of "homogenizing" the Brazilian population and believed that this would eliminate the "disagreements and setbacks" between Black and white populations. This

free or people who have been enslaved) born in Brazil, separating them to the enslaved ones who were born in Africa's countries.

¹⁷ In Portuguese: "*Representação à Assembleia Geral Constituinte e Legislativa do Império do Brasil Sobre a Escravatura*".



concept of homogenization involved racial mixing and encompassed issues such as racial whitening and the eradication of religions with African origins. The author explicitly expresses his viewpoint in the following excerpt: "let us instruct them at the bottom of the true Religion of Jesus Christ, and not in mummeries¹⁸ and superstitions" (BONIFÁCIO, 1825, p. 25).

If on one hand, the author recognizes the humanity of enslaved individuals and criticizes the oppressive actions of Portuguese colonizers and white slave owners. However, on the other hand, he attributes negative qualities to enslaved people such as "inoculate all their immorality, and all their addiction", implying that their presence had a corrupting influence. Furthermore, Bonifácio send critics to the Portuguese and slave owners, suggesting that the leisure time afforded to slave owners by the labor of enslaved individuals enabled them to indulge in these alleged vices.

Furthermore, he supports that the institute of slavery was an obstacle to industrialize the country, when he said that "you, who have slaves, live, in a great part, in inertia, because you are not needed by hunger or poverty to improve your industry or improve your plantations." (BONIFÁCIO, 1825, p. 16), but it is also not beneficiary to the agricultural market when he writes that "the plantation of Brazil, made by stupid and lazy slaves, does not give the profits" (BONIFÁCIO, 1825, p. 17).

Feeling the winds blowing in Santo Domingo Island, Bonifácio expresses concern about the potential consequences of maintaining slavery without any flexibility. He emphasizes that could cause a rebel uprising with a great bloodshed, jeopardizing the desired social harmony and the importance of the territorial integrity of Brazil. He points that "in a few years it must produce a growing number of desperate individuals, who are already burdened by the weight of injustice, which condemns them to a state of degradation" (BONIFÁCIO, 1825, p. 22). Bonifácio's rationale for advocating gradual emancipation lies in his desire to prevent a situation reminiscent of the Haitian Revolution, commonly known as "*Haitianism*"¹⁹:

[...]only by preserving them (the enslaved), the hope of becoming a day our equals in rights and beginning to enjoy from now on the freedom and nobility of the soul, that only addiction is able to take from us, they will serve us with

¹⁸ In Portuguese: *momices*. A term that can be understood as a reference to *Rei-Momo*, or King Momo, one of the major personalities in Brazilian Carnival. He is the king of Carnival and has a fun personality and is a true party maker.

¹⁹ In Portuguese, *haitianismo*. A movement which had a huge fear that what happened in Haiti could happen in Brazil too.



fidelity and love; of enemies will become our friends and customers. (BONIFÁCIO, 1825, p. 25)

At the conclusion of this work, the tutor of D. Pedro I delineates the specific measures for the progressive liberation of the enslaved population, of what would be this "slow and gradual emancipation". These measures include provisions for governmental support towards the integration of European immigrants and freed Black individuals. However, Bonifácio also advocates for their active participation and contribution, suggesting that they should make their own financial contributions after in a properly time:

All men of color freed, who do not have a profession, or an adequate way of life, will receive from the State a small portion of land to cultivate, and will also receive the necessary assistance to establish themselves *and the value will be paid with the course of time*. (BONIFÁCIO, 1825, 29-30)

1.2.3. The Writer, José Martiniano de Alencar

Following, José de Alencar, a prominent political figure, a member of the Conservative Party, renowned for his literary novels that intricately weave the fabric of Brazilian society, publishes in 1865 "To the emperor: political letters"²⁰ and in 1867-68, "New Political Letters from Erasmo"²¹. These works offer profound insights into his perspective on the discourse surrounding slavery and the potential pathways towards its abolition or preservation.

Alencar comprehends slavery as "a social fact, as are despotism and aristocracy; as were women seen as property of men, the father be proprietary of his children and so many other ancient institutions" (ALENCAR, 2009, p. 282), which should not be disrupted through legislation or any governmental intervention but rather be subject to the natural progression of societal evolution. It also guided his readers to understand that slavery played a beneficial role for the social evolution:

In the history of progress, slavery represents man's first impulse for collective life, the primitive link of union between civilizations. Slavery was the embryo of society; the embryo of the family in civil law; embryo of the state in public law. (ALENCAR, 2009, p. 284-85)

²⁰ In Portuguese: "Ao imperador: cartas políticas"

²¹ In Portuguese: "Novas Cartas Políticas de Erasmo"



Alencar posits that slavery played a transformative role in the moral and spiritual development of the enslaved individuals. "The slave must be, then, the wild man who is instructed and moralized by work. I consider him, in this period as the neophyte of civilization. The salutary influence of Christianity has sweetened slavery" (ALENCAR, 2009, p. 287). Additionally, he argues for the positive economic impact of the slavery institution, stating that "Without African slavery and the trafficking that carried it out, America would still be a vast desert today." (ALENCAR, 2009, p. 289). These arguments by Alencar seek to justify and glorify the institution of slavery, portraying it as a means of civilizing the enslaved and contributing to the development of the American continent.

Alencar's opposition to legislative abolitionism was grounded in his belief in an organic societal transformation. He advocated for the positive effects of racial mixing, foreseeing it as a catalyst for social change that would ultimately lead to the natural and voluntary end of slavery. Alencar viewed this organic social movement as a key factor in creating the necessary conditions for the emancipation of enslaved individuals: "Slavery is resolved by the absorption of one race by another. Each interconnected movement of opposing forces is a step further towards the leveling of the castes, and an impulse in the good of emancipation." (ALENCAR, 2009, p. 296)

1.2.4. The Engineer, André Pinto Rebouças

Rebouças, a monarchist and abolitionist, recognized the pervasive influence of slavery in Brazilian society. Unlike proponents of legislative abolitionism, he understood that simply enacting new laws (as in fact occurred) would not be sufficient to address the complex issues intertwined with the institution of slavery.

For Rebouças, slavery went beyond a way of producing wealth, but rather as a deeply rooted social structure that permeated all aspects of Brazilian society. He particularly emphasized the exploitative nature of the relations among the oligarchic class and the marginalized population:

All the public and private evils that afflict this empire, all the political and particular miseries of the Brazilian family swerve from the combined action, for three centuries, of these two great corruptors, who call themselves slavery and territorial monopoly. [...]
The Farmer or lord of ingenuity, despot and tyrant, wants isolation, solitude, the desert, to be able to exercise against the aggregates and against the poor immigrants, who has the simplicity of relying on his promises (REBOUÇAS, 1883, part XIII)



Fifty years before the end of the slavery, Rebouças advocated for an abolition that also encompassed the implementation of agrarian reforms²² and economic transformations to ensure a more equitable and just society for the newly freed. From this, the author creates the expression "rural democracy", which should act on the bases of land reorganization, having as an objective the use of land as mechanism to promote freedom and autonomy, and not of exploitation (as was done by the big farmers):

What RURAL DEMOCRACY wants is for everyone to be free to acquire the portion of land necessary for their living, to the progress of their family's well-being. What it condemns is the immense, enormous *big plantations*²³; without any proportion to the productive forces of the monopolist: it is the desert next to the capitals, such as Rio de Janeiro; is iron and fire sterilization; it is irrational and extensive culture; is the land reduced to mining well; is the man lowered into beast of burden; in "arms for the plantation", as the slaves of this Empire cynically say... (Uppercase by author, REBOUÇAS, 1888a)

In addition to supporting this agrarian reform, with the land redistribution for the formerly enslaved people (reducing the big plantations), Rebouças also writes about the foundation of local peasant cooperatives:

Within the circle of their rights, every citizen is, or must be, by our constitution and by our laws, a State; a company, an association; sum the circles of citizens' rights, which composes it; the circle of rights is the maximum circle, which circumscribes the circles of all its members; this circle is naturally larger and stronger; and that is why it causes shock, which causes fear, which causes terror in the oligarchs, who want a weak and subdivided people: a people of sheep, surrendered to for them to take their free will, incapable of the least resistance! (REBOUÇAS, 1888b, p. 346)

Rebouças envisioned a transformative vision in this project of a nation; which encompassed the dismantling the group of large plantation systems, the abolition of slavery and the collaborative construction of a just and harmonious public order, by autonomous individuals:

Give education to Brazilians so that they perfectly know the full extent of their rights and duties; give them work so that they can really be free and independent. (REBOUÇAS, 1988, p. 284)

Rebouças aimed to challenge the superficial and empty concept of "citizenship" that only existed in a formal constitutional framework. He advocates for the expansion of

²² Remarkably similar to what occurred in US with "Homestead Acts", Rebouças proposed a revision of the agrarian structure of the country, by new laws (based on the principles of social justice and raise of productivity), searching for a more egalitarian distribution of lands and the profit from its fruits.

²³ In Portuguese, *latifúndio*. Those were large land property of a single owner which produces one or a few types of product. In Brazil, the most common *latifúndios* were sugarcane and coffee.



civil rights to encompass individuals who were previously enslaved and denied full access to these rights. Central to his vision, was granting these individuals the possibility to acquire their own property, as he believed that such empowerment would lead to "the wealth and national prosperity":

We cannot calculate the influence, which only this single possibility will have on the development of the welfare of the emancipated, immigrants and settlers, and consequently in wealthiness and national prosperity. (REBOUÇAS, 1888b, p. 112)

The process of "Ruralization" was a mean to populate and colonize the expansive countryside of the country while preserving its territorial integrity. Rebouças advocated for the expansion of rural area to also establish regional assemblies, enabling collective decision-making regarding the direction of public administration. According to Rebouças: "the discussion and administration of collective interests [...] it is the great school of patriotism and the source of that intelligence of public affairs that has always been the distinctive character of free people." (REBOUÇAS, 1888b, p. 274).

Finally, in Rebouças thinking, as Menezes writes, democracy and monarchy are not opposites, but complementary. (MENEZES, 2008, p. 137)

In the subsequent section, we shall undertake an examination and comparative analysis of Luiz Gama's assessment of the prevailing social milieu, as well his propositions pertaining to the discussions. Gama, an eminent abolitionist and now viewed as a social theorist of the era, formulated his own perspective and ideas, which will be juxtaposed against the viewpoints articulated by Marquis of Queluz, José Bonifácio, José de Alencar and Rebouças.

2. The Radical, Luiz Gama

Following, we shall delve into Luiz Gama's conceptual framework concerning his comprehensive blueprint for the establishment and access of civil rights in Brazil. However, it is necessary to contextualize the foundations and influences from which Gama had as a source of inspiration. Such basis is from the philosophy area – which gave Gama a basis for conjecture a plan for the implementation of a specific model of government and social organization – or his actions as a radical abolitionist activist.

Among these Luiz Gama's inspiring sources, who was cited in his publications,



what comes about the ideas, we can observe the construction about nation, by Ernest Renan.²⁴ Gama, in a letter addressed to his son, references the influential work of "The Life of Jesus" by Ernest Renan²⁵ alongside the Bible, as two indispensable literary works that his son should not overlook. Within this context, Gama's inclusion of Renan's seminal work and the Bible underscores their significance as essential readings, emphasizing their potential to shape the intellectual and moral development of his son. Regarding to what is now known as Human Rights and freedom of education (independent of the church), Luiz Gama found inspiration in the ideas and writings of Victor Hugo²⁶.

About the abolition led by institutions Gama recognized on the President of the United States, Abraham Lincoln's²⁷ pivotal role, who played a crucial role leading the country through the Civil War and in the context of the abolition of slavery; and in the area of theoretical construction of law, Gama was inspired by Friedrich Carl von Savigny²⁸, the German jurist and legal scholar of law, the key figure of Historical School of Jurisprudence, which can be highlighted the importance of understanding the social and historical conditions that shaped the legal framework surrounding slavery.

Also, it is observed that Gama drew inspiration from historical figures and individual experiences in his daily actions, such as Jesus Christ²⁹, John Brown³⁰ and Spartacus³¹. These figures represented individuals who challenged and rebelled against oppressive institutions and power structures in their respective contexts. In the case of Christ, Gama may have found inspiration in Christ's resistance against the Pharisees and Roman Empire; and his teachings that emphasized justice, compassion and the liberation

²⁴ To learn more about this relation, check: FERREIRA, Ligia Fonseca. *Luiz Gama: um abolicionista leitor de Renan*. Estudos Avançados, 21 (60), p. 271-288. 2007. And TITAN JUNIOR, Samuel. *Que é uma nação? de Ernest Renan*. Plural, [S. l.], v. 4, n. 1, p. 154-175, 1997. DOI: 10.11606/issn.2176-8099.pco.1997.75901.

²⁵ In "Letter my son, Benedito Graco Pinto da Gama". GAMA *apud* FERREIRA, 2020, p. 361.

²⁶ Gama references Victor-Marie Hugo, renowned French author (that also had relevant political militancy on behalf of rights of humanity and democracy), as a source of inspiration in two publications: "Letter to the Editor" (*Carta à redação*) published on the newspaper Correio Paulistano (SP), on its section "A Pedido", on February 22, 1867, p. 2-3," and "Letter to the Editor" (*Carta à redação*) published on the newspaper Correio Paulistano (SP), on its section "A Pedido", on February 20, 1867, p. 3.". These publications may be found entirely in LIMA, 2021, p.107, 111.

²⁷ In "Letter to the Editor" (*Carta à redação*) published on the newspaper Correio Paulistano (SP), on its section "A Pedido", on February 20, 1867, p. 3". This publication may be found entirely in LIMA, 2021, p.107, 111.

²⁸ Lucio de Mendonça (Biographer of Luiz Gama) mentioned Gama's inspiration in "*Gazeta da Tarde* (RJ), *Folhetim*, on December 15- 1880". This publication may be found entirely in LIMA, 2021b, p.83.

²⁹ In "Letter my son, Benedito Graco Pinto da Gama". GAMA *apud* FERREIRA, 2020, p. 361.

³⁰ A radical abolitionist who led armed insurrections against slavery. He was sentenced to the death penalty and went to the history as a martyr to abolition in the United States. (LIMA, 2021, p. 107)

³¹ Gladiator, strategist and popular leader who escaped the slavery to which he was subjected and organized an army for an uprising that fought the central power of Rome in the Third Servile War (73-71 BC) (LIMA, 2021. p. 74)



of the oppressed. Christ's actions and message resonated with Gama's own radical position against the existing powers of Brazilian State in his era (the Monarchy), and the pursuit of justice for the marginalized.

John Brown known for his role in the abolitionist movement in the US, also served as a source of inspiration for Gama. Brown's radical approach, including acts of civil disobedience and armed resistance, mirrored Gama's own radical stance against the slavery in Brazil.

Similarly, Gama have looked to Spartacus, the enslaved gladiator who led a major uprising against the Roman Empire and its slavery, as a symbol of resistance and liberation. Gama drawn parallels between the enslaved architected the uprising led by Spartacus against the Army of Rome and the need for collective action to challenge the oppressive structures of his time.

In addition to discerning in Gama's endeavors, there is an implicit reflection of intellectuals and activists. Gama explicitly expresses his support for a form of social mobilization in 18th century São Paulo that can be interpreted as radical, as it aims to address the fundamental aspects of the societal structure. He refers to this approach as a "revolutionary pursuit of freedom", characterized by its confrontational nature.

Gama's scathing criticism was directed towards a "prudence" that respected the laws that enabling the enslavement of individuals. He opposed the composed and tranquil demeanor of those who supported a gradual and slow end of slavery, also voicing his disapproval of press censorship and even confronted some of its Republican coreligionists, who used ideals of positivism³² as a guide to support a gradual and "scientific" emancipation, without harming financially slave owners. The latter, according to Gama, believed in "calm evolutions" and wait for the "peaceful and voluntary fall of the bleak monarchy" (GAMA *apud* FERREIRA, 2007, p. 268). The excerpt below shows an overview about such points:

To the positivism of the soft slavery, I put against it the revolutions of freedom; I want to be crazy like John Brown, and like Spartacus, like Lincoln, like Jesus; I despise, however, Pilate's pharisee calm [...]
I am at the beginning: when justice closes the doors of the courts, when *prudence* is taking over the country, when our adversaries rise to power,

³² Orthodox positivists are excluded here, as FERREIRA (2020, p.269-270) is excluded, once in Brazil there were several positivist movements. The Orthodox were "frankly abolitionists and concerned about the fate of future freedmen in the post-abolition", having as main figures Miguel Lemos and Teixeira Mendes. These, "defend the abolition of slavery, without indemnification of the lords, preaching altruism, cardinal principle of Comte's religion and, therefore, of the Brazilian Positivist Church, founded by them, which forbade its members to own slaves."



when the press be broken, I will know how to teach the wretched to the way of despair. [...] Evangelizers of positivism, remember that we do not ATTACK RIGHTS; WE PURSUE CRIME, for the sake of the salvation of the unfortunate; and remember, in the sweet peace of their quiet offices, that the joys of the slave are like the black cloud: at the climax they turn into tears. (griffins and uppercase by author. GAMA *apud* FERREIRA, 2020, p. 268-269)

In addition, Gama's cultural background was deeply influenced by figures such as Camões, and particularly, Gama identified himself with the character of Filodemo from the play *O Auto de Filodemo*, a character who "was plebeian servant of a noble, who he would later discover to be his uncle". (GAMA *apud* LIMA, 2021, p. 53-54). When examining Gama's writings, it is evident that he often draws inspiration from Afro-Greco-Latin literature and culture, especially on his political writings (LIMA, 2021, p.45).

In his poetry, Gama also used the "North-American legal chronicles, Portuguese-Brazilian civil legal theory, and Portuguese satirical poetry", with "a pragmatic objective: to establish an emancipatory normative framework for the processing and judgment of causes of liberty in the province of São Paulo" (LIMA, 2021, p. 37). In his book, *First Burlesque poetry of Getulino*³³ (1859), the author's voice already was telling about the social inequality in Brazil that was an abyss and about the slave institute, which surrounded all social relations present in the Empire of Brazil.

Another aspect of Gama's theoretical position is that he was "accused" of being associated with the Communist International (1864-1876). Although he published that "Christ established communism for the salvation of society; a save society abolish communism for Christ's sake!" (FERREIRA, 2011, p. 292), in responding to this accusation, Gama clarified that his action aimed to "promote the propagation of primary education and emancipation of slaves by legal procedures." (LIMA, 2021, p. 31-32)

Given Gama's theoretical foundations in all these already mentioned beacon, Gama's works are an amalgam of these ideals. This construction, presented by Gama to the readers of imperial São Paulo, serves as a call to put his radical ideas into practice, advocating for the emancipation of enslaved individuals through legal procedures and immediate, unrestricted abolition.

This construction involves an inclusive concept of citizenship, ensuring full access of civil rights, the implementation of wage labor of the entire population, a Republican

³³ In portuguese: "*Primeiras trovas burlescas de Getulino*". Getulino is a name originated in *Getúlia*, the ancient name given from Romans to the north Africa region, which corresponds nowadays the coast area of Tunisia and Algeria. Other authors put *Getúlia* next to the Saara Desert. What all agree is that was in Africa, what had a great significance in that time, when the mainstream was to keep apart of all African symbolism.



State and its social organization based on a horizontalized democracy. These aspects will be more detailed in the following topics, but in general aimed "at the same time, the black race as an active voice and a political program that addressed the abolition of slavery, of a permanent army, the National Guard, the death penalty and the religion of the State", about the "freedom of conscience and worship, teaching, press (...) association and peaceful meetings", "the regeneration of the courts, polluted by the greed of judges" and a program that "in politics sustains republican ideas; as socialist, a Christian democracy" (LIMA, 2021, p. 25). For LIMA, "democracy, law and freedom become key words" of Gama's work (2021, p. 11).

2.1. Abolition now: under the perspective of a radical republican

Luiz Gama pointed out to the inseparable connection between abolition and the liberal Republic, intended to ensure the rights and effective engagement of the population by promptly and unrestrictedly eradicating the institute of slavery. In this context, it is pertinent to delve into Carvalho and Neves (2009) interpretation regarding the relation among race, abolition, liberal States and access of civil rights as a means of establishing an effective model of citizenship:

The modern notion of race is a social construction, intricately linked, in the American continent, to the contradictions between civil and political rights intrinsic in citizenship, established by the new liberal states, and the prolonged process of abolition of slavery. (CARVALHO; NEVES, 2009, p. 355)

Within Gama's perspective, the social inclusion of Black people in the post-abolition project differs from that "slow and gradual" inclusion envisioned by the Brazilian State and certain authors (such as Bonifácio). An example of this slow and gradual insertion (although one could argue whether it was the primary intention, or an unintended result) by the State was the enactment of laws allowing the recruitment of the free black population for the defense troops, which increased the number of black people in military positions, providing a significant avenue for social mobility for light-skinned blacks (or, considering the IBGE³⁴ classification, *pardos*³⁵) in the 19th century.

³⁴ In Portuguese: *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (Brazilian institute of Geography and Statistics), is a public institute which measure nowadays the census of Brazilian population, one measure is by race and color.

³⁵ One of the races that IBGE has in its database is *Pardo*, which is near to what is usually known as brown or light-skin. Clearly a product of mixing of races (between black and whites, whites and Indigenous or even Black and Indigenous people).



For Gama, alongside abolition, material emancipation (not solely the enactment in an empty law lacking material effectiveness) should occur immediately and unrestrictedly, as evident in the current topic and in the subsequent analysis.

2.2. A wide and unrestricted education

Afro develops the idea of an inclusion program centered around free and mandatory literacy, the universalization of secular primary education, and the establishment of libraries in "all towns, villages, districts and cities of the province. Mandatory and inclusive universal free public education" (LIMA, 2021, p. 136)³⁶. Although Gama's publications do not explicitly the issue of women and girls' access to education, the author advocates for strong state intervention to ensure educational opportunities for all men and boys. However, it is important to acknowledge that Gama's concept of universality was confined to the male sphere. Gama does not immediately raise objections or explicit prohibitions for girls and women to access educational rights. On the contrary, he employs several expressions that could be interpreted broadly, expressing his utopian vision of "the doors of science completely open to all intellects" (GAMA *apud* LIMA, 2021, p. 138) and that "wherever there is a hut, wherever there is a spirit, let there be a book" (GAMA *apud* LIMA, 2021, p. 138).

Gama posits a correlation between education, access to rights and citizenship, contending that education would yield freedom (not only freedom related to end of slavery, but freedom to read, with a critical spirit to comprehend the world), which would inevitably serve as another "step" towards attaining citizen status for the newly emancipated or free Black individuals. From the perspective of the intellectual, education represents a "radical experience of freedom". Through this experience of independence, the individual would also have an autonomy of conscience, and by having this autonomy of conscience, he would have an autonomy of conscience, enabling them to engage in autonomous political movements and actions.

This foundational, free, universal, mandatory and decentralized instruction, coupled with educational (secularism / laicity), constitutes a key element in opening the doors to social emancipation for individuals. Education, according to Gama, would mold

³⁶ About this matter, Gama's words were sharp in his article published in the newspaper *Democracia* (SP) on December 1, 1867, p. 1. This publication may be found entirely in LIMA, 2021, p.137, 139.



the Brazilian citizen model, finally abandoning the position of subjects under the emperor, thereby transforming, *de facto*, the reality of the marginalized population that had been either devoid of or subjected to limitations in accessing civil rights.

Lima validates this interpretation of Luiz Gama thinking in his work "*Democracia*"³⁷ suggesting that the genesis of this inclusive social project lies in the popularization of the aforementioned public-school model:

Afro sees public education as "man's inalienable right" and the freed as a recipient of rights. In a historical time when learning to read and write was a privilege restricted to a small portion of the population, even among the free population, Afro included the freed effectively as a citizen, reinforcing rights and truly recognizing it as part of the nation's political body. (GAMA *apud* LIMA, 2021, p. 27)

Within this framework of education Luiz Gama proposed its implementation as a "civilizing and democratic reform that Brazil [...] could not afford the effects if was not accomplished. Freedom of education, therefore, would be an expression of freedom of conscience and thought" (LIMA, 2021, p. 27-28). Gama argued that this was the only viable solution, as without a basic education, accessible to all and free from religious influence, newly emancipated individuals and/or the first generation of freed people would be deprived of "true freedom", lacking a critical mindset and easily falling prey to society, perpetuating systems of oppression and inequality. The scenario would remain the same, only the actors would change: if Gama's proposed changes were not implemented, oppression would not emanate from the monarchy but from the colonels (*coronéis*)³⁸ and oligarchy entrenched in Brazilian society – a situation that indeed manifested in the history of the First Brazilian Republic³⁹ and the "*Café com Leite*" policy⁴⁰. In the following excerpt, Gama speaks against the oligarchies in both parties (Conservative and Liberal party), however, it can be understood that the author's intention was to highlight that the effective social emancipation would only be achieved through the

³⁷ In English: Democracy.

³⁸ In Portuguese, "*coronéis*", were wealthy and powerful local leaders who headed a movement known as "coronelismo"; a complex structure of power that started locally, with the figure of the "coronel" being more powerful than the public authority (State). It was spreaded all over Brazil after the end of Monarchy, as parallel power, violent and corrupt, that got into politics, electing themselves (the *coronéis*) or people who worked on behalf of them (their "godsons"). Much of those "godsons" were elected by buying vote of poor illiterate people who did not know about their rights.

³⁹ In Portuguese: *República Velha* (literal translation Old Republic). It was the first period of Republicanism in Brazil, right after the end of Monarchy, from 1889 to 1930.

⁴⁰ In Portuguese: "*política do café com leite*" (literal translation coffee with milk policy). Was a term that referred to the domination of Brazilian politics in the First Brazilian Republic by the oligarchies of São Paulo state (who dominated the coffee industry) and Minas Gerais (who dominated the dairy interests).



dismantling of the power structure held by a small group of powerful over a substantial portion of miserable.

I declare, with the strongest firmness of conviction, that the people must be saved by themselves, when, free of delusions, they will be conscious of what they are worth and how much they can accomplish and that, in order to achieve it, it has indispensable precision to bring to the ground the powerful oligarchy of the two militant parties, that oppresses them, and to raise high the sacred standard of democracy.

The day of Happiness will be the memorable day of emancipation of the people, and the day of emancipation will be the one on which the great are slaughtered and the little ones raised; where there are no masters or slaves; bosses or subordinates; powerful or weak; oppressors or oppressed; but in what the enormous Brazil is called - the common homeland of Brazilians or - United States of Brazil. (GAMA *apud* LIMA, 2021, p. 96-97)

2.3. Democratic ideals

Luiz Gama, driven by a fervent commitment to the democracy, until its "last consequences", founded the newspaper *Democracia* in 1868. However, it is essential to delve deeper into Gama's understanding of the term "democracy", being traced back to the ideals of the Age of Enlightenment, which emphasized the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. Still, Ferreira (2011, p. 297) stated that democracy or democrat was also used to refer to republicans.

It is crucial to open the debate regarding the Enlightenment as a source of Gama's inspiration. While the essence of his inspiration was the French Revolution (1789-1799), it would be remiss to disregard the influence of the Emancipation Proclamation of the United States (1862), given Gama's temporal proximity to this event. Both States have a shared history of being colonies and they are situated on the American continent.

Gama's position is evident in a letter to his son, where he asks him to work tirelessly so "that this country in which we were born, can exist without a king and without slaves, and be called as United States of Brazil"⁴¹ (GAMA *apud* FERREIRA, 2011, p.193);

⁴¹ In this work, Ferreira puts it that "According to José Maria dos Santos, it is certainly the first time that the expression "United States of Brazil" was enunciated. Cf. *The Paulista Republicans and the Abolition*. São Paulo: Livraria Martins, 1942, p. 95."



and that he had "a sublime dream [...] The American⁴² Brazil and the lands of Cross⁴³, without kings and without slaves!" (GAMA *apud* FERREIRA, 2011, p.137).

In Gama's perspective, democracy permeates the aforementioned educational model, always striving at the idea that human dignity should extend equally to all inhabitants of Brazilian territories. For Gama, in a modern and republican democracy, the status of a citizen with civil rights (and the access to exercise them) should not be restricted to a race or a social class. He advocates for the extension of social rights to encompass the entire population.

3. Conclusion

Upon examination of Luiz Gama's writings, it can be perceived an effective and wide citizenship project, aimed at securing access to rights. This project demonstrates Gama's understanding that its effectiveness rested on three intersecting pillars: abolition (which is only effective when immediate and unrestricted); access to basic education (which is secular and mandatory); and a role model of Democratic (or Republican) government (given that such terms were viewed as synonyms by certain social groups during that period). The project's amplitude is due to the fact that it included not only free, white, Portuguese and European individuals (as was ruling at the time), but by the entire population living in Brazil.

Gama's expansive citizenship project would also ensure for Black Brazilians and Africans (including those who in a such desired future would have been emancipated from slavery) civil, political and social rights, a proposition that diverged from the hegemonic ideology and the material reality of their historical era. Such construction of a citizenship inherent in a Republican, Democratic State, free from slavery and grounded in education, was a viable pathway towards securing rights for those individuals who had endured the harrowing experience of enslavement.

⁴² Here, the real meaning is still open to interpretation; Gama could be talking about using United States as a model of liberty and independence (as a former colony) and also can be understood as a model of Brazil that could be an independent as an American State (referring to the continent), getting apart of Portugal's influence and domination.

⁴³ In portuguese: *Cruzeiro*. Terra do Cruzeiro was one of the names that Brazil was known. It refers to the constellation of Crux that can be seen; also, it has a religious meaning as Cruzeiro can be understood as Cross.



Through the intertwining of these three pillars – abolition, education and democracy – Gama demonstrates, in several passages, that abolition without education and democracy (or republic), would perpetuate the social marginalization of the formerly enslaved population and the subsequent generations. Likewise, the sole presence of education would secure educational opportunities for those individuals who already possessed guaranteed rights. Lastly, democracy and/or republicanism alone, without abolition and without education would keep the power centered in the hands of a privileged few – as evidenced in the First Brazilian Republic – with the oligarchies that controlled the nation's production.

It can be also worth of mention that in addition to designing this future Brazil of post-abolition period, that would count with that project to a pave path and end for achieve citizenship, Luiz Gama presented himself as a role model of citizen built by education considered in this project (even if he was still in an era of subjects and emperor in a slavery country): he have been illegally enslaved and, having contact with alphabetization, he proved his illegal condition of enslaved and won his liberty. He continued, using writing and by education, gathering knowledge; until the point of having remarkable legal knowledge and becoming a certificated lawyer.

Luiz Gama presented himself as living proof that, by enabling this wide access to education, it would be possible for the largest number of people to become subjects of rights, which could conquer a certain social mobility, autonomy and economic independence.

In conclusion, this research exposes Gama's advocacy for this method of citizenship construction, as an instrument that would guarantee, to those people historically marginalized and denied agency, something close to the principle of "human dignity" (concept that, it is worth mentioning, only was written in Constitution of Brazil in 1988 – the current supreme law in Brazil).

Lastly, it is it is important to point out that this research is intended to be an initial step in an ongoing academic exploration that is still open. This project aims to delve deeper into the often-overlooked perspective of this author, who through his abolitionist endeavors, outlined plans driven to dismantling the prevailing slave structure and achieving true emancipation. The lasting effects of discrimination and exclusion continue to hinder societal progress, even though formal abolition took place approximately 134 years ago. Therefore, this objective holds contemporary relevance, as the legacy of slavery



persists in denying the most fundamental and elementary rights about freedom and equality, narrowing the concept of citizenship for many Brazilians.

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About the authors

Thaís Budóia de Almeida Prado Ribeiro

Postgraduate in Leadership and Human Development from Mackenzie Presbyterian University (2017), Bachelor in International Trade from the Pontifical Catholic University of São Paulo (2013), currently pursuing Bachelor in Law at Mackenzie Presbyterian University. Engaged in research within the groups of "State and Law in Brazilian Social Thought" and "Citizenship in Brazilian Social Thought: the racial question," affiliated with the research line "Citizenship Shaping the State," at Mackenzie Presbyterian University. MackResearch Scholar (2021-2022).

Silvio Luiz de Almeida

PhD in Law, by the Philosophy and General Law Theory of University of São Paulo. Master in Political and Economic Law by Mackenzie Presbyterian University. Bachelor in Law by Mackenzie Presbyterian University. Bachelor in Philosophy by Faculty of Philosophy, Languages and Literature, and Human Sciences, at University of São Paulo. Concluded post doctoral studies at Faculty of Law at University of São Paulo. Researcher at post doctoral program of Faculty of Economics at University of São Paulo. Professor at graduation course and permanent professor at the Post Graduation Strictu Sensu Program in Political and Economic Law at Faculty of Law of Mackenzie Presbyterian University. Professor at Business School of São Paulo (FGV-EAESP) and at Law School of São Paulo at the Getúlio Vargas Foundation. Visiting Professor (Edward Larocque Tinker Visiting Professor) at Columbia University, in New York City, and Mellon Visiting Professor do Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies da Universidade de Duke (EUA). Director of Luiz Gama Institute. President of Brazilian Studies Center (CEB) at Institute fir Reform of State and Business Relations (IREE). Lawyer. Minister of Human Rights and Citizenship.

The authors contributed equally to the writing of the article.





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