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What does it mean to be an African person? Racialized identity and citizenship policies for the Sixth Region of Africa[1]

O que significa ser uma pessoa africana? Políticas racializadas de identidade e cidadania para a Sexta Região da África

¿Qué significa ser una persona africana? Políticas racializadas de identidad y ciudadanía para la Sexta Región de África

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Abstract

With the Declaration by the African Union of the Diaspora as the Sixth Region of the continent – a centenary demand of activists and intellectuals – debates resurface around the African identity. It aims to explain via African epistemologies: how does pan-Africanist thought condition criteria and principles of identity and citizenship towards the institutionalization of racialized and pluralistic policies for the Sixth Region? Paths of self-determination are debated when problematizing the concept of "diaspora." Endogenous criteria and principles that condition reparatory and racialized policies are discussed. Finally, contributions and potential of the epistemological assumptions afrocentered for International Relations.

Keywords: Race and International Relations. Sixth Region of Africa. African Diaspora. Self-determination. Identity & Citizenship.

Resumo

Com a Declaração, pela União Africana, da Diáspora como Sexta Região do continente – reivindicação centenária de ativistas e intelectuais – ressurgem debates ao redor da identidade africana. Almeja-se explicar via epistemologias africanas: como o pensamento pan-africanista condicionam critérios e princípios de identidade e cidadania rumo à institucionalização de políticas racializadas e pluralistas para a Sexta Região? Debatem-se caminhos de autodeterminação ao problematizarmos o conceito "diáspora." Em seguida, são discutidos critérios e princípios endógenos que condicionam políticas reparatórias e racializadas. Na conclusão, sinalizam-se contribuições e potencial dos pressupostos epistemológicos afrocentrados para as Relações Internacionais.

Palavras-chave: Raça & Relações Internacionais. Sexta Região da África. Diáspora Africana. Autodeterminação. Identidade & Cidadania.

Resumen

Con la Declaración, por la Unión Africana, de la Diáspora como Sexta Región – reivindicación centenaria de activistas e intelectuales – resurgen debates en torno a la identidad africana. Se pretende explicar vía epistemologías africanas: ¿cómo condicionan el pensamiento panafricano criterios y principios de identidad y

ciudadanía rumbo a la institucionalización de políticas racializadas y pluralistas para la Sexta Región? Se debaten caminos de autodeterminación al problematizar el concepto "diáspora." Se discuten los criterios y principios que condicionan las políticas reparadoras y racializadas. En conclusión, se señalan contribuciones y potencial de los presupuestos epistemológicos afrocentrados para las Relaciones Internacionales.

Palabras clave: Raza & Relaciones Internacionales. Sexta Región de África. Diáspora Africana. Autodeterminación. Identidad & Ciudadanía.

Introduction

When Burkinabé intellectual Ki-Zerbo (2006) was asked what the biggest problem was for Africa in his book, For When Africa, he replied that it was the problem of identity. All this because the oppressors have fixed the image of Africa and Africans "in the scenario of misery, barbarism, irresponsibility and chaos" (Ki-Zerbo 2010, XXXII). With Du Bois (1925), Hall (1990), Mbembe (2014), in dialogue with Fanon (2008), taking into account the processes of enslavement, colonial domination and racism, we would say that African identity, that is, the identity of African people and their descendants born in the diaspora, was and continues to be placed in the zone of non-being, that is, it was and is marked by dehumanization.

Le mouvement panafricaniste au XXe siècle: Contribution to the Conférence des Intelectuels d'Afrique et de la Diaspora (CIAD I, in free translation: "The Pan-Africanist Movement in the 20th Century: Contributions to the Conference of Intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora") (Union Africaine 2004), a work organized by the African Union in partnership with the Republic of Senegal, is not only full of historical evidence about what the Pan-Africanist movement was in the 20th century, but also contains reflections that reveal how this movement was being built, on a global level, as a force for combating racism and for elaborating African identity beyond national identities.

In the aforementioned work, Le mouvement panafricaniste au XXe siècle (2004), and in the eight volumes of the General History of Africa,

which were published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) between the 1960s and 1990s, one can see that the concern to forge a Pan-African identity, which takes into account the particularities of the experiences of being an African person on the continent and in the African diaspora, is present (Malomalo, 2018, 2019).

However, while the Pan-African Congresses, for example, were considered spaces for activism, politics and science by blacks in the African diaspora, the General History of Africa, published by UNESCO, devoted more of its pages to telling the history of Africans on the continent. In order to correct the shortcomings that were observed in the preparation of the work considered to be the realization of epistemic and political justice for Africa, and with an increasing understanding of the importance of the African diaspora, UNESCO dedicated the 10th volume to the African diaspora with this title: General History of Africa, X: Africa and its Diasporas (Santos 2023).

As a strategy for both the fragmentation and obliteration of the global African community, for centuries any recognition of dignity to African people was denied, through, not only, de-Africanization processes, but also subjective legal colonial and slavery instruments. Resulting, partly, from movements that for centuries have claimed recognition of the cultural and historical continuum of African resistances and solidarity among target peoples of colonization, enslavement, and racism, "the diaspora" was institutionalized as the Sixth Region by the African Union (AU) in 2003[5]. That opened new debates around the African identity that recover a conceptual repertoire from the rise of African emancipatory movements that promote re-Africanizations and propose endogenous solutions based on the heritage of African knowledge and culture.

Our research problem, therefore, aims to explain: how does the pan-Africanist thought condition criteria and principles of identity and citizenship towards the institutionalization of racialized and pluralist policies for the Sixth Region?

It is not the objective of this research to present a decisive or final meaning regarding what African identity is. Instead, it consists of articulating, in debate, a theoretical-conceptual framework referring to the ontological conceptualization of the African person in the Sixth Region in the footsteps of Doty (1993) and Silva

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5   The original five regions are: Central Africa, Southern Africa, Southern Africa, West Africa and East Africa.

(2021), as well as its effects on criteria and principles of identity and citizenship produced endogenously through African epistemologies.

This research is characterized as explanatory since this qualitative investigation aims to deepen the reasons and paths that lead to the establishment of African criteria and principles for identity and citizenship, through racialized and pluralist policies. Considering the theme whose sources of information come from, mostly, the oral circulation of ideas or institutional means, data collection through semi-structured interviews and documentary research, in addition to bibliographical review, were used as procedural methods. Primary sources consist of interview transcripts, official African Union documents, as well as speeches by activists and intellectuals at congresses.

We dialogue, essentially, with the theoretical keys provided by the critical approach, in International Relations and related areas, and racist epistemological assumptions, as explained by Errol Henderson (2013). Thus, our analysis draws on postcolonial, anticolonial and/or pan-Africanist oral and written texts by Gonzalez (1988), Doty (1993), Malomalo (2010, 2017, 2018, 2019), Silva (2021, 2022), and Dagoberto Fonseca (Latitudes Africanas 2022).

Following the introduction, the first section discusses paths of self-determination and challenges using the concept of "diaspora" to refer to the experience of enslavement, colonization and usurpation of African identity. In the second part, we seek to outline criteria and principles that, based on African ontologies and epistemologies, shape the endogenous conception of racialized and pluralistic components of identity and citizenship policies. Finally, we make final considerations about the contributions presented throughout the work and the epistemological, theoretical and practical potential research assumptions for the field of International Relations.

Paths to de-Africanization and self-determination under debate

This section aims to bring into debate Pan-Africanist intellectual traditions regarding the processes of de-Africanization and self-determination, racializing analytical categories that seek to study international relations concerning African identity in the Sixth Region of the continent based on African

theoretical-epistemological bases. In this context, it is essential to respond to questions posed by Doty (1993) dialoguing with both African and Brazilian libraries. Furthermore, we problematize operationalizing the concept of "diaspora" in the reality of African peoples, presenting additional discovered paths from such discussion.

Through the most diverse religious rites, bureaucratic-administrative processes and intersubjective domination, attempts were made to uproot the African roots of their peoples. The colonial strategies of de-Africanization of the Amefrican peoples[6] are an ongoing fact. Examples include the deletion of African names and replacement by European names (Lopes 2011), the dismemberment of families, compulsory conversions to Islam and Christianity as well as other physical and symbolic mutilations of African cultural expressions. Due to its size and terrifying meaning, we must also point out the incessant Western genocide of racialized peoples, especially original peoples, traditional and peripheral communities in the Améfricas.

Considering this, we observe that the implementation of colorism is one of the most ingenious practices for promoting discord and disunity among African peoples. Disputes, conflicts and rivalries between mestizo people and black people were strategies provoked by colonial whiteness. The process occurs through the differentiation, categorization and hierarchization of African people according to skin pigmentation, degree of hair texture and "blackness"[7] of phenotypic traits. According to Nei Lopes (2011, 446-447):

> The main strategy of slavery in the Americas was to make the captives forget their African status as quickly as possible and assume that of "blacks", a sign of subalternity, in order to prevent *banzo**[8] and the desire for rebellion or flight, frequent reactions, although antagonistic.[9]

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6   Gonzalez (1988, 77) defines "Améfrica" as "an ethnogeographic reference system, it is our creation and that of our ancestors on the continent where we live, inspired by African models" whose methodological value lies in the rescue of a specific unity between African peoples.

7   Historically, the notion of "black" phenotypic traits has been associated with people from the regions of Angola-Congo, where the largest population contingent of people enslaved and trafficked to Brazil comes from. We recognize the phenotypic diversity of African peoples beyond this territorial portion of the continent.

8   According to Nei Lopes (2011, 181), banzo can be defined as a "psychopathological state, a kind of nostalgia with deep depression, almost always fatal, into which some enslaved Africans in the Americas fell."

9   Versão original: "A principal estratégia do escravismo nas Américas era fazer que os cativos esquecessem o mais rapidamente sua condição de africanos e assumissem a de "negros", marca de subalternidade, a fim de prevenir o banzo* e o desejo de rebelião ou fuga, reações frequentes, posto que antagônicas. (Lopes 2011, 46-447)."

The domination over African identity is a seminal point whose tactics represent one of the specificities of colonialism: its deep and rooted penetration into the subjectivities of African people, beyond the servile labor bond. (Bernardino-Costa; Grosfoguel 2016, Curtin 2010, Gonzalez 1988, Malomalo 2017). Exterminating and mischaracterizing the marks of Africanization in slave societies are steps towards dehumanizing African people, who are no longer recognized as political or epistemic subjects (Silva 2021, 38).

The de-Africanization processes could be summarized in multiple denials, among which we highlight the denial of existing according to African ways of being and living. Operant racism is normalized in such a way that the Western white subject is placed at the center of morality, intellectual productions and aesthetics (Silva 2021). This subject parametrizes behaviors, cultural icons and identities by framing what is acceptable as within normality, what is tolerated through "cordial racism" and what is retaliated, exterminated, or rejected. Still according to Professor Karine Silva (2021, 47):

> Colonizing Eurocentrism denied the existence of non-white peoples in two ways: it dehumanized the people it racialized, hierarchized and trafficked, placing them in a zone of not being (FANON, 2008); and used all its efforts to prohibit the creation of States, placing such nations in a condition of no place. That is, the subjectivity of the ex-colonized was doubly denied, both in the sphere of being and in that of international power. It is always worth remembering that only those that are recognized as states can be considered subjects of Public International Law.[10]

In the Pan-Africanist perception, one of the clear impediments to the processes of a greater union, unity and cooperation between African peoples in the Pan-Africanist perception is the colonial capacity to manipulate the memory and forgetfulness of African people regarding their own identity. As a result of constant resistance to racism, the Pan-Africanist movement emerged claiming the self-determination of African peoples. (Gonzalez 1988).

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10 Versão original: "O eurocentrismo colonizador negou a existência dos povos não brancos de duas maneiras: desumanizou as pessoas que racializou, hierarquizou e traficou colocando-as na zona de não ser (Fanon, 2008); e empregou todos os seus esforços para proibir a criação de Estados, colocando tais nações na condição de não lugar. Ou seja, a subjetividade dos ex-colonizados foi negada duplamente, tanto na esfera do ser como na do poder internacional. Não é demais lembrar que apenas os que são reconhecidos como Estados podem ser considerados sujeitos de Direito Internacional Público. (Silva 2021, 47)"

Fundamentally, in this research, we aim to make the questions posed by Roxanne Doty (1993, 444) regarding African experiences, demands and productions in the Améfricas. We rely on questions such as: Who are "we"? Who are "they"? To whom we relate? How do "we" relate to "them"?

The invention of racially based hierarchies rests on the view that race is a biological component of human beings. We must recognize in the invisibilization of the race category and the autonomous agency of an African subject the very strategy of denying citizenship to a Brazilian identity already composed of African presence, even if refuted by dominant eugenics groups.

Hence the importance of conceptualizing race according to Doty (1993). The place of the category "race" in international relations studies has, only recently, incorporated a legacy of registered and systematized knowledge since at least the 19th century. However, according to Doty (1993, 450), the academic traditions of the field of international relations are still anchored in biological differences. In the literature on Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations (ERER) and in African Studies, for example, the concept of race as a sociological category – as opposed to a biological category – is consolidated in many countries, such as Brazil. Despite the eugenic categorization of humanity by biological criteria, Nascimento (2009 186) exposes that W.E.B. du Bois "locates the shared identity of African peoples on the continent and in the diaspora in their common historical and cultural experience rather than in biological criteria."

The contradiction resides in the attempt to make "race" seem neutral when, in fact, it is a category inherently linked to practices of exclusion and power. That is, according to Doty (1993, 449) "the problem is in the concept itself and in how it is generally defined and applied." Her conceptualization of "race" deals more with a critical genealogy of the points where racial differences were constructed than with the historical importance of race in international relations. Through the generation of discursive practices, practices of meaning and the repetition of these practices in everyday life engrains racialization in society, which is a dynamic process that enables a social group to be repeatedly defined and delimited. According to Silva (2021, 39), in addition to "the silencing of memories, one of the epistemic inflicted violences is discursive disauthorization." In this sense, "race" not only crosses borders, but becomes a place where borders are produced.

Doty's invitation to reconceptualize is reflected in the data collection carried out by the co-authors with professors Dagoberto José Fonseca (Unesp), Jorge Rasta (Quilombo D'Oiti) and Bas'Ilele Malomalo (UNILAB), with the mediation of professor Sylvani Euclênio (Thinking Africanly – PA). The conversation sought to collect information linked to academic reflections, knowledge and experiences of the guests, varied work profiles and theoretical affiliations within the Pan-Africanist field.

The semi-structured interview, broadcast live and available on YouTube channels (Latitudes Africanas 2022), was strongly motivated by the re-emergence of debates around African identity and presence in the so-called "diaspora." In exact reproduction of the words of the Rasta master:

> We keep looking for the threads that lead us to Africa and the condition in which we find ourselves. Because it is very difficult to find yourself in a position of African and diaspora or African, despite such being the concept of the 6th Region, in a world, a society that says that being black is the worst thing. It is the lower limit of a being; it is to be of African descent in Brazil, which places us mainly as a descendant of enslaved people, or of a slave, as literature teaches.[11]

As for Dagoberto Fonseca's views (Latitudes Africanas 2022), the theoretical-analytical foundation allows us to advance in reconceptualization studies considering that, for him, the "appropriation of the concept (...) it is fundamental for us to change identity. A concept is not an empty space; it is, instead, fundamental because it is not neutral, it is political."

We observed the emergence of many questions and proposals to revise the concept of "diaspora" as a topic of interest in the field of Social Sciences in the first quarter of the 21st century (Edwards 2017, Flor 2019, Malomalo, 2017, 2019). Both in the scope of academic discussion and in that of activism, and the dialogue between both, there are multiple sources of criticism of the term diaspora, despite not being the only target concept. Terms like "negro",

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11 Versão original: "A gente vai buscando os filamentos que nos levam à África e à condição em que nos encontramos. Porque é muito difícil se encontrar numa posição de africano e diáspora ou africano, mesmo sendo o conceito da 6ª Região, em um mundo, uma sociedade que diz que ser preto é a pior coisa. É o limite inferior de um ser, é ser descendente de africano no Brasil, que nos coloca principalmente como descendente de escravizados, ou de escravo, como a literatura ensina." (Latitudes Africanas 2022).

"preto", "Afro-descendant", "Afro-Brazilian" and many others according to Flor (2019, 376) also "connote, at the same time, the core of disagreements and the motto of these disputes." Therefore, we focus on the "African diaspora" due to its internationalized institutional dimension within the scope of the African Union, a field of interest for this research.

A break in the history of relations between Africa and its diasporas marks 2001, given that such year encompasses the transition from the Organization of African Unity (OAU), founded in 1963, to the African Union (AU) (União Africana 2000, 2003), which represents a new spirit of African insertion in the new post-1990 world order.

Through the creation of the "Diaspora Program", the AU aims to mobilize hundreds of millions of people not only from recent migrations, but also who have been in a condition of mobility since before or during the European colonial enterprise. After the declaration of the Diaspora as the Sixth Region of the continent (African Union 2003), technical meetings were organized to define the concept. The result is to understand the "African diaspora" as "composed of people of African origin living outside the continent, regardless of their citizenship or nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and to the construction of the African Union" (African Union 2005, União Africana 2005).

According to Edwards (2017, 40), the term "diaspora" corresponds to "[one] of the most embarrassing problems in recent works on black culture and politics in the international sphere." One of the most striking criticisms focuses on the "splitting of the world into two parts by colonial whiteness: on one hand, there is a humanity entitled to a dignified life and, on the other, a sub-humanity, a place where lives do not matter – they are silenceable, exploitable, and disposable." (Silva 2021, 42). Their perceptions gain more dimensions with the provocations of Dagoberto Fonseca (Latitudes Africanas 2022) in relation to the operationalization of the term "diaspora" on African peoples:

> (...) the concept of diaspora does indeed create some problems for us. We have some diasporas: the Jewish diaspora, (in)the gypsy diaspora and many smaller ones (...) What are these diasporas saying to us, as a concept? They're telling us these are smaller people. By the way, non-people. That

were separated, that were dispersed, that were violated throughout history and lost their original territories so that today they live in the diaspora.[12]

In order to analyze its assumptions, the semantic links that dehumanize peoples, particularly Africans, were investigated when juxtaposed with the term "diaspora", to which the following questions are appropriate:

> Is this situation applicable to the African continent? Does this concept apply to us? If we consider that it applies to us, why doesn't this concept fit the Irish, the Scots, the Britons, why they do not fit the Italians, the Germans, why do these concepts not belong to the Japanese... but why do these concepts belong to us? (...)
>
> Brazil is the largest country of Italian refugees since the 19th century and we still call them immigrants, when strictly speaking they are refugees. Refugees from the wars of unification in Italy, refugees from the wars of unification in Germany, refugees from the Napoleonic wars in the context of the European 19th century.
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> But we don't call these populations that lived the diaspora, let alone conceptualize these refugee populations either. Especially because refugees are those from Eastern Europe, those from Africa; refugees are from other countries, but not from (Western) Europe. (Latitudes Africanas 2022).[13]

Therefore, it seems essential to deepen – in the wake of Doty's argument – the conditions in which the term proves to be appropriate in a very brief genealogy. Fonseca's primary argument (PA, 2022) presents as a reflection

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12 Versão original: "(...) o conceito de diáspora nos cria de fato alguns problemas. Nós temos algumas diásporas: a diáspora judaica, (n)a diáspora cigana e tantas outras menores (...) O que essas diásporas estão dizendo para nós, enquanto conceito? Estão dizendo pra nós que essas são pessoas menores. Aliás, não-pessoas. Que foram separadas, que foram dispersadas, que foram violentadas ao longo da história e perderam seus territórios originários de modo que hoje vivem na diáspora."

13 Versão original: "Essa situação se aplica ao continente africano? Esse conceito se aplica a nós? Se considerarmos que se aplica a nós, por que esse conceito não cabe aos irlandeses, por que esse conceito não cabe aos escoceses, por que esses conceitos não cabem aos bretões, por que esses conceitos não cabem aos italianos, por que esses conceitos não cabem aos alemães, por que esses conceitos não cabem aos japoneses... mas por que esses conceitos cabem a nós? (...) O Brasil é o maior país de refugiados italianos desde o século XIX e nós ainda os chamamos de imigrantes, quando a rigor são refugiados. Refugiados das guerras de unificação na Itália, refugiados das guerras de unificação na Alemanha, refugiados das guerras napoleônicas no contexto do século XIX europeu. Mas nós não chamamos essas populações que viveram a diáspora, então tampouco conceituamos essas populações de refugiadas. Até porque, refugiados são aqueles do Leste Europeu, são os da África, refugiados são de outros países, mas não da Europa chamada assim de Ocidental." (Latitudes Africanas 2022).

of the mobilization of racial hierarchies invented by whiteness to define who migrates, in humane conditions, and those who suffer diaspora, migrating as objects of other peoples.

Moreover, given the etymology of the term "diaspora" as a Greek word that refers to "dispersion", he argues that the "notion of a 'dispersed flower' conveys that we have no roots and this is fundamental" to be said because it is in disagreement with the reality of the peoples in the Sixth Region. For Malomalo (Latitudes Africanas 2022), the fact that this dispersion led people to find new colonies would be consistent with the practical process of building the recently institutionalized African region.

The recent use of the term "diaspora" as a concept, beyond merely a notion, deserves some attention. Flor (2019, 375) states that, although the notion of what we now understand as "African diaspora" was current in resistance against colonialism and slavery, it is relatively consensual in black intellectual traditions that only in the 1950s did the word become popular, "being granted the status of a concept." Only since then has the term "diaspora" been preferred to evoke "the connections and commonalities between groups of African descent around the world" (Edwards 2017, 41).

The Stateunion Protestant context was perhaps the main responsible for the link between the terms "diaspora" and "African" and similar terms, as well as for the propagation and diffusion of this chain of linguistic signs. Initially, there was an explicit religious foundation for the use of "diaspora" associated with "[Judeo-Christian] religious semiotics and [the] parallel with the history of the Hebrew people." The parallels between the migratory experiences of African peoples and those of the Jews were based on biblical text. According to Flor (2019, 378), the "Old Testament thus becomes a fertile ground for analogies about freedom, exile, exodus and redemption between the history of enslaved blacks in the New World and that of the Hebrew people."

Within the scope of emancipatory movements, this association was possible due to the yearning for a physical and spiritual return to the continent, from which an imaginary about the identity of African people was built through the transplanted Jewish experience.

At the dawn of the Pan-Africanist movement, "turning to Africa" was equivalent to a dream of physical displacement to the original, mythical and

mystical land. (Gala 2019, 85-87) with the purpose of "redemption of the soul" following the pattern of the Jewish diaspora. However, between the end of the 1970s and the 1980s, another identity linkage with African roots takes shape. In Flor (2019, 380) we speak of a perceptive transition "from a conception of genealogical affiliation (religious) to a secular conception of belonging (racial)."

We should also be aware that this foundation was often "conditioned by an inflexible Stateunion exceptionalism" that does not nullify the advances of emancipatory movements, but must be debated (Edwards 2017, 47). According to Gonzalez (1988, 72), there is a fundamental distinction between open racism and disguised racism or denial. The first is typical of the Anglo-Saxon, Germanic and Dutch world and guided by the "rule of the single drop of blood" that led to racial segregation as a device to assert racial superiority. The second is characteristic of the Amefrican territory where "'theories' of miscegenation, assimilation and 'racial democracy' prevail."

For the Stateunion intellectual Lélia Gonzalez (1988, 74), it is precisely the racial conscience in relation to racism that gives rise to unity, "in the sense of rescuing and affirming the humanity and competence of an entire ethnic group considered 'inferior'." Techniques and characteristics of disguised racism cloud collective awareness of its practices and effects. Even so, the notion of "diaspora" gains strength and meaning in scientific and activist discourse in Brazil "due to the need for new ways of thinking about the relationship between national society and the African presence (with regard to cultural and political issues)." (Flor 2019, 374).

After all, in line with Doty (1993), we seek to answer: what elements help us define what it means to be an African person in the Sixth Region? Given the ethnic and national plurality in the identity composition, it seems pertinent to assume that the answer involves speaking not in terms of "Afro-Brazilian people" or "Afro-diasporic people", but rather in terms of "Africans from the Sixth Region", with the necessary national derivations, forming the "African-Brazilian" identities, the "African-Argentinean" and so on. The results of the primary data collection allow us, in the expression of Dagoberto (2022), to translate Pan-Africanist claims to epistemological endogeneity:

> (…) So I "I'm" claiming that we review our concepts in the light of a historical, ontological and cultural experience. (…) The concept is political and cultural because it also has an ontological basis and foundation in what we are and what we want to be. It is not, therefore, another one who defines who I am based on the agreements that this other says I am. (Latitudes Africanas 2022).[14]

In Flor's review (2019, 374), a broad understanding of the state of the art of Pan-Africanist movements suggests that we are experiencing the "rise of new forms of belonging/identification, propagated through transnational movements of (re)construction of bonds with Africa." The researcher identifies that systematically questioning the erasure of the African presence is at the origin of these "new patterns of identity, culture and belonging."

Therefore, our central point of discussion regarding the self-determination of African identity in the Sixth Region grows in obstacles from the premises of cultural and political unity. That is, although there is African resistance to slavery, colonization, and racism, unity is more difficult in a context where categorizations based on colorism were promoted and where racial segregation was not explicitly implemented, despite this being visible to the naked eye. In the following section, we will address criteria and principles of identity and citizenship based on African ontologies and epistemologies, in addition to their concrete and potential reverberations on racialized policies in the international sphere.

Principles and criteria of African identity and citizenship: racialized and pluralist policies

> The affirmation of our African origin does not imply any rejection of our Brazilian national identity, for the simple reason that the Brazilian national identity is also African. (…) the dominant segment refuses to assume its own face. (…) They speak of 'reminiscence' or the 'survival of

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14 Versão original: "(…) Então eu "tô" reivindicamos que nós revisemos os nossos conceitos à luz de uma experiência histórica e ontológica e cultural. (…) O conceito é político e cultural porque ele também tem base e fundamentação ontológica naquilo que somos e naquilo que queremos ser. Não é, portanto, um outro que define quem eu sou a partir de concertações que esse outro diz que sou." (Latitudes Africanas, 2022).

traces' of an African culture supposedly alien to the Brazilian one... Such euphemisms cannot cover the sun with a sieve. The truth is that deep and broad African dimensions permeate our culture and our history and constitute the integral defining basis of Brazilian national identity.

Senator Abdias Nascimento in his inaugural speech at the Federal Senate (Nascimento 1997 quoted by Gala 2019, 321-322).[15]

Under the title "Africa: the root of Brazil", the above words reflect the fight against racism in national legal and political institutions that erodes the resistance, self-determination and self-government of the African-Brazilian people.

In this section, we outline how agents guided by African ontologies and epistemologies, in response to the colonial concession of sub-citizenships, shape the endogenous conception of principles, criteria and racialized policies of identity and citizenship as part of a path of self-determination and affirmation of the African presence in the Sixth Region.

Rescuing the assiduous *pulsão palmarina*[16] encompasses demarcating the centrality of cultural awareness for Africans, considering the location of a person as the "psychological, cultural, historical or individual place" that they occupy in relation to their own culture, history and African heritage. Therefore, policies euphemistically referred to as "assimilationist" naturalize a white European core of the human experience, marginalize African peoples and obliterate "their presence, their meaning, their activities and their [African] image." In contrast, for Asante, Afrocentricity "is a type of thinking, practice and perspective that perceives Africans as subjects and agents of phenomena acting on their own cultural image and human interests." (Asante 2009, 93).

Queiroz (2017), Malomalo (2010), Gala (2019) and Abdias in the 1997 inaugural speech converge in the argument that the persistent denial of

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15 Versão original: "'A afirmação da nossa origem africana não implica nenhuma rejeição à nossa identidade nacional brasileira, pela simples razão de que a identidade nacional brasileira também é africana. (...) o segmento dominante se recusa a assumir sua própria face. (...) Falam de 'reminiscência' ou da 'sobrevivência de traços' de uma cultura africana supostamente alheia à brasileira... Tais eufemismos não conseguem tapar o sol com a peneira. A verdade é que profundas e amplas dimensões africanas permeiam a nossa cultura e a nossa história e constituem a base integral definidora da identidade nacional brasileira.' Senador Abdias Nascimento em discurso de posse no Senado Federal ". (Nascimento 1997 citado por Gala 2019, 321-322).

16 Reference to the legacy of Quilombo dos Palmares.

citizenship, whether passive or active, only on the text in law or in full efficacy, supports the invisibilization of African identity(ies) as a project.

According to Doty (1993, 459), since racial relations are global and vice versa, racial identity becomes an important element in the construction of national identity. At the end of the 19th century, disputes around Brazilian identity and the implementation of eugenic projects intensified. The reformulation of affirmative policies for white people concomitant with the genocide of the African-Brazilian people, however, have not been able to materialize in Brazil the plan to eradicate the high African demographic presence and its cultural manifestations.

Queiroz (2017, 125) states that the citizenship denial to enslaved Africans was "based on the fear of past experiences, such as the Haitian one", namely the Haitian Revolution. According to the author (2017, 98), it was through the feeling of fear that the phenomenon of Haitian Revolution would be reproduced in Brazil that the white society "(...) developed practices, national narratives, founding myths and discourses that build excluding social structures."

For Lélia, "in the face of resistance from the colonized, violence will assume new and more sophisticated contours; sometimes not seemingly violence, but "true superiority." The historical-cultural formation of the Améfricas reverberates the experience that the Portuguese and Spanish had developed in terms of "more effective processes of articulating racial relations", especially after the Moorish (African and black) conquered Iberia. (Gonzalez 1988, 71).

It seems opportune to reflect on the sophistication of these colonial domination mechanisms in direct dialogue with Doty (1993, 460) as she claims that the presuppositions of racism would not be based on inferiority, but on the relationship between the "insiders" and the "insiders." That is, her approach relates to the normalization of an identity model and the retaliation, rejection, marginalization and obliteration of the person who deviates from the invented norm.

Doty's text (1993, 457) is indicative in proposing that such discursive practices be examined in specific historical instances of imperial expansion in order to analyze how questions of identity and difference, "self" and "other" were articulated. Denying citizenship or granting of nationality, in the sense presented by Roxanne, would correspond to the abnormalization of the African

person as well as their ways of being and living. For Ambassador Irene Vida Gala in her book "External Policy as Affirmative Action" (2019), "reflections on the construction of a Brazilian identity have been frozen", significantly due to Gilberto Freyre's works (Casa Grande & Senzala, 1933), as they formed elites, public opinion makers and diplomats.

Anti-racist movements in Améfricas move from a perception of Africa as an idyllic and untouched territory to the reconstruction of an imaginary that considers the challenges of contemporary Africa. Layers of complexity are added to the relations between Africa and America, which begin to recognize the interplay between tradition in hodiernal, and unity in diversity. In addition to deconstructing and eliminating white supremacist myths, the black movement is now guided by a struggle for reparations. The foundations of this period enable rescuing and forging social, political and legal emancipatory categories through which the African self asserts itself not as an invisible and dehumanized object, but as an autonomous and Afro-centered agent.

In view of this, Malomalo (2010, 305-306), assesses that the "citizenship claimed by black social movements is based on the notion of a plural nationalism, therefore, the national identity that it claims is also plural." Transposing to the field of Pluralist Constitutionalism of *Bien Vivir*, professor and researcher Santos (2018, 141) questions the homogeneity of the sources producing official legal norms: "the crisis of the modern Eurocentric paradigm also represented the exhaustion of its main pillar of support: legal monism, according to which the State is the only source of legal normativity."

During the 1st Conference of Intellectuals from Africa and the Diaspora (CIAD), held in Dakar, Senegal in 2004, Souleymane Bachir Diagne defended prioritizing an understanding of African identities through internal pluralism, since any pretense homogeneity would only disguise the cracks that certainly would be revealed over time. The need to "become aware that plural legal systems in Africa exist, on which the colonial legal systems were implanted", was confirmed. (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie 2013, 603-605).

Faced with the systematic inferiorization of African cultures, including in its legal dimension, the African Renaissance, which joins the spirit of the AU, officially founded based on Pan-Africanist values in 2002, proposes a rescue of tradition. According to the Programme of Debates entitled "Traditional Peoples

and Communities of African Matrix" prepared by the Special Secretariat for Policies for the Promotion of Racial Equality in 2016, Paulo Oliveira (2011) affirms in his speech that "tradition is closely linked to the concept of asèsè, origin and passage, theme of this chant sang by the Yorùbá people in death rites, signifying the return to one's own origin.." (Brasil 2016, 12).

> Ìyá mi, àsèsè! My mother is my origin!
> Bábà[17] mi, àsèsè! My father is my origin!
> Olódùmarè un mi àsèsè o! Olódùmarè is my origin!
> Ki Ntoo bò Orìsà à è. Therefore, I will worship my origins.

Traditional, as understood in the Yoruba epistemological foundations, carries an intergenerational meaning of transmission of values and know-how. Despite the use of a fragmentation strategy against African families, it is an educational process primarily implemented through kinship networks.

Since we start from the principle of "unity in diversity" coined by the Senegalese polymath Cheikh Anta Diop (1987), we can say that when exposing its ontological unity, considering the kaleidoscope of cultural expressions, we are referring to the core of African culture. Certainly, we reserve ourselves the possibility of not following the revolutionary thought of such intellectual. Even so, the Yoruba tradition would still be largely explanatory of the contemporary social reality in Brazil since the cultural manifestations coming from Yorubaland undoubtedly correspond to the best preserved and most widespread and practiced African cultural expression on Brazilian soil. Traditions are reterritorialized in the Sixth Region.

Silva (2021, 39) understands "knowledge as situated and embodied." The construction of racialized identity, as is the case of African identity, is the result of African roots and social and cultural interaction. Its developments are associated with experiences of body socialization, leading us to glimpses of African meanings of "body-territory", with Muniz Sodré (2002) being one of the main references of this theme in African literature in Brazil.

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17 Oyěwùmí (2021) warns that the Yoruba language, which is not gendered, suffers serious errors and translation problems when interpreted from the logic of Western Euro languages. As an illustration, the word "bábà" is often translated as "father", when it actually means "master" or "wise person", without prior determination of gender.

In the dialogue between Dagoberto and Bas'Ilele (Latitudes Africanas, 2022) during the interview, different and convergent interpretations emerged. The first asserts: "What does 'Africa in us' mean? It means we don't need territory. It means that we are ourselves the African territory." The theologian and philosopher Malomalo (Latitudes Africanas 2022) makes his contribution by explaining that "'Africa in us', for me, has to do with knowing how to deal with ancestry and spirituality.", in the case of "an ontology that was built by [African] ancestors." According to Elisa Larkin Nascimento (2008, 141):

> [although there is a lack of articulation records,] the existence of similar struggles, as well as **the reproduction of African forms** of organization within the cumbes, palenques, cimarrones and quilombos, refers to a **community** of longing and experience of freedom that marks the phenomenon as a **unity** of aspirations that crosses the African world. (emphasis added)[18]

In the sharing of a common cultural heritage lies the main driver for claiming access to African citizenship or multiple citizenship, whether African people are geographically located on the continent or not. For Lélia Gonzalez, Améfrica corresponds to an "ethnogeographic reference system, it is our creation and that of our ancestors on the continent where we live, inspired by African models." There is no purely geographical restriction because "it incorporates an entire historical process of intense cultural dynamics (adaptation, resistance, reinterpretation and creation of new forms) which is Afrocentric." (Gonzalez 1988, 76-77).

Among concrete experiences and intellectual traditions that influence the debate around African citizenship or multiple citizenship, the Haitian Revolution stands as a pioneering undertaking in the search for endogenous solutions to ancestral African knowledge. Haitian constitutionalism occupies the role of a hermeneutic, epistemological and methodological key, not the "basic locus of an essentialized history." (Queiroz 2017).

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18 Versão original: "[ainda que faltem registros de articulação,] a existência de lutas semelhantes, bem como a **reprodução de formas de organização africanas** no seio dos *cumbes, palenques, cimarrones* e *quilombos*, remete a uma **comunidade** de anseio e experiência da liberdade que marca o fenômeno como uma **unidade** de aspirações que atravessa o mundo africano. (Nascimento, 2008, 141, grifo nosso)"

We contribute, therefore, with a brief analysis of the Amefricanity in the assumptions and principles referring to citizenship in the Haitian Constitution of 1805. In the text, Haitians are treated as "blacks", celebrating the term as a "landmark of citizenship" and going against colonial strategies to destroy the structures of African families and peoples. By stating that every Haitian citizen is black, whether or not he or she is black, the document (1) neutralizes the fragmentation of the African people, (2) assumes the autonomy and agency of the black person as a subject (3) focuses on the African heritage as the core of national identity and, above all, (4) configures the constitutional instrument from an "anti-colonial subject of utterance, self-referenced in its collective, emancipated from the edges." (Santos 2021, 58-80).

The criteria for defining Haitian citizenship differ from Eurocentric models because they are not guided solely by the principles of *jus soli* and/or *jus sanguinis*. As Queiroz (2017, 75) clarifies, "Haiti offered citizenship to all indigenous peoples, Africans and their descendants who came to reside in its territory – that is, all those who potentially could have been victims of slavery and genocide." By radically inverting components of colonial logic, it managed to recreate endogenous ancestral African knowledge through the regulation of the unified African identity in its plurality.

Especially after the brutal murder of the young Congolese Moïse Kabagambe, on January 24th, 2022 at the Tropicália kiosk in Rio de Janeiro, the importance of incorporating race as a "guideline category for repairing the historical debt with Africans, Africans and Afro-diasporic people who built this nation" is beyond visible. (Silva 2022).

Among Pan-Africanist intellectuals, Silva (2022) has defended the racialization of legal norms related to migration issues, in addition to affirmative policies for Africans regardless of nationality. As a reverberation, in the contemporary Brazilian context, of activism and intellectual traditions guided by the Haitian spirit, many black social and political groups have proposed the broadening and deepening of debates around the proposal to grant automatic Brazilian nationality to African people born or not in the Sixth Region. By arguing "in favor of automatically granting Brazilian nationality to all black Africans and people from the diaspora, and the implementation of affirmative action policies for these contingents", it deals with the unity of the

African community on the globe and the explicit racialization of political and legal-institutional mechanisms.

Final remarks

The bridge between debates about African identity and the conception of racialized and pluralist politics is a path of ontological and epistemic justice claimed by African peoples for centuries. We highlight below some of the contributions of this article and explanatory potentialities of Pan-Africanist epistemological assumptions for International Relations.

Based on the bibliographic review, on data collection via interviews, it seems to us that the African identity anchored in the common matrix has been regarded as the possible solid base of the African renaissance in the 21st century. At least via the African Union and in specific countries (such as Ghana, Senegal, and Ethiopia, for example), there is a growing interest in promoting dual or multiple citizenship for people from the Sixth Region. In order to stir up policies of ontological and epistemic justice for the African people, civil society in each locality, for example, African-Brazilian society, must continue to organize itself and expand networks to revive complex themes such as self-determination, the African presence in Sixth Region and the responses to the sophistication of colonial rule instruments.

Reconceptualization of key elements of racial dynamics have a strong impact on public policies of identity and citizenship through discursive strategies of coloniality and, ultimately, on the self-image that African people build of themselves from the Western aesthetic imaginary of "modern." The colorist nomenclature used by the Brazilian Census Institute – IBGE, which distinguishes blacks and browns, is a perpetuation of colonial tactics that foment disagreements, misunderstandings and disunity among the African population based on phenotypic elements. That promotes, therefore, the destitution of African cultural identity and the incrustation of a Euro-Western nomenclature.

Conceptualization informs practice and self-determination becomes essential. Recognizing the importance of this finding creates conditions for

examining the producing and radiating role of public policy formulations and colonial norms on processes of subjective self-identification on the part of each social group on Brazilian soil."

The fact is that the contemporary national citizenships of Africans, regardless of geographic location, were not usually defined based on endogenous principles and knowledge. Even though there is an interconnection between culture, politics and law, the modeled citizenship for Africans in the world follows the Eurocentric pattern of nation and state construction, marginalizing Africans to sub-citizenship, either in comparison with other citizens of the same country, or in the scale of the white supremacist international system whose borders were arbitrarily defined in the neocolonial context.

The reviews and criticisms of the concept of "African diaspora", especially after the institutionalization of the Sixth Region by the AU, open a new discussion regarding the belonging bond of the African person and their cultural roots. With the institutionalization of the "diaspora" as the Sixth Region, new meanings of African identity and new semantic possibilities reappear in contemporary international relations.

In line with the key provided by Haitian constitutionalism and bearing in mind that the apparent non-racialization of the legal and political apparatus consists of the very strategy of annihilation, we extend the proposal to conceive the racialization of constitutional texts through multilateral international treaties in AU's scope. In addition, given the plurality of legal systems endogenous to Africa, we guide the diversification of the sources that produce official legal norms, relying on the African ontological contribution as a basis for establishing assumptions and principles based on a legal ethos and epistemological structures.

Finally, an emancipatory perception of the African people would encompass that such identities – anchored in a cultural matrix and common experiences regardless of nationality or citizenship – must be organized not only through developmental lenses, the driving force behind the African Union's African Diaspora initiative, but also through those of the epistemic justice and historical reparations as important pillars of the African Renaissance.

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