

A brief report on the relations between Brazil and England in the 19th century: the transition of the labor system and the main legacy of the slavery system

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Abstract. The influence of England on the economic formation of Brazil is well known. These induced marks are easily seen in current times. Even after independence, Dom Pedro I found himself pressured to keep the nation subordinate to the British in favor of international recognition, a fact that was reflected in the trafficking of enslaved Black people. The treaty signed in 1826 was not only about the renewal of a mere British interest, but also of an abolitionist agreement that transformed Brazil in an economic and social character. The abolition of slavery in Brazil depends on external factors and, not least, internal ones: a period in which there were more enslaved individuals than free whites –building the concern that, as a matter of time, Black people would become aware.

Keywords: Slavery; Brazil; job

JEL codes: N36

[es] Un breve informe sobre las relaciones entre Brasil e Inglaterra en el siglo XIX: la transición del sistema laboral y el principal legado del sistema esclavista

Resumen. La influencia de Inglaterra en la formación económica de Brasil es bien conocida. Estas marcas inducidas se ven fácilmente en los tiempos actuales. Incluso después de la independencia, Dom Pedro I se vio presionado para mantener la nación subordinada a los británicos a favor del reconocimiento internacional, hecho que se reflejó en el tráfico de negros esclavizados. El tratado firmado en 1826 no se trataba sólo de la renovación de un mero interés británico, sino también de un acuerdo abolicionista que transformó a Brasil en un carácter económico y social. La abolición de la esclavitud en Brasil depende de factores externos y, no menos importantes, internos: un periodo en el que había más esclavos que blancos libres, lo que generó la preocupación de que, con el tiempo, los negros tomarían conciencia.

Palabras clave: esclavitud; Brasil; trabajo

Códigos JEL: N36

[pt] Um breve relato sobre as relações entre Brasil e Inglaterra no século XIX: a transição do sistema de trabalho e o principal legado do sistema escravista

Resumo. A influência da Inglaterra na formação econômica do Brasil é bem conhecida. Essas marcas induzidas são facilmente vistas nos tempos atuais. Mesmo após a independência, D. Pedro I se viu pressionado a manter a nação subordinada aos ingleses em prol do reconhecimento internacional, fato que se refletiu no tráfico de negros escravizados. O tratado assinado em 1826 não tratava apenas da renovação de um mero interesse britânico, mas também de um acordo abolicionista que transformava o Brasil em caráter econômico e social. A abolição da escravatura no Brasil depende de fatores externos e, não menos importante, internos: um período em que havia mais escravizados do que brancos livres – construindo a preocupação de que, em questão de tempo, os negros se conscientizassem.

Palavras-chave: Escravidão; Brasil; trabalho

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Sumario. 1. Introducción. 2. Brazil in the international context of the english century. 3. The transition from slave to waged work and its reflections in Brazil. 4 Conclusive analysis. Bibliographic references.

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1. Introduction

Since the 17th century, with the advent of the Industrial Revolution, England has solidified its commercial expansion around the world. Overcoming Dutch naval power and containing French land power, the British instituted the balance of power in Europe, which allowed for their overseas expansion. This decrease in the naval and commercial power of the Netherlands proved to be a pillar of the transition of hegemonies, from the Dutch to the British. With an expanding trade, with its consolidated naval power, privileged insular position and with the containment of countries that could threaten its dominance in Europe (mainly France), Great Britain established itself as a hegemonic country throughout the 19th century. Both European powers had a similar military power where all States sought their survival in the International System, but the leadership was British. It was through this balance that the Pax Britannica endured for a century.

The relationship between Brazil and England was born out of an ancient Portuguese heritage. This fact is reflected in the first decades of this relationship: England maintained its economic interests since the times of Colonial Brazil. After becoming independent, Brazil was still politically weak and militarily disorganized, it maintained an economy of exportation of agricultural products, practically no consolidated industry, in addition to dependence on foreign capital and industrialized products (mainly English). In this way, in demanding political recognition for its independence, it was not difficult for Brazilian subordination to British power.

A country in an economically privileged position has the power to impose its interests on smaller nations. In this case, Great Britain, as the hegemonic power of the time, overlaps its abolitionist interests in Brazil, an economy that was dependent on enslaved labor, mainly exercised in the northeast region during the sugar cycle. British interests were clear: renewal of commercial treaties signed with Portugal and an end to the slave trade for economic reasons.

The present article aims to expose the relations between Brazil and England that influenced the transition from slave to wage labor and, in the consequent structural formation of Brazil observed in current times. To reach this objective, the work is divided into two parts: Initially, the Brazilian situation in the international context will be addressed; in the second part, the transition from slave to wage labor and its consequences will be briefly described under the hypothesis that this period is fundamental in the understanding of racial inequality in Brazil.

2. Brazil in the international context of the English century

The 19th century is the English century. “England became the main world power, dominated international trade, managed international finances through the gold standard, guaranteed a consumer market for its prod-

ucts, influenced internal, external and regional policies.” (Pereira, 2015, p. 40).

Relations between Brazil and Great Britain began in colonial times, through the relationship with Portugal. British interests in Portuguese territory are still considered to be from the 17th century, with the signing of commercial treaties between the two nations. From this period, one can notice the situation of dependence and subordination of the Portuguese court, verified in the three treaties signed between 1642 and 1661, making official privileges and freedoms for British traders on Portuguese soil. “In general, few states are at the top of the power hierarchy and, consequently, are able to shape the interactions between the other actors in their interests.” (Pereira, 2015, p. 40).

In the following century, the link between these two countries –albeit a little shaken– had been maintained. And with the economic growth in the share of trade, English eyes turned once again to Portugal. In the international context, the wars between Great Britain and France represented a change in the order of power in Europe. In the 1790s, when Great Britain asserted its naval dominance in the Atlantic, Napoleon’s France was forced to resort to land wars and, in the first decade of the 19th century, imposed the continental blockade on England. This fact is important in the Portuguese-British relationship, as it was through Portugal and its overseas territories that England found new markets to replace the closed markets in Europe. It is in this context that the sudden move of the Portuguese court to Rio de Janeiro takes place, in 1808, in an escape from the French invasion.

From 1808, with the arrival of the Portuguese Court in Rio de Janeiro, more than thirty commercial establishments were created in connection with Great Britain. The size of this trade and its rapid development may be demonstrated by the expenditures that Brazil spent on imports: 1860,000 pounds against receipt of 950,000 pounds in 1820, and in the following year, 2230,000 pounds against 1300,000 pounds received from its exports, that is, the import of English goods was greater than the export of Brazilian products to the European market. In view of this, the Portuguese wanted to have their privileges restored, since with the treaties of 1810, they lost about five-sixths of their foreign market. These pressures, in turn, would have triggered the definitive rupture of the colonial pact, in 1815, elevating Brazil to the category of United Kingdom. With this, Brazil would move away from the former colony status, gaining relative autonomy, since the Portuguese State would be reproducing its administrative system here, controlling the entire empire of Rio de Janeiro. As Brazilian ports were opening up to British trade, the situation of colonial Brazil changed radically. (Oliveira, 2008, p. 2).

The social, political, economic, and cultural transformations linked to this event were quite expressive. From improvements to the capital’s infrastructure, raising the colony to quality from the United Kingdom to Portugal

and the Algarves, the opening of ports to friendly nations, as well as the emergence of a middle class. The participation and influence of English capital intensified in this period. In this scenario, some treaties are signed between Portugal and England, with commercial benefits, for the latter. With the independence of Brazil, Great Britain stopped depending on the Portuguese intermediary in its relationship with the colony. This change, however, was not reflected in British foreign policy towards Brazil, and during the first decades of the new empire the interests of the British remained the same as those of the early 19th century.

Ad valorem tariffs, which granted a maximum rate of 15% to English products and, as described in article ten, allowed the formation of a British jury parallel to the Brazilian one. That is, any special case involving British citizens in Brazil would be subject to British law, with British magistrates responsible in Brazil. Among household items, furniture and fabrics, English exports were frequent in Brazilian Portuguese daily life. While Brazil found by the British, it was dedicated to few agricultural products and the importation of enslaved people.

The second treaty of 1810 is a treaty of alliance, friendship, and navigation whose tenth article refers to the slave trade. In this article, the Prince Regent agreed to cooperate with Great Britain on the following stated arguments: “Injustice, uselessness of the trade, and disadvantages arising from continually introducing an alien and artificial population.” In this treaty, Portugal was prohibited from trafficking in territories on the north coast of Africa that were not the domain of the Royal Highness. This was the first gradual abolition of trafficking agreement. But it is known that little was done by Portuguese initiative.

Five years later, on January 21, 1815, in Vienna, Great Britain signed another treaty with Portugal, which again yielded to English interests; but this time he accepted the abolition of the trade north of the Equator for a modest indemnity of 300,000 pounds, and the next day another treaty was signed pardoning a debt on a loan that Portugal obtained in 1809 (which was about half of the payment missing). In this period, only a part of the enslaved who arrived in the states of Maranhão, Bahia and Pernambuco came from the northern region of Ecuador, thus having minor impact on the number of slaves who arrived in Brazil.

Two weeks after the Declaration, on February 8, 1815, Portugal participated together with England, France, Spain, Sweden, Austria, Prussia, and Russia in an “Eight Powers Declaration” in which the colony-owning countries would start from the beginning. that “the slave trade was repugnant to the moral principles of humanity and universal morality.” It is noted that, in this period, public opinion in the countries began to be influenced by a new model and innovative thinking that aimed at the need to fight trafficking. A few months later, this declaration was annexed to the Congress of Vienna where it served as the basis for later conferences, where countries discussed ways to abolish trafficking. Of the member countries, only Portugal and Spain persisted with trafficking.

In 1817, two years later, Britain assumed the role of “international police”. An additional convention was ratified to the 1815 treaty between England and Portugal, in which the illicit trade in African slaves would be reprimanded and the right to visit and search suspect vessels would be recognized, as well as the creation of “mixed commissions”. That is, England would have the right to inspect suspicious ships and detain them if slaves were actually found.

In the following years, England again had the opportunity to increase its demands. Five years later, the Portuguese colony gained independence and Brazil inherited its dependence on England from Portugal. The subject of much criticism, Emperor Dom Pedro I bet on the friendship between Brazil and Great Britain to obtain recognition as an independent country vis-à-vis the other powers, cooperating even more with British interests. Unlike his ministers, the emperor was in favor of abolition because of the importance of diplomatic recognition. The 1826 treaty can be said to be a referendum on previous treaties. English interest in ending the slave trade was primarily commercial. After years of profiting from this trade, England in the 1800s needed a consumer market to absorb its production. Thus, with the advent of innovative technologies, the mechanization of the means of production, communication and transport had a significant impact on the expansion of the industry. Moral issues were also part of the debate, but they were in the background. It is also worth mentioning that England, having ended its own trade in 1807, lost the competitiveness of its colonial agricultural products in the international market. Because they were such conflicting interests, the traffic of African slaves in Brazil was extended until 1850. Even with the intense pressure exerted by England, the interest of the ruling elites lasted for many years in this issue.

In the international system, England had held in the 19th century the position of center and Brazil –which had been a Portuguese colony until 1822– easily fits into the periphery. As mentioned by Celso Furtado, there is a tendency to deteriorate exchange relations, where peripheral nations suffer severe consequences.

To the English, the large stock of metals guaranteed their wealth during the gold standard, as it was the cradle of the Industrial Revolution, it was able to change capital-labor relations, free trade and, therefore, the end of slavery that fell to them as a piece. key to increasing your consumer market and in the world increasing your profits –the vicious cycle of wealth.

The first phase of industrial capitalism covers the period between 1770 and 1870, marked by the intense international division of labor. From 1870 onwards, there is a “deviation of course” instigated by the Second Industrial Revolution, which then induced the transition from slave to wage labor: the abolition of slavery in the United States of America and Russia between 1861 and 1865 and the unification of Italy and from Germany from 1868 to 1870, intensively introduced industrial production in these countries. “This period marks the end of British hegemony and the beginning of inter-imperialist rivalries, whose main protagonists would be Great

Britain, Germany, and the United States. Between 1870 and 1913 Great Britain loses industrial primacy” (Singer, 1974, p. 548). This rivalry unleashed the well-known First World War. In the words of Paul Singer:

The growing rivalry between the great imperialist powers ended up leading to the First World War, from which the panorama of world capitalism began to change again. The conflict marked the end of the division of the world between a reduced number of powers. In 1914 there were no more territories to “acquire”: any new dispute would have to be at the expense of another imperialist power. From 1918, the movement of capitalist expansion began to ebb. The October Revolution separated the world capitalist economy and the largest country in the world by extension, the Soviet Union. From there, national emancipation movements emerged, such as that of Gandhi in India in the 1920s, which prepared the Colonial Revolution, which expanded vigorously until the 2nd World War.

The period that begins after 1918 is not only characterized by capitalist reflux, but also by the internal reorganization of the capitalist economy. (Singer, 1974, p. 549).

3. The transition from slave to waged work and its reflections in Brazil

In addition to the low customs rates, there were loans made by Dom Pedro I. Consequently, Brazilian dependence on England ceased to be exclusively commercial but also financial until the mid-twentieth century. Thus, in 1845, *Bill Aberdeen* (1845) was enacted, a British law that granted the British Royal Navy strong rights to prohibit the slave trade, thus being able to act unilaterally and even more rigidly.

The fact that England acted aggressively against Brazilian ships would hamper imperial intervention in the Silver. To resolve this issue, Brazil enacts the Eusébio de Queiroz Law (1850), which puts an end to the slave trade in Brazil and guarantees British neutrality in Brazilian interventions against Argentina and Uruguay between the 1850s and 1860s. (Pereira, 2015, p. 48).

On September 28, 1885, the Sexagenarian Law (also known as the Saraiva-Cotegipe Law) was enacted, granting the release of enslaved individuals over 60 years of age. It is worth remembering, during this period, the life expectancy of the enslaved was less than 40 years. The Lei Áurea was signed by Princess Isabel only in 1888, making all remaining slaves in Brazil free, but without the right to political participation, education and with rare opportunities for salaried work. As explained by Manuel Correia de Andrade:

Nor can we isolate the period after 1888, when the slave was transformed into a “free” worker. This is because the relationship system was one that had been institutionalized in more than two centuries of use, based not

only on Portuguese and Brazilian legislation, but also consolidated in a series of uses and customs, respected as if emanating from the law itself. Even the changes in infrastructure, which occur more quickly, do not immediately change, but in the long term, the legal, social and, above all, ideological structures. The slave, even freed, continued to be seen by the ruling class as if he were a slave and he himself felt marked by his previous condition. Even after abolition, with the extinction of the slave system from a legal and social point of view, many times the relations between masters and ex-slaves continued to be guided by the system that was crystallized. It is easier to change a law than to change a mindset. The change is not fully felt with the simple enactment of the law, but slowly, when old habits and customs are being deactivated. (Andrade, 1983, p. 72).

Brazil, even having no interest in the abolition of human trafficking, was pressured to sign a treaty that provided for its end. As a newly independent country and in need of political recognition, it accepted British help, which it did not take long to collect. As demonstrated, Brazil was economically dependent on England, which used this to establish its economic dominance. Economic and military powers are linked to political relations between nations. There are strong indications that the abolition of slavery in Brazil was induced mainly for economic reasons, but not exclusively for that. There are studies that point to an ascendancy in the social organization of Black people, at a time when they were already quantitatively the majority in Brazilian territory. In particular, Quilombo dos Palmares, which was formed in the 16th century, in the Captaincy of Pernambuco, which, at its peak, had around 20,000 members - entering history and possibly encouraging many of those who suffered from slavery.

The history of Black people and favelas in Brazil is intertwined. Those who have not tasted the rare opportunities for salaried work have occupied peripheral regions of the cities. These occupations – later called favelas – are characterized by the neglect of police and state authorities, lack of commitment to human rights and the consequent violence. As Gizele Martins explains:

Favelas began to mark the urban landscape at a time when the authorities of the time were concerned with making the city of Rio de Janeiro a major force for capital. It was the time of expansion of the city, of its commerce, modernization.

In 1888, slavery is abolished and this black population, which was stolen from their countries on the African continent and enslaved in Brazil, when “freed” continues to fight for other rights, including housing [...] black woman who occupied this slum space and other residents of the city of Rio de Janeiro, migrants mainly from the Brazilian northeast and from other cities in Rio de Janeiro, began to occupy the city’s hills. Without citizenship, housing, education and health, favelas have become a solution to the lack of housing rights for these populations. The favelados only built their shacks, cultural life and alternative work over time. (Martins, 2019, p. 20-21).

There is a term known by some authors as “Slow Violence”, as Berkeley Kershnik (2012) points out, this term suggests that violence is not an immediate consequence of the military dictatorship, but something that was structured throughout the historical process. The lack of basic sanitation, education, the health system, and the consequent presence of daily violence in a region practically exempt from state public policies in favor of the well-being of citizens residing in the favelas, generating a “management void”, often filled by the drug trafficking, eventually filled by the militias.

The latest data published by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) show that, among people living below the poverty line, more than twice as many self-declare as black or brown. Almost 80% of management positions are being held by white people and, among elected federal parliamentarians, only 24.4% are black or brown. On the other hand, the Brazilian Public Security Yearbook (2020) indicates that Black people are the majority in prisons and, it is worth remembering, in 2019 there were approximately 755,274 people in closed regime, among these, almost 67% are Black people, the vast majority without completing education. fundamental. Social inequality in Brazil is racial.

4 Conclusive analysis

Britain’s hegemonic position was evident in the 19th century. Such a relationship gave this nation the responsibility of managing the international system with-

out major wars. Portugal benefited by guaranteeing the transfer of the Court to Rio de Janeiro in order not to face the Napoleonic invasion, consolidating its peripheral position in the system transferred to independent Brazil. In short, the abolition of slavery is the result of intense external and internal pressure. External pressure had been driven by the English government, which after the industrial revolution had required the formation of a large consumer market. Internally, despite not having the same potential for armed force, the intense inhumanity of slavery could trigger other rebellions –there was a great social demand for change.

However, the transformation from slave to wage labor in Brazil was disorderly, without clear objectives and against the will of the national elites –therefore, the enslaved were freed, but without the initial right to vote, without the opportunity for wage work. Thus, the first favelas were formed that, historically, are practically devoid of priorities in respect of human rights by State authorities and police authorities.

In short, in the English century, England conducted the main economic policies implemented also in Brazil, which, since then, had formed its bourgeoisie, passing through what we recognize today as dependent capitalism. The Black population in the country is the majority, but it is not present in the majority in universities, in leadership positions in the public and private sectors, nor in parliamentary positions. Blacks in Brazil are the majority in prisons and in poverty. Thus, from a brief historical analysis, it is possible to verify that racism is not a specific case, it is structural.

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