

WORKING CLASS AT LARGE IN HISTORICAL CAPITALISM:
GLOBAL SOUTHERN PERSPECTIVES

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Dr. phil.

to the Department of Political and Social Sciences
of Freie Universität Berlin

by
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Berlin, 2022

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Date of defence: May 8th, 2023

I hereby declare that this dissertation is all my own work. Furthermore, no sources and aids other than those indicated have been used. The intellectual property of other authors has been marked accordingly. I also declare that I have not submitted the dissertation in this or any other form to any other institution as a dissertation.

Acknowledgements

To the memory of Silvia Lillemets

Doing this PhD has been a long and curvy but enriching path, which started before initiating the process at the Freie Universität Berlin. It goes back to my academic and political experience in Brazil, which began unfolding in the 2000s. It was mainly after deciding to live in Brazil, after obtaining my master's degree at Lund University in 2004, that I entered in contact with its rich endogenous tradition of historical sociology and social theory as well as with Marxism, including the Latin American versions. At that time, the readings carried out in the study group about Latin American sociology, coordinated by José Mauricio Domingues at the IUPERJ-IESP, planted the first seeds to develop a critical perspective of global modernity and an epistemological critique on the central social theories from the viewpoint of Latin American realities and sociological theories. I could deepen some of the reflections on Latin American and Brazilian sociology while teaching at Tallinn University in 2008/2009.

Initiating a PhD in sociology at the Institute of Latin American Studies encouraged a sociological imagination, which would be critical of sociology's "methodological nationalism" and place at the centre of analysing the global structures of power. A short fellowship to study the theories of global inequalities at the *desiguALdades* research network was a fundamental moment in this process. I want to thank my supervisor, Sérgio Costa, for stimulating this critical stance through the sociology colloquium readings and the challenging comments on my research. Most of all, I am grateful to him for believing in my work throughout all these years, for generously and selflessly supervising my thesis, for giving me intellectual freedom, and for knowing when and how to contribute with suggestions and comments to improve the whole. Still, above all, I am thankful for his patience.

I thank Marcia Lima for receiving me for a research stay in 2014 at the Department of Sociology of the University of São Paulo, which kindly provided me with access to the necessary facilities. During this time, participation in the Center for the Study of Citizenship Rights (CENEDIC) study group, coordinated by Prof. André Singer, was essential to reading some central scholarly works about Brazilian capitalist history.

My interest in Brazilian social theories and historiography about the coerced (unfree) labour in historical capitalism and their possible contributions to the renewal of the Marxist political economy of labour started taking more defined contours when I read the work of Manuela Boatcă

about the comparative inquiry into “second slavery” and “second serfdom” from the world-systems and decolonial perspectives. I am greatly indebted to her for introducing me to world-systems analysis and its connection with Latin American dependency perspectives and global labour history. I also wish to thank Jorge Grespan for reading and commenting on one of the early drafts of the first chapter. The conversations with Arthur Bueno about the recent bibliography on expropriation and with Cassio Brancaloneo about diverse work modalities in the social metabolism of capitalism were significant. Whereas Fabio Teixeira Pitta helped me to understand the Marxian value theory, the exchange with John Clegg about capitalist slavery in the US South contributed to my comprehension of the value theory from the viewpoint of slave labour. Online participation in the study group about super-exploitation and slavery organised by Roberta Traspadini was fundamental to gaining more profound knowledge about peripheral Marxist perspectives on modern colonial slavery. Whereas Bernardo Bianchi was an essential company in the discussion of ideas in their embryonic state, Alice Guimarães was there to contribute to the final refining of the dissertation. I am also in debt to my dear university colleagues at the Latina American Institute, whose careful reading and comments on my chapters stimulated lively debates at the sociology colloquiums. They helped me resolve several puzzles on the road.

I am very grateful to Heinrich Böll Stiftung for granting me a scholarship of 3,5 years, which was fundamental in developing my thesis and making the research stay in Brazil possible.

My warm thanks go to all my friends, who have accompanied my journey in different phases, being emotionally and intellectually supportive. My special thanks go to Mele Pesti from Estonia. An exceptional thanks to my Brazilian friends: Ana Paula Soares Carvalho, Carlos Henrique Santana, Mauro Santos, and Luciano Gatti. In Berlin I am grateful to Pegah Byroum-Wand, Julia Tomberg, Virginia Borges, Mari Teixeira, Ely Almeida, Dalia Mecka, Rafaela Pannain, Juliana Streva, Barbara Marcel, Ricardo Cortês, Claudia Maldonado, Fabio Santos, Luzia Costa Becker, Liszt Vianna, Paul Herden, Ronan Bonagamba and Nadine Weber. Making music with Urso Ki Ti Schubsen, even during the darkest times of the pandemic, was fundamental to keep the mind quiet, the spine erect, and the heart peaceful. Hence, a big wrauuuhhh to all the ursos and ursas.

This work would not have been finalised without my family's unconditional love, patience, humour, and encouragement, who supported me throughout all these years. I dedicate this thesis to my family.

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Introduction

Marx's positions on the links between capital and labour and the economic categories that personify them, instead of being taken as theoretical expressions of the social relations of production and, as their criticism, end up stripped of all the intertwining of particular determinations, presented as the substance of capitalism.

Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco

Neither is the periphery totally passive nor is the centre homogeneous.

Guerreiro Ramos

Thesis aim

This thesis aims to explore and rethink critically the concept of labour, which is central to the 19th-century social science paradigm and continues to organise the production of social scientific knowledge. Given that and with the focus mainly on the Marxist political economy of labour, I will problematise the classical narratives of capitalist labour and working-class formation theoretically, epistemologically, temporally, and spatially. The questions that I propose to answer are, first, whether the concept of labour, which is transformed into the norm of capitalist modernity, can take into account the social categories which do not fit into the defining one, but particularly the ones in other times and spaces, especially when it comes to the coerced (unfree) and unwaged labour, such as colonial and peripheral modes of labour control as configured in historical capitalism. The second question asks whether incorporating peripheral knowledge production can contribute to the renovation of the dominant concept. It will be argued that this 19th-century paradigm is limited in time and space by excluding other realities and marginalised knowledge. It does not take into account either the complex and multi-layered experience of labour force formation in the periphery of the capitalist system or the core countries of capitalism. Accordingly, I propose decentred wage labour, that is, free labour, which is considered the central pillar of capital accumulation. Hence, by broadening the notion of labour, this thesis aims to expand the concepts of labour and the working class within the unit of analysis of the capitalist world economy. It will be done by reevaluating the classical narrative from the viewpoint of coerced (unfree) and non-waged forms of labour from the global peripheries. Therefore, it is not the form of labour that determines capitalism as a socio-economic system, but labour through various social arrangements becomes subordinated to value

creation and capital production. In other words, in capitalism, free and unfree labour, waged and unwaged, is subsumed under capital. To advance with this aim, I join a long-existing literature unfolding since the beginning of the last century. My original contribution to the debate is creating a dialogue between the critical knowledge produced in the Global North and the historical experience of Brazil, as well as the knowledge produced by the Brazilian historical social science from the 1940s until today and examining its potential to renew the Marxist political economy of labour.

Hence, the problem I tackle in this dissertation is that orthodox Marxist and neoclassical political economies have defined capitalism by wage labour; in other words, double free labour constitutes the only exploited class and the core mainstay of capital accumulation. As various authors have highlighted, such a definition excludes unfree, non-waged, and dependent labour forms defined as pre- or non-capitalist, anomalous, and not value-creating or capital-producing. This 19th-century concept, which is socially constructed, politically advocated, legally guaranteed, and scientifically legitimised, contains a dichotomic and evolutionary outlook regarding labour forms and working-class formation in capitalism, as the coerced (unfree) and unwaged labour forms have been defined in opposition to wage labour. In that sense, slavery and other coerced forms have served as standards against which the liberty of the modern proletariat, and thus the existence of capitalism, have been measured. Whereas “free” wage labour is the defining feature of capitalism, all other forms in which labour appropriation does not take this form are regarded as non-capitalist, hence belonging to another temporality. They are considered backward and archaic, incompatible with capitalism, non-contemporaneous with free labour, and antithetical with capital production.

Moreover, their abolition is the condition for the transition to capitalism, which should be followed by the adoption of wage labour. If they continue existing in capitalism, they are labelled anomalies or residues destined to disappear as wage labour becomes dominant. Consequently, whole social categories and geographical areas have been made invisible, as they are conceptualised as either belonging to an earlier mode of production or would be significant only in the phase of primitive accumulation of capital in Western Europe. Although slavery and colonialism are considered structurally and historically essential for the development of capitalism and industrialisation in England, they are left out of the theory of capital. The dichotomic and evolutionist view treats slavery and regions where it was used as a labour control as homogeneous entities. It also disguises more complex forms of wage labour than the notion of double-free labour permits to grasp. Hence, this notion should be expanded to overcome the dichotomies and evolutionary logic underlying it. In other words, decentre the “free” wage labour as the defining

form of capitalist labour and analyse the general working-class formation from the viewpoint of unfree and unwaged labour as integral to capital accumulation at the global level.

Methodology

The axiological and epistemological stance adopted here is that knowledge is not neutral. Given that, I adopt the perspective of critical theory, which implies that it is not sufficient to understand reality but also to transform it (Domingues 2017, Ch. 1; Marx 1976, 1977a, 1988; Wallerstein 2004). The thesis will contribute to interdisciplinary knowledge by bringing together what has been separated by the academic division of labour: sociology, political economy, and history. I maintain that knowledge is plural in terms of disciplines but also in terms of geographical experiences. I recognise that knowledge is created-situated, depending on the place of production and enunciation. Therefore, I bring to the debate the marginalised critical social-scientific knowledge produced in a particular place in the periphery – Brazil – which has been incorporated into global capitalist dynamics since its colonial conquest. Based on that, I will create a dialogue between the knowledge produced in the Global North and the Global South.

The contribution to include the perspectives from the Global South to this dialogue is particularly important, as the analysis of the social scientific production from the viewpoint of “geopolitics of knowledge” (Mignolo 2002) has long demonstrated that production and circulation of knowledge at the global level is asymmetric (Beigel 2013, 2016). The historically constructed structural inequality between the centre and periphery in the field of knowledge reveals a limited export and circulation of peripheral ideas, viewpoints, and theories (Beigel 2013; Connell 2007). This has produced a historic Northern bias (Collyer 2014; Connell et al. 2017; Costa 2010) in social science, as what is considered universal knowledge is created historically from the “traditional centres of excellence” in the Global North without significant participation of peripheral scientific communities (Beigel 2016:9). The post-WWII internationalisation process has enhanced this power relation through various mechanisms related to the international scientific system (Beigel 2014a). This has implied the universalisation of particular knowledge. In other words, viewpoints, concepts, and frameworks, which are tied to specific places and eras, that is, metropolitan societies, have gained the status of universality under the assumption that they can be applied to different realities. Bourdieu ([1992] 2000:154) has called this phenomenon an “imperialism of the universal”. In that context, the social scientific paradigm born in the 19th century in a specific socio-political and economic context in Europe was permeated by particular ideas about the modern world identified

by ideas of civilisation, reason, and inevitable progress (Bringel and Domingues 2015; Wallerstein 1991), as opposed to its “Other,” producing binary thinking, which was reproduced throughout the 20th century (Beigel 2014b; Costa 2006).

Regarding the definition of capitalism and capitalist labour, this paradigm has reified the concepts of proletarian and bourgeois as they were defined according to the form found in the 19th century in Western Europe (Wallerstein 1991:152). That characterises liberalism and orthodox Marxism, as both have generalised excessively based on the English case. Both are structured by dichotomous and evolutionary thinking.

Nevertheless, although the export of knowledge produced in the periphery to the hegemonic circuits is limited, it does not mean that there is no rich and autonomous regional production or that the international labour division follows a simple export-import model. Nor does it mean that knowledge produced in peripheral academic circles is a mere reflection of the knowledge produced in the North, as if the import and appropriation of core theories and concepts by the peripheral academic circles have been made uncritically (Beigel 2013). The critique of intellectual colonialism has been present, for example, in Latin America since the beginning of the 20th century, including a challenge to the “parochialism” of social sciences (Wallerstein et al. 1996) and a perception of the need to construct intellectual autonomy.

After WWII, the peripheral theoretical and methodological perspectives emerged within the context of the internationalisation of social sciences and universalisation of the northern concepts of knowledge that widely challenged social science's central theoretical and methodological assumptions. As the studies on southern theories and historiography (Boatcă 2003; Connell 2007; Love 1996; Maia 2014; Rojas 2016) have shown, different concepts of history, capitalism, class formation, and labour exploitation are in dispute in global peripheries where the entrance to capitalism happened particularly via colonialism, conquest, and slavery or other coerced (unfree) labour forms, which have also printed another trajectory on working-class formations.

The specific “twist” that capitalism has given in former colonies and later peripheries within the context of capital's overseas colonial expansion can potentially have several unintended consequences. The peripheral twist can potentially create a critical space from where the contradictions of capitalism and liberalism can be better conceived (Maia 2009). Ricupero (2008) highlights that it can reveal the particularity of peripheral conditions. Periphery can also be a point of departure for the production of the critical theory of global capitalism. As such, the peripheral twist of capitalism can unveil the “truth of the capitalist centres” (Ricupero 2008). In that sense, Ricupero (2008:65) has very appropriately reminded that the slavery *sans phrase* of the New World

would unveil what free labour in the metropolis would be, that is, a form of disguised slavery. The peripheral perspectives open a breach to understanding working-class formations based on more complex and multilayered processes of proletarianisation, semi-proletarianisation, and de-proletarianisation, in which the international and local dynamics are entangled.

As has been appointed by Bringel and Domingues (2015), the discussion about the “South” or the “(semi-)periphery”, which has gained force during the last decades and has from very different theoretical-methodological standpoints contributed to the decentring of sociology by giving centrality to colonialism, should go beyond a simple denouncement of provincialism disguised in universalism. According to these authors, it is necessary to elaborate broader frameworks of interpretation of (semi-)peripheral realities based on systematic theorising to build more global perspectives. In that sense, the aim of this thesis is not only to appoint to the epistemological limitations of classical Marxist theory, that is, its provincialism, but in fact, to contribute to a broader framework whereby it would be possible to take into account higher complexity of interconnected working-class formations and capital accumulation at the global level from the point of view of (semi-)peripheral realities and social categories, which have taken shape historically through a particular entrance to capitalism via colonial conquest and slavery.

The extent to which marginalised intellectual traditions, such as the Romanian one, based on the historical analysis of their development trajectory, have contributed to the questioning of central principles of Western social theory when it comes to the issues of social change, in general, and underdevelopment, in particular, has been studied by Boatcă (2003). The way the historical analysis of the second serfdom within the Romanian sociological tradition, together with the studies about second slavery in Latin America, have provided elements to the conceptualisation of both as labour regimes in the modern capitalist system’s peripheries has been analysed by Boatcă (2014) by mobilising the world-systems perspective to contest the binarism of social scientific approaches. A contribution to the expanded notion of the working class in terms of Atlantic labour internationalism from the viewpoint of historical materialism has been made by Drapeau (2014) in his PhD thesis. Regarding the contribution of Brazilian historiography to the renewal of Marxism, it has been recently studied by Grespan (2020).

In one way or another, all these works have inspired my dissertation, which is a novel sociological contribution in two ways. First, it contributes to the renewal of the Marxist political economy of labour by proposing to reconceptualise it from such perspectives as the world-systems analysis, Global Labour History, Marxist feminist political economy and contemporary Marxist debates about expropriation. Moreover, it does it from the point of view that labour, either free or

unfree, wage or unwaged, is subsumed under capital(ists) to grasp the value and capital production in historical capitalism based on commodity labour-power of coerced (unfree) and unwaged workers. To reformulate the Marxist political economy of labour is to expand the notion of working-class formations based on global intersected processes of expropriation, exploitation, commodification, and coercion, with their specific historical anchorings, as a common class-basis of diverse dependent and subordinated labourers. Secondly, it proposes to examine the peripheral historical social science from a particular place in the Global South, that is, from Brazil, and assess its contributions to the renewal of the Marxist political economy of labour and thereby to the global historical sociology which would be contemplative of the (semi-)peripheral realities.

Finally, the perspective of critical theory adopted here implies that another transformative quest also informs the research aim. Namely, it is oriented by the emancipatory horizon regarding the abolition of all forms of domination, direct and indirect, under which the capitalist exploitation of labour, free or unfree, subordinates human beings. Marx considered it necessary to overcome the direct forms of domination and the servitude defining the capitalist form - wage labour. In that sense, the enslaved workers in the colonies did not only reveal the slavery of the metropolitan wage labourers but the liberation of labour in black skin was seen by Marx (1976) as the fundamental condition for the emancipation of labour in white skin. This idea continues to be pertinent in contemporary capitalism, considering the concomitant (re-)creation of expropriating forms of labour appropriation in the form of hyperdisciplined wage labour, flirting even with slavery, and the sophistication of the mechanisms of domination of the cognitariat. Thus, the junction of diverse forms of labour exploitation and expropriation under the category of working-class(es) should be considered from this emancipatory perspective.

Brazilian historical social science is used here as a case study of marginalised peripheral knowledge. In terms of empirically and theoretically conceived historical relations between colonialism, slavery, and capitalism, Brazil is a paradigmatic case. It is a country that was formally colonised and experienced neo-colonialism in the 19th century after gaining independence from colonial rule and had the longest-lasting slavery, abolished only in 1888. At the same time, its prolific intellectual production needs more international recognition. In the 1950s and 1960s, Brazilian social scientists also thematised the need for autonomous and endogenous social sciences in the context of political and intellectual anti-colonial movements in the Third World. This so-called movement was marked by the challenge to Eurocentrism, critical reception and assimilation of core sociology and the necessity to create own academic institutions and spaces of debate. This resulted in broad and global theorisation on Brazilian society, which created a novel conceptual

pool linked to social change and the discussion on colonialism, imperialism, developmentalism, dependence, social inequality, and the state (Domingues and Bringel 2015). Analyses of its colonial and imperial history were done using its own conceptual and methodological tools (Beigel 2010, 2013; Bringel and Domingues 2015), resulting in theorisations of colonial/peripheral/dependent forms of capitalism. Although Marxism had been influential since the 1920s in the intellectual ambient, since the 1940s, some of its orthodox assumptions were questioned, resulting in heterodox Marxist and endogenous Marxist theorising and interpretations of Brazilian socio-economic history regarding its incorporation into the capitalist world system. As the Brazilian scholars from diverse disciplinary areas were verifying the general theoretical tenets of Marxism against the specificity of Brazilian historical capitalist development, it resulted in making a critical case about the structural link between colonialism and diverse coerced (unfree) and unwaged labour forms, on the one hand, and capitalism and modernity, on the other.

The case study of Brazilian historical social science undertaken in three chapters is based on the secondary literature review. It includes examining the scholarly contributions, which have either explicitly questioned the core theoretical assumptions of Marxist political economy regarding the theory of capitalism and the role given to colonies, peripheries, and coerced labour in capitalist history or have produced research results which enable questioning these assumptions. The research, analyses, and explanations of sociologists, political economists, historians, and philosophers are examined and analysed from the viewpoint of the aim and questions of this thesis. The study is not limited to an exercise of historical investigation to reconstruct the universe of authors. I have gathered and combined authors, their research results, interpretations, and ideas critically insofar as they constitute an agenda of specific concerns and questionings. Hence, it is not a thesis of ideas and books, but I have mobilised them critically and placed them in dialogue with the Northern Marxist political economy.

I review the historiographical works produced between the 1940s and the 2020s, about the long historical time ranging from the 16th to the 19th century. This secondary literature can be divided into three phases. The works in historical social science developed in the 1940s-1970s were mainly concerned with the broader historical analysis of Brazil's socioeconomic and political formation, its integration into the capitalist world economy and the definition of its mode of production. In the debate participated sociologists, political economists, historians and philosophers, whose rich historiographical research of structural relations between slavery and capitalism, core and periphery entanglements, developed into diverse theoretical models, such as structuralism, dependency theory and mode of production perspective. Some of them, particularly

dependency theory, inspired later world-systems theory and the renewed debate about primitive accumulation. The second period, unfolding since the 1980s, is characterised by the new historiography, with works focusing on micro-histories. It has renovated the social history of labour, concentrating on more punctual topics, but has still been inspired by aspects central to Marxism. More recent literature since the 2000s has tried to combine earlier macro-historic perspectives with recent micro-histories in dialogue with the world-systems theory, global labour history, and the perspective of second slavery.

The presentation of Brazilian historical social science works does not follow a chronological order regarding the appearance of ideas and studies. Chapter three bridges the first two chapters by following the evolution of the Brazilian Marxist debate about capitalism and slavery in terms of general methodological, conceptual, and theoretical discussions. Two other chapters are organised thematically and according to historical periods: a colonial period in the so-called mercantile phase of capitalism and the imperial period during the stage of the hegemony of liberal-industrial capitalism in the world economy. In that sense, the selected authors have been combined insofar as they have contributed to the knowledge about labour organisation in articulation with capitalist formation in one or another historical period. It cannot be said that Brazilian critical historiographical production can be unified under one umbrella concept. However, the work of Caio Prado Jr. ([1942] 1999) is an essential point of departure, which was the first in Brazil to provide a heterodox Marxist interpretation of “colonial capitalism.” The lineage created by Prado Jr., which has evolved into different perspectives and informed a historical analysis, permits the evaluation of various contributions to revising theoretical assumptions central to the hegemonic sociological paradigm.

Thesis structure

The general argument is developed in five chapters as follows. In the *first chapter*, I will review the critical theoretical approaches within the Marxist political economy in the Global North and the relationships between them about the context of their emergence, their analytical scope and how they have contributed to the critical theory of capitalism from the standpoint of the broadened notion of the social organisation of labour. These approaches will be discussed in four steps.

First, I will discuss the anomalies and ambiguities in Marx’s work. Theoretically, Marx repeatedly clarified that capitalism is defined by “free” wage labour. Accordingly, slavery and other

forms of coerced (i.e., unfree) forms of labour were significant only historically as the moments of the “so-called primitive accumulation” in the mercantilist phase of capitalism. As pre-capitalist labour forms, they were seen by Marx as anomalies in the capitalist mode of production. Another reading valuing Marx *at or from the margins* (Anderson 2010, Krisis 2018) has highlighted the ambiguities and nonlinear views, particularly in his later works, since *Grundrisse*. These readings have drawn attention to the case that the way Marxists drew from Marx’s concrete and abstract analyses does not do justice to his somewhat ambiguous insights about world-historical development and historical processes of the capitalist mode of production, as observed by Wallerstein (1991). These somewhat nonlinear views about the historical process of capitalist development do not counter the idea about varieties of proletarians, that surplus value can be extracted in various forms and that slavery and other non-wage labour forms were and are essential for the functioning of capitalism. Indeed, the authors (Bellamy Foster, Holleman and Clark 2020; Clegg 2020; Clegg and Foley 2018), who have during recent years made efforts to advance the theory of “capitalist slavery” or “slavery’s capitalism,” argue that Marx had quite a lot to offer to this ambition.

Second, the debate regarding the violent roots of the formation of capitalism, including enclosures and expropriations of direct producers giving birth to a new class, that is, the proletariat, as well as the peripheral developments in terms of colonialism and slavery, have revolved around the notion of “the so-called primitive accumulation”, as originating from Marx. Hence, I will review this notion's older and newer criticisms. This debate has resulted in Marxist reformulations of the so-called primitive accumulation as being structural and enduring and not just constituting a pre-capitalist phase. In the 1960s-70s, both the scholars associated with the Marxist Dependency Theory (Frank 1967, 1978b) as well as the feminist thinkers of the Bielefeld School (Bennholdt-Thomsen 1981; Mies [1986] 2014; Werlhof 1984) understood non-wage or unpaid forms of labour (colonial or not) as essentially part of the capitalist logic of accumulation at the global scale. Recent revisits of “primitive accumulation” through such modified notions as “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey 2003) and *Landnahme* (Dörre 2015, 2018) have shown how the labour appropriation based on extra-economic compulsion and expropriation has been produced and reproduced as a systemic necessity of capitalism, including also in the core countries of contemporary financialised capitalism and not only in the capitalist peripheries.

Moreover, “expropriation” is not continuous regarding the expanded reproduction of propertyless workers available for capital in diverse modalities (Fontes 2010). It also constitutes a mode of accumulation based on confiscating capacities and resources, restricting workers from

reproducing their labour power (Fraser 2016). These “dependent expropriable subjects” (Fraser 2016) are created and recreated constantly by state violence as a response to capital’s need to have available spheres, regions and categories, where and from whom it can reap absolute surplus-value (Tomba 2013b). In that sense, these debates demonstrate how capital, through its drive for self-expansion, subjugates labour in different spaces under diverse but combined arrangements of exploitation and expropriation to sustain its quest for profit.

Third, I will examine the contributions of Wallerstein’s (1974) world-systems analysis. As a Marxist reformulation of colonial exploitation and colonial modes of labour control under capitalism, world-system analysis could be considered one of the outcomes of critiquing the concept of primitive accumulation in the 1970s. Its focus on the capitalist world economy as a unit of analysis made it possible to understand the structural entanglements of capitalist peripheries and metropolises. Accordingly, it defines an interdependent combination of various forms of labour control and modes of exploitation as a defining feature of capitalism. In that way, colonial methods of labour control are considered constitutive and necessary to capital accumulation. World-systems analysis was also born as a critical response to the unilinear evolutionary models endorsed by the American modernisation school in the 1950s and 60s and to the dominant liberal frameworks to which the modernisation paradigm belonged (Boatcă 2003). Wallerstein (1991:3) also advocates “historical social science”, which is an intellectual category focusing on the analysis of the entire “historical systems” and the capitalist world economy as the dominant historical system since the 16th century. It also questions the disciplinary divisions within the social sciences and proposes to unthink them. In this section, I will also discuss more recent contributions to the analysis of slavery from the viewpoint of the capitalist world economy (Tomich 2004; McMichael 1991, 1999).

Finally, I will examine the framework of Global Labour History and its contribution to overcoming the divide between unfree and free labour. If the defining feature of the capitalist mode of production is that labour-power becomes a commodity, then the authors (e.g., Linden 2011) related to this framework maintain that “coerced commodification of labour-power” is the common denominator and class basis of all the subordinated workers, independently of whether the commodification takes place through economic or extra-economic compulsion.

All the frameworks examined in the first chapter tackle the problem of dichotomy and unilinearity regarding social development issues analytically and empirically. The core points of these approaches are synthesised in the final part of the chapter into a broadened definition of capitalism regarding its three dimensions: *social activities*, *processes*, and *structures*. The world-systems perspective captures the multi-dimensional analysis as it reveals the historical

entanglements, combinations between and continuities among labour forms sustaining diverse but articulated modes of capital accumulation. Moreover, different aspects, such as the commodification of labour-power, expropriation, exploitation and coercion (economic and extra-economic) of labour, although operating distinctly in the case of every category of subordinated labour in its particular space and time, comprise the intersecting processes of labour's subsumption under capital and constitute the common class basis of the internally heterogeneous global proletariat interconnected through the capitalist world-economy.

The *second chapter* problematises the notion of “free” wage labour, the defining form of capitalist labour and the mainstay of capital accumulation. As observed, the dichotomous and unilinear view puts slavery against “free” labour, that is, wage labour, which sustains an assumption that “free” wage labour means an end of coercion. In that light, this chapter proposes to analyse this central category of classical Marxism from the viewpoint of dependence, compulsion, and subordination, as well as disentangle freedom from wage labour and, therefore, capitalism. First, I will discuss critically the presuppositions that sustain the 19th-century paradigm of wage labour in capitalism, interchangeably used with “free” labour. By reviewing Marx's works and those of some critical Marxists about the 19th-century sanitised image of wage labour, I will analyse the “free” wage labour as a specific mode of labour control in a commodity-determined society. This critique demonstrates the double subordination of wage labour: the proletariat is indirectly enslaved to capital, the class of capitalists, and wage labourers are subordinated in the labour process when they sell their obedience for the means of subsistence (Banaji 2003; Screpanti 2017). Secondly, it will be shown, based on the recent research about the history of wage labour mainly in the core countries of capitalism as developed by Moulrier-Boutang (1988), Steinfeld (1991, 2001) and Steinberg (2003, 2010), that extra-economic coercion through legal constraints and expropriation have also been central features of wage-labour in England, the paradigmatic case of the development of bourgeois liberal capitalism.

Moreover, the contemporaneity of restricted wage labour (Moulrier-Boutang 1998) or coerced contract labour (Steinfeld 1991) in the metropole and colonial slave labour is an example of shared labour histories, as both modes of labour control were configured relationally in the same universe of capital's challenge to fix down and discipline available workers as value- and capital-producing labour (Moulrier-Boutang 1998), through various degrees of coercion. Hence, extra-economic coercion through legal constraints was at the heart of market relations and industrial capitalism development, as these were used to bind wage labourers to specific employers. The “free” proletariat with the legal freedom to reject the restraint of breaking off from the employment

relation was not the norm of wage labour in England until the end of the 19th century. Given these points, in the third part of the chapter, I will discuss the diverse but contemporaneous and combined forms of subsumption of labour under capital, which take into account free and unfree wage workers, enslaved plantation workers and other coerced workers as capital- and (surplus-)value-producing labour. As the authors, particularly Banaji (2010), mobilised in this part of the chapter show, freedom may be relevant at the level of total social capital, but at the level of individual capitals, what defines capitalism is the appropriation of surplus value, and this can happen through various kinds of unfree and free, wage and unwaged labour, as wage-labour relations can be also disguised behind more complex arrangements of compulsion.

In the subsequent three chapters, these previously discussed approaches will be placed in dialogue with the secondary literature on capitalism, social change, colonialism, and coerced labour produced in Brazilian historical social sciences, including sociology, from the 1940s until the 2020s.

Hence, in the *third chapter*, I will focus mainly on Brazilian historical social science before the 1980s. Still, I will incorporate some more recent studies, which have contributed to the research of the colonial system of exploitation and slavery as a colonial mode of labour control. The examination of the Brazilian debate about the relationship between slavery and capitalism starts with the discussion of the first heterodox Marxist analysis of colonial capitalism in terms of contesting the basic assumptions of Marxism as it had been received by the Brazilian Communist Party in the 1920s, being strongly influenced by ideas of sequentiality of stages. Caio Prado Jr. put colonisation and slavery at the centre of his analysis, which were considered the products of European commercial and colonial expansion. This work created a lively exchange of ideas and influenced a significant part of the subsequent discussion about the Brazilian form of capitalism between the 1950s and 1970s. It resulted in different theoretical frames critical to the Northern theories and concepts. Highlighted will be dependency theory, the debate about the “old colonial system” and the “slave mode of production”. Under scrutiny will be the development of these different frames through the angle of how they created or not methodologically and theoretically a “relation of exteriority” between slavery and capitalism. Although the Marxist analyses arrived at very different conclusions (Teixeira 2010), what tended to unite them, *with some crucial exceptions*, was conceiving colony and metropolis, slavery and “free” labour, although combined within the same system, belonging to different social formations, pre-capitalist and capitalist, respectively (Franco 1978; 1984). A perspective that proposed to overcome this “relation of exteriority” was the one developed by Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco (1978, 1984), who conceptualised periphery and centre, slavery and “free” labour as unitarily determined categories. Hence, plantation slavery

and enslavement of African persons, in particular, were understood by her as being concomitantly determined by and defining capital. Plantation enslaved labour was not only the product of capital and integral to capitalism but also a value- and capital-producing labour. In that sense, she made significant steps towards the world-systems perspective. In the following, from the perspective of capitalism as a unitary whole of structurally entangled histories of accumulation, I will discuss how the establishment of the South-Atlantic colonial system of exploitation has been understood by Brazilian scholars such as Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco (1978), Castro (1977, 1980) and Luiz Felipe Alencastro (2000), as determined by capital. Then, I will examine how these authors, as well as Denise Ferreira da Silva (2019, 2022), have contributed to the theorisation of black racial slavery as a historically specific form of value- and capital-producing labour, which is particular to the South-Atlantic colonial space of exploitation. Enslaved Africans are conceived as proletarian workers, integral to the general social organisation of labour, and plantation slavery is integral to the capitalist mode of production. What Franco (1978:9) has defined as the total expropriation of labour in the 16th century is an expression of the form that slavery assumed within the “general movement of the expropriation of the means of production” and as such was an adequate and profitable labour form in the economic system based on the absolute exploitation of the means of production. This thread reappears in the work of Ferreira da Silva (2019, 2022), which scrutinises Marx’s theory of value from the viewpoint of “wounded captive bodies in the scene of subjugation.” She allows understanding of the compatibility of capital with the colonial property form, which was essential for the authorisation of the appropriation of total value by total violence, understood as expropriation. Finally, to conceptualise this totally expropriated labour as a value-creating and capital-producing labour, I will discuss Franco’s (1978) contribution to broadening the theory of sale and purchase of labour-power as a fundamental moment of capital production in the colony.

The fourth chapter aims to bring together the works of some Brazilian scholars who have contributed to the understanding of the system of colonial exploitation based on slavery as a form of capitalism in the market, legal and productive spheres. In line with Alencastro (2000), the South-Atlantic colonial system of exploitation integrated into the capitalist world economy will be discussed in its four dimensions: (1) slave trade as the first global (unfree) labour market; (2) slavery and law; (3) labour organisation and process in the colonial productive enterprise; and (4) production of slave-mercantile capital. By focusing mainly on the contributions of two historians, Alencastro (2000; 2007) and Florentino (2014), the chapter examines the constitution of private property in person and labour commodification in colonial capitalism through heteronomous commodification of labour-power through the market of enslaved workers, which is founded on the

expropriation of African people and their enslavement. The “freeing” of the workers from their conditions of labour occurs through other means than in the case of the propertyless wage workers in the core countries of capitalism. However, state violence is the central mechanism also here, mainly through wars, which were the primary mechanism of producing necessary labour for colonial exploitation. By examining the discussion of Brazilian scholars about the relationship between slavery and law during the colonial period, the chapter also highlights how the commodification of enslaved labour, as well as the value- and capital-producing unfree form of plantation labour exploitation, were guaranteed by the State political and legal apparatus as well as by the private punitive system. By studying the works of Castro (1977, 1980), Fernandes (1976), Ferlini (2003) and the *brasilianista* Stuart Schwartz (1985), I will discuss the subsumption of plantation unfree as well as non-slave labour under planter-capitalist through large-scale cooperation, highlighting that it anticipated the labour organisation in the industrial factory. The sexual, racial, ethnic, occupational, and legal distinctions of plantation workers were used as a mechanism for disciplining and controlling the plantation social labour for value extraction. This permits us to understand the form of existence of capital in the colonial economy, that is, “slave-mercantile capital” (Pires and Costa 2010), as well as the production of absolute surplus-value through the expropriation or super-exploitation of slave labour. Hence, in combination, the authors scrutinised in this chapter were able to conceive intertwined and legally guaranteed forms of capital accumulation and production based on totally expropriated workers: accumulation by expropriation through the trade of enslaved workers and capital accumulation through labour appropriation by expropriation in the productive sphere where excess surplus-value was created, contributed to the capital accumulation in the world-scale.

The *fifth chapter* will explore the Brazilian historiographical works regarding four points regarding the social organisation of labour under 19th-century liberal capitalism, which was hegemonic in the world economy. It is critical of the transition narrative by showing that the working-class formation did not necessarily imply a transition in terms of a *linear transformation* from enslaved to “free” wage labour, as an “inevitable end-point,” as the “only historical alternative” (Wallerstein 2000:246). 19th-century liberal and dependent capitalism was compatible with slavery as well as with other forms of coerced labour, free or unfree. What was transformed were the *mixes* of labour forms. First, I will examine the work of the historian of São Paulo University, Rafael Bivar Marquese, aligned with the “second slavery” analytical framework, about the quantitative and qualitative change of slavery, which continued as an essential material basis of 19th-century economic and social transformations in Brazil. Second, the investigation of the

research on the legal and discursive changes about slavery after the so-called political emancipation of Brazil at the beginning of the 19th century has shown how slavery was legally framed and discursively justified according to the liberal ideas of the right to private property, which suggests that slavery was not contradicting liberal ideology. Third, although slavery continued to be a fundamental material base of economy and society, authors who have studied the social history of labour in the 19th century have shown how the previously enslaved workers, freed Africans and indigenous peoples, as well as free poor peasants, were subsumed under capital in novel and regionally distinct forms of compulsory labour arrangements to attend the changing labour needs in the context of changing dynamics of the world economy. This suggests that labour forms, which have been usually presented as “intermediary forms” between slavery and free labour, have *transformed* from one form of compulsory labour to another, proving further evidence for a “permutation of labour relations” (Linden 2011). Fourth, suppose several of these novel labour arrangements are examples of formally free persons being subordinated to compulsory labour arrangements. In that case, the work of the economic historian Douglas Libby about British capital in the mining industry of Minas Gerais shows how hiring enslaved labour became a broadly used labour arrangement in the 19th century. It is an important example of how entanglements of international and local dynamics reinforced labour arrangements, which combined elements of enslaved labour and wage labour, being historically possible and necessary. The chapter concludes that the forms of labour exploitation, which gradually started to substitute the ownership of enslaved workers, such as the hiring of enslaved labour, contract labour, peonage, tenancy, *colonato* and day labour, had their specificities. Still, they also revealed possible approximations between wage and enslaved labour, expressing social and legal ambiguities.

1. Expanded notion of working class in Marxist political economy

In this chapter, I will discuss some critical views within Marxist political economy regarding the social-scientific definition of capitalism by “free” wage labour since Adam Smith and Karl Marx and reproduced by later orthodox Marxism and liberally oriented modernisation theories. This dominant view has contributed to the dichotomic and evolutionary understanding of labour and the working class in capitalism. In this chapter, I will focus on what has been called heterodox Marxist perspectives regarding the political economy of labour. In the first moment, the “anomalies” and ambiguities within Marx’s work will be discussed. Theoretically, Marx repeatedly affirmed that capitalism is defined by “free” wage labour. Accordingly, slavery and other forms of coerced (i.e., unfree) forms of labour were significant only historically as the moments of the “so-called primitive accumulation” in the mercantilist phase of capitalism. As pre-capitalist labour forms, they were seen by Marx as anomalies in the capitalist mode of production. Another reading has referred to the ambiguities in Marx’s later works, since *Grundrisse*, and has suggested that he had much to say about slavery’s importance in the analysis of capital. Second, as the debate regarding proletarianisation has revolved around the notion of “primitive accumulation”, I will resume the “older” and the “newer” criticisms of this notion. This debate has resulted in Marxist reformulations of the so-called primitive accumulation as being structural and enduring and not just constituting a pre-capitalist phase. In the 1960s-70s, both the scholars associated with the Marxist Dependency Theory (Frank 1967, 1978a) as well as the feminist thinkers of the Bielefeld School had understood non-wage forms of colonial labour control, on the one hand, and female subsistence labour, on the other, as essentially part of the capitalist logic of accumulation at the global scale. Recent revisits of “primitive accumulation” through such notions as “accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey 2003) and *Landnahme* (Dörre 2015, 2018) have shown how the labour appropriation based on extra-economic compulsion and super-exploitation has been produced and reproduced as systemic necessities also in the core countries of contemporary financialised capitalism and not only in capitalist peripheries.

Moreover, “expropriation” is not continuous regarding the expanded reproduction of propertyless workers available for capital in diverse modalities (Fontes 2010). Still, it also constitutes a mode of accumulation based on confiscating capacities and resources, restricting workers from reproducing their labour power (Fraser 2016). These “dependent expropriable subjects” (Fraser 2016) are constantly produced and reproduced by state violence as a response to

capital's need to have available spheres where it can reap absolute surplus value (Tompa 2013b). In that sense, this debate demonstrates how capital, through its drive of self-expansion, subjugates labour under diverse but combined arrangements of exploitation and expropriation under capitalism.

Third, I will examine Wallerstein's (1974) world-systems perspective, whose shift to the capitalist world economy as a unit of analysis has made it possible to understand the interdependent combination of various forms of labour control and exploitation as a defining feature of historical capitalism. Fourth, suppose the defining feature of the capitalist mode of production dominating the world economy is that labour-power becomes a commodity in diverse ways. In that case, the contribution of the examined Global Labour Studies is that "coerced commodification of labour-power" is the common denominator and class basis of all the subordinated workers entangled through the world economy (Linden 2011).

The chapter will end with a synthesis of the discussion, bringing together central elements to build a broader notion of the working class in capitalism, which also implies expanding the notion of capitalism itself. Thus, the aim is to think about the coerced (unfree) and unwaged work as part of the category of (surplus-)value and capital-producing labour and how it enters the fundamental social activity, processes and structures of capitalism as a social system.

1.1 Marx's anomalies and ambiguities

The prevalent and hegemonic understanding of modern capitalism, according to the 19th-century social scientific paradigm, is that it is defined by the exploitation of "free" wage labour. According to Marx (1976), labour is a purposeful activity in which human beings constitute themselves as social beings, and the form that the purposeful activity takes depends on property relations and the division of labour. In capitalism, the widespread form is wage labour. It is notably the capitalist form of capital accumulation based on the appropriation of value via wage contract, that is, a labour relation intermediated by impersonal domination, that is, market rationality, that constitutes the novelty and specificity of capitalism.¹ Hence, the typical worker studied by labour sociology and political economy has been this doubly free individual in the Marxian sense:

Free workers, in the double sense that they neither form part of the means of production themselves, as would be the case with slaves, serfs, etc., nor do they own the means of production, as would be the case with self-employed peasant proprietors. The free workers

¹ Marx wants to show that modern workers freely – and more effectively – do what ancient people had to do by enslaving others (Roberts 2017).

are therefore free from, unencumbered by any means of production of their own. (Marx 1976:874)

Hence, the “double freedom” means that the workers are “free” from the control of the particular employer, thus, “free” to choose their employer, and “free” from the means of production, which compels them to sell their labour-power in the market for a wage to obtain their means of subsistence (Linden 2011). This type of worker would be fundamental for the existence of capital according to Marx and more orthodox Marxist scholars (Brenner 1982; Cohen ([1978] 2000; Miles 1987; Wood 2001):

The historical conditions of [capital’s] existence are by no means given with the mere circulation of money and commodities. It arises only when the owner of the means of production and subsistence finds the free worker available, on the market, as the seller of his own labour-power. And this one historical pre-condition comprises a world's history. Capital, therefore, announces from the outset a new epoch in the process of social production. (Marx 1976:274)

In the footnote of the same page, it reads that: “[t]he capitalist epoch is therefore characterised by the fact that labour-power, in the eyes of the worker himself, takes on the form of a commodity which is his property; his labour consequently takes on the form of wage labour. On the other hand, it is only from this moment that the commodity form of the products of labour becomes universal” (Marx 1976:274).

The story of the emergence of the social category of “free” wage labour, that is, the proletarianisation process, refers to the creation of the floating masses of expropriated peasants at the beginning of the 16th century subjected to the “discipline necessary for the system of wage-labour” (Marx 1976:899). This is the story of the genesis of the capitalist mode of production and the so-called primitive accumulation. Marx explained the origin of this new social formation by critically analysing the paradigm of classical political economy and its notion of “primitive accumulation”. However, the “primitive accumulation” of classical political economists, such as Adam Smith, is qualified by Marx as “so-called” because it explains capitalism’s emergence through wealth accumulation through theft, commercial profit, or imperialism. To Marx, wealth accumulation per se does not constitute “capital” or produce capitalism. Instead, capital is a social relation. Hence, the origin of this new social form to Marx and later Marxists derives from the transformation of “social property relations” or the “relations of production” whose epicentre was England (Wood 2001). This change process, which lasted for centuries, included violent expropriations of direct producers from the means of production and subsistence, thereby separating direct producers from their conditions of labour and labour product. The other side of the process of

expropriation is the concentration of social and economic resources, which is the basis of proletarianisation, that is, the formation of the class of propertyless workers obliged to sell their labour power to the new owners of capital (Marx 1976).

Although in *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels (1988) articulated the capitalist development to European colonial expansion, it is in *Capital* that domestic socio-economic and political structures in England, such as the loss of the power of feudal landlords, the development of the bourgeoisie, development of the proletariat, the rise of the world-market, colonialism, slavery and international division of labour, are articulated coherently as events constituting the “real” primitive accumulation (Marx 1976).

Marx did approach the entanglement between unfree coerced labour and “free” wage labour in the process of the constitution of capitalism, both integrated into the global division of labour developing since the 16th century, in the sense that the production based on the former was the condition for the development of the latter. Thus, in *Capital*, the “dawn of the era of capitalist production” and, with it, the capital accumulation process are traced back to the “discovery of gold and silver in America . . . [and] enslavement” (Marx 1976:915) and slavery appeared as an important economic category under and for capitalism, as “[v]eiled slavery of the wage-labourers in Europe needed the unqualified slavery of the New World as its pedestal” (Marx 1976:925).

Although Marx did consider global development and colonialism in his discussion about the historical development of capital, he has been criticised from different theoretical angles for giving too much emphasis to the European experience and for the way he interpreted the non-European events and processes (Boatcă 2015). Marxist theory of class and capital would be based on the assumptions that capitalism had developed in Western Europe, that the proletariat would emerge first there, and that socialist revolutions would occur first in Western Europe (Wallerstein 1991a). Moreover, Marx’s writings on British rule in India, China and Russia have been criticised for unilinear views, Eurocentrism and Orientalism (Said 1978).

At the same time, Kevin Anderson (2010) argues that Marx’s views on societies in capitalist peripheries changed over time. In the 1840s, particularly in the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx's perspective could be characterised as unilinear, influenced by ethnocentrism, foreseeing that non-Western societies would inevitably be incorporated into the capitalist system, modernised by colonialism and the world market, repeating the same model of capitalist society as the industrialised countries (i.e., England). However, from *Grundrisse* on through *Capital* until the 1879–82 notebooks, his views would become more multilinear and less deterministic, envisioning various possible development paths for countries (Anderson 2010).

The most viable perspective for the analysis elaborated in this dissertation is perhaps the one that conceives Marx's theory as depicting social development as dialectical and contradictory, in the sense that it is "centred on the rise of capitalism . . . and on its 'contradictions'" (Therborn 1996:60), focusing, thus, on the causally connected opposing poles of modern capitalism, emancipation and exploitation. The generation of the structures out of opposing parts would derive from the very contradictory character of capital (Grespan 2020:241) in movement. As it will be seen in the third chapter, it is exactly through the lens of global capitalism's contradictory character that the Brazilian Marxist scholars' have explained the direct connection between the European capitalist development based on "free" labour and European colonial expansion to the Americas, installing there a productive system based on enslaved labour (Franco 1978).

How the development of the core countries of capitalism takes place as a result of the exploitation and domination of colonial and peripheral areas of capitalism becomes explicit in Marx's letter to Paul V. Annenkov from 1846, in which Marx was clear that the industrialisation of the European metropolises was based on slavery in the colonies:

Freedom and slavery constitute an antagonism. There is no need for me to speak either of the good or of the bad aspects of freedom. As for slavery, there is no need for me to speak of its bad aspects. The only thing requiring explanation is the good side of slavery. I do not mean indirect slavery, the slavery of the proletariat; I mean direct slavery, the slavery of the Blacks in Surinam, in Brazil, in the southern regions of North America. Direct slavery is as much the pivot upon which our present-day industrialism turns as machinery, credit, etc. Without slavery there would be no cotton, without cotton there would be no modern industry. It is slavery which has given value to the colonies, it is the colonies which have created world trade, and world trade is the necessary condition for large-scale machine industry. Consequently, before the slave trade, the colonies sent very few products to the Old World and did not noticeably change the face of the world. Slavery is therefore an economic category of paramount importance. Without slavery, North America, the most progressive nation, would be transformed into a patriarchal country. Only wipe North America off the map and you will get anarchy, the complete decay of trade and modern civilisation. But to do away with slavery would be to wipe America off the map. Being an economic category, slavery has existed in all nations since the beginning of the world. All that modern nations have achieved is to disguise slavery at home and import it openly into the New World. (Marx and Engels 1982:95)

While free labour and enslaved labour appear as opposites, they are indispensable to each other as one does not exist without the other (Franco 1978). There is no doubt that Marx recognised the fundamental role of slavery and colonies in capitalism's formation, industrialisation, and the emergence of the urban industrial proletariat. Slavery or other coerced non-wage labour relations are not marginal for the construction of the capitalist mode of production, particularly in the phase

of primitive accumulation of capital. Hence, Marx sporadically envisioned the capitalist world economy as the unit of analysis within which slavery and industrial proletariat were understood (Boatcă 2015:43).

At the same time, slavery and serfdom are used to define the *differentia specifica* of the freedom of capitalist wage labour. Moreover, the disappearance of slavery would be fundamental for the specific capital-labour relation to emerge. In *Grundrisse*, Marx discusses the historical conditions for money to become capital and labour to become wage labour (i.e., capital-creating). The link between capital and labour has to take the form of a free exchange of living labour capacity for objectified labour (Marx 1973:463-464), in which living labour stands for the human activity in the work process through which is realised objectified labour, that is, used-values. However, this free exchange would require the disappearance of slavery and other “lower forms of living labour.”

Hence, in Marx’s theory, capital cannot emerge from enslaved labour² because labour-power should be acquired through the intermediation of money; exchange cannot emerge when the *living labour capacity* of enslaved workers appears as the property of some third party. Living labour capacity can only belong to itself and control its expenditure through exchange. As enslaved workers belong to particular individuals, to specific owners, they are nothing else than their “labouring machine”, which “has value for others, is value itself” (Marx 1973:464). Moreover, “[a]s a totality of force-expenditure, as labour-capacity, he is a thing [*Sache*] belonging to another, and hence does not relate as subject to his particular force-expenditure, nor the act of living labour” (Marx 1973:464-465). Regarding “free workers,” Marx says that they sell a particular amount of force-expenditure (to an individual capitalist). In contrast, every specific expenditure is smaller than the total labour capacity. The totality of labour capacity *appears* to wage workers as the property over which they exercise domination. In the case of enslaved workers, the total labour-power, which is traded, is only one part of the commodity, which the enslaved worker represents as a whole and belongs to the owner of the enslaved worker.

In Vol II of *Capital*, Marx (1997) distinguished the commodity of enslaved workers from the commodity-labour-power in the wage system in two ways, arguing that the difference was purely formal. First, the “plunder” whereby the slave commodity was acquired in the market was “not promoted by a process of circulation, but by the actual appropriation of labour-power of others by

² Although on some occasions, he treats slavery as a universal phenomenon, as if Antique slavery was the same as modern slavery in the New World, the latter just means the continuation of the former. On other occasions, he treats New World slavery as a concrete category, qualified as “purely industrial slavery” (Marx 1973:224), acquiring a particular character in time and space, being an expression of actual social relations of production.

direct physical compulsion” (Marx 1997:478-479). Second, “[i]n the slave system, the money capital invested in the purchase of labour-power play[ed] the role of money form of the *fixed* capital, which [was] but gradually replaced as the active period of slave’s life expire[d]” (Marx 1997:478-479). Thus, under this kind of market relation, the “[t]he slave-owner buys his worker in the same way as he buys his horse. If he loses his slave, he loses a piece of capital, which he must replace by fresh expenditure on the slave market” (Marx 1976:377).

If slavery appears “at individual points within the bourgeois system of production”, then it is possible there “only because it does not exist at other points; and appears as an anomaly opposite the bourgeois system itself” (Marx 1973:464). There is a following tension in Marx’s treatment of slavery, enslavers and colonialism. Although they were “structurally embedded in the logic of capitalist production”, they were incorporated as anomalies to the capitalist mode of production in Marx’s theorisation (Boatcă 2014, 2015). In other words,

[w]hile Marx, the most radical representative of neo-Republican labour movements, could *historically* think the empirical reality of slavery appearing together with capitalism, he *theoretically* unthinks the significance of the slavery-capitalism conjuncture, formalising freedom and the fulcrum by which capitalist fetters might be overthrown through labour’s historically specific representation (Sorrentino 2019:33).

Hence, one could say that a more conventional reading of the importance given by Marx to slavery and other coerced labour forms would be restricted to the so-called primitive accumulation of the mercantilist era, hence, a pre-capitalist form. The status of slavery as an anomaly in Marx’s theorisation about the specifically capitalist mode of production would derive from the identification between the creation of surplus value and capital³ production and the transformation of labour-power into commodity.

Although it can be said that Marx’s class theory and analysis of capital had problems in being truly global as he privileged industrial urban wage labour, some argue that Marx had quite a lot to offer to the study of “capitalist slavery” or “slavery’s capitalism” (Bellamy Foster, Holleman,

³ In *Capital*, Marx (1976:322) defines capital as money that creates more money, as a “self-valorising value”. This is the “driving motive and determining the purpose of capitalist production . . . to the greatest possible extent, i.e., the greatest possible production of surplus value, hence the greatest possible exploitation of labour-power by the capitalist” (p. 449). The secret of the self-valorisation of capital “is essentially the command over unpaid labour” of other people and surplus value (in the form of profit, interest or rent) “is in substance the materialisation of unpaid labour-time” (p. 672). The self-valorisation process of objectified labour takes place in the labour process through the agency of living labour, in which surplus value is being produced (p. 1008). Thus, the production process is concomitantly a labour process and valorisation process. By buying the commodity labour-power in the labour market, the owner of money obtains this “specific use-value which this commodity possesses of being a source not only of value but of more value than it has itself” (p. 301). Surplus value is the difference between the value of the commodity produced by the worker during the day and the value of the worker’s labour-power, hence, the unpaid labour. In that sense, Marx’s distinction between labour and labour-power is fundamental for understanding the creation of surplus value. All in all, capital is a social relation to Marx and not a thing.

Clark 2020; Clegg 2020; Clegg and Foley 2018) and that logically there should be no impediment that enslaved workers, in general, and enslaved African workers, especially, as valuable commodities could also be the producers of value and surplus value, just like the labour-power commodity in the wage-system (Drapeau 2014).

As observed by Wallerstein (1991a), the “Marx at the margins” (Anderson 2010)⁴ introduces an ambiguity regarding whether only the urban industrial proletariat could be considered the only proletariat and the only producer of surplus value. For example, in the *Class Struggles in France*, it appears that the interests that the French peasants paid on the mortgages and advances made by the usurer did not transfer to the latter not only the rent and net profit but also part of the wage, which made the French peasants sink to the status of an Irish tenant farmer. “Their exploitation differs only in *form* from the exploitation of the industrial proletariat. The exploiter is the same: *capital*” (Marx 1978:121-122). It is essential to highlight the “difference in form” as, according to Wallerstein (1991a:154), it draws attention to the substantive similarity between the two phenomena, whereas the difference is “secondary and minor.” Furthermore, in the *Appendix to Capital I*, where Marx formulates various forms whereby labour can be subsumed under capital⁵, he also mentions “hybrid subsumption,” meaning that surplus value can be extracted when labour is

⁴ This expression comes from the title of Anderson’s *Marx at the margins* (2010), in which the author explores the so-called marginal themes in Marx’s lifework, such as nationality, ethnicity and non-Western societies. Eight years later, in 2018, *Krisis, Journal for Contemporary Philosophy*, resumed the project with a little twist and launched on Marx’s 200th birthday an issue *Marx from the margins*.

⁵ These different forms of subsumption of Marx reveal the “diverse ways in which capital, as a specific social form of wealth, exercises its epochal making power” (Murray 2004:245) and the social and material transformations capital creates. “*Formal subsumption of labour under capital*” is “the general form of every capitalist process of production”. Labour takes the form of “free” wage labour; hence, the workers do not work anymore for themselves but for the owners of the means of production, capitalists. The labour process does not change (technologically). Instead, capital subsumes the labour process as it finds it or as it is available. Surplus labour is appropriated in the form of “*absolute surplus value*”, that is, through the unlimited prolongation and intensification of the workday, without direct coercion or personal domination, to produce commodities for the market. This form of subsumption is formal because it is only formally different from previous modes of production. The new relation of economic subordination substitutes previous direct relations of domination, and the labour process is becoming more intense and continuous (Marx 1976:645-646; 1019-1022; 1025-1026; 1028-1029). “*Real subsumption of labour to capital*” “arises and develops on the basis of the formal subsumption” and implies that capital has taken over control over the production. Labour appropriation is characterised by the extraction of “*relative surplus value*”. It is presented by Marx as the “capitalist production proper” because it would not tolerate any more previous social relations. Instead, it transforms the technological production process and social groupings (Tompa 2013c:148). For example, labour is being socialised (collective labour) through “co-operation, division of labour within the workshop, the use of machinery and in general the transformation of production” to serve capital’s end (Marx 1976:1024; 1034-1038).

not formally subsumed under capital.⁶ However, in the situation of hybrid subsumption, the appropriation of surplus labour would occur in the form of expropriation, that is, appropriation without exchange or equivalence, possible through direct coercion, differently from wage-labour, which involves the appropriation of unpaid labour through “dull economic compulsion” with the “semblance of exchange” (Blumenfeld 2022; Marx 1973:508,551).

Moreover, in the chapter about the *Production of Absolute Surplus value* in volume one of *Capital*, Marx used the example of slavery in the US South to demonstrate that capitalist production maximises labour time within the production process, acknowledging at the same time that through the incorporation of what he called the “lower forms” of labour into the world-market, they enter into the value-producing relations of production. Indeed, Marx had much to say about “slaveholder capitalism,” which would be one form of capitalism based on “plantation economy”. To this would correspond a distinct type of accumulation, according to which the capitalisation takes place based on the anticipation of surplus value created by enslaved labour (Bellamy Foster et al. 2020):

[A]s soon as peoples whose production still moves within the lower forms of slave-labour, the *corvée*, etc. are drawn into a world market dominated by the capitalist mode of production, whereby the sale of their products for export develops into their principal interest, the civilised horrors of over-work are *grafted* onto the barbaric horrors of slavery, serfdom etc. Hence the Negro labour in the southern states of the American Union preserved a moderately patriarchal character as long as production was chiefly directed to the satisfaction of immediate local requirements. But in proportion as the export of cotton became of vital interest to those states, the over-working of the Negro, and sometimes the consumption of his life in seven years of labour, became a factor in a *calculated and calculating system*. It was no longer a question of obtaining from him a certain quantity of useful products, but rather of the *production of surplus value itself*. (Marx 1976:345, emphasis added except the first)

⁶ When Marx talks about “hybrid forms of subsumption” (1976:645), he refers either to “transitional forms” or “accompanying forms” [*Nebenformen*]. Marx elaborates more about these forms in the Appendix of Volume One of *Capital* and in the Manuscripts of 1861-1863. As the notion suggests, according to Marx, the transitional form implies that capital has not yet taken the form of productive capital, and labour has not taken the form of wage labour. In that sense, hybrid forms belong to “social formations” previous to bourgeois formation. Nevertheless, as “accompanying forms”, they can be reproduced in changed physiognomy by the capitalist mode itself. Such are, for example, labour forms subsumed under usurer or merchant capital. To illustrate the former, Marx (1976) brings as an example a form of labour control used in India – Ryot -, according to which the direct producer is a small, independent, and self-sustaining peasant who produces with the means of production obtained with the money lent by the usurer. The latter appropriates from the Ryot not only the entire product but also part of the means of subsistence, indicating a higher rate of exploitation. A similar form would be “debt slavery”. In England, a similar relation of exploitation – “domestic industry” - was reproduced under the influence of large-scale industry (e.g., stocking weavers). It can be a transitional form but also reproduced by the capitalist mode of production (extraneously!). Relations of production under merchant capital can also be “transitional” and “accompanying”. Here, the merchants appear as manufacturers who advance the raw material and buy the product from independent producers. In the capitalist mode of production, this form appears in a changed shape, in which the “domestic industry” is reproduced. Under the form reproduced in capitalism is an exploited population unemployed due to the development of large industry. One of the examples is “jobbing work”, according to which the surplus value depends not only on the overwork and appropriation of surplus labour but also on the reduction of wages below the normal average level. Another example is the subcontracting system of “middlemen” or “sweaters” (Marx 1976:1023; 1044; 1048; 1994:118-121).

In this passage, as in various other occasions, Marx referred to the high mortality rate of enslaved workers under the capitalist plantation system, proportioned by their overworking under constant violence. Their average life expectancy of seven years, under the possibility of continued and fast replacement of labour-power through open trade of enslaved workers, entered the profit calculations of enslavers (Bellamy Foster et al. 2020). In volume three of *Capital*, Marx reinforced the idea about the profit production in plantation type of colony when he wrote, “where the capitalist conception prevails, as on American plantations,” slavery becomes a labour form producing “surplus value . . . conceived as profit” (Marx 2010a:790). In the *Theories of surplus value*, Marx (1968) wrote that:

[i]n the second type of colonies—plantations—where commercial speculations figure from the start and production is intended for the world market, the capitalist mode of production exists, although only in a formal sense, since the slavery of Negroes precludes free wage-labour, which is the basis of capitalist production. But the business in which slaves are used is conducted by *capitalists*. The method of production which they introduce has not arisen out of slavery but is *grafted* onto it. In this case, the same person is a capitalist and landowner. (P. 301-302, second emphasis added).

In this passage, Marx suggests that the plantation economy rooted in the “second type of colonies” was capitalist in form. It was directed by capitalists and worked by enslaved labour as capital- and value-creating labour insofar as it was integrated into the world market. However, the principal form of capitalism was based on “free” wage labour, on which the entire value structure of capitalism was built (Bellamy Foster et al. 2020). Marx uses the metaphor of *grafting* as if the capitalist form of production was surgically attached to the plantation economy from the outside. In contrast, slavery, as well as plantation owners as capitalists, were the anomalies in the bourgeois system.⁷ It is being suggested that Marx refers to two variants of capitalism, the “free variant” based on the sale of wage labour, and the variant based on enslaved labour found in the Americas until the end of the 19th century (Patterson 1979), but as maintained by the Marx’s passages above, the latter could only exist in the broader capitalist world-system. Nevertheless, the reduction of production costs and forced overworking through the direct compulsion of enslaved labour allows the capitalist to extract more surplus value from enslaved labour than it was possible with the employment of “free” labour (Patterson 1979:55), as in the case of the enslaved labour, “the entire labour product

⁷ In the often-cited passage in *Grundrisse*, Marx (1973:464) writes, “The fact that we now not only call the plantation owners in America capitalists, but they *are* capitalists, is based on their existence as anomalies within a world market based on free labour”. Banaji’s (2003) interpretation of this passage is that the owners of enslaved workers are capitalists because they are part of total social capital.

of the slave and family, above whatever provision for food and other necessities the owner cared to make was expropriated” (Ransom and Sutch 1988:133-134).

Integration into the world market is fundamental that enslaved labour is subsumed under capital, but then only because capitalism was *grafted* on it. It reveals how, to Marx (1976:950), “economic categories appropriate to earlier modes of production acquire a new and specific historical character under the impact of capitalist production”. Nevertheless, slavery’s subsumption could only be formal, implying that slavery was external to capitalism. The metaphor of *grafted*, hence, still suggests the relation of exteriority between two variants, as capital encounters and subsumes enslaved labour “as it found it” and not that slavery in its capitalist form was the product of capital and emerged from within the process of the development of modern capitalist world-system since the 16th century as maintained by Wallerstein (1974).

At the same time, the passages from *Capital* quoted above maintain that the fact that enslaved workers and their labour-power were the property of others and as the money invested in that took the form of fixed capital (like machinery in Marx’s value-theory, it is money tied up for a long time), it did not impede that insofar as their products were incorporated into the world market, they were not anymore oriented to the production of useful products, but commodities, thus, “production of surplus value” in a “calculated and calculating system”⁸. This comment referred to the cotton production in the US South, which directly fed the expanding textile manufacture in England under the hegemony of industrial capital in the 19th century, but which nonetheless weakens the argument that surplus value and capital cannot in no way be produced in a situation in which labour-capacity belongs to another or is not offered for sale by its carrier. Thus, historically enslaved labour becomes a producer of surplus value when integrated into the commodity exchange

⁸ In *Grundrisse*, Marx (1973:419) argues that in production based on slavery, the sphere of circulation and exchange is very narrow and “the slave does not come into consideration as engaged in exchange at all”. The main reason is that consumption is not mediated at all points by exchange, and in the production system based on enslaved labour, the labour has a direct use value for those working; that is, it is not mediated by wage.

in the capitalist world-economy, as Marx made explicit in volume three of *Capital*,⁹ and was competitive with other forms of exploitation under capitalism.¹⁰

Hence, in a specific historical condition, as observed by Drapeau (2014), defining enslaved workers as “fixed capital” did not impede the merchants from extracting value from this commodity in purchasing and selling enslaved labourers. To extract value and, therefore, “transfer the use-value they posited into a commodity, their persons, together with their labour-power, needed to be consumed productively by capital in the labour process,” in other words, enslaved African workers had to be metamorphosed into social labour through cooperation (Drapeau 2014:305). According to Drapeau’s fortunate reading of Marx, labour under slavery becomes surplus value-producing labour in historically specific productive relations, or in other words, Black racial slavery became a fundamental form of labour exploitation intermediating the capitalist relations of production in the American plantation economy integrated to the world economy.

Therefore, producing surplus value and profit is independent of how labour power is commodified. Marx does talk about the commodification of the labour-power of enslaved workers, but to have access to it, the purchaser buys the labourer him- or herself. He suggests that the relationship of superintendence and labour management established between the owner of the means of production and the possessor of labour-power functions mainly in the same way: “regardless of whether this labour-power is purchased by buying the labourer himself”, as it is under slavery, or “whether the labourer himself sells his labour-power”. In both cases, the “production process . . . appears as a process by which capital consumes his labour” (Marx 2010a:383). It is relevant to observe that Marx also refers to the living labour capacity of enslaved workers, although being the alien property, whereby their personality is denied. Hence, there is a distinction between enslaved workers as property and enslaved workers as labour. Later in this chapter, I will discuss how the distinction between property and possession of labour-power opens the possibility of envisioning the form of labour-power commodification under slavery.

⁹ In volume three of *Capital*, based on discussion of the slave-based accumulation in the US South, Marx understood that “[t]he entire surplus value, extracted from slaves directly by the owner of all instruments of production, “is regarded as profit. . . . [As] the price paid for a slave is nothing but the anticipated and capitalised surplus value or profit to be wrung out of the slave” during her working life” (Marx 1998:790,795). What distinguishes enslaved workers from the “free” wage worker” is that the latter has “no value” because what has value is her labour-power, but the former “has exchange value, a value,” being, hence, a “piece of capital” (Marx 1973:288-89). However, enslaved workers were both capital assets and *labour* (Bellamy Foster et al. 2020).

¹⁰ Based on the reading of Cairnes’s *The Slave Power* (1862), Marx maintains that this competitiveness of plantation slavery is derived from its large-scale character, combined production and extreme intensity imposed on enslaved labour. On the other hand, the labour intensiveness of plantation capitalism would not also favour industrialisation because it encouraged investing capital in enslaved workers and not in technology (Bellamy Foster et al. 2020).

The use of child labour in English factories proves there is no antithesis between the sale of labour-power by someone other than its possessor and the production of capital. Child labour was sold by parents as well as by the priests who administered orphanages. Marx described this kind of exploitation in *Capital* as a metamorphosis of children's blood into capital. Child labour as a crucial proletarian subject has often been overlooked and hidden. It is related to how, in capitalism and labour movements, children were put under tutelage and excluded (Frings 2019:434).

Moreover, the way machinery influenced the legal relationships appears in other passages. Namely, the workers who initially sold only their labour-power, which they owned as formally free persons, started to sell their children and a woman: he became the trader of enslaved workers. Capitalism's demand for minors significantly resembled the need for enslaved workers, as could be read in American newspapers in the 19th century (Marx 1976:417).

All in all, it is suggested that there can be several kinds of proletarians and that all different forms of labour create surplus value once they enter the circuit of capital (Wallerstein 1991a:155). In other words, once the African enslaved workers in American plantations, Polish, Romanian and Russian serfs and other forms of coerced workers are drawn into the "world market dominated by the capitalist mode of production", they enter along the industrial wage workers, men, women and children, into the composition of the "modern working class in general" as suggested by Marx (1976:356, 413).

1.2 "Primitive accumulation" as the *modus operandi* of capitalism

The dissent around the peripheral social labour organisation in (historical) capitalism has revolved around the notion of "primitive accumulation". In this section, I will discuss the perspectives which understand unfree and unwaged forms of labour as instances of primitive accumulation but are simultaneously critical of Marx's formulation. Rosa Luxemburg formulated one of the first critiques, in which "primitive accumulation" gained a world systemic framing regarding the capitalist expansion to the so-called non-capitalist peripheries. Marx's conceptualisation of the so-called primitive accumulation, as a pre-capitalist form of accumulation through non-capitalist relations of production or geographical areas, had been unsatisfactory not only to Rosa Luxemburg but to a significant part of non-orthodox Marxist thinkers, to whom it did not do justice to periphery's role in the logic of capitalist accumulation. During recent decades, the category "primitive accumulation" has been revisited by several authors to provide new readings of the concept, to interpret the neoliberal or post-Fordist modes of capital accumulation or to rethink

the long-term historical development of capitalism by focusing on some of its constitutive elements (Dörre 2015, 2018; Federici 2014; Fontes 2009; Fraser 2016; Harvey 2003; Nichols 2013; Roberts 2017; Tomba 2013b).

Nichols (2013) has synthesised the central tensions within the debate. The main point of contention of this discussion, situated within the polemic over the transition from pre-capitalist to the capitalist mode of production, has been whether primitive accumulation is a stage (pre-history of capitalism) or part of the structure of capitalism. This contention has been mobilised basically around the issue of forms of violence: that is, whether extra-economic forms of violence are part of mature capitalism as much as they were in the early stage of capitalism. The primary interpretation of Marx's position regarding the so-called primitive accumulation is that, as a historical stage, it was to be substituted by the general law of capitalist accumulation. Therefore, the overt violence would be supplanted by the exploitation functioning based on the "silent compulsion of economic relations" (Marx 1976:899). The contemporary debate regarding the original accumulation has revolved around internal-external dialectic: whether and to what extent the "outside" of capital becomes incorporated. Another approach concerns extra-economic coercion to expropriate means of production, subsistence, and social wealth for capital accumulation within the capital's sphere of influence. Another focus is concerned with the object of expropriations (Nichols 2013).

One of the first scholars to question Marx's perspective of the so-called primitive accumulation as a precursor to capitalism was Rosa Luxemburg. In her *Accumulation of Capital* ([1913] 2003), she analysed capital's expansion through imperialism during the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. She concluded that primitive accumulation should be understood as a continuous and repetitive phenomenon. It was evident to her that "specifically capitalist development" (the capitalist zones governed by economic laws) depended on non-capitalist spheres in the form of specific social strata or entire geographical zones such as colonial areas. The non-capitalist modes and relations of production were fundamental for resolving underconsumption and realising surplus value,¹¹ as they served as markets for industrial products, sources of raw materials and labour power. However, they remained external. Nevertheless, like Marx, Luxemburg located colonial expropriation of land (and resources) and enslaved labour as previous and external to capital.

¹¹ "The existence and development of capitalism requires an environment of non-capitalist forms of production... Capitalism needs non-capitalist social strata as a market for its surplus value, as a source of supply for its means of production and as a reservoir of labour-power for its wage system" (Luxemburg [1913] 2003:348-9).

1.2.1 Interpretations of the capitalist peripheries

During more than a hundred years of lively debate, the wide range of Marxist scholars questioning the mismatch between official Marxism and the peripheral realities is very heterogeneous.¹² One of the thinkers who has done justice to the peripheral role in capitalist accumulation is André Gunder Frank, the pioneer of the Marxist Dependency Theory, which has had a strong influence on the world-systems perspective. Like other intellectuals of his time, he tackled the enduring primitive accumulation argument from the point of view of the ongoing relationship between the capitalist core and the non-capitalist periphery. Unlike Rosa Luxemburg before him, Frank considered non-capitalist relations of production/the colony/the periphery/the frontier internal to the capitalist system.

Frank's (1967, 1969) understanding is placed within the framework of one capitalist world system, which has developed since the 16th century and is the product of worldwide capital accumulation. Its parts - metropolis and satellite or centre and periphery - are integrated into a hierarchical power relation, constituting relational notions which co-exist in time, reinforcing each other mutually.¹³ The two relational concepts – core and periphery – are subordinated to the same determination, such as the capacity to appropriate surplus generated in the world economy through international economic relations such as commodity trade and capital circulation (Boatcă 2015; Frank 1967, 1969).

The paramount quality of the system is the appropriation of surplus value through diverse production processes, while wage labour represents just one of the possible forms (Frank 1967:256). In his essay about the underdevelopment in Brazil, Frank concluded that the employment of labour in different forms, such as slavery, tenancy, sharecropping, and indentured servitude alongside wage labour, was not proof of co-existing feudal and capitalist economic structures but a direct consequence of the subsumption of Brazilian agriculture under the metropolitan interests and needs (Frank 1969:236). Although he considered all these relations of production to be determined by a single capitalist world system, he considered them essentially “non-capitalist”.

¹² See the discussion about the heterogeneity of Marxist tradition and one of its constellations in “Latin American Marxism” in Rojas (2016).

¹³ “The analysis of a single process of accumulation and the development of a single world capitalist system renders the question of the internality or externality of the determination, at least of this process itself, irrelevant and unanswerable” (Frank 1978b:253).

By discussing the relations of production based on slavery and indigenous labour in Latin America, the Caribbean and India, which were created right after the colonisation of these areas, Frank characterised them as super-exploitative practices.¹⁴ The forcible robbery of the labour-power (the consumption fund) of enslaved and indigenous forced labourers, in other words, the “super-exploitation of labour-power through excess-surplus value” (Frank 1978:240), was transformed into the fund of capital accumulation worldwide. In the case of wage labour, super-exploitation means reducing the wage below the value of labour power, whereby the workers are denied the minimum necessary means for subsistence. Frank finds it more appropriate to call these exploitative practices - less-than-subsistence super-exploitation - “primary accumulation”. He distinguishes between capital accumulation based on non-capitalist relations of production and capital accumulation based on capitalist relations. He denominates the former modality of accumulation as “primary” and not “primitive”, as it is not prior but a “frequent, if not constant, companion of the capitalist process of capital accumulation” until today (Frank 1978b:240-241). Hence, the two types of processes are concomitant and interdependent: “The capitalist accumulation of capital takes place partly on the basis of primary accumulation through the ‘non-capitalist’ relations of production” (Frank 1978b:244,247).

The importance of these forms of exploitation based on unfree and unwaged relations of production does not reduce the significance of the formation of wage labour through the separation of direct producers from the means of production, but “the process of divorcing owners from their means of production and converting them into wage labourers was not only primitive, original, or previous to the capitalist stage, but also continued during the capitalist stage, as it still does. Thus, primary non-capitalist accumulation also continues, feeding into the capitalist process of capital accumulation. However, the latter continues not simply because capitalist development of wage labour divorces producers from their means, but also *despite* this divorce through the maintenance and even re-creation of not strictly wage labour relations” (Frank 1978b:244).

The relevant question for the existence of capitalist accumulation is the “*transformation* of the relations of production . . . through their incorporation into the process of capital accumulation” (Frank 1978b:250). What is relevant in this notion is that the transformation of pre-existing relations of production does not necessarily mean the establishment of wage labour everywhere. Instead, the “incorporation into the worldwide process of capital accumulation may entail trans-

¹⁴ To Frank (*idem.*), super-exploitation constitutes an exploitative practice in which part of the consumption fund of the worker is appropriated by capital, in the sense that the worker is paid less than the value of his or her labour-power, and in particular times and places hinders the reproduction of labour-power.

formation of relations of production from one ‘non-capitalist’ form to another or the utilisation of preexisting forms of production to contribute to capital accumulation in combination with different circuits of circulation” (Frank 1978b:251). Although considering the transformation of labour forms upon their incorporation into the process of capital accumulation or understanding the subsumption of non-wage labour forms under capital, Frank leaves non-wage (agricultural) labour out of the capitalist sphere by insisting on their continuing non-capitalist character.

1.2.2 Feminist critique

More or less contemporary to the Marxist Dependency¹⁵ debate was the feminist critique of Marx, thematising unpaid labour, particularly the (re)production of labour-power and women’s unpaid work. Whereas the dependency theorists had emphasised the role of colonial forms of labour control in the production and reproduction of metropolitan wage labour, the prominent feminist critique was that Marx’s analysis of capitalism was centred on the value-producing labour in the form of commodity production, excluding thereby the importance of women’s unpaid reproductive work in the process of capitalist accumulation. The question of (re)production of labour-power in Marx’s work appears in the form of workers’ consumption of commodities that their wages can buy and the work required to produce them. The value of labour-power is measured in the value of commodities necessary for the renewal of the life process of the male wage worker. Since (re)production appears as far as it is related to commodity production and the market, no other work necessary for the workers’ physical and emotional recovery appears. This limited conception of labour arguably restricts the understanding of the actual extent of capitalist exploitation of labour and the function of wages in the creation of gender division within the working class. Feminists argue that capitalism must rely on unpaid domestic labour for the reproduction of labour power and devaluation of reproductive work as a means to cut labour costs (Federici 2012:92-93)¹⁶.

To tackle these so-called “blind spots” in Marx’s work and formulate a Marxist feminist theory of accumulation, in the 1970s, the feminist researchers of the Bielefeld School drew on Rosa Luxemburg’s *Capital Accumulation* ([1913] 2003). They adapted her considerations about the

¹⁵ When Frank (1978b) discussed capital’s partial dependence for its reproduction on the conversion of use values into exchange values for the capitalist circulation of commodities, he also included women’s unpaid labour in bourgeois and working-class families under the category of primary accumulation.

¹⁶ An Italian Marxist feminist political philosopher, Silvia Federici (2014), who has been strongly inspired by the bold and stimulating work of Bielefeld feminists, has continued studying women’s reproductive labour from the viewpoint of primitive accumulation in an early phase of capitalism. The feminist critique of Marx is summarised in her *Revolution at Point Zero* (Federici 2012).

primitive accumulation to female unpaid labour.¹⁷ Such German sociologists as Bennholdt-Thomsen and Maria Mies argued that unpaid labour, done mainly by women, is a type of “primitive accumulation” in a manner that the household produces for free the most crucial element of capitalist production and reproduction – the labour-power commodity. This female unpaid labour is constantly brought about by capitalism itself (Soiland 2016). The Bielefeld sociologists conceptualised household or subsistence production as an ‘exterior’ of the capitalist mode of production, which is located within it and is permanently created anew and “freely” appropriated whenever needed by capital. In that sense, Maria Mies (2014b:110) understood household production as an “internal colony” subsumed under capital. Moreover, this “freely” appropriable “internal colony” is the very foundation of the process of the production of surplus value (Mies 2014b:31).

By using the “iceberg” metaphor, Bielefeld Marxist feminists argued that in the capitalist economy, the visible part of the iceberg, comprised of the typical or “normal” form of exploitation based on wage labour, rests on an invisible base composed of the unpaid labour of women, of subsistence production, and other “colonies,” which are exposed to very different forms of exploitation¹⁸. The costs that capital refuses to pay can be “externalised” to this hidden base (Mies 2014a:225).

Hence, contrary to the central beliefs of orthodox Marxists, feminist Marxists gave priority to the usually excluded groups – the 90 per cent of the world population who could not be called “free” or “proletarian” – in the study of capital accumulation at the level of world-economy. With that, they denied that capital accumulation is sustained mainly by the “free” wage labourers. Their radical thesis consisted instead in a claim that “the 90 per cent of unfree non-wage labourers are the pillar of accumulation and growth, the truly exploited, the real ‘producers’, the ‘norm’, and represent the general condition in which human beings find themselves under capitalism” (Werlhof 1984:138).

¹⁷ The Bielefeld sociologists based themselves on her argument that “capitalism, even in full bloom, resorts to forms of accumulation in which not contract but ‘violence, fraud, oppression, and plunder’ are the dominant forms of appropriation” (Luxemburg [1913] 2003:329).

¹⁸ Hence, the exploitation of “capitalist productive labour”, which, according to Marx, defines capitalism proper, is possible due to the subsistence production of non-wage labour of women and other non-wage labourers as enslaved workers, contract workers and peasants in the colonies. Consequently, the “capitalist production process” should encompass the super-exploitation of non-wage labourers, making the exploitation of wage labour possible. The exploitation of non-wage labour is “super-exploitation” because capital appropriates more than surplus labour. It also appropriates the labour and time necessary for people's survival or subsistence production. The “expropriated” part is not compensated by a wage. It is “determined by force or coercive institutions” (Mies 2014b:48). It should be added that in the case of enslaved workers, we can talk about the expropriation of lives, considering the high mortality rate among the captive bodies.

If the continuum of capitalist relations of production and conditions of work was constructed so that on one pole there was a “free” wage labourer, and on another, a housewife, then, as argued by Werlhof, labour forms such as

[s]lave-work today, unfree forms of wage labour, home-industry, peasant production and the like all lie on this continuum of capitalist production, which is today becoming more and more like a slide inclining towards housework. All have one thing in common: dependence on the market and, generally, on money or, more exactly, on a wage. (Werlhof 1984:141)

Hence, it is not “proletarianisation” that defines capitalism but “housewifisation”, which characterises increasingly an enormous part of working-class members, whose labour-power is rewarded under the average value necessary for its reproduction (Mies 2014a:218-223). The claims about the exploitation of unpaid female labour were, hence, generalised on the entire working class in late capitalism, referring to the tendency of the people to reproduce themselves increasingly below society’s replacement level; thus, the generalisation of non-wage labour or the type of wage labour unable to guarantee its subsistence. In the context of the “housewifisation” of work, the reproduction of labour becomes a “subsistence production”; in other words, an “economy of survival” constantly subsumed under capital (Bennholdt-Thomsen 1981:31). In that sense, Bennholdt-Thomsen refers to a “marginal mass”, which, although constituted of wage-labourers, reproduces itself at no cost to capital but is available whenever needed. This “mass”, although marginally subsumed under capital, is not outside or in the margins but represents “an integral component of the capitalist system” (Bennholdt-Thomsen 1981:44). This kind of subordinated integration is not non-capitalist or pre-capitalist but a specific outcome of the continuous primitive accumulation. Nowadays, often forgotten critical formulations of Marxist Dependency Theory as well as Bielefeld Feminist political economists anticipated the main contribution what, according to Roberts (2017) characterises the newer readings of primitive accumulation, namely, that it is not considered anymore as a temporal and spatial frontier between capitalism and non-capitalism, as it was to Marx and Luxemburg. Instead, they situate it within capitalism itself.

1.2.3 The primitive accumulation concept revisited

Probably the most renowned author who is part of the wave of new readings of “primitive accumulation” as inherent to the operations of capitalism itself is David Harvey. He has substituted the “accumulation by dispossession”, understood by “force, fraud, oppression, looting”, as well as political violence, for “original accumulation” or the “primary accumulation” to distinguish it from

the connotation of pre-history that the latter has. The difference from Marx is that “primitive accumulation” is not pre-historic, nor is it outside of the capitalist system, as Rosa Luxemburg had maintained (Harvey 2004:74). However, he continues with the “internal-external dialectic”. According to Harvey (2003), capital produces its “non-capitalist other”, that is, spaces and labour relations within the capitalist system to resolve the overaccumulation towards which the system internally drives. These relations and spaces, as “externalities”, are part of capitalism, but they are external to the specifically capitalist mode of accumulation, that is, “expanded reproduction of capital”. Although organically linked, accumulation by dispossession and capital’s expanded reproduction constitute two distinct forms of accumulation. In that reading, the new sources of labour-power can derive from the existing non-capitalist spaces/sectors (peasants transformed into wage labourers or cheap labour found in colonies), or these can be manufactured, if needed, by the production of the mass of unemployed, which will devalue the labour-power or create undervalued labour-power (super-exploitation) (Harvey 2003:141,149). According to Harvey, the aim is to create, even by destruction, a “set of assets” (including labour-power) at a low cost to transform them into a profitable use. In other words, capital generates its own other to prey on it. The unemployed labourers, over-exploitative labour relations, and unfree labour forms constitute exactly the externalities of the system, which capital creates and uses when it needs them.

Another author who argues that expropriation and extra-economic violence are constitutive of capital accumulation and that capital resorts to them due to its inherent expansionary logic is a German sociologist, Klaus Dörre. By borrowing from Hannah Arendt, David Harvey, Rosa Luxemburg, and the Bielefeld sociologists, Dörre (2015, 2018) understands the history of capitalism as a “sequence of various *Landnahmen*”. Like other previously discussed authors, the sociology professor at the University of Jena maintains that capitalism needs a specific “outside, ” which comprises non-capitalist relations of production, regions, and sectors, whose “occupation” he calls *Landnahme*. If what makes capitalism dynamic is the endless accumulation of capital, it depends on the “non-capitalist other”, which has to be constantly available. Thus, “expanded reproduction of capital” cannot sustain itself only on its own basis but needs to occupy this “non-capitalist ‘other’” as “land”. Hence, *Landnahme* refers to how “not yet commodified [activities] become a ‘land’ to be occupied” (Dörre 2018:72). Either this non-capitalist “outside” already exists, or it will be produced and created by capital.

In that sense, expanded capital accumulation does not necessarily transform all labour into wage labour. On the contrary, all forms of work which have been considered conventionally as marginal or as non-capitalist/non-modern from the point of view of capital accumulation, such as

unpaid labour, reproductive activities and super-exploitative labour relations, which tend to rely on extra-economic forms of compulsion, become the necessary “other” of the paid and productive labour. The latter is acquired in the market based on the logic of equivalent commodity exchange. Hence, it is intermediated by the silent compulsion of economic relations. Although, as known, the equal exchange is a mere semblance, as the wage worker is paid a wage equivalent to the value of their labour, but not the value of what they produce, which is being expropriated (Marx 1973). Unpaid labour, reproductive activities, and over-exploitative labour relations are “conditions of possibility” for the exploitation of “free” wage labour, which can become the object of *Landnahme*, too.

Hence, on the one hand, there are specifically capitalist labour forms, which are fully commodified labour and are subject to valorisation. On the other hand, there are non-capitalist labour forms, which are not (yet) commodified but can be instrumentalised, occupied and internalised. Dörre suggests that wage labour and capital either remain dependent on the non-commodified labour forms, such as predominantly female and unpaid care work, or the non-commodified forms could also become commodified and inserted into the valorisation process. In that sense, these “previously unused activity potentials” become the “new frontiers” of capital accumulation. The valorisation of industrial labour would be possible if it is continuously supplemented by unpaid, self-directed work or care work. The Bielefeld feminist scholars Bennholdt-Thomsen and Mies argued that unpaid domestic labour constitutes surplus labour and, as such, enters into the valorisation process. Hence, they showed that female subsistence labour, producing use-values, also produces (exchange-) value, although through multiple intermediations, as added by Dörre (2018:75-76).

The distinctions between paid and unpaid labour or within paid work itself also appear in the form of “primary” and “secondary relations of exploitation,” implying two different systems of private appropriation of social wealth (Dörre 2018:77-78). Primary exploitation, far from being the dominant form, means that labour appropriation in capitalism can take place in the form of wage labour whereby extraction of surplus value is intermediated by (formal or informal) contractual relations and equivalent exchange, in the sense that the worker is rewarded the value of the labour-power. In the second case, the equivalence criterion is not fulfilled or is fulfilled only partly, in the sense that the value of the labour-power and living standard are pushed below the morally and socially established average of subsistence in a specific moment of history. Surplus labour appropriation relies on extra-economic disciplinary mechanisms. The standard form of exploitation in capitalism would be “the institutionally guaranteed exchange of equivalents in the production of

surplus value”, from which deviate those exchange relations, which are “subject to external discipline and partly take place outside the capitalist firm and the production of surplus value” (Dörre 2018:78-79).

Dörre (2018), like Harvey (2003) and Luxemburg ([1913] 2003), frames these commodified and non-commodified forms of socialisation as well as “primary” and “secondary relations of exploitation” as a “dual nature of capitalist accumulation”, systematising them based on the internal-external dynamic: there is an “internal market” where social relations take part based on the equivalent commodity exchange, which is dependent on an “external market”, which is not based on equivalent exchange, or only to some extent. Moreover, the exchange relations characterising the “external market” are defined by “arbitrariness, political discipline or even overt force”. *Landnahme* is constantly redrawing the boundaries between the internal and external. The inside-outside distinction could be maintained or redrawn when the symbolic-cultural and state-managed disciplinary mechanisms (e.g., institutionalised racism or sexism) are used to reduce the wages of certain social groups below the general standards of wages, reproducing, hence, the “secondary relations of exploitation”. Furthermore, capitalists can have several strategies to overcome the crisis of accumulation by intensifying both forms of exploitation, for example, by not paying certain activities within the wage labour relation or outside of it (Dörre 2018:78-79). The “duality” is now systemic: existing, being produced, and reproduced within the capitalist world system itself (Dörre 2018:75).

Although Dörre (2018) focuses on the *Landnahme* process in the post-Fordist flexible accumulation regime dominated by financial capital in Western Europe (particularly in Germany), and (semi-)peripheries enter the picture only insofar as it is the provider of potential migrant labour-power, his discussion contributes to a critical global sociology of labour with several considerations which are also valuable for my research problem. First, capitalism can involve not just appropriation of labour but workers’ “capacity to work”, and both are politically intermediated and, in the case of “secondary exploitation”, repressively implemented. Secondly, the transformation of labour power into concrete, desired, and adequate work performance (the moment of control and compulsion of labour) does not count only on “indirect control” through the internalisation of the silent compulsion of economic relations by the subjects enjoying increasing individual freedom. Labour appropriation of more precarised groups often takes place by “external discipline” and “increasing unfreedom” (Dörre 2018:101). In that sense, the relations of exploitation can be reinvented by creating spaces of “controlled autonomy”. The *Landnahme* notion enables to go beyond the fixation on wage labour, as it brings under scrutiny the expansive reproduction of capital

through *Landnahme*, as it implies the appropriation of diverse labouring activities/potentials, which do not constitute typically paid labour, but which nevertheless accompany the wage form and make it structurally possible. The question is about the moving and blurring boundaries between paid and unpaid labour and productive and unproductive labour. Given the evidence about the occupation and incorporation of various forms of labouring capacities into the valorisation process, such as the labouring activities producing use-values, also creates challenges and asks to rethink Marx's theory of value and capital accumulation (Dörre 2018:97-102). These considerations have implications for how we analyse contemporary labour relations and how we can expand the historical analysis of capitalist development.

As it can be seen, Dörre's model, like that of Harvey's, is based on a logic of integrated duality: on the one hand, there is an "internal market" which sustains capital accumulation and works according to capitalist rationality that is, it is constituted of the equivalent commodity exchange; on the other hand, there is the "exterior", produced with the assistance of several disciplinary mechanisms, which is not functioning based on capitalist rationality. The latter includes all the excluded, the super-exploited labourers, whose labour power is bought below the market value, constituting an endlessly exploitable sub-proletariat. Capitalism's expansionary logic integrates both forms of accumulation, although the concrete mechanism that integrates the two is not exposed.

Dörre's *Landnahme* concept helps us understand how previously non-commodified geographical and social spaces, such as the African continent and the New World, as well as their inhabitants and their labour, become commodified and included in the circuits of capital when they are transformed into colonies and enslaved. However, it still has limitations in dealing with unpaid commodity-producing labour, which is highly commodified and contributes directly to capital valorisation. Such is the enslaved labour.

According to Roberts (2017), the criticism of Marx's so-called primitive accumulation thesis and the debate about capitalist exploitation and its relation to force and compulsion tend to collapse the distinction between *capitalism* and *capital*. Based on Roberts's (2017:15) reading, Marx never maintained that the so-called primitive accumulation was pre-historic to capitalism and, hence, a past episode. Instead, he considered it an "ongoing necessity internal to *capitalism*, but always anterior to the specific operations of *capital*". It is the pre-history of capital while still inherent to mature capitalism because the simple activity of amassing wealth (hoarding money, land, products), which is the consequence of this process, does not mean yet that this wealth is used as capital. According to Marx (1976:301), the latter can happen only with the capitalist exploitation of labour-

power through the wage contract rooted in the labour market, whereas the use-value of labour-power results in more value (i.e., surplus value) than it is worth. Extra-economic violence, central to primitive accumulation, would be unable to make money to function as capital. Capital as the primary agent of capitalism is not the agent of primitive accumulation, which another capitalist agent carries out, that is, the state, creating thereby the conditions for capital accumulation by labour exploitation. That was the case under the colonial regime and continues under contemporary capitalism (Roberts 2017:12).

Although recognising that primitive accumulation and one of its elements – expropriation – are enduring and structural, most of these previously discussed authors continue reproducing the antinomy between capital accumulation based on the exploitation of contractual wage labour, on the one hand, and primitive accumulation as expropriation, plunder, and robbery applying to the super-exploited, on the other hand. Even if not constituting the “exteriority” of *capitalism*, such labour forms like slavery and other unfree and non- or semi-wage forms are “previous” and “external” to *capital*, contributing to the amassing of wealth or being the condition of possibility of the wage labour. Still, they do not produce surplus value and hence capital, or they only do it partially. As emphasised by Roberts (2017), although Marx did not deny that exploitation based on extortion would be possible, the issue is simply that it would not be considered *specific* to the capitalist exploitation of labour. The focus on this specificity obfuscates all other forms whereby labour exploitation creates surplus value and produces capital, even if the commodity labour power is not sold by its possessor and owner.

Contemporary authors aligned with Marxist Dependency Theory in the global periphery, such as a Brazilian historian, Virginia Fontes, in her *O Brasil e o capital-imperialismo* (2010) is critical of how Harvey distinguishes between two qualitatively different although articulated modes of capital accumulation, contributing like that to the teleologically modernising view of capitalist development. Accordingly, the distinction between “accumulation by dispossession” and “expanded reproduction of capital” would reproduce a dichotomy between capitalist (normalised) and non-capitalist (primitive) countries (Costa and Gonçalves 2020). Like that, the “primitive” refers to spoliation and open violence, implying an inevitable return to the “original sin”, whereas “normalised” means accumulation based on free wage labour and economic compulsion (Fontes 2017:2201-02). This distinction is created based on the “exteriority” of capitalism, in terms of spaces/categories of workers/sectors/territories existing “outside” of the capitalist mode of production, as maintained by Rosa Luxemburg, or as being “manufactured” by capital itself within the capitalist system, constituting the “accumulation by dispossession”, as argued by Harvey

(2003). Luxemburg's and Harvey's theses are based on the relation of exteriority, reproducing a dualistic understanding of capital accumulation (Costa and Gonçalves 2020). To Fontes (2017:2202), however, it does not make sense to talk about "normalised" capitalism because, from the world systems viewpoint, extra-economic violence and expropriation have always been present but have been just displaced geographically to capitalist peripheries. In contrast, since the hegemony of industrial capital in the 19th century throughout the "glorious thirty years", the core capitalist countries have enjoyed a supposedly normalised and civilised mode of accumulation. Moreover, capital's expansionary movement does not mean creating exteriors but, on the contrary, subordinating existing labour relations under capital in *diverse* forms (Fontes 2017:2208-9). All in all, according to Fontes (2017), fraud, pillage and expropriation have become more evident in the neoliberal phase of capitalism as they are no longer part of the socio-economic reality of global peripheries but have become the order of the day in the core countries of capitalism.

The internal-external dynamic makes it difficult to understand how the "internal" dynamic of capitalism "promotes and exacerbates the very social conditions in its base, be it through the subaltern incorporation of other sectors of production, other regions or countries, modifying and subordinating the relations encountered there, be it by its direct expansion, as, for example, through the industrialisation of new areas" (Fontes 2010:71). Inspired by the work of Lenin, Fontes maintains that in its expansion, capital tends to eliminate any externality, as it imposes its command by subsuming previous social relations, "subalternising and mutilating them" (2010:71).

Instead of focusing on primitive accumulation, Fontes focuses on one of its elements – expropriation - but not as a distinct regime of accumulation. Although it does not define capitalism as a totality, it is a "necessary condition" or "the condition of possibility" of capitalist social relation and its expansion, that is, the extraction of surplus value based on the exploitation of "free" labour. In fact, throughout capitalist history, it has been and continues to be the other side of the centralisation and concentration of capital. Expropriation is distinct from spoliation, which is identified with plunder and robbery. As an instance of the "violence of capital", expropriation is a permanent and continuous process, constituting the condition for the production and expansion of the social base of capital itself. This social base subordinated to capital is made of the masses of expropriated formally free workers and, hence, separated from the "social conditions (or resources) of production" and, therefore, fully or partially dependent on selling their labour-power in "any condition" (Fontes 2010:22,42,48). Fontes (2010) talks about "primary expropriations", which continue to be present in capitalism on a growing scale. These include the expropriation of direct producers (e.g., rural populations) from their means of production and subsistence (social resources

of production), such as land, or simply being unable to continue traditionally reproducing their life forms.¹⁹ At the same time, “secondary expropriations”, promoted by contemporary interest-bearing “capital-imperialism”, have emerged. This comprises expropriating workers from their historically conquered rights and subsuming different spheres of life under capital.

Spatially and temporally on the global scale, both expropriations have been implemented unequally, that is, in diverse manners, rhythms and degrees, resulting in a labour force which is “unequally liberated to international capital and differently formed, but still equally available (and in need) for *various modalities* of exploitation of surplus value” (Fontes 2010:45,71-72, emphasis added). Fontes’s (2010) affirmation that the masses of expropriated workers, although being formally “free”, can be subsumed under capital in any form, in the sense that surplus value can be extracted in whatever modality, including in different legal structures, expands the notion of working classes beyond the urban factory workers.

In that sense, expropriations have not resulted in typical capital-labour relations. Contractual wage labour became dominant in the 19th century in the capitalist core. In capitalist peripheries, expropriations resulted in the creation of more or less compulsory labour forms, but they were not external to capital (Fontes 2010:63-64). The expropriations in the 20th and 21st centuries have led to the subordination of expropriated labour under “more or less disguised forms of compulsory labour”, that is, the recreation of “apparently paradoxical, archaic forms”, such as workers entering non-contractual and extremely precarious employment relations, being unequally connected with high-tech sectors (Fontes 2010:43).

Temporally, Fontes (2010) works with the Marxian periodisation of capitalism, defined by “free” labour. Although she mentions that colonisation was part of capital’s expansion in the 19th, the unfree forms of labour, such as slavery in the 19th century, do not constitute to her the social base of the capital relations because the worker is not formally free and is not the owner of their labour-power. As the “social base” of capital is necessarily made of formally “free” labour, although exploited through diverse modalities, there is no space for “unfree” wage labour either. In that sense, if Fontes denies the “outside” of capital, then, according to her, there is one when it comes to coerced (unfree) labour. What is lacking is that expropriation may also lead to the production of workers subsumed under unfree labour arrangements or may be incorporated in contractual arrangements in which they are not the sellers of their labour power.

¹⁹ This tends to introduce an element of diversity in the form of extraction of surplus value. Subsumption to capital “*modifies diverse historical forms* and, even if it permits the maintenance or incites its reproduction, it converts them in altered moralities of subordination to capital, hindering the possibility of their plain reproduction in pre-, non- or anti-capitalist forms” (Fontes 2009:73, emphasis in original).

Whereas Fontes considers expropriation as a condition, mean, or the result of capitalist exploitation, in the sense of producing the capitalist relation based on the propertyless workers and the capitalist owners of means of production, Nancy Fraser (2016) problematises the restriction of capital accumulation to the exploitation of “free” wage labour by capital in commodity production. According to Fraser, this excludes unfree, dependent, and unwaged labour, which have played a fundamental role in capital accumulation in the entirety of capitalist history but also nowadays. The central point is that the unfree and dependent labour, which is expropriated instead of exploited, is “subject to domination unmediated by wage contract”. Accordingly, she does not consider “expropriation” as the mere condition of the possibility of labour exploitation by capital (Fraser 2016:169). Still, it also implies a social distinction and division within the category of labourers itself. In other words, the “subjection of those whom capital *expropriates* is a hidden condition of possibility for the freedom of those whom it *exploits*” (Fraser 2016:166, emphasis in original). Expropriated labour is racialised. As expropriation is structural to capitalism, we can talk about racialised capitalism. Hence, the division between workers is not derived only from the economy but is a politically instituted hierarchy of different (legal) statuses between the “dependent subjects of expropriation” and the “free subjects of exploitation”, serving capital’s “disparate mechanisms of accumulation” (Fraser 2016:169-171).

As argued by Dörre and Harvey, expropriation is a mode of accumulation, that is, value extraction by other means, rather than value extraction by exploitation. The former involves the “confiscation” of capacities and resources²⁰ and their *conscription* into capital’s circuit of self-expansion. It can be overtly violent through conquest (New World slavery) or veiled (debt mechanisms). The confiscated capacities and resources can be conscripted into capital’s circuits directly, “involving immediate conversion into value” (as in the case of slavery), or indirectly, through mediations, as in the case of domestic or subsistence unwaged labour, for example, in semi-proletarianised households. What should be emphasised here is that these confiscations do not constitute a simple theft leading to mere amassed wealth. The capacities that have been “commandeered”, in fact, “get incorporated into the value-expanding process that defines capital.” In a nutshell, expropriation is “confiscation-cum-conscription-into-accumulation” (Fraser 2016:167). Expropriations are not restricted to early capitalist history, but these have also taken a new form in contemporary times, including prison labour, corporate land grabs, debt slavery and others. One of the structural reasons capital resorts to expropriation is that in a system driven by

²⁰ Fraser (2016:166) lists labour, land, animals, tools, minerals or energy deposits under the confiscated assets, but also human beings, their sexual and reproductive capacities, their children and bodily organs.

limitless expansion and private appropriation of surplus value, there is an ongoing interest by the owners of capital in obtaining labour and resources below their costs and, if possible, even for free. Accordingly, through expropriation, capital may acquire specific capacities and resources by not paying for their reproduction, a point that was already touched on above in association with domestic reproductive labour or overexploitation of enslaved labour and indentured servants. Hence, it may lead to workers' inability to guarantee their reproduction as they are subordinated under super-exploitative labour arrangements and paid below the average socially necessary cost of their reproduction. Throughout different phases of capitalist development²¹, expropriation and exploitation have been entwined differently (Fraser 2016:173-177).

Both Fontes (2010) and Fraser (2016) have contributed significantly to the understanding of expropriation as part of the structures of capitalist development. Not constituting any external sphere, they are understood as part of the internal logic of capitalism, not pre-historic to capitalism nor previous to capital. Both need to specify better the mechanisms which tie together different forms of appropriating labour within the same socio-economic system. Tomba's (2009, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c) work may provide certain concreteness to the argument that the drive for endless accumulation explains the constant production and reproduction of expropriation practices combined with exploitation.

When Massimiliano Tomba talks about the permanence of primitive accumulation, like Harvey and Luxemburg, he argues that “[c]apital needs to create geographical areas or productive sectors where it can produce an enormous quantity of absolute surplus value” to support the “production of extra-ordinary surplus value” and “[t]he primary violence of the accumulation must be repeated ever anew” (2009:60). Echoing more Rosa Luxemburg, non-economic factors are a crucial characteristic of the accumulation-process. In that sense, extra-economic violence creates these labour forms to reap these fresh amounts of absolute surplus value.

However, unlike Harvey and Luxemburg, Tomba (2013) denies that these areas and factors were “external” to capital. Accordingly, an essential difference from Luxemburg's argument is that accumulation does not need non-capitalist regions but a world market, which not only holds together different forms of exploitation by synchronising them but also brings together different working classes. An important notion here for capitalist modernity since its beginning is “synchronisation”, which means “switching onto the same track” (Tomba 2013a:346).

²¹ Fraser (2016:173) understands capitalism as an “institutionalised social order” whose phases have been made up of different “regimes of racial accumulation”: commercial capitalism, liberal capitalism, state-managed capitalism and financialised capital. In every one of those regimes, there is a particular configuration between expropriation and exploitation, following the geopolitical, national, social, class, racial and gender divide.

Hence, capital does not create the “exterior”, but capital needs or profits from the “differentials of surplus value”, that is, the “extra” or the “social surplus value” on a global scale. It is created either by technological development or by encountering relations of production in which the productive power of labour is inferior. In other words, capital needs a range of “wage differentials, of different productive powers and intensities of labour”. Extra-economic means, such as the State-*Gewalt* through expropriations and its political-regulatory intervention, enter to make possible these differentials by incorporating previously non-commodified areas, spaces and labour forms into the ambit of capital accumulation. The means may include the state regulation of workers, new forms of forced labour, racism, discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and place of birth, creating insecurities to migrant labour. It creates them if capital does not find them²² (Tomba 2013c:165,148).

State violence has played a fundamental role in synchronising the histories of extra-economic violence, which were and are the “conditions of possibility” of the capitalist mode of production” (Tomba 2009:405). In the Marxist account of the so-called primitive accumulation (Nichols 2015), relatively independent elements such as state violence, expropriation of direct producers from their means of production and subsistence, the creation of the propertyless proletariat, disciplining of wage workers for the commodification of their labour-power in the labour market, and criminalising beggars in early modern England are combined from the 16th century onwards with overseas events such as slavery, colonialism, and the expropriation of indigenous lands. State violence, through its policies and penal laws, was fundamental in synchronising these histories of extra-economic violence by the 17th century, making the capitalist mode of production possible, as observed by Tomba (2013a) based on his reading of Marx’s *Capital*.

Tomba (2013a) refers to various “violent levers” of accumulation – public debt, surplus population, colonial system, and credit – mentioned by Marx in *Capital*, which are synchronised by the extra-economic violence. As known, Marx highlighted that the history of proletarianisation and, hence, the establishment of the capitalist mode of production was written in “letters of blood and fire” (Marx 1976:875). As observed by Moulner-Boutang (1998) and Costa and Goncalves (2020:18), Marx (1976:885) distinguishes between two “historical-legal phases” of expropriations and violent usurpation of common property in England that played a crucial role in the creation of capitalist private property regime: the first one ranges from the 15th to 17th centuries, when

²² Tomba draws from Marini, according to whom the incorporation of Latin American countries into the world market resulted in the surplus value produced in countries of dependent capitalism being transferred *gratis* to core countries of capitalism where labour productivity is higher. This, in turn, forces the unfavoured nations to increase the intensity of labour exploitation (Marini 1991, cited in Tomba 2013c:147).

expropriations were carried out illegally by “individual acts of violence” against legislations that aimed at restricting them; and the second phase, which starts in the beginning of the 18th century, when the law itself was used as an instrument of expropriations, denominated as “Parliamentary form of the robbery” (Marx 1976:885). Both of these phases were accompanied by the penal law, or the so-called “bloody legislation” (Marx 1976:896), which was used to discipline and adapt the uprooted and loose “free” propertyless workers for the wage system, the logic of the labour-market and transform them into capital- and value-producing labour, hence, disciplining them since the 16th century into the “chronometer of the market” (Tomba 2013:366). In this context, Marx talks about the rise of “bloody legislation” against vagrancy and pauperisation in England and France.

Colonialism is another violent lever of capital accumulation, although according to Marx, it belongs to its external circuit. Thus, capitalist modernity was born entangled with colonialism and slavery. Colonies not only provided markets for manufactured goods, but through the colonial system, the treasures captured in the colonies through the “undisguised looting, enslavement and murder” were transformed into capital in the mother countries, which implied using much force and extreme political intervention (Costa and Goncalves 2020; Marx 1976:918). Although not developed by Marx himself, Costa and Goncalves (2020) emphasise the use of a set of international and metropolitan laws during the colonial period, which enabled the uprooting of African and indigenous peoples from their lands and transforming them into living commodities to be tied down as capital- and value-producing labour in the productive enterprise of the Americas.

As shown by Moulrier-Boutang (1998) in his study about the history of dependent labour, workers’ escape and flight was the main challenge of capitalist accumulation between 1500 and 1800 not only in England but also in English colonies as well as in other parts of the Americas. Hence, modern slavery could be considered part of a broader attempt to discipline and fix rural labour through several state political-regulative instruments within the world economy since the 16th century (Costa and Goncalves 2020; Moulrier-Boutang 1998). This point will be elaborated further in the fourth chapter in the “Enslaved labour and law” section.

Violence was extreme in plantation colonies, producing commodities for the world market. In the 19th century, this extreme violence was a means by which capital could acquire labour power for plantations. The labour intensity was synchronised with the “clock of the world stock exchange” (Tomba 2013:366). It is suggested that degrees of violence or coercion as necessary for capital accumulation vary, as they are part of the same continuum of capitalist relations of production.

Thus, these elements of extra-economic violence do not just belong to the origin of capitalism, but these are re-created and recombined by the very capitalist mode of production. State violence

has been a fundamental extra-economic power and synchroniser in the *permanence* of what Tomba (2013a; 2013b) calls the “original” (*ursprüngliche*) or “primary” accumulation. Accumulation is the continuous driving power of capitalism. Original accumulation “begins always again through extra-economic violence, which heightens the process of accumulation. It is ‘original’ or ‘primary’ because it is the basic element that always re-initiates the temporal counter of capitalist modernity” (Tomba 2009:56). It is both capital accumulation and state violence or an accumulation with extra-economic coercion. These two mechanisms - *world market and State-Gewalt* – are the mechanisms of synchronising different forms of exploitation. The “original violence of the accumulation must be repeated over and over again to cause new differentials in the force of production and intensity of labour” (Tomba 2013c:408-409). In Tomba’s (2009) view, state violence is the extra-economic means to combine these different forms of exploitation and subsumption and synchronise them to the rhythm of the world market.

Where do these wage differentials, and the differentials of productivity and labour intensity, come from, and how are they combined? Tomba (2013b:xiii) thinks of the permanence of primary accumulation based explicitly on the 19th-century capitalist expansion, which was marked by the imposition of one type of labour time – *socially necessary labour time* – through the world market on the rest of the globe insofar as capital subsumed under its command in hybrid forms existing labour forms and adapted them to its own needs.

Tomba’s insights are inspired by Marx’s work after the 1860s when the latter was thinking about capitalist development through the combination of forms of exploitation on the world scale. That means the combination of labour exploitation through the extension of the working day (absolute surplus value) and exploitation based on the intensification of the labour process through higher labour productivity, for example, by introducing new technologies (relative surplus value). Each of these forms characterises one form of subsumption of labour to capital, respectively, formal subsumption and real subsumption, which should be considered contemporary to each other instead of representing stages of capitalist development.²³ The synchroniser of these forms of exploitation and subsumption would be the “socially necessary labour time”, which is the social average of exploitation, or the time of labour of an average social intensity to produce a commodity, or in other words, the labour necessary under the social conditions existing at the specific historical time. In that sense, the time that counts to produce a commodity is socially and not individually determined. Every labour time used to produce a commodity should be related to the socially necessary labour

²³ Instead of being “historical stages of subsumption”, “formal subsumption”, and “real subsumption” are “concepts of subsumption, as argued by Murray (2004:251-252). Neither does “real subsumption” mean “real” capitalism.

time. Hence, the synchronisation of different forms of labour exploitation is ensured through the “socially necessary labour time”,²⁴ which is repetitively and constantly imposed through the world market (Murray 2004:251:252; Tomba 2009, 2013b).

Given that, relative surplus value can derive from the introduction of machines, resulting in the devalorisation of labour power. Moreover, an extra surplus value can derive from the sporadic introduction of innovations/machines, leading to a more intense and less porous labour process, that is, the labour of higher productive power than the social average. In contrast, the individual labour objectified in the commodity would be lower than the social average. The immediate repercussion of introducing new technologies is that other capitalists would find ways to cover this differential (of relative surplus value) by extending the working day. Moreover, if technological development broadly spreads, it also changes the “socially-necessary labour”. This, in turn, would lead the capitalists to search for surplus value by extending the working day. For this reason, capital is looking for the “masses of absolute surplus value” globally, within the same country or corporation. Every single capitalist is subsumed under the command of total capital, which forces every single one of them to use “socially average labour”, or where it is possible and where the resistance of workers is weaker, “labour of an intensity superior to that of social labour” (Tomba 2013c:150).

Hence, absolute surplus value, differentials of wages, productive capacities and labour intensities are fundamental for sustaining exploitation based on relative surplus value. They will be created if the sectors, groups, and geographical areas with these differentials do not exist. In that sense, economic and extra-economic violence of capital are intertwined to ensure these differentials: geographical areas, productive sectors, and social groups, which can guarantee these differentials, should be “produced, maintained and reproduced on a global scale”. In other words, the “primary violence of the accumulation must be repeated anew” (Tomba 2009:60). “Silent economic compulsion” is sufficient as long workers are on the tracks of valorisation through the network of world-market or transnational chains. Still, extra-economic coercion enters whenever workers leave these tracks or whenever masses of labour should be sent along these tracks and synchronised (Tomba 2013b:186). In that context, enter “new enclosures”, wage differentials created through racism and sexism, as well as the political and economic function of borders for the migrant workers without citizenship. As shown by Brazilian *dependentista* Ruy Mauro Marini ([1973] 2000), this process involves the transfer of surplus value and capital from one country to another and from one sector to another.

²⁴ Socially necessary labour is the labour necessary under the social conditions existing at the time (Tomba 2009: 58).

These two forms of exploitation are equivalent to two forms of labour subsumption – formal and real – in the capitalist mode of production. A third one should be added to these, a “hybrid” or “intermediate form of subsumption”²⁵ (Tomba 2013:62). Labour forms that are subsumed in hybrid forms do not take pure wage form. They fall under the command of capital, but extracting surplus value can be more exploitative than under “formal subsumption”, as it can involve direct coercion (*direkter Zwang*). Marx paid very little attention to these forms, as he considered them not specifically capitalist because they were allegedly “transitional” or (re)produced (extraneously) by the capitalist mode of production. Hybridity consists of the *combination of capitalist exploitation without capitalist production* (Marx 1994:119-120). It would be necessary, however, to give them more emphasis as these so-called “non-capitalist forms” are not “residues” from previous modes of production but rather “contemporary alternatives” (Tomba 2013b:182). According to the principle of synchronisation within the scope of the world economy, these so-called “traditional” and “unwaged” forms of production were and could be integrated into the capitalist market in “hybrid forms of subsumption” without being subsumed formally to capital, in the sense of becoming a typical “free” wage labour (Tomba 2013b:168).

Formal subsumption can include contemporary child labour or other forms of forced labour recreated in modern capitalism, as well as working days of up to 18 hours, which illustrate the current level of production of social surplus value (Tomba 2013b:155). Under hybrid subsumption would belong modern forms of slavery, which are not just residues from the past but “forms that, though with an altered physiognomy, are produced and reproduced in the background of the *current* capitalist mode of production” (Tomba 2009:63, emphasis in original). Thus, the supposedly anachronistic forms of labour, such as slavery or other forms of coerced labour, are not pre-historic or residual in modern capitalism but are contemporaneous to the most advanced forms of work and are even necessary for their existence (Tomba’s 2013b:149). In the new mode of production, the so-called “archaic” forms can acquire a new meaning²⁶.

Capital can exploit forms of labour without transforming them into pure wage labour. It may appropriate the direct producer’s subsistence fund without paying the equivalent for labour power, harming the worker’s capacity to reproduce their labour power. Moreover, subordinating formally free workers to capital can transform them into wage labourers, maintaining the previous labour

²⁵ See footnote six for the definition.

²⁶ “Economic categories appropriate to earlier means of production acquire a new and specific historical character under the impact of capitalist production” (Marx 1976:950).

process. Alternatively, it can exploit the existing labour forms by subsuming them under the command of capital. Expropriation can also result in slavery.

Although Tomba understands modern slavery and new forms of slavery as the products of the capitalist mode of production, the industrial character of plantation production since its inception, and recognises that it would be transformed once it is integrated into the world market, he argues that modern slavery in the New World was born at the end of the 18th century. His inspiration is Marx's discussion of cotton production in the US South and the debate about "second slavery", coined by Tomich (2004), which has a rather US-centric bias, generalised to the rest of the histories of slavery in South America. Nevertheless, Tomba's insights about the subordination of enslaved labour to the hegemony of "socially necessary labour time" in the world market of the 19th century are precious to comprehending how slavery as a modern mode of labour control was integrated into global capitalism. The English and international industries also regulated the labour time of enslaved workers. At the same time, the slaverdriver's whip became the violent synchroniser of enslaved labour to the "global stock market" (Tomba 2013b).

In that sense, slavery, instead of being a residual form of labour, represents a "possibility for augmenting the intensity of labour and guaranteeing to capital masses of absolute surplus value" (Tomba 2013b:149-150). Labour time had to be intensified and made as nonporous as possible. In countries where commercial production was based on enslaved labour, the principle of managing enslaved workers was that "the most effective economy is that which takes out of the human chattel in the shortest space of time the utmost amount of exertion it is capable of putting forth" (Tomba 2013b:152-153).

The world market imposes the "productive power of socially-necessary labour". At the same time, violence is necessary so that capital can synchronise the intensity of plantation slavery to the "clock of the world stock exchange" marked by "the temporality of socially necessary labour time". As with the development of the world market, "all peoples are entangled in its net", also enslaved labour, which becomes something new with its subsumption to the world market. Different social and productive forms are subsumed to capital when they stop producing for their own needs and start producing commodities for the world market; that is, they become part of total capital (Tomba 2013b:149-50). It will be argued in this thesis that these elements were given already during the Portuguese colonial conquests in the 16th century, as it was in its American colonies that enslaved labour started to be used for the production of commodities for the emerging world economy gradually dominated by the capitalist mode of production, as it will be discussed in the following subchapter within the context of world-systems analysis.

Tomba's discussion about the articulation of the modes of labour exploitation and forms of capital accumulation borrows from dependency theorists, from Frank (1978b) as well as from Marini ([1973] 2000). As both dependency theorists argue, capital accumulation can also occur through super-exploitation in the ambit of both wage labour and various forms of servile labour, whereby part of the workers' consumption fund is appropriated by capital. Hence, while Tomba argues that formal, real and hybrid forms of labour subsumption are articulated through the world market and synchronised by state violence, this entanglement should also incorporate super-exploitative practices.

1.2.4 The critique of the critique of primitive accumulation concept

All the above-presented authors agree that expropriation (*Enteignung*) and extra-economic forms of violence are the *modus operandi* of capitalism and, as such, are continuous and structural. Expropriation is not limited to the expanded reproduction of labour power concerning the creation of propertyless workers and their entrance into the labour market. It can also refer to a dimension of labour appropriation, which refers to the exploitation of somebody or a thing in that person by harming that person. In other words, the exploitation of labour is enabled by the exploitation of the person and their vulnerability, which is harmful to that person (Wood [1981] 2004:256). Accordingly, exploitation that harms a person's capacity to reproduce their labour-power and life activity may be considered *expropriation*. In that sense, it is possible to talk about the prolongation of the moment of expropriation of the means of subsistence in the process of super-exploitation of labour power (Martins 1996).

Although discussing the production and reproduction of unfree or/and unwaged labour forms such as slavery, serfdom, tenancy, sharecropping, peonage, domestic labour and forms of unpaid labour as *instances* of "primitive accumulation" and the way they are combined with the typical wage-labour, some of these above-discussed authors who are one way or another critical to Marx's initial formulation, still classify these forms of labour as the "non-capitalist other." The authors who have revisited the primitive accumulation notion in recent decades (Dörre 2015, 2018; Harvey 2003) consider not typically wage labour forms as "external" to specifically capitalist capital accumulation. Differently from the formulations elaborated between the 1970s and 1980s (Bennholdt-Thomsen 1981; Frank 1978b; Mies 2014a; Werlhof 1984), more recent revisions exclude unfree and colonial forms of labour from the historical analysis of capital accumulation because only formally free labour, even if exploited in different modalities, constitutes the social

basis of capital (Fontes 2010). Roberts's (2017) definition frames these recent approaches quite well: the modes of labour control considered as instances of primitive accumulation are not previous to capitalism but prior to capital, as capital production necessarily implies the generation of surplus value. Fraser (2016) and Tomba (2013b) deviate here by not making any use of the "internal-external" divide nor excluding modern colonial slavery from the considerations of global capital accumulation. Tomba (2009, 2013a, 2013b) permits analysing the concomitant subsumption of labour under capital more concretely in formal, real, and hybrid forms synchronised through the world market. State violence has a vital role in creating geographical areas and social categories which can be exploited so that differentials of surplus value can be created and appropriated by capital on a global scale. All in all, the contribution of the renewed discussion about expropriations is to show that through its drive for self-expansion, the same force, that is, capital, subordinates different regions, local histories, social groups and labour in diverse ways (Chibber 213:285). Besides its homogenising drive, it subsumes existing hierarchies and power relations and produces and reproduces new ones.

Although necessary for the consideration of the primitive accumulation of capital, which feeds into the "capitalist accumulation of capital" (Frank 1978), this debate still presents limitations in terms of the possibility of understanding unfree and unwaged labour forms as part of the capitalist accumulation proper (Brass 2011), that is, as capital- and value-producing labour. A Brazilian sociologist, Denise Ferreira da Silva (2019, 2022), also points to the limitations of employing primitive accumulation as an analytical tool. Even if analysed as continuous and permanent, it results in classifying coerced (unfree) labour as "temporally previous" and/or "analytically exterior" of *capital*. Marx had excluded, for example, slavery from capital production because of its juridical form, being simply a value itself (like an instrument or raw material), not a value-producing creative living labour. By classifying the colony and coerced (unfree)/unwaged labour forms as the frontiers of *capital* internal to capitalism, the notion of primary accumulation tends to obscure their role in the production and reproduction of capital.

In that sense, it would be necessary to consider various modalities of accumulation based on the expropriation and exploitation of labour and their functioning as capital. The following sections will contribute analytical elements to this task.

1.3 The World Systems Theory's critique

Immanuel Wallerstein, like the dependency theorists before, as Bielefeld feminists concurrently and some authors linked with the resumption of the debate about “primitive accumulation” after him, had maintained that both Marx’s notion of “primitive accumulation” as well as Rosa Luxemburg’s changed version of it had contributed to transforming modern slavery, serf labour, sharecropping, debt slavery, domestic work and other kinds of subsistence labour in anomalies of the capitalist mode of production inherently defined by “free” wage labour. The focus of Marxism on the urban industrial proletariat had resulted in that “[n]ine-tenths of the world became ‘questions’, ‘anomalies’, ‘survivals’” (Wallerstein 1991a:160). Wallerstein recognised the ambiguities in Marx, but he criticised the one-sided reading made by the so-called orthodox Marxists for defining the essence of the capitalist mode of production through the existence of “free” wage labour – which derived from the excessive generalisation of Marx’s examination of the English case of capitalist development – which has not only transformed into anomalies specific social groups and strata, but also whole peripheral zones, which deviate from the normative model. The same goes to Rosa Luxemburg. Wallerstein (2000) is aware that Luxemburg understands primitive accumulation as a continuous process, as contemporary and connected with the capitalist mode of accumulation through international trade. Here again, the critique is directed to the classification of accumulation based on expropriation as “non-capitalist,” which would transform it into an “anomaly” in capital accumulation. In sum, there is a broad acceptance that the *wealth* created by primitive accumulation in colonies/peripheries contributed to European capitalist development. Still, it has been seen as distinct from *capital* and not integral to the capitalist accumulation of capital (Hopkins et al. 1982:50).

Liberal and orthodox Marxist thinkers consider the forms where “freedom” – in the sense of being available for sale and purchase on the market – is limited as leftovers from “an incomplete evolutionary process and mean . . . that a zone or an enterprise is ‘less capitalist’ than if there were no such constraints” (Wallerstein 2000:141). Thus, the deviation from or congruence with the normative model – or how much free labour/commodities/producers there are – has permitted us to define the degree of capitalism of the state. The problem with these deductions is that they do not conform to a statistical norm since, for example, the “free” wage labour in enterprises of free producers is a minority even in the modern world, which becomes even more apparent when the unit of analysis is world system (Wallerstein 2000:142).

The proponents of the world-systems perspective have suggested changing the unit of analysis to examine the patterns of capitalist development and processes of class formation not from the nation-state perspective but within the scope of the historical system of the modern capitalist world economy. This methodological shift, inspired by dependency theory's relational notions of (under)development and the centre-periphery structure (Love 1996), resulted in a definition that the relations of production, which define this historical system, are relations of production of the whole system of European world-economy born in the 16th century²⁷ with the establishment of Europe's overseas colonies. Moreover, although free labour is a defining feature of capitalism, it is not so in the entire productive enterprise: free labour belongs to the system's core and coerced labour to its periphery. Accordingly, the essence of capitalism is the *mixture* of free and unfree forms of labour, not just free labour (Wallerstein 1974:127). Subsequently, slavery, serfdom, sharecropping, indentured servitude, tenancy and forms of coerced work were all alternative modes of labour control of the modern capitalist system's periphery, in which labour power appeared in a commodity form.²⁸ Hence, the change of unit of social analysis reveals the coexistence of "wide areas of wage and non-wage labour, wide areas of commodified and non-commodified goods, and wide areas of alienable and non-alienable forms of property and capital" (Wallerstein 2000:143). The mixture might be spatially and temporally uneven. What becomes necessary, then, is to identify the structures that preserve any particular combination and underlying pressures that may be transforming the mixes over time. Thereby, the forms that were considered anomalies "to be explained away [become now] patterns to be analysed" (Wallerstein 2000:143).

What are the central assumptions of world-systems analysis? First, Wallerstein (2000:139) distinguishes between three historical systems: the "system and the people within are regularly

²⁷ Marx also argued that the 16th century marks the creation of the capitalist system: "World trade and the world market date from the sixteenth century, and from then on, the modern history of capital starts to unfold" (1976:247). Both world trade and the world market would be impossible without slavery and colonialism.

²⁸ Wallerstein's work is situated in the mode-of-production and dependency debates that developed in the 1960s and 1970s. One of the known contestations of Frank's argument that the economy of 16th-century Spanish America and Portuguese America had been capitalist has been put forth by Laclau (1971:25). According to Laclau if capitalism is a production for profit for the market, where the profit does not go to the direct producer, one could say that not only the economy of Spanish America but also the slavery in Roman latifundium and the serfdom of Medieval Europe were capitalist. Wallerstein questions this critique by arguing that there are essential differences between the economy based on medieval serfs, on the one hand, and slave-holding Portuguese America or *encomienda* workers in 16th century Spanish America or serfdom in Poland. First, there is a difference between transferring "part" or "most" of the surplus to a market; second, the production of the former was oriented to the local market and of the latter to the world market; third, how the exploiting classes used the surplus or profits also varied: whether it was used for self-consumption or whether they were motivated to maximise them and partly reinvest them. That is, whether capital was produced or not. Last but not least, in contrast to the latter, labour-power was not a commodity in the serf and lord relations in feudalism. Moreover, if integration into the world market would strengthen feudalism, then only a new kind (Wallerstein 1974:126). So, it indicates how the integration process to the capitalist world-economy reconfigures and recasts the old or existing social relations.

reproduced by means of some kind of ongoing division of labour". Besides mini-systems and world empires, the historical system "world economy" is a vast, uneven chain of "integrated production structures dissected by multiple political structures" (Wallerstein 2000:139). The basic capitalist logic is that accumulated surplus is distributed unequally through the market, not through a unified political system as in previous historical systems (Wallerstein 2000:139-140).

Although the world capitalist economy has a single labour division, there are multiple political and cultural units. The main feature of the modern capitalist world economy is "production for sale in a market . . . to realise the maximum profit" (Wallerstein 2000:83). Thus, at the core of the definition of historical capitalism is the orientation to the profit maximisation through the generalised commodification of processes (exchange, production, distribution, and investment), or in other words, an "endless accumulation of capital", which makes capitalism a continuously self-expanding and transforming system (Wallerstein 2000:260, 335). In fact, "liquid and mobile capital, which dislocates from one application to another according to the opportunities of profit, in constant pursuit of accumulation for the sake of accumulation" (Marquese 2019:247) would shape precisely the mixture of labour forms existing in the world economy in particular historical time.

This world economy as a world system based on a single division of labour emerged in the 16th century, was consolidated in the 17th, and became the only existing system in the 19th century. The dominant mode of the social organisation of this economy has been capitalist since then, being, according to Wallerstein (1974:77), probably "the *only* mode in the sense that, once established, other "modes of production" survived in the function of how they fitted into a politico-social framework deriving from capitalism". By that conclusion, Wallerstein also aimed to respond to the question created by Marx's and Marxists' definition of capitalism with industrialism: what mode of production characterised Europe between the 16th and 18th centuries? Most Marxists have called it a "transitional" phase, which, according to Wallerstein (2000:83-84), is a "blurry non-concept". Not a "merchant capitalism", as Marx called this period, but an "agricultural capitalism", as the exchange between the regions was already happening within the world economy; "mercantilism" would be "the mode of struggle" (Wallerstein 2000:94). Denominating this period agricultural capitalism would also remove the problem of defining capitalism merely with free wage labour, as "[a]n individual is no less a capitalist exploiting labour because the state assists him to pay his labourers low wages (including wages in kind) and denies these labourers the right to change employment" (Wallerstein 2000:85).

If capitalism is defined by labour power as a commodity, then during agricultural capitalism, wage labour was only one of the forms whereby labour power existed as a commodity. Slavery,

serfdom, coerced cash-crop production, sharecropping, and tenancy were all alternative forms of relationship between employer and labourer in which labour-power is a commodity²⁹ (Wallerstein 2000:85). Hence, independently whether workers receive wages in cash or kind, we are dealing with a relationship in which the labour-power is a commodity.

Different labour forms, as “modes of labour control”³⁰, are distributed according to the structural division of labour among core, semi-periphery, and periphery within the world system. To Wallerstein, what makes one region or system opt for a specific labour form has to do with demand and supply relations as well as cost and profitability, or in other words, desirability (profitability), necessity (employer’s self-interest) and possibility (the kind of work required). Nevertheless, instituting a particular labour control requires a definition, circumscribing, and enforcement by the state and its judicial apparatus (Wallerstein 1974:99-100).

In the capitalist world system, production is oriented to the production of exchange values and not use-values. There is surplus value, as the created value is greater than the socially necessary amount necessary for the reproduction of the labour-power, which in movement creates the commodity, no matter the nature of the social relation at the workplace. Moreover, the expropriation of surplus value, as evidence of exploitation, can be effectuated by producers either via market, state or directly (Wallerstein 1979:276). What distinguishes different labour forms attributed to world regions (whether they are core, semi-periphery or periphery), according to the international division of labour, is the degree of coercion and exploitation, that is, the extent and how the workers yield the value that they have created, not whether the labour is rewarded in wage. In the capitalist system, the producers are rewarded to produce exchange value (Wallerstein 1991b:117). What unites all the modes of labour control in the capitalist world economy is that all produce value for others but are exploited to different degrees. Based on whether the worker keeps *all*, a *part* or *none* of the value that they have created for others and how they get rewarded for the value that they have wholly or partly transferred to someone else, whether *nothing*, *goods*, *money* or *both* – goods and money, it would be possible to distinguish between various labourers. According to Wallerstein

²⁹ Social labour in the 16th century was organised like this: enslaved workers who were employed in sugar plantations and mining were concentrated in the periphery, “serfs” employed in large domains of grain production were also part of the capitalist periphery; most of the wage workers, mainly involved in agricultural production, was situated in Western Europe; tenant farmers were employed in various kinds of cash-crop production in Western and Southern Europe; and the new class of “yeoman” farmers was drawn from North-western Europe (Wallerstein 1974).

³⁰ “Modes of labour control” (Wallerstein 1974) “refer to those socio-economic relations and political structures that are instituted in order to ensure effective control over workers for the purpose of profitable world-economic production. . . . In Wallerstein’s model these different modes of labour control are the effects of world-market pressures. Regardless of their specific socio-political nature (e.g., slave-holding, feudal, fascist, socialist), they are considered parts of a larger capitalist world system and, therefore, capitalist” (Jaffe 1998:162).

(1991b), proletarians are all those who “yield part of the value they have created to others”. Accordingly, a “free” wage labourer, who yields all the value created and receives in return money, is only one type of proletarian. In that sense, compared with other workers, the enslaved workers transfer all the value to the “owner” and receive either goods or nothing in return. They receive the lowest reward for their labour in the world system. Other combinations may correspond to a small producer (or middle peasant), tenant farmer, sharecropper, or peon³¹ (Wallerstein 1991b:120, 2000:95, 229).

Plantation slavery is a mode of labour control, characterised by “indefinitely lasting work obligations of one person to another from which the worker may not unilaterally withdraw” (Wallerstein 2011:164). Wallerstein (2000:56) defines it as a “form of capitalist wage-labour” because labour is offered for sale as a commodity on the market, and the state intervenes to guarantee a low current wage, which in the case of enslaved workers is constituted of the cost of subsistence, however euphemistic this may sound. Also, from the owners' perspective, the enslaved workers receive a wage, which, besides subsistence, includes the cost of purchase and supervision, divided by the years of practical work (Wallerstein 1976:1211). The actual cost of the enslaved workers is not only based on the sale price but also on the existing productivity levels of wage earners in the same system. Wallerstein (1974) presumes that enslaved labour is typically used to produce crops requiring little skill. This has already been denied by Tomich (2004) and Schwartz (1985). Nevertheless, based on that, he concludes that the only way to make the employment of enslaved labour feasible in the capitalist system is the possibility to purchase the enslaved workers at a low cost outside of the world economy, which externalises the cost of reproduction, placed on the shoulders of “some other system”, which in the case of the early stage of the world-economy were the regions of African continent trading enslaved workers (Wallerstein 2000:56-67). Another way to compensate presumably small profits in an economy based on enslaved workers is to produce large quantities.

Furthermore, the capitalist system treats the enslaved worker as an “impersonal item of commerce” (Wallerstein 1974:88–89). Thus, as suggested by Boatcă (2015), the world-systems perspective is one of the outcomes of various critiques on the “primitive accumulation” notion that had started in the 1960s, which as a neo-Marxist reformulation of colonial exploitation under capitalism considered the developments outside of Europe. By arguing that non-wage and coerced

³¹ Each of these types should also take into consideration other factors: (1) whether labour was extracted by economic or extra-economic compulsion; (2) length of the contract; (3) whether the relationship that the direct producer has to a given owner can be transferred to another owner without the approval of the producer (idem.:120).

forms of labour were constitutive of capitalist logic, it proposed to decentre the industrial proletariat as the principal exploited class and “free” wage labour as the defining category of capitalism.

Wallerstein’s interpretive model of capitalism as a historical world system is quite helpful in developing a global sociology of labour. It allows thinking about various combinations of forms of labour exploitation as a fundamental feature of capitalism. However, I agree with Marquese (2013a) that it should be cautiously applied. In Wallerstein’s scheme, in which the whole (modern world system) defines its parts, the conceptualisation of international labour division is rigidly schematic, which results in historically specific social relations becoming “fixed general categories that define structures of the modern world system”, or “abstracting from essential differences in form between various social relations of production” (Tomich 2004:15-16). Although compatible with capital, coerced/non-wage labour is an attribute of the periphery (Brass 2011). Hence, slavery appears as an indivisible and static institution attributed to the system’s periphery, whereas free labour defines the system's centre. Black slavery in the Americas would be an unchangeable social category between the 16th and the 19th centuries, not differing in substance from other coerced modalities of labour or free labour, which were also present in the periphery (Marquese 2013a:248). Sidney Mintz was one of the first scholars to apply Wallerstein’s world-systems analysis to study plantation slavery in the Caribbean. He showed the endurance of non-wage forms of labour control in the capitalist world economy (Boatcă 2015). He already made the same critique as Marquese in his article *The So-Called World System* (1977). Wallerstein’s model would aggregate the diversity of forms of labour appropriation, which does not only characterise one “zone” of the world system but also the component regions and sectors. According to Mintz (1977), integrating various forms of labour appropriation within every region is relevant data to explain how they fit into the world system.

US sociologist Dale Tomich adds to this critique that Wallerstein’s world-systems analysis suffers from an abstract methodological individualism, which endorses profit-maximising individual rationality. It excludes from the consideration the question of social origins of society and history, or “how social relations are produced, how they produce and how they are reproduced” (Tomich 2004:16). Last but not least, Wallerstein’s model connects the producers ultimately to the product, but loses from sight the social relations between human beings (Tomich 2004:16), although in that Wallerstein seems to follow a Marxian diagnostic of modern capitalism in which the social relations between human beings take the form of relations between things.

After the critique of Sidney Mintz (1977), other critical scholarly contributions have emerged to not only research the transformations of slavery in connection with the changes in the

capitalist world economy but also advance the theorisation of “capitalist slavery”³². Scholars who have studied the internal changes of slavery have emphasised the qualitative difference between colonial and industrial capitalism, as the former combined political monopoly and expanded production and circulation of commodities (McMichael 1991:326). James in *The Black Jacobins* ([1938] 1989), McMichael (1991), Moulrier-Boutang (1998) and Blackburn (1997) have emphasised that due to several social barriers to large-scale commodity production and trade and the regulations limiting proletarianisation in Europe, due to traditional agrarian relations (the “putting-out system”), guilds and customs, during the mercantilist era, it was enslaved labour that offered the “social organisation of labour for the large-scale commodity production”. Thus, one of the historical significances of the colonial system was to anticipate “the industrial proletariat in how it organised labour” (McMichael 1991:326, 1999:14-15). I will develop this point further in my chapter about enslaved labour and capitalism in Brazilian history and historiography.

With the incorporation of cotton production in the US-South into the global circuits of capital, enslaved labour changed qualitatively, acquiring a new meaning in the XIX century in the sense of not being used anymore by planters for social status and production of luxury products. Instead, enslaved labour became commodity-producing, competing with other labour forms in the world market (McMichael 1991, 1999). Although “colonial slavery” was integral to the European world economy, the content of social relations in the capitalist world economy was changed with the qualitative change of capitalism. As a result of these changes, “slavery was no longer the ‘pedestal’ of metropolitan accumulation” and “veiled slavery of the wage-labourers” (Marx 1976:925) as it had been during the colonial system organised according to the mercantilist logic. It became “merely one of several competing forms of commodity-producing labour in the capitalist world market” (McMichael 1991:327). In industrial capitalism under British hegemony organised around wage labour, industrial capital integrates various labour systems, wage and non-wage, via common value relations (McMichael 1991:325). Insofar as enslaved labour and other unwaged labour forms enter into global value chains, they preserve their form. Still, they acquire a new meaning, which implies that their content is being reformulated in the sense that they become value-producing labour, as their products in the commodity form are being consumed as wage foods by the metropolitan wage workers. As such, enslaved labour is internal to world capitalism (McMichael 1991:321-322). The value of non-wage labour forms was “historically expressed

³² In recent decades the US scholars, but not necessarily from the world systems perspective, have contributed to the understanding of the capitalist character of antebellum slavery in the US (Baptist 2014; Beckert 2014; Beckert and Rothman 2016; Blackburn 1988, 1998; Johnson 2013; McMichael 1991, 1999; Oakes 1990; Tomich 2004) and developed a theory of capitalist slavery using Marxian value-theory (Clegg 2015, 2020).

through the wage form”, meaning that the commodities produced in the colonial or posterior peripheral countries – coffee produced by enslaved workers in Brazilian plantations or sugar produced in Cuban enslaved-labour-powered plantations – were valorised at their European destination as wage foods. Unwaged labour was subordinated to the commodity form (McMichael 1999).

Under this new capitalist regime, with the availability of commercial credit for primary products, increased the production of industrial inputs such as cotton as well as wage foods, coffee and sugar, produced by non-wage labour, on which the reproduction of metropolitan wage labour depended (McMichael 1999:16, 1991:323). At the same time, the quantitative increase of wage labour depended on the expanding markets for manufactured goods (McMichael 1999:16). Slavery, as one of the several forms of labour control, was qualitatively redefined and expanded under an industrial capitalist regime. This should discard the linear understanding between slavery and capitalism, according to which the former would be a “historical anachronism” (McMichael 1991:343). Capital united this varyingly constituted capital- and value-creating proletarianised labour force into a world proletariat through these value relations.

Dale Tomich (2004) has also proposed a critical approach to the world-systems perspective without denying the validity of the capitalist world economy. By borrowing from the definition that “capital . . . is a social relation of production” (Marx 1977b:212), the *social relations of commodity production* are central to Tomich’s (2004) analysis of the transformations of slavery in the Caribbean in the context of the changes taking place in the capitalist world-economy of the 19th century. Enslaved labour itself is treated as part of the *organisation of social labour on the world scale*, constituting a specific form of commodity production in an interdependent relation with other forms of social labour, waged or not, within a complex of interrelated processes of production and exchange through the world market and international division labour (Tomich 2004:18).

Based on Tomich’s analysis of the integration of economic formations in the Caribbean and the rest of the Americas into the world market and division of labour at the end of the 18th century as producers of cheap food products and industrial raw materials, they contributed to the reproduction of the wage labour relation on an expanding scale in the core countries. Thus, insofar as various forms of value-producing labour are drawn into the global value relations, wage labour becomes the synthesis of many determinations as its social reproduction starts depending more and more on cheap inputs (cotton) and food (coffee, sugar, tea, and wheat), produced by several forms of concrete labour (Parron 2022). In parallel, the role, composition, and significance of unwaged labour – slavery, peonage, serfdom, sharecropping and independent commodity production – in the

development of the world economy were redefined as a result of their subordination under the capital-wage labour relation, which was capable of transforming the specific “constellation of relations of production and exchange forming the world economy”, and thereby recasting also the division of labour and world market (Tomich 2004:52). It is this *transformation* of slavery in Americas in the context of British hegemony and industrialisation that Tomich (2004) denominates as “second slavery”.

Based on his study of the shift of sugar production to an emerging agricultural frontier in Cuba in the first half of the 19th century, which resulted in an intensification of import and employment of enslaved labour, Tomich (2004) demonstrates that there was no incompatibility between slavery and technological development as believed by Marx (based on Cairnes 1862) and later reproduced by Marxist scholars, including Wallerstein. This invalidates Wallerstein’s (1974) reasoning as to why one or another mode of labour control became attributed to a specific region within the world system, namely, that slavery is a labour form which is necessarily compatible with productive sectors of low productivity and requires little skill. According to Tomich, enslaved labour-based sugar plantations in Cuba started to employ modern industrial techniques financed by British financial capital. Cuba was the first to mechanise sugar mills by introducing steam power and vacuum pans, thereby contributing to the qualitative transformation of sugar production. There was a quantitative increase in sugar production related to the scale enabled by the expanding railway network, which opened new lands in the interior (Tomich 2004:64-65).

All in all, the approach of the scholars of “second slavery” is well captured by the idea that slavery originates from world capitalism as much as modern capitalism, as a world economy has its origin in slavery. Hence, instead of arguing that capitalism developed first in Europe and then expanded to the New World, it would be more proper to say that capitalism was formed in the process of its very expansion, that is, in the constitution of the world economy (Marquese 2019:250).

1.4 Expanded notion of the working class in Global Labour History

According to Marx, capitalism is a commodity-determined society in which commodity (together with capital) is not only a product, but it is the “most fundamental structuring social form of capitalist society” (Postone 1993:44). It means that not only labour products and means of production take the form of a commodity but also labour itself, or more precisely, the labour capacity, that is, labour-power. It is only in capitalism that labour power becomes a commodity, in

that only in this kind of social form are workers forced to sell their labour power to obtain the means of subsistence, having nothing else to sell. Only when labour-power becomes a commodity does the commodity form of the labour product become universal, or does the commodity production become generalised³³ (Marx 1976:274n4, 733). This condition is also intrinsically tied to the generation of surplus value. Marx assumes that the commodification of labour-power implies that labour in capitalism takes the form of wage labour, constituting the formal subsumption of labour under capital (Marx 1976:273-274, 1019).

In his *Workers of the World* (2011), Marcel van der Linden observes that Marx's notion of the working class is restricted to these particular workers, who are the "free proprietors of their labour capacity and, hence, of their persons". They are "free of all the objects needed to realise their labour-power" and therefore "have no other commodity for sale" being forced to sell their labour-power. The Dutch social historian, who is known for developing a new paradigm of global labour history by broadening the notion of the working class in capitalism, leads us to question the central assumptions behind Marx's hypotheses, namely that labour-power should be offered for sale by the worker, who is concomitantly its "carrier" and "possessor", and that the worker sells nothing else. As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, Marx did not discard the possibility of other forms of labour commodification, even though he excluded them from the sphere of capital. Marcel van der Linden systematically elaborates on various typologies of labour-power commodification.

The point of departure is that the "carrier" and the "possessor" of labour power, which appear together in the modern "free" wage-labourer, could be analytically disconnected from each other. This operation makes it possible to distinguish between various forms of labour-power commodification and, hence, between what Linden denominates as the "subaltern workers." The "free" wage labour in a global capitalist economy appears as "only one way among others in which capitalism transforms labour-power in commodity" (Linden 2011:10). At the same time, nothing seems to impede that labour-power could be offered for sale by someone else than its carrier. Under specific historical conditions, labour-power can appear in the market as enslaved or bonded labour not sold by its carrier but by the third party as an owner (Linden 2011). In other words, enslaved workers do not own their labour power. They do not sell it; they *are* sold.

When comparing the perspectives of Fraser (2016) and Van der Linden (2011) in analysing the so-called "anomalies" within capitalism, the former proposes to rethink the exploitation dynamics by adding another dimension – expropriation – to distinguish between unfree/unwaged

³³ This means that "people do not consume what they produce but produce and exchange commodities in order to acquire other commodities" (Postone 1993:147).

dependent workers and “free” wage workers, the latter permits to understand the diversity within the working class, as all subaltern workers, including “free” wage-labour, are subordinated to coerced commodification. While Fraser focuses on the distinction and the interrelation between “free” and unfree labour, Van der Linden emphasises the fluidity and combination between the boundaries of different forms of labour commodification. Both are complementary perspectives, although the former employs the notion of expropriation to conceptualise it as a distinct mode of capital accumulation centred on “dependent subjects of expropriation”. Van der Linden proposes to expand Marx’s value theory. By borrowing from Cohen’s ([1978] 2000) understanding of proletarians as subordinated to the compulsion to sell their labour-power³⁴ and from Castoriadis (1987) the concept of “instituted heteronomy”³⁵, Linden proposes a definition of “coerced commodification of labour-power, as a common class-basis of all subaltern workers:

Every carrier of labour power whose labour power is sold (or hired out) to another person under economic (or non-economic) compulsion belongs to the class of subaltern workers, regardless of whether the carrier of labour-power is him- or herself selling it out and, regardless of whether the carrier him- or herself owns means of production (Linden 2011:33).

Hence, the common class basis of all subaltern workers – coerced as well as free, wage as well as non-waged – who are available and mobilised by global capital is the *coerced commodification of their labour power*, independently of whether the workers own their labour power or not. Linden’s definition of capitalism implies that labour of both, typically free and wage workers as well as of enslaved and other coerced labourers, is subordinated to the imperatives of capital in various degrees of coercion (Linden 2011:33). His concept of “coerced commodification of labour-power” corresponds to specific social property relation, which structures the power of the workers. The power of subaltern workers in and outside the production process defines their class position in relation to their employers.³⁶

³⁴ Cohen ([1978] 2000) does not define the proletariat by its separation from the means of production and subsistence but by the compulsion to sell labour power. The proletariat might have her means of production, but to use them, she has to contract with the capitalist.

³⁵ Instituted heteronomy is expressed in the “mass of conditions of privation and oppression, as a solidified global, material and institutional structure of the economy, of power and of ideology, as induction, mystification, manipulation and violence. . . . [It] express[s] and sanction[s] . . . an antagonistic division of society and, concurrent with this, the power of one determined social category over the whole” (Castoriadis 1987:109).

³⁶ In order to define the class position of different subaltern workers, Linden reformulates the classical Marxist analysis of power in the production process (power over the purposeful activity, over the object of labour, over the instruments of labour, and the labour product) by discussing their power in terms of their (1) labour-power (control over the body); (2) means of production; (3) labour product; (4) fellow subaltern workers in the labour relationship; as well as outside of the immediate labour process (5) with the employer: and (6) the members of their household (Linden 2011:34-35).

Borrowed from Wallerstein, there are various forms of compensating the worker for their labour effort, which means that exchange between employer and employee does not necessarily involve a wage payment. Moreover, if the worker-employer relation is taken beyond the exchange process, then the relation is not restricted only to a money relation. The appropriation of labour products, even in the case of the wage labour relation, can imply paternalistic aspects such as company housing. Moreover, as appointed in the previously discussed feminist critique, the market relationship, in the sense that the worker buys consumption goods for the wage earned from the sale of the labour-power to guarantee the reproduction of labour, may involve unpaid reproductive work.

In the third chapter, I will present a more detailed reconstruction of the theory of sale and purchase of labour-power as elaborated by the Brazilian sociologist Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco (1978) to analyse how concrete forms of labour-power commodification in the situation of unfree labour appear during the colonial capitalist history in which the commodity form of labour product was not yet general.

1.5 Synthesis

There are many definitions of capitalism. Capitalism has been defined as a world system, as a specific social formation, as a mode of production, as a sequence of accumulation regimes and modes of regulation (like Fordism or financial market capitalism), as a social subsystem, as the society based on economic growth, as a multistage process, and so on (Dörre and Haubner 2018:13). Although we could identify three main theoretical approaches - neo-classical, Marxist and Weberian – this work is dedicated to the discussion of the Marxist approach. Although Marx never used this term, according to him, the formal characteristic of a capitalistically functioning economy, which started to take shape in the 16th century but reached its maturity in the 19th century, is about investing money (M) in commodities (C) to obtain more money (M') . . . M-C-M'. The activity of actors within capitalism as a socio-economic formation would be guided by the “abstract principle of value creation”. One could say that Marx agreed with neoclassical economists, to whom capitalist society meant that “production tends to be oriented towards exchange and monetary profit.” Weberians would also agree. Other definitions emphasise the “organisation of production for a distant trade”, “world market”, “market expansion”, “monetary economy”, and cash nexus (Dörre 2018).

Marxist perspectives have been identified with a structural approach. As already written at the beginning of this chapter, to Marx, capitalism as a historically specific form is defined by

“specific relations of production” or “social property relations” (Wood 2001) and not only by production of wealth, “production for the market”, or the “system of commodity production”. Two structural elements characterise this specific social property relation, namely that the means of production are privately owned, implying the regime of private property, and therefore, labour power itself has become a commodity. The accumulation of wealth in the hands of some human beings, such as merchants, usurers, or other acquisitive persons, is not a sufficient criterion. The capital in their hands must be used to connect the labour-power to “the creation of surplus value in production” (Dobb 2008:7-8). Hence, according to a more orthodox Marxist account, capitalism would be a socioeconomic formation corresponding to a specific ownership regime and a particular form of social relations. Every definition of capitalism also has its story of origin. As discussed in this present chapter, Marx’s story is about the so-called primitive accumulation, which would be, accordingly, the transformation of the social property relations through the expropriation of direct producers, the formation of the classes of propertyless proletarians and propertied owners, world trade, colonialism and slavery.

These constituting elements of capitalist socio-economic formation can be considered in three dimensions: *social activities*, *processes*, and *structures* (Wallerstein 1992). It is a consensus among several scholarly perspectives that capitalism can be characterised as a social-historical system of ceaseless accumulation of capital for the sake of accumulation (the stock of commodities, machines, money), which constitutes a fundamental *social activity or social phenomenon* of capitalism (Wallerstein 1992:567), which itself must be explained. The unit of the process of capital accumulation would be the modern historical world system dominated by the European world economy, which implies that “capital accumulation was a single process, all of a piece, although operating of course through a multiplicity of competing individual “capitals”” (Hopkins et al. 1982:49).

Specific *processes* can explain how the fundamental activity comes into being or how this activity is pursued. Processes belonging to the production and reproduction spheres can constitute a mediating meso-level between social activity and structural determinants. Here would belong a certain economic mentality, blending the “spirit of the entrepreneur and adventurer with calculative elements of the ‘bourgeois spirit’” (Sombart 1928, cited in Dörre and Haubner 2018:14), which is required so that the accumulation of capital could occur. However, in his later writings, Weber recognised that these mentalities should be explained, too. In other words, the psychology and culture of economic behaviour are subject to structural constraints (Weber 2002:359). Hence, the patterns of economic behaviour of productive agents, which emerge from structural constraints,

could be “envisaged as transmission mechanisms through which the structural level shapes the formal patterning” (Clegg 2020:80), that is, the primary social activities of the capitalist world-economy.

Moreover, the dimension of the process is concerned with the forms of surplus value extraction and surplus value distribution. It asks about appropriating the surplus value in the labour process: through the market or extra-economic coercion? As discussed in this chapter, the conventional view is that with the development of capitalism, the direct compulsion becomes less relevant, and the impersonal forms of domination (intermediated structurally through workers’ market dependence) become hegemonic. However, as the analysis suggests, extra-economic compulsion through state violence, legal coercion, and interpersonal domination over labour constitute capitalist power relations. Hence, I consider that free and unfree workers are subordinated to capitalists or capital. What should also be taken into consideration is the competitive pressure on firms to specialise (on a profitable product), innovate (to enhance labour productivity), and accumulate (Clegg 2020:80-82). The distribution of the total social product tends to occur through the market mechanism, a political instrument in the modern capitalist world system, and legal backing exists to guarantee the transfer (Wallerstein 1992:572).

The *structural* dimension is the underpinning driving force of the social system. The underlying structures are the private property regime, the commodification of goods, labour, land, and the modern state (Wallerstein 1992:573). When the modern capitalist system is compared with previous historical systems, the right to private property is not new since a similar structure of ownership rights also existed in Ancient Rome. Nevertheless, it does not reduce the fact that they are very much diffused in capitalism. Private property secures a specific access and consumption of goods directly or via the market by excluding collective or individual others from their use. The exclusion should not be considered absolute since private property rights are not exempt from external interference; there can be state-sanctioned legal restrictions (Wallerstein 1992:574).

The institution of private ownership of the means of production has implied the elimination of producers’ direct (non-market) access to means of subsistence. Hence, the movement of expropriation and separation of direct producers from the conditions of realising their labour and subsequently from the labour product has resulted in workers’ growing market dependence and culminated in the logic of exploitation. Here, the private ownership of the means of production secures the employer’s access to the worker’s labour power through the market, and the contract provides the right to use labour power for the purposes determined by the employer. As discussed in the third chapter, this should not be regarded as the only form of private property in the modern

capitalist system. As argued by Ferreira da Silva (2019), the colonial private property regime based on the property in the person of enslaved workers as well as of indigenous lands during the colonial and imperial period in Brazil guaranteed permanent access of planters to labour capacity of enslaved workers, as well as the right to sell and hire it, as well as expropriate the total value through total violence. In that sense, the private property regimes, in one way or another, guarantee the “rights of increase” (Proudhon [1840] 1994), that is, the extraction of not only value but also surplus value from labour.

If private property guarantees a specific “security of goods”, including labour-power, its second object is commodification, structured by law and custom. First, we can talk about the commodification of goods. Commodity form of goods is not the distinctive or defining characteristic of capitalism, as the research of the last 80 years has shown, the separation between production for use (use-value) and production for exchange (exchange-value) existed in other previous social formations, where simple commodity exchange was present (Wallerstein 1992:576). The commodity form is becoming generalised in capitalism regarding its extension and scale. However, the commodification is not total in capitalism. As repeatedly shown, this socio-economic system also operates based on non- or semi-commodified spaces, activities, and resources, which have been constantly reproduced or produced. Wallerstein (1996) argues that capital prefers rather semi-proletarianised households. The existence of non- or semi-marketised spheres is not a sign of pre-capitalism but is rather systemic. Moreover, commodified and non-commodified spheres/activities depend on each other (Fraser and Jaeggi 2018).

What about two other phenomena of commodification: land and labour? The commodification of land and labour has been considered by social science literature as a defining social phenomenon of capitalism and refers to their availability for purchase on the market (Hopkins et al. 1982:56). Regarding land, Wallerstein (1992) argues that in comparison with earlier social systems, where the commodification of land was restricted, in capitalism the constraints for alienability through market have been largely undone. In the last couple of centuries, the commodification of land has been diffused, but it does not apply to all the land. Wallerstein defines the commodification of land in capitalism as a matter of degree compared to previous systems rather than a matter of essence. Moreover, there have been other means than the market to gain control over land (Wallerstein 1992:576). This suggestion is fundamental for understanding “colonial capitalism”, as in Brazil, where land was not commodified until 1850 but was granted by the state through the Sesmaria regime until then. Despite the control of land through non-market

means, in colonial Brazil, land was a fundamental element in the production for profit and accumulation in absolute terms.

Regarding the commodification of labour, to Marx and orthodox Marxists, what defines capitalism is wage labour. As asserted since the beginning of this dissertation, the aim is to broaden the definition of value- and capital-producing labour in capitalism from the perspective of unfree and unwaged labour forms. As discussed at the beginning of chapter two, wage labour has particular properties, constituting a specific category in capitalist history. However, if we approach the empirical reality of wage labour, as suggested by Wallerstein, then even if wage labour has been a central and defining feature of the capitalist historical system, it has never been the only mode of using labour-power in capitalism, neither has it been the most profitable from the viewpoint of capital. Wage labour has been present in other historical systems. There has been quantitatively more wage labour in capitalism, although it has not reached the majority (Wallerstein 1992:576, 2004:20).

In that light, some influential and renowned Marxist historians of US South slavery, such as Genovese and Fox-Genovese (1983:117), also define capitalism by the presence of wage-labour, arguing that in slavery, “market mediated only the sale and purchase of goods and not labour-power”. It will be argued in this thesis that it is not correct. Indeed, the market mediated the sale and purchase of enslaved workers' labour power³⁷. As in the case of wage labour, also in the case of enslaved labour, a distinction between labour-power and living labour can be made. Labour-power, for Marx, is a commodified form of the human capacity to labour. The concept does not specify the period in which labour-power is being sold. What we know is that when the labour-power is being sold once and for all, for a lifetime, the person is sold into slavery. If it is sold temporarily, for a specified period (year, a day, an hour), it implies a free (but dependent) labour relation. Nor does the concept itself specify by whom it is sold. The labour-power of one human being must not necessarily be sold by the labourer himself- or herself, but a third party can sell it, as it is argued by Marcel van der Linden (2011). In the case of enslaved workers, labour-power is sold together with the person by a third party. Therefore, the commodification of labour-power does not distinguish wage labour from enslaved labour. It is precisely what unites them, according to Clegg's (2020) definition of capitalist slavery based on his study of 19th-century slavery in the US South. Marx did not have problems with the idea of the commodification of the enslaved workers' labour power, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter.

³⁷ See, for example, Clegg (2020), who also makes this point in formulating the theory of “capitalist slavery” to understand antebellum slavery in the 19th-century US.

How has the commodification of labour power been justified? Firstly, it has been argued that only if labour-power is alienable is it possible to obtain an optimal allocation of its use. According to Wallerstein, it leaves out the possibility of administrative transfers, which may be as effective as the market. Moreover, research has also shown that the market of enslaved workers also played a fundamental role in allocating labour-power between regions, sectors, and plantations in the US South (Clegg 2020) and Brazil (Alencastro 2000). Secondly, it is also argued that commodified labour-power provides a market for commodity goods. It, however, leaves out the possibility of collective purchase of goods for reproduction, for example, in the case of factory or plantation owners (Wallerstein 1992:578).

The modern state is another element that is considered to be part of the structural determinants. Private property, as one of the structural determinants of capitalism as a social system, requires political guarantees, and the state can provide these. The states provide the legal rights to determine the rules governing the social relations of production within their territorial jurisdiction. They regulate the modes of labour control by, on the one hand, legislating the increase of the commodification of labour-power by facilitating its mobility; on the other hand, they can also impose residential limitations to restrict proletarianisation. Hence, the state has had a fundamental role in disciplining the labour force, as discussed above concerning the state's role in creating the conditions for capital valorisation. Modern states are part of the inter-state system. By shaping local modes of labour control, the states reinforce a world-economy-wide division of labour, in which the role of non-wage labour can remain remarkably high. Modern states have enabled the fundamental activity of the modern capitalist world system, that is, the ceaseless accumulation and expansion; they are also its very expressions (Wallerstein 1992:580). All in all, if the structural determinants are the conditions of the meso-level and ground the system's principal activity, the "self-valorising value shapes the form of the production process and grounds the intrinsic dynamic of capitalist society" (Clegg 2020:79).

The definition of capitalism used here is not committed to a specific form of labour-power commodification or exploitation. In fact, by using the reformulation of the concept of labour-power commodification in capitalism, there could be various forms whereby labour-power becomes a commodity, as I have already indicated above. Moreover, there is no hindrance for the labour-power to become a commodity if the worker is unfree and if the commodity form of labour products has not become general (Franco 1978), as discussed in more detail in the third chapter. Hence, one specific relation of production does not determine the social system. Instead, the kind of labour

form used in a particular region, sector, or individual firm is determined by other factors, that is, by the imperative of the movement of capital.

Independent of the form of commodification, the degree of coercion, or the type of reward for labour effort, labour in different social arrangements becomes subsumed under capital. Hence, if we think now about all these elements, which have appeared until here to think of the types of proletarians, then we could say that value- and capital-producing labour is made up of all the expropriated and disciplined workers, whose labour-power is sold to somebody else either under economic or non-economic compulsion for heteronomously determined purposes, to enter in the valorising process (Linden and Roth 2014). At the same time, workers yield part or all of the value to others, being appropriated from their product wholly or partly, receiving for their labour in return nothing, goods, or money, or goods plus money (Wallerstein 1991b). What unites the subordinated and dependent workers is the commodification of their labour power, subsumption of labour under capital and production value to somebody else while keeping either nothing or part of it. Labour appropriation can occur either through exploitation or expropriation. Of course, we should include another element, which is reproductive labour. In a pretty limited way, we could say that some workers reproduce other workers' labour power. The state and its legal institutions have a relevant role in determining the extent of labour commodification and controlling the process of disciplining labour in creating the conditions for capital valorisation.

The state shapes the private property regime and thereby the access of the capitalist class to the heterogeneous proletariat in a variety of ways, enabling the appropriation of (1) the personality, in the sense of acquiring the property in the person, by transforming them into an enslaved worker, indentured servant, serf, forced labourer or contract-worker; (2) the labour-capacity; (3) the means of labour and subsistence, (4) the products, either entirely or in part; and (5) the reproductive sphere of the exploited (Linden and Roth 2014:478-479).

Colony/periphery in the capitalist world-economy

The critical perspectives discussed in this chapter, with certain adjustments, enable us to go beyond the relation of exteriority between metropolis and colony, core and periphery, and enslaved labour and "free" labour, which have conventionally been analysed as belonging to different temporalities or stages of capitalist development. These approaches bring the combinations and mixtures of modes of labour control and, thereby, the interdependence of the modes of capital accumulation to the centre of analysis. They propose that the territories colonised in the 16th century in the context of

the European commercial and colonial expansion were incorporated into the international division of labour as colonial peripheries of the capitalist world economy, dedicated to the exchange of basic and essential goods and flows of capital and labour. In other words, the local labour regimes that emerged and developed with colonisation were put to work for certain economic ends. This incorporation into the world economy occurred via the exchange of primary products or plunder and violence. The modes of labour control, such as slavery, were instances of capital expansion, enabling the extraction of fresh absolute surplus value through coercive and violent mechanisms of domination.

Instead of focusing on mentalities, the emphasis on structural constraints operating in the production and reproduction processes reveals the capitalist character of the colonial economic system depending on the exploitation of enslaved labour, not because of the mentalities of economic agents but because it was integrated into the capitalist world-economy, as it was the product of capital in expansion. The capitalist world economy's expansion depended on the (surplus-)value- and capital-producing labour to be obtained in the market of enslaved labour, used for the production of commodities to the market for profit, for the sake of endless accumulation.

There is constant pressure for expansion in the world economy dominated by capitalism as a world-historic mode of production. Rewarded are those who use the surplus to accumulate more capital to create more surplus (Clegg 2020; Wallerstein 1991b:117). The same constraint applies to colonial planters: "A slave owner who did not allow market considerations to loom large in his firm's operations would sooner or later go bankrupt and be replaced by one who did" (Wallerstein 1976:1211).³⁸ Structurally, for the colonial economy to follow the pattern of capitalist accumulation, there should be a labour market and concentrated capital, including land. This includes installing a legally guaranteed system of private ownership, which gradually eliminated the subsistence alternatives to production. In Brazil, as in other New World regions, it happened initially by violent expropriations, plunder and pillage of the native peoples of colonised lands in the Americas and in Africa, their forced dislocation, commodification and conscription in the heteronomously determined system of production. To understand this pattern, it is fundamental to expand the unit of analysis beyond the metropolis-colony relation and include the elements of the colonial system in

³⁸ Proof of that is the rapid change of commodity frontiers, in the sense that the production had to look constantly for fertile soils. Furthermore, the colonial economic agents also competed in the world market, and the competition revolved around the price of commodities. Moreover, as demonstrated later by Castro (1980), the sugar mills during the colonial period had a high rate of rotation of owners, depending on their response to the market pressures to produce commodities of the necessary quality and quantity. Bankruptcies were also triggered by constant indebtedness.

which the African continent provided the necessary labour-power by means of expropriation, and Europe provided the consumer markets as well as manufactured goods.

We must define the elements of a system and consider its dynamics of change. The form of capitalism in the 16th century differed from that in the 19th century or the 21st century. If we say that capitalism is a world-historic mode of production where the commodity form is generalised, then it was not the case in the initial phase of capitalism. At the same time, nothing impedes labour-power from becoming a commodity when the commodity form of labour products has not yet become generalised (Franco 1978), as will be elaborated in the third chapter. This implies that capitalism is compatible with the colonial modality of private property based on the property in persons.

In a nutshell, my aim here is to take a critical standpoint on the perspective that enslaved labour and other forms of bonded labour are not compatible with capitalism because as “labouring machines” or “sold like horses,” they cannot produce capital. This perspective has led to conceptualising unwaged (unfree) labour and (free) wage labour as opposites. In this chapter, I have presented the core ideas of some authors of the Marxist political economy from the Global North who are critical of this assumption, underpinning this kind of dichotomic understanding of labour organisation and class formation in capitalism having to pass necessarily through a linear transition from unfree to “free” wage labour. I argue that by upscaling the unit of analysis from the nation-state to the capitalist world economy, Wallerstein permits conceiving the combination and interdependence of distinct forms of labour organisation. The mixtures, however, do not remain static. They go through permutations during capitalist development.

Moreover, it is not only the co-existence or combination of modes of labour control in different parts of the world that are interconnected through global commodity production and consumption. Methods of labour control – slavery, “free” wage labour, unfree wage labour sharecropping, labour tenancy, debt slavery, etc. – represent material commonalities and are synchronised into a continuum of capitalist relations of production. First, as capitalism can be defined as a “production of commodities by means of commodities” (Sraffa 1960), labour-power in capitalism is a commodity and commodification of labour-power can be “autonomous” or “heteronomous” (Linden 2011). Second, workers produce value and yield part (or all) of the value they have created. Third, they receive nothing for their labour, are rewarded in goods or money, or receive both (goods and money). Fourth, each labour form implies coercion (either extra-economic or economic) to extract value. In that sense, to Wallerstein, enslaved workers, sharecroppers, and “free” wage workers all share the proletarian condition, as they are expropriated from the means of production and subsistence in different degrees and work for capital under diverse modes of

compulsion. These modes of labour control are integrated into the world system, divided into core, periphery, and semi-periphery, which are connected through unequal exchange and power structure.

The aim is not to argue that enslaved labour is the same as wage labour. To say that enslaved labour in the colony and wage labour in the core were subordinated to capital is not to say that they shared the same conditions, situations, and destinies. As workers whose labour-power is commodified, they tend to be in two opposite extremes of the continuum. Nevertheless, they have been intertwined throughout the world economy and have been necessary to each other, and in some situations and moments, their conditions have approached each other significantly. Even if the conditions vary in time and space, both categories of labourers can be considered “forced labourers” (Marx 1973:326),³⁹ as they are forced to work for somebody else. As such, they can be regarded as part of a global proletariat. As suggested by Fraser (2016), we may distinguish analytically between exploited workers, who have part of the value they produced appropriated but are rewarded by wage which should be equivalent to the value of their labour power, and expropriated workers, who have all or part of the value necessary for the reproduction of their labour-power confiscated. In that sense, direct violence and expropriation deepen the rate of exploitation. Economic and extra-economic compulsion and commodification connect with exploitation and expropriation.

In that sense, the picture of the global proletariat would not be complete if we did not complement commodification, coercion, and exploitation with that of expropriation. On the one hand, expropriation is the basis of exploitation, in the sense that the commodification of labour power depends on a certain degree of expropriation of the means of production and subsistence, that labour-power could become available for exploitation by capital. On the other hand, expropriation is another form of labour appropriation. In the case of constantly expropriated and expropriable subjects, their capacity to reproduce their labour-power is reduced to the minimum or even confiscated. Expropriation does not produce division between propertyless workers and property owners, but the expropriation of some can be the condition for exploiting others. This implies that subordinated and dependent subaltern workers constitute one working class, historically in movement and subsumed under capital in diverse but interconnected ways. Hence, we can observe the articulation between commodification, coercion, exploitation, and expropriation.

³⁹ “Autonomous wealth as such can exist only either on the basis of *direct* forced labour, slavery, or *indirect* forced labour, wage labour. Wealth confronts direct forced labour not as capital, but rather as relation of domination (*Herrschaftsverhältnis*)” (Marx 1973:326). According to Patterson (1982:2), Marx did not mean here that the master is in any way necessarily precapitalist. The comment was provoked by a November 1857 letter to the Times of London from a West Indian planter who, in what Marx calls “an utterly delightful cry of outrage,” was advocating the reimposition of slavery in Jamaica as “the only means of getting the Jamaicans to generate a surplus in a capitalist manner once again”.

2. Decentring the “free” wage labour as the norm of capitalism

In my initial research proposal, the aim was to investigate the relationship between modern slavery and capitalism and examine the contributions of the intellectual work of Brazilian scholars to the renewal of the Marxist political economy of labour beyond the fixation on wage labour as the defining moment and the norm of capitalist mode of production. However, comprehending the social organisation of labour in historical capitalism and researching the importance of colonial history and slavery for capitalist development and vice versa, it pleads a focus on entangled co-existence and combination of forms of labour control in the world economy. In his provocative essay “Was the Plantation Slave a Proletarian?” (1978), the US anthropologist Sidney Mintz, the pioneer of the research on the Caribbean slavery in sugar-cane production from the world systems perspective, has reminded us not to define “slave” and “proletarian” in isolation, because “[these] two vast categories of toiler were intimately linked by the world economy that had, as it were, given birth to them both, in their modern form” (Mintz 1978:97–98). Due to this interdependence, a purely definitional approach is not enough. Mintz also draws attention to the fact that, although enslaved workers and wage labourers existed in other historical epochs, the 16th-century world economy gave birth to them in their modern form. Thus, although modern colonial enslaved labour in its form shares elements with the enslaved labour in Antiquity, when being born within the context of a capitalist world economy, its content is being reformulated and redefined. As suggested by McMichael (1991:322), methodologically, it implies distinguishing between the “phenomenal form” of slavery and its “historical content”. None of these categories can be treated as transhistorical universal abstract categories. Slavery is not universal as a historical phenomenon. Instead, it should be placed in its time and space as contemporaneous and relational with the development of free labour within the same historical world system.

As appointed in the last chapter, Marx uses slavery and serfdom to define the modern freedom of the proletariat (Franco 1978), which has consequently left the coerced (unfree) labour out of capitalism as an anomaly or a residue. We have come to understand wage labour as reduced to the 19th-century “free” wage labour, theoretically and historically defining the specificity of capitalism as a social form and, as such, the polar opposite of enslaved labour. This 19th-century form of “free labour” has often been defined as an end of coercion and not as a mode of labour control (Cooper, Holt, and Scott 2000). The “narrow framework of free labour ideology” is based on the assumption that free labour, which is used as a synonym for wage labour, is incompatible

with compulsion, violence and bondage. Consequently, as bondage is incompatible with capitalism and capitalism is compatible with wage labour, wage labour is incompatible with bondage (Banaji 2003). In theory, forms of labour are seen as relatively fixed categories, which means that, for example, the so-called “free” wage workers⁴⁰ are attributed the qualities of ownership of labour-power, equality of exchange and autonomy in economic and social relations. Although Wallerstein was always critical of the notion of free labour and its limitations in concrete social relations in historical capitalism, his logic of attributing free labour as a mode of labour control for skilled workers in the capitalist core and all types of coerced forms of labour control for less skilled workers in the capitalist peripheries has left out consideration a particular mix of labour in any specific region as well as internal contradictions of every mode of labour control (Linden 2011; Mintz 1977; Steinberg 2003). Focusing only on the commodity exchange between modes of labour control belonging to distinct but combined relations leaves the historically changing content of slavery untouched. It also treats the wage labour category as a coherent and uniform unit defined by “freedom”.

Hence, this chapter aims to decentre the 19th-century “free” wage labour, the urban industrial proletariat, as the norm of capitalist mode of production and freedom as the defining feature of wage labour. As the definition of “coerced commodification” as the common class basis of all the subaltern workers suggests (Linden 2011), wage labour could also be approached from the viewpoint of coercion. In the first part of the chapter, I will discuss critically the presuppositions that sustain the 19th-century paradigm of wage labour in capitalism, interchangeably used with “free” labour. In other words, the focus will be on the “free” wage labour, which, according to orthodox Marxists, defines the capitalist social form and has been the central sociological object in the research on labour exploitation and capitalist class formation. Thus, in the following, I will take

⁴⁰ Marcel van der Linden (2011) contests the thesis of the historian of Antiquity, Moses Finley (1973), according to whom the institution of wage labour was a sophisticated latecomer. In his *Ancient Economy*, Finley (1973) argues that the emergence of the system of wage labour required two developments: first, the abstraction of man’s labour from his person and the product of his work, and secondly, the introduction of another abstraction, labour-time, as a method, which would permit the measurement of labour for payment. Linden shows that wage labour was already present in the Antique period. However, what was temporarily sold or hired out was not labour-power but the entire person, taking the form of personal hire. He mentions Greek *misthós* (wage, soldier’s pay). Linden asserts that wage labour at that time was conceptualised differently than it is today, as the hire simultaneously included the worker herself and her labour performance. Based on his study of historical documents, Linden lists four types of wage labour from ancient times: mainly agricultural casual labour, temporary artisanal or skilled labour, military service, and artisan apprenticeships. What was common to these types of wage labour was that they were used in temporary services. Linden classifies these types of wage labour as free. “Free” means that the person was not a slave in the strict sense of the term. However, it was often the case that workers were forced to stay until the end of the contract, or they were forced to enter the contract and labour. In the pre-capitalist period, wage labour was a marginal phenomenon and appeared only sporadically. However, it is estimated that in 13th-century England, two-thirds of the rural population was available for part-time or full-time employment as wage labourers, which suggests a rapid expansion of the cash economy since the high Middle Ages. However, the rural proletariat in 15th century England was an unfree wage labourer (Linden 2011:40-47).

up Marx's work and some Marxist critics about the 19th-century sanitised image of wage labour to critically analyse the "free" labour as a specific mode of labour control in a commodity-determined society (Marx 1976). Instead of taking "free labour" as the matrix form of the wage system, it will be analysed from the viewpoint of "dependent labour" (Moulier-Boutang 1998), focusing mainly on its dimensions of coercion and subordination. This critique demonstrates the double subordination of wage labour.

On the one hand, the proletariat is indirectly enslaved to capital, or the class of capitalists, and on the other hand, wage-labourers are subordinated in the labour process in which they sell their obedience for the means of subsistence (Banaji 2003; Screpanti 2017). In the following step, by presenting some insights from recent studies about the history of wage labour (Moulier-Boutang 1998; Steinberg 2003, 2010; Steinfeld 1991, 2001), I will show how in the Anglo-American societies the extra-economic coercion was also historically present in wage relations until the end of the 19th century. Moreover, the contemporaneity of restricted wage-labour (Moulier-Boutang 1998) or coerced contract workers (Steinfeld 1991) in the metropole and enslaved labour in the colonies is an example of shared labour histories, as both modes of labour control were configured in the same universe of capital's challenge to fix down and discipline the available workers as value- and capital-producing labour (Moulier-Boutang 1998), through various degrees of coercion. Hence, extra-economic coercion through legal constraints at the heart of the development of market relations and industrial capitalism was used to fix workers to specific employment arrangements. In light of that, the "free" proletarian with the legal freedom to break off the employment relation is the latecomer in social labour history and was not the norm of wage labour in England until the end of the 19th century. In the third part of the chapter, I will discuss the diverse but contemporaneous and combined forms of subsumption of labour under capital, which take into account the heterogeneity of the global proletariat encompassing free and unfree wage workers, plantation enslaved workers and other coerced workers as capital- and (surplus-)value-producing labour. As the authors, particularly Banaji (2010), discussed in this chapter, show, "freedom" may be relevant at the level of total social capital, but at the level of individual capital, what defines capitalism is the production of surplus value, and this can occur through various complex arrangements of compulsion.

2.1 Critical approaches to the research on wage labour

2.1.1 Assumptions behind the wage labour category

To Marxists and liberal political economists, the pillar of capital accumulation is the appropriation of labour in the wage form. That is, unlike in the case of enslaved workers whose labour is stolen directly by capital, the appropriation of labour in the case of free labour is mediated by contract, and labour is partially compensated through wage payment, which should be equivalent to the value of the labour-power necessary for its reproduction. Wage-labour, to Marx, has a double character: it is simultaneously abstract and concrete. In capitalism, abstract labour (labour in general as a human activity) takes the concrete form of wage labour, or wage-form subordinates the abstract labour. Said in another way, abstract labour appears in a historically specific form, that is, in the form of wage labour. In that sense, the abstraction in Marx's method has its historical origin. The historical origin of capitalist wage labour is the separation of direct producers from the means of production and subsistence and their transformation into doubly "free" workers. In this sense, Marx uses wage labour interchangeably with free labour. As concrete labour, wage labour under capitalism is capital-creating and value-producing (Banaji 2010).

Nevertheless, it was not wage labour per se for Marx, which would be the condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production. Wage labour was used for luxury production in pre-bourgeois economies without transforming into capitalist mode. The condition for transforming the feudal economy into capitalist economic structures was the relation between two commodity owners: the owners of money and the owners of labour-power (Marx 1973:259). In other words, the relation between capital and labour had to take the form of a free exchange of living labour capacity for objectified labour (Marx 1973:463-464).

In theory, the "free" wage labour – the "doubly free worker" – is a free individual who disposes of their labour-power as their commodity and who has no other commodity for sale (Marx 1976:272). It belongs only to a specific historical moment (Franco 1978; Postone 1993). As pointed out by Linden and Roth (2014), in concrete terms, it is the urban industrial proletariat, which gained its privileged status in the 19th century, with the organisation of workers, especially the highly qualified artisans, in trade-unions, establishing, what became known as the "modern labour movement"—with this also appeared a clear distinction between the "real" proletarians and other workers, a division line enforced by Marxists.

In this part of the chapter, I will focus on the social category “free” wage labour, which has been opposed to the unfree and unwaged labour in classical political economy, liberal political theory and Marxist theory. The “free” wage labour category could be considered an invention, consolidated in the context of 19th-century liberal industrial capitalism as a social category. It is the social product of centuries-long socio-economic pressures and adaptability, the fruit of social struggles, and not necessarily an inevitable necessity.

“Free” wage labour became known as Western Europe's 19th-century urban industrial proletariat.⁴¹ At the same time, in the capitalist world system, the free wage labour form has not necessarily become a statistical norm. As the data gathered by the Global Collaboratory on the History of Labour Relations shows, even at the beginning of the 19th century, the proportion of commodified labour relations, particularly of workers labouring for wages, was relatively low.⁴²

If we focus on wage labour defined as free labour, then some very particular characteristics define the “freedom” of the wage labourer. This category entails a specific understanding of the modern individual and person and social relations between individuals. What I would like to do, first, is to describe the particular characteristics that have been attributed to this specific social category, known as the modern proletarian. Secondly, by mobilising some authors who are critical of the assumptions behind this category, I will discuss the incoherence of the “free” wage labour category. I will resume the crucial discussion about the “freedom” of the wage worker and emphasise the dimensions of subordination, coercion and social domination in a double sense. The aim is to approach the wage labour category to that of the enslaved labour as a dominant form of labour-power in the New World's colonies and later in capitalist peripheries, both being part of the global social organisation of labour.

As a point of departure, I will take the theory of sale and purchase of labour-power as elaborated by Marx in volume one of *Capital*. Particularly in chapter six, Marx (1976) presents the presuppositions of the classical political economy regarding the functioning of the labour market. These presuppositions synthesise perfectly the idealised bourgeois world, in which the capitalist market is the place of encounter between legally equal owners of commodities. To Marx, it serves

⁴¹ Charles Tilly (1984) has estimated that in 1500, approximately 94 per cent of all European proletarians were “rural”, which proportionally had changed little by 1800, still amounting to 90 per cent.

⁴² The data for the forty-six per cent of the world population in 1800 shows that around fifteen per cent of the working relations were commodified, whereas only six per cent worked for wages. The data for the thirty-five per cent of the population in 1900 reveals that thirty-six per cent worked in commodified labour relations and wage workers comprised ten per cent. (Hofmeester and Moll-Murata 2017) Commodified labour involves a labour relation, which involves a market exchange in which the workers or their labour products are sold. This category includes those who work for the market and those who work for the public institutions. It comprises also enslaved workers who produce for the market (Hofmeester et al. 2016).

to elaborate his argument on how money becomes capital. To him, capital must emerge from circulation, but it cannot appear only from circulation. The capitalist – the money owner – must find in the labour market a commodity whose use value is the source of value. Its use creates more value than the cost of reproducing this commodity, the value of labour-power, the wage. This commodity is labour power, the commodified form of labour capacity. To Marx, the transformation of labour-power into a commodity is the condition for generalising the commodity form in a capitalist society.

In chapter six, Marx discusses several conditions that must be fulfilled for the labour-power to become a commodity. Although wage labour had existed in other previous social formations, it is only in capitalism as a historically specific socio-economic structure that labour-power takes the form of a commodity. One condition that labour power could appear as a commodity in the market is that workers must be “free”. They must be the owners of their labour-power and be free from all the relations of bondage and the means of production and subsistence. That is the starting point of the theory of sale and purchase of labour-power, which articulates such categories as person, possession, and property of labour-power in its legal form:

For this relation to continue, the proprietor [*Eigentümer*] of labour-power must always sell it for a limited period only, for if he were to sell it in a lump, once and for all, he would be selling himself, converting himself from a free man into a slave, from an owner of a commodity [*Warenbesitzer*] into a commodity. He must constantly treat his labour-power as his own property [*Eigentum*], his own commodity, and he can do this only by placing it at the disposal of the buyer, i.e., handing it over to the buyer for him to consume, for a definite period of time, temporarily. In this way he manages both to alienate [*veräußern*] his labour-power and to avoid renouncing his rights of ownership [*Eigentum*] over it. (Marx 1976:271)

In another passage, where appear articulated alienation, property and the person, Marx says the following:

In order that its possessor may sell [his labour-power] as a commodity, he must have it at his disposal, he must be the free proprietor of his own labour-capacity, hence of his *person*. (Marx 1976:271, emphasis added)

The first condition is that workers should be “free”. This means they should own their labour power as their own property. The proprietors of labour power must sell it for a limited period only; that is, they must sell it temporarily. In this way, they can alienate their labour power without renouncing their *right of ownership* over it. If they would sell it in lumps, they would become commodities themselves.

The main criteria to distinguish between “free” and unfree labour is based on a presupposition that in the former case, the individuals own the property in their persons. In the latter

case, the individuals are owned by someone else. Hence, in theory, the “free” workers can sell or contract out their labour power, a piece of that property part of their persons, in exchange for a wage, whereas the latter is bought and sold as a property-commodity. What is implied here, then, is that the “free” wage workers own themselves. In the words of Pateman “[t]o make a contract in the public world of the capitalist market, to become a wage labourer, presupposes that an individual owns the property in his person; he can then contract out his labour-power, part of that property, in the employment contract” (1988:131). In the case of the so-called “free” labour, as it is labour-power which is contracted out and not labour, bodies, or person, this permits to claim that employment contract constitutes a “free” relation. Hence, the element that distinguishes between wage labour, on the one hand, and non-wage and unfree labour, on the other, is the ability to contract out a piece of property in exchange for a wage (Pateman 1988:135).

Hence, there are four elements which have been commonly used to make a distinction between “free” wage labour and unfree/non-wage labour: (1) the legally free workers and owners of their labour power as a commodity stand on an equal footing with employers in the market, in contrast to enslaved workers, who are excluded from this setting, dispossessed of any power over the other, without personality and rights (Franco 1978: 6); (2) the employment contract is temporally limited; (3) “free” workers receive wages and not protection as unfree workers do; the first is the basis of free exchange; (4) the “free” workers sell their own labour-power, which is part of the property in their persons, and not their labour or themselves. For these reasons, “free” labour and unfree labour stand at opposite poles (Pateman 1988:146).

There is another condition for the labour power to appear in the market as a commodity: the wage workers are forced to offer for sale their labour power inherent in their living bodies, not being able to sell commodities in which their labour is objectified. Thus, the wage workers have nothing else to sell but their labour capacity and are socially obliged to sell the labour. Socially constitutes the condition of the proletariat's “collective unfreedom” regarding the total social capital. Thus, for the transformation of money into capital, the capitalist must find in the market a free worker, who is “free” in the double sense: on the one hand, “as a free individual he can dispose of his labour-power as his own commodity”, and, on the other hand, “he has no other commodity for sale, i.e. he is rid of them, he is free of all the objects needed for the realisation [*Verwirklichung*] of his labour-power” (Marx 1976:272-273). In other words, the “free” labourers, in theory, should always be in control of their own bodies, as they are free from bondage. Moreover, they are “freed” from any control of the means of production and subsistence. Hence, they are propertyless.

This is how the modern proletarians, the owners of themselves and obliged to sell their labour-power, were understood in England at the end of the 19th century. This is the understanding of wage labour, which is interchangeable with “free” labour. When liberal political economists and liberal political theorists have depicted the development of wage labour, they have highlighted the emancipation from feudal bondage and the constitution of self-owning individuals. According to Marx, they have omitted the other side of the story, which is the violent uprooting of direct producers from their previous forms of social and economic relations, separation from the means of production and subsistence, and the compulsive adaptability to the new proletarian condition, as already discussed in the previous chapter about original accumulation. This process constitutes the collective condition of wage labourers as a class compelled to sell their labour power.

Sometimes Marx uses “selling themselves” instead of “selling their labour-power”, showing that he might have been bothered by this distinction, as observed also by Mintz (1977)⁴³. This might be part of Marx’s intellectual confusion or ambiguity⁴⁴, which was more clearly present in his earlier works, for example, in *Wage Labour and Capital*, in which he argued that the condition of wage labour in capitalism is that the “free labourer sells, and indeed sells himself piecemeal” (Marx 1977b:203). However, ideas are rooted in their time. This ambiguity was also present in the social reality and discourses of the working people when Marx elaborated his critique of political economy. Capital in the world economy of the 19th century was expanding by employing workers under diverse arrangements - wage labour and enslaved labour. Even if the workers were employed under different legal arrangements, they often shared similar working conditions. Nevertheless, in

⁴³ Although Marx repetitively emphasised the contrast between “veiled” slavery and “slavery pure and simple”, Mintz (idem.) recognised Marx’s tendency to waver between the recognition of wage labour as distinctive in that the workers sell their disembodied labour as a commodity and a rejection of this view in favour of the worker as a “wage slave.” Marx was also uncomfortable with the relationship between slavery and capitalism, given its presence in the leading industrial state in the 19th century.

⁴⁴ What seems to contribute to this ambiguity or apparent intellectual confusion is that Marx’s categories are not very fixed. They are in flux in the sense that he is always presenting the categories from different points of view. The sale of labour power, according to the bourgeois consciousness, is one thing, but from the worker’s point of view, another. Regarding the worker’s perspective, the question is whether labour-power has become a commodity in the workers’ consciousness or whether they experience this transformation as a “process of enslavement” (Marx 1976:990). If “free” wage labour implies only a change of form in comparison to slavery (Marx 1976:1063), then materially, essentially, and substantively, the “free” wage workers as a class are in slavery to capital, even if the “formal freedom” serves as the “necessary illusion”, and this was how the compulsion to sell one’s labour for a wage was perceived by 19th-century proletarians. Furthermore, Marx analyses the categories as classical political economists use them, but the primary purpose is to critique political economy. From the perspective of the critique, he argues that political economists transform appearances into reality.

the first volume of *Capital*, it seems that Marx had opted for the concept of workers selling their labour power.⁴⁵

In *Capital*, Marx elaborates on a phenomenology of the bourgeois world and capital (Franco 1978) and deconstructs the “liberal utopia” (Harvey 2010). As argued by Franco (1978), Marx uses the same terms and language as they appear in the self-consciousness of the bourgeoisie, capturing the liberal phase of capitalism. In this way, the constitution of the subjectivity of the modern proletarian is related to freedom and property as the bourgeois right understands it; hence, the theory of the purchase and sale of labour-power is elaborated with such concepts as possession, property, and person. In turn, the labour contract of purchase and sale of labour-power appears as the central aspect of Marx’s value theory. In his critique of the political economy, the “freedom” of modern proletarians constitutes the essence of their servitude (Franco 1978).

2.1.2 Person, property, and the sale of labour-power commodity

As it appears in the above-quoted passages of *Das Kapital*, what characterises the “free” wage labourer is that the person, the carrier of labour-power, is also its owner. These above-quoted passages have a clear Hegelian inspiration when it comes to conceptualising the forces and talents of the person, which are inherent in the individual but exteriorised when used (Franco 1978). According to Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco, the reconstruction of Marx’s conceptualisation of labour-power as the commodity sold by its owner is built on Hegel’s concept of freedom based on labour-power as property. In other words, the condition of being the proprietor enables the “free” workers to maintain the capacity to commodify their labour power. What appears here is the individual, who is concomitantly the possessor (*Besitzer*) and the owner (*Eigentümer*). Hence, the two have an identity as idealised in the bourgeois society. That is how people exist in civil society – “as proprietors, in their exchange, through contract” (Franco 1978:24).

What happens with labour power and its carrier when the owner of money buys labour power in the market? As Arthur (1980:9) maintains, Hegel and Locke consider “the relation between persons and their labour-power to be one of property and also recognise that labour is alienable”. Locke’s political theory allows that the labour of somebody becomes the property of another independently of the duration of the labour relation, as human beings can sell themselves to

⁴⁵ Sebastian Gerhardt (2014) observes that whereas in the *Critique of Hegel* formulated in 1842, Marx had warned against the transformation of human qualities in things, he is guilty of the same operation when he makes the sale of labour-power as a commodity one of the cornerstones of his value theory. The critique of Hegel was made from a moral point of view, but in his theory of capital, the reification of labour-power is legitimate.

drudgery but not to slavery. To Hegel, property is related to freedom and differently from Locke, Hegel does not find alienation of labour evident because “*labour-power is not immediately ‘external’* in the same sense that other alienable things are” (Arthur 1980:9, emphasis added). In his *Outlines of the Philosophy of Right*, Hegel ([1821] 2008) deals with the question of how inward properties such as mental aptitudes, erudition, skills, attainments, and inventions become “things” which can be alienated. Alienation means transferring property to another agency and giving up something, which is “my property”, which is already external. To Hegel, spiritual possessions, such as consciousness, are inalienable, but “external things embodying a person’s powers”, such as labour products, are alienable. Spiritual possession involves the substance of personality, while “the latter are merely particular single objectifications of my powers” or as products (Arthur 1980:10).

Hegel sees exceptions in the alienation of personality, for example, in the case of slavery and serfdom. Slavery is justifiable because man is not free by nature but becomes free.⁴⁶ Therefore, “freedom” would be the precondition for alienating inward possessions without falling into slavery. Freedom here implies the development of “free mind” or “self-consciousness”, and only this could mediate the sublation of human existence. This self-consciousness enables human beings to take possession of their own bodies, which become nobody else’s but one’s own property (Hegel [1821] 2008:69). Hence, the solution for the alienability of personal powers is to treat them as property: “We are to own ourselves” (Arthur 1980:10). The power to treat oneself as a mere legal “thing” is in Arthur’s (1980:10) words precisely one of the results that Hegel considers deriving from the development of human powers, such as self-consciousness.

The time limit is another of Hegel’s criteria for making the transfer of particular bodily and spiritual capacities lawful without falling into bondage and losing one’s freedom. Someone else can acquire the right to use a person’s abilities for a restricted period.⁴⁷ The time restriction will establish a relation of exteriority to the totality and universality of a person’s being. An opposite case would be when the whole of a person’s time is being alienated, and the result is that the substance of the human being, the personality, becomes the property of the other. The time limit here is the mediation between freedom (wage-labour) and unfreedom (slavery): “[I]t is only when use is restricted that a distinction between use and substance arises. So, here the use of my powers

⁴⁶ Hegel (idem.) believed that people are not free by nature but become free. Becoming free implies having self-consciousness, the will taking possession over the body. The enslaved worker, as unfree, belongs to the sphere of unconsciousness. Hence, the enslaved people, or any other subordinated people, have been made responsible for their situation and condition. The conquered and the enslaved, and not only the conquerors and enslavers, are to be blamed for slavery.

⁴⁷ It would be compatible with the rule of law of modern capitalism, as according to that slavery would be prohibited but not the possibility that the worker signs a contract of subordinate employment (Screpanti 2017).

differs from my powers and therefore from myself only insofar as it is quantitatively restricted” (Hegel [1821] 2008:79). Thus, time restriction would establish a distinction between the alienation of use (piece by piece) and alienation of substance (entirety). This is supposed to guarantee the independence of the wage worker’s personality, which is to say that wage workers would not give up any of their freedom in the production process because the use of force differs from the force itself (Screpanti 2017:524). What is suggested here, then, is that subjects have full and free property over their labour power, and its temporary conveyance transforms it into a category of a “thing” and places it in the labour market to the sphere of purchase and sale (Franco 1978:7).

Arthur (1980:11) observes that with the time-limit argument, Hegel admits that “my labour-power is part of the substance of my personality – an essentially inward property insofar as I am in possession of myself”. The mediation of time restriction to externalise these inner possessions has several shortcomings. Considering that labour-power constitutes the substance of “my personality” and the substance of the power is “the totality of its manifestations” (Hegel, [1821] 2008:79) allows us to argue that in the case of the wage worker, through the successive piece by piece alienation of the labour-time, the entire labour-time would be appropriated by others: “what is a 'thing' in pieces is all of a piece a 'thing’” (Arthur 1980:11). From the materialist viewpoint, if the totality of the manifestations of labour-power is being equalised with the power itself, then what configures here is ‘wage-slavery’. From an idealist perspective, however, what constitutes here is a legal person who owns his or her labour-power as private property and sells it in pieces, remaining him- or herself, even if giving up his or her power (Arthur 1980:11). To Hegel, persons maintain the property in their persons by the unity of possession and property of the labour-power in the same individual (Franco 1978). Said in another way, even if workers put their labour power at the employer's disposal, to Hegel, they remain its owners.

According to the legal ideology, it is possible that the power itself can be treated as an external property. Arthur affirms that Hegel capitulates precisely to this kind of idealist solution. However, it is a real possibility that in certain employment relations, the totality of the manifestations of powers of the worker is wasted away. For example, when the worker becomes discardable because of a job accident or work-related psychological or physical problems. If workers’ entire labour-time is being alienated, then the only aspect that distinguishes wage workers from enslaved workers is their legal status, whereas materially being in slavery to capital (Arthur 1980).

Whether the workers are selling their power piece by piece or the totality of it is not a mere philosophical question. It can be considered sociologically. By discussing the concept of super-

exploitation, a Chilean sociologist and economist, Jaime Osório, points to two values of labour-power present in Marx: daily value and total value. The total value refers to the entire working life of workers or the total number of days during which the possessors and owners of labour-power can sell their “commodity” in the market in good conditions, except the years of retirement, when they do not participate in the labour market. Marx (1976:664) would suggest that the total value determines the daily value⁴⁸. Hence, “the daily value of labour-power should be calculated considering the determined time of useful life of the worker and total average life, according to the existing conditions of life of the time” (Osório 2009:176, my translation) we are analysing. Thus, the value of labour-power is a historical and moral magnitude (Postone 1993). From that point of view, an insufficient salary and an exhausting labour process, which shortens the total useful life and the total life of the worker, are ways whereby capital today appropriates the future years of labour and life (Osório 2009:178). From that perspective, Arthur’s argument (2010) is not abstract and essentialising.

The 19th-century workers also considered the time limit of the employment relation fundamental to distinguish between free and unfree labour. Persons who were “hired” under multi-year contracts from which they could not pull out were seen by the English workers as working in the condition of slavery. The US legal historian Robert Steinfeld has referred to the research of Woods (1982), which shows that the trade unions in the 1870s were particularly critical of the hiring system prevalent in some small trades. They considered the workers hired under the long-term contracts (1, 2 years) as being “bound like slaves to the employers” because, in contrast to “free men” hired under short-term contracts, they were forbidden to participate in labour strikes even on short notice (Steinfeld 1991:13).

However, time restriction is a purely quantitative measure. It is not a sufficient indicator to distinguish between free or unfree labour because the restriction could be arbitrary or because contracts of short durations (in comparison to the labour engagement for life as in the case of slavery) could determine that the worker stays until the end of the contract and any breach of the agreement would be penalised, or the labour conditions in itself would be harmful. So, the time limit does not necessarily make the worker free. Under a limited contract, a theoretically free worker can be transformed into an unfree contract worker or indentured labourer whose legal freedom to leave the employment relation is restricted. This was the case not only with the European indentured workers in English, French and Dutch colonies, who had to complete an eight-

⁴⁸ In *Capital*, Marx (idem.) writes that “[t]he value of a day's labour-power is estimated (...) on the basis of its normal average duration, or the normal duration of the life of a worker.”

year labour contract in a plantation and, after that, obtain a piece of land to work on their own. It was also the situation of many service workers in England in the 17th and 18th centuries, who had to work under three-year contracts while being punished for breaching them. The time limit may not reveal anything about the personal domination that can be constituted in the use of labour-power by its temporary owner. The time limit might be satisfactory from the perspective of preserving certain autonomy throughout the piecemeal alienation of labour power. Still, it does not reveal the social relation established due to the alienation of labour-power to the use of the other, who acquires the legal property over it (Arthur 1980:11).

The time restriction has been used to argue that wage labourers do not sell their labour power but hire it out (Linden 2011). From the critical point of view, this argument is problematic for the reasons appointed by Arthur above. Namely, hiring out labour-power suggests that the workers cede their labour-power for alien use, but after the end of the contract term, they acquire it back, like any other hired thing. This view would ignore the relation of subordination established between workers and capitalists and the fact that this relation may harm workers. If they cannot sell something they have once sold twice, they cannot receive back something that has already been used in the same state. The worker has lost their powers. Their hours, days, weeks, and years, which have been accumulating piece by piece, forming a totality, are alienated to the other side, to the alien person. As Linden (2011) himself writes: “Once labour effort has been made, we can never turn the clock back so that the appropriated labour effort is itself returned to the wage-labourer” (p. 19). Moreover, the notion of “hire” is also unsatisfactory from another point of view. Namely, it refers to shared ownership of the labour-power, concealing that at some point, the worker loses control over the property (Bidet 2007), even if only for a determined period.

As it appears in the passages of *Capital* quoted above, Marx takes this time criterion as the condition that the wage workers would not lose their property in their persons. They would maintain their status as “free” persons and would not fall into slavery. Marx takes Hegel’s distinction but transforms it, making Hegel’s conceptualisation of self-ownership an expression of bourgeois ideology (Franco 1978; Harvey 2010).

2.1.3 Peculiarity of the labour-power commodity

Labour power itself is a peculiar commodity, as observed already by numerous authors. What makes it peculiar is that it is inseparable from the person of the labourer (Kuczynski 2013; Marx 1976; Nies and Sauer 2018:55; Pateman 1988; Polanyi [1944] 2001), and it is not produced

for sale (Nies and Sauer 2018:59) as other commodities are. It is part of the personality of the concrete individual, integral to the self, inherent to the living body, and part of the identity of the human being. It is not a thing. It is a “living labour capacity”, that is, “the aggregate of those mental and physical capabilities existing in the physical, the living personality of a human being”, which is inseparable from the worker’s bodily existence (Marx 1976:270). This capacity, this use-value, “exists not really, but only in potentiality, as his capacity” (Marx 1973:267). Labour “present in time”, alive, can only be present as a “living subject, in which labour exists as capacity, as a possibility; hence as *worker*” (Marx 1973:272, emphasis in original).

Both liberals and socialists have accepted the existence of such a thing as labour power. However, as pointed out by Carole Pateman (1988:150), the arguments about the duration of the employment contract, fair wages or exploitation ignore the question of *how* this peculiar property can be separated from the worker and their labour. Everybody accepts implicitly that individuals own property in their person. Still, nobody seems to show how the (living labour) capacities, which are part of the self and self-identity, can be separated from the person. According to Pateman, they cannot be separated like pieces of property. Indeed, “[it] becomes a reality only when it has been solicited by capital, is set in motion” (Marx 1973:267). In that sense, purchasing labour power means buying the use of labour capacity, “hence in practice labour itself, since the USE of labour capacity is its ACTION – labour” (Marx 1994:132). As known, Marx (1976:980) distinguishes between labour-power, which is a labour capacity, and the physical act of work, labour, which is a “living labour” or “labour-power in action”⁴⁹.

Hence, labour-power is a peculiar commodity because it is part of the person’s substance; it becomes a reality only when in action. Its value is determined not only by the physical element but also by historical and moral aspects, and it is the source of value. Thus, there is a very peculiar relationship between the labour power and its owner because whatever happens to the property also occurs to its owner (Polanyi [1944] 2001:76). Moreover, the sale of labour power is different from the sale of any other commodity, since its acquisition does not guarantee its use, or, as Franco (1978) puts it, its purchase does not ensure the simultaneous transmission of its possession and property. Going beyond the market exchange process is necessary to comprehend the sale and purchase of labour-power.

⁴⁹ “[T]he political economists believed they could penetrate to the value of labour through the medium of the accidental prices of labour. As with other commodities, this value was then further determined by the cost of production. But what is the cost of production of the worker, i.e., the cost of producing or reproducing the worker himself? . . . Therefore, what they called the ‘value of labour’ is in fact the value of labour-power, as it exists in the *personality of the worker*, and it is as different from its function, labour, as a machine is from the operations it performs” (Marx 1976:678, emphasis added).

Several authors (Arthur 1980; Bidet 2007; Franco 1978; Moulrier-Boutang 1998; Pateman 1988; Tomba 2009, 2013a, 2013b) have taken up Marx' affirmation that labour-power is a peculiar commodity, not like any other as liberal political economy would affirm and elaborate on that. It is not only that the sphere of the use of labour-power is the sphere of exploitation, hence a hidden abode behind the market exchange, but also that the purchase and sale of labour-power are consummated in the sphere of its use, where the labour-power is being alienated, indeed.

In the labour market, the capitalist, the purchaser of labour-power commodity, acquires the temporary *right to consume its use-value*. That is to say that it is the right of its property, which is transferred to the capitalist. Marx describes the acquired right of property and its implication to the worker in the following:

A capitalist pays for a day's worth of labour-power; then the right to use that power for a day belongs to him, just as much as the right to use any other commodity, such as a horse he had hired for the day. The use of a commodity belongs to its purchaser, and the possessor of labour-power, by giving his labour, does no more, in reality, than part with the use-value he has sold. From the instant he steps into the workshop, the use-value of his labour-power and therefore also its use, which is labour, belongs to the capitalist. (Marx 1976:292)

Thus, the transference and the renunciation of the property right over the worker's labour power is the first moment of its alienation. In the case of the so-called "free" proletarian, wage appears as a mystification of the relation between the capitalist and the worker: "[i]t is not labour which directly confronts the possessor of money on the commodity-market, but rather the worker. What the worker is selling is his labour-power. As soon as his labour begins, it has already ceased to belong to him; it can, therefore, no longer be sold by him" (Marx 1976:677).

This above-described social relation highlights that the distinction between possession and ownership is one of the requirements for the sale of labour power. As observed by Franco, in this moment of rupture in the market relation, proletarians, the possessors and proprietors of their labour power, temporarily transmit their property, that is, the right to use their labour power and preserve its possession. Hence, in this first moment of the sale of labour-power, "the legal power of the capitalist over [the labour-power] implies worker's actual sublation or giving up of the power over it, that is, over the active dominion of his natural and autonomous faculties and capacities" (Franco 1978:21). Hence, what first seemed to be the property of the worker, becomes the property of the other. As reminded by Wood (2004), Marx refers to this movement as a "dialectical reversal" of the previously assumed rights of property:

The property turns out to be the right of the capitalist to appropriate alien unpaid labour or its product, and on the part of the worker the impossibility of appropriating his own product.

The separation of property from labour has become the necessary consequence of a law that apparently originated in their identity. (Marx 1973:458)

This “dialectical inversion” to what Marx refers to seems to question the liberal thinkers, such as Locke, according to whom the product as the result of one’s own labour becomes one’s own private property. However, the above demonstrates that the right of property, which initially appeared to be based on one’s own labour, seems to be the “right to alien labour, and as the impossibility of labour appropriating its own product” (Marx 1973:458). The exchange between workers and capitalists becomes the opposite: the laws of private property – liberty, equality, and property – turn into its opposite. This turned into workers’ propertylessness and their dispossession from their labour.

The realisation of the transference of this labour-power commodity, which is to say, the exercise of acquired right by its new owner, depends on the exteriorisation by the workers of this productive activity. This happens in its consumption, that is, in the labour process. For the sale of labour power to be consummated, it must be put in movement, which could only happen in the labour process. For the alienation of the labour-power to occur, the worker must be present since “[h]is power only exists insofar as he is in possession of himself, and he has developed it as essentially inward property” (Arthur 1980:11) and the powers must be used by the worker however unwillingly. In other words, labour-power does not do anything without being put into use, as it exists in the person of the worker only as a potential or a capacity (Pateman 1988).

Hence, as summarised by Franco (1978), the labour process does two things: it determines the dissociation of the labour-power from the subject who embodies it, allowing the conveyance to someone else the right to use it, who asserts this power through the legal appropriation of its product; on the other hand, workers give up the property over their labour-power but asserts its possession, by mobilising and exercising their attributes, which are peculiar and inherent to them. In other words, in the labour process, workers deliver their labour; the use of the labour-power, which is labour, hence the product, belongs to the capitalist. By that, workers give away the power over their labour power or lose control over the labour process and the labour product⁵⁰ (Franco 1978).

To get workers to exercise their powers in the service, the capitalist has to enforce work with the desired quantity and quality. This demands the *subordination of labour to the command of the*

⁵⁰ Said in another way: “[w]hile it is true that once it has purchased labour-power, capital becomes the “owner” both of that labour-power and of its use, actual labour, it is no less true that living labour must always remain an activity performed by the worker – and this is the basis of the inevitable “class-struggle within production”” (Tomba and Bellofiore 2013:365).

capitalist (Arthur 1980:11,14), who decides the purpose of the labouring activity. Indeed, labour power should be appropriated with the help of “the energies of armies of supervisor, time-motion men, guards, spies and bosses of all description” (Gintis and Bowles 1981). In that sense, the capitalist labour process is heteronomously determined and implies the subordination of labour to the capitalist's command for valorisation. It is not only about increasing efficiency through technological advancements. Neither is capitalist exploitation just a quantitative process in the sense of “exchanging something for nothing.” It is a qualitative matter of subordinating labour to the aims and methods of the capitalist to “pump out” the surplus from the worker, as Marx would say (Arthur 1980:14). The institution of these controls and pressures leads to the eradication of workers’ autonomous use of their powers. It is important to emphasise once more that we are dealing with wage relations as they were configured in the case of the 19th-century urban industrial proletariat.

Franco (1978) points to the differences in Hegel’s and Marx’s understanding of the alienation of labour power. According to Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right*, the capacities, such as the power or the totality of its manifestations, something “which is part of my personality”, are not inalienable. However, they are alienable to Marx. For Marx, workers alienate their (labour)power, indeed. The labour-power itself is committed and not its single manifestations. By alienation, the transfer of property to another agency, a negative situation emerges, which harms the person, implying the loss of control and other fundamental properties. While to Hegel, forces, skills, and talents are being exteriorised by the force of the spirit, to Marx, the exteriorisation of labour-power is a result of various socio-economic pressures. Nevertheless, despite these pressures and violence whereby the labour-power is being conveyed, Marx captures exactly this abstract moment of the constitution of the individual as a person immersed in the dependency of market relations, where “free” individuals with their labour-power and capital meet in an equal power relation (Franco 1978).

In Marx’s conceptualisation, thus, the employment relation under the 19th-century liberal capitalist order contains a paradox. On the one hand, the worker is “the free proprietor of his own labour-capacity, hence of his person”; he has it “at his disposal” (Marx 1976:271). On the other hand, by using their powers, the worker puts them temporarily at the disposal of the capitalist, who has purchased it; the capitalist becomes its new proprietor (Bidet 2007:49). The difference between Hegel and Marx regarding this question is that whereas to Hegel, workers remain the proprietors of their labour-power, to Marx, workers lose their ownership when they sell it. Nevertheless, to Marx, there is a division of this property. Namely, even if workers alienate their labour power, they do not “renounce [their] rights of ownership to it” (Marx 1976:292, emphasis added). In that way, workers

are the proprietors of their labour power until they dispose of it and non-proprietors when they sell it to someone else. The relation established with the limited “disposition” of labour-power is a question of domination. Hence, a political relationship of subordination is configured between the capitalist and the wage worker (Bidet 2007:48-49).

This is also how Marx (1976) sees the labour contract.⁵¹ Differently from Hegel, he sees it as a relation of subordination, which is a required element for capitalist exploitation to extract surplus value. Marx constantly compares wage labour to slavery, emphasising the slave-like character of wage labour as a new form of servitude, mentioning wage slavery on several occasions. He recognises that the worker with an employment contract “sells at auction eight, ten, twelve, fifteen hours of his life, day after day, to the highest bidder, to the owner of the raw materials, instruments of labour and means of subsistence, that is, to the capitalist” (Marx 1977:203).

So, it is through subordination that unpaid labour is appropriated from the worker, which accumulates as dead labour in the pole of capital, congealed in the product, which becomes the property of the other, assuming an autonomous power over the worker. In that sense, private property is the cause and consequence of alienated labour. The synthesis of the alienation of labour, as the process of labour, is the active alienation of workers from their own labour, which comes to confront them as capital (Marx 1988). The externalised labour of workers accumulates “every day” as “dead labour” on the pole of capital, reconstituting the dominance over the living labour. Workers' need to alienate their labour piece by piece is also derived from this. According to Marx, it is no wonder that workers appear in the market as sellers of their labour power to guarantee their subsistence. The compulsion to sell one's labour-power is reproduced daily in the social relation established between capital and labour, as at the centre of the relation is the reproduction of the property relation or the reproduction of the *separation* between workers and the means of realisation of their labour and subsistence.

On the one hand, historically, through the process of enclosures, expropriation of direct producers, monopolisation of the means of production and subsistence under the dominion of capital, constituted the regime of capitalist private property, and the proletariat dependent on capital. On the other hand, this separation is reproduced constantly in the process of capital movement, whereby the alienation of labour becomes the conditions of private property or private property becomes the cause of alienated labour. Capital, by having a monopoly over the means of production

⁵¹ On various occasions, Marx describes an employment contract as a formality: “Where the labour of children is concerned, even the formality of a voluntary sale vanishes” (Marx 1976:724n20).

and subsistence, as the accumulated dead labour, reproduces the existing power relations through expanded reproduction (Arthur 1980).

In the wage relation, the particular bourgeois legal form, which is the labour contract, labour-power is transformed into a commodity and thus incorporated into the valorisation process. According to the bourgeois right, the temporary cession of talents and capacities of the person is licit, indeed, as affirmed by Hegel; this is the presupposition of the labour market as described by Marx. What, according to the bourgeois right, is legal and legitimate – the temporary cession of personal talents and aptitudes – constitutes for Marx the sustenance of the exploitation (Franco 1978).

2.1.4 Labour contract as the sale of obedience

In the 19th century, anarchist socialists maintained that the state and law had a fundamental role in establishing property relations and fixing wage slavery through labour contracts. Hence, they contested the conventional view about the employment contract, that the workers contract out their labour power in exchange for a wage and that it should not involve servitude. This external existence of labour-power as a quasi-material object gained its legal status with liberal legalism or “general theory” of contract in the 19th century, which justified an almost unrestricted subordination of wage labour in “innocuous fictions of consent” (Banaji 2003:69).

The labour contract created a belief that wage relations would be defined by individual autonomy, free will, free agency, and self-ownership (Banaji 2003). This set of ideals was the basis of why wage labour came to be used interchangeably with “free labour” and why “free” wage labour came to represent *the norm* of wage-labour relations. Moulner-Boutang (1998) also shows, based on his thorough and comparative historical research of various dependent labour forms, that “wage” initially represented a liberation from feudal bondage in Europe, where feudalism existed, symbolising a certain autonomy and freedom of movement. However, by the 16th century, the wage earners, who had nothing else than their labour-power to sell, became classified as the “poor” (Moulner-Boutang 1998), as the voluntary sale of labour-power became the precondition of servitude (Orren 1991:94-95).

Carol Pateman (1988), who is critical of the theorists of contractualism, argues that the “disembodied fiction of labour-power” allows us to argue that instead of persons, labour or bodies,

labour-power is contracted out.⁵² This permits us to talk about an employment relation as a “free” exchange between two commodity owners. However, according to her, the problem with accepting this term is that it results in focusing merely on the unfair exchange between worker and capitalist, highlighting the sphere of exploitation in terms of unpaid labour, which is the condition of worker’s wage and the requirement for the (re-)production of surplus value. In that sense, the critique is directed extensively on the extraction of surplus value in the form of extended working hours, which, as said before, led Marx (2010b:92) himself to compare wage labour with slavery: “The system of wage labour is a system of slavery”. Pateman (1988), however, argues that wage slavery is not the result of exploitation, or at least not only. To her, exploitation results from the fact that the sale of the labour-power includes worker’s subordination.

The “disembodied fiction of labour-power” would support the idea that workers are not commodities in capitalism, but their labour-power is. According to Pateman (1988), that transforms the concept of property ownership in person into a “political fiction”⁵³. It would be more correct to say that, in practice, the workers and their labour are the subject of the contract. This suggestion also sounds persuasive in light of what was argued in the previous section, which is that by the employment contract, the employers acquire the property right over the labour-power, realised in the labour process, in which labour is subordinated to capitalists. The employment contract gives the employer a “political right to compel the worker to use of his capacities in a given manner, or the right to the worker’s obedience” (Pateman 1981:151). As noted by Screpanti (2017),⁵⁴ Marx (1976:1060) emphasised on several occasions that the capitalist production process starts “when the worker [sells] the right to control his labour-power in exchange for the necessary means of subsistence” and that capital is “buying the capacity of disposing over the worker” (Marx

⁵² In fact, Marx (1976) considers it irrational to say that capitalist meets in the market the owner of his or her labour-power. It is worker who confronts the capitalist.

⁵³ Pateman (1988) maintains that we should not use the notion of labour-power but instead refer to the sale of the worker or her labour. Gintis and Bowles (1981) argue that labour-power cannot be considered a commodity since it is not produced like any other commodity. They say that specific moral and historical elements enter labour-power production. What matters in the process of its production are other places than the market, such as households, for example. Thus, the uncommodified element or unpaid domestic labour is relevant for the production and reproduction of the labour-power. This point has, of course, been emphasised for a long time by feminist scholars. To determine the value of labour-power, that is, wage, not only market forces play their role. Furthermore, referring to labour as the use-value of labour-power refers to a utilitarian view of production. Labour processes in capitalist firms should instead describe hierarchy-creating (hierarchies in terms of sexual, racial, and skill divisions) political and cultural practices, which are central to the extraction of surplus value (Gintis and Bowles 1981).

⁵⁴ Screpanti (idem.) argues that the notion of employment contract that Marx put forth in the *Appendix of Capital* vol. I (*Results of the Immediate Process of Production*) and the *Manuscripts of 1861-1863* is different from that suggested by Hegel. The notion of a labour contract for the latter is an “agreement for the exchange of commodities” and resembles the Roman institution, *locatio operis*. In mentioned publications, Marx elaborates on another concept based on the *locatio operarium*, which implies an agreement whereby workers assume an obligation to obey their employers. Marx’s notion is based on subordination and subsumption (Idem.:513).

1973:301). Hence, when workers sign the contract, they sell their obedience. In other words, through employment contracts, “workers are paid to obey” (Benyon 1973:253). In that sense, workers are selling their authority over themselves. This definition of employment contract supports what I have argued above regarding the subordination of labour to capital, that based on this established social relation, the capitalists can appropriate labour effort with the desired quality and necessary quantity.

Since [the worker] cannot be separated from his capacities, he sells command over the use of his body and himself. To obtain the right to the use of another is to be a (civil) master. To sell command over the use of oneself for a specified period is not the same as selling oneself for life as another’s property - but it is to be an unfree labourer. (Pateman 1988:151)

These characteristics are better expressed by the term *wage slave* (Pateman 1988:151). Accepting that labour-power is a commodity is to accept the paradigm of private property of liberal ideology.⁵⁵

In a capitalist system in which labour is formally subsumed under capital, which implies that instead of working as independent commodity owners, workers labour under the command of capitalists for a wage, the employment contract establishes an institutional condition for the subordination relation (Screpanti 2017:527). Pateman (1988) calls the right to compel workers to use their capacities in a particular manner a political right acquired by employers through contracts. Therefore, there is a paradox in the labour contract. It sanctions the free choice of workers to surrender their freedom for a certain period, but “once signed the contract their freedom of choice is in principle nil and labour activity is ‘imposed’ on them” (De Angelis 1996:18–9). It is expressed in that “[t]he workers cannot decide how to work, what to produce, how to cooperate, how to use machines and so on. These prerogatives pertain to the capitalist, who has used the employment contract to transform the freedom surrendered by the workers into their own power” (Screpanti 2017:529).

However, there is something previous which determines the labour contract, which Pateman does not consider, but which, to Marx, makes capitalism a specific social form, the commodity form. Commodity-form implies a “definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them, the fantastic form of a relation between things”, which Marx (1976) calls commodity

⁵⁵ This libertarian idea of self-ownership is present in Marxist condemnation of exploitation. Cohen (1995) has asked why Marx and Marxists have been reluctant to reject the idea of self-ownership. The answer might lie in a “desire to carry forward the energy of the bourgeois revolution, which is a revolution of self-ownership against the feudal unfreedom that negates it, into the socialist one. If that is so, then this would be among the bourgeois inheritances that disfigure Marxism” (Cohen 1995:117).

fetishism.⁵⁶ In a commodity-dominated economy and society, labour-power becomes a commodity, a thing. In a commodity-determined society, individuals are forced to sell their labour power to consume commodities others have produced to reproduce their labour power. To Marx, for the commodity form of the product to become generalised, labour power has to become a commodity. As labour-power becomes a commodity, it enters the circulation of commodities, constituting an economic form, a social phenomenon, in which the world of things starts to live a life of its own, which we do not appropriate but which starts to command the social life between human beings, including the externally imposed compulsion to labour (Antunes 2013).

2.1.5 Wage-labour and economic bondage

Wage-labour's indirect enslavement to capital

That these “free” labourers appear in the market to sell their only property, their labour power, which is part of the substance of their persons, is not a natural fact; this figure is the product of history, the result of several socio-economic and legal pressures, which have separated the worker from the conditions of production. As the propertyless workers do not have any other property to sell, they are free, which is to say that they are *obliged* to sell their only property. This contradiction of the “free” wage labour form of the 19th century is perfectly expressed in a non-ironic way in the affirmation that “the wage-labourer . . . is *compelled to sell himself of his own free will*” (Marx 1976:932). This raises the question of to what extent workers’ exercise of their powers is autonomous or to what extent their self-ownership (Cohen 1995; Safatle 2016) is an illusion. Cohen (2000) argues that wage labourers own their labour power, as the capitalists need labourers, and they have no choice but to hire them. However, it seems that this criterion would not be enough to assert that the workers own their labour power. The argument that proletarians are in full ownership of their labour power and that this ownership is not an illusion is problematic, indeed. Therefore, the aim is to deal further with more general constraints faced by wage labour, with the subalternity of the “free” wage labour subordinated to the “coerced commodification” (Linden 2011) and subsumed under capital (Banaji 2003, 2010; Marx 1976).

The coerced commodification of labour power in the case of wage workers is generated historically and structurally. On the one hand, the consequence of the separation between the direct

⁵⁶ I am thankful to Prof. José Mauricio Domingues for drawing my attention to that point in our conversation about this chapter.

producers and the conditions of realisation of their labour derived from repetitive expropriations from the means of production and subsistence, which is concentrated as the private property of the other, whereby the social relation between capital and labour is produced. On the other hand, the fundamental process, whereby the piecemeal sale of the worker's labour power is constantly updated and reproduced, is a process whereby living labour appears as non-capital and capital as accumulated dead labour. In that sense, we can say that the subordination of workers as a class to total capital, that is, the class of capitalists, is established before the sale of labour-power, or as Marx (1976:723) says, the “worker belongs to capital” due to the existing social relation of ownership based on capitalist private property regime reproduced in the production process. Unlike personal domination, which is established in the labour process, this is impersonal domination. Still, it is a domination expressing workers' economic dependency on *total social capital*. In that sense, the workers appear in the market as sellers of their labour capacity. Even if workers are at the disposal of their labour power, the objective conditions and the subjective conditions of their labour belong to capital and confront them as capital (Screpanti 2017). As the worker belongs to capital before the employment contract, would not the latter be a legal formalisation of bondage? Or do workers sell themselves “voluntarily” into servitude? In Marx’s words:

[c]apitalist production therefore reproduces in the course of its own process the separation between labour-power and the conditions of labour. It thereby reproduces and perpetuates the conditions under which the worker is exploited. It incessantly forces him to sell his labour-power in order to live, and enables the capitalist to purchase labour-power in order that he may enrich himself. *It is no longer a mere accident that capitalist and worker confront each other in the market as buyer and seller.* It is the alternating rhythm of the process itself which throws the worker back onto the market again and again as a seller of his labour-power and continually transforms his own product into a means by which another man can purchase him. In reality, the worker belongs to capital before he has sold himself to the capitalist. His *economic bondage* at once mediated through, and concealed by, the periodic renewal of the act by which he sells himself, his change of masters, and the oscillations in the market-price of his labour. (Marx 1976:723-724, emphases added)

In this passage from *Capital*, Marx refers to the workers’ dependence on the capitalist class, the total capital. He suggests that through the alienation of their powers, the workers reproduce the domination of capital over the workers and, at the same time, workers’ subordination to capital, which makes it no accident that workers are forced to sell themselves piece by piece in the market, hinting an “indirect enslavement” of wage-labour to capital. When the gradual collapse of feudalism meant for the people freedom from serfdom, hence, from direct bondage, with the development of capitalist relations of production, the workers under the wage system were integrated into a new type of bondage, an economic one. The indirect enslavement of wage workers to the total social

capital occurs through the repetitive and piecemeal sale of labour power. In the case of enslaved workers, the historical specificity of the form of ‘economic bondage’ takes place in another manner: a one-time direct form of the enslavement of labour and its ownership by the owners of the means of production (Marx 1976:1063-4), which is the individual planter capitalist.

In *Capital*, Marx (1976:719) refers to the employment contract as a “legal fiction” which, together with the constant change of individual employers, gives the “appearance of independence”. This critique is woven from the perspective of total social capital:

[t]he reproduction of labour-power which must incessantly be re-incorporated into capital as its means of valorisation, which cannot get free of capital, and whose *enslavement to capital* is only concealed by the variety of individual capitalists to whom it sells itself, forms, in fact, a factor in the reproduction of capital itself. Accumulation of capital is therefore multiplication of the proletariat. (Marx 1976:763-4, emphasis added)

In another passage in *Grundrisse*, Marx argues that workers have only their direct living labour to exchange, and the repetition is only apparent. What workers exchange for capital is their total living labour capacity, which they spend on average for twenty years. Instead of paying it all together at once, capital pays it piece by piece as workers put their labour power in its disposition, implying that they sell it during their economically active lifetime and only when capital solicits it.

However, all in all, Marx (1977b) understands this bondage of wage labour as “collective enslavement” in the sense that:

The worker, whose sole source of livelihood is the sale of his labour, cannot leave the *whole class of purchasers, that is, the capitalist class*, without renouncing his existence. *He belongs not to this or that bourgeois, but to the bourgeoisie, the bourgeois class*, and it is his business to dispose of himself, that is to find a purchaser within this bourgeois class. (P. 203, emphasis in original)

Thus, “workers are free to submit to the power of the exploiters” (Screpanti 2017:528). I discuss here the relations of coercion, dependence and subordination, which are established between wage workers and capital in the process of production and reproduction of capital. At one point, the above-described tension between possession and property is part of the capital process, the production of surplus value. But not only. It also produces and reproduces the capital relation itself. In this process, workers objectify their labour capacities into a product, which appears as an alienated product, and their labour appears as alienated labour, as they are appropriated by capital as its private property. In this process, workers also reproduce the means of their subsistence in the form of a wage and the conditions of production. Marx describes this process in detail in *Grundrisse*:

The product of labour appears as alien property, as a mode of existence confronting living labour as independent, as value in its being for itself; the product of labour, objectified labour, has been endowed by living labour with a soul of its own, and establishes itself opposite living labour as an alien power: both these situations are themselves the product of labour. But while capital thus appears as the product of labour, so does the product of labour likewise appear as capital – no longer as a simple product, nor as an exchangeable commodity, but as capital; objectified labour as mastery, command over living labour. (Marx 1973:453-4)

Hence, the previous discussion suggests that coercion and subordination of all wage labour appear in two dimensions (Banaji 2003). First, structurally, it is the result of the production and reproduction of capital and labour relations, whereby the “worker belongs to capital”. The structural condition of the propertyless proletariat is that the workers are compelled to sell their labour power in the market since the conditions of production confront labour as “alien property”⁵⁷. The wage labour is subject to economic coercion. This concerns the proletariat as a class. Hence, the working class is indirectly enslaved to the total social capital, i.e., the class of capitalists. Second, at the level of direct relations established between workers and capitalists in terms of the exchange of labour for a wage, the workers sell their “obedience for wages” and are subordinated under the command of capitalists, who have to find ways to enforce labour contracts. Hence, wage labour is constrained and subordinated in this double sense (Banaji 2003:87-88).

By employing analytical philosophy, Cohen (1982) problematises the claim that proletarians must sell their labour power for a wage. The question of compulsion can be approached from an individual or collective point of view. Theoretically, the individual worker might be able to escape their proletarian condition and become a small landowner, or they could ascend socially into the ranks of the petit bourgeoisie, becoming, for example, self-employed. Even though, in practice, the worker may have some fundamental instruments of labour or means of production or subsistence at their disposal, it does not necessarily imply that they can use them autonomously without having to contract with the capitalist. Different structural – legal, economic, political, cultural, social – factors that enable or restrict individual options should be analysed. One of those factors is property relations in capitalist societies. Hence, when considering the wage workers as a class, we can talk about “collective unfreedom”, implying that workers are forced to sell their labour-power (Cohen 1982:11-12) due to the existing economic structures. Cohen relates the workers’ collective condition to the “silent compulsion of economic relations”, which should be specifically a capitalist form of domination. However, as I will discuss later, we should broaden the notion of “coercion” in

⁵⁷ In Marxian terms, it is then the private property that grounds the relations of domination in capitalism.

capitalism by including extra-economic forces, operating not only in the case of unfree/non-waged labour but also regarding wage labour.

The economic bondage to which the wage labour is subject expresses wage workers' vulnerability in the face of capital. This vulnerability is concerned not only with the worker's special capacity or activity but with the workers themselves. When Marx discusses the subordination of labour to capital, he sees capital exploiting workers' entire productive activity, which he sees as the substance of workers' lives: "The wage labourer's entire life is being sold off, day by day, hour by hour, so that the worker's whole being is really in thrall to capital" (Wood 2004:246). In that sense, it is not so different from the enslaved workers, although, in the case of the enslaved workers, the totality of living labour capacity is sold at once. The vulnerability occurring in certain circumstances enables benefitting from the person or something about the person. The use of a person or something very intimately bound to the person may globally harm and degrade them. In this case, the wage labourers are vulnerable to capital. This vulnerability is given by the fact that, as mentioned above, capitalists own the means of production, and the workers own the labour power, which they can use according to the social powers of production. This condition has been continuously produced and reproduced by forcible expropriation of workers, which was and is one of the fundamental elements of the capital constitution. Workers can only live by labour by using capital's means of production in a labour process in which they do not have control over their labour power, which is also an aspect of vulnerability. Thus, it is essential to consider the historical traits of capitalism, which gives a systemic dimension to the vulnerability of workers in the face of capital, which can exploit their labour by taking advantage of their vulnerability.⁵⁸ In that sense, the workers' exploitation should not be limited only to some formal features of wage bargaining or distributive issues. It involves systematic exploitation of the worker's vulnerability (Wood [1981] 2004:246-7). Thus, vulnerability is institutionalised through various socio-economic pressures, as well as by legal and political institutions. In that sense, exploitation appears connected with expropriation and alienation.

⁵⁸ It is crucial to resume the topic of exploitation of the "free" wage labour, as it has been naturalised in the social sciences and the contemporary social world. Discussing the nature of exploitation of the wage worker, be it in the core or the periphery of capitalism, demonstrates how complicated such affirmations as "when the wage worker is just exploited, the dependent worker such as slaves etc. are also expropriated" (Fraser 2016) are. I find highly relevant for my research these scholarly attempts, which establish an interdependent relationship between the development of wage labour and unfree/non-waged labour, showing the expropriation as a "hidden abode" behind "exploitation", which reveal hierarchies between different modes of labour control in the historical capitalism. Nevertheless, it cannot lead to the naturalisation of exploitation of the "free" wage labour and to normative evaluations of considering it just.

In the post-revolutionary decades in the 19th century, it was common among anarchist socialist intellectuals as well as among labour movements in the North Atlantic as well as in the South Atlantic to denounce all wage labour as “wage slavery” (Pateman 1988),⁵⁹ which expresses workers’ structural domination by capital produced by the institution of private property. How socialist-anarchist thinkers understood wage labour is well synthesised by the connection made by the revolutionary anarchist, philosopher and typographer Proudhon ([1840] 1994)⁶⁰ in his most known book, *What is Property?* The book starts with a comparison between property and slavery. Proudhon defines slavery as murder since selling women and men into slavery means depriving them of their will, their personality and their thoughts. A transformation of this first proposition would be the second proposition that “property is theft”. With the comparison of these two propositions, Proudhon suggests that the introduction of constitutional rights to private property, the title in land and capital, and the systems of exploitation that it created is a transformation of slavery from chattel to wage-slavery. By that, this anarchist socialist argued that private title in things held by the capitalist class deprived the workers of the fruits of their labour to which they had a right, and it would be the only legitimate source of property.⁶¹ By contrast, the ownership of the means of production should be collective. Thus, the institution of “private property as an exclusive right of dominion”, its enforcement and legal protection by the state, enable the theft of products and value from those who produce them.⁶² According to Proudhon, this constitutes the structural dependence of wage labour on capital.

⁵⁹ According to Pateman (1988), the term *wage-slave* originates from the self-defensive speech of slave owners of the US South in the middle of the 19th century. By that, they suggested that the enslaved workers in plantations lived better than the factory workers of industrialising England. This notion was appropriated in the 19th century by anarchist socialists who gave it a critical twist regarding the conditions of the allegedly “free” wage workers, which would not differ much from slavery. Here, French and Russian anarchist socialists such as Proudhon, Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Tolstoy can be mentioned, as well as some German anarchists such as Moses Heß. At the beginning of the 20th century, Emma Goldman advanced this critique during the years spent in the US (Kinna and Pirchard 2019).

⁶⁰ One may raise an eyebrow by encountering the name of Proudhon in the text, which has used much ink to discuss Marx’s ideas so far. Everybody familiar with the history of socialist ideas and politics knows that these two were almost enemies. According to my reading, although disagreeing politically regarding the question “What to do?” Marx and Proudhon shared similar critical positions regarding their diagnostics of capitalist economy and society. It is argued that Marx was influenced by Proudhon’s ideas of political economy and recognised in *The Holy Family* that his *What is Property?* (1956) was the first significant scientific analysis of private property.

⁶¹ Although defining property as a theft, Proudhon was not against any property. He (as well as Marx) believed that workers had the right to the fruits of their labour.

⁶² To Proudhon, the political emancipation of proletarians would be only partial without economic emancipation. The condition of economic emancipation is the abolition of wage labour, that is, the relationship of subordination and authority sustained by the owners of the means of production and subsistence.

In the case of both forms of labour control, slavery and wage slavery, the structural domination and subordination derive from the notion of private property. In Proudhon's analysis, the possibility of the privateness of property comes from the previously established idea of "dominium and absolute exclusivity over a thing". This principle is at the foundation of Roman and Greek accounts of private property and is essential for the possibility of transference and alienability of property. It sustained the institution of slavery. Proudhon argued that private property based on the dominium and absolute exclusivity constituted the basis of the structural domination that the enslaved and wage workers experienced in the form of dependence on their "masters" (Kinna and Prichard 2019). In the first case, the masters exercise the dominium over the person of enslaved workers. In the second case, the exclusive ownership of the means of production and subsistence produces and reproduces wage slavery. Nevertheless, in both cases, ownership relation is the foundation for expropriating surplus value and the product.

Wage labour was denounced as "wage slavery" by dispossessed workers, labour activists and anarchist-socialist intellectuals in the capitalist core and the capitalist periphery (Engels 1987; Mattos 2008). The language of "slavery" was mobilised in the context of movements for the abolition of plantation slavery in the Americas, consolidation of private property regime and the new status of previously enslaved workers who had legally become the owners of their labour-power, being now "free" to sell it to whomever they wished. In his *Slavery and Social Death*, the Jamaican-US sociologist Orlando Patterson (1982) argues that the perception that, in reality, there was no difference between selling their labour to survive or selling their bodies might have become particularly sharp in spaces where enslaved labourers worked side by side with not enslaved workers in agricultural units, newly emerging industrial manufactures, urban commerce or in the construction sites in the economies of the New World. In both the capitalist core and the capitalist peripheries, the workers resisted the condition of wage labour and the "free" labour contracts for a long time. Patterson suggests that the resistance to the "free" labour contract and the fiction of disembodied labour-power in the 19th century expressed in the ideological denunciation of wage labour as wage slavery was triggered by the use of directly dominated individuals for the production and reproduction of wealth and how it revealed the reality behind the so-called free labour. Workers perceived what working for others meant: "alienation from the means of production and exploitation by the employer" (Patterson 1982:33-34).⁶³ Rather than arguing that slavery degraded

⁶³ Patterson (idem.) has argued that in any society where there was a large number of enslaved workers, the non-slaves tended to despise working for others. It was not labour itself that was despised, but working for others, as Moses Finley in his article "Between Slavery and Freedom" (1964) has shown for Ancient Greece.

labour, it would be more proper to say that slavery unveiled the degrading nature of capitalist labour in general, which could take an extremely alienating and exploitative form under slavery in the sense of transforming even human beings into commodities, with seven years of useful life.

In their study about the Atlantic proletariat published in the book *The Many-Headed Hydra*, Linebaugh and Rediker (2000) not only show how the proletarians and intellectuals of the West-European industrial centres made use of the “slave” imaginary to describe the proletarian condition denouncing the exploitation in the factory floor but also how they identified themselves with and advocated for the cause of the abolition of slavery in the Americas. For example, amid the French Revolution of 1789, the English cutlers of the steel town Sheffield positioned themselves against slavery. They were aware that the cutlery wares they produced were sent to the Coast of Africa and used there partly as values to be exchanged for enslaved workers. Sheffield manufactured sickles and scythes for harvest, scissors, razors for the export market, and pike. The workers’ organisation, the Sheffield Constitutional Society, founded in 1792, besides declaring themselves against slavery, also asserted that independently of colour, the enslaved workers, as well as the English proletarians, had “all things in common,” emphasising the class and race unity (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000:273-274).

According to Orlando Patterson (1982:9), who has conducted very ambitious research about systems of slavery in different times and spaces in history and compared the exploitation of enslaved labour with that of wage-labour, has concluded that in physical, economic or real human terms, “[t]he distinction, often made, between selling their labour as opposed to selling their persons makes no sense whatsoever”. This becomes relatively evident in the case of some wage labour forms, which share some characteristics with enslaved labour. For example, debt bondage is a labour arrangement under which workers lose control over their labour power, being hindered from commodifying it. To approximate “chattel slavery” and “wage slavery” and show that they may have shared each other’s characteristics is not to maintain that they are “moral equivalents” but to understand that they inhabited the same universe. A common institutional framework made both structural forms of social domination and relations of exploitation possible and necessary for the production of capital.

As already mentioned, Marx (1976:932) also used the “slave” metaphor numerous times when he refers to values such as free will and equality of exchange underpinning the employment contract as merely formal, since at the end of the day the wage worker is “compelled to sell himself of his own free will”. For example, in 1875 Marx refers to “white slavery” and “wage slavery” not in the sense of immoral employment relations, which he does too regarding super-exploitative

working days, but in terms of persistent coercive character of wage-labour itself: “. . . that the system of wage labour is a system of slavery, . . . slavery which becomes more severe in proportion as the social productive forces of labour develop, whether the worker receives better or worse payment” (2010b:92).

Nevertheless, it was common to consider “wage slavery” as “free labour” as long as it was measured against actual slavery and serfdom (Steinfeld 2001:13). Indeed, this was the procedure in *Capital* (Marx 1976:272-273, 874-875, 908-909) and in *Grundrisse* (Marx 1973:464-65, 507), where slavery and serfdom were measured against “free” wage labour. What made the 19th-century “wage slave” “free” in this binary opposition was that the wage labourer had the “ability to decide whether, and to whom, his labour-power will be sold” (Miles 1987:25).

With the establishment of “employment society”, the critical use of “wage slavery” fell out of use, and the definition of citizenship by “work” and “full (male) employment” became the core political demands of the working-class movement (Pateman 1988:136). One of the reasons why wage labour lost its critical meaning is related to the proper Western labour movements, which started to contrast wage labour to slavery. The concept of “work” changed its meaning gradually: when it first marked the social distinction, it began to gain a moral connotation. According to Hermanns, “[w]ork has changed semantically in the course of the 19th and early 20th centuries in such a way that the political function and the social role of this word have been reversed, and the word for social distinction has ultimately become a word for social integration” (1993:53).

The integration of the exploited in metropolitan countries into the “employment society” started with the abolition of slavery through “free labour” (Frings 2019). One of the ways of persuading the wage workers to accept their status was the legal fiction of disembodied labour-power, according to which the free worker sold their services through a contractual relationship (Patterson 2017). The law of contracts generated a new “ideological imaginary”, which legitimated the new social and economic relations of the 19th century. Alienation and exploitation, which were structural, appeared in this new imagination to be the consequences of people’s own desires (Gabel and Feinman 1998:501). Ironically, for the British working class, the implementation of the ideology of “free labour” also meant a defeat, as they submitted themselves to their fate as exploited enslaved wage workers in the allegedly “free world” (Buck-Morss 2009; Davis 1999:489), in which the “freedom” of “free” labour is based on a minimalist meaning: “*primarily*, the legal capacity (‘autonomy’) required to enter a labour agreement” (Orren 1991, cited in Banaji 2010:150).

In this milieu, the unity between black and white workers and the discourse of racial equality also disappeared from the political agenda. Linebaugh and Rediker argue that a significant

turning point in the political project of England's workers' organisation was the Haitian Revolution (1791-1804), whereby "race [had become] a tricky [and] threatening subject" (2000:273-274). According to these authors, the Haitian Revolution marked the birth of the English labour movement, as the first workers' organisations were created. The insurgencies that the Haitian Revolution had triggered were defeated. The proletariat became more segmented: "[w]hat was left behind was national and partial: the *English* working class, the *black* Haitian, the *Irish* diaspora" (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000:286, emphases in original). The English working class that emerged after the Napoleonic Wars (1815) started to distinguish itself from the enslaved African workers of New World plantations, thereby revealing its provincialism and vulnerability to racist appeal. If before the 19th century, one finds a common and single story of the Atlantic proletariat, then after that, a fragmented narrative emerged: "the story of the working class" and "the narrative of Black Power" (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000:333-334). This division can also be witnessed in the 20th-century scholarly debate, in which race has been disconnected from the political economy of labour.

In this context, a rigid dichotomy between free and unfree labour was also developed, that is, between pure wage labour and enslaved and indentured labour, respectively. This distinction became a holy cow to both Marxists and liberals, which has disguised how different labour forms are combined and contribute to the formation of capitalism. It has also contributed to the mystification and abstractness of wage labour. The "freedom" of contractual relations does not exclude the necessity of analysing "free" labour as another form of labour control and the wage worker as a forced labourer. The contractual relation reconfigured the power relation. When direct personal power over the other lost legitimacy, such power had to be intermediated "through control over property" (Patterson 2008:146-147).

As Steinfeld (1991) demonstrates, the power logic in the case of "free" wage labour evolved so that wage workers were legally defined as autonomous persons with the legal right to control and dispose of their own persons. Hence, the new legal paradigm of employment was rooted in *self-ownership*, as repeatedly shown in this chapter. Concomitantly, self-ownership also started to base suffrage. Therefore, the change in the status of wage labour had two sides. Wage workers began to enjoy *formal* legal autonomy and the political rights of self-government. However, the other side of it, or the irony of it all, is that these workers continued *propertyless* as enslaved wage workers, which placed significant restrictions on their *de facto* powers of self-government. At the same time, this subject had a gender and colour in the Anglo-American world. This new subject was mainly male and white. In Steinfeld's words: "[t]his contradictory state of affairs – legal and political rights

of self-government joined to economic vulnerability and dependence – was one of the principle defining characteristics of wage workers in the new nineteenth-century order” (1991:184).

According to Steinfeld (1991:187), this new legal paradigm may have made it more challenging to advocate that wage workers' propertylessness subordinated them to the rule of others. In other words, “[a]chieving legal autonomy represented a real gain for labouring people, but it also helped to obscure the systemic ways in which law continued to contribute to their oppression through the operation of the ordinary rules of property and contract in a world in which productive assets were unequally distributed” (Steinfeld 1991:9).

How self-government and independence (self-ownership), on the one hand, and subjection and dependence (property ownership), on the other, were allocated to separate spheres of life, the former to the public and the latter to the private sphere, expresses the separation of the spheres of state and civil society. A separation, which Marx exposed so well in *The Jewish Question* ([1843] 1975), is expressed in two figures: *cityoen* and *bourgeois*. In this process, the private property became a bare “private economic power” and was not, ideally, associated with the government.

Another consequence of the separation of spheres, economic exploitation receding to the private sphere, is that capitalism in the bourgeois ideology appears to be sterile, free from violence and coercion. Its invisibility shows how it appears in the bourgeois consciousness.

2.1.6 Veiled slavery of wage-labour

Workers' structural dependence on capital and the economic coercion to commodify one's labour-power, derived from it, are veiled by the dominance of bourgeois civil society. The indissoluble unity between possession and property in the same person, the worker who is at the same time the property owner of his or her personality, in the abstract, participating as an equal commodity seller in the market, is an ideology which constitutes the socio-economic reality of the 19th century and beyond. However, “pure ideology” or the “paradise of human rights” (Marx [1843]

1975)⁶⁴ is necessary for the system. It can be considered a legitimation of exploitation (Frings 2019: 440). The “free” wage labour ideology permits the compulsion to labour to appear abstract. Theoretically, there should be no personal or direct forms of social domination of labour in the capitalist society. Wage itself is a mystification. In the market, the compulsion seems impersonal; it does not appear social but looks natural instead. The wage workers are immersed in a social structure where their needs and no specific social sanction or direct force naturalise their social need to labour. One must labour to fulfil one’s necessities. Nevertheless, labour to survive, as a “historically determinate social necessity, serves as the basis for a fundamental legitimating ideology of the capitalist social formation as a whole, throughout its various phases” (Postone 1993:161).⁶⁵

As appointed by Banaji (2003), although the free employment contract is a formality and mystifies the “essential nature” of wage labour, it is one of the essential mediating forms of the capitalist relations of production. Mystifying forms emerge from concrete conditions. Hence, opposing “free” labour to unfree labour is to ignore the role of the contract in concealing the dimension of domination in apparently free and equal transactions.

Marx grasps the liberal phase of proletarianisation, the stage of the individualist market society, which is a universe of individuals who own property in their persons and who are disposed to exchange goods (Franco 1978; Moulrier-Boutang 1998). The way Marx constructs the idea of freedom is the freedom as understood by the bourgeois world: “the freedom is the freedom to sell oneself to the highest bidder, [which means that it is the] freedom within the labour market and the strict limits of the market” (Moulrier-Boutang 1998:277) or the freedom to enter a contract (Banaji 2003, 2010). As Moulrier-Boutang (1998) argues, it is not about the freedom to leave the situation of dependent labour. The vision of wage workers as “free” and having property in their persons is the

⁶⁴ Although Marx did not underestimate the importance of political emancipation, he was critical of the bourgeois revolution, of the “rights of man” instituted by the French Revolution. This critique was formulated in the *Jewish Question*, published originally in 1843. There, he identified the restricted potential of the discourse of the “rights of man” regarding human emancipation, as it did not emancipate man but the bourgeois (political emancipation vs. human emancipation). Political emancipation did not do away with the self-interested and egoistic bourgeois individual (the man as the member of civil society) but rather emancipated him or her, guaranteeing by legal means the protection of his or her person, property, and rights. In other words, “citizenship and political community [were reduced] to a mere means for maintaining these so-called rights of man, that therefore the *citoyen* is declared to be the servant of egoistic *homme*” (Marx [1843] 1975:164). What is referred to here is the separation between and autonomisation of the state and the civil society (the sphere of capital), as the characteristic of bourgeois society and the modern state. This schism is also present in the individual, implying the individual’s fragmentation into the citizen and the bourgeois, living a “double life”.

⁶⁵ What is implied here is the question: why do workers continue to return to work every day? Why do they continue selling their labour power, or why do they continue subjecting themselves to a system that exploits them?

concept of the individualised market society, whereby individuals relate to each other as property owners.

From a legal standpoint, what should be an exchange of equivalents between two equally free commodity owners, when turned around, becomes only an apparent exchange. In the *Appendix* to the volume one of *Capital*, Marx (1976:1063) argues that market transaction is an “illusory reflection” of a capitalist social relation, which must be constantly reproduced. At the same time, it results from the capitalist production process, as workers must regularly buy back a part of the product they produce in exchange for their living labour. In that sense, the sale and purchase of labour-power and the commodity produced by the worker are just “forms, which mediate his subjugation by capital” (Marx 1976:1063). Hence, it is a form of mediation of social domination, guaranteeing the “perpetual dependence”, which is repeatedly renovated: “[i]t is a form, however, which can be distinguished *only formally* from other more *direct forms of the enslavement of labour* and the *ownership* of it as perpetrated by the owners of the means of production” (Marx 1976:1063-4, emphasis added).

All of it is well summarised in a passage, where the “free” sale and purchase of labour-power is characterised as a “formality”, although essential to capitalism, as “one of the *essential* mediating forms of capitalist relations of production”, which at the same time is a “superficial relation” and “deceptive appearance”, mystifying the “essential nature” of the wage-labour (Marx 1976:1064).⁶⁶ The chapter about the working day in *Capital* reveals well the tension between the form and content, between theory and history (Tomich 2004:26).

In fact, in volumes one and two of *Capital*, Marx uses the method of analysis in terms of *form* and *content*, *appearance* and *essence*. Through these notions, he analyses the market exchange, or the *equality* of the relationship between the owners of commodities, qualifying it as an *appearance*. This relationship, which belongs to the sphere of circulation, is the premise of the capitalist relations of production, but it is also its result. The exchange of labour-power for money appears as the sale and purchase of any other commodity. “If supremacy and subordination come to take the place of slavery, serfdom, vassalage and other patriarchal forms of subjection, the change is

⁶⁶ “It follows that two widely held views are in error: There are firstly those who consider that wage-labour, the sale of labour to the capitalist and hence the *wage form*, is something only *superficially* characteristic of capitalist production. It is, however, one of the *essential* mediating forms of capitalist relations of production, and one constantly reproduced by those relations themselves. Secondly, there are those who regard this superficial relation, this *essential formality*, this *deceptive appearance* of capitalist relations as its true *essence*. They therefore imagine that they can give a true account of those relations by classifying both workers and capitalists as *commodity owners*. They thereby gloss over the essential nature of the relationship, extinguishing its *differentia specifica*” (Marx 1976:1064, emphases in original).

purely one of form. The form becomes freer because it is objective in nature, voluntary in appearance, purely economic” (Marx 1976:1027-8).

It is not that the members of capitalist society live in an illusion; it is that appearance is part of reality. Wage form, for Marx, is a particular form of bondage, which implies that the workers are free as they have the opportunity to bargain with and change the employer, which conceals the bondage itself. In that sense, wage workers appear to be free agents, but in essence, they are bound to capital (Cohen 1972). This is one of the dimensions of the meaning of indirect enslavement of wage labourers.

For these reasons, Banaji (2003) argues that the concept of “free labour” is incoherent. However, not only due to the double logic of dependence and domination: subsumption to capital and subordination *cum* obedience, which is concealed by the employment contract but also because free labour can end up under various forms of bondage. “Freedom” from the means of production and subsistence, as well as the freedom to enter the employment contract, might evolve into different forms of bondage. Moulier-Boutang (1998) maintains that “free” wage labour should be considered as one of the forms of dependent labour, being part of the wage system, coexisting and combined with other unfree forms of wage labour. Moreover, if the qualification of “freedom” in this case is to be taken seriously, it should not simply mean the “freedom” to enter the contract but the capacity to reject the dependency inherent to the wage relation itself.

2.1.7 Private property, the “right of increase”, and surplus value

Suppose workers belong to the capital before selling their labour power to a capitalist, and an employment contract creates a social relation of domination. How can the argument about the equal or equivalent exchange between commodity owners be sustained? As Marx's main contributions to the critique of political economy suggest, it can be maintained if the “hidden abode” of exploitation is not exposed. Workers get paid the equivalent of the value of their labour-power but not what they produce (Dörre 2018:78). Hence, they do unpaid labour. The vulnerability that derives from the structural power relation between capital and labour and the sale of obedience for a wage allows the surplus labour in the form of a product to be confiscated. The subsumption of labour under capital and labour's subordination in the labour process constitute, for Marx, the conditions for exploitation or the extraction of surplus value. Workers sell their obedience in exchange for a wage, and the capitalist acquires the use-value of the labour-power. Wage form is a

form of appearance, which conceals the real relations, in that the wage is not a “price of labour” or the “value of labour”, but it is a “masked form for the value of labour-power”:

Wages are not what they *appear* to be, namely, the *value*, or *price*, of *labour*, but only a masked form for the *value*, or *price*, of *labour-power*. . . . [I]t was made clear that the wage-worker has permission to work for his own subsistence, that is, *to live*, only in so far as he works for a certain time gratis for the capitalist . . . ; that the whole capitalist system of production turns on increasing this gratis labour by extending the working day or by developing productivity . . . that consequently, the system of wage labour is a system of slavery, and indeed of a slavery which becomes more severe in proportion as the social productive forces labour develop, whether the worker receives better or worse payment. (Marx 2010b:92, emphases in original)

In the wage system, the workers must sell their labour-power to earn subsistence. Still, they can do it only if they perform unpaid labour since working as much as is necessary to make a living would not guarantee the expansion of capital. This is why the common-sense expression of “fair wage” or “equal exchange” is nonsensical.

The capitalist pays the labourers in money, which is only a fragment of what they produce, but the commodity form veils this relation. The payment in money makes it seem as if the source of the payment made by the capitalist would be something other than the expropriated unpaid labour (Mepham 1972:17).

It is interesting to add here the perspective of anarchist socialists, according to whom it is the exclusive ownership of private property, the entitlement to land and capital, which gives their owners the power to appropriate unpaid labour in the form of surplus value and obtain profit. In *What is Property?* Proudhon ([1840] 1994:118) defined private property as the “right of increase” [*aubaine*]⁶⁷, “claimed by the proprietor over anything which he has marked as his”. Proprietors enjoy the “right of increase” by exploiting the propertyless, which is enabled by the monopoly over the possessed things. This right can take different forms.⁶⁸ The logic of its functioning is that the proprietors, who have the monopoly over possessed things, instruments, lands, and tools, hire them

⁶⁷ With the “right of aubaine”, Proudhon (idem.) alludes to the institution of aubaine, which regulated the presence of foreigners or outlanders in the jurisdiction of feudal lords. The “right of aubaine” refers to the proprietor's right to a thing, which is marked with her symbol, and to objects and people, who are in a relation of dependence regarding the marked thing. Proudhon transformed into a critique of the capitalist private property, which in Locke had appeared as a justification of the appropriation of products of those who depend on the property owner: “. . . the grass my horse has bit, the turfs my servant has cut, and the ore I have digged in my place, where I have a right to them in common with others, become my *property* without the assignation or consent” (Locke [1690] 1980:19-20, emphasis in original). Justified is the appropriation of the horse and his feed, the servant and his or her labour, all qualified by the possessive pronoun “my” (Franco 1993:51).

⁶⁸ “Farm-rent [*fermage*] for lands, house-rent [*loyer*] for houses and furniture, rent for life-investments, interest for money, benefice, gain, profit (three things which must not be confused with wages or the legitimate price of labour)” (Proudhon [1840] 1994:119).

out so that workers can produce certain use-values or exchange-values. They have not made the instruments (including land, obviously), but the monopoly situation gives the owners the right to ask for payment for their use. As they have not spent any labour, the profit is created from nothing, which permits Proudhon to conclude that private property is unproductive. From the point of view of labour, the workers are forced to hire instruments to gain their means of living.

If we compare Marx's and Proudhon's accounts about producing the means of life, both reside on a conditionality. In the former case, it is a conditionality to perform unpaid labour, and in the latter case, it is an obligation to pay for the use of the means of production, which are the products of past social labour. Both constitute a surplus for the owners.

Marx and Proudhon regarded the principle of private property as "everyone's right to enjoy one's own fruits of labour", written in the French Constitution of 1793, as false. Both argued that private property guarantees the right to appropriate the labour of others. Thus, capitalist private property is based on the labour of others.

In that light, Tomba highlights that from the perspective of the process of valorisation, Marx affirms that it is "no longer the labourer that employs the means of production, but the means of production that employ the labourer" (Marx 1996, cited in Tomba 2013b:126). Tomba refers to the process of inversion: instead of the workers consuming the "material elements of productive activity", the material elements are consuming the workers, the living labour, as "the ferment of their own vital process" (Tomba 2013b:126). In this context, the core idea of capital becomes intelligible: the "value valorising itself" (Marx 1976:988). From the point of view of capital valorisation, it is not precisely the expropriation of the unpaid labour of an individual worker which contributes to that, but the appropriation of the value produced by the collective worker, the collective energy produced in the collective labour activity.

2.2 Wage-labour and extra-economic coercion

In this chapter, I have discussed the double subordination and coercion of the "free" wage labour, or the urban industrial proletariat: first, the subsumption of labour to capital, and second, the social relation of obedience and subordination in the labour process as an exploitation process. Both imply a relation of heteronomy. As discussed in the first chapter, the process of subsuming labour under capital is not only an episodic event in history, but it is a continuous process, which includes the expropriation of direct producers and creating an available mass of exploitable labourers, who are obliged to sell their labour-power and disciplined to perform capital-producing and value-creating

labour. However, theoretically, wage relations in capitalism should be intermediated only by the silent compulsion of economic relations, that is, economic rationality, which should have substituted any direct compulsion, open violence, bondage, and expropriation. Since the 18th century, the dominant belief has been that what distinguished “free” labour from unfree labour was that the former enjoyed the right to work for whom they wished and to leave the job whenever they wanted. The only form of appropriating labour from wage workers should be a dull economic compulsion, including pressures such as deprivation of income and property from time to time, to which the employers would voluntarily recur as the most efficient form. If violent extra-economic coercion was ever part of capitalism, then only in its genesis phase, as a mechanism of the so-called primitive accumulation. The continued existence of such relations in the so-called “mature capitalism” is considered a residue from past times destined to disappear insofar as economic rationality becomes hegemonic or they exist only as exceptions.

Moreover, compelling labour performance through extra-economic means would be the case only in agricultural peripheries of the expanding capitalist system, where labour scarcity prevailed, the land was abundant, and planters were forced and able to use unfree labour and contract workers in the 19th century. Recent research on the history of wage labour in Europe has challenged this picture, showing that what has become known in the 20th century as the “free” wage labour was not the norm of wage labour until the last quarter of the 19th century, when the law of labour contracts was changed in 1875. The norm was some restricted form of wage labour, implying that separating workers from their conditions of labour could also develop into coerced labour arrangements.

A French economist, Moulrier-Boutang (1998) maintains in his magnificent book *De l'esclavage au salariat. Economie historique du salariat bride* (From slavery to wage labour: an economic history of the bridled proletariat) that fixing and disciplining the dependent workers fleeing the employment contract was the main challenge of capital accumulation between 1500 and 1800. The challenge of capitalist accumulation during these four centuries was to immobilise the bodies of dispossessed workers by hindering the flight, punishing the breach of contract and the refusal to work. In other words, to discipline the propertyless and to tie them down to capital as value-producing labour.

The relation of dependency on and subordination to capital was historically institutionalised politically and legally. The curbing of workers’ mobility through various social policies and laws happened in two dimensions. First, at the macro-societal and -economic scale, and second, in worker-capitalist relations. Both processes imply the use of violent means, both legal and political, to fix the workers and to “put the poor to work”. The use of legislation by capitalists until the last

quarter of the 19th century is evidence that employment relations until very late were not just intermediated by pure market relations or economic compulsion (Gerstenberger 2018; Moulrier-Boutang 1998; Steinfeld 1991, 2001).

It is hardly believable that workers in the 19th century used their labour power at the limit of their physical and mental capacities during long working hours just by free will, enough motivated by the three shillings, which were paid for them that they could reappear at work the next day. Or that the only factor that led to the entry into the ranks of the proletariat was hunger, or that the machine dictated the rhythm in the workplace. The worker did not leave! Why? Often, workers were obliged to finish the contract because, in the case of not staying until the end of the term, they were punished with imprisonment or a monetary fine. However, are wage workers not always free to leave? They were free to enter the new employment relationship, but until the end of the 19th century, it was not so evident that they were free to say no to subordination.

As seen in the works of Moulrier-Boutang (1998) and Wallerstein (1974), the central concern of employers in the early phases of capitalism was labour control in different forms, more particularly, the control of labour mobility. However, before the social and political hierarchies could be established in the labour process, the private property regime and social discipline had to be established at the macro- and meso-societal levels. Curiously, the process of proletarianisation, usually conceptualised as increasing availability and release of the labour force to the rural or urban labour markets as a result of enclosures, taking place in various waves, was not an infra-social process in the sense that dispossessed workers were forced to move towards the new centres of production to start earning their living as a result of push and pull factors. Moulrier-Boutang's study of labour and social policies during the first three centuries of capitalist formation demonstrates that between the 16th and 18th centuries, the main issue besides creating an available working class was the disciplining through the "Great Fixation" of the impoverished rural population. The second movement of "Great Fixation" was the constitution of the subject of Possessive Individualism and contractualism (Moulrier-Boutang 1998:244-245).

Labour and social policies, as well as surveillance, were used to restrict the mobility of dependent workers to fix them to the reproductive sphere, to their families, land, or to any other institution playing the role of controlling their reproductive activity in the sense of controlling the autonomy and independence of the dependent salaried workers concerning the requirements of capital's valorisation (Moulrier-Boutang 1998:246-247). Arguably, the "Great Fixation" of the impoverished rural population was necessary for controlling the price of labour-power as an essential condition for extracting surplus value. This applies not only to wage labour but also to

non-wage labour, which is necessary to reproduce the former. The control of vagrants and beggars could also be seen from that angle.

Moulier-Boutang (1998) talks about the wage system developing since the late medieval and early capitalist phase, into which the regimes of slavery and indentured labour used in the New World were also integrated. What we know as the so-called primitive accumulation in England and, to a lesser extent, in other European countries happened hand in hand with the “Great Fixation”. “Great Fixation” included controlling intra-rural and rural-urban mobility, culminating in parish serfdom and controlling beggars and vagrants. From the world system’s perspective, it occurred concomitantly with the gradual establishment of slavery in European colonies in the New World, which is also part of the broad movement of fixation and control of labour markets⁶⁹. Wallerstein (1980) writes about the early period of industrialisation and the competition for merchant capital in 1651-1689, which put pressure on the workers regarding labour discipline. He shows how the idea of cost-efficiency in England, the image of clockwork (Thompson 1967:57), “duty to labour”, “right to employment”, and labour discipline were synchronised in the same bundle. It is illustrated by the “slavery” of coal and salt miners in Scotland⁷⁰ as well as the practices of binding the workers to their workplaces in royal factories in France despite high salaries (Wallerstein 1980:93). Hence, the authoritarian control of labour-power seemed to have been a common practice within the scope of the early capitalist world-system, in which New World slavery and indentured labour as well as the control of the mobility in European and US labour-markets (Moulier-Boutang 1998:175) were synchronised in the same universe.

In Late Medieval Europe, workers were no longer enserfed or enslaved but dependent workers, expressing different modes whereby wage relation was curbed. From that point of view, wage labour, as a historically new form of servitude, shared some of the qualities of plantation enslaved labour, and modern slavery shared some of the qualities of wage labour. They share not just a transhistorical notion of labour as a human activity. Both share qualities that characterise the social organisation of labour in the modern capitalist world system. From the viewpoint of “shared histories” (Randeria 2000), the contemporaneous configuration of both modes of labour control

⁶⁹ In the 16th-18th centuries, not only the propertied bourgeois figure was in the constitution, but also its opposite – the “motley crew” of propertyless working people were manifesting themselves through the “constant threat of escape” from the capitalist forms of labour, and the “disobedience to the law and order” in colonies as well as in motherlands. These underclasses were resisting their fixation as value- and capital-producing labour implemented through the trade of enslaved workers, witch-hunts, enclosures, enforcement of laws against vagabonds, punishments for property crimes, and organisation of labour according to capitalist logic (Linebaugh and Rediker 2000:103-104).

⁷⁰ These miners were considered bondsmen in the fullest sense by their masters. However, strikes were allowed, but it had to do with the high demand for skilled labour (Wallerstein 1980:93n121).

within the broader process of “Great Fixation” is an example of shared labour histories, as capital faced a challenge to fix down and discipline the available workers as value- and capital-producing labour (Moulier-Boutang 1998), through various degrees of “coerced commodification” (Linden 2011), a process in which State-*Gewalt* was fundamental.

Moulier-Boutang (1998), who applies Wallerstein’s world-system perspective to trace the genealogy of the historical wage system back to late-medieval England, argues that it was after the end of the Black Death (which had considerably reduced the number of workers resulting in the doubling of the value of labour-power) that it was possible to witness the first formations of labour markets, regulated by the trade associations as well as the State.⁷¹ In the Late Middle Ages, wage relations signified a symbolic and practical emancipation from serfdom for workers. It mainly implied becoming one’s master, increasing mobility, and participating in urban decision-making. In the 16th and 17th centuries, with the increasing number of the “poor”, wage labourers were classified as unworthy. Among the “poor” were those with no other means of production than their mind or body to sell (Moulier-Boutang 1998:280-81). The concrete category of “free” wage labour is primarily dispossessed labour. In other words, the freedom of free workers was negative. They were “free” to move, theoretically. Were they free to choose? Yes, their masters!

Thierry Drapeau (2014), in his PhD thesis “Atlantic roots of working-class internationalism”, reminds us well that in the German edition of *Capital*, Marx (1976:896) used the term *vogelfrei*, “free as a bird”, to characterise this newly gained freedom: “free but outside the human community and therefore entirely unprotected and without legal rights”.⁷² Marx seems to have used *vogelfrei* to refer to both “unattached” and “rightless”. In the chapter about the so-called primitive accumulation, Marx draws an image of the “free, unprotected and rightless proletarian”. In the same chapter, he suggests that in Italy, where serfdom dissolved and capitalist production developed the earliest, the emancipated serfs became “free” proletarians without legal rights (Marx 1976:876n1).

Also, the research of the US legal historian Robert J. Steinfield (1991, 2001) about the history of wage labour in England as well as in the US has radically revised the picture painted by

⁷¹ In 1381, insurgent movements demanded the abolition of the Statute of Labourers, which was created between 1349 and 1351. This statute aimed to freeze wages and previewed several measures to control mobility. The Statute was implemented by labour contracts, which contained the obligation of the worker to labour for a fixed time, whereas breaching the contract was punishable by different forms of public shaming. The worker who entered the labour contract was dependent and had no freedom to negotiate the wage increase. In 1382, the insurgents demanded freedom of wage negotiation, the abolition of serfdom, the freedom of all tenants, a uniform ground rent, general amnesty, total freedom to buy and sell, and the freedom of work. What was regulated by the state was not mobility per se but dislocations without labour contracts, as it made it impossible to control wages (Moulier-Boutang 1998).

⁷² Editorial footnote.

the Scottish Enlightenment regarding the “free” wage labour. Steinfeld has questioned the narrative that “[u]nfree serf labour gave way to regulated wage labour and finally to free wage labour as part of this larger historical process” (2001:1-3). He has also challenged the conceptions of historical wage labour based on rigid assumptions, which relate a fixed set of contract practices to a specific labour form, e.g., wage labour and contract labour (Steinfeld 2001:5): one defines capitalism, and the other is an anomaly in the capitalist system. Steinfeld’s study about the use of a mix of economic and extra-economic means of pressure by employers to appropriate labour and guarantee their economic aims, enabled by the state, leads him to conclude that different labour forms should be analysed as part of a “broad continuum” than as opposites (Steinfeld 2001:8).

In his book *The Invention of Free Labour*, published in 1991, Steinfeld shows that the type of wage labour developing in Europe at the time slavery and indentured servitude were established in the New World was not free labour but wage labour, not much different from indentured servitude. The transaction through which workers sold the property in their labour power could take various forms.

The labour arrangements in 17th-century England could last from day/week/task until a year, including life-long service. Although the population understood these labour arrangements as a kind of servitude, they were defined as “free”, principally for being consensual and voluntary.⁷³ However, the most common legal form of consensual manual labour was unfree labour (Steinfeld 1991:4)⁷⁴ because English law made the breach of labour contracts punishable by imprisonment. Mobility was restricted in manifold ways. The same happened in American colonies, where legal

⁷³ Despite different „compulsory labour clauses” in labour legislation, servant’s (also including day-labourers) subordination to the control of the employer during the period of the contract, conveyance of property in labour to the employer for a fixed term (from day until years), and criminal punishment in the case of premature breach of contract, which approached servants with enslaved workers, “servants” in the broader sense were considered “free” and as such opposed to “slaves”. A fundamental aspect of this distinction was the consensual basis of the labour agreement: even if the worker was subjected to drudgery and by law could render oneself to some compulsory service, ordinary service was considered voluntary, but slavery and villeinage were not. This also resulted in the idea that economic exchange was voluntary. The contemporaries of Locke and other political theorists, as well as broader public imagery, distinguished between servants and enslaved persons based on other aspects. Service implied transferring only the property in the servant’s labour to the master; the obligation to serve the master was limited; the master had limited rights to the labour of their servants; service was temporary; after completing the service, the worker could move as anybody else; servants had the right to own property, and during their service, they had some rights. In slavery, the master obtained the almost absolute property of the enslaved person; she may have had a right to the enslaved person’s life; slavery meant total rightlessness; the owners of enslaved persons obtained an almost total right to enslaved persons; the enslaved person was subordinated to owner’s absolute authority; they could not own property, not even of their own persons, but they were the subjects of property and hence rightless; slavery was a permanent condition transferred by blood to offsprings. Despite that, it is evident that before the 18th century, “free labour” was a “contradiction in terms”. However, distinguishing “servant” and “slave” was possible because “legal freedom (and unfreedom) were not absolute matters but matters of degree” (Steinfeld *idem.*:22-23, 99, 101-102).

⁷⁴ When the legal form, which did not give any right to employers to penalise the breach of contract or have a right to specific performance, appeared in American colonies at the beginning of the 18th century, it was a unique form and not a universal form of contractual labour (*idem.*).

measures were undertaken to make labour agreements enforceable, and workers were subjected to criminal punishment if they failed to comply. In England, it did not apply only to apprentices or servants but also to labourers and artificers. Thus, in the 17th century, one cannot find such a legally recognised category as free labour as a self-conscious set of legal and social practices. Instead, at that time, English and American law provided the employer with the possibility of legal control over the persons of their workers. Hence, the workers were legally free to enter the labour contract but not to leave it. The contemporaries viewed this legal control in two ways. On the one hand, it is an authority or personal government that some people exercise over others. On the other hand, it was understood as a legal right or a property that employers enjoyed over the services or energies of their workers for a limited period, as established in the contract. In the second half of the 17th century, this legal control of property became an essential component in the development of the market society (Steinfeld 1991:3-4).

The practice of enforcing contracts and a private property regime did not disappear with the liberal market capitalism of the 19th century. In England and the US, law was used to force labour agreements. A singular capitalist employer did not do this, but the law functioned in favour of enforcing labour contracts, as shown by Steinfeld (2001). Steinfeld (1991, 2001) and Moulrier-Boutang (1998) argue that market society does not imply an inevitable overcoming of unfree labour. By contesting the Polanyian thesis of double movement, the latter suggests that charity institutions were not implemented to restrict the market mechanisms to guarantee social protection. These institutions were important in regulating the mobility of dependent workers and were, thus, the conditions for market expansion. Since the middle of the 16th and 17th centuries, the Correction Houses and the Working Houses cheaply leased the poor to local employers (Moulrier-Boutang 1998:19).

Scholars have often considered the continuation of extra-economic coercion in 19th-century labour relations as a feudal relic (Orren 1991). They have opposed considering it part of the *modus operandi* of capitalist institutions. However, there are also studies about Master-Servant Law in England⁷⁵, which defined the legal status of those who worked for others, putting the “masters over their workers in a truncated legal hierarchy” (Steinfeld 1991:16). Steinfeld refers to the historiographical work of Douglas Hay, who has shown that the penal sanctions, which were used against English industrial workers, derived from the Master and Servant Act. From a broader perspective, these did not constitute an exception to the rule. Criminal punishments for contract

⁷⁵ The Master and Servant Law defined the *de jure* and *de facto* status of most workers as servants until 1875 (Corrigan 1977).

breaches became more frequent with the onslaught of industrial development (Hay 1990, cited in Steinfeld 2001:6n12).

The “free” contracts and “free” labour market instituted in the 19th century did not produce what became known as “free” wage labour. They created what Steinfeld (2001:234) calls a “regime that employed nonpecuniary pressures to appropriate labour from workers”. In that context, it would be more proper to talk about the nineteenth-century wage labour form as “coerced contractual labour” or indentured labour, hence unfree or coerced, in Moulrier-Boutang’s (1998) terminology as a “curbed wage-labour”. Thus, the nineteenth-century industrial capitalism with more accessible markets in England did not produce free labour but a form of “coerced” contractual labour.

These two – unfree and free contractual labour – do not stem from different social and economic systems: medieval economy and society and market economy and society, respectively. On the contrary, they are rooted in the same socio-economic system, and these are just two different regimes of property in person (Steinfeld 1991:6-7).⁷⁶ In that sense, the first blossoming of labour markets had as its integral element the criminal enforcement of labour agreements (Steinfeld 1991:9). This, then, modifies the traditional narrative:

The origins of modern free wage labour are not found in the free contracts in free markets of the first half of the nineteenth century but in the restrictions placed on freedom of contract by the social and economic legislation adopted during the final quarter of the century. (Steinfeld 1991:10)

As observed by Steinfeld and Moulrier-Boutang, this pattern was found not only in England but also in Germany, France, and the US. According to Steinfeld, it does not make sense to draw a line between “free” and “unfree” labour based on the distinction between extra-economic (non-pecuniary) and economic (pecuniary) coercion, since both are measures to coerce the performance of labour. Specific pecuniary measures, such as the loss of all wages in the case of non-performance of the labour agreement, could have a similar effect as milder non-pecuniary measures, such as short confinement. Severe pecuniary measures could imply significant restrictions to life circumstances, loss of home or incapacity to feed a family. Despite that, according to the modern view, independent of the severity of the financial measure, it does not produce coerced labour, but any non-pecuniary measure does. Making this distinction also does not make sense because the

⁷⁶ By the 18th century, “[i]ndentured labour and free labour represented alternative legal expressions of the idea that individuals owned and could freely sell the property in their energies” (idem.).

purpose of their use is usually the same – accomplishing particular economic objectives by the employers - and they can lead to similar consequences (Engermann 1992:2977; Steinfeld 2001:17).

The underlying assumption regarding the economic measure is that it is the result of market forces, which are impersonal and indirect. As the classical political economy has affirmed, market force is a natural and uncontrollable invisible hand, in contrast to law, which is fabricated by people. This division creates an appearance as if economic coercion did not have “its source in a set of legal rights, privileges, and powers that place one person in a position to force another person to choose between labour and some more disagreeable alternative to the labour, just as so-called legal compulsion does” (Steinfeld 2001:19). Thus, economic coercion is not natural but results from law, and more specifically from the direction of private property, which functions as a mechanism to restrict liberties. Economic coercion might provide a broader universe of alternatives (although often ungraspable to the individual) than legal coercion (Steinfeld 2001:20-21).

English historical sociologist Marc Steinberg has also shown, based on his research on the role of the legal institutions in labour control in industrial capitalism, that these kinds of penal sanctions applied by English capitalists, instead of being the residues of feudalism, should be put into the context of the developments of the 18th- and 19th-centuries: “[m]aster and servant should be seen as a historical form of advanced formal subsumption of labour in the absence of other institutional or technical forms of control in the workplace” (Steinberg 2003:451). Using extra-economic means is particularly important for the formal subsumption of labour under capital. Historically, capitalists tried to get the workers under their control, especially in sectors where craft workers still had quite a lot of autonomy. Steinberg discusses several ways workers were bound to their employers in the 19th century, not only through the enforcement of contracts. For example, outsourced workers were charged for ancillary materials in some sectors. Among the locksmiths, a type of debt peonage was typical: the masters lent money to the workers who could not repay the loan. In lock trade, the workers were also hired from workhouses as apprentices. In nail and chain trade, although this kind of practice had been made illegal a decade before, a “truck system” (“tommy” shops) was used, in which workers received their remuneration in goods or alcohol sold in factory-owned groceries and beer shops at inflated prices (Steinberg 2010:192).

From the 18th and 19th centuries, there are examples of forced migration of agricultural labourers to industrial centres, such as Manchester in England, as well as the use of gang labour. Until the last quarter of the 19th century, some employers used the law to punish workers for

⁷⁷ “While individuals maintained legal property rights in themselves, controls over land and capital led to economic outcomes resembling those when property rights in persons belong to others” (idem.).

breaching the labour contract. With the abolition of the Master and Servant Law in 1875, employers started using other mechanisms to subordinate labour. In the final decades of the 19th century, new factories introduced and extended mechanisation as a control mechanism. Female and child labour were more extensively used and substituted for the skilled male workers. Larger industries created paternalistic regimes (Corrigan 1977), introducing practices of informal favours, which consisted of housing and “sponsoring of social activities” (Steinberg 2003:483). By controlling the reproductive activities of their workers, employers could guarantee continuous access to their labour (Linden and Roth 2014:479), create a commitment, lower the reproduction costs and create a complex moral bond (Corrigan 1977). Using different means to control labour continued into the twentieth century. These forms of binding the workers to the employers in modern enterprises also raise questions about the purity of wage relations in employment relations.

The research of Steinberg (2003, 2010) and Steinfeld (1991, 2001) on the wage labour in the core areas of the capitalist world economy until the end of the 19th century reveals a limitation of the world systems analysis in terms of the international labour division, according to which unfree labour has been historically a critical category only in the accumulation processes in the periphery and semi-periphery, and not as an important “institutional feature in the core” (Steinberg 2003:451). Extra-economic compulsion used in England until the last quarter of the 19th century to appropriate labour cannot be considered a feudal residue. Instead, it was based on legal and direct instruments used increasingly in the winds of industrialisation to enable control over labour (Moulier-Boutang 1998; Orren 1991; Steinberg 2003, 2010; Steinfeld 1991, 2001). It was not just in “former times”, but capital continued resorting to legislation in the heyday of liberal capitalism when it seemed necessary to enforce property rights over formally “free” workers. These results are telling in the sense that wage labour itself cannot be treated as a closed and uniform category, as between enslaved and “free” wage labour, there are several intermediary categories, which means that the boundaries between labour forms cannot be drawn that strictly.

The wage form, as value- and capital-producing labour, was almost always imposed on early expropriated workers through direct and indirect force, which is also expressed through all kinds of attempts by dependent workers to flee from employment relations. Besides structural factors, specialised literature tends to emphasise the historical aspects as relevant in eliminating penal sanctions. In that sense, the decrease in violence at the end of the 19th century cannot be explained only as an economic process (Frings 2019), nor can it be associated with the “historical mission” of the bourgeoisie (Chibber 2013). Frings relates the elimination of penal sanctions and the change of the rules governing the labour contracts to the decades-long labour struggles and the search for new

legitimation mechanisms for the labour discipline on the part of capitalist employers. Heidi Gerstenberger (2018) sustains that the international movement for the abolition of slavery placed the work contract in the middle of the justification of capitalism.

There were alternatives to this 19th-century formal free wage labour, such as mutualism and cooperatives, which were criminalised with the imposition of the new employment society based on contractual wage relations. That wage form meant a change in the form of servitude is telling about the capital-labour relation. Namely, proletarianisation does not guarantee workers' capacity to fully own and freely dispose of their labour power under capitalism. Still, it may result from it, although it is highly unstable within a capitalist regime.

In the capitalist mode of production, the workers' struggle to control their labour power has been constant and continuous, demonstrating the instability of the wage form. Even in contemporary capitalism, individual capitalists seek ways to restrict workers' control over their labour power. Evidence of it can be found in practices to weaken labour unions, limiting or even criminalising labour strikes, as workers face punishments either in the form of nonpayment of wages or other kinds of pressures when they are trying to withdraw their labour power from the valorisation process. That capital has used and continues using extra-economic coercion to subsume labour is not a sign of capitalism's immaturity. It is just a business-as-usual, as one would say nowadays.

2.3 Heteronomous subsumption of free and unfree labour under capital

It has become clear that this kind of urban industrial proletariat in the form of "free" wage labour that Marx placed at the centre of his analysis of capitalism was not there until quite late. He focused on the specificity of the appearance of abstract labour in wage form, so much so that in his works about the critique of political economy, other labour forms belonging to the working class are obfuscated. However, as noticed by Baronov (2000), Marx's detailed description of the working day permits observing that wage labour itself appears in various concrete forms referring to broad heterogeneity and diversity whereby capital subsumes labour as a consequence of industrialisation

and mechanisation (Baronov 2000:72).⁷⁸ *Capital* reveals that the “working class in general” was very heterogeneous in England and in other Western European countries in the 19th century. This special commodity labour-power can presuppose manifold historical processes and in no way implies that surplus value can be produced only with this form of wage labour (“free”). Baronov (2000) argues that Marx used this category because it relies on pure money relation in its relationship with capital, making it the most comprehensive form to quantitatively demonstrate surplus value production. At the same time, he considered it the most highly developed form capable of providing capital with labour-power. However, he regularly showed how, in the first half of the 19th century, extremely precarious labour arrangements were developed in the background of the large-scale industry that employed the surplus population under various kinds of subcontracting systems of piecework. The surplus value did not depend only on the expropriation of surplus labour but also on the reduction of the wage below their normal average level.⁷⁹ Another view about Marx's privileging of “free” wage labour is that the “liberal utopia” during the emergence of the British empire could ideally rely on this form of wage labour as the legitimation of capital. Accordingly, Marx does not highlight wage labour as central in capitalism because it had become dominant in his time; otherwise, the production of surplus value would have been impossible. He did it because wage labour represents the highest form of veiling exploitation (Frings 2019:440).

At the same time, in *Capital*, Marx understood distinct forms of labour exploitation – absolute surplus value and relative surplus value corresponding to formal and real forms of subsumption of labour under capital⁸⁰ - as being contemporaneous to each other and combined in the same temporality (Tomba's 2013b). These do not represent distinct historical stages but somewhat different concepts of subsumption (Murray 2004), appearing in the socioeconomic world as overlapping and contemporaneous, synchronised by the world economy and state violence (Tomba 2013b). According to Tomba's (2013b) reading of *Capital*, “formal subsumption” is not a transitory form to “real subsumption”, but it continues co-existing and combined with “real

⁷⁸ In his chapter about the working day in the first volume of *Capital*, Marx shows the impacts of the factory system and mechanisation on the working class. The development of the factory system and expansion of mechanisation led to the multiplication of the proletariat, the emergence of the reserve army, the unemployed, and the increasing semi-employed population. Women and children worked next to the so-called mature wage-labour, which comprised adult male workers. Semi-proletarianisation was common in English factories. Considering the 19th-century workload per person of the same family to guarantee bare subsistence, the proletarian household was not much distinguishable from the contemporary serf household in Russia or the household of enslaved people in the plantations of the Americas. Furthermore, the “company towns” which provided barracks to proletarian women and children in England were comparable with manors and plantations (idem.).

⁷⁹ Marx calls them transitional or accompanying forms. See the fn 6 in section 1.1 of chapter one.

⁸⁰ See the fn 5 in section 1.1. of chapter one.

subsumption”, which does not mean that “real subsumption” means “real” capitalism. Neither do forms which have been identified as pre- or non-capitalist necessarily disappear. They can be subsumed in *hybrid* forms under the reign of capital, being produced and reproduced by it in combination with other forms of subsumption. In this process, the allegedly pre- or non-capitalist forms can maintain their form. However, they can be reformulated in terms of their content while being integrated into the value-producing process, in which the capitalist intervenes from the outside as its director and manager.

In that light, one of the weapons of capital is to shape a working class articulated in a form advantageous to it (Linebaugh 1976; Wood 1988:6)⁸¹. It was in this key that Lenin (1899) comprehended the division within the working class, showing how in the 19th-century Russia the subordination of labour under capital intensified and extended the “backward” modes of production. Lenin’s (1899) analysis of the development of capitalism in Russia showed that the wage-labour forms were very diverse because they were entangled with the survival of what he understood as a “pre-capitalist regime”. In his analysis, Lenin emphasised the relationship of the working class to capital, independently of the form in which the capital organised it. He analysed the lumber and timber sectors, where the workers living in forest depth were embedded in relations of bondage, and part of their income did not take the form of a monetary wage. Such un- or semi-waged labour forms were the condition for developing large-scale industries in the fuel, machine and building sectors (Lenin 1899:590). What appears here as the so-called “residue” is qualitatively fundamental for capitalist accumulation. Linebaugh (1979) comments that extra-economic forms of bondage, such as truck payment, persisted as conditions of exploitation to provide stability for capitalist accumulation.

Inspired by the work of Lenin, Banaji has argued that “[i]t was precisely in the backward countries subjugated to the world economy as ‘colonies’ that the process of the *mediation of capitalist (value-producing) relations of production by archaic (“pre-capitalist”) forms of subjugation of labour* assumed historically unprecedented dimension” (2010:62, emphasis in original). Hence, the so-called pre-capitalist or non-capitalist forms can take a capitalist content, becoming capital-creating and value-producing, although preserving their form. They can just as

⁸¹ Even some of the most optimistic critics of capitalism, such as Ellen Meiksins Wood (1988), argue that capitalism is a very flexible mode of production, as it can take advantage and reject particular social oppressions. Compared to previous modes of production, according to Wood, capitalism is not inherently entangled with extra-economic, juridical or political identities, inequalities or differences. Due to its tendency to generalise commodity form, it can even undermine such differences by transforming them into interchangeable labour units. However, capital is also probably capable of co-opting any “extra-economic oppressions” historically and culturally available in any given context. I would add here that capital is not just co-opting but is also able to create exploitation combined with extra-economic oppression.

well assume wage form in some disguised manner⁸², as their value-creating unpaid labour is exchanged for minimum means of subsistence (Banaji 2003, 2010). Banaji invites us to consider the possibility that “capitalism [is] working through a *multiplicity* of forms of exploitation *based on* wage labour” (Banaji 2010:145). Accordingly, sharecropping, labour tenancy, debt slavery, and other kinds of bonded labour, as specific modes of labour exploitation, could be just ways whereby paid labour is employed, exploited, and controlled by employers. This does not mean to Banaji that all workers labouring under such regimes are wage workers but that these forms can represent subsumption of labour under capital, according to which the sale of labour-power for wages is disguised in more complex arrangements. Therefore, wage contracts can be organised under different labour systems if we broaden the notion of wages to encompass payments in land, housing and debt (Moulier-Boutang 2003:91). The relation of production may not appear as capitalist. However, the type of exploitation may be, as the hybrid form of subsumption suggests.

French economist Moulier-Boutang (1998) has researched “historical wage labour” in the world system since the late Middle Ages, including a wide range of what he calls “dependent labour forms”, free or unfree. He argues that capitalism emerged and developed based on dependent labour forms. “Free” wage labour is part of the “more global phenomenon of the development of dependent labour in a capitalist regime” (Moulier-Boutang 1998:247). Wage labour can also imply unfreedom when it comes to the restriction of mobility by the employer. Employers have always sought ways to restrict the mobility of workers (i.e., of living labour). In that sense, wage labourers may work under reduced degrees of freedom, including under unfree wage labour (*salariat non-libre*).

He considers dependent labour, not formal freedom, as the matrix of the wage system. The wage system itself has developed from or is embedded in dependent labour. Dependent labour includes more than just the workers themselves but also the activities they perform for employers. It could be defined as:

The working capacity of an individual, who has only that to live (and who therefore finds himself separated from the means of producing for the market and self-subsistence), the capacity, which is put at the disposal of an employer, who is the exclusive owner of the means of production and the authority regarding the division and organisation of labour, is the subject of market transactions (including monetary) and the transfer of property rights, it is sufficient for the worker to be formally paid, but it does not need to be so. (Moulier-Boutang 1998:251)

⁸² This argument that some unfree/semi-free/semi-waged labour forms may assume the wage form in a disguised way might have received its inspiration from Marx himself. In *Grundrisse*, he says that: “wage labour . . . *can* stand in opposition to slavery and serfdom, though *need* not do so, for it always repeats itself under various forms of the overall organisation of labour” (Marx 1973:467, emphasis in original).

This has permitted Moulier-Boutang to argue that enslaved labour is a “hyperdisciplined variant of wage labour”. He shows that the subsumption of labour under capital has not resulted in proletarianisation in its pure form everywhere, which is the “free” wage labour. “Free” here means that the worker “refuses to authorise in one form or another the alienation from the wage worker the right to freely break off from the relation of subordination to the employer” (Moulier-Boutang 1998:253). Dependent labour has historically developed also into “curbed wage labour” (*salariat bride*), which refers to an employment relationship which is binding in form and in the substance of what is sold (Moulier-Boutang 1998:16). In its different manifestations, it represents blocked proletarianisation. It is characterised by restricted mobility because of the constraints of ending the labour contract and low wages. “Curbed wage labour” is distinct from pure wage labour (Marxian proletarian) and the small proprietor or peasant (Chayanov’s restricted proletarianisation). It encompasses enslaved and enserfed workers who are definitively forbidden to leave the master and the land; convicted labourers, indentured labour and servants (apprentices) who, after a temporary ban to leave the employer gain access to free and independent activity; and peonage and different kinds of discrimination, squatters, coolies and international migrants, who face temporary or lasting legal and economic restrictions to leave the employer and to enter the labouring activity (Moulier-Boutang 1998:689). All these forms of “curbed wage labour” are compatible with the rule of production of commodities through commodities.

Extending the concept of wage-labour so that it can take several forms, including unfree wage-labour, seems to resolve the dilemma of how labour forms that are not wage-labour *stricto sensu* enter into the capital-producing and value-creating relations. Although arguing that capitalism is compatible with unfree or unwaged labour, which are also value-producing and capital-positing, in a “disguised way”, Banaji ends up privileging wage-labour form as the only value-producing labour. Therefore, the problem with Banaji’s concept of “disguised wage labour” and Moulier-Boutang’s concept of “curbed wage labour” is that they imply that any labour is part of the wage system and produces surplus value. Wage labour appears in different forms. This seems to stretch the wage labour as an analytical category too much (Vrousalis 2018:436).⁸³

⁸³ Vrousalis (idem.) argues that the “disguised-wage-labour” argument is politically and theoretically weak because it is based on the assumption that only wage labour produces surplus value and that the class of wage workers is the “main object of capitalist exploitation”. Although an “easy fix”, this trick would limit the analysis of historical forms of capitalist exploitation as well as imply that in case of the diminishing of the class of wage-earners – be it due to deindustrialisation, increase of self-employed or “gig economy” – also the range of capitalist exploitation would refrain. Vrousalis (idem.:436) argues it would be an “anti-Marxist conclusion” that no Marxist would admit.

Despite the critique, Banaji's and Moulrier-Boutang's formulations are valuable because they permit considering that wage labour can appear in the unfree or semi-free form and that legal freedom is not necessarily the condition of wage labour. Underneath the phenomenological level of direct compulsion is what Marx (1973) called the "real transaction" of the capitalist mode of production: "the uneven repetitive exchange of value-producing labour for minimal means of subsistence" (p. 1064).

Their formulations also permit us to question Cohen's (2000) argument that wage labourers are inevitably the full owners of their labour power. Compared to enslaved workers who own none of their labour power and neither means of production, the proletarians own all their labour power but no means of production. This distinction, as has been shown by Banaji (2000) and Linden (2011), can be contested if we, for example, take slavery in the Americas and specifically Brazil, where enslaved people were coerced to work for a wage and produce surplus value. It is the case where enslaved labourers have almost no control over their labour power, as they are still living property but at the same time are performing wage labour. In debt-peonage, debt is a control mechanism within the wage system, whereas debt takes the form of an anticipated wage. Fixed-term contracts or punishment for the breach of the employment contract is also evidence of workers' precarious control over their labour power, although being retributed in monetary form.

The analytical concept of "disguised wage labour" also reveals the mystifying character of "wage form" itself. To Marx, "wage form" is mystifying because it veils exploitation behind the market exchange, or the division of labour-time between necessary labour time, paid labour, and surplus labour-time, unpaid labour. "Disguised wage labour" reveals the "wage forms" in the expropriative and compulsive forms of labour appropriation.

Wage-labour does not have to be based on the legal doctrine of freedom of contract. Often, those authors who set wage labour apart from other forms of labour or unfreedom focus on its legal form, transforming wage labour into a narrow category (Moulrier-Boutang 1998). Moulrier-Boutang (1998) argues that

the secret of capitalism is not wage labour. It resides "in the meeting under the unity of command of the capitalist entrepreneur, the means of production, on the one hand, and the social capacity to work stripped of all the means for commodity production. . . . There is production of surplus value, says Marx, from the moment market production is organised based on the separation of the means of production and labour. (Pp. 256-7)

Hence, Moulrier-Boutang adds, the basis of the capitalist exploitation relationship is not the legally or formally constituted state of an employee but a social relationship of capital, which

“makes historical forms of controlled and dependent labour, producers of surplus value” (1998:256-7).

It would be helpful to distinguish between *individual* and *social capital* and ask whether the expansion of *total* social capital can happen based on capital accumulation based on the exploitation of unfree workers. Or, formulated in another way: is “free” wage labour an economic necessity and a historical prerequisite of capitalism? Banaji (2003, 2010) argues that total social capital cannot expand only based on the exploitation of strictly unfree labour. The capitalist economy is regulated according to the logic of total social capital; labour mobility is essential at this level. Individual capitals, in turn, are neutral regarding the nature of labour power and can exploit workers in different manners, not being particularly interested in their rights. Hence, the liberal utopia is indifferent to the use-value; it can use the commodity as it pleases since it has acquired it according to the principle of equal exchange. Accordingly, capital can accumulate based on different forms of labour appropriation and control, including enslaved labour and a multiplicity of forms of exploitation based on *wage labour* (Banaji 2003). Hence, the market order is indifferent regarding how it commodifies labour-power, be it through the enslavement of persons or wage labour (Moulier-Boutang 1998:252).

From the point of view of individual capitals, it does not matter whether it buys the labour power from its possessor and owner or a third party. In the words of Moulier-Boutang (1998:256), “[a] slave market, a contract market, negotiation for payment or benefits in kind, play a substantially analogous role to that of the free wage market”. Independently of whether the labour form relies on wage or not, capital appropriates from the workers their labouring capacity in a commodified form (Baronov 2000:68-69).

Thus, formal freedom of wage labour is essential for capital-relation in general. Still, it is not a necessary condition for wage labour to exist as a form of labour exploitation at the level of the labour process. Therefore, one could agree that “[a]t the level of *individual* capitals, it is accumulation or the ‘the drive for surplus value’ that defines capitalism, not the presence or absence of ‘free’ labour” (Banaji, 2003:81 my emphasis). In one way or another, individual capitals “have repeatedly subjected free workers to repressive forms of control”, which means that “free” labour under capitalism is a highly incoherent concept (Banaji 2003:79, emphasis in original).

Hence, the authors discussed in this section reveal how, throughout historical and contemporary capitalism, capital, through its spatial and temporal movement, subsumes labour in various forms, subordinating and changing them under its command, integrating these different forms into the valorisation process—a process in which state violence plays a vital role as the agent

of capital. Labour subsumed under individual capitals in coercive arrangements plays a crucial role in capital accumulation as these constitute the “internal colonies” from where absolute surplus value is expropriated and which enable the wage-differentials and differentials of surplus value, which support the global expanded reproduction of capital.

2.4 Conclusion

As was said at the beginning of this chapter, neither modern slavery nor wage labour can be defined in isolation, primarily as both, in their modern form, were given birth to by the capitalist world economy in the 16th century. By arguing that both modern wage labour and modern slavery are contemporary to each other and, as such, part of the same universe, this chapter has taken dependent labour, and not free labour, as the primary model of capitalism. Hence, the aim has been to analyse wage labour from the angle of coercion, subordination and dependence. These are features that the 19th-century dichotomic understanding of capitalist labour has obfuscated. It is argued here that wage labour cannot be defined only by freedom, not even in the core countries of capitalism. Hence, it has been necessary to decentre the “free” wage labour as the defining feature of capitalism, as the norm and as the only capital-producing labour.

After examining the features of “free” wage labour, I analysed the contradictory and incoherent nature of this social category as understood by Marx and several Marxist philosophers and political economists, discussing the limits and problems related to the ownership of labour power. The dependence and compulsion of the “free” wage labour have been shown to take place on two fronts in a commodity-determined society: historically produced and constantly reproduced collective subordination of the modern proletariat under the domination of collective capital, on the one hand, and the sale of obedience for a wage to capitalists, on the other. In other words, unlike the workers who are directly enslaved to particular enslavers once and for all, modern proletarians could be understood as being indirectly and repetitively enslaved to capital. The contradiction between theory and history has also been revealed by the political discourse of the 19th-century socialist movements, which defined wage labour as wage slavery.

By discussing the recent research about the history of wage-labour in the core countries of capitalism, particularly that of Steinfeld (1991, 2001) and Moulier-Boutang (1998), it has been shown that extra-economic coercion and expropriation have also been central features of historical wage-labour in England, the paradigm case of the development of bourgeois liberal capitalism to Marxists. Hence, the typical Marxian pure form, the “free” proletarian, was not the norm of wage

labour in England until the end of the 19th century. Moreover, it was one possible outcome of centuries of adaptations and socio-economic pressures, consolidating only in the 19th century with all its internal contradictions but never really becoming a statistical majority within the capitalist world system.

Capitalists commonly used extra-economic coercion with the assistance of state institutions to discipline the dispossessed workers for the value- and capital-producing labour and bind them to employment arrangements. Employers had at their disposal a law that previewed criminal punishment for the breach of contract, and they made active use of it not only during the early development of market relations but also during the heyday of industrialisation in the 19th century. Hence, wage labourers may have been free to enter the labour contract but not necessarily to leave it. Due to this constraint, legal and economic historians prefer defining this type of wage labour as unfree contract labour (Steinfeld 1991) or restricted wage labour (Moulier-Boutang 1998). These penal sanctions have been described in England as characterising the formal subsumption of labour under capital, which, with their abolition, were substituted by paternalistic means or by the machine (real subsumption). From the world systems viewpoint, the contemporaneity of restricted wage labour (Moulier-Boutang 1998) or coerced contract workers (Steinfeld 1991) in the metropole and enslaved labour in the colonies is an example of shared labour histories, as both modes of labour control were configured for centuries in the same universe of capital's challenge to fix down and discipline the available workers as value- and capital-producing labour (Moulier-Boutang 1998), through various degrees of coercion.

Hence, the "free" wage labourer, the proprietor of their labour power and its sole seller, is only one of the categories of dependent labour within the wage system. In its concreteness, wage labour can also be unfree or curbed (e.g., unfree contract labour, *mita*, debt slavery, indentured servitude), and labour appropriation can take the form of expropriation. At the same time, wage labour (free or unfree) itself has been only one of the forms that labour-power has become a commodity and labour has been subsumed under capital in the capitalist world system, as enslaved labour, tenancy, peonage, serfdom, sharecropping, have been other forms.

Different forms of subsumption of labour under capital do not develop in stages; on the contrary, they are contemporary to each other. From the world-systems perspective, the heteronomous subsumption of subaltern workers under capital can be concomitantly real, formal and hybrid. It includes modern slavery in the plantations in the former colonies and later peripheries. Whereas the property in the persons of enslaved workers gave to the colonial and peripheral planters the right to appropriate labour without any mediation, the ownership of the

means of production could provide the manufacturers in Europe a temporary property in the labour-power of proletarians and, thereby, the “right to increase”. The discussion has been guided by the idea that free or unfree labour is subordinated under capital, and all subaltern workers are subject to coerced commodification of their labour power, regardless of whether this coercion is economic or extra-economic. There should not be any impediment to considering the unfreedom or the expropriative dimension in the capital–wage–labour relation.

This raises again the question about the (in)compatibility between slavery and capitalism. As it has been discussed above, in various of his works and letters, Marx was explicit about slavery’s fundamental historical role in the birth of capitalism, considering slavery an essential economic category. However, despite several ambiguities, he left it as a pre-capitalist labour form undetermined, untheorised and outside the capital’s ambit. As was debated in the first chapter, various criticisms elaborated by heterodox Marxists since the 1970s in the Global North on the concept of primitive accumulation resulted in novel formulations about the variety of unpaid and non-commodified forms of labour, including the colonial unfree and non-wage forms of labour control, as constitutive and essential to the logic of capitalism. In other words, wage labour is not the norm of capitalism. Nevertheless, some conceptualisations still define the unfree and non-waged forms as non-capitalist and, as such, external to capital production proper. In the following, I will explore these questions from the peripheral outlook by bringing into the dialogue the Brazilian historical social science and examining their contributions to the renewal of the Marxist political economy of labour.

3. Slavery and capitalism in Brazilian historical social science

In Brazilian social sciences, the formation of the modern working class, with some exceptions, has been discussed from the moment of European immigration and the constitution of the urban-industrial proletariat at the end of the 19th century. There has been quite a clear distinction between “labour history” and the “history of slavery”. In *grosso modo*, the former starts when the latter ends. In Brazilian sociology, the disciplinary division of labour has been such that slavery has been researched within the field of what can be denominated as “racial relations” and not as a moment in the history of labour (Cardoso 2008). I suggest that this division has to do partly with the definition of modern capitalism and modernity by “free” wage labour, and sociology is the science of the modern.

The more endogenous and autonomous social science, which had developed in Brazil in the 1950s and 1960s and was critical of Eurocentrism and the concepts of central social sciences, elaborated structural interpretations of colonial and imperial history (Schwartz 1999:178) and formulated slavery as a labour category. This characterised the heterodox Marxist interpretations (Prado [1942] 1999, 1966, 1979), structuralism (Furtado [1959] 2007), Marxist dependency theory (Marini [1973] 2000), historical sociology (Cardoso 1962; Fernandes [1964] 2008; Franco [1969] 1997; Ianni 1962), historiography (Costa [1966] 1997), mode of production debate (Cardoso 1973a, 1973b; Castro 1977, 1980; Gorender 1980), and the works of *Brazilianistas* (Eisenberg 1974; Schwartz 1985 to mention just few). Most of these strands, in one way or another in dialogue with Marxism, could be considered as local expressions of the global debate about capitalist development. The main focus was on the consequences of Brazil’s particular integration into the world economy (Marquese 2013a:226). The research on slavery in Brazil borrowed more from Marx’s general criticism of the capitalist system than his writing on modern slavery (Grespan 2020).

Since the 1980s and 1990s, vibrant historiographical research about slavery has critically revised the social history of labour (Alencastro 1988; Chalhoub 1990, 2015; Reis 2019; Chalhoub and Teixeira 2009; Eisenberg 1989; Ferlini 2003; Fraga Filho 2006; Fragoso 1996, 1998; Fragoso and Florentino 2001; Hunold Lara 1988, 1998; Libby 1984, 1988; Mattos 2008; Negro and Gomes 2006; Palácios 1996; Pires and Costa 2010; Soares 1988b, 2003). Labour sociology has also included some of the conclusions of this so-called “new historiography” (Cardoso 2008). These rigorous empirical investigations, which have innovated the research methodology, have

demonstrated much higher heterogeneity of labour relations, particularly after the official end of colonialism, than previously believed. Instead of discussing the “transition” from unfree to free labour, these studies have questioned the rigid frontiers between them. According to Marquese (2013a) and Grespan (2020) differently from the socio-economic historiographical research in the middle of the past century, which had privileged slavery’s connection to the capitalist world economy, this new historiography has directed the focus on microhistories, that is, to the internal processes resulting in the dominance of the mode of production category in the studies about slavery, as the “external” problem seems to have been resolved by Brazilian integration into international capitalism.

Nevertheless, the studies of the new historiography still partly mobilise certain aspects of Marxism (Grespan 2020). They have contributed to broadening the horizons of the history of labour and working-class formation in historical capitalism so that colonial/post-colonial slavery was incorporated into its scope, going beyond the narrow focus on the role of European immigrants to São Paulo at the end of the 19th century. Hence, there is an enrichment in the social history of labour, from which the historical sociology of labour could benefit. These contributions will be discussed in the fourth and fifth chapters, together with the more contemporary efforts to synthesise the earlier macrohistory with the recent microhistories (Alencastro 2000; Florentino 2014; Marquese 2013a, 2013b, 2015; Marquese and Salles 2016).

This chapter will focus more on historical social science before the 1980s. Still, I will incorporate some more recent studies, which have contributed to the research of the colonial system of exploitation and slavery as a colonial mode of labour control. This chapter is divided into two parts. In the first part, I will revise some critical Marxist interpretations about the relationship between slavery and capitalism in Brazil. Although the ones who borrowed from the Marxist perspective arrived at very different conclusions (Teixeira 2010), what tended to unite them, *with some crucial exceptions*, was supporting an evolutionist and dichotomic view regarding the transition from slavery to “free” wage labour. Even if they analysed slavery and other forms of coerced (unfree) labour in the periphery and “free” wage labour in the core as part of the same capitalist system, by defining capitalism with the latter, they reproduced the “relation of exteriority” between slavery and capitalism (Franco 1978, 1984). What is the “relation of exteriority”? It is to conceptualise theoretically the relation between the colonial peripheries and metropolitan cores as an “integrated duality” through the world market in a way that places them in distinct but combined temporalities, the former as pre-capitalist, and the latter as capitalist formations (Franco 1978,

[1969] 1997).⁸⁴ In that light, I will examine how this debate shifted theoretically and methodologically from the perspective of “integrated duality” to the “unit of contradiction” (Franco 1978). This shift implied an overcoming the formulation of the relation between colony/periphery and metropolis/core, and free and enslaved labour, as a “relation of exteriority” and instead, understanding them as unitarily determined categories. Hence, this move implied conceptualising this relation as an expression of structurally entangled histories of capital accumulation, constituting the capitalist world economy.

The second part is divided into three sections. First, from the perspective of capitalism as a unitary whole of structurally entangled histories of accumulation, I will discuss how the establishment of the South-Atlantic colonial system of exploitation has been understood by such Brazilian scholars as Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco (1978), Felipe Alencastro (2000), Castro (1977, 1980) as determined by capital. Second, I will examine how these authors, as well as Denise Ferreira da Silva (2019, 2022), permit us to think of modern colonial slavery as an instance of a general social organisation of labour in the capitalist world economy. What Franco (1978:9) has defined as the total expropriation of labour in the 16th century is an expression of the particular form that slavery assumed within the “general movement of the expropriation of the means of production” and as such, was an adequate and profitable commodity- and capital-producing labour in the economy based on the absolute exploitation of the means of production. This thread reappears in the work of Ferreira da Silva (2019, 2022), who scrutinises Marx’s theory of value from the viewpoint of “wounded captive bodies in the scene of subjugation.” She allows an understanding of the compatibility of capital with the colonial property form, which was essential for authorising the appropriation of total value by total violence, understood as expropriation. Third, to conceptualise this totally expropriated labour as value-creating and capital-producing labour, I will discuss Franco’s (1978) contribution to broadening the theory of sale and purchase of labour-power as a fundamental moment of capital production.

⁸⁴ Ricupero (2007) has pointed out that Franco argues that even the theory of dependency understands the relation between metropolis and colony, the core and peripheral “poles of capitalism”, as the one of opposition or even incompatibility, implying that in both situations would prevail distinct modes of production. The “misplaced ideas” thesis of Roberto Schwarz (1992) would also be inspired by that formulation, except that it was applied to liberalism, originating from the capitalist core.

3.1 Towards structural entanglements beyond the “relation of exteriority”

3.1.1 Heterodox Marxism and “the meaning of colonisation”

I start this section by exposing the ideas of Caio Prado Jr., the first Brazilian heterodox Marxist thinker. In 1930-1970, he elaborated an original interpretation of capitalist formation in Brazil without subordinating reality to theoretical formulas or theory to reality. Instead, he translated Marxism to Brazilian-specific socio-historical experience (Ricupero 1998, 2000). Previously, the Marxist interpretations of the Brazilian social and political situations were elaborated by the members of the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB), which was founded in 1922 (Ricupero 2000). They followed the Marxist-Leninist canon defined in the Third International in Moscow (1919–1943), according to which the world history was interpreted as successive stages of slavery, feudalism, capitalism and socialism (Grespan 2020). Prado’s work broke with this sequential interpretation of history, as he built the basis for understanding slavery as a modern phenomenon related to the expansion of European commercial capitalism (Schwarz 1999), emphasising the impact of external factors on the internal socio-economic formation.

Prado Jr. was searching to give a structural explanation of Brazilian historical formation, and as such, he was the forerunner of structuralists, dependency theorists, and mode of production scholars. The central ideas of his argument were developed in 1942 in *Formação do Brasil contemporâneo (The Colonial Background of Modern Brazil)*. He explained the Brazilian socio-economic formation by the abstract idea of the “true meaning of colonisation”, which would be characteristic of all the peoples who had experienced the colonisation of exploitation and which had structured the posterior concrete collective socio-political experiences. The “true meaning” itself lies in the vast “commercial enterprise” inaugurated by Portugal in the 15th century to explore the natural resources for the benefit of European trade (Prado Jr. [1942] 1999:31).

Prado Jr.’s position was based on his understanding of capitalism, according to which agricultural production during the colonial times was market-oriented and latifundium (big property) was a large and dynamic profit-seeking enterprise oriented to the tropical commodity (monoculture) production to the world market. The third pillar of the “commercial enterprise”, modern slavery, was born in proportions that the Antiquity had not known and was uppermost a form of labour control to which Europeans resorted to providing the necessary labour-power for the production of tropical commodities sold at a very high price in Europe. The enslaved worker in the structure of the colonial economy was defined as a “machine of brute labour force” or as “a live

instrument of labour” (Prado Jr. [1942] 1999:23, 270). According to Prado Jr., concrete forms of labour in the colony did not define the structure of the colonial system. These should be explained by their incorporation into the more extensive commercial relations between Portugal, Brazil and Africa (Grespan 2020:245). This argument entered into conflict with the official stance of the Communist Party, where the Brazilian economic and socio-political development was interpreted with the concept of *mode of production*, according to which slavery was a mode of production to be overcome by capitalism. An official stance was best represented by Nelson Werneck Sodré but contested by Prado Jr.⁸⁵ To Prado Jr., it was not the labour form that defined the mode of production, as Sodré believed.

Consequently, slavery would not necessarily be supplanted by enserfed or wage workers as a necessary step for the transition to socialism (Greenspan 2020). At the party congress in 1947, Prado Jr. alleged that even if enslaved and other forms of coerced workers were employed, the Brazilian colonial experience had not been feudal but capitalist (Love 1996:179,284n48). In *A Revolução Brasileira (The Brazilian Revolution)*, Prado Jr. (1966) maintained that feudalism in the proper sense had never existed in Brazil, which had been part of the international capitalist system from the 16th century on. If there was any transition occurring in Brazil, it was from “capitalism in formation” (the colonial situation) to “still capitalism” (national situation) (Ricupero 2000:135).

In his analyses of capitalism in Brazilian early agriculture, he argued that since its establishment, the big rural enterprise was based on a complex collective labour organisation, integrating a large number of cooperating workers, which made him, like Jesuits already centuries before, compare the colonial plantation with an industrial factory (Prado Jr. [1942] 1999:143). In colonial times, the workers integrated into collective labour were enslaved workers who held many different occupations, whereas the property of enslaved people was not the only form of exploitation. Enslaved workers were working together with not enslaved and other coerced labourers. In the 19th century, enslaved labour was partially substituted by other compulsory labour arrangements such as sharecropping, *colonato*, labour tenancy (*morada*), *meeiros*, and *vaqueiros*. All were part of an organic whole, the productive unit of great exploitation, the conditioning factor of labour patterns (Prado Jr. [1942] 1999:147).

⁸⁵ According to Grespan (2020), the mode of production debate in the Brazilian Communist Party (PCB) was unfolding in the context of the international Marxist debate about the transition from one mode of production to another. Its emblematic moment was known as the Dobb-Sweezy debate about the transition from feudalism to capitalism unfolding in the 1950s, with articles published by renowned Marxists such as Maurice Dobb, Paul Sweezy and Christopher Hill. In Brazil, the Marxist historian Nelson Werneck Sodré defended the PCB's official stance. In his two books, *Panorama do Segundo Império* (1939) and *Formação Histórica do Brasil* (1960), he argued that slavery as a mode of production determined the other characteristics of the colonial system.

Prado Jr. understood these arrangements as modern dependent labour relations, so much so that what characterised them was the relation between property-owning employer, on the one hand, and subordinated and propertyless worker-employees, on the other hand. Interestingly, in his works published in the 1960s, Prado Jr. had a much broader understanding of labour relations than his contemporaries. Modalities of payment for labour-power or service during the colonial period varied according to the labour regime from place to place and from time to time, including not only payment in money (wage) but also in product (kind), as well as concession to the worker of the right to use employer's land for subsistence cultures, practices, which continued until the beginning of the 20th century (Prado Jr. [1942] 1999:213-214, 1979:60-65)⁸⁶. These schemes had a double function: non-monetary rewards were not just service payments but also constituted a mode of labour control to bind the worker to the property, guaranteeing stability and security in service (Prado Jr. 1979:62-63). Prado Jr. suggests here that these different forms of rural labour regimes are wage labour relations disguised in various compulsory labour regimes because the worker is just hiring their labour-power, having no power over labour product, being rewarded for the service. The form of payment distinguishes these forms of labour control from wage-labour *stricto sensu*. Thus, the wage system was the generalised labour relation that characterised rural labour in the first half of the 20th century (Prado Jr. 1979:63).

The reward for labour in forms other than money in rural labour relations should not be explained by “feudal residues” (Singer 1961) or “traditional forms of work” (Ianni 1961) but by “mercantile relations”, and they could be characterised as super-exploitative labour arrangements (Prado Jr. 1979:66-67). An extreme case of it has been the exploitation of rubber tappers (*seringueiros*) in Amazon, who were tied to the employer by indebtedness. Prado defined it as “disguised slavery”, legally enabled (Brazilian Civil Code art 1230) and developing in the context of scarcity of labour-power at the beginning of the 20th century. At most, these could be considered residues of slavery but not feudalism. According to Prado Jr.'s (1979:59-63) analysis, super-exploitative labour relations were the products of Brazilian integration into the capitalist world economy, first as a colony and later as a periphery.

By separating the social labour in the rural economy, first dominated by enslaved labourers in the plantation system, then by legally free rural proletarians, from any feudal agrarian structure, in *A Revolução Brasileira*, Prado Jr. (1966:63) united these two types of labourers under a common

⁸⁶ With time, the non-monetary modalities of reward were substituted by wage in money, which show, according to Prado, that they were the equivalents of wage. As wages, they were simple forms of payment for using labour power. Prado also applies the Marxian method in analysing rural labour relations in terms of separating their “true nature” from their “formal appearance” (Prado Jr. 1979:65-66).

logic of “great rural exploitation”. Like the activity of enslaved workers, the labouring activity of the formally “free” rural proletarians was entirely subsumed under the direction of the entrepreneur who concomitantly owned the land as well as organised the production, where the workers were important only as the possessor of labour-power in service of the entrepreneur (Prado Jr. 1966:64) and the freedom of the rural proletarian meant only changing one seigneur for another alike (Prado Jr. [1942] 1999:289). With that, he alleged that neither the relations of production based on slavery nor wage labour could be characterised by peasant form. Hence, they could not be the base of any feudal form or any of its modern spin-offs (Prado Jr. 1966:67). Prado Jr. alleges, then, that the labour relations in the great rural property in the New World, either based on enslaved labour or “free” labour are relations between employee and employer. These workers were maintained, rewarded or compensated for their services by seigneurs or proprietors under whose power they were working. Whereas the enslaved workers were rewarded by food, clothing and habitation or by the concession to work on their plots of land on Sundays and some other days of the week, the “free” workers were paid in money, in kind or with the land use right (Prado Jr. 1966:65).

3.1.2 Marxist Dependency Theory

Caio Prado Jr.’s ideas strongly influenced the dependency theory, known by such Brazilian authors as Ruy Mauro Marini, Theotônio dos Santos, Vânia Bambirra, and non-Brazilian André Gunder Frank. Dependency theory, in its Marxist version, emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s as a critical reaction to the optimistic views about the possibility of developing countries overcoming underdevelopment and catching up with the developed countries, enabled notably by the post-war industrialisation in Brazil. The “developmentalism” of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL), affected by modernisation theories, was influential in the 1950s. The Marxist dependency theories⁸⁷ were critical to its theoretical assumptions and policy recommendations. They understood capitalism as a world system whose main characteristic was the asymmetrical power relation between colony and metropolis, centre and periphery, which

⁸⁷ There were neo-Marxist as well as non-Marxist versions of dependency theory. Moreover, there were significant differences among the Marxist writers (Love 1996:200).

constituted a “unit of contradiction” (Carcanholo 2013:192; Franco 1978).⁸⁸ More generally, the function of every part of the world system was determined by the whole and not by itself (Grespan 2020:247). Hence, they rejected the distinction between “traditional” and “modern” states/regions and thus also the notion of social change as a transition from the former to the latter, as if “underdevelopment” would constitute a “stage” before development (Boatcă 2003). This debate also influenced the discussion about capitalism and coerced labour forms.

In the first chapter, I discussed some of the contributions of André Gunder Frank (1966), whose core thesis of “development of underdevelopment,” when applied to the Brazilian peripheral rural labour relations, implied the simultaneous employment of workers under slavery, tenancy, sharecropping, unpaid and wage labour. This was the result of the subsumption of Brazilian agriculture under the interests of metropolitan industries, first in the context of “mercantile capitalism” and then under “industrial capitalism”, not evidence of “coexistence of feudalism and capitalism” (Frank 1967:230-246). Frank’s (1966) thesis about the “development of underdevelopment” was resumed with modifications by Ruy Mauro Marini in his essay “Dialética da dependência” (The Dialectics of Dependency), published originally in 1973. When Frank (1967) argued that the “dependency situation” in Latin America in the context of the regime of liberal capitalism of the 19th century meant a consolidation of the “colonial situation”, then to Marini ([1973] 2000) “underdevelopment” was developing since Latin America was forged in the context of commercial expansion promoted by emerging capitalism and in close relation with the dynamic of international capitalism. Although there were continuities between “the colonial situation” and “the situation of dependency,” they were not homogenous. In the first moment, between the 16th and 18th centuries, as raw material producing and exporting areas, the colonial economies played a fundamental role in the formation of the capitalist world economy, and slavery’s relevance is limited to this formative phase. According to Marini, it was only after 1840, in the context of dependent capitalism, that Latin American economies were articulated to the consolidated international division of labour with the emergence of the big industry. The relation of dependency is a relation of subordination between “formally independent nations,” in the frame of which are also changed or recreated the *relations of production*. Differently from the colonial period, when the

⁸⁸ One of the main theses of Marxist Dependency Theory (MDT) is that “centre and periphery [are] contradictory elements of the same dialectical unit, world capitalism” (Carcanholo 2013:192). Centre and periphery, or development and underdevelopment, are “phenomena, which are qualitatively differentiated and associated by antagonism as well as by complementarity, that is, although they are antagonistic, the two phenomena constitute the “elements of the same contradictory process of capital accumulation”, whereas underdevelopment does not mean stagnation (Carcanholo 2008:252, 257-8). This perspective differs from the theory of Cardoso and Faletto (1979), which approaches the relationship between the peripheral economy and world economy as a relation of interdependence, which implies the possibility of “associated development”.

surplus was appropriated by metropolitan areas of the centre of capitalism through expropriation, that is, by slavery, in the form of primitive accumulation of capital, then in “dependent capitalism”, the surplus is appropriated through a variety of economic mechanisms. This “dependent economy” can be understood in terms of capital accumulation and general profit rate in the capitalist world system, in which trade in the world market is based on unequal exchange (Marini [1973] 2000). Like Frank, Marini also understands capitalism as a “hierarchical, monopolised and unequal world system which produces and reproduces distinct national/local patterns of accumulation” (Martins 2013:16-17).

From the point of view of international capitalism, Marini examines to what extent peripheral forms of labour exploitation were combined with labour exploitation in the core countries of capitalism. The relation between them was that of production and consumption. The thesis of Marini is that not only the industrialisation of Western Europe and the growing industrial working class and urban population stimulated the Latin American food export, but that agricultural commodities provided by Latin America contributed to the tendencies of increasing industrial proletariat as well as urban population in the core. Insofar as the growing working class and urban population counted on the agricultural products from the colonial/peripheral countries, it liberated parts of the societies at the centre for the specialisation in other activities, services, or manufacture. To the “global supply of food products”, whereby the tropical products entered into the diets of industrial proletarians, is also added the contribution to the “formation of the market of raw materials to industry” (Marini [1973] 2000:111-112).

The contradictory character of Latin American dependence consisted of contributing to the quantitative growth of commodities in the capitalist world system and enhancing the qualitative change in the “accumulation regime” in the core economies, that is, from the “production of absolute surplus value” to the “production of relative surplus value”, which is to say that capital accumulation became more dependent on the productive capacity of labour than on the exploitation of the worker (Marini [1973] 2000:112-113). The low price of tropical food products exported by Latin American economies, the peak of it being in the second part of the 19th century, contributed to the reduction of the “social value of commodities”, the cheapening of the wage goods, and thereby to the decrease in the “real value” of labour-power in the capitalist core and thereby to elevated profit rates (Marini [1973] 2000:115).

At the same, in the peripheral countries, the effect of unequal exchange,⁸⁹ which configures between the manufactures-producing core and agricultural products-producing periphery, the peripheral economic agents are encouraged to compensate for the lost profits by increasing labour exploitation in the productive sphere of their home countries (Marini [1973] 2000:121-122; Martins 2009). Therefore, dependent capitalism in Latin America has a reverse side. As it contributes to the qualitative change in the core, the accumulation regime in Latin American countries is based on the greater exploitation of the worker.

Thus, to compensate for the loss of surplus value, the capitalists of Latin America use, according to Marini, three mechanisms to increase the exploitation of labour-power, which is, in fact, the exploitation of the worker. The first is the intensification of labour. The second is extending the working day, the classical form of extracting absolute surplus value. The third form is about “reducing the consumption of the worker beyond the normal limit”, which “transforms the worker's necessary fund for consumption, within certain limits, into a fund for the accumulation of capital” (Marx 1976:748). These mechanisms increase the surplus value by reducing the remuneration of the labour-power below its value and are denominated as super-exploitation⁹⁰ (Marini [1973] 2000:123-131).

It is important to emphasise for the argument developed in this thesis that the integration into the world market and the subsequent transformation of production of use-values into exchange values is a sufficient condition to trigger the “search for profit” and that such forms of surplus value extraction would start operating (Marini [1973] 2000).

The three mechanisms of super-exploitation emphasised by Marini imply that the worker is restricted from reproducing their labour power. The first two mechanisms cause faster wear out of labour-power, leading to premature physical exhaustion, as workers are obliged to spend more labour than “normal”. The third mechanism removes the means that workers could consume even the minimum to restore their labour power. These mechanisms can appear separately and combined.

⁸⁹ In the world market, which sustains and is sustained by the international division of labour, agricultural commodities are sold below their value and manufactured goods above their value as a result of what the “disadvantageous countries” transfer for free part of the produced value, which is, surplus value (Marini *idem.*).

⁹⁰ An interesting question is how the super-exploited workers compensate for the “stolen” income. To what extent may it increase intra-familial labour exploitation? How will it contribute to double or triple working days? Will it intensify female labour both in terms of care work and in the labour market? Will the workers look for extra sources in subsistence farming?

In his polemic with Fernando Henrique Cardoso⁹¹ (1972), Marini refuted Cardoso's stance about super-exploitation, according to whom it was merely a historical curiosity and, in a specifically capitalist mode of production, an accidental event. Marini argued it to be a "necessary" one of world capitalism. According to him, it is not a survival of primitive modes of capital accumulation. It is part of the contradiction of the capitalist mode of production, and it will not be overcome when capitalism approaches the "pure model". The analysis of overexploitation cannot be skipped because, first, it is intensified by capitalist development, implying greater exploitation of workers and resulting in growing inequality in societies where it operates. Secondly, modes of labour exploitation vary according to the integration of countries and sectors into the world economy and the movement of capital (Marini [1973] 2000:163-164). All in all, what is highlighted is that the theoretical analysis of the capitalist mode of production should study distinct forms of exploitation, which underpin different "forms of capital accumulation" and appear combined in the world economy, as already discussed in the first chapter (Tomba 2013b).

With the conceptualisation of the contradictory character of Latin American "dependent capitalism," Marini demonstrates how distinct forms of exploitation are articulated and combined in the capitalist world economy through the relation between production based on relative surplus value⁹² and production based on absolute surplus value.⁹³ Nevertheless, he restricts the functioning of the mechanism of super-exploitation to peripheral wage labourers and, to a lesser extent, to servile labourers, emerging first in the export sectors in Brazil and continuing in the phase of "dependent capitalism". Regarding the enslaved labour, he is dubious. For example, compared to servitude, enslaved labour would be more adaptable to capital because capitalist production supposes direct appropriation of labour-power and not only products of labour. In that sense, it is not accidental that colonial production, directly connected with European capitalist centres, was massively making use of enslaved labour. However, there would be a problem with the compatibility between enslaved labour and super-exploitation of labour because the slavery regime

⁹¹ According to Cardoso (idem.), "everything that refers to forms of production based on absolute surplus value, however important historically, lacks theoretical interest" because the "specificity of industrial capitalism" is "production of relative surplus value." Marini's essay generated an exchange of ideas regarding development, dependency and super-exploitation with Fernando Henrique Cardoso and José de Serra. Both the critical article by Cardoso and Serra and Marini's answer to it were published in 1978 in a special number of *Revista Mexicana de Sociologia* (Sader 2000).

⁹² Relative surplus value is understood as a "form of exploitation of wage labour which, fundamentally with the basis in the transformations of technical conditions of production, results in the *lowering of the real value of the labour-power*". More specifically, it is related to cheapening "wage foods" (Idem.: 113).

⁹³ It is important to add that the latter form of exploitation can also appear in socio-economic formations with higher technological development. The question is which one of them appears with higher incidence.

would be a hindrance to the unrestrained reduction of the remuneration of the worker due to the inelasticity of supply⁹⁴ and because “[i]n the eyes of the slave a minimal wage appears to be a constant quantity, independent of his work” (Marx 1976:1031), differently from the “free” wage worker. However, there is an exception. Namely, when enslaved labour was fully available or easily replaceable, which was the case until 1830 (Florentino 2014), but also after that, as the transatlantic trade continued illegally until 1850, being replaced by the domestic trade of enslaved workers and by hiring enslaved workers to obtain labour-power.

This stated “incompatibility” seems to do more with Marini’s more orthodox definition of capitalism⁹⁵ than with the conclusion based on grounded evidence. As will be seen in the final chapter, the employment of enslaved labour in the 19th century was fundamental for changing the accumulation regime in the core countries of capitalism (Parron 2022, 2023). Moreover, slavery and the exploitation of enslaved labour adjusted to the changes in the world economy marked by more intense competition between individual capitals. Indeed, Marini adds that planter capitalists also sought ways to increase surplus labour by manipulating the “dead time” of production: “When the slave economy is being subordinated to the capitalist world-market, the deepening of the exploitation of slave is accentuated, as it interests the proprietor to reduce the dead times for production and make the productive time coincide with the time of worker’s existence” (Marini ([1973] 2000):128). Super-exploitation of enslaved labour by reducing the necessary labour time to the minimum is possible if worn-out labourers and labour power could be replaced easily. The seven useful years of enslaved workers’ lives can be explained by extending the working day beyond the acceptable physical limits or reducing the maintenance below minimum subsistence needs, which results in premature exhaustion or death, facilitated by easy access to cheap labour-power.

According to Marini, enslaved labour would be substituted by wage and servile labour forms, where enslaved labour was scarce, especially after the end of the transatlantic trade (1850) or after slavery’s official abolition (1888). Nevertheless, as Marini sustained that the road to capitalism in Brazil, characterised by the compensating mechanisms of super-exploitation, took place via a

⁹⁴ It refers to the restricted availability of enslaved labour. This would be the case in Brazil in the second part of the 19th century after the final abolition of the trade of enslaved workers.

⁹⁵ To Marini (*idem.*), capitalism is defined by the transformation of the labour-power and not the worker himself or herself into a commodity. This determines capitalism’s superiority compared to mercantile forms of production. Hence, not the commodification of the “whole time of worker’s existence with all its dead moments which this implies from the point of view of production”, but “the time of his existence which can be used for production, letting the worker take responsibility for the non-productive time, from the point of view of the capitalist” (*idem.*:127-128).

“mixed system of servitude and wage labour”⁹⁶, he left the enslaved labour outside. However, despite the end of the trade of enslaved human beings, enslaved labour was still a dominant labour after 1850 in the coffee sector, providing the wage foods for the growing industrial proletariat of the core countries of capitalism (Marquese 2013b; Marquese and Salles 2016; Parron 2022) and until the 1870s it co-existed with contractual wage labour, tenant-farming (*morada*) in the northeastern sugar production (Palácios 1996).

The sociologist of São Paulo University School of Sociology, Florestan Fernandes, was critical of the economic and sociological research, which focused on the crisis of slavery and, I will add, on the alleged “transition to free labour” as an evolutionary goal. At the turn of the 18th to 19th century, with the end of the colonial system, slavery would be transformed more or less into a “natural fact”, which required no explanation. In his *Circuito Fechado*, Fernandes (1976) emphasises that slavery was not a uniform institution. There have been various forms of slavery since its emergence with colonisation. It was dynamic and changing in time together with the “economic cycles” and remained an essential “human factor” in the labour system until its abolition. According to Fernandes (1976), until its official abolition, it constituted a fundamental “material basis” not only for the accumulation of agricultural wealth in the colony and empire but also for the internal expansion of capitalist markets and capitalist production. Nevertheless, he makes the meaning of slavery clear: slavery was the factor of “original accumulation” of capital first in European economies and then in 19th-century Brazilian capitalism in the course of its industrialisation and formation of urban-commercial economy, being also one of the trampolines for the emergence of urban-industrial wage-labour (pp. 4, 28, 54).⁹⁷ Only a couple of years later, after the publication of Marini’s “Dialética da Dependência”, Fernandes ([1975] 2006; 1976) argues that the road to capitalism in Brazil took place via slavery. However, Fernandes (1976) leaves it as a “pre-capitalist” factor out of capitalism proper, in the sense that slavery – as a non-capitalist relation of production – was significant as far as it was an instance of original accumulation of capital in terms of accumulation of wealth, which was transformed into capital in the urban-industrial sector. Despite the significance of the accumulated wealth based on the exploitation of enslaved labour in

⁹⁶ In the 19th century, enslaved labour developed into various forms of contract and servile labour, the truck system [*cambão*] or debt slavery, which were labour arrangements in which workers were exploited directly by capital.

⁹⁷ More specifically, in Brazil, the “economic surplus produced by coffee” generated by the exploitation of enslaved labour played a significant role in the funding of European immigration either by private enterprise or by the state (Fernandes 1976:29). Questionable is, however, the definition of migrant workers as constituting the modern working-class, although they were subordinated under various forms of coerced labour arrangements. Such a procedure is not being made in the case of enslaved labour. Interestingly, until recently, the history of the modern working class has been framed in the context of European immigration to São Paulo.

the agricultural sector, which was transferred to the industrial sector, for example, the construction of railways, as will be shown in the last chapter based on the new historiography, enslaved labour itself was used in capitalist industrial enterprises.

Frank, like Marini, argues that super-exploitation is no *residue* of primitive forms of accumulation. Unlike the latter, Frank argues these exploitative practices would be most appropriately characterised as primary accumulation (as he proposed substituting it for Marx's so-called primitive accumulation), and they are produced and reproduced by capital itself.⁹⁸ Hence, there would be no incompatibility between slavery and super-exploitation.⁹⁹ Accordingly, the accumulation of capital on the world scale took place through the super-exploitation of enslaved workers and indigenous peoples in Latin America, India and the Caribbean right after their colonisation and has continued during the phase of industrial capitalism until today, feeding into "capitalist capital accumulation" (Frank 1978b:240-241).

3.1.3 The Old Colonial System and the primitive accumulation of capital

Prado's perspective and dependency theory found their most elaborated version in the work of the Marxist-inspired historian of the University of São Paulo, Fernando Novais. However, instead of the meaning of colonisation being in the European trade, as sustained by Prado Jr. ([1942] 1999) to Novais ([1979] 1989), the meaning of colonisation and the purpose of the construction of colonial economic enterprise was to contribute to the *original accumulation of capital* in European economies, between 16th and 18th century within the framework of the Old Colonial System.

In his book *Portugal e Brasil na Crise do Antigo Sistema Colonial (1777-1808)* (*Portugal and Brazil in the crisis of the old colonial system*), published first in 1979, Novais argues that in the context of the transformations in Europe commanded by commercial capital, merchant bourgeois confronted obstacles to guarantee its ascension and the transition from servile to wage labour. Therefore, it recurred economically to external support and politically to the unification of state power to induce accumulation. Novais maintains that the interests of European merchants determined the enslavement of Africans rather than the native peoples of Brazil. What attracted the merchants was the high profitability of the trade of enslaved workers between the coasts of Africa

⁹⁸ See a more extended discussion about the interpretations of "primitive accumulation" in the global periphery in the first chapter of this thesis.

⁹⁹ To Frank (1978b), super-exploitation of labour produces an excess surplus value, which had figured in Marx next to absolute and relative surplus value but had remained underdeveloped, especially because Marx assumed that in the market, the labourer gets, on average, a fair reward for selling his or her labour-power to somebody else.

and Brazil in the 16th century. Hence, he considers the Atlantic trade as the fundamental element of the colonial system, and the trade of enslaved human beings, in particular, unveils the capitalist character of modern slavery, as the enslaved workers were commodities (Grespan 2020). He concludes that “paradoxically, it is the slave trade that explains the colonial African slavery, and not the other way around” (Novais [1979] 1989:105).

By being strongly influenced by the work of Eric Williams, Novais sustains that colonisation and the trade of enslaved human beings were fundamental elements in inducing capital accumulation in European economies. However, as its source was *outside the system*, it should be defined as original or primitive. Hence, “capitalist original accumulation in European economy” (Novais ([1979] 1989:69-70, 96) depended on a “set of mechanisms”, such as metropolitan “exclusivity” and transfer of excess surplus to metropolitan and extra-metropolitan merchant bourgeois, which “integrates and articulates the colonisation with central European economies”. In that light, like Prado Jr., Novais also suggests that the characteristics of the colonial socio-economic system, including its labour forms, were determined less by its internal conditions and mainly by the insertion of Brazil into the broader world economy, or in other words, by the “*necessary adjustment of the colonial enterprise*” to the needs to promote the process of the modern capitalist formation ([1979] 1989:102). In this context, slavery was a simple instrument in service of the primitive accumulation of capital in Europe. Regarding the society established in colonies, Novais defines it as a slave-holding society, whose “inter-relations and values opposed the rising bourgeois societies in Europe increasingly” (Novais ([1979] 1989):106) adopting a perspective influenced by the US Marxist historian of slavery, Eugene D. Genovese¹⁰⁰ ([1969] 1971).

3.1.4 Is slavery a distinct mode of production?

The tradition initiated by Prado Jr., which was further elaborated by the authors linked with the dependency theory and with the debate about the “old colonial system,” was criticised for being “circulationist” and for downplaying the internal conditions of socioeconomic structures, which were present within the colonies and later peripheries (Cardoso 1980:110). According to the historians critical to this tradition, what was configured in the Americas since the colonisation was a particular mode of production, which Jacob Gorender (1980) defined as “colonial slavery” and Ciro Cardoso (1973a, 1973b) called “colonial slave mode of production”. The “colonial slave mode of

¹⁰⁰ Eugene D. Genovese was highly influential in Marxist slavery studies in Brazil between the 1960s and 70s. His work has become contested in recent decades by new and renovated slavery studies (Clegg 2015, 2020).

production” was defined based on the presence of slavery and had its laws of functioning. Although it was considered dependent on the metropolitan markets and inserted in the international division of labour, the mode of production theories de-emphasised the external factor as a determinant and gave prominence to internal dynamics. In his *Escravidismo Colonial*, Gorender (1980), for example, was critical of the perspectives of slavery analysed from the point of view of subordination to commercial capital, which, according to him, imposes on colonisation and the labour forms a specific end, that is, a function, determining the internal economic structure, or the sphere of production. He proposes to analyse slavery based on the relations of production, which, according to him, was absent in what he called “circulationist” interpretations focused on the world market. The mode of production perspective contributed to the understanding of the “unique amalgam” that was created with the interaction between the so-called traditional modes of production in the “backward countries” and capitalism (Love 1996). At the same time, its focus on internal dynamics resulted in the shift from the capitalist world system as a totality to the “local” mode of production as a totality, which has various other implications discussed later.

The above-discussed authors, either gathered around the dependency theory or the mode of production debate, privileging either production or circulation, tend to converge in two crucial points, which are well summarised by Marquese (2020). First, these perspectives are based on the assumption that “primitive accumulation” was a specific phase in capitalist history, which is explicable by the formation of the world market and the transformation of social relations of production in specific European countries. Second, they also assume that capitalism is equivalent to wage labour, and enslaved labour is a backward and archaic labour relation incompatible with the modernity of proper capitalism (Marquese 2020:108).

3.1.5 Colony and metropolis as unitarily determined categories

Other interpretations emerged in the shadow of more known perspectives of dependency theory and mode of production in the 70s. One of the most stimulating discussions in Brazil about the formation of capitalism and treatment of central polemics of this debate - “traditional” versus “modern”, “pre-capitalist”, “non-capitalist” or “capitalist”, “particular” versus “universal”, “enslaved labour” versus “free labour” – was provided by the historical sociology of Maria Sylvia

de Carvalho Franco¹⁰¹. Her PhD thesis was supervised by the renowned Brazilian sociologist Florestan Fernandes from São Paulo University, defended in 1964 and published in 1969 as a book named *Homens livres na ordem escravocrata* (Free Men in the Slave Order). This book sets the terms of her critique regarding the “formation” debate elaborated on during her time in Brazil. In her later works, she elaborated her critique further. What interests me in this section is reconstructing the relation between the social organisation of labour (enslaved labour and “free labour”) and capitalism in her works to understand particularly the analytical-theoretical proposal of her historical sociology. An essential part of the introduction of her thesis, which was omitted from the publication but had tackled the relationship between slavery and capitalism, was published as a separate article in 1978 and presented as a research project in 1984 in an academic seminar about “Slave labour, economy and society” held at Unicamp. Unfortunately, the research idea proposed in this presentation was not consolidated in a publication. Hence, we cannot know which may have been the answers to some very intriguing questions Franco had raised to herself. However, the research project presented in the seminar provided some suggestions for understanding the centre and periphery as part of the same mode of production and elements for the notion of the global proletariat. Her particular way “to bring together what was apart,” that is, to articulate the history of capital with the peculiar reality of Brazil, was indirectly influenced by “The Marx seminar”¹⁰² (Schwarz 1999:93) and approached her to the interpretations of capitalism of such dependency theorists as André Gunder Frank, Ruy Mauro Marini and Theotônio dos Santos, who shared common theoretical positions (Ricupero 2007:61, 2016:42-43).

Franco’s (1978:2) historical sociology is critical of evolutionary and linear approaches to “social change” and “development”, which have converted the “order of sequences of transformations” observed in specific Western European societies into a “general model” of social change, against which other socio-economic realities have been measured. Thus, her critique targets the scholarly work, which has interpreted the socio-economic formation of Brazil through the

¹⁰¹ Marquese and Salles (2016) argue that both Maria Sylvania Carvalho Franco and Antonio Barros de Castro, who wrote their works at the end of the 1970s, had their arguments overshadowed both by the political and economic events in Brazil as well as epistemological shifts taking place in the historiography of slavery, which gradually employed the “slave mode of production perspective”, which interpreted the enslaved labour in the frame of an autonomous unit.

¹⁰² In a little essay, Roberto Schwarz (1999) tells the story of the “Seminar to Read Capital,” organised in 1958 at the Philosophy Department of São Paulo University by José Giannotti. It integrated many USP junior researchers from humanities and social sciences who were in the phase of writing their PhD dissertations. From there, several fundamental interpretations of Brazilian capitalism were born. Schwarz suggests that Franco’s PhD thesis was influenced by the “critical, ideological and bibliographical climate” of the seminar, although she did not participate in that. Regarding the global political conjuncture, the background of the Marx Seminar was marked by the revelation of Stalin’s crimes and the critique of the bureaucratisation of the Soviet Union, the Cuban Revolution, and the developmentalist political agenda in Brazil in the 1950s.

opposite poles of “tradition” and “modernity” or “feudalism” and “capitalism”, capitalism and slavery. Hence, she challenges the orthodox reading of Marxism and structuralist-functionalist modernisation theories, which were in vogue between the 1950s and 70s. Both, according to her, transform historical socio-economic processes into abstractions. Regarding the reception of Marx in Brazil, Franco is critical of those readings which have transformed the abstract categories of Marx's theory into an ontology of capitalism. Hence, those readings and reflections which resort to a Marxist periodisation of history fail to consider Marx's positions regarding the connection between capital and labour and the economic categories that personify them as theoretical expressions of concrete social relations of production and their critique. They present them as the substance of capitalism. This, according to Franco, results in such statements as:

There is capitalism only with free labour", "the slave does not produce surplus value", or that "slavery" is recognised in colonial Brazil in opposition to capitalism, intending, with this, safeguarding differences and particularities, however, what is achieved is precisely a schematism that cancels them out. What in Marx was a rational presupposition and historical existence, concepts constituted in the movement of social relations, is reduced to a timeless, unalterable condition, to a category taken in itself. In the scheme above, the categories, not the men, produce history. (Franco 1978:27)

Given that, Franco aims to resume historicity by analysing the relation between the parts and the whole from the viewpoint of totality, in which the socio-economic process connects dialectically “social categories”, which have been considered conventionally antithetical to each other. Accordingly, she criticised both perspectives, which were dominant from the 1970s to the 1980s regarding the colonial socio-economic formation. It would be inconsistent to construct the model of “slave mode of production” based on slavery in analogy with the “capitalist mode of production”, defined by free labour, as operated by the mode of production perspective. Slavery cannot be used as a principle to unify the entire system as its foundation, nor can free labour be used as the defining principle of the capitalist mode of production. Instead, the institution of slavery was subordinated to other determinations, which defined its meaning. Her suggestion that social categories can be redefined and their content can change as they become incorporated into the capitalist world system is relevant to the argument elaborated on in this dissertation. Moreover, by arguing that slavery since its emergence was subsumed to other determinations, she does *not only* suggest that the socio-economic processes taking place in the colony were “subordinated” or “functional” to the ones found in the centre of the capitalist system, as the dependency theory and the *Old Colonial System* perspective had maintained. Instead of affirming dependent or functional relations between the parts and the whole, Maria Sylvania de Carvalho Franco (1978) goes further by denying

any relation of exteriority between “nucleus” and “periphery”. The *colony and metropolis are particular developments of capitalism*, but both carry in themselves the essential content - profit – which traverses all their determinations. This method will be sustained here: conceive the development of capitalism as global and investigate the engendering of its parts, of the particular forms they assumed in the movement of historical differentiation of this universal determination – profit and accumulation. (Pp. 27-28, emphasis added)

Franco's view (1978) is well defined by Ricupero (2007:61, 2016:42-43): “Centre and periphery are *part of the same mode of production*, favouring different moments of the process of the constitution and reproduction of capital.”

The interpretations that analyse the connection between the core and periphery as a relation of exteriority perceive Portuguese colonies as constituting one of the factors that contributed to the capitalist formation insofar as they were the providers of tropical commodities through the “pre-capitalist” forms of production¹⁰³. In these interpretations, the character of the colonial economy is defined by slavery or by its connection with the phase of commercial capital, in which the meaning of slavery is determined by its contribution to the primitive accumulation of capital in Europe (Franco 1978). Primitive accumulation as the pre-history of capital and, hence, pre-capitalist as understood by Marx and classical Marxists, is founded on looting, robbery and plunder. By putting it this way, it would be partial and has created many problematic interpretations. The tendency has been to deny the capitalist determinations on colonial production due to slavery or the commercial phase of capitalism.¹⁰⁴ However, as the expanding markets and productive systems were constituted together with one specific mode of production, that is, capitalism, a more precise way to define the link between colony and metropolis is to affirm that: “*with the latifundium and slave labour was installed a mode of production presided by capital*, that is to say, a particular system of social domination” (Franco 1978:33, my emphasis). This is to say that the social domination installed in the colony had its roots in the regime of production established in the colony, particularly in the property regime, determined by and determining capital. This affirmation does not deny that slavery and colonial production contributed to the primitive accumulation of capital in European

¹⁰³ Hence, it refers to an „integrated duality, in which the internal and archaic face of black slavery was integrated, via world market, to the external and modern face of global capitalism” (Marquese 2019:20). This analytical perspective framed the work of Genovese, influenced the debates about the Old Colonial System and “colonial slave mode of production” in Brazil (See Cardoso 1973a, 1973b; Gorender 1980).

¹⁰⁴ This kind of interpretation is central to the so-called São Paulo school of sociology and central in the works of Florestan Fernandes (1976, [1975] 2000), Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1962) and Octávio Ianni (1962), which Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco ([1969] 1997, 1978) criticises in her work.

economies. It asserts that colonial production based on enslaved labour was subsumed under capital determinations¹⁰⁵.

It is due to the Marxist definition of primitive accumulation by plunder and robbery, which denies the character of enslaved labour as capital- and value-producing labour, that Franco proposes another theoretical approach: to open the theory of sale and purchase of labour-power. Understanding the process of commodification of labour-power in the slavery regime is fundamental for conceptualising this particular regime of social domination inherent to the capitalist mode of production, that is, the production of surplus value (Franco 1984). Nevertheless, the notion of “primary accumulation” is still analytically valuable when examined as part of the socio-economic dynamic of distinct economic cycles and the capital accumulation based on super-exploitation of labour, not as external but continuous and inherent to the capitalist *modus operandi*. In the last chapter, I will discuss some regional examples of transformations of relations of production in the context of 19th-century industrial capitalism.

Thus, by rejecting the “relation of exteriority” and seeing “core” and “periphery” as parts of the capitalist system, Franco (1978:1) proposes to think about the “particular determinations of the social organisation of labour” (enslaved and free labour reconnected through the world economy) and the “colonial units of production” as “constitutive parts of the essence of capitalism”, without assuming that the relations established between core and periphery are the “result of the combination of diverse socio-economic formations”, some capitalist, others pre-capitalist.¹⁰⁶ She proposes to understand slavery at this moment of capitalist history as an integral part of the *general process of the social organisation of labour*. Like that, enslaved labour in the colonies of the

¹⁰⁵ Regarding that point, a Brazilian sociologist, Luiz Werneck Vianna (1999), compares the work of Florestan Fernandes ([1975] 2006) to that of Maria Sylvia Carvalho Franco ([1969] 1997), whose PhD thesis was supervised by the former. Vianna (1999) considers both developing a Weberian interpretation of Brazil. Regarding the period of post-independence of Brazil (1822), Florestan Fernandes ([1975] 2006) in *A Revolução Burguesa no Brasil* (Bourgeois Revolution in Brazil) discussed the relations between “legal-rational and patrimonial order”; “political liberalism and economic structures inherited from the colony”, “backwardness and modern” as antithetical but not incompatible to each other. The “backwardness”, according to Fernandes’s interpretation, would be “rational to capitalism” in the sense that the bourgeoisie would use both backwardness and the modern for its advantage. This constitutes a particular form of being inserted in world capitalism (Vianna 1999). Franco’s position presented in her *Homens livres na ordem escravocrata* ([1969] 1997) does not perceive the “tradition” and the “modern” deriving from Brazil’s unequal development of capitalism as a “belligerent contraposition”, but they appear as combined. It implies that contradictory principles adjust to each other and merge uniquely (Vianna 1999:12). It is precisely in that way that the “unit of contradiction” refers to the unequal development within the capitalist world-economy: enslaved labour in the colony/periphery and “free labour” in the metropolis/centre appear as combined, constituting a specific amalgam. From that point of view, liberalism is modern. However, modernity is not expressed only in elevated and advanced values; it contains and produces the “total unequal”, the enslaved worker.

¹⁰⁶ With these affirmations, in her *Homens livres*, Franco takes a critical stance about the definition of slavery as a unique mode of production, which distinguishes her from her colleagues of the sociology department of USP, Cardoso (1962) and Ianni (1962) as well as from her supervisor Florestan Fernandes (1965), according to whom slavery, as an essential institution, had structured the totality of Brazilian society and determined also its development after the abolition of slavery (Botelho 2013).

capitalist periphery and “free labour”¹⁰⁷ in the metropolis of the capitalist core are mutually determining in the *longue durée* since the emergence of slavery in the modern world until its abolition. The world of slavery and free labour constitute here a “unit of contradiction”, which is to say that the¹⁰⁸

re-emergence of slavery, the development of free labour, the formation of the bourgeoisie and the constitution of colonial entrepreneurs are unitarily determined categories: in modern times, one does not exist without the other. (Franco 1978:34)

Perceiving metropolitan free labour and colonial enslaved labour as a “unit of contradiction” permits abolishing profound differences between these labour forms and avoids fragmenting reality, as both are subordinated to the same logic of capital accumulation. The determination which unites the apparently contradictory forms is capitalism. Franco ([1969] 1997:13) understands capitalism as an “inclusive concept (...) as imprecise as still was its figure in the colonial system”.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, the contradiction is rather apparent and theoretical because, in reality, they are complementary.

When Franco’s contemporaries, such as Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1962) and Fernando Novais ([1979] 1989) had qualified capitalism in play due to slavery as “commercial capitalism” to distinguish it from capitalism proper¹¹⁰, Franco placed modern slavery *within* the formation of the capitalist system as a totality from the 16th century onwards. In her model, colonial Brazil did not appear as “archaic” or “pre-capitalist”. Instead, European New World colonies occurred as part of the constitution of the “way to be modern” and “the bourgeois order”, which included the constitution of the capitalist of private property. One could agree with Cazes (2014) that Franco’s

¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, when Franco (idem.) argues that enslaved labour in colonies was necessary for the development of “free labour” in the metropolis, she has in mind that enslaved labour was part of the socio-economic processes, whereby in Europe the propertyless population was transformed gradually in proletarians, that is, urban-industrial wage workers, dispossessed from their means of production and forced to sell their labour-power. It was a social category consolidated in the 19th century, which informed Marx’s theorisation. However, the “necessary population to complete the system is put immanently within the very system, that is, this population was, since the beginning of the process, constituted of small property holders, peasants, transformed in vagabonds, beggars and wage labourers through expropriations, development of manufacture and textile industry” (Franco 1984:224-225).

¹⁰⁸ Dale Tomich (2004), one of the leading figures behind the research on the “second slavery”, has used this notion to explicit the interdependence between different labour forms in the capitalist world economy and the formation of the social organisation of labour on the scale of the world economy.

¹⁰⁹ This view of capitalism as an “inclusive concept” or “open formation” suggests that capitalism is intrinsically historical and combines with the view of Fraser (2018:14) that “[f]ar from being given all at once, [capitalism’s] properties emerge over time. . . . Features that appear central at the outset may decline in salience later, while characteristics that seem marginal or even absent at first could assume major importance later”. This conceptualisation permits understanding situations where the commodity form is not fully generalised.

¹¹⁰ In his *Capitalismo e escravidão no Brasil meridional*, Cardoso (1962:201) repetitively described a “slave economy” aimed at “mercantile capitalist production” as a “capitalist slave-holding” system of production or “capitalist” economy based on enslaved labour. Nevertheless, it is distinguished from a specifically capitalist economy. What defines the latter is that capital accumulation occurs based on wage-labour producing “relative surplus value” (Cardoso 1962:201).

thesis seems to be the radicalisation of Prado Jr. ([1942] 1999) as well as that of Eric Williams (1944). It should be added that her perspective approaches very strongly the views of C.L.R James ([1938] 1989) and W.E.B. Du Bois ([1935] 1992), as will be seen later.

Franco does not qualify capitalism as “commercial”, nor does she qualify capital not to fragment the reality. In that sense, I agree with Cazes (2014) that Franco’s work aims to understand a more *general* process of the formation of capitalism. When it comes to the procedure of defining the process of the formation of capitalism, in her PhD thesis, she suggests the following:

Capitalism is thus proposed as an *open formation*, claiming that it is a reality that is intelligible only in all its complexity when knowledge is oriented towards - in each of the phases of its development – capturing the connections determined between the areas that constitute its nucleus and the areas that are subject to its sphere of influence and put at its service and that have its own internal meaning largely defined by this situation. (Franco 1964:36-7, emphasis added)

To think, then, about the process of formation of capitalism, she proposes that we should “think globally the movement of the constitution of the system of world capitalism” (Franco 1964), to not divide the reality in abstract models, which even if connected remain external to each other. Thus, Franco (1964) proposed a vision of totality, which would not imply examining only the relation between the whole and its parts nor analysing the process of the constitution of the “system of world capitalism” based on the formation of the industrial capitalism in Europe at the turn of the 18th to 19th century. She does not identify capitalism with England or Europe, “free” wage labour or industrialisation. According to her inclusive concept of capitalism, the socio-economic system installed in the colony was not *essentially* different from that of what was developing in Europe (Franco [1969] 1997:15). Despite the particularity of the “relations of domination and production” in Brazil, the “subordinate” and “dependent” incorporation of the colony in the European capitalist world-economy pressured progressively towards the “increasing integration of the economic system”, “division of social labour”, “stratification of society in social classes”, and “continuous consolidation of [highly centralised and bureaucratic] political power” together with the generalisation of the commodity form of labour products. These structural socio-economic relations and processes of capitalism were established in their embryonic form in the 16th century, which deepened along the centuries, being consolidated in the 19th century, in the sense that earlier colonies became later peripheries (Franco 1984:221).

Franco seems to suggest that capitalism does not necessarily homogenise social forms but unifies (unequally) the diversity of social forms by specific common determinations such as commodity, money, capital, and abstract labour (Chibber 2013). It is affirmed when she argues that

the fundamental processes and categories (relations between seigneurs and enslaved workers, seigneurs and free dependent workers and later migrant workers in São Paulo) that constituted Brazilian society, oriented predominantly to the commercial production to the world market, were *determined by the emergence and development of the capitalist system*. In other words, since the implantation of the specific mode of production (i.e., capitalism), capital was the determining factor in defining the “global conditions of existence [and] the relations of domination” (Franco 1978:45).

As observed correctly by Cazes (2014:123), Franco’s broader concept of capitalism combines a Weberian definition of capitalism as an orientation to continuous and growing profit pursued through a rational activity with a Marxian view of capitalism as a world system based on self-valorising capital in a social system in which is generalising the commodity form of labour products. The definition of capitalism by the “search for profit” (Ricupero 2007:62) is established in the introduction of Franco’s PhD thesis, where she argues that the rational drive for profit and the orientation for the profitable large-scale production for the market characterised since colonisation the organisation of Brazilian economy and society. In the context of capitalist formation in the 16th century, the colony would be the first moment in which “capital appears determining a system of production and, integrally, a system of social relations” (Franco 1964:37). As we know from Marx, besides formal criteria of “ceaseless accumulation of capital”, it implies several structural elements and socio-economic processes to make it possible. However, an important argument by Franco is that the form the *relations of production* and *social domination* take in the periphery of capitalism does not hinder the capitalist production of capital. On the contrary, they are fundamental for its production. In fact, at the structural level, the colony lacked neither private ownership of the means of production nor commodification of labour power. In one of the following chapters, I will tackle precisely the multiple forms of “coerced commodification” of labour-power in a way that we could think of enslaved labour as capital- and value-producing labour. It would open the possibility to deal with such questions as how the enslaved workers entered into the circulation of surplus value to sustain their own reproduction and the reproduction of free labour in the capitalist core. This form of capitalist domination implies “appropriation of the surplus of unpaid labour” to become surplus value (Franco 1984:223).

In terms of historical periodisation, Franco (1978) relates the constitution of the “other form of expropriated labour”, the enslaved labour, with the beginnings of primitive accumulation of capital in North-Western Europe, when guildsmen and craft workers were still rooted in the particularity of their labour and were attached to their masters, and when capital was present in a limited form; when direct producers were expropriated, and slowly transformed into propertyless

proletarians due to rural enclosures (Marx 1973:396-7, 1976). At that moment, the enslaved workers – present in large and growing numbers – and the emerging “free labour”, or at this point, the “dependent wage labour” (Moulier-Boutang 1998), were connected already through the “movement of the constitution and expansion of capitalist markets and instauration of bourgeois dominium” (Franco 1978:9).

Franco anticipates a perspective that capital is a “global social relation”, a “contradictory unity”, when it integrates various labour systems differentiated in space and time through “common value relation” or “global commodity production” (McMichael 1991). As non-wage forms of commodity-producing labour are absorbed by capitalist circuits, incorporate value relations and are subsumed to capital, they are being qualitatively reformulated, suggesting a gap distinguishing modern slavery from Antique slavery. “In temporal terms, wage and non-wage forms of labour coexist within the same universe of value relations, each influencing the other” (McMichael 1991:325). When enslaved labour enters these global value-relations, it becomes a capital- and value-producing labour.

Particularly valuable here is Franco’s extrapolation from the connection between capitalist markets and the production system to the articulation between modern slavery in the New World and free labour in Europe, gradually expanding in the context of expropriations, growing division of labour and generalising commodity form of labour products. In this context, Franco emphasises (1984:222) the “inseparable genesis” of enslaved and free labour, not only at the centre but also in the periphery, establishing a unitary development of social organisation of labour in modern historical capitalism. If one of the determining aspects of capitalism is the generalisation of the commodity form and colonial Brazil was part of the movement of the generalisation of the relations of exchange under the movement of capital, not only externally but also within its very colonial economy, the socioeconomic system implanted in Brazil was not essentially different from the one taking shape in European metropolises, as suggested by Franco (1978).¹¹¹

Hence, Franco’s historical sociology of the general process of social organisation in *longue durée* articulates its different instances: enslaved labour in the colony/periphery and “free labour” in the metropolis/core. However, the “destiny” of the “free” labour in the colony/periphery is also articulated in it: “The free labour in Europe and in the colony negate each other and determine each other through the mediation of slavery” (Franco 1978:38, [1969] 1997). In what she calls the first

¹¹¹ Franco (1984) argues that some elements of capitalism – such as the market, the social division of labour, social differentiation and integration, and the modern state - were present in the 16th century and continued deepening in subsequent centuries.

moment, free labour and enslaved labour affirm each other, as the latter was necessary for the development of the former and vice versa, whereas the “free labour” in the colony was “without meaning of existence” or “indispensable” as it was not the “necessary labour for the mercantile production”. This type of “free labour” refers to non- or semi-proletarianised labour existing in the margins of plantations, in possession of land but not owning it. In the second moment, in the 19th century, the development of “free” labour in the core countries of capitalism led to overcoming slavery in the periphery, which had become a hurdle to its expansion. At the same time, it induced the expansion of “free labour” in the periphery (Franco 1978:38, 1984).

This model closely follows Eric Williams’s thesis (Cazes 2014), which was very influential in the São Paulo School of Sociology and among mid-century historians¹¹². The idea of Williams can be summarised as “slavery created capitalism (...) and capitalism destroyed slavery” (Tomich 2004:94). Without citing Eric Williams’s *Capitalism and Slavery*, its influence on Franco’s notion of “unit of contradiction” is pretty evident, although there are some fundamental differences. First, instead of perceiving slavery and capitalism as incompatible, Franco brings slavery inside capitalism and considers slavery, as a distinct mode of labour control, as necessary for the development of free labour. This relationship intensified in Brazil in the 19th century. The second part of Williams’s thesis that “capitalism destroyed slavery” is a classical Marxist thesis that slavery and other servile forms of labour become an obstacle to capital’s expanded reproduction. In Franco’s (1978, 1984) work, slavery became a hindrance to the expanded reproduction of “free labour” in Europe or to British capitalists’ need to find new markets for their manufactured goods. This thesis has been, however, questioned in manifold ways already by André Gunder Frank (1967, 1978b), by the world-system’s perspective, by the New Economic History, by recent scholars aligned with the research programme about “second slavery”, and “The New History of Capitalism”. First of all, even if the British West Indies, the case of Williams, witnessed an overcoming of slavery, from the world-systems perspective, it was partially relocated (Chalhoub 2015) and intensified by industrial capitalism in other newly opened agricultural frontiers incorporated in the world economy (Marquese 2009, 2013b, 2016; Parron 2022; Tomich 2004). Thus, the history of the 18th and the 19th centuries shows that the hegemonic role assumed by urban-industrial wage labour in the world system without being the empirical majority under the rule of industrial capital, initially intensified slavery in the new agricultural frontiers, a point also recognised by Franco (1978) as well as Fernandes (1976).

¹¹² Cardoso’s (1962) interpretation of southern slavery is informed by the thesis of Williams (1944), which was developed in *Capitalism and Slavery*.

Moreover, Franco (1978) argues that this intensified relationship between enslaved labour in the periphery and free labour in the core was triggered by the expanding coffee sector, which implied the incorporation of new lands in coffee production and led to the expropriation of independent peasants. Franco also shows the transformation of independent subsistence peasantry, formed by former enslaved workers or indigenous peoples, into a fuzzy mix of labour arrangements. Expropriations did not result in proletarianisation as an achievement of the shift to typical wage labour but in diverse categories of formally free workers, who were expropriated from the land property but not from its possession. They were semi-proletarianised, casually meeting the labour demands of the expanding world coffee market (Franco 1978, [1969] 1997). A similar process had also happened earlier in the sugar production areas in the northeast of Brazil, where people freed from slavery were gradually subsumed under the arrangements of servile contract labour (Palácios 1996). I will explore it more in the fifth chapter. Frago (1996) prefers, in this case, to talk about not enslaved labour because a significant part of free men and women were subordinated to various forms of coerced labour arrangements. Instead of adopting an evolutionary assumption, it is more adequate to think about the 19th-century labour arrangements in the context of liberal and industrial capitalism through the global value relations whereby wage labour in Europe was articulating with different unfree and free labour arrangements in the peripheral countries (McMichael 1991). Furthermore, as Frank (1978) suggested, capitalist transformations may also imply a transformation of labour relations from one coercive form to another.

Until the end of the 1970s, most studies approached slavery as a social structure full of contradictions and studied its relationship to the broader capitalist system. Most tried to answer the question of how coerced (unfree) labour forms contributed to the “global process of original accumulation of capital” or were functional to the capitalist development in Europe, where labour-power became increasingly wage labour. Except for Frank (1978b), the colonial production based on slavery becomes meaningful from the point of view of either contributing to the development of North-Western European industrialisation (Marini [1973] 2000), the “original accumulation of capital” and metropolitan state formation (Novais [1978] 1989) or to European trade (Prado ([1942] 1999)).

In dialogue with these perspectives, Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco advanced in four points: first, metropolis/centre and colony/periphery are two poles of *the same mode of production*, sustaining different moments of the process of production and reproduction of capital; second, derived from the former, enslaved labour in the colony/periphery and wage labour in the metropolis/centre of the world-system are the moments of the *modern* general social organisation of labour,

corresponding to a *capitalist* mode of production; third, capitalism cannot be defined by industrial-urban wage labour only. What characterises capitalism is how different labour forms combine in the capitalist world economy; and fourth, as in the case of both – “free” wage labour and enslaved labour – we are dealing with dominated and dependent labour, whereas the difference is only formal. Although Franco’s concept of social change is still partly mechanical in the sense that the internal functioning of capitalism triggers the necessary substitution of slavery by free labour in the periphery as a social system in terms of the expansion of the market and “free” labour in the core, the critical point is that in the rural economy, the “free” labour does not take the form of “free” wage labour, but previous compulsory labour forms were transformed into new coerced forms. The way Franco, as a sociologist from the global periphery, combined the different trajectories into capitalist modernity seen as global, anticipated the world systems perspective (Wallerstein 1974), contemporary Global Labour History and approached the notion of “entangled modernity” of post-colonial studies (Randeria 2000, Therborn 2003). In recent decades, the understanding of capitalism as an open global formation has been incorporated by the studies of slavery developed by Alencastro (2000), Marquese (2013b, 2015, 2020), Marquese and Salles (2016), Marquese and Tomich (2015), and Ferreira da Silva (2019, 2022).

3.2 Configuration of enslaved labour in the capitalist world economy

3.2.1 The establishment of the colonial system of exploitation

Quite in line with Wallerstein’s world-systems analysis, Franco (1978) departs from the idea that capitalism as a world system in the form of a European world economy was born as global in the 16th century with the development of the world market and when one could observe based on the trade with Portuguese products, changes in capitalist practices in Europe. She goes contrary to these currents of Brazilian socioeconomic historiography, which deny any capitalist determination on enslaved labour or transform this “basic social relation” as a defining aspect of the “colonial slave mode of production” (Gorender 1980). According to Franco (1978), it is a capitalist determination which creates slavery in the New World, also creating this mutual relation of interdependence between enslaved labour and free labour. At this point in history, in the 15th and 16th centuries, the fundamental capitalist determination was the capitalist world economy. She puts the labour of enslaved workers at the centre of the emerging world economy, connecting it with the growing trade transactions, expanding enclosures, free labour and European colonial expansion.

Modern colonial slavery in the New World can be understood through several factors that shaped its existence. In the 15th century, accumulating capital pressured towards the change in trade pattern, aiming at a more significant number of transactions, increased quantity and regularity. On the one hand, it brought about the expansion and organisation of consumer markets, and on the other, the provision of commodities in rhythm and volume following the transformations taking place in these markets. Accordingly, as a global social relation, capital is the subject that interconnects and synchronises these different facets of the world economy: circulation, production, distribution, and consumption (Franco 1978). As such, the “vast capitalist mechanism”, which was merchant capital, articulated through its transactions and uniting continents, opening the forefronts of trade and financing the emergence of new slave-holding colonial centres (Castro 1984:45). In that sense, as it is commonly argued in the Brazilian socio-economic thought, the movement of accumulation of (merchant) capital triggered a construction of colonial formation in the context of the building of capitalism (Novais [1979] 1989:48). In other words, “the *colonisation* [through tropical agriculture] promoted a direct intervention of European entrepreneurs in the *sphere of production*”. It is notably the Flemish capital at this point that organised the commodity exchange in alliance with the Portuguese system of production in colonies (Franco 1978: 29). However, I will not consider it a “colonial formation of Ancient Regime”, which permits to define it uniformly as part of “an old colonial system”, as Novais ([1979] 1989) does. To make tighter the relation between the birth of New World’s socio-economic formations and the world system dominated by the capitalist mode of production, it makes more sense to argue that with the colonisation of the New World was established a “new model of colonial exploitation” (Hobsbawm 1974, cited in Castro 1984:45). The new productive system was present embryonically in the 15th century, oriented to large quantities and low price, which was significantly different from the previous Mediterranean model, which was characterised by high price, limited transaction and elevated profits, besides employing few enslaved workers (Blackburn 1997).¹¹³ It is confirmed by Blackburn (1997) that this pattern changed at the end of the 15th and at the beginning of the 16th century when

¹¹³ Robert Blackburn (idem.) asserts that this is precisely what marks the novelty of New World’s slavery compared to the earlier slavery in the Mediterranean: the scale of operations and use of enslaved workers in large numbers. In the 14th and 15th century Mediterranean sugar industry, in Crete, Cyprus and Sicily, enslaved workers were used but not in large numbers. Sugar production was rather artisanal and domestic. In the Canary Islands, at the beginning of 1500, thousands of enslaved workers were used. However, the labour force there was mixed, including, besides enslaved workers, free labourers, native bonded labourers, immigrants, and even native Americans (idem.:6, 110-111). This seems to belie the affirmation of Wallerstein that “slaves followed sugar”: first, because sugar production does not have to rely necessarily on enslaved labour, and second, enslaved workers were used as craftworkers before the production became large-scale.

sugar production spread to the Atlantic islands, where enslaved workers constituted half of the labour force.

Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco emphasises in this initial phase the change in quantity, regularity, and scale, which had diverse qualitative implications on the socio-economic and political structures, which will be touched on later. However, at this particular moment, particularly with the Portuguese sugar trade, quantities in the world market increased regularly and systematically according to the needs of the Flemish capital. Aligned with Prado Jr.'s ([1942] 1999) thesis about the meaning of colonisation being embedded in the establishment of a "commercial enterprise", Franco argues that "*the changes in the ambit of commodity circulation were correlated with the implantation of an entirely new socio-economic system, whose aim was to obtain the product*" (1978:29, emphasis in original). The "new colonial system" inaugurated with the European colonisation of the New World's territories meant a direct interference in the process of production, guaranteeing the entrance of commodities into the market as well as the appropriation of the surplus for the accumulation of capital in the European world-economy, in the sense that the meaning of this mutually adjusting movement was *expansion*. In straightforward terms, the colonial enterprise initially aimed to produce cash crops for profit for the world market (Wallerstein 1974). Besides large quantities, the new production system was characterised by large numbers of expropriated workers, the concentration of capital, and a qualitatively distinct labour process (Franco 1984:222).

The radical reduction of sugar's price allowed that already, in the 16th century, sugar would cease to be a luxury medicinal spice, spreading to the broader layers in European societies, hence earlier than shown by the classic work of Sidney Mintz (1986). It entered into a more general consumption habit of the urban population, used to conserve meat and fruits and make jams and substitutes for honey (Stols 2004; Wallerstein 1974).¹¹⁴ Through Portugal, sugar reached Antwerp in the 16th century, which had become an essential centre of the sugar trade, where the sugar refining industry was concentrated, and in the 1600s, Amsterdam (Stols 2004). The growing number of people who increasingly depended on rents, salaries, or wages, in turn, fueled the demand for

¹¹⁴ Masefield considers sugar one of the most critical ingredients of the European diet besides grains. Sugar is vital as a caloric source and as a substitute for fats. It was used for alcoholic drinks. Later, it was used for chocolate (Masefield 1967, cited in Wallerstein 1974:88n70). According to Stols (2004), sugar was a crucial colonial commodity already in the fast-expanding capitalist commerce of the 16th century. He describes the sugar boom in 1565 when sugar was no longer used as a tiny luxury spice for medical purposes. Instead, the quantities increased due to the spreading practice of conserving fruits and making jams. From royal courts, it had spread to the kitchens of small shopkeepers, artisans, and peasants. These preserves and jams also moved urban commerce in Portugal and the Netherlands, as their preparation and sale constituted a complementary income for the women of lower classes. Among the working people, consuming the cheaper by-products from sugar refining, molasses, called *Stroop*, as the substitute for honey was common. Later, towards the end of the 17th century, its consumption increased even more due to the spread of tea and other sugared drinks. British sugar consumption increased by 2500 per cent between 1650 and 1800 (Mintz 1986).

“popular luxuries” such as sugar (Blackburn 1997:16). By the beginning of 1600, Holland was the biggest buyer of Brazilian sugar¹¹⁵, as the Dutch exported illegally or legally, from half to two-thirds of Brazilian sugar to Amsterdam (Alencastro 2000:22). The country’s urban economy was growing. It already had a considerable presence of wage-earning proletarians (Oakes 1990). Besides the increasing urban population integrated into the cash nexus, the growing demand in general for tropical commodities such as tobacco, sugar, indigo and cotton seems to have had to do with the increasing productivity of metropolitan agriculture where the capitalist relations were spreading (Wallerstein 1974),¹¹⁶ and the growing demand was organised by merchant capital.

Hence, in the newly emerging international division of labour, Europe provided the markets for tropical products, and the New World provided the sale outlets for North European manufacturers. Blackburn, for example, shows how, in this trade network established at the beginning of the 17th century, the Luso-Brazilian traders and planters depended on Dutch and English merchants to open their markets to sell sugar and acquire manufactured goods. On the other hand, the Northern merchants needed access to the supply of tropical goods and new sale outlets (Blackburn 1997:181). In that sense, the profits gained from sugar production based on enslaved labour did not just go to the metropolis but also through Portugal to other European merchants, who had provided initial capital and an “industrial outlet” (Wallerstein 1974:121).

The bipolar colonial system of exploitation connecting Portuguese America and Portuguese Africa was incorporated into this axis of the European world economy (Alencastro 2000). Alencastro (2000) shows how the socioeconomic system of production aimed at producing commodities for the world economy was first developed in the 15th century in the Atlantic islands before being introduced in colonial Brazil in the middle of the 16th century. The introduction of the agro-industrial sugar complex in 1455 in Madeira and later in São Tomé combined several interests, including the Portuguese crown and Lusitanian and Genoese, Dutch and German commercial

¹¹⁵ As the sugar prices in the world market rose, Brazilian sugar production expanded. By 1600, there were almost two hundred engenhos in Brazil, which produced between 8,000 and 9,000 metric tons of sugar per year, reaching 14,000 metric tons by mid-1620. Brazilian production peaked in the middle decades of the 17th century when it dominated the European sugar market. (Klein and Luna 2010)

¹¹⁶ Wallerstein (1974) calls this first phase of world capitalism not commercial but agricultural. Wood (1998) and Brenner (1982) argue that British capitalism has agrarian roots. The first phase of violent enclosures, completed in a significant part of the English countryside by the end of the 16th century, generated a particular pattern of rural labour. Big farms were divided up into rented plots cultivated by tenant farmers. The tenants were increasingly subject to the market imperatives, which forced them to increase productivity, on which the landlords depended. Both were increasingly dependent on capitalist practices: “maximisation of exchange value by means of cost-cutting and improving productivity, by specialisation, accumulation, and innovation” (Wood 1998:25). From the part of the tenants, this implied intensification of exploitation, either of the labour of others or self-exploitation by the tenants and their families (Wood 1998). This argument about the articulation of metropolises and colonies in agricultural capitalism is also advanced by Robin Blackburn (1997).

capital accumulated in European markets. Besides that, it counted on the experience of the technicians of Sicily (Alencastro 2000; Castro 1984:43; Ferlini 2003:146). Some other historians emphasise the settler and commercial initiative more than the Portuguese Crown in the “take-off” of Atlantic sugar islands at the end of the 15th century (Blackburn 1997:7).

São Tomé has been considered the first tropical laboratory of capitalist slavery, which was later implemented in modern Americas (Alencastro 2000). As defined by Novais ([1979] 1989:104), it was the “modern colonising exercise” since most of the components that attached the systematic sugar production to the organised capitalist trade were already evident in the Atlantic islands before the system was established in Brazil (Franco 1978). As shown in utmost detail by Alencastro in his book *O trato dos viventes* (2000), São Tomé was the ground where the preparatory training was done for the future adaptation of the Portuguese presence in the tropics. In 1519, a set of rules concerning the selection, boarding, nourishment, transport, branding with hot iron (*marca a ferro em brasa*), treatment and training of Africans for modern slavery were established.

The cultivation techniques underwent some changes, from manual presses to mills working on animal traction and finally to water-powered mills (Castro 1980b). Also, animal creation, types of sugar grinding, enslaved workers specialised in colonial labour and immunised against tropical disease, methods of the slave trade, curative and nutritive practices, as well as institutions of indirect control were first practised in Atlantic islands, and then transported and employed continuously and in large-scale in Brazil (Alencastro 2000:65-70) It was in São Tomé where the labour of enslaved workers was used for the first time in large-scale (Castro 1980a:71). Robin Blackburn (1997) has highlighted that São Tomé model of plantation slavery broke with the previous modes of sugar production and in many aspects was the forerunner of the pattern launched later in the Caribbean.¹¹⁷

The dislocation of sugar production from the Atlantic islands to Brazil in the middle of the 16th century was done under the direction of the Portuguese imperial power, which imposed itself as the catalyst of productive labour and productive system in Brazil, subordinating the colonisers to the “meaning of colonisation”. This “colonising the colonisers” implied synchronising colonial domination with colonial exploitation through the metropolitan market (Alencastro 2000:22-23).

¹¹⁷ According to Blackburn (idem.), in 1522, there were sixty mills in São Tomé. The large plantations had up to three hundred enslaved workers employed in cultivation and processing. São Tomé’s experience also proved that a socioeconomic system based on sharp socioeconomic inequalities is inclined to revolts. The first large-scale insurrection of enslaved workers happened there, which destroyed seventy sugar mills. As happened two centuries later with the Haitian Revolution, this revolt created a similar panic and fear in any society of the time based on slavery, justifying the domination and exploitation imposed on enslaved workers. In Brazil, a specific directive was included in the indigenous policy to contain the escape of enslaved workers by fixing “docile” native people in villages (*aldeamento*) managed by religious orders (Alencastro 2000).

The labour division in the production economy established in the Atlantic was such that Portuguese America produced tropical commodities, and Portuguese Africa supplied enslaved workers. Thus, the colonial system was based on the principle of complementarity and not competitiveness. It took more than one century before the economic system in Portuguese America became tightly synchronised with the trade of enslaved workers, consolidating in the 17th century as an integrative part of the capitalist world economy (Wallerstein 1974). With the support of imperial and foreign capital, the Portuguese elaborated a system of commodity production to the world economy. Thereby was given birth, in the words of Alencastro (2000), to a most advanced colonial exploitation in the Atlantic system, which combined the looting of African people and American slavery-based agricultural production on robbed native lands.

Brazilian economist Antônio Barros de Castro (1977, 1984) has compared the Portuguese colonial enterprise with the Dutch one. Through the United East India Company, the latter acquired in the 18th century a monopoly in the trade of spices with Asia and was typically mercantile in the sense of containing production in Asian countries as well as keeping the peasants producing pepper at the level of subsistence to keep the prices elevated in European markets. Dutch merchants acted according to the old mercantilist formula: buy cheap, sell dear and reap the difference. In that sense, there was no change in the trade pattern. As mentioned above, the Portuguese colonial model in the 16th and 17th centuries included a productive enterprise, employed advanced techniques for its time, and was oriented to export. Although it started experimenting with other labour regimes, it gradually consolidated around black racialised slavery. The selling price had to cover the costs of the means of production and labour power. Profits and the increasing product depended on low production costs or favourable conjuncture. Although the relations between merchants and planters were marked by different and even conflicting interests, turning around the conditions of commercialising the product, the border between them was fluid. Castro suggests that the Portuguese trade pattern did not follow the law of mercantile capital: buy cheap and sell dear. Instead, he highlights the changes in the modes of exchange and the articulation of “emerging capitalism” (Castro 1977:213-217).

Multiple determinations defined the new socio-economic system, which, as mentioned earlier, were played out in the Atlantic islands before developing further in Brazil. Sugar already had an established distribution network. However, other aspects attach the system of production to capitalist trade. Technologically, as the scholars of recent decades (Blackburn 1997; Tomich 2004) have emphasised, sugar production was a complex process, which had allegedly enabled an increase in the volume of production to attend to great demand (Franco 1978; Prado [1942] 1999).

Regarding technology, however, it is true that since Brazil had become the main sugar frontier, the technology of sugar-making did not change much after the adoption of the vertical three-roller grinding mill at the beginning of the 17th century, which did allow a considerable increase of productivity (Castro 1980b).

In terms of necessary labour, sugar production demanded large quantities of unqualified labour. It also required skilled labour, and enslaved workers also performed skilled labour. Hence, it cannot be confirmed that the abundant labour force just characterised sugar production without any specific qualification or skill, except some masters, as believed by Franco (1978) and considered by Wallerstein (1974) as the main factor to explain why one or another form of labour control became dominant in core, semi-periphery and periphery of the world-system. According to the latter's model, the dominant form of labour control in the periphery was unfree labour as it was most adequate to economic sectors, which required little skill, such as sugar production. As shown later, skilled labour was central to sugar production (Schwartz 1985). Fieldwork was the most labour-intensive, absorbing most of the enslaved labour - usually eighty per cent, but skilled labour used different forms, including enslaved labour. The cultivation of sugar cane did not require much skill. Hence, no specific qualification was needed. The technical part of sugar production in large-scale grinding mills was an industrial process that required a broad range of skills. Except that of the sugar master, these were relatively easy to obtain (Schwartz 1985). Another essential element of the production system was the private ownership of the means of production, particularly land, which was broadly available in Brazil. As already mentioned, especially in the beginning, the land was obtained by a grant from the royal state, which protected privileged strata and contributed to the concentration of the means of production. However, with time, in the 17th century, there was already an existing land market.

As Castro shows, sugar-making was also costly, as it demanded a large amount of initial capital, particularly during the initial colonisation phase. Therefore, it could not be easily distributed among small producers. Few could afford to construct a mill, and those who could not afford it became cane farmers. It was not land that demanded a significant amount of initial capital, but rather the labour-power, constructing buildings, clearing lands, building drainage channels, and sowing sugar cane. Besides initial capital, keeping the sugar estate in operation also required high expenses due to the need to replace the workforce, which was primarily created by the high mortality rate of enslaved people, resulting in the planter living in constant indebtedness. However, all the operating costs, liquidation of credit and acquisition of more enslaved workers had to be covered by the sale of the product – sugar (Castro 1977:179-180, 1984:50; Klein and Luna 2010).

Besides the initial capital provided by the Portuguese Crown, it also came from religious institutions, but mainly from merchant groups. In many cases, mills were built and acquired by merchants themselves, with a significant presence of Portuguese New Christians with Asiento capital (Alencastro 2000)¹¹⁸ in Pernambuco and Bahia (Castro 1977:179; Novinsky 1972; Salvador 1976).¹¹⁹ This suggests that many planters were merchants or relatives or partners of merchants, indicating the fluidity of frontiers between planters and merchants, as mentioned above. Besides building and owning mills, these New Christians also became cane farmers, technicians, and skilled workers. Thus, merchant interests were focused on securing foreign markets and providing initial capital for the units of production, acquiring enslaved workers and becoming the directors of production (Castro 1980:85).

Colonial production was incorporated into the world economy, becoming subordinate to economic determinations and international competition. It was not wholly subjected to metropolitan legislation, as Portugal was limited in politically organising trade between its American colony and other countries.¹²⁰

In the next chapter, I will discuss the capitalist character of plantation. Here, I will advance some points. Castro (1980a) argues that 16th-17th-century plantation was a large-scale capitalist enterprise, resembling more the 19th-century manufacture than European productive units of the 16th -18th centuries.¹²¹ Given the restrictions that merchant capital faced in Western Europe to interfere and control the production in guilds and craft labour, regulations to limit proletarianisation, a way to liberate capital accumulation was the development of rural cottage industries, which

¹¹⁸ Flemish agents, Sephardic Jews, and New Christians (Spanish and Portuguese Jews who had converted or were forced to convert) dominated the colonial trade of Portugal (Novinsky 1972; Salvador 1976). Sombart ([1911] 2001) has shown that New Christians, the Portuguese bourgeois, had broad international connections. In the context of Caribbean colonial enterprise, Robin Blackburn (1997:332) defines those involved in the plantation economy as “new merchants” who did not act based on a traditional formula of “buy cheap and sell dear” but were engaged in organising and improving transport as well as cultivation and processing. The Portuguese merchants, mainly New Christians, were holding the Asiento contracts (1580-1640), which granted the monopoly position in the slave trade to provide enslaved workers to the Spanish colonies. These merchants accumulated money by trading enslaved human beings, sugar, silver and horses. Some also accumulated wealth through the sugar enterprise in northeast Brazil. These merchants who accumulated money through Asientos rose into the ranks of becoming the bankers of the Spanish Crown. Most, however, went bankrupt with the separation of Spanish and Portuguese Crowns in 1640 (Alencastro 2000).

¹¹⁹ Schwartz (2004) mentions that initial capital also came from European aristocratic families besides merchant investors. Moreover, the Portuguese Crown financed some of the early mills besides giving tax exemptions. Initial capital is also derived from institutions, such as religious orders.

¹²⁰ With this argument, Castro (1980a) contests the thesis of Novais ([1979] 1989) that by regulating the sugar prices in the colony, that is, keeping them lower than in the metropolis, the metropolitan merchant groups were able to extract “excess-profits” or “excess surplus value”, which was central to Novais’s definition of the “colonial system”. To Castro (1980:90n80), however, the price of sugar in the colony was subordinated to the fluctuations in the world market, which limited the principle of “exclusivity” or the “metropolitan monopoly” overseas to the detriment of foreigners.

¹²¹ Mintz (1986) and Blackburn (1997) have also put forth such arguments. Blackburn (1988:333) defines plantation as belonging at the same time to the “world of manufacture” as well as to that of “commercial agriculture”.

initially distributed work to “households”, known as a putting-out system (Castro 1977; Marx 1976). However, under the putting-out system, the manufacturers did not yet have direct control over the production which cottager families or artisans performed. Unlike European manufacturers, the colonial planters-owners at this time were often also integrated with merchant networks in Portuguese America and later in the Caribbean. They were responsible for organising the labour process and purchasing the equipment, implements, provision and supply of new enslaved workers (Blackburn 1988).

When in the 16th century, the English landlords and tenants were already subjected to the capitalist imperatives of productivity and accumulation, the number of wage workers employed by tenant-farmers and by landlords, as shown by Blackburn (1988), was low in comparison with the number of labourers united under the “roof” of the plantation in Portuguese America and later in the Caribbean islands. When the English landlords employed two to three dozen labourers, the most giant farms in Bahia and Pernambuco in the 17th century had at least a hundred enslaved workers. If skilled workers and cane farmers were included, the number of people integrated into the plantation was even higher, although the average number of enslaved workers per farm was twenty (Schwartz 1984). The size of plantations increased with the Caribbean model regarding the physical territory and the number of workers, reaching from two to three hundred enslaved workers (Blackburn 1988).

Franco (1978) argues that technological changes were introduced in sugar production on the Atlantic islands. Once installed in Brazil, no technical innovations happened, resulting in capital expanding on a stable technological base, making other variables more necessary for productivity and accumulation. She does not, however, take into consideration an essential technical innovation from 1608-1612, which changed the process of grinding the cane, that is, the adoption of the vertical three-roller mill (*moenda de entrosas*) (Castro 1980b:680-690),¹²² which was mainly operated by enslaved female labour, which will be discussed in the next chapter. This technological change and how it triggered other changes, including in social relations, is studied by Castro (1980b). He demonstrates the technical changes in colonial sugar production and the transformations in the labour process, about which the documentation until 1980 was relatively poor. Moreover, he questions this “rooted preconception” in Brazilian socio-economic

¹²² Cane could be ground in various ways. Regarding the impact of productivity in the engenho, the three-roller mill enabled simplifying the labour process by discarding some preparatory tasks in the grinding process and improving the product quality (idem.). A horizontal three-cylinder mill was invented in 1754 by John Someaton, and its fabrication started in England in 1794. In Brazil, it was also broadly used. (See Ferlini 2003 for the technical sugar production process and its transformation).

historiography about the incompatibility between technological change and slave labour, reproduced by renowned scholars of Brazilian socio-economic history. He shows that the vertical three-roller mill, which is nothing more than an arrangement to integrate and simplify functions, transformed the labour process because sugar juice extraction became more continuous. The labour process became more intense and less porous, which resulted in much more significant quantities of cane. However, as argued by Castro (1980b), its impact went way beyond the labour process changes, having broader demographic and structural social-economic consequences.¹²³

After this technological change had removed some restrictions from sugar production, reducing the cost and breaking the monopolies, no relevant technological transformation occurred until the beginning of the 19th century except for some minor adjustments in the Caribbean islands (Castro 1980b). Until then, the intercolonial competition was related to other elements, such as the integration of sugar production and the labour organisation. Regarding Brazil, Franco's (1978) suggestion makes quite a lot of sense when she says that after the stabilisation of the technological base, an economic system aimed at a simple increase of commodities and capital expansion rested on the intensification of the exploitation of the means of production in absolute terms.¹²⁴ That is to say that the expansion of sugar production depended on the appropriation of new lands, the expansion of plantations, the increase of their capacity and the multiplication of mills, which required an increasing amount of labour-power. Hence, besides the systematic and massive exploitation of expropriated men and women, the expansion of the sugar enterprise, integrated into the world economy, depended on the regular and proportional growth of labour-power (Castro 1984:45; Franco 1978). The land was acquired based on the grant system – *Sesmaria* – which, although appearing feudal, indeed, and had some feudal background, was capitalist in essence, as it was considered essential for the expansion of mercantile capitalism. Those who received the grants had commercial profits in view and were financed with commercial loans, which were paid back from profits obtained from labour exploitation (Simonsen 1962, cited in Frank 1967:151-152).

According to Post (2011:111), “this sort of *extensive* growth based on the absolute growth of surplus labour is typical of non-capitalist forms of social labour.” However, another view is

¹²³ Besides the reduced cost of sugar production, in two decades, it led to the multiplication of sugar mills in the colony and the decentralisation of sugar production as it moved from the Northeast to other regions, such as Rio de Janeiro and Maranhão. It also influenced the social-economic order of the colony. With cane farmers' easier access to set up their own mills, it reduced the social distance between old mill owners and more affluent cane farmers, changing the power relation between them and leading to new conflicts (Castro 1980b).

¹²⁴ By arguing that the expansion of colonial enterprise took place in absolute terms, Franco (1978) suggests that this new form of colonial exploitation was based on the extraction of absolute surplus value, which can be related to Marx's (1976:1025-1034) notion of “formal subsumption of labour under capital”. In fact, “formal subsumption” is, for Marx, a distinctive historical trait of capitalism (Drapeau 2014; Moulrier-Boutang 1998:148).

possible. Namely, as discussed in the first chapter, the process that makes up the production of absolute surplus value constitutes the “general foundation of the capitalist system” and is the starting point for the production of relative surplus value (Marx 1976:645). The increase in absolute surplus value is connected to the absolute surplus labour.

3.2.2 The “total expropriated” as the colonial mode of labour control

The organisation of enslaved labour was fundamental for transforming sugar from a luxury product to a commodity produced in large quantities. Franco has argued that what explains the implementation of slavery as a labour control was the organisation of the sugar enterprise, that is, the configuration of the large units of production, which were created in response to the organisation of capitalist markets, to regularly and in large quantities obtain the product, through a large number of workers. In the same vein is maintained by Castro (1984), to whom the adoption of slavery should be explained through the activities that underpin and determine the socio-economic structure of the new colonial model. At the moment of the constitution of the capitalist market by the colonial expansion, capital is already concentrated, and it needs expropriated labour in large quantities, which, in turn, is compatible with the mode of accumulation of capital: more land, more raw material and more workers (Franco 1984:226). Thus, to obtain the product, the large production units used many workers who were “united and controlled by subjects who owned the private property of the means of production and to whom belonged by right the labour product. It is a situation in which appears a radical dissociation between direct producers, means of production and labour product” (Franco 1978:31). Hence, at this point in history, there was already a historically constituted category of workers in large numbers who were expropriated from the means of production and were put in service of others, in a way that it was necessary to capital.

In the Brazilian historical social science, the adoption of slavery as a form of labour control in the New World colonies has been explained in different ways: the enslaved person was already present in Spanish and Portuguese societies, hence, the *archaic* “ideology of seigneurs” (Genovese [1969] 1971), the demographic argument about the scarcity of “free labourers” in Europe (Williams 1944:6)¹²⁵ or in the New World (Furtado [1959] 2007; Williams 1944), the higher price of settler labour (Prado Jr. [1942] 1999), the known Marx-Wakefield thesis about the open frontier (Marx

¹²⁵ “With the limited population of Europe in the sixteenth century, the free labourers necessary to cultivate the staple crops of sugar, tobacco and cotton in the New World could not have been supplied in quantities adequate to permit large-scale production” (Williams 1944:6).

1976; Williams 1944:4)¹²⁶, the activities of slave traffickers and their profits, that is, the slave-trade (Novais [1979] 1989¹²⁷), or the argument about the sugar production as an unskilled sector, hence appropriate to slave labour (Wallerstein 1974). None of these explanations alone are sufficient to understand why slavery became the dominant mode of labour control in activities, which underpinned the socioeconomic structure of the “new colonial model” (Castro 1984:48). Differently from the most commonly used demographic argument, Franco (1978:31-32) provides a sociological explanation, namely, that the subjects expropriated from the means of production and compelled to sell their labour-power as the only source to guarantee the livelihoods did not exist as a *social category*, being able to fulfil the labour needs of the colonial production, which was based on the organisation of big property at the historical moment in which took place the adjustment between colonial production and capitalist trade. At that time and still in the 18th century, the social category of persons in Europe who lived only from wage labour, depending on it for their survival and not only for a seasonal supplement, was still limited (Tilly 1984). However, there were labourers who were partially dependent on wage labour and were often subordinated under coercive labour arrangements.

According to Castro (1977), it was not precisely the lack of available free labour in Europe or in the newly colonised lands that led to the adoption of enslaved labour. In Britain, “free” persons were exported to the New World to be tied down to the plantation by the contract of indenture. In the initial phase of the development of the sugar complex in colonial Brazil, Portuguese free labourers worked in sugar plantations, but as artisans, as “masters” and “officials”, being well paid (Estevão Pereira, cited in Castro 1977:197). To them, working on a plantation was an alternative, as this work may have provided possibilities for social mobility, capital accumulation, acquisition of enslaved people and starting one’s own productive enterprise (Castro 1977:195-197). Besides the free imported artisans and skilled labour in colonial Brazil, the segment of free and poor workers was also broadly present, most commonly living in villages or on the margins of plantations. However, as mentioned above, they were only marginally integrated into mercantile production, providing a myriad of temporary and casual services to the plantation (Franco [1969] 1997:14-15).

¹²⁶ The open frontier thesis suggests that the adoption of coerced labour in large colonial units of production is made necessary by the abundance of unoccupied lands, as without compulsion, the people would follow their “natural inclination to work on [their] own land” and work as self-employed (Castro 1977:195; Williams 1944:4). According to Castro (1977) this argument would not make sense in the Americas of the 16th-17th- century.

¹²⁷ Novais ([1979] 1989) mentions the organisation of a mercantilist system of colonisation as a reason. The mercantilist system emerged within the system of relations to promote the so-called primitive accumulation in the core. Slavery, reproduced through the market, would broaden the vast and profitable slave trade. While indigenous slavery kept the gains within the colony, the accumulation generated by the slavery of African peoples would flow to the Metropolis.

Furthermore, it did not work out to subordinate indigenous populations to the plantation's value-producing labour, either, as discussed below.

Therefore, the labour needs of the sugar sector could be satisfied only by “the violently open and legally guaranteed form of appropriation of alien labour-power, which is slavery” (Franco 1978:32), which could be exploited systematically and increased regularly. The mode of accumulation, in absolute terms, demands masses of available workers to be incorporated into the production process. Accordingly, slavery as a mode of labour exploitation enabled the fast and easily moulded mobilisation of labour power, which could be adjusted to large-scale production in growing volume. More specifically, the enslaved African workers proved to be historically possible labourers in the context of Portuguese colonisation, as these totally expropriated labourers could be forced to labour entirely in service of others. Moreover, this labour agent was adequate for this type of production to the sugar trade as it could be “increased according to the tendencies of expansion” (Franco 1978:32). As added by Castro (1984:50), as such the enslaved labour was not an “alternative to free labour” in the chain of the producers of colonial commodities, but enslaved labour upsurged as “socially necessary”, given the labour process, demands of the capitalist world economy and intercolonial competition¹²⁸, which imposed its conditions and limits. In that sense, the enslaved Africans appeared to be the only labour agents who could be fixated on the plantation as a capital- and value-producing labour, something which, as it will be seen later, was not possible with other coerced indigenous labour forms. The justification of the enslavement of African peoples requires taking into consideration some ideological arguments used by the colonisers and enslavers when it comes to religion and race. However, these will be briefly discussed in the next chapter in the section about the trade of enslaved African people.

Like the dependent wage labourers, the enslaved workers are also expropriated from the means of production and, therefore, from the full labour product. Unlike the wage labourers, the enslaved workers are deprived of their entire labour power. Thus, by being incorporated into the social relations based on slavery, the workers have been deprived of all their property, including the property in their labour-power, which is their own body. Indeed, slavery is a “modality of exploitation of labour-power based directly and previously on the subjection of labour, through worker-commodity to commercial capital” (2013:33). Martins (2013:32-33) specifies that enslaved

¹²⁸ It is more common to emphasise the merchant relations between metropolises and their respective colonies instead of intercolonial relations. According to Castro (1984), initially, the competition was between different merchant interests. However, later, the competition dislocated to the ambit of production: Sicily was threatened by Madeira, which lost its position due to the pressure derived from Brazilian producers. Such competition is usually affirmed to emerge in the 19th century with the end of “the old colonial system”, the opening of the markets and the hegemony of industrial capital.

labourer is subsumed under capital personified in the landowner, in the sense that through captivity “capital organises and defines the labour process”. The condition of slavery shaped the type of direct coercion that the planter exercised on enslaved workers to appropriate labour. Hence, the subsumption of labour to capital was not only based on the monopoly over the means of production but also on the monopoly over the very labourer. Based on this “double expropriation” – the means of production as well as personality – Franco (1978: 32) defines the enslaved Africans as the “*totally expropriated*” (*expropriado total*). The control that others have over enslaved workers approaches them to “total control” and “absolute domination” because enslaved workers are alienated from their personalities. By definition, they do not have any power over their persons and labour capacities, approaching them to almost total powerlessness (Patterson 1982).

In this complex labour arrangement, the meaning of enslaved labour rested *mainly* in the large-scale production of commodities for sale in the world market¹²⁹. Unlike the dependent wage labourers, enslaved workers were separated from the sphere of consumption, not acquiring their subsistence through the market exchange, having to provide their subsistence in most cases. Although somewhat mixed combinations were also at play. Other authors have also shown how enslaved people commercialised the surplus obtained from their provision grounds, not only using it for their subsistence (Cardoso 1996). However, they also consumed products imported from abroad and increasingly produced in the domestic economy (Fragoso and Florentino 2001; Franco 1978:31), whereas the commodities produced by enslaved workers were exchanged for the wages of the proletarians of the metropolitan countries in the capitalist core.

What is suggested here is that in the way that slavery was generated in the 16th century to sustain the production connected to the capitalist system in formation, the enslaved worker “emerged redefined as . . . an economic category”¹³⁰ (Franco [1969] 1997:13), like that being integrated to colonial capitalism. According to Alencastro, there was a *shift* taking place in the Atlantic islands with the imposition of the trade of enslaved workers as productive agents of agriculture. Namely, “slavery (*escravidão*), as a (legal apparatus permitting, here and there, reduction of direct producers in private property), was transformed into the system of slavery (*escravismo*) as a (colonial productive system founded on slavery (*escravidão*) and integrated into the world economy) (2000:32-33). It is important to note that the “colonial productive system” does

¹²⁹ 65-70 per cent of enslaved people were destined to *engenhos* (Goulart 1975, cited in Castro 1977:203). Other destinations in the 17th century were tobacco production or domestic services (Castro 1977:209).

¹³⁰ Marx refers to the redefinition of social relations when they become governed by capital. In that sense, McMichael (1991, 1999) distinguishes between phenomenal and historical forms. When value relations incorporate labour forms, their historical meaning changes, whereas their phenomenal form remains unchanged.

not mean the “slave mode of production” as distinct from and external to the capitalist mode. With this turn, the enslaved African people as commodities obtained through the trade became the productive labour of the sugar economy in the Americas. It was most clearly played out first in Madeira and São Tomé islands in the middle of the 16th century. This turn marked the shift from free labour to enslaved labour as a more advantageous labour form and was translated into economic policy. The justifications were provided in the licenses (*alvará*) of October 16, 1562, and October 30, 1562, addressed to the Madeira farmers who protested against the monopoly of the slave-trade contractor. In this license, the Portuguese Crown argued for substituting enslaved labour from Guinea for free labour, appointing the former as a cheaper, more productive, and profitable option and advantageous to the royal revenues¹³¹.

Notably, at this historical conjuncture of European colonial expansion, articulation of world markets, the slave trade and the system of production, which sustains a specific mode of capital accumulation, Franco defines modern colonial slavery as an essential moment of *the general social organisation of labour*. She discusses it as an integral part of the formation of the global proletariat. Moreover, modern slavery should be understood in terms of property relation; that is, it was a “particular form that it assumed *within* the general movement of the private appropriation of the means of production” (Franco 1978:9, emphasis in original).

As part of the general social organisation of labour, enslaved labour was fundamentally entangled with the development of “free labour” in the centre (as well as in the periphery) of capitalism as a unitary whole. This relation was established with the implantation of the new productive system in the New World, developed between African and Asian warehouses, essential for the development of European markets (Gorender 1980; Novais 1969, [1979] 1989; Prado Jr. [1942] 1999). The development of free labour and another expropriated labour, enslaved labour, were entangled by the constitution and expansion of capitalist markets, tightly associated with the development of the bourgeois order (Franco 1978:9).

This general social organisation of labour in the 15th and 16th centuries involved the violent seizure of common lands and forcible expropriation of small direct producers in Europe, leading to

¹³¹ “It is concerned with the large expenses of sugar production that the farmers of Madeira Island have in their farms and mills, with workers and men employed for *soldadas* and *jornais*. Moreover, as some so-called farmers fear such expenses and cannot meet them, they often fail to plough and make as much sugar as they would if they had slaves in their plantations who worked and were continuously in their service. It is necessary so that farms can always be exploited and not be damaged or harmed due to the scarcity of workers, in which the farmers and people to whom the farms belong receive much loss, and it is in my right [also] to break this cause, wanting to provide for it . . . I am happy to give you a place and a license that you can set up on Madeira Island . . . one ship [per year] to rescue slaves in the rivers of Guinea . . . according to the need that each of the farmers has for slaves” (The Royal License, October 16, 1562, and October 30, 1562, cited in Alencastro 2000:32-33, my translation).

the various forms of formally free but dependent labour, as well as the expropriation of native peoples in Africa and in the Americas, giving way to multiple forms of servile, enslaved labour and “free” dependent labour, which, as contemporaneous processes, were instances of the formation of modern private property relations (Oakes 1990; Roberts 2017:9). As it was discussed in chapters one and two, the concept of labour-power in Marx’s *Grundrisse* is intimately related to the property regime, that is, to the *expropriation* of the means of production and subsistence and separation of the workers from their conditions of labour (Franco 1978). Accordingly, as affirmed by Fontes (2019), expropriation is a “necessary condition” or “the condition of possibility” of capitalist social relations and their expansion. However, the peripheral thinkers have innovated the concept of “expropriation” from the viewpoint of colonial slavery. It does not refer only to the separation of direct producers from their conditions of labour but to its continuation in the process of legally guaranteed direct appropriation of labour power under capital. In this concrete form, enslaved labour is integrated into world social labour.

As Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco at the end of the 1960s, approximately five decades later, the Brazilian sociologist and Black feminist writer Denise Ferreira da Silva (2019, 2022) in her books *Dívida Impagável* and *Unpayable Debt* about racialised capitalism, aims to “re/decompose” Marx’s equation of value by confronting it with the “wounded captive body in the scene of subjugation” (i.e., “slave in the scene of total violence”), to show that there are more components that enter in the value production than Marx had considered.

She points to the delimitations of Marx’s theory of capital, according to which “specifically capitalist mode of accumulation” is determined by one type of property regime only. It is determined by the *capitalist private property* as the “means of production and subsistence . . . serve at the same time as the means of exploitation of, and domination over the worker” (Marx 1976:933). This capitalist form of private property identified with the development of wage labour, where the workers are owners of their labour power, excludes in Marx’s general theory of value another, a colonial form of value appropriation founded on the private property regime based on slavery from any consideration about the production of capital (Ferreira da Silva 2019:89). Accordingly, the *exteriority* of colonies and enslaved labour regarding capital production derives from the property form of enslaved labour arrangement, that enslaved worker him- or herself has value and the total violence it allows (Ferreira da Silva 2022:233). To Marx, “enslaved labour” is considered nonproductive as it is “unpaid labour” mediated by title and property rather than

contractual relations. Hence, there would be no quantitative basis to measure the time the enslaved workers laboured for themselves and the time they laboured for the owner.

Therefore, the private property regime based on the mode of appropriation mediated by slavery would be placed into the category of “the so-called primitive accumulation”, considered by Marxists as well as liberal scholars “temporally previous and analytically exterior” of *capital*, and determined to disappear as a result of the domination of the typically capitalist private property (Ferreira da Silva 2019:174). As already formulated in this thesis, but in another way, this identification of a specifically capitalist mode of production with only one legal form of private property tied to one concept of labour conceals, according to Ferreira da Silva (2019:174-175), the participation of the colony with its apparatuses of “total violence” in the accumulation of capital “through how the legal form of property circumscribes the social conditions of *properly* capitalist production”.

However, the form of labour organisation, based on the ownership of captives, constitutes the colonial property regime (Alencastro 2000:242). As put by Denise Ferreira da Silva (2019:177-178), the regime of colonial slavery “constitutes the legal-economic structure of the capitalist regime”. She maintains that the mode of labour appropriation in the modern colony is *expropriation*, an important instance of the modern economic-legal matrix (Ferreira da Silva 2019:153, 2022:181). The colonial property form authorises the “use of total violence”, which permits the appropriation of total value created by enslaved labour, flesh and blood of enslaved workers, which enter into the accumulation of global capital. She brings this kind of economic-legal modality on which slavery relies under the determination of capital as much as enslaved labour determines capital. Expropriation of total value means appropriating not only the surplus labour but also the necessary labour through “total violence”, which constitutes the “structure (...) of global capital” (Ferreira da Silva 2019:156).

Echoing Fraser (2016), Ferreira da Silva proposes a conceptual shift, viewing *capital* as a *juridical-economic architecture*, which encompasses *two modes of governance* that have developed over the past four centuries: the colonial territory (*colony*) and the political body (*polity*). These modes involve *different methods of appropriating territory and labour, relying on legal agreements (constitution and citizenship) on the one hand and the threat and use of force (conquest and slavery) on the other*. These modes also encompass *distinct ways of appropriating economic value* through which capital is produced and reproduced: (1) exploitation, which implies the partial appropriation of value intermediated by contract, that is, wage-labour, as described by Marx; and (2) expropriation, which implies the appropriation of total value through total violence, sanctioned by

the ownership of human beings, that is slavery. Both labourers yield the total value to the employer, with a difference that in the case of wage-labour, we are dealing with the partial appropriation of created value under legal obligations, as the worker receives a wage which should be equivalent to the value of labour-power (exploitation). In the case of enslaved labour, the total created value is being appropriated under the threat of total violence exercised by owners over enslaved people and enabled by the colonial legal and economic architecture (expropriation) (Ferreira da Silva 2019:89, 91-92, 177). Essentially, this expropriated total value is the “flesh and blood” of enslaved workers, which enters into the accumulation of global capital.

To reimagine the enslaved worker as the producer of value, Ferreira da Silva reconstructs Marx’s equation of value (such as the commodity “yarn”, for example), in which the collective labour of enslaved workers producing cotton on plantations disappears and appears simply as a *raw material*. Neither is capital produced when cotton is produced. First, it is necessary to include in the equation the *value of the enslaved workers*, whose bodies are materially expended in the production of cotton. Furthermore, she proposes to reimagine enslaved labour not as raw material but as “living labour” which is performed under the “brutal lash”. Hence, she includes the labour of enslaved workers performed to create value, which in its totality, including the value of the “wage” of the enslaved labour and the owner’s profit, is being expropriated. Hence, as discussed before, expropriation refers to this kind of logic of exploitation, in which the value necessary for the reproduction of labour power is violently appropriated and enters the fund of capital accumulation. What is configured is the *excess*. The last chapter will discuss how the cheap commodities such as cotton, sugar, tea and coffee produced by enslaved and other forms of coerced labour determined the value of metropolitan/core wage labour once they entered the capital circuit.

Hence, these two forms of extracting labour in capitalism correspond to two types of private property regimes, which correspond to either power exercised over persons or power exercised over commodities, constituting one single continuum, diachronically and synchronically, as has been argued by Marxist sociologist, Orlando Patterson. Hence, open power and concealed power are part of the continuation between “direct personal power” and power in its “‘fantastic form’ of concealment of real power in capitalism brought about by the mediation of property and the ‘fetishism of commodities’” (Patterson 1982:18-19). The statute of being enslaved in these terms *approaches* the “total domination from the viewpoint of the master and total powerlessness from the side of the slave”; hence, slavery is “one of the most extreme forms of the relation of domination” (Patterson 1982:2). The principle of total domination in economies operating mainly based on the

enslaved labour have suited very well to fast expand wealth based on enslaved workers, land and commodities (Patterson 1982:32).¹³²

In her analysis of John Locke's *The Second Treatise of Government*, published in 1690, Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco (1993) discusses how total powerlessness is used by classical liberal theory to justify the enslavement of persons and, hence, the appropriation of enslaved labour by capital. In the second part of the 17th century, with the development of capitalist forces and the bourgeois consciousness, the liberal political theory articulated the idea of property with the concepts of liberty and equality, understanding that people have property in their persons and capacities. According to Franco's interpretation of the Lockean political theory, human beings and their private property are constituted by actively using their internal powers and capacities to appropriate the external world. Accordingly, those who have forfeited their lives, that is, given away power over themselves, either through "just war" or a committed crime, in the sense of becoming inactive and incapable of using their powers to produce their lives, can become subject to bondage and legitimate private appropriation by the propertied classes to be transformed in just and legal gains. Slavery, as understood by Locke, implied "somebody's right to take possession of and dominate absolutely" the ones who had forfeited their own lives¹³³ (Franco 1993:48). The person was enslaved precisely because they did not have a property in their person, that is, power over the use of their person, body and capacities (Franco 1993:38-41). In that sense, the enslavement of human beings can be understood as a radical form of appropriating human lives and capacities by those who belong to the ranks of equals and propertied in the liberal social and political order (Franco 1993:49). Through the "private appropriation", they lose their human attributes, the power over themselves and their belongings, become subject to almost absolute domination and arbitrary power of their masters:

¹³² The idea of absolute ownership of things, the invention of Romans, was a "legal fiction" to distinguish between enslaved and non-enslaved human beings (Patterson 1967:31-32). Patterson (1967) argues that in Rome, this fiction of defining property in terms of persons and things ideally met its purpose: "to define one of the most rapidly expanding sources of wealth, namely slaves." This relation implied absolute power over the "thing" in the sense of going beyond extracting a total economic value from a thing, including also psychological power. Absolute ownership fits well in slave-holding societies, where the primary forms of wealth are privately owned land, commodities, and enslaved labour (Patterson 1982:32).

¹³³ Locke considered slavery a justifiable institution. There is a consensus among scholars regarding Locke's engagement in the institution of slavery in two forms. First, he invested in companies trading with enslaved human beings (Royal African Company and a company to develop the Bahama Islands). Second, he was a secretary and, to some extent, a policy advisor to three different groups who were engaged in colonial matters in the Americas, which included the provision and regulation of enslaved workers (as a secretary to the Lords Proprietors of Carolina Locke co-authored the Fundamental Constitution of Carolina, which included a provision that "every freeman of Carolina shall have absolute power and authority over his negro slave of what opinion or religion soever" (Glausser 1990:200-204; Tully 1993; Welcham 1995).

The presence of the slave in the *Second Treaty* has nothing of 'contradictory' with liberalism: practically and theoretically, from a heuristic or ethical point of view, the justification of slavery is an ultimate consequence, which derives from its presuppositions: the power attributed to the perfect specimen, to confiscate, in a total way, the constitutive predicates of the human person [freedom and possession of oneself and things], from those considered harmful and defective. (Franco 1993:49)

On the one hand, in the 17th century, enslaved human beings were distinguished from servants, the dependent proletarians. Different from the enslaved workers, who are dominated in absolute terms, over the “free” worker, the servant, the master will obtain a temporary power. The appropriation of alien labour and the product is justified by money and desire for endless accumulation as well as by the production of general wealth through the division of labour (Franco 1993:50). However, even enslaved workers are distinguished from the “free” workers, Franco observes that Locke unites them under the same category “servant”¹³⁴, suggesting it to be also a broader category in the 17th century. Although the one is subjected to almost absolute domination and the other falls under the master's powers only temporarily, Franco (1993) maintains that in Lockean liberal doctrine, the labour of both can be legitimately appropriated¹³⁵, reduced to an alien instrument and converted in a just gain. In the case of enslaved workers, by their own fault and through “just war”. Free persons make themselves servants voluntarily and through the mediation of money and exchange.

¹³⁴ “But there is another sort of servant, which by a peculiar name we call *slaves* who being captives taken in a just war, are by the right of nature subjected to the absolute dominion and arbitrary power of their masters. These men having, as I say, forfeited their lives, and with it their liberties, and lost their estates; and being in the *state of slavery*, not capable of any property, cannot in that state be considered as any part of *civil society*; the chief end whereof is the preservation of property” (Locke [1690] 1980:45-46). It is essential to mention that at the time of Locke’s writings, the employment relations in England were regulated by the Master and Servant Act. Master and Servant Law created a separate legal status for those who provided service to others. It guaranteed to masters a “legal right of obedience” of their servants, and “all manual labourers (...) were subject to penal sanctions” when not fulfilling their contract (Steinfeld 1991:16). Steinfeld (1991) has argued that the early modern English law had understood “servant” as comprising all forms of wage-labour. In the 17th as well as in the 18th century, the term “servant” had multiple uses. It was used more narrowly, but it also had a broader meaning. Its narrow meaning referred to “resident household workers”, who usually worked for a year and were paid wages. A broader meaning encompassed all those “who worked for others for compensation on whatever terms” and were servants “in service”. (Steinfeld 1991:16-20, 55, 106, 70) English law in the 17th century permitted indentured servitude (Patterson 1967:74). Although, in the beginning, the labour form of indentured servants shared many of the features of servants in England, principally because it was consensual, however, with time it developed into a distinct institution. Also, the view that black servants did not belong to the same community of Christian, civilised Europe appeared gradually (Patterson 1982). In New England, the word *servant* was used to describe white British indentured servants and enslaved workers introduced in 1619. However, with the consolidation of African slavery in the middle of the 17th century, the commercial and legal language adopted the word “slave” to refer to black enslaved workers (Alencastro 2000:145).

¹³⁵ Expropriation of labour identifies the enslaved workers as “inferior creatures” who serve others. However, Locke also places the servants next to animals, as the “neighbour of horses”, being denied of human dignity: “. . . the grass my horse has bit, the turfs my servant has cut, and the ore I have digged in my place, where I have a right to them in common with others, become my property, without the assignation or consent of anybody. The labour that was mine, removing them out of that common state they were in, hath fixed my property in them” (Locke [1690] 1980:19-20). Franco (1993:51) has drawn attention to the fact that the servant, Locke calls the free man selling his or her services for money, seems to be here not far from the animal category, as justified is not only the appropriation of the horse and its feed but also the servant and his or her labour, all qualified by the possessive pronoun “my”.

In the case of enslaved workers, without life and rights, all this “legitimizing ideology of domination” deriving from the consensual exchange, which veils the exploitation of wage labour, disappears. Like a criminal, enslaved persons lose their rights and lives and are transformed into beasts. As suggested by Franco (1993), the damage to the enslaved human beings goes further, as they become *nonbeings*. Enslaved workers are the *absolute unequals*: besides losing their rights and lives, they become totally alienated to their owners, to the point of becoming their instruments. Enslavers have the power to postpone the death of enslaved workers and use it to their own advantage to accumulate profits. If the situation becomes unbearable, the enslaved workers can kill themselves¹³⁶. Franco considers the condition of modern enslaved workers worse than that of enslaved workers in the ancient world. In the liberal and Christian world, the enslaved people are dispossessed of any reference: they have lost property in themselves and have ceased being an “untouchable divine property” and are entirely reified through trade (Franco 1993:51-52).

In Franco’s (1993) interpretation, the “free” labourer and the enslaved labourer appear to belong to the same socio-economic and political universe, in which the same criteria of property and productivity determine the social classification and stratification. According to this ideological basis, the indigenous peoples and the black Africans could be legitimately expropriated, dislocated and conscripted in the circuits of capital (Fraser 2016) as value- and capital-producing labour, not just for individual wealth, but for the sake of unlimited accumulation within the world-system.

The particularity of the economic bondage of the “total expropriated” is not founded on the repetitive “indirect enslavement” of the worker to capital – the capitalist class as a whole – but on their “direct enslavement” once and for all to an individual planter-capitalist. By being almost absolutely dominated by others, having little or no control over their person does not, however, contradict capitalist principles and its underpinning liberal ideology.

So far, I have discussed the emergence of the South-Atlantic system of exploitation within the capitalist world system in the 15th and 16th centuries, the main features of the economic system in Portuguese American colonies and the kind of totally expropriated labourer sustaining the mode of capital accumulation. Further conceptual considerations should consider the broadened notion of the working class and enslaved labour’s position. Marx was clear that there is no capitalism without surplus value, and without surplus value, there is no production and reproduction of capital. Thus, the question is how enslaved labour would enter into this production and circulation of

¹³⁶ To Locke (*idem.*), all human beings are the “property of God” except the enslaved human beings. When God’s children are conditioned to self-preservation, the enslaved human beings in the modern colonial system are left with the option to liberate themselves from torture through self-destruction; they can take their own lives.

(surplus-)value, which is one of the moments of the production and movement of capital. Surplus value is a crucial moment in selling and purchasing labour power. If commodification of labour-power is the point of departure for value-producing labour and capital, how do we think of it regarding enslaved labour?

3.2.3 Coerced commodification of the labour-power of enslaved workers

In the first chapter, I presented Marcel van der Linden's critique of Marx's theory of the sale and purchase of labour power and his proposal to open it to other forms whereby labour power becomes a commodity. Some decades before, Brazilian sociologist Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco contributed similarly to expanding this theory. Linden and Franco's contribution in reconstructing this theory is to rethink the slavery-capitalism relation *theoretically* and not only *historically*. As discussed in the first chapter, those who have classified slavery as belonging to the moment of primary accumulation, although as a continuous phenomenon within capitalism, have kept it still as precious to *capital*. Because the notion of primary accumulation is associated with robbery and plunder, as an accumulation of wealth previous to capital, a way to consider enslaved labour as value- and capital-producing would be to rethink and reconstruct the theory of sale and purchase of labour-power. In this section, I will explore mainly the contribution of Franco (1978) and that of Ferreira da Silva (2019, 2022) to that reconstruction.

What motivates Franco to rethink this theory is that to Marx, the production of surplus value is fundamental for capital production since "the movement of capital accumulation is inconceivable without surplus value" (Franco 1984:224). As seen above, according to Marx (1976), money becomes capital if there is surplus value-producing labour, and surplus value is one of the moments of sale and purchase of labour-power. Hence, the condition of the formation of surplus value is that labour-power becomes a commodity. However, to Marx, enslaved labourers do not produce value and surplus value, hence, capital, because they do not own their labour power and are themselves commodities¹³⁷. As Ferreira da Silva (2022:208-210) puts it, to Marx, an enslaved worker is a commodity that has value for others, which is realised by the owner in the market when they buy or sell the enslaved worker. As use-value, the enslaved worker is merely a machine, a horse, an instrument of production and as such nonproductive of value. Marx conceptualises enslaved human

¹³⁷ According to Clegg (2020), some Marxist scholars (Harvey 2010:90; Linden and Roth 2014:470; Murray 2016:187–88) have suggested that, according to Marx's definition, enslaved workers (like machinery and other constant capital) are not productive of either value or surplus value. However, as Clegg (2020) maintains, this would derive from their tendency to conflate fixed and constant capital.

beings “as dependent on nature” (Franco 1978:9), which seems to rely on what Vainfas (1986) denominates an Aristotelian conception of property, according to which the enslaved people are a physical extension of their master’s body (Ferreira da Silva 2019). However, if the question is how enslaved workers and their labour-power enter into the circulation of (surplus) value, then one issue to be confronted is precisely that: expand the notion of the commodification of labour-power by distinguishing between ownership and possession of labour-power. To understand that what is sold and bought is, in fact, a living labour capacity, and not a horse, raw material or a working instrument, is to enable to conceive the enslaved labour in the sphere of production as *living labour*, value-producing labour, having the capacity to transform raw materials and other means of production through the expenditure of their bodily and spiritual powers into sugar, cotton, coffee, tobacco (Ferreira da Silva 2022:241), which enter in the circulation sustaining the reproduction of themselves well as the metropolitan wage-labourer.

Linden (2011), as well as Franco (1978), maintain that the theory of sale and purchase of labour-power and hence the theory of the production of capital is deduced by Marx in *Capital* having in view the “free” and alienated worker – “possessor of his labour-power, legally qualified and socially obliged to sell it”, a social category, consolidated in the mid-19th-century (Franco 1978:16). As discussed in the first chapter, this person is articulating two conditions. First, the condition of being free, which is provided by property. This is a concept constituting the “bourgeois conception of subjectivity”, based on the idea that only the one who has full and total possession of oneself has a property in his or her person, which enables the sale of the labour-power. It is the foundation of the labour contract. The second condition is that the worker has no other commodity to sell. Hence, they are forced to sell their labour power (Marx 1976:270-273).

Hence, Marx takes the “fully established and articulated market” in *Capital* as a point of departure to develop his theory of capital and articulates his entire text from the beginning. Regarding social relations, the generation of the “free” and dispossessed stratum is also completed. Thus, this historical situation is tied to an already “constituted capitalist system,”¹³⁸ in which all, or even most, products have taken the commodity form. The commodity form of labour products has been generalised, as labour has taken the form of wage labour (Franco 1978:16-18).

For the *product to appear as a commodity*, “the product must cease to be produced as the immediate means of subsistence of the producer himself” (Marx 1976:274). According to Franco

¹³⁸ According to Postone, for Marx, the “generalisation of the commodity form” characterises fully formed capitalism. A society where the commodity form is generalised and hence socially determining is where the “labour of *all* producers serves as a means by which the products of others are obtained” (Postone 1993:151-153).

(1978), this requirement is not limited to any historical situation concerning the constitution of a socio-economic system. It just means that: “[t]he appearance of products as commodities requires the level of development of the division of labour such that the separation of use-value from exchange value, a separation which first begins with barter, has already been completed. However, such a degree of development is common to many economic formations of society [*ökonomische Gesellschaftsformationen*], with the most diverse historical characteristics” (Marx 1976:273).

At the same time, “[t]he production and circulation of commodities can still take place even though the *great mass* of the objects produced are intended for the immediate requirements of their producers, and are not turned into commodities so that the process of social production is as yet by no means dominated in its length and breadth by exchange-value” (Marx 1976:273, emphasis added). It is precisely with this length of the system of commodity circulation that we should work with, as there would be no logical impossibility “*that [labour-power] could not be transformed in commodity, although the generalisation of the commodity form of labour products has not yet been completed*. It is enough that there is a market *whose complexity cannot be defined*” (Franco 1978:17, 23, emphases added). In other words, capitalism does not have to be a fully constituted system for labour power to become a commodity.

If the sale and purchase of labour-power were limited only to the “possessor of labour-power” (concomitantly its proprietor), labour power cannot become a commodity in any other situation (Franco 1978:19). Thus, to open the theory of capital production, the production and circulation of surplus value, based on the separation of above-described conditions, Franco distinguishes between two categories based on logical and historical orders: one concrete figure of “free” but alienated proletarian of the 19th century, forced to sell their labour-power, belonging to the 19th - century constituted capitalism; and another figure of the abstract proprietor and seller of labour-power in a less defined situation, belonging to a situation of simple commodity exchange (Franco 1978:17-18).

Moreover, in the moulds of Marx's logical reasoning, Franco constructs a hypothesis that “there is no incompatibility between capitalist production and the institution of slave labour”. It is based on two premises. First, for labour-power to become a commodity, the worker does not need to be *free*. Second, if the condition for creating surplus value is that labour-power is a commodity, capital becomes compatible with other labour regimes insofar as there is a constituted labour market. These premises are based on other assumptions, such as that its proprietor sells the labour-power and that its sale is based on the condition of separability between its possession and ownership (Franco 1978:15, 19).

In the second chapter, I analysed the peculiarity of labour-power and the separation of possession and property in the sale and purchase of the labour-power of the urban-industrial proletariat. As shown by Linden (2011), when possession and property of labour-power, which appear united in the modern urban industrial proletariat, will be separated, then we arrive at a possibility of thinking of various forms whereby labour-power becomes a commodity, independently of whether the seller is its owner or not and whether the commodification is heteronomous or autonomous.

Hence, if we go beyond the market situation of two commodity owners, treated by Marx, and think of possession and ownership as separated, that would open the possibility to consider another market situation, the enslaved labour market, and hence another type of seller of labour-power, distinct from its possessor, the *slave trafficker*, who has the property in other people's labour-power and sells it in the market, in a concrete situation associated with the earlier form of capitalism. The slave traffickers are the free owners of other people's labour-power, which they sell in lumps, transferring to employers of enslaved labour the property in the person and the labour-power inherent in the person.

As discussed in the previous chapter, at the historical moment of the 16th century, there was already an existing and expanding world market¹³⁹ in which enslaved workers were the fundamental producers of commodities. There was also the market of enslaved labour, meaning a separation existed between the use-value and exchange-value of labour-power. Labour power was not used directly to guarantee one's subsistence (Franco 1978:23), and labour power entered the circulation of commodities.

In the colonial moment of capitalism, labour power becomes a commodity, as an object of sale and purchase, in a situation in which workers are not free, that is, slavery. In the exchange between two commodity owners – the owner of alien labour-power and the owner of money – the transaction implies a transfer of the property right in the person or the transference of the workers and their labour capacity. The purchaser buys the commodified form of labour capacity, that is,

¹³⁹ The fetishism of commodities characterised the complexity in 16th-century trade, the fetishisation of abstract exchange value, as merchant entrepreneur was a “subject unhampered by fixation upon objects, a subject who, having recognised the true (i.e., market) value of the object-as-commodity, fixated instead upon the transcendental values that transformed gold into ships, ships into guns, guns into tobacco, tobacco into sugar, sugar into gold, and all into an accountable profit” (Stallybrass 1998:186). In a similar vein argues Patterson (1967:19), according to whom Marx recognised, that in the “early stages of simple commodity production the fetishism of commodities exists, although it is easy to see through; as the production process becomes more complex, power over individuals is increasingly mediated through power over goods until the point is reached where the basic power relationship is largely, though never completely, obscured”.

labour-power, indeed.¹⁴⁰ As in the case of wage labour, labour capacity is a potential, a capacity which alone does nothing. Thus, a simple acquisition of enslaved workers does not guarantee an automatic use of their labour power. It implies that the enslaved workers must use their force to engage in the labouring activity, although the compulsion to do it takes place primarily through direct coercion.

In the market of enslaved labour, who confronts the buyer of labour capacity is the seller and owner of this labour-power, but not its possessor – the trafficker of human energies. Hence, in the case of the enslaved labour market, the sale of labour-power is intermediated by the third person, the owner, in this case, not the workers themselves. Thus, it is configured in another market situation in which labour power is being sold and purchased among two equal and legitimate owners of their commodities. In a nutshell, the core of this relationship is described by Mandel (1976:49): “[o]nly if we were in a 'capitalistic slave society', where owners of slaves hired out labour-power to owners of factories renting land from landed proprietors, could one say that institutional equality existed between all owners - though, of course, not between owners and slaves! Obviously, in that case, the slave owners would hire out their slaves only if they received a 'net return' over and above the upkeep of the slaves”. In this statement, Mandel takes a critical stance on the alleged equality in a capitalist labour market, where the seller is the worker and the buyer the capitalist. If we are looking for equality, it exists between buyers and sellers in the market of enslaved labour.

Franco suggests that the most essential condition for the transformation of labour-power into a commodity is that it should be put into the market by the proprietor. However, this would present a limitation in such labour regimes, where the enslaved worker is somebody else’s property, but the worker sells their labour power to possible buyers. Based on Linden (2011), I suggest that the seller of labour-power should be limited neither to its possessor nor strictly to its proprietor. Only then could we consider various possible situations in which labour power becomes a commodity under the capitalist mode of production.

After this reconstruction, it is possible to consider another labour market situation in which we find a seller of labour power, the possessor of their labour power but not its owner. A third party holds the ownership of enslaved workers. Here the reference is the *slave-of-hire* (*escravo de ganho*) (Reis 2019). Furthermore, we can contemplate another type of labourer, whose person and labour

¹⁴⁰ Recent attempts to theorise capitalist slavery also suggest that enslaved labour is indeed labour. The purchaser buys not actual labour (i.e., the products of his or her labour) but potential labour, which is labour-power, the commodified form of capacity to work (Clegg and Foley 2018:2). In other words, “buying a slave represented a future purchase of labour” (Klein and Luna 2010:127).

power are the third party's property, who temporarily sells their property's labour power for its actual employer. Here is another situation in which the temporary owner of labour-power has access to its use, given that another person owns the person. The reference here is the *rent of enslaved labour*. Labour power is transferred from the owner to the buyer without the possessor's consent, without transferring the ownership. The two owners share the surplus value. If the condition for creating surplus value is that the labour-power is a commodity, capital becomes compatible with other labour regimes if one requirement is fulfilled; that is, there is a labour market. In that sense, we can affirm that there is no incompatibility between capitalist production, enslaved labour, or any other kind of unwaged or unfree labour. These categories will be discussed in the last chapter of this thesis.

The broadening of the theory of sale and purchase of labour-power was aimed at understanding the multiple ways in which labour-power in capitalism can become a commodity and thereby make the figure of the enslaved worker compatible with capitalism and capital production. As the conceptual discussion suggests, in the heyday of capitalism, labour power can take the form of a commodity even if the commodity form of labour products has not yet been generalised.

3.2.4 Enslaved Africans as the dark proletariat

What these previous theoretical-analytical-historical formulations suggest is that the unfree plantation workers, defined as totally expropriated workers at the moment of capital's overseas expansion and the inception of the capitalist world economy, are part of the global proletariat, hence contributing to the notion of class formation. Franco (1978:32) suggests that the proletarian class, socialised through a slow process of continuous economic pressures through centuries, was *sketched out* during European colonial expansion to the New World. Also, others have argued that the "slave constitutes an anticipation of modern proletarian" or "a possible proletarian" and, as such, enables capitalism through "primitive accumulation", the incorporation of capitalist rhythms and methods of work (Castro 1977, 1980), and by being a value- and capital-producing labour. These statements do not just mean that temporally enslaved labour became before wage labour. They instead suggest that (1) enslaved labour was the condition of possibility of wage labour; (2) as a mode of labour control, slavery incorporated some of the features of wage labour; and (3) it was part of the general social organisation of labour at the moment of the emerging capitalist world-system and as such contemporary to the spread of wage labour. The general organisation of labour took distinct forms socially and legally.

In the context where European regulations limited proletarianisation in the mercantilist era, but manufacturing was developing, the colonial system offered the social organisation of labour for large-scale commodity production, which boosted the conditions for broad markets and industrialisation (Franco 1978). In other words, enslaved labour was the “first form of large-scale commodity-producing labour” (McMichael 1999:15), incorporated into the global value relations. With the commodity production to the world market, enslaved labour was redefined as value- and capital-producing labour, thus immanent to world capitalism (Blackburn 1997; McMichael 1991, 1999).

The way Marx (1976) thought of wage labour as “immanent to the system”, as the necessary labour that capital in its movement potentiated, analogously Franco (1978:32) proposes to think of enslaved labour as the *other* of “free labour”,¹⁴¹ as a necessary element at the colonial moment of capitalist history. Enslaved labour was the “organisation of labour to be exploited”, defined in the middle of a set of determinations, which linked capitalist trade to sugar production during the colonial expansion of capital. Hence, enslaved Africans, as a “necessary population to complete the system, [were] put immanently within the very system” (Franco 1984:224), or in the words of Turner (1995), they were turned into “an immanent form of proletariat.”

The Brazilian scholars, hence, echo the works of “Black Marxists” (Robinson [1983] 2000) from the beginning of the 20th century - C.L.R James ([1938] 1989) and W.E.B. Du Bois ([1935] 1992). In his *The Black Jacobins*, C. L. R. James ([1938] 1989:86) understood that enslaved labour “was the first form of expropriated social labour” and enslaved workers “were closer to a modern proletariat than any group of workers in existence at the time”. In turn, Du Bois ([1935] 1992:16) had entitled the first chapter of his book *Black Reconstruction in America, The Black Worker*, suggesting that the “dark proletariat” could not represent anything other than the “real modern labour problem” as “the black worker was the ultimate exploited”, from whom the surplus value was “filched,” concealed by machine and power in “cultured lands”. Cedric J. Robinson ([1983] 2000), in his study of what he denominates as “Black Marxism”, highlights that in his book, Du Bois understood that slavery should be understood principally through the category of labour because “slavery was the specific historical institution through which the Black *worker* had been introduced in the modern world system. However, it was not as *slaves* that one could come to an understanding of the significance that these Black men, women, and children had for American

¹⁴¹ According to Ferreira da Silva (2022), Marx does not consider the colonies as “the other” of Europe or the enslaved labour as “the other” of wage labour. He leaves colonies and slavery undetermined, stating simply that these are not the elements of capital. He does not specify the mode of production to which they belong; they are non-capitalist.

development. It was as *labour*” (p. 236, emphasis in original). The institution of slavery could not be understood if looked at in isolation as a thing in itself. Rather, Du Bois had considered it as a product of “particular historical development for world capitalism that expropriated the labour of African workers as primitive accumulation” (Robinson [1983] 000:236). Du Bois considered American slavery as a “subsystem of world capitalism” (Robinson [1983] 2000:236).

Decades later, Franco (1978) conceptualised the enslaved African workers as the only “total expropriated” necessary for the mode of capital accumulation at the moment of European colonial expansion. Now, Ferreira da Silva also transcends the separation between the colony and capital, which historical materialism has (re)produced, to conceive the economic character of expropriating wounded captive bodies. In other words, the colonial economic-legal architecture, whose pillar is slavery, enables the expropriation of the total value produced by enslaved labour, which makes up the “structure (blood and flesh) of global capital” (Ferreira da Silva 2019:90-91).

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter has aimed to discuss some central theoretical and conceptual contributions of Brazilian Marxist historical social science to the global sociological debate about the relations between modern colonial plantation slavery and capitalism. Under the scrutiny have been particularly those contributions of Brazilian Marxist authors, which have questioned the central tenets of orthodox Marxian and Marxist political economy, particularly when it comes to the “relation of exteriority,” which has defined the relation between unpaid/unfree (coerced) labour and capitalism historically and theoretically. When Caio Prado Jr. was the first to consider slavery as determined by the European colonial and commercial expansion, the subsequent Marxist Dependency Theory (MDT) left modern colonial slavery as an instance of primitive accumulation outside of capitalism proper, except Andre Gunder Frank. Such authors as Jacob Gorender and Ciro Cardoso took the same stance, defining slavery as a distinct mode of production. According to Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco (1978), both the dependency school and the “colonial mode of production” notion created the “relation of exteriority” by defining slavery as a non-capitalist relation of production and leaving it undetermined by capital. Ferreira da Silva (2022) makes the same critique of the orthodox Marxist theory of capital. To overcome it, it has been necessary to consider metropole/core or colony/periphery, free labour and enslaved labour as different parts or instances of capitalism as a unitary whole, being differentiated according to the movement of capital.

From this perspective, I discussed how the ideas of different authors converged in defining the features of the South Atlantic colonial system of exploitation under the commercial capital within the capitalist world system emerging in the late 15th and early 16th centuries. As has been shown, the mode of accumulation of capital that characterised the colonial productive system of Portuguese America was based on the intensification of the exploitation of the means of production and labour in absolute terms. It was oriented to the large-scale regular production of tropical commodities in growing quantities, which required an equally stable and proportional growth of land and labour.

Black African slavery, as a colonial form of labour control, possible and adequate to respond to the particular labour needs of the colonial productive system, has been analysed by Franco (1978), Castro (1977) and Alencastro (2000) as part of the general process of social organisation of labour within the capitalist world-economy in formation in the 16th century. At this point in Western Europe, the worker necessary for the system was constituted through the expropriation of direct producers from their means of production and subsistence, which, according to Marx (1973, 1976), was a fundamental social condition for the configuration of labour-power necessary for capitalist production. Given the constitution of the modern capitalist property regime in the 16th century, and echoing the ideas of “Black Marxism”, Franco defines the modern colonial enslaved workers as the “total expropriated”, that is, a particular form that it assumed in the general movement of the private appropriation of the means of production (Franco 1978) as necessary to capital given its economic objectives. In the same vein, Ferreira da Silva (2019, 2022) has argued that capital is not produced and reproduced only by exploitation, that is, the appropriation of surplus value through one and the only legal form, contract. It is also compatible with the colonial legal-economic modality according to which the appropriation of labour takes place through total violence, which is used to extract the total value permitted by the legal form, which is the property title in the labourer (Ferreira da Silva 2019, 2022). Contrary to the Marxian theory of value, which excludes the colonies and slavery from capital production, Franco and Ferreira da Silva permit conceptualisation that “the totally expropriated labour” was capital- and value-producing, indeed. Both provide some keys to how enslaved labour could be historically and theoretically conceptualised as value- and capital-producing labour within the moulds of historical materialism.

Considering that the Marxian condition for the production of capital is that the labour-power becomes a commodity, in the last section, I have discussed Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco’s reconstruction of Marx’s theory of sale and purchase of labour-power to think of the labour market situations in which the possessor of labour-power is not free. This reconstruction reveals a

historically concrete labour market situation, in which the figure of the free seller of labour-power is distinct from the free seller of their own labour-power configuring in early modern England, that is, the doubly free labourer. Hence, it is possible to formulate a concept of a South-Atlantic labour market, according to which the free sellers and owners trade the commodified labour capacity of unfree individuals in a historical situation in which the commodity form of labour products had not yet been generalised. This implies that labour-power could become a commodity, and labour could become capital- and value-producing without the labourer being free.

4. Colonial exploitation and slavery in the South Atlantic system

After examining some of the central authors of the main perspectives within the Brazilian Marxist thought regarding the relation between slavery and capitalism, from the viewpoint of the analytical shift from the “relation of exteriority” to an inclusive notion of “unit of contradiction” (Franco 1978), I examined how it unfolded into the analysis of what Alencastro (2000) has denominated as the colonial system of exploitation established in the space of South Atlantic and integrated into the capitalist world-economy. It considered the role of merchant and state capital in launching the sugar enterprise in Portuguese America, which consolidated around black racial slavery and was integrated into global value relations. The two notions suggested by Franco (1978) – the “total expropriated” and the coerced commodification of enslaved labour as well as Ferreira da Silva’s (2019, 2020) formulation about expropriation as the mode of appropriation of total value by total violence sustained by colonial economic-legal architecture – connect with the discussion of Alencastro (2000; 2007) and Florentino (2014) about the market of enslaved labour as well as with the process of the subsumption of enslaved labour under value-creation and capital production in the South-Atlantic system of exploitation.

Hence, this chapter aims to bring together the works of some Brazilian scholars who have contributed to the understanding of the colonial system of exploitation based on slavery as a form of capitalism within the market and productive sphere. In line with Alencastro (2000), the South-Atlantic colonial system of exploitation integrated into the capitalist world economy should be analysed in its two dimensions: the trade of enslaved workers as the first global (unfree) labour market, on the one hand, and the labour organisation and process in the colonial productive enterprise, on the other. The chapter is divided into four parts. In the first part of this chapter, I will discuss the contributions of Alencastro (2000; 2007) and Florentino (2014) to comprehend the heteronomous commodification of labour power, which is the sale of enslaved labour in the market. At its foundation is the process of expropriation, including the “expropriation of the masses of people from the soil”, thereby separating human beings from the conditions of their labour (Marx 1976), which takes place outside of the colonial territory. In the second part of this chapter, I will examine the discussion of Brazilian scholars about the relationship between slavery and law during the colonial period. The aim is to highlight how the commodification of enslaved labour and the value and capital-producing unfree form of plantation labour exploitation was guaranteed by the State political and legal apparatus as well as by the private punitive system. In the third part, I will

examine mainly the works of Castro (1977, 1980), Ferlini (2003), Fernandes (1976) as well as of the *brasilianista* Stuart Schwartz to comprehend the subsumption of plantation unfree as well as not enslaved labour under planter-capitalist through large-scale cooperation, which anticipated the labour organisation in the industrial factory. Particular emphasis will be given to complex labour management through the use of sexual, racial, ethnic, occupational, and legal distinctions of plantation labour as a mechanism of disciplining and controlling the plantation's social labour for value extraction. The fourth part will examine the notion of “slave-mercantile capital”, coined by Brazilian economists Pires and Costa (2010), which is a form of existence of capital in the colonial economy in the periphery of the capitalist world economy. A Brazilian Marxist feminist scholar, Heleieth Saffioti (1976), permits us to understand the production of absolute surplus value by enslaved labour, understood as *the super-exploitation* of enslaved labour. Super-exploitation is understood as a continuation of expropriation of labour in the productive sphere through extra-economic coercion, that is, an “appropriation [of labour] without equivalence” (Marx 1973:596). Hence, in combination, the authors examined in this chapter enable conceiving intertwined forms of capital accumulation and production based on the totally expropriated worker: accumulation by expropriation through the trade of enslaved labour and capital accumulation through appropriation by expropriation of enslaved labour in the productive sphere where excess surplus value is created, entering into the capital accumulation in the world-scale.

4.1 Colonial trade of enslaved labour as the first global (unfree) labour market

Does the labour market story start differently than that: the owner of money has to find a commodity, which is the source of value, that is, the commodity labour-power? Where does the money owner find it? In the market. Hence, two equal commodity holders meet in the market. The one has what the other does not. One is the owner of the commodity ‘labour-power’, and the other is the owner of the commodity ‘money’, which should be exchanged. As shown in the last chapter, the matter is more complex in history, not only regarding the social relation between capital and industrial proletarians in 19th-century England. Finding this kind of transaction in Brazil's colonial and post-colonial eras is even more complicated. As the logical-theoretical juggling of Franco (1978) (to reconstruct and expand Marx's theory of buying and selling the labour-power) above demonstrated, economic production in colonial times did not do without masses of expropriated workers, who were not the owners of their labour-power. At the same time, we could find another concrete figure: the trafficker of enslaved workers, the owner of the alien labour power, which was

sold in the market, as well as the final purchaser, the colonial entrepreneur, who would use the means of coercion to force the workers' labour to appropriate the labour product. Accordingly, on the colonial labour market meet the owner of money and commodities and the owner of a person/labour-power, the trafficker of enslaved labour. As will be seen, this labour market contained several transactions in which the enslaved worker was a simple object of sale.

On the one hand, the transactions between the traffickers of enslaved human beings (from the interior of Africa until the interior of Brazil) involved the sale and purchase of human commodities. The slave traffickers were interested in the human commodity itself as a value which could be exchanged for another commodity. Analytically, it is necessary to distinguish between possession and ownership of labour power to imagine another market situation in which the labour-power was not owned by its possessor (carrier) and was commodified by third parties. The trafficker of enslaved labour transferred to the employer of enslaved workers the ownership of workers and their labour-power. To obtain labour power, the employer bought enslaved human beings. In essence, it is assumed that what gives value to enslaved human beings is the source of value they contain, the labour capacity, which, when put in movement, can produce value and surplus value.

It will be sustained here that the sale and purchase of the labour-power of enslaved workers were intermediated through the transatlantic trade of enslaved human beings, which was the first global unfree labour market, created during the Iberian colonialism and determined by the spatial movement of capital, as part of the constitution of the capitalist world-economy (Alencastro 2000; Marquese, 2013a:252).¹⁴² Hence, the existence of unfree non-wage labour does not mean that the labour market is absent.¹⁴³ The aim is to understand the profitable transatlantic trade¹⁴⁴ as a labour

¹⁴² Here, I agree with the reading of Marquese (2013a) that this is precisely one of the main implications of the work of Luis Felipe de Alencastro (2000). As is argued by Alencastro (2000), the Brazilian labour market was extra-territorialised from 1550 until 1930, as along all these centuries, the main contingent of labour force was born and produced outside of the colonial and national territory. Thus, *xenophagy* of the Brazilian economy – that is, its inclination to aggregate human energy reproduced outside of its productive space – was defined since the mid-16th century as an essential factor in the evolution of Portuguese America (Alencastro 2000:41).

¹⁴³ Robert Miles (1987:172) maintains that unfree labour (“relations of production where labour-power is distributed, exploited, and retained by politico-legal mechanisms and/or by physical compulsion”) is synonymous with the absence of labour-market. Drawing from Franco (1978) and Alencastro (2000) as well as Florentino (2014), I am demonstrating precisely the opposite that even in the social formations where unfree and unwaged labour is used, there exists a labour market, based on the exchange of labour-power as a commodity, especially if we do not limit our analysis to the national/colonial territory. Like the wage labour market, the market of enslaved labour “allocates the right to exploit labour” (Clegg 2015a).

¹⁴⁴ The trade of enslaved human beings was a highly lucrative enterprise, as Novais argued. Alencastro (2000) and others show that the Portuguese crown and royal administration found this trade an essential income source. This revenue was derived from the tributes to leave the African port and from the right to enter the Brazilian port in the form of different taxes charged over captives.

market, although unfree, as its possessor does not commodify the labour-power. I will focus on the social and economic production and reproduction of this living commodity through the means of expropriation, that is, on the process of making these kinds of “coercively commodified” and “totally expropriated” workers available for capital production and reproduction in the system of production.

4.1.1 First reflections about the trade of enslaved human beings in Brazilian historiography

According to Brazilian historiographical works about the colonial economy and society, the existence of slavery in colonial Brazil made the external supply of labour-power indispensable. Although all the authors such as *Ciro Cardoso* (1996; 1973a; 1973b), *Antonio Barros de Castro* (1977), *Celso Furtado* ([1959] 2007), *Jacob Gorender* (1980), *Fernando Novais* (1989 [1979]) and *Caio Prado Jr.* ([1942] 1999) present differences in their arguments, there are three crucial points in common. First, the reproduction of the labour force through the international slave trade was essential for the calculus of the economy operating based on enslaved labour. The reproduction of colonial enterprise depended on it. More specifically, the expansion and growth of the export of tropical commodities corresponded to the import of very particular commodities – men and women (*Cardoso* 1983; *Franco* 1978; *Furtado* [1959] 2007; *Prado Jr.* [1942] 1999; *Novais* [1979] 1989). Secondly, they also emphasise the relation between trade and the demographic logic of colonial enterprises. *Prado Jr.* ([1942] (1999) highlights that the continuity of trade implied cruelty and contempt for the life conditions of enslaved human beings. *Furtado* ([1959] 2007) and *Novais* ([1979] 1989) affirm that the possibility of counting on the continuous external inflow of cheap labour power was a sign of short-sightedness of colonial entrepreneurs, as the investment of monetary resources in the acquisition of enslaved labour hindered the capital rotation as it immobilised capital invested in enslaved workers. *Florentino* (2014) contests this view, arguing that the very trade contributed to the rapidity of capital rotation. *Gorender* (1980) develops a structural argument that the trade, which provided cheap labour power, permitted the super-exploitation of enslaved labour and its immediate substitution, which reduced the gap between the moment of expenditure and the moment of refund. The result was that in the moments of accelerated trade and growth, the intensity of exploitation of enslaved labour increased, leading to high rates of mortality, which resulted in the scarcity of labour power. Third, all the authors mentioned above, except *Novais*, argue that the demand created the supply. From this opposite viewpoint, *Novais* contends that the high profitability of the trade activity itself led to the use of enslaved labour by the colonial

enterprises, and the Atlantic trade was one of the most critical sectors for the accumulation of European merchant capital.

According to Florentino (2014), all these authors, except Cardoso (1973a, 1973b), lack an analysis of the factors that made the African continent provide cheap labour for such a long time. Without more profound elaboration, Gorender (1980) mentions that Africa was perfectly integrated into the European capitalist world economy in the 16th century and not outside of it, as Wallerstein (1974) had maintained.

Last but not least, Furtado, Gorender, Novais, and Prado Jr. consider the trade of enslaved labour a metropolitan enterprise that functioned in service of European commercial capital and was structured by it. This is not only because labour-power was reproduced “externally” but also because the resources to feed the trade were external. According to Florentino (2014), this view is somewhat limited since it does not consider the endogenous sources of accumulation. Alencastro (2000) also argues that not all the produced surplus value flew to the metropolis and foreign merchants because a part of the profit generated by the sugar enterprises was reinvested in the acquisition of instruments of production, including the purchase and replacement of the labour-power. Florentino (2014) emphasises the native merchant capital.

For most of the classics, especially for Jacob Gorender and Fernando Novais, the “external” reproduction of enslaved labour is a mechanism of de-accumulation, damaging the subsequent national development. This view contradicts the perspective of sociologist Florestan Fernandes (1976), as he understands that the capital deriving either from the trade of enslaved labour or from its productive exploitation was a form of primitive accumulation of capital, thus, as a fundamental basis of the development of urban-industrial economy and urban proletariat in the 19th century. The Brazilian classical works of economic history published between the 1960s and 1980s did not elaborate much on the transatlantic trade as an essential mechanism in labour formation, which demanded going beyond the proper colonial or national space as a unit of analysis. However, recent historiography offers several innovative studies about the transatlantic trade, among whom I would highlight Luiz Felipe de Alencastro’s *Trato dos viventes: Formação do Brasil no Atlântico-Sul* (2000) and Manolo Florentino’s *Em costas negras: uma história do tráfico de escravos entre a África e o Rio de Janeiro* (2014).

Particularly Alencastro’s and, to a lesser extent, Florentino’s work, allow us to go beyond the strict internal-external division reproduced by authors such as Novais and Gorender. I would maintain that the type of labour organisation adopted by the colonial economic system was related to its specificities, which were determined by the movement of capital and the development of

capitalism. Its emergence is understandable when considered part of historical capitalism, where the social organisation of labour (enslaved and free labour) developed in combination.

4.1.2 The South Atlantic system of colonial exploitation in historical capitalism

To grasp the steps of the commodification of the labour-power of enslaved workers in the unfree labour market, one should take into consideration the South-Atlantic space, where the trade of enslaved labour took place, which means that the continuity of the colonial history of labour does not confuse with the continuity of colonial territory, as argued by Alencastro (2000). Brazilian historian Luiz Felipe de Alencastro incorporates the South-Atlantic labour market as a fundamental dimension of the capitalist world system. In that sense, this labour market cannot be understood without the expanding sugar production in the northeast of Portuguese America and European overseas expansion, which was driven by the broad set of forces of European commercial capital, Iberian or not (Marquese 2013a: 245), as well as by the expanding working class and consuming strata in Europe. Thus, differently from Novais ([1979] 1989), according to whom the trade of enslaved Africans created African slavery in the New World, differently from those who argue that demand created the supply, according to Alencastro (2000) the trade as well as slavery in the New World in connection to the expanding metropolitan markets conditioned each other. The introduction of the sugar economy in the New World, particularly in Brazil, created the demand for labour power, which could not be sufficiently attended to by the indigenous servile labour or (“free” or unfree) wage labour. Therefore, this demand started to be attended in another form through the intensification of the trade of enslaved African people (Cardoso 1996: 89-90). Alencastro suggests that the trade became increasingly organised by merchants established in Rio de Janeiro and Salvador and not in Lisbon. The arrangements between merchants based in Brazil and Lisbon with the Portuguese royal state will not be elaborated here.¹⁴⁵

Alencastro’s (2000) thesis is that an extra-territorial space, a Lusophone archipelago composed of enclaves of Portuguese America and jurisdiction of Angola, which was the preferential market of Luso-Brazilians, emerged in the 16th century. These two poles were united by the ocean and completed each other in the same *system of colonial exploitation*.

¹⁴⁵ Regarding this point, see the work of Fragoso and Florentino (2001), who have shown quantitatively how, at the end of the colonial period, big merchants established in Rio de Janeiro accumulated internally in Brazil and through the slave trade, without any financial dependence on European merchants, and capitals were partly reinvested in export agriculture. This work polemically suggests the relative autonomy of the colony in the face of the metropolitan interests, also annulling the hierarchy and power relations in the world market in which the colonial and post-colonial or neo-colonial economies were inserted (Marquese 2013a).

Before the opening of the transatlantic trade in the 15th century, Portugal already had an experience with the trade of enslaved human beings on the northwestern coasts of Africa (Klein and Luna 2010). Between 1444 and 1500, it trafficked between 500 and 1000 enslaved persons a year from the trading posts (*feitoria*)¹⁴⁶ of Arguin (Mauritania) and San Iago (Cape Verde). It did not result in intensified traffic. Contrary to the transatlantic trade, it did not lead to significant changes in the sources of supply (Klein and Vinson III 2013: 21-24). Such events as the assignment of the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494), which enabled Portugal to secure control over the maritime routes between western African coasts and the piece of the eastern coast of South America; the arrival of Pedro Álvares Cabral on April 22 of 1500 and claiming the territory, which is now Brazil, for the Portuguese Crown, and the authorisation of Spanish Crown in 1501 to introduce enslaved African people in the Americas, contributed to the growing volume of Portugal's trade of enslaved labour, reaching more than two thousand enslaved workers per year (Klein and Vinson III 2013:25-28). Portugal's hold over Africa was secured with the Union of the Two Crowns (1580—1640). Despite that, during most of the 16th century, the economic exploitation of colonised lands in the Americas counted on the indigenous labour power. The transition to black African slavery took place from the final quarter of the 16th century onwards.

Several geopolitical factors have been emphasised as being in play in the 15th and 16th centuries, which led to the adoption of Africans as the dominant form of enslaved labour, available and legally authorised by the Iberian colonisation for their use in the plantation labour in the Americas (Klein and Vinson III 2013:31-36). One could emphasise such factors as the end of the Muslim and Slavic slave trade in the Mediterranean, the Portuguese restrictions to enslave people from India since 1520, Papal (1537) and Spanish (1542) prohibition against enslaving Amerindians, unsuccessful Iberian attempts to position in the Asian slave trade (Góngora Mera, Costa and Vera 2019:79). Góngora Mera et al. (2019) also mention the shortness of the route between Africa and Brazil or the Caribbean in comparison to any other route between Asia and the Americas. Moreover, in Africa, there already existed an internal network of capture and transport of enslaved human beings before the Portuguese settled first in Guinea and then in Angola. Furthermore, local governors were willing to sell their war prisoners and enemies to Europeans. This already-existing intra-continental exchange in sub-Saharan Africa would be intensified by the emergence of the

¹⁴⁶ The origin of the *factory*, the pillar of industrialisation, has been traced back to the Portuguese *feitorias*, the trading posts offering bases in the coastal ports of Africa. Britain would have initially used the term factory in the sense of the “trading companies in foreign countries or colonies” (Buck-Morss 2009:101-102).

oceanic tract and incorporated into the movement of the world economy by the European maritime advancements (Alencastro 2000:44).

Catholicism, as the ideological¹⁴⁷ apparatus of the Portuguese Crown's colonisation project, provided the religious justification for the enslavement of African people, who had fallen in captivity through "just wars" or by using the argument of "natural inequalities"¹⁴⁸. The first evangelic justification was provided by the bull *Romanus Pontifex* (1455) issued by Pope Nicholas V, who supported the Portuguese kings in combatting Muslim kingdoms (Alencastro 2000). With this and another bull, *Dum Diversas* (1452), the pope extended the privileges of Portuguese kings already granted by previous popes, such as the domain over all the conquered territories in Africa, adding to that the monopoly over trade in the region as well as the right to enslave perpetually Muslims and pagans, as well as infidels (Morales Padrón 1979).

There were two moments of the ideological basis of enslavement of African people. At first, in the 15th-17th century, it was justified by the paganism/evangelisation polarity. Since Africa was depicted as the continent of cannibalism, paganism and other perversions, the rescue (*resgate*) and deportation of Africans and their subsequent Christianisation would serve as the salvation of souls and bodies. Two hundred years later, in the 18th century, another ideological discourse based on the barbarity/civilisation polarity was employed. In both cases, the enslavement and the trade of enslaved human beings were justified as a "transition that takes the individual from the worst to not that bad" (Alencastro 2000:43-54). Jesuits in Portuguese America, such as Antonio Vieira (1608-1697), also saw in the enslavement of Africans and their trade a possibility of liberating the Amerindians from coerced labour and *corvée* payment. In the words of Alencastro (2007:138), "the catechisation and freedom of Amerindians" was compensated by "African slavery". The Jesuits in Portuguese America themselves were invested in the slave trade, and they were proprietors of enslaved workers and sugar mills in Bahia, hence being involved in both sides of the South Atlantic exploitation system through their missionary work and the material life.

Despite the diversity of ideas and heterogeneity within the Church in the Portuguese and Spanish colonies, official positions of the Catholic Church, expressed in the papal bulls, were necessary for the (1) emergence of the European transatlantic trade; (2) determination of who was

¹⁴⁷ Under *ideology*, I will understand in this thesis the processes of production, circulation, social legitimation, and universalisation of interests, ideas, conceptions, and values specific to particular social groups. These are expressed in "politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc., of a people," and they are produced by "real, active men" and women (Marx and Engels 1998:42).

¹⁴⁸ "Just war" could not always be employed as an argument. The "natural inequalities" argument assumes a hierarchy between people according to their physical and mental traits and capacities. Clerics and missionary Jesuits often developed this discourse in Spanish and Portuguese America. Although not official of the church, they are argued to be influential during slavery in the Americas (Góngora Mera et al. 2019:102-104).

subject to enslavement and who not; (3) Church's active participation in the trade and slavery; and (4) preserving slavery until the end of the 19th century (Góngora Mera et al. 2019:97-102). In the Iberian-American colonisation, the Catholic Church helped to establish and consolidate the domination in the overseas regions through the fixation of the colonial population. Through the promotion of the subordination of the overseas population to the kingdom, it helped to strengthen the control over the colony (Alencastro 2000:27).

The trade of enslaved African people emerged in the context in which, first, it was just one segment within a broader trade network articulating Portugal to the Middle and Far East. Second, in the second part of the 15th century, the trade of human beings was an essential source of revenue for the Royal Treasury. Portugal provided enslaved labour to other European powers, which stimulated the creation of the predecessor of the Overseas Council, the House of Slaves (*Casa dos Escravos*) (1486), under the royal department of the Home of the Mine and Treaties of Guinea. Third, the trade was attached to the overseas production. The labour of enslaved African people would be used to boost agricultural production in the Atlantic islands. As discussed above, São Tomé was the laboratory of the productive system based on enslaved labour. In Madeira Island, the sugar cane production by enslaved workers and native peoples from the Caribbeans (*guanchos*) was imposed on the wheat cultivators by colonists, and the island started importing wheat from the Azores. The translation of the shift from free labour to enslaved labour as a more advantageous form of labour exploitation into an economic policy was marked by the royal license of 1562 (Alencastro 2000:31-33, 387n94, 387n95), as already discussed above.

Whereas overseas commerce and politics were initially disconnected from each other regarding both the trade of and the productive system based on enslaved labour, reflecting the proper organisation of capital inside and outside of the Portuguese imperial territory, it is there where these initially disarticulated elements converged into one colonial system of exploitation, reflected in numbers of enslaved workers imported and coffee plants grown in Brazil. Whereas in 1575, only 10 thousand Africans had entered Brazil (Spanish America received 37500 and Atlantic Islands received 124000 enslaved workers), by 1600 of the 125 000 Africans deported to America, 40 per cent entered Brazil. Moreover, since 1580, the sugar mills of Brazil were far ahead of Madeira and São Tomé Islands concerning sugar production (350 000, 40 000 and 20 000 coffee plants (*arrobas*) respectively). This "mutation" and the structure historically determined by commercial capitalism owed to several circumstances (Alencastro 2000:33).

It took one century for the trade of enslaved labour and the economic system in Portuguese America to adapt reciprocally to each other. *State-Gewalt* (Tomba 2013a, 2013b) played a

fundamental role in synchronising various components of this large movement into a structure shaped by historical capitalism. First, the metropolis had an outstanding power, as the control over the enslaved labour market gave it control over the reproduction of plantation slavery. Second, the taxes associated with the trade of enslaved labour provided new sources of income to the crown and royal administration. Third, a group of entrepreneurs, the metropolitan merchants, combined in the colony the advantages of oligopsony (many sellers for few buyers of sugar) with oligopoly (few sellers for many buyers of enslaved workers), which permitted them to earn super-profits. The merchants of Portuguese America were able to control the commercialisation of agricultural products by selling enslaved African workers on credit to the mill owners and farmers, which also explains the high indebtedness of most colonial entrepreneurs. Fourth, the trade of enslaved labour dynamised not only the foreign trade but also was the primary mechanism to guarantee the expansion of production in colonial units, which in turn stimulated the trade and secured the transfer of surplus from the productive sector to the mercantile interests, which in turn constituted the basis for the implementation of the colonial exploitation. Fifth, considering various complex elements around the labour supply, the recourse to credit and anticipated purchase of enslaved African people gave advantages to the colonists. Thus, the plantation owners and mill owners of Portuguese America started to depend on the trade of enslaved Africans and metropolitan merchants to obtain enslaved labourers. This established the basis of metropolitan domination in the colony combined with colonial exploitation (Alencastro 2000:20, 33-41, 143).

The institution of the general government in 1549 in Portuguese America gave rise to centralisation, which reduced the privileges of hereditary captaincies (*donatários*)¹⁴⁹. The installation of the authority of the central government took place precisely in the course of the transition from the harvest economy based on indigenous labour to the economy of production based on sugar mills and enslaved African labour. Several measures were created to prohibit the use of indigenous labour¹⁵⁰, and incentives were designed to stimulate the trade of enslaved African

¹⁴⁹ According to Celso Furtado (1977:9, 10n2), although the hereditary captaincies were modelled according to Portuguese feudal institutions, he argues that they should be seen as part of the aim to attract private capital to move forward the commercial expansion directed by the Portuguese Crown. He compares them with the trading corporations of England and Holland created at the end of the second part of the 16th century.

¹⁵⁰ Alencastro says that these incentives were created in various moments; in every moment, new frontiers had to be included in the commercial circuits, which was done by imposing dependency on the slave trade. Such was the case of Pará and Maranhão in the mid-17th century. In that sense, Alencastro suggests that the “survival” of any commercial production required integration into the Atlantic system of exchange imposed by commercial capital. Hence, the labour organisation determined the laws of the land. Thereby, African slavery became the dominant mode, whereas the captivity and compulsory labour of native people appeared as the secondary mode of colonial labour exploitation. However, the prohibition was not always valid. Exceptions were created, especially in the moments when the supply of enslaved Africans suffered ruptures, often due to political struggles for hegemony, wars or when the price of African labour reached high levels (Alencastro idem.: 197-198).

people. The intervening state power gave various fiscal incentives to construct mills. On March 29 1549, a royal warrant was issued, which permitted every mill owner to import 120 enslaved persons from Guinea and São Tomé Island. On March 29 1559, permission was issued authorising mill owners to import 120 enslaved people from Congo at one-third of the taxes (Bandecci 1972). Fiscal incentives and other favourable conditions in Brazil did not just trigger the transference of São Tomé mill owners' operations to Brazil (Blackburn 1997:166) but also an outflow of enslaved labour from the Caribbean to Brazilian plantations (Alencastro 2000).

Another factor which contributed to the consolidation of the Portuguese colonial structure and strengthened its presence in Central Africa was the system of temporal concessions to individuals to traffic, introduce and sell enslaved Africans in (Spanish) America – *Asiento*, which substituted the previous system of *license* (1533-1580). The structure created by Spanish *Asientos* (or monopoly contract) between 1580 and 1640 attracted the great European merchant capital to invest in the trade. The concession contract defined the duties and privileges of the concessionaires, the volume of enslaved workers, the duration of the concession, and the percentage of the revenue paid to the Spanish Crown. By that, the Spanish Crown ensured not only a regular inflow of enslaved labour to its colonies and fixed revenue but also transferred to the concessionaires the risks of the operation, such as deaths on board, shipwrecks, and pirates (Vila Vilar 1977:93-123). The union of two Iberian Crowns granted significant concessions to the wealthy independent Portuguese landowners and merchants. After the end of the union between the two Iberian crowns in 1640, the slave trade, which was integrated with Brazil, incorporated part of the trade circuits, the equipment of slave ships and the infrastructure generated by the *Asiento* capital. As a result, the entrance of enslaved human beings into the Brazilian ports increased, as planters, who were already entirely dependent on the labour of enslaved Africans, were looking for additional labour power (Alencastro 2000:79, 2007:127).

Besides the cosmopolitan networks of families, persons, and ports that the *Asiento* reveals, it also demonstrates how the slave trade appeared to be one of the driving forces of historical capitalism. The incorporation of Africa into the world economy and commodification of previously non-commodified labour introduces a specific form of accumulation into commercial capitalism. The trade of enslaved African people grew into a global enterprise with the foundation of big state-funded companies by France, England, and the Netherlands in the middle of the 17th century to attend to the growing demand for labour power by sugar, tobacco and cotton plantations and to compete for the revenues generated by the trade. All of them also held *Asientos* in different periods. The Dutch West India Company made several contracts between 1662 and 1700. In 1701 the

Asiento de Negros was conceded to the French Guinea Company, and in 1713 a new *Asiento de Negros* was granted to Great Britain. This international treaty between Great Britain and Spain gave the former a monopoly to introduce 1440 “pieces” in Spanish America over thirty years, which the British also used for the contraband trade of manufactures. With this treaty, Great Britain consolidated its hegemony in the trade of commodified human beings in the Caribbean, supplying enslaved labour to other powers in the area (Blackburn 1997; Góngora Mera et al. 2019:136ff).

4.1.3 Production and reproduction of enslaved labour

After presenting these socioeconomic, ideological and geopolitical factors as part of the constitution of the Atlantic system, I would like to stop more specifically on the dynamic of the social and economic (re)production of what I have called above the “totally expropriated” and coercively commodified labour. Alencastro calls the first moment and a fundamental aspect of the long process of enslaving human beings, *uprooting*. Uprooting consists of two moments: *de-socialisation* and *de-personalisation*. *De-socialisation* is central to capturing and delinking individuals from their native communities. It is completed by *de-personalisation*, implying the transformation of the captive into a commodity, reification, and objectification, carried out in a society where slavery is the dominant mode of labour control. With both processes, the enslaved individuals are transformed into a “polyvalent instrument of production” (Alencastro 2000:144).

As argued by Alencastro (2000:144-45), it has been part of the logic of enslavement in Antique Greece as well as in Congo in the 15th century that slavery was imposed on individuals who were foreign to the societies where slavery existed, as it should best guarantee the repetition, institutionalisation, commodification, and taxation of enslaved labour. It has had several interconnected advantages. Distancing and isolating enslaved workers from their native communities facilitates and deepens their transformation into the instrument of production and makes their labouring activity more profitable. Hence, the de-socialisation of individuals can contribute to increased exploitation rates. The possibility of a more substantial submission derived from this de-socialisation increased the value of enslaved workers in the African territory and Brazil. For example, the price of enslaved workers who had run away in Brazil was lower due to the risk that they may have become the agitators of *quilombos* (the settlement of fugitive enslaved workers) and revolts (Castro 1977:202).

The Africans who were absorbed by the commodification spiral of the slave trade faced an intensification of these two processes – de-personalisation and de-socialisation – from one exchange

to another. It has been estimated that during the first two centuries of the slave trade, between the departure from the African village until the arrival in the farms of Portuguese America, enslaved people could have participated in at least five transactions (Alencastro 2000:144-6). In every one of these transactions, the enslaved people changed their owner, whereby the owner became an abstract figure: when the individuals were violently extracted from their communities when they embarked on the slave ship by force, and when they were sold coercively in the public square and conducted to their final owners. In every one of these stages, the enslaved individuals and their labour were desired as commodities. In every social relation that was configured in every one of these stages, the enslaved individuals were subordinated to their new owners. What enabled this subordination was the creation of a “collective slave”: in the port of Africa, in the slave ship, in the quarter of enslaved workers, in the field and in the mill (Cardoso 2008:79-80).

Hence, the labour necessary to reproduce the colonial socio-economic system was guaranteed by the trade of enslaved labour. This trade introduced a factor of speed in *mercantile reproduction*, impossible to be reached by demographic reproduction,¹⁵¹ to attend to the demands of the expansion of sugar production, based on the exploitation of means of production in absolute terms, which required an increasing use of land and labour (Franco 1978). In that sense, colonial entrepreneurs did not have to make any internal investment in capital, land, and labour to guarantee broadened reproduction of native labour-power *in loco*. It was enough to count on the coerced labour markets in African villages. Slave trade permitted the regular introduction of new labour power, replacing those who had died and those who had left the system due to manumissions or escape. Hence, the burden of reproducing the necessary labour-power for the plantation of Portuguese America was transferred to the shoulders of African people. In contrast, the American colony focused on producing exchange values (sugar, cachaça, tobacco) to the world economy. The connection between the two sides of the Atlantic economy was created by commercial capital (Alencastro 2000:149). It can be argued that capital was/is perfectly compatible with this mode of expansion and accumulation, where the multiplication of commodity production occurs with the multiplied absorption of enslaved workers (Franco 1984:226).

The social production of enslaved workers took place between the falling into captivity in the Black Continent, where the Africans were transformed into commodities, as they became the

¹⁵¹ “Natural” reproduction was also practised in colonial times in some plantations that belonged to religious orders. Plantations belonging to private owners preferred destructive mercantile reproduction. However, in the 19th century, the stimulation to families of enslaved workers increased, allegedly due to the high price of enslaved workers in the context of the end of the Atlantic slave trade. (See Schwartz 1985) I use the word “natural” in quotation marks as it would be pretty absurd to think and say that the reproduction of forced labourers can be natural.

“pieces” to be “reborn as factors of production implemented in Portuguese America” (Alencastro 2002:149-150), or to be reborn as a capital- and value-producing labour. By being incorporated in the mills and plantations in the New World, the Africans were subordinated to the statute of an enslaved worker and subsumed to a social relation intermediated by the labour organised by their new owners. To guarantee the continuation of colonial production without interruption, the enslaved individuals had to be re-socialised rapidly in their new status of enslaved workers, which was effectuated by property owners, overseers and older, usually enslaved women. Re-socialisation here implies subjecting the enslaved workers to a new discipline through negative (punishment) and positive (compensation) methods, whereas both were violent forms (Alencastro 2000:150-154). The workers expected to labour at a certain intensity and deliver the product of a desired quantity and quality were fabricated within the production process through direct and indirect violence (Ferlini 2003:141-142).

It was, for example, common to beat enslaved workers immediately after their arrival on the plantation. This practice was known as the “first hosting” (*primeira hospedagem*) and included severe whipping. This kind of torture had an educational function not only concerning the newcomers, who had to be tamed, subjugated and disciplined for their new value-producing positions but also regarding the entire brigade of enslaved workers. Slavery did not just imply an effective use of violence but also the permanent threat of it and its possibility of being put into practice at any moment (Gorender 1990:26-27, 38).

4.1.4 Accumulation based on expropriation

Whereas Alencastro’s analysis focuses on the period between the 16th and 17th centuries and encompasses the South-Atlantic reality more broadly, Manolo Florentino, in his *Em costas negras* (2014), has studied in more detail the fluxes of enslaved labour between Brazil (Rio de Janeiro) and Africa (Congo and Angola) during the 18th and 19th centuries, especially from 1790 until 1830. Florentino (2014) focuses on the geographically differentiated double structural function of the slave trade. As emphasised by Brazilian historiography, it was the primary means to ensure the physical reproduction of the necessary labour power, especially in areas linked with the expanding world economy. However, historiography has hardly approached how the reproduction of this necessary labour presumed a previous social production of the captive in Africa. According to Florentino, it encompassed two processes. First, socio-politically, it shaped the social hierarchy and power relations in African regions, which were most related to the export of human energy. Second,

from the economic point of view, the violent form of this production, *expropriation*, allowed this flux of labour-power to take place at a low cost, an aspect already emphasised but not elaborated by Gorender in *Escravidismo colonial*. The cheapness of enslaved labour contributed to the dissemination of the property in enslaved workers in Brazil as well as to the “reifying entrepreneurial logic” (Florentino 2014:11). It was fundamental for the profitability of the trade, and it was the essential condition for the viability of the agricultural enterprise in the Americas.

When it comes to the production and reproduction of enslaved labour, Florentino contributes to a broader understanding of how the violent uprooting of African people, that is, expropriation, contributed to the cheapness of this particular commodity. It was an exception that colonisers, owners-planters or even the traders of enslaved labour directly imprisoned and enslaved free people for coerced labour in the Americas and in Europe. The main form of producing enslaved workers was through the wars in Africa, either through religious wars between Muslims and non-Muslims or between clans, tribes, or already constituted states. The latter provided, in fact, the most significant number of labourers in the Americas. Thus, the African states were essential agents in enabling an accumulation based on plunder. The other mechanism to obtain enslaved labour, especially in Congo in the 16th century, was raids to the frontier areas (Florentino 2014:95).

The trade cycle of the traffickers was constituted of various moments of exchange. It started with money (currency, credit and bill of change), which was exchanged for commodities and, in turn, for another commodity, a living commodity. The cycle was closed when the enslaved individual assumed the capital-money form (Florentino 2014:163). The trade between the Atlantic buyers and African sellers was based on barter – a commodity for a commodity. The exchange, which started the exchange of enslaved individuals for horses and guns (Alencastro 2000), developed into a much broader trade in which the victors of war paid with enslaved individuals for different European commodities such as textiles and guns or for alcohol and tobacco from the Americas. The barter itself fed the war, which was the mechanism of enslaving human beings. Although enslavement was relatively common in Africa, the emergence of the European world economy and the colonisation of the Americas changed the nature of slavery there, as it lost its traditionally domestic feature and acquired a mercantile character (Florentino 2014:105; Fragoso and Florentino 2001:63-64; Gorender 1980:134-135).

Both the State violence and unpaid labour were fundamental elements in the production of enslaved labour. Florentino (2014:106) considers it a specific *form of original accumulation*, that is,

accumulation based on expropriation, as it will be understood here.¹⁵² Violence is regarded as the central element in the production of enslaved workers¹⁵³ (Florentino 2014; Fragoso and Florentino 2001:55), as well as the strategy of profitability of the trafficking enterprise (Florentino 2014:106). As shown by Florentino (2014), from wars emerged numerous prisoners who were sold to the traffickers on the coast. The states in African societies became the only large-scale producers of enslaved workers, guaranteeing the continuous reproduction and massive availability of labourers. At the same time, violence in the form of *war* is distinct from the logic of *social production* of enslaved labour. This permits us to understand the construction of the low price of enslaved labour.

Social production refers to subsistence labour to raise a human being. It is a “sum of expenditure of labour hours, necessary for the production and maintenance of the human beings from their birth until the moment of enslavement” (Florentino 2014:105). Before enslavement, the individual contained thousands of labour hours spent by the family or the entire community (Meillassoux 1985, cited in Florentino 2014:105). As violence, that is, *expropriation*, “represented the fundamental means whereby the man was removed from his community and enslaved, the cost of his social production was in no way replaced” (Florentino 2014:105). Hence, the expropriation of human beings from the soil and their enslavement means appropriating the alien labour without compensating for it.

This resulted in the non-equivalent exchange, running from the interior of Africa to the enslaved-labour-based productive enterprise in the Americas. The exchange of one commodity – the enslaved individual – for another good – ten or twelve bales of textile or four or five barrels of sugar-cane rum- was not equivalent regarding the labour hours necessary for their production. This non-equivalent exchange was reproduced in all the phases of the circulation of this human commodity, which permitted every market agent in this chain – from small African traffickers and African traders to the Rio de Janeiro traders who organised the circuit – to obtain extra profits. In the Americas, the price at which the enslaved labourer was purchased did not express its real social value. It was possible because expropriation was at the root of the reproduction of enslaved labour

¹⁵² Eisenberg (1983) maintains that violence as an initial coercion is part of the constitution of both the enslaved labour as well as the wage labour. In the case of the former, it is the capture in the form of war. In the second case, it is expressed in separating the worker from direct access to the means of production and subsistence, initially by enclosures and then by parliamentary measures. In both cases, the conditions are not chosen voluntarily but imposed.

¹⁵³ The price of the enslaved labour varied in different economic and political conjunctures. As shown by Alencastro (2000), it was high at the moment of the War of Thirty Years (1618-48) and especially after the end of the slave trade. However, Florentino (idem.:164) argues that the market value of enslaved labour was low as it excluded the number of labour hours necessary for the production of the captive in Africa and since it was captured by violence. Hence, the value of enslaved labour was structurally constituted. According to him, this explains why, until 1830, the ownership of enslaved human beings was highly disseminated in the Brazilian social fabric and why the productive system could expand based on the absorption of enslaved labour but also depend on it in the moments of market recessions.

in the Americas. Expropriation allowed dissociating the market value structurally from the production cost of the captive¹⁵⁴ and letting the agents of trade charge a relatively low price for enslaved labour (Florentino 2014:105-106, 110, 111, 164). In a nutshell:

From the perspective of the trafficker of Rio, the formula in this circuit can be represented as M–C (money vs commodity), C–C (commodity vs commodity), C–M' (commodity vs more money than was initially invested) [...] [where] the exchange C–C was not in itself an equivalent trade (in hours–labour), as violence, and thus unpaid social labour, constituted a primary form of 'production' of the captive. (Florentino 2014:164)

Hence, enslaved labour was the product of expropriation, reproduced in every single relation of sale and purchase between traffickers, in which the trafficker had temporary property in enslaved workers, which made legal the transaction and appropriation of the price difference. After arriving in the port of Salvador, Recife or Rio de Janeiro (the biggest port of enslaved workers in the 19th century) started the Brazilian phase of the extended cycle. From the Rio de Janeiro port, Florentino's (2014) research object, the most significant part of enslaved individuals were taken to the buyers of the interior and the small cities of the south and southeast. According to the data gathered by Florentino, few traffickers in Rio de Janeiro received enslaved individuals directly from Africa and were responsible for their distribution. It shows that this market was relatively concentrated. One example of traffickers in Brazil was the figure of *comboeiro*, who sold the enslaved individual for a double price.

In Brazil, other factors also shaped the price of enslaved labour (Castro 1977). Castro (1977) says that traffickers would also manipulate the demand price. On the one hand, there is the "ideal value" of the enslaved labour, in a sense, what would be the product produced by enslaved workers to their owners during their economically useful lifetime, after the deduction of costs of production, maintenance of enslaved workers and the interests paid to the trafficker. This cannot be the price of enslaved labour. Otherwise, the planter will not make any profit. On the other hand, the trafficker knew what he was going to get for the enslaved worker in the market, which shaped their price. To approach the price to the ideal value, the trafficker would keep a certain scarcity of enslaved workers in the market. In that sense, the competition between the planters shaped the price by increasing it. The ideal value of enslaved workers depended probably most on the sugar price in the world market, hence, also on the consumption of sugar among the middle and working classes in

¹⁵⁴ The market value of wage labour should express the social labour necessary for producing commodities, which is essential for the (re)production of labour-power. What is considered necessary for reproducing labour-power is culturally and socially defined. As discussed before, feminist scholars have pointed out the limitations of this concept of defining the value of wage labour, as it excludes unpaid reproductive work (including psychological care work) to reproduce this valuable commodity, labour power.

the European markets, but also on the competition between sugar-producing colonies, as is well shown by the entrance of the Caribbean islands in the sugar production in the middle of the 17th century. At the same time, Castro (1977) emphasises that the price of enslaved workers also depended on the effort or productivity of enslaved labour.

However, to Florentino, the profit of the trafficking enterprise was acquired on the supply side by keeping the price as low as possible, which was obtained by the expropriation guaranteed by state violence and unpaid subsistence labour (Florentino 2014:106, 11). The slave trade was profitable despite the high risk involved in it, the multiple taxes that the traffickers had to pay on the way, as well as the elevated investment in the business. For example, for the right to embark the enslaved individuals, the trafficker had to pay a tax to contractors (*contratadores*), which was a payment for the contract signed with the Portuguese Crown (Castro 1977:207). The trade implied high financial risks due to sickness and high mortality rates that characterised this particular commodity's journey from Africa to the final destination. According to the secondary literature, Florentino (2014) concludes that approximately 50 per cent of enslaved human beings may have died still in the African soil, on the way from the zones of capture to the port, and still during the temporary stay while waiting for the embarkation.

Moreover, the human commodities may have been robbed in the ports of embarkation in Africa, or later, on the sea, lost due to shipwrecks or the actions of pirates or deaths on board due to scarcity of food or water, sicknesses, cruel treatment, overcrowding as well as fear. However, the high mortality rate was included in the economic calculation of traffickers. This also might, according to Gorender (1980), explain the difference between the price of the captive in the African market (Luanda) and Brazilian (Rio de Janeiro) market. Florentino (2014:169) shows that this difference fluctuated between 50 and 70 per cent between 1808 and 1817, reaching 103 per cent in 1820. Risks to have the ships and the commodities on board detained increased also due to the pressure of Great Britain to end the slave trade. These risk factors contributed to the concentration of the trade enterprise in the hands of few traffickers, as the seventeen biggest trafficking companies (9,1 per cent of the total) were responsible for half of the trips (Caldeira 2011:167-168¹⁵⁵; Florentino 2014:157-159). Furthermore, the organisation of the trade demanded costly investments in the purchase or lease of ships, employment of the ship's personnel and equipping them with necessary instruments, and acquisition of commodities – textiles, weapons, gunpowder, tobacco and spirits – to be traded for enslaved workers (Florentino 2014:154ff).

¹⁵⁵ According to Caldeira (idem.), between 1811 and 1830, 279 registered traffickers were operating, but only thirteen of the biggest enterprises were responsible for 42,1 per cent of total journeys, regularly participating in the market.

By comparing the import patterns of enslaved human beings to Brazil and other regions of the Americas, Alencastro (2007:147-148) maintains that every new productive cycle involves an acceleration of import. It was so with the rise of sugar production (1575 and 1625), the start of gold mining (1701-1720), and the opening of the coffee frontier (1780-1810), whereas the crisis and recession entailed a deceleration. We could think of it in terms of original accumulation. It has been common to argue that every productive cycle starts with an original accumulation – in the 19th century with the rise of coffee production as in the 16th century with the establishment of sugar enterprise – as a response to the reorganisation of the capitalist world economy. However, this reorganisation and rupture, which shape and reorder property regimes, represent a discontinuity which “resumes the process of the constitution of the capitalist system at every moment” (Franco 1984:221). Usually, the reorganisation of the system has been thought of in terms of expropriations in the colonial/peripheral territory. However, from the perspective of the South-Atlantic system, every beginning of a new productive cycle entailed an accelerated process of expropriating African people in growing quantities from the soil and “freeing” them from the means of subsistence. It implied their subsequent subordination to the heteronomous commodification of their labour capacities, as their commodified labour was sold by third parties through various phases of market exchange, to be finally transformed into capital- and value-producing labour in the productive enterprise in the Americas. In the productive system, the enslaved individual was subordinated under an expropriating labour arrangement, which was enforced and guaranteed by legal and direct violence.

In every one of these cycles, the state, as the capitalist agent, played a fundamental role in guaranteeing the conditions for the production of commodities to the world economy and accumulation of capital on the world scale by synchronising multiple components, including rough expropriation of people in the African territory, expropriation of native peoples as well as peasant producers, land concentration as well as super-exploitation of labour in the plantation system. As demonstrated by Alencastro (2000, 2007), it was like that with sugar in Bahia and Pernambuco, with the establishment of export agriculture in Amazon and Maranhão to the detriment of peasant production and compulsory indigenous labour in the middle of the 17th century. The state entered to provide fiscal incentives to obtain enslaved labour of Angolan origin (by the Royal Charter of 1672, which also meant the migration of Portuguese capital from the Orient to start cultivating Asian plants) (Alencastro 2000:141-142). In the middle of the 18th century, the Portuguese Crown took several measures as a reaction to the asymmetrical exchange relations, on the one hand, with England, resulting in the direction of a good part of the gold to England to balance the terms of

trade¹⁵⁶, and, on the other hand, concerning Brazilian settlers and merchants. The metropolitan administration under Marques de Pombal (1750-1777) tried to take back control over the “reproduction of American production” by intervening in the colonial labour organisation and engineering a new agricultural frontier to be incorporated into the world economy through the administered supply of enslaved labour through transatlantic trade to the north and northeast of Brazil. In 1755 and 1759, two monopoly trading companies were created in Lisbon: General Company of Grão Pará and Maranhão (CGGPM) and General Company of Pernambuco and Paraíba (CGPP). The CGGPM was funded by the governments of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau to provide enslaved labour from Bissau for commercial agriculture, white rice, cacao, and cotton cultivation, which had to substitute the forest-gathering economy. In Pernambuco, Paraíba, and the surrounding areas, CGPP sold African labour power¹⁵⁷ originating from the Gulf of Guinea and Angola. In the shipping towards the African ports, the companies also privileged the metropolitan merchant capital to the detriment of the *Brasilico* capital, which had dominated the branch before (Alencastro 2007:142-143).

So far, the aim has been to discuss the economic and social (re)production of the coercively commodified and “totally expropriated” labour, the enslaved labour, mainly based on the works of Alencastro (2000, 2007) and Florentino (2014). Alencastro permits us to understand the South-Atlantic colonial regime as the first global labour market which united both the colonial territory of Portuguese America and Portuguese Africa as one common space of exploitation, where the production of commodities – labour-power and tropical foodstuffs – to the world market was taking place. Through the mechanisms of de-socialisation and re-socialisation, the enslaved workers were socially reproduced through various phases of market exchange. Manolo Florentino, in turn, permits us to understand the mechanisms of expropriation behind the constitution of the low market price of enslaved labour, which was fundamental for the reproduction of the productive enterprise in Brazil. Both enable an understanding of how human powers were incorporated into the circuits of capital accumulation at a meagre cost and were made available for super-exploitation. Hence, Alencastro’s and Florentino’s works permit us to question Wallerstein’s (1974) argument that the low price of enslaved labour derived from the fact that it was acquired outside the world economy. In the face of

¹⁵⁶ A good part of the gold extracted by enslaved workers and native peoples in Brazil was destined for England to balance Portugal's trade balance, which depended on English-manufactured products. This made London the primary market of precious metals in Western Europe (Mota and López 2009:162). In other words, it is on behalf of the English that enslaved workers and native peoples have toiled in America, to paraphrase Voltaire (Voltaire 2002, cited in Alencastro 2007:142).

¹⁵⁷ Between 1756 and 1787, approximately 85,000 Africans were imported to the four northeastern regions of Para, Maranhão, Pernambuco, and Paraíba (Klein and Luna 2010).

the debate developed in the first chapter of this dissertation, it would be more appropriate to say that it was obtained through the accumulation by expropriation of labour within the Atlantic system of exploitation, which was part of the world economy.

4.1.5 The impact of slave-trade on the domestic economy

The slave trade and plantation slavery complex was an essential pillar of capital accumulation and the formation of world capitalism, connecting Europe, Africa and the New World into an organic whole through the flows of people, commodities and ideas during five centuries. How colonial exploitation based on enslaved labour and the slave trade was responsible for capital accumulation, which financed British industrialisation and contributed to the consolidation of the economic and political hegemony of the British empire during the 18th century, has been broadly researched since the pioneering work of Eric Williams (1944)¹⁵⁸. The triangular trade was massive. It interconnected the exchange of heteronomously commodified labour-power in African ports for manufactured goods produced in British factories by propertyless dependent proletarians, or other commodities such as tobacco and spirits produced in the Americas primarily by enslaved workers but also by other servile wage labourers, and the exchange of violently expropriated enslaved labour for tropical commodities in American colonies, which were sold in European markets, where they became wage-foods for the growing industrial working class or inputs in industrial production. Merchants in Amsterdam, London, Bristol, Liverpool, Lisbon and Madrid earned a considerable amount of profit from the slave trade, either directly from the sale of enslaved bodies or from the speculation on commodities, from the circulation of money, from credit transactions or other modalities of risk capital (Robinson 1987, cited in Morgan 2000:37), which participated in the

¹⁵⁸ Eric Williams's theses have created great polemics since the publication of his book *Capitalism and Slavery*. The theses have been refuted as well as confirmed by new detailed research. The wealth accumulated by individual merchants through the slave trade was staggering. However, there is more controversy regarding the profitability of the slave trade and its economic impact on Britain. See Morgan (2000:36-48) for the summary of the debate regarding the profitability of the British slave trade and the application of capital in British industry. See also Marquese (2012) about the main arguments used since the end of the 1960s by North American and British scholars to question the main theses of Williams, emphasising endogenous factors in the British industrialisation and highlighting humanitarianism and democratic impulse created by the Era of Revolutions as decisive mechanisms in the English anti-slavery movement, in detriment of economic factors. Williams argued that what led to the fall of slavery and the slave trade were the capitalist interests, who saw the high sugar prices caused by protectionist policies as an impediment to the "free trade", reduction of factory wages and global hegemony. Since the mid-1980s, the debate around the relationship between trade and capitalism has been renovated by many stimulating works, which have updated the work of Williams: Blackburn (1997), Ronald Findlay (1990) (who, through an econometric model confirms the thesis of Williams about the relevance of slave-trade to the British economy) and Joseph Inikori (2002) (who demonstrates the definitive impact of the enslavement of Africans on British industrialisation), to mention just few. See the summary of this debate as well as the reception of Williams in Brazil in Marquese (2012). Among the overlooked economic factors in the British pressure to abolish Brazilian participation in the slave trade was the fear that without the abolition of slave-trade Brazilian sugar production would cause serious harm to the colonists in British Antilles (see the statement of the British foreign secretary, Palmerston in 1848 in Alencastro 2007:172n100).

genesis of industrial and financial capital, favouring the process of industrialisation, creation of banks and the stock market¹⁵⁹, which started to dictate the rhythm and speed of the labour exploitation in all spaces of production incorporated in the international division of labour.

Williams's thesis has been very influential also among Brazilian economists and sociologists, including *dependentistas*, who considered slave trade and slavery as instances of primitive accumulation of capital in the European economies as well as in Brazil (Cardoso 1962; Fernandes 1976; Furtado [1959] 2007; Marini 1973; Novais [1979] 1989; Viotti [1966] 2010). Novais's thesis explores how the slave trade and slavery promoted the primitive accumulation of capital in European economies, its concentration in the hands of merchant entrepreneurs, and the expansion of markets for manufactured products. The surplus created in the peripheral zone of the system was transferred through the mechanisms of colonial trade to the metropolis, to metropolitan and extra-metropolitan merchant bourgeoisie. Still, part of it remained in the colony among a few colonial planters to guarantee the reproduction of the economic enterprise (Novais [1979] 1989:107, 114). How the Portuguese state intervened to control the original accumulation of capital through the slave trade and make it flow in the direction of the metropolis is in detail documented by Novais and more recently by Alencastro (2000), who gives more emphasis on the trade and politics with Africa in the South-Atlantic system.

How slavery and the slave trade had been fundamental for internal capital accumulation has also been a significant topic in Brazilian scholarly research. The South Atlantic slave trade was a fundamental labour market to ensure the physical reproduction of enslaved labour for the colonial economic productive system in the periphery of the capitalist world economy. Hence, the trafficking capital contributed to the accumulation of *slave-mercantile capital*, being more on the winning side than the productive capital when it comes to the capture of surplus value, as a significant part of the profit deriving from trade had flown abroad. Nevertheless, the effects of the trade go far beyond that. Slave trade and the capital accumulated through it contributed in various manners to the colonial and later to the imperial domestic economy.

After Portugal had obtained under its control the trade circuits, which used to be contracted by Spanish America through *Asientos* and after gaining back Angola (1648), a setting in which the dependence on enslaved labour of Africans was no longer reversible (Alencastro 2000:40),

¹⁵⁹ Besides capital accumulation and direct profits derived from the trade and its impact on industrialisation, Morgan (2000) emphasises other, rather more indirect factors that benefitted and shaped British economy and society: strengthening of commerce and export of manufactured goods, growth of financial and business institutions (for example marine and fire insurance), development of shipping and ports (especially in London, Liverpool, Bristol, Glasgow), demographic development, the expansion of the working-class, creation of jobs and employment as well as increasing wages.

Brazilian merchant capital gained domination over the Angola-Brazil route of slave-trade. This resulted in the Brazilian traffickers also reaping the most significant part of the profits from the trade of 350 thousand enslaved workers in the 17th century. Most of the enslaved workers were then absorbed in sugar production. Still, the number of imported enslaved labourers doubled with the discovery of gold mines at the end of the 17th century, with the main mining zones being in Minas Gerais, Mato Grosso, Goiás, and Bahia. By dominating the transatlantic slave trade, the Brazilian colonial traffickers also controlled the entire domestic chain of the trade, selling the enslaved workers, “the pieces from Africa,” to the local wholesalers “capable of paying for large lots with money or commodities of high liquidity accepted by traffickers, and reselling the slaves at a profit in the interior” (Caldeira 2011:178). This relation was intermediated by muleteers and other dealers commanding the trade caravans to transport the products. It also demonstrates the accumulated domestic capital required to make these transactions possible and the flourishing of the petite bourgeoisie (Caldeira 2011:179).

The trade mobilised various economic areas in the colonial territory, particularly those which were directly related to the production for the market (slave market or the market of tropical commodities) or those which were indirectly associated with the mercantile sector, such as the production of foodstuff. Items grown in the colony and exchanged for enslaved bodies were cowries, manioc flour, tobacco and *cachaça* (*jeribita*). In the Recôncavo of Bahia province, the slave trade was related to ship construction, repair, and tobacco production (Caldeira 2011; Pedrão 2002). Tobacco was cultivated by settler-tenants, enslaved workers for self-subsistence, smallholders with some possession of enslaved labourers and cattle, and large-scale producers. From the 17th century, it was exported increasingly to Costa da Mina (increase from 11 to 60 vessels leaving Brazilian ports between 1681 and 1700), when the Bahian traffickers dominated the slave trade on this route.

Moreover, the growing need for enslaved labour in the mining industry stimulated the cultivation and trade of tobacco (12500 plants a year in 1703), which contributed to the concentration of commerce in the hands of few traders (Nardi 1987). Bahia had a monopoly in tobacco cultivation and export. Tobacco export to Africa, which lasted until the mid-19th century, also contributed to cattle raising being drawn into the Atlantic market at the start of the 1680s. The reason was that the tobacco rolls were wrapped in leather, which equated to 15 per cent of the price of exported tobacco (Nardi 1996). Among the cowherds were “free” persons as well as black, Indian or mixed-race captives, who were paid in kind or by piece for their labour, which included pasturing the herds and driving them to markets, although not having much to do with the enslaved

plantation workers (Alencastro 2000:136). In the 17th century, an important, although little researched, naval construction was also taking place in what is now known as the state of Rio de Janeiro and in São Paulo, the latter of which had a marginal role in the Atlantic system then. Alencastro mentions that from the nineteen ships captured by the Dutch West Indian Company (WIC) in Luanda Bay (1640), seven were made in the shipyards of Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo. The *Padre Eterno* was one of the most giant vessels in the world, and all of it was constructed in Rio de Janeiro. Some parts of the equipment and some shipbuilding technicians came from England. However, the vessel was manufactured mainly by colonial artisans. The cutting, transporting and preparing the timber work, carpentry, cordage, masting, and aerofoils produced in these diverse dockyards were made by the labour of “public Indians”, enslaved Indians working in royal service. Even if “Brazilian” products gained a certain advantage in comparison to the metropolitan products in the exchange with Africa, it favoured the interests of traffickers of enslaved workers, merchants and the South-Atlantic system. The anti-cyclic role that *jeritiba* had during the economic crisis at the end of the 17th century, and the product’s role in the low price of enslaved workers acquired by planters, are cases that illustrate the concentration of benefits (Alencastro 2007:138).

By the 19th century, the Brazilian integrated domestic market was already considerable, as 85 per cent of the total production was consumed internally (Caldeira 2011:168). Such critical economic and political events as the opening of ports in 1808, the liberalisation of trade, the arrival of the Court, and the acceleration of trafficking marked the beginning of the 19th century. Moreover, with the abolition of the trade in England and the United States in 1808, Brazil assumed control of slave trafficking in Mozambique (as well as in India and the Indian Ocean), redirecting the enslaved Africans from the eastern side of the continent to Brazil. In that sense, the intensified commodity exchange with Europe and Africa boosted agricultural production. At the same time, the British products exported to Brazil also served as an exchange value in Africa, making more commodified human energy available and favouring the production of tropical commodities (Alencastro 2007:147). Before 1800 and after the turn of the century, the growing sugar and coffee production in rural areas absorbed most of the enslaved labour, which was dynamised by the world market and vice versa, confirming the world-systemic links. The excessive growth of agricultural units of sugar and coffee in the Rio de Janeiro region between 1790 and 1840, but especially after these events mentioned above, is responsible for the deepening of the tendency of concentration of property in enslaved workers. The absorption of enslaved labour by plantations increased from half to three-fourths of the total of enslaved workers (Fragoso and Florentino 2001:86-88, 92-95)

In that context, the volume of imported Africans was growing continuously. Between 1790 and 1840, arrived in the port of Rio 1500 ships, equivalent to 700,000 enslaved workers, that is, 1/5 of the entire 350 years of the slave trade (Fragoso and Florentino 2001:86-88, 92-95). Regarding the profitability of the slave trade, based on the detailed study of investments and fortunes acquired from the slave trade between Luanda and Rio de Janeiro during the first decades of the 19th century, Florentino (2014) concludes that with the average profitability of 19,2 per cent, the Rio de Janeiro trade was superior to any studied trade before 1830, for example, to the British trade between 1761 and 1807 whose profitability was 9,6 per cent. It was equivalent to the profitability of the trade of Cuba and Bahia during the posterior decades (Eltis 1987, cited in Florentino 2014).

With the political emancipation of Brazil (September 7, 1822), the colonial appropriation based on the expropriation of slave labour disappeared, resulting in the profits staying in Brazil. However, through the mechanisms of the world market, a significant part was drained under very disadvantageous conditions. Similarly, a substantial amount of the commercial capital accumulated through the slave trade, now “internalised”, stayed in the Brazilian squares. Hence, capital accumulation through the enslaved labour regime was fundamental for both the reproduction of the agrarian complex and the urban-commercial economy, which later transformed into the urban-industrial economy (Fernandes 1976). As shown by Florentino (2014:193-4), based on one mapping of the most significant capital owners of Rio de Janeiro ordered by the Crown in 1799 to gather funds for agricultural “improvement”, of the 36 biggest capital owners of the province, seven of them appeared twelve years later (1811) directly or indirectly involved with slave-trade, showing that the trafficking was a relevant source of the accumulated commercial capital. The capital of slave traders was influential in the urban economy, as they invested in the real estate market, shipbuilding, and credit market, as well as in cabotage and agricultural assets (including land and farms). Regarding value, the investment in agricultural productive activities was less relevant than the rest – real estate and trade – which had a speculative and commercial character. The capital of the trafficking elite of Rio de Janeiro, which was reinvested in economic activities between 1790 and 1830, was fundamental for the physical reproduction of the direct producer – the enslaved workers. In terms of the value moved by the trade, it was one of the most critical sectors in the colonial economy and the most dynamic space of accumulation in the Southeast of Brazil, being superior to any other import item, also exceeding the value of the import of manufactures in 1805 as well as the value of sugar export in 1810 (Florentino 2014). The problem with Florentino’s treatment of trafficking capital, however, is that he considers it autonomous, obfuscating the world-economic links and the asymmetric power relations involved in it.

At the same time, as shown by the historian of the Federal University of Fluminense, João Fragoso (1998), the capital of the members of the merchant elite of Rio de Janeiro accumulated through the slave trade (but also, commercialisation of sugar, export/import to the metropolis), was not invested only in rural assets for speculative reasons (usury), but was converted at the turn of the 18th century in productive capital in large agricultural units (with more than hundred enslaved workers) and was later fundamental for the launch of the coffee production in the new agrarian frontier of Paraíba do Sul. In other words, the surplus labour accumulated by the commercial elites returned to productive activities. At the same time, the great merchants became planters and the owners of enslaved workers and land. Although entrepreneurial reasons or profit orientation were important motives for converting capital into production, Fragoso emphasises the motivation related to prestige, on which social stratification and distinction in the colonial society were based, constituting a non-capitalist element. The same logic characterised Bahia in the 17th and 18th centuries and Mexico (Fragoso 1998:321, 360-369). By that, Fragoso seems to want to “confirm the cliché of the rich merchant doing his best to turn himself into a useless aristocrat” (Blackburn 1997:54). From the planter-owner perspective, money invested in enslaved workers was productive as it was transformed into capital in the colonial productive process (Alencastro 2000). With the end of the slave trade (1850), the liberated capital was invested in labour arrangements, which would substitute enslaved labour. Like several farms in São Paulo (*Ibicaba* of the company *Vergueiro & Cia*, for example) or later, the State financed the import of European migrant labour to be subjugated under the contract labour arrangement - *colonato* (Martins 2013:54).

Regarding industrialisation in Rio de Janeiro, at the beginning of the 19th century, the participation of industrial assets in the total wealth of the city was meagre – 1,6 per cent in 1820. In the same year, 36 per cent of industrial assets belonged to the wealthiest persons in the city (16,6 per cent in 1797-99), compared to 77,9 per cent of active debts (92 per cent in 1840). Direct investments of trafficking capital in industrial activities in Rio de Janeiro until the 1830s seemed insignificant (Florentino 2014:195-202). Regarding the period after the end of the slave trade in 1850, Leopoldi (2000:36-37) has argued that the liberated slaver capital was partly invested in industrial activities, especially in Rio de Janeiro. Industrial activities would also be stimulated by the demand created by the agricultural sector. The first industrial activities (at the end of 1850, there were 1910 factories registered by the Ministry of Economy) were concentrated in a few sectors, such as the production of food and beverages, textile and clothing, leather, tobacco, and wood, attending the basic demands of the local population, as well as metallurgy, being the response to the need for tools by the agricultural sector. However, there is no data about the extent to which this

capital was invested and to which industrial branches. According to Soares ([1996] 2002), the liberated capital was invested in Rio de Janeiro in such urban activities as urban services, transport, banks, and commerce, but not in manufacturing, but if, then only indirectly in the form of loans through banking houses. Nevertheless, also regarding Bahia, a similar argument has been made, namely that after the recession of the sugar production in Recôncavo, the commercial capital accumulated partly through the trade (as well as the associated tobacco trade, navigation, and contraband of diamonds as well as imports) was looking for possibilities to be reproduced in the textile industry and ironworks, as well as in the transport sector (Pedrão 2002:313ff).

Moreover, an opposite movement existed. Namely, with his study of the process of *proto-industrialisation* in the state of Minas Gerais at the end of the 18th and in the 19th century, Libby (2002) shows that it played an essential role in the generation of currency, which guaranteed the acquisition of a massive number of enslaved workers in the region, whose economy after the end of the gold cycle consisted mainly in the production of foodstuffs to the colonial market, employing enslaved or peasant labour. This role was previously played by São Paulo (Alencastro 2000). The highly spread rural home textile industries¹⁶⁰ in Minas Gerais, studied by Libby (2002), produced mainly rough, thick, and durable textiles consumed predominantly by enslaved workers. The fabrics were partly commercialised, partly exchanged for other commodities, but primarily made for self-subsistence. Interestingly, the labour-power in spinning and weaving comprised only free and enslaved women.

4.2 Direct enslavement of labour under capital: law and control

As it can be remembered from the discussion elaborated in the first chapter, the *State-Gewalt* (Tomba 2013b), through its political-legal intervention, has been fundamental for the fabrication, commodification, disciplining and controlling of workers and their labour-power to transform them into capital- and value-producing labour and to be incorporated into the circuits of capital accumulation. Thus, it should be necessary to ask about colonial slavery in Portuguese America: how was the violently open labour appropriation in the case of slavery guaranteed legally for colonial and imperial exploitation in the capitalist world economy? How were the violence of the

¹⁶⁰ All kinds of households participated in the home textile industry: farms with large numbers of enslaved workers, mining units, urban townhouses, poor and small subsistence farms, and urban shacks. Compared to the proto-industrialisation in Europe, the experience in Minas Gerais did not develop in industrialisation in terms of the factory system; it did not take even the form of a putting-out system. It was instead declining in the second part of the 19th century. One reason is the competition of cheap British machine-produced fabric, which invaded the Brazilian market (Libby 2002).

state and its legal institutions used to create and sustain the mode of labour control based on the total expropriation of enslaved African workers? What did the law say about the critical aspects concerning the domination of enslaved workers: discipline and labour appropriation? How was the law used to discipline and control enslaved labourers, to subordinate them under individual capitalists and thereby under capital?

4.2.1 Slavery in law

The constitution of Spanish and Portuguese legal order concerning slavery was founded on the Code of Justinian, which was a Byzantine compilation of Roman Laws from the 6th century, which was organised between 1263 and 1265 by Alfonso X of Castile into a compact form, the *Siete Partidas*. In these documents, slavery opposed reason and natural rights, according to which all human beings were born free. Accordingly, slavery was defined within the scope of people's rights, and it was the lowest status in terms of honour, in which the people had lost control over themselves, being at the mercy of the will of others. The enslaved workers would be subjugated to the alien power and dominion, having no control over themselves (Silva Junior 2013:60; Hunold Lara 1980/81). As this condition was considered to some extent unjust, the *Siete Partidas*, structured within the Christian doctrine, also introduced articles aimed at protecting enslaved workers from the abuse of their owners. Thus, the enslaved workers were granted some benefits, such as the legal capacity to denounce the abuse, the right to bodily integrity (not to be killed or mutilated), the right to marry even against the will of the owner, form a family, and under certain conditions own property (Góngora Mera et al. 2019).

The plantation system was erected on Portuguese legislation based on absolute ownership of things derived from Roman Law. Still, the normative body was renovated according to the emerging circumstances in the context of colonisation. The initial experiment was done with the attempts to subsume indigenous peoples for plantation labour. Gradually, the law was adapted to the new reality represented by black African slavery (Hunold Lara 1980/1981; Silva Junior 2013).

In the long run, the law of the Iberian conquerors enabled the consolidation of the land dispossessions and the subordination of the indigenous peoples, administering the slave trade and enslavement of African people, as well as establishing the regime of inequalities and hierarchies (Góngora Mera et al. 2019:119). It also ensured disciplining initially the native peoples and then the enslaved Africans for value-creating and capital-producing plantation labour.

Based on civil and canonical law, indigenous peoples were better positioned in the social hierarchy than Africans, who were at the bottom of the order. Compared to the indigenous peoples, the legal situation of Africans was much more uncertain. They could be enslaved (Góngora Mera et al. 2019:119-120), hence not having power over their bodies, and as such, they could be subordinated under the arbitrariness of the planter-owner. They could be sold, bought, inherited and traded as movable property. As observed by Alencastro (2000), no royal document described the native peoples in terms of brutal human energy, factor of production or a commodity. Fiscal and mercantile terms also referred to Africans and Indians differently. The formers were referred to as pieces [*peças*] and “slaves”, whereas the latter were referred to as captives, which implied “individuals imprisoned” in “just wars”. The regulations regarding the enslaved African people in Portuguese colonies were limited to the practical aspects of controlling their bodies, in contrast to the protective norms of native peoples.

Whereas in the first year of colonisation, the Spanish Crown passed a protective regulation to avoid the extermination of Indians (*Leyes de Burgos* of 1512 prohibited the enslavement of indigenous peoples), the Portuguese Crown allowed the enslavement of indigenous peoples for legitimate reasons (justified by “Just War”). The *Lei sobre a Liberdade dos Gentios* (Law of March 20, 1570) declared all Indians free, except those captured in war or fled from villages. With the unification of the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns (1580-1640), the law to prohibit the enslavement of Indians was extended in 1587 to Portuguese territories (Góngora Mera et al. 2019:124). With the prohibition of the enslavement of native peoples, the enslaved African workers constituted the dominant labour. However, the native peoples (free and enslaved) remained the core of the labour force in regions which were not integrated into the Atlantic market, as it was with São Paulo until the mid-18th century and Amazon until the end of the 18th century (Alencastro 2007:132; Klein and Luna 2010). By the installation of the sugar complex in the Americas, Portugal already had a century-long experience of using enslaved labour in the sugar plantations in the Atlantic islands and with the market of sub-Saharan enslaved human beings, which was “regulated based on general norms of civil law about the sale and transport of livestock and other animated personal property” (Góngora Mera et al. 2019:130). With the installation of the sugar complex in Brazil in the middle of the 16th century, trade and production took new dimensions. Therefore, to provide labour power to the plantation economy, a set of laws had to be adapted, and new laws were created for the unique emerging situation in the New World to make available the labour force through the unfree labour market as well as to control and discipline the black bodies for the new value- and capital-producing labour. Although on some occasions, the law set some obligations of care to the owners

and tried to limit the use of open violence, in general, the laws were repressive, aimed mainly at establishing the rights of the owners and punitive actions against enslaved workers, especially the rebellious ones and *quilombos* (Góngora Mera et al. 2019:124). In the following section, I will focus on how the law guaranteed the social control, discipline, domination and appropriation of the labour of enslaved workers.

Portugal's overseas administration and government were structured in mercantile houses and councils with jurisdictions in determined territories or specialised in specific topics without establishing a legislative entity in American colonies. As shown by the Brazilian historian of the University of Campinas, Silvia Hunold Lara (2000), there were gradually complexifying administrative bodies to control the commodity trade since the trade with the regions of Africa. The legislation was produced directly by the Portuguese Monarch or the Overseas Council, established in 1643 to administer Portuguese colonies in Brazil, India, Guinea, Cape Verde and São Tomé. The Portuguese denominated the conquered and colonised territories as overseas domains or conquests (*domínios ultramarinos ou conquistas*). The Portuguese domain in America (first, Ilha de Vera Cruz, Terra de Santa Cruz and, later, Brazil) was in the beginning divided into big administrative circumscriptions called general or hereditary captaincies (*capitanias gerais* or *hereditárias*). The Portuguese Crown granted jurisdiction over these territorial units to private individuals – donataries, who belonged to the Portuguese nobility. In addition to various privileges, they had broad legal-administrative and military authority and constituted legitimate representatives of the monarch in the Americas. However, the institution of General Government in 1548, situated in Bahia, brought about the centralisation of power, which diminished the privileges of donataries, as the captaincies were gradually subordinated under the Crown (Hunold Lara 2000:17-27). It is important to highlight that the European overseas expansion coincided with the emergence of centralised states under the control of the royal authority. Such a process, different in style and rhythm, occurred in Portugal, Spain, Prussia, Scandinavia, England, and France. By the mid-seventeenth century, the State and bureaucracy had become synonymous (Novais [1979] 1989; Schwartz 1973). Economically, the creation of a general government in Portuguese America was also marked by the transition from a harvest economy based on indigenous compulsory labour to a production economy based on sugar mills and enslaved African labour (Alencastro 2000:20).

Hunold Lara (2000) shows that the Portuguese legislative tradition regarding black slavery is divided into ordinances, *legislação extravagante* and royal provisions. The three ordinances were:

Afonsin Ordinances (*Ordenações Afonsinas*, 1446)¹⁶¹, Manueline Ordinances (*Ordenações Manuelinas*, 1521)¹⁶² and Philippine Ordinances (*Ordenações Filipinas*, 1603).¹⁶³ Philippine Ordinances were what most approached the reality of the New World, the system of exploitation and slave mode of labour control established in the colonies.¹⁶⁴ In fact, with the Philippine Ordinances, black slavery appears as a legally perpetual value-producing mode of unfree labour. Complementary legislation (*legislação extravagante*) was created to intervene in particular issues.¹⁶⁵ Finally, there were determinations in the form of provisions and notices (*provisões e avisos*) emanating from royal ministers and councils, including the Overseas Council. The evolution of law, its unification, and then the updates should be considered part of the broader political process of creating centralised states in Europe, concomitant with the overseas expansions (Novais [1979] 1989).

Regarding black African slavery, Portugal did not have such codes as the French *Code Noir* (1685), the British *slave codes* (Act to Regulate the Negroes on the British Plantations promulgated in 1667, which established a legal status of enslaved workers) or the Spanish *Black Code* (the Royal Decree of 1789, developed at the end of the colonial period, but not implemented). These codes explicitly regulated the ownership and social control of enslaved labourers by fixing the obligations of owners vis-à-vis their enslaved workers and the punitive rules (Hunold Lara 2000; Marquese and Joly 2008). Neither was there any collection of laws about slavery, which operated like a code and would specify the ownership and domination of enslaved workers (Hunold Lara 2000; Marquese 2002). Nevertheless, the ordinances, as well as the *legislação extravagante*, established fundamental principles which legitimated slavery as the mode of labour control (Hunold Lara 2000:37) and regulated the relations of exploitation of enslaved labour as well as conflicts derived from there (Campello 2018). Other scholars argue that despite there being no coherent slave code,

¹⁶¹ Constituted the attempt to unify the laws existing in Portugal in the 15th century.

¹⁶² Substituted the previous ordinances with few amendments, excluding the legislation about Muslims and Jews.

¹⁶³ They were introduced still during the Castilian rule but were revalidated by João VI in 1643 upon the separation from Spain. They updated the Manueline Ordinances, and such were the primary legal reference during the entire metropolitan domain and remained in force in Brazil until 1916.

¹⁶⁴ The two first Ordinances referred to the Muslim captives from the territories dominated by Islam by using the terms “serf” or even “serf” and “slave” interchangeably. The Philippine Ordinances associated the “slave” with Africans. Hence, with the consolidation of the enslaved labour regime of African peoples in Portuguese America, the term “slave” becomes associated with the new reality, which is substantially distinct from the one related to Muslim captives, serfs or “metropolitan slaves” (Campello 2018; Hunold Lara 1980/81:380-385).

¹⁶⁵ They go beyond ordinances and express the royal will, either directly or indirectly through the ministers, including a set of laws (orders of general character), bills of law, permits (*alvarás*) and permits in the form of law (*alvarás em forma de lei*), royal letters (*cartas régias*, constitute a royal order to a specific authority or person), decrees (a resolution of the monarch addressed to a specific minister or court).

there were two slavers' codes (*códigos negreiros*) regulating the slave trade, one promulgated in 1684 and the other in 1813¹⁶⁶ (Martins 2017).

Most provisions about slavery in Manueline and Philippine ordinances treat topics concerning civil and criminal law. In the complementary ordinances, a significant part of the legislation treats regulation and taxing of economic activities. Established taxes on property and employment of enslaved workers, transactions involving enslaved human beings (*sizas*), forms of tax collection, fines, and penalties to tax evaders. A significant part treated the trade with Africa, being concerned with the “practical aspects of the control of the flux of this valuable commodity”, focusing on topics of embarkation, transport of enslaved workers, value, forms of payment, taxing and collection of taxes (Hunold Lara 2000:27-28, 37; Martins 2017).

Although the Portuguese legislation did not explicitly mention the possession and dominion of enslaved workers by owners, the property right, which gave the masters the privilege to dispose of the labour and the body of enslaved workers, was revealed through the principles described in different norms. For example, there were norms about the continuation and maintenance of the dominion of enslaved individuals after the donation of manumissions (PO, Book IV, Title 63). Moreover, some principles could be found in legal texts of both Ordinances (Manueline and Philippine) about the devolution of fugitives (MO, Book V, Title 41; PO, Book V, Title 62), invalidity of the sale of diseased or lame enslaved individuals (MO, Book IV, Title 16; PO, Book IV, Title 17), and criminalisation of those, who helped and covered fugitives (MO, Book V, Title 77; PO, Book V, Title 63). Whereas the “lawfulness of slave property” was guaranteed by the Crown's seal branded with red iron on the bodies of Africans who left Angola (Alencastro 2007:139-140), these norms mentioned above, the ones dealing with the regulation of trade with Africa (MO, Book V, Titles 112 and 113; PO, Book V, Titles 106 and 107) as well as the subsequent laws, all created a legal basis (Hunold Lara 2000:36-38), allowing the planters-owners to establish property rights in Africans and their descendants as in any other commodity.

Góngora Mera et al. (2019:131) observe that the language in these ordinances is very reifying and animalising of enslaved individuals, equating them with livestock, which might have to do with the primary concern of Portuguese laws being focused on the regulation of commercialisation and commodification, due to its early involvement with slave-trade, differently from Spanish legislation, which focused instead on the questions of ownership and control of

¹⁶⁶ *Lei das Arqueações* created norms to avoid overcrowding in slave ships and other measures to reduce deaths in transit.

enslaved individuals in its colonies.¹⁶⁷ Hence, the Manueline and Philippine Ordinances mentioned above, which regulated the rejection of the sale of enslaved persons due to disease or physical deficiency (Book IV, Title 17), equate enslaved workers with “animals” (*bestas*), or their escape was seen as equivalent to the loss of birds or “any other things” (*quaisquer outras coisas*).

In regulations in which enslaved bodies were the objects of “commercial transactions, pending claims in court, contentions, discounting one debt to another, etc.” they were treated as *things*, in other words, as commodities, movable goods, with a double nature having use-value as well as an exchange-value (Hunold Lara 1980/1981:391-392). In the regulation of the sale and purchase of movable goods, enslaved individuals were equalised with animals (PO, Livro IV, Title 1). In the norms about inheritance, they were considered indivisible assets in inventory (PO, Book IV, Title 96). As property, the enslaved workers were subject to the dominium of their owners, who obtained the right to use their services and explore their labour power as they wished, appropriate the full product of their labour, which became the property of their owners. Moreover, as such, enslaved workers could be the objects of contracts of sale and purchase as well as lease agreements. They could be mortgaged, pledged, and pawned. They could be objects of commercial insurance, adverse possession, inheritance, and testament and be part of the planter’s property, which had a value and hence could function as collateral for a loan (Campello 2018).

The dominium depended on the deprivation of enslaved persons from all their capacities, excluding them from civil life. Consequently, they did not have civil or political rights and were not allowed to testify in court, contracting or exercising guardianship. Access to the courts of justice, not only to be judged but also to seek protection, was possible, but only under certain restrictions (PO, Book III, Titles 7, 9). These few enslaved workers who could start a lawsuit could do it through some intermediaries such as the owner, public prosecutor or a free person. Moreover, in the court, the speech of enslaved people was filtrated by lawyers, speech writers or other clerks, framing it according to the dominant ideology (Gorender 1990:24; 39). Although the legal system was highly precarious in terms of the protection of enslaved people (Costa 1997), the Luso-Brazilian legislation also limited the arbitrariness of owners by denying them the right to life and death of enslaved individuals as well as allowing only “moderate” punishment (PO, Book V, Title 36).

¹⁶⁷ Other British colonies, such as Barbados, had much more detailed laws about the governing of enslaved workers, for example, the “Act for the better ordering and governing of Negroes” passed in 1661 (Engerman, Drescher and Paquette 2001:105-113).

By law, enslaved people did not have the right to form a family and marry. However, some families were recognised by customary law. Marriages and family formation were encouraged in plantations administered by religious orders but not in secular plantations. In most lay plantations, the planters preferred enslaved male workers, which is reflected in the gender ratio of one woman to three men. The families of enslaved people were not protected by law, as married enslaved people could be sold separately. The decree of September 16 1869, finally prohibited the separate sale of family members (Campello 2018). The customary law in Portuguese America recognised the right to manumission (not written in law until 1871), which was revocable for ingratitude. Still, in the middle of the 19th century, by law, the enslaved people could not own anything to themselves but only to the owners. However, exceptions were created, which derived from the recurrent practices in colonial times, insofar as the accumulated goods would contribute to the owner's wealth. Thus, the enslaved people could have an annuity, *pecúlio*, but at the owner's authorisation. As slaves-for-hire (wage-earning enslaved workers), the enslaved people could keep the surplus; when commercialising their product, they could keep the exchange (Wehling 2006:339-341). Manumissions through *pecúlio* were also a form of disciplining the enslaved workers, as it encouraged self-control in accumulating savings and adopting the work ethic (Cunha 1983:438).

As it is known, the same ordinances, as well as the complementary legislation, recognised the human condition of the enslaved people when they recognised their penal responsibility. The status of enslaved people was framed in terms of a *person* and was mentioned in the “context of prohibitions, possibilities to commit crimes, or last resort to be appealed” (Hunold Lara 1980/1981:393-393). Criminal law was applied to enslaved individuals (Book V of PO and MO) who were made responsible for the delicts they committed. Here, enslaved people transcended their reification and were recognised by society as persons. “The first human act of the slave is a crime” (Gorender 1980:65). However, holding enslaved people responsible for their delicts also had a high price since they were permanently assigned the heaviest and most shameful penalties.¹⁶⁸

The escape of enslaved people was the second main concern of the metropolitan state besides trade (Hunold Lara 1988:37). Besides the titles (Book V, titles 62, 63), which penalised the

¹⁶⁸ Philippine Ordinances foresaw mutilations as a penalty for some crimes. For example, the Book V, Title 41 of PO foresaw that enslaved workers, who pulled out a weapon against their masters without injuring them, would be whipped publicly, and had one of the arms cut off. When killing the master and her son, the penalty would be threefold: the enslaved worker would have both hands cut off, the flesh squeezed out with burning tongs, and she would die on the gallows. Criminal Law was harsh also with not enslaved workers, who could also have their hands cut off in the case of certain crimes, but the status of being enslaved aggravated the punishment. Moreover, by the charter of March 3 of 1741, the Portuguese Crown had determined that the fugitive enslaved workers and *quilombolas* should be branded with a hot iron an F on their shoulders, when found for the first time, voluntarily, in *quilombos*. If they were caught for the second time, they would have an ear cut off, by a simple order of the judicial authority (Gorender 1980:65n16).

escape and those who concealed the fugitives, the criminal law considered the formation of *quilombos* and insurrections as severe crimes, having a particular item about “the slaves who live by themselves” (PO Book V, Title 70). Besides the ordinances, there was broad legislation aimed at suppressing the flight and insurrection of enslaved people, prohibiting and eliminating *quilombos*. By Roman Law, the escape of enslaved individuals was understood as an act of “stealing oneself” (Campello 2018; Malheiro [1866] 1976:81). The severe penalty in the case of the formation of *quilombos* could be explained by the viewpoint of the owners and the state (and its ideologues, the Jesuits) as the violation of the law of property, a theft, as by escape the enslaved workers were stealing a valuable property, which did not belong to them by law, their bodies.¹⁶⁹ Whereas to owners, the escaped enslaved worker did not just represent a lost property but also a non-produced value (Moura [1988] 2019:227), the enslaved worker as a “fugitive property” was trying to restore the power over/property in him- or herself (Kawash 1999:279).

All in all, Portuguese laws contain an ambiguity. As *persons*, the enslaved people had a criminal statute, but their civil and legal status configured them as *things*. In sum, enslaved workers are a particular commodity, capable of committing a crime and obtaining “privileges” compared to the owners (Hunold Lara 1980/81:391-392, 394). However, the recognition of the humanity of enslaved individuals in no way should be a motive to distinguish between allegedly more moderate and softer Iberian slavery and harsher Anglo-Saxon slavery.¹⁷⁰ Some scholars of slavery (Gorender 1980; Patterson 1967, 1982) have pointed out that this ambiguity – enslaved person as alien property, a commodity and a “disposable chattel”, and enslaved person as a human being – is not particular to Portuguese laws. It is structural to the slavery institution, as most of the ancient and modern slave-holding societies recognised “slave as a person in law”, which is to say that legally and morally, the enslaved people were held responsible for their delicts (Patterson 1967:22).

State intervention through its political-legal apparatus was fundamental in commodifying, disciplining, and controlling the category of labourers, from whom fresh amounts of absolute

¹⁶⁹ It is to this that the comment of the Jesuit Antônio Vieira regarding the quilombo of Palmares and its members refers to in 1691 when he considered the fugitive enslaved workers as “mortal sinners” and a “total destruction of Brazil” based on the example of Palmares, the enslaved workers would take liberty by force, “running away and going to the forest with all their capital, which is nothing else than their own bodies” (Antônio Vieira, cited in Vainfas 1988:53).

¹⁷⁰ Frank Tannenbaum’s work *Slave and Citizen*, originally published in 1946, revived an already previously existing idyllic, benign, and moderate view of Iberian slavery, produced by 19th-century travellers and later in the works of Gilberto Freyre (Hunold Lara 1988:98). This supposed softness and benignity would derive from the legal tradition inherited from the Code of Justinian (6th century), condensed in the *Siete Partidas* (1263 e 1265), which, as mentioned above, as based on the Christian doctrine, saw a contradiction between slavery and natural law, and recognised the humanity of enslaved people. According to Tannenbaum (1946), all this tradition would be transferred to the Iberian overseas colonies, showing continuity in this legal tradition (Hunold Lara 1988). This view has been, however, broadly contested since the 1960s by Davis (1966) and Mintz (1969), as well as by Brazilian authors, such as Bastide and Fernandes (1953), Cardoso (1962), Costa (1997 [1966]), Ianni (1962).

surplus value could be appropriated (Dörre 2015: 25; Marx 1976; Tomba 2013b). Inspired by the British historian E.P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class*, the Brazilian historian Silvia Hunold Lara studied in her book *Campos da violência* (1988) how punishment was used between 1750 and 1808 to compel the enslaved people to work. She discusses punishment as a rule instituted by law and enforced by justice courts. Criminal law had a fundamental role in guaranteeing the social control and discipline of enslaved workers by prohibiting them from carrying a gun, limiting their mobility, and criminalising the fugitives and those who helped them, as well as the *quilombos* (maroon villages). Altogether, these norms codify black slavery by legally guaranteeing the permanent and totally depersonalised form of value-producing unfree labour. They constitute a whole system of social control to fix the enslaved workers to their value-producing positions in plantations and discipline them for value-and capital-producing labour.

As in other colonies, the execution of social control as part of an entire system of surveillance depended on the mobilisation of the free population, as any white or mixed-race citizen would be punished if they hid a fugitive enslaved person and helped their escape. The law previewed high pecuniary penalties to those who helped or covered their flight, having to pay five times the value of the enslaved worker, whereas a non-payment could lead to debt slavery of the transgressor (Silva Junior 2013)¹⁷¹. The mode of labour control and the fixation of enslaved labourers on their value-producing positions, to extract from them what, in fact, produced value – labour, implied, on the one hand, decentralisation of state's violence to the free population, then, on the other hand, the planters also had their so-called private police (*capitão do mato*) (Moraes 1986:251). These socially recognised agents, usually free people of colour, were paid for capturing fugitive enslaved workers and returning them to their respective owners (Goulart 1972:69).

With the recognition of enslaved workers as commodities in law, the African people who were previously expropriated from the ownership of their means of subsistence were now *legally* stripped from the conditions of their labour, from the ownership of their persons and from the capacity to commodify their labour-power. Thereby, they were also “freed” from their condition of reproduction, which was the condition of their *direct* enslavement to capital, which takes the form

¹⁷¹ The Spanish law in Saint-Domingue from 1522 foresaw severe punishments to free people who had freed alien enslaved workers and helped them to escape: the first time, they would have their leg cut off; the second time, they would die by hanging, being made responsible for the crimes committed by the fugitive. However, the ordinances promulgated eight years later, in 1528, distinguished already between enslaved people and people with free status. In the case of helping the enslaved workers to escape, free people, if Spanish, were first obliged to pay a certain amount of money and, when not able to pay, were assigned a physical punishment. Cutting a leg or the death penalty were only foreseen as punishments for enslaved people (Silva Junior 2013:49).

of one-time enslavement of the worker to the individual capitalist to be continuously “re-incorporated into capital as its means of valorisation” (Marx 1976:764, 1063).

Whereas jurists have transformed enslaved individuals into chattels, whose subjectivity is recognised in the criminal act, materially, in the process of production, appears the human factor. This human energy is what interests the owners-planters and what is organised and used through the social organisation of enslaved labour. There has been much criticism of the tradition of socio-economic analyses, which has reduced the enslaved workers to their legal condition as a *property/thing*. One part of this criticism, which tries to insist on the subjectivity of enslaved workers and redefine them as agents of their history, obfuscating the broader macro-structural determinations related to the capitalist world economy (see, for example, Chalhoub 1990, Hunold Lara 1998), could be somewhat problematic. Other critics have, however, argued that seeing the enslaved worker in terms of a *property/thing* has obfuscated in perceiving the enslaved worker as an economic/productive category or as a labourer. As put by Ferreira da Silva (2019:90, 179), approaching the enslaved workers only in terms of property and subsequently as a means of production obfuscates the “vital force” of enslaved workers and their “productive capacity” (and hence, the economic character of its expropriation, which is capital-producing), who by transforming means of production and raw materials, produce commodities. Therefore, as *a living labour*, the enslaved labour possesses productive capacity. In other words, it is in the labour process where the enslaved worker is a “subjective agent” (Gorender 1990:36). But before I touch upon that, I will discuss how the dimension of control and discipline of enslaved workers in the production units was perceived and regulated.

4.2.2 Enslaved labour management

It has been observed that regarding the central points of social domination within the productive units – labour exploitation and discipline – the law left it to the owners-planters’ decision (Marquese 2002). The research has commonly shown that the planters were enjoying “private punitive power” within their units of production (Franco [1969] 1997; Zaffaroni et al. [2003] 2011:414), as they could decide the private punishment and the quantity of labour to be appropriated (Marquese 2002:60). As also concluded by Hunold Lara (2000:38) based on her survey of Portuguese legislation, regarding the domination and management of enslaved labour, the “legislation about African slaves and their descendants is especially careful about not interfering in

the power of slaveowners and the right of property in their slaves". However, in other areas, the Portuguese Crown and its bureaucracy penetrated every detailed aspect of the life of its subjects.¹⁷²

Although, in the last instance, as seen above, the state tried to correct abuses of power and eliminate the cruelty of punishment, the owners were left to decide about the central aspects of the domination of enslaved workers. Absence is a form of presence. According to Marquese (2002), public powers interfered in situations when the rebellions of enslaved people (Palmares, Malê Revolt, etc.) reached out of the margins of plantations. However, planters always received these attempts with complaints about the interference in the internal management of plantations. That may demonstrate a particular division of roles between the State and private individuals regarding the control of the enslaved population (Cunha 1985:435). The metropolitan state guaranteed the reproduction of the colonial system of exploitation by supplying enslaved labourers, repressing insurrections and escapes, hence intervening outside of the units of production. The control and discipline of enslaved workers and their exploitation for colonial labour in private domains was the owners-planters' responsibility, as far as the Metropolis guaranteed colonial exploitation through the domination of colonists (Hunold Lara 1988:36; 41).

That is, the state recognised the exclusivity of property, protecting the owners' right to private property and hence also their right to decide over the discipline and punishment, domination and exploitation, within plantations as long as it was applied with moderation. However, attempts to change this Portuguese legal tradition emerged during the reign of D. Pedro II (1667-1706) from 1688 onwards, as various laws regarding the brutal treatment of enslaved workers were passed in the context of resistance in the northeastern sugar-producing areas, which had resulted in the harshening of the treatment and exploitation of enslaved workers¹⁷³ (Marquese and Joly 2008:218). Although the masters started to be legally restricted from applying severe physical punishments, the Provision of January 17 1714, revealed that the planters did not comply with this order and continued employing harsh penalties.

¹⁷² Particularly in the second part of the 18th century, the Crown's attempts to guarantee control over colonial society intensified. This was expressed in the centralisation of administrative and legal bodies. At the same time, measures against vagrants and beggars were also employed, and several measures to control the population were implemented, including the policing of urban zones (Hunold Lara 1988:36-37).

¹⁷³ Royal Charter from February 20th of 1688 was released in the context of conflicts concerning the community of escaped enslaved workers, *Quilombo dos Palmares* (1605-1694). The aim was to forbid the planters to apply excessive and cruel punishments. This document provided the settlers and even the enslaved workers resources to denounce the owners who applied cruel punishments, who were then obliged to sell their enslaved workers to owners who would give them better treatment. This norm entered in conflict with the tradition of "slave administration", which guaranteed "domestic sovereignty" to owners-planters. This was, however, neither the first nor the last attempt to interfere in the administration of enslaved workers (Marquese 2004:65-8). The *Cartas Régias* of February 23rd of 1689, January 11th of 1690, and February 7th of 1698 also aimed to regulate the punishments (Hunold Lara 2000:30)

Various discourses existed about violence as a “relation of domination and exploitation” (Hunold Lara 1988:23). From the perspective of state authorities, slavery as the mode of labour control could not just be sustained by violence and punishment but required *moderation* in treatment, which has been called by Gorender (1990) an official ideology of the state. To comprehend this ideological basis of slavery, many historians have studied the ideas of theologians and priests of the Company of Jesus. Jesuits have been denominated as the rationalisers (Moura [1988] 2019) or, in Gramscian terms, the organic intellectuals or the ideologues of slavery (Vainfas 1986, 1988). The Jesuits never put into question the legitimacy of slavery or the enslavement of African people. In fact, in the enslavement of African people, accepted either in silence or openly, the Jesuits found the possibility to combine the project of Christianisation and the “material needs of modern colonisation”¹⁷⁴ (Vainfas 1988:49-50). Their notion of social control, from Antônio Vieira (1608-1667), André João Antonil (1649-1716), Jorge Benci (1650-1708) until Manoel Ribeiro da Rocha (1687–1745), was synthesised by a formula “bread, punishment and labour”, aiming at making labour organisation in plantations more productive and acceptable to enslaved workers (Vainfas 1986), thus, avoid their flight and fix them to the productive unit. This formula rested on mutual obligation: the obligation of enslaved workers to labour but without excess and the owner’s obligation to guarantee moderate and correct punishment and provide food, clothing, and dwelling. Concomitantly, they condemned super-exploitation in terms of the negligence of basic needs, application of torture and abuse, and preached obedience and subservience of enslaved workers, trying to conciliate masters and enslaved workers. Punishment had to guarantee discipline and be measured, moderate, and reasonable (Gorender 1990; Marquese 1992; Vainfas 1988). Of course, there are particularities in the Jesuits' recipes. Jorge Benci, an Italian Jesuit and author of *Economia Cristã dos Senhores no Governo dos Escravos* (1705), associated labour and maintenance, and labour as an instrument of power. However, he did not give it a commercial

¹⁷⁴ Although Jesuits defended the non-enslavement of native peoples, they did not position themselves against slavery as such. In fact, they justified the enslavement of African people, although they condemned the most violent variants of the treatment of enslaved workers. Vainfas (1986:93-100; 1988) has broadly studied the ideological basis of African slavery, primarily through the ideas of Jesuits who belonged to the Society of Jesus. Among the Brazilian Jesuits, it was common to use medieval-Christian ideas to defend the “natural servitude” of blacks and Africans in the colonial context, according to which slavery is a punishment for the “original sin” (Curse of Ham), but also the road to redemption, salvation and civility. The justifications for that appeared in Antônio Vieira's sermons and in Jorge Benci's works. A more secularised and economic argument was provided by Antonil, to whom “the slaves are the hands and legs of the masters of the engenho”, legitimising slavery because, without enslaved labour, it would be impossible to create wealth in Brazil. Manuel Ribeiro da Rocha offered a legal Christian justification. “Just war”, crime or sale due to a need, would be legal means of enslavement. The discourse of “just war” was usual in the 16th century in the context of the enslavement of native people, and it was written in the Philippine Ordinances in 1603. Justifications of captivity through “just wars” and due to a crime were used widely in the 16th and 17th centuries. Differently from Antique slavery, what characterised New World slavery was that enslaved people were captured “so that they might be sold”, which made it “geared to commercial networks” (Blackburn 1997:10).

meaning, differently from another Italian Jesuit with an adopted name, André João Antonio, to whom labour in the plantation had an economic character aimed at the production to the market (Vainfas 1986:102). In his research of the ideas about the administration of enslaved workers in the units of production, Marquese (1998) shows how Antonil rationalised the social relations of labour by formalising the biblical formulation about mutual obligations between planters-owners and enslaved workers in relatively secular and pragmatic terms when he argues that “one cannot command anybody, without payment, and the payment of slave is his food” (Antonil [1711] 1837). It is the “spirit of contract” that, according to Bosi (1992:161), draws attention to Antonil’s *Cultura e opulência do Brasil*.¹⁷⁵ As owners were made responsible for the maintenance of enslaved labourers, it suggested that the enslaved labour relation involved a primary transaction: “exchange of labour for subsistence”, as it was in the case of the day labourers who exchanged their services for salary (Vainfas 1986:108). Putting the relation of enslaved workers and their owners in terms of a contract would be a euphemism and an enormous mystification of social reality as the “slave labour has its origin in direct or legalised violence” (Gorender 1990), considering that African people were forced into the labour arrangement designed for them, hence it was a violently imposed “contract”. Indeed, the emphasis on owners’ authority and the obedience of the dependent strata implies that the Jesuit ideal saw the mutual obligation functioning in a social setting, which presupposed a rigid hierarchy between the dominators and the dominated (Marquese and Joly 2008).

As sustained by both Clóvis Moura and Ronaldo Vainfas, the ideology of moderation was not and could not be practised by the planters. According to Vainfas (1988), although the ideas and works of Jesuits reverberated in the colonial legal apparatus as an ideological substratum, they did not circulate. They did not influence the consciousness of the planters. The teachings would “bump against” the private ideology of the owners. To Gorender (1980, 1990), the doctrine of Jesuits, which was practised in religious plantations, the minority in the colonial economy, could not be practised in secular plantations since it could not be conciliated with the interests of excessive profit of ley planters. As suggested by Moura ([1988] 2019), the conduct of planters was determined by the fact that the colonial units of production were integrated into the international division of labour

¹⁷⁵ Bosi (1992) sees it as “more modern and . . . more civilised than the blind dominium of regimes of pure favour and servitude. He adds that “to rationalise the behaviours in the sphere of labour serves here the bridge between clumsy and archaic mercantilism and Enlightenment which had barely started to dawn in Europe of seventeen hundred.” He also understands that the labour organisation in *engenhos* is associated by Antonil to profitability (Bosi 1992:161-163). Marquese (1998:94), however, argues that “rentability” (*rentabilidade*) is understood by Antonil and his contemporaries in most cases as the quality of sugar in terms of its consistency of cane, which would depend on the technical skill of the sugar-master. However, once Antonil refers to it regarding profitability, the sugar quality must also have been related to price and profitability.

prevalent in the world economy. This made super-exploitation necessary to guarantee the product and generate the excess surplus value, ensuring the reproduction of the productive enterprise and its distribution between the Crown, metropolitan and extra-metropolitan interests.

Moreover, the logic of total commodification of labour under slavery, according to which enslaved workers could be freely and legitimately bought and sold in the market, hired, mortgaged, and alienated heteronomously at will by their owners, was imposed on the paternalism of “mutual obligation” or “duty.” In that sense, decades before Moura’s and Vainfas’ writings, this apparent dilemma regarding the planters’ social conduct regarding their dependents, whether intermediated by personal relations or economic interests, was resolved by Franco ([1969] 1997, 1976:62), when she argued that mercantile character of the productive enterprise enhanced interpersonal power relations, which were cultivated or destroyed according to the material interests of planters. Nothing limited the arbitrariness of the planters to exploit the labour of their dependents as they saw it necessary.

The propertied classes were inserted in the capitalist world economy and inter-colonial competition in the colonial period, being subordinated to capitalist determinations, which oriented their conduct to profit. As discussed before, insofar as the production system based on the exploitation of enslaved labour becomes oriented to the commodity production to the world market, it results in the harshening of exploitation and the fading away of soft patriarchalism (Marx 1976). The “bourgeois economic thinking – the priority of profit with all its social implications – was inevitable . . . , since it prevailed in international trade, toward which . . . [Brazilian] economy was directed. The constant practice of such trade taught this way of thought to more than a few” (Schwarz, 1992:20). Although in the early phase of capitalism, the commodity had not become a generalised social form, the extent to which it existed was sufficient to exert a “form of social compulsion” on those who were incorporated and subordinated to its network (Schwarz 1992).¹⁷⁶ As discussed in the ‘Synthesis’ section of chapter one, capitalist determination implies that planters who did not take the market rationality in their operations seriously were forced to stop their activities (Castro 1980; Wallerstein 1976:1211). Gorender (1980, 1990) argued that violence was not random, be it in direct violence or concession and persuasion. It was subsumed to the

¹⁷⁶ The commodity is not just a “product” but also “the most fundamental structuring social form of capitalism”. It should also lead us to analyse to which extent commodity and capital define and shape the “goal of production” and its “material form” (Postone 1993:30). Provided that capitalism as a social formation is characterised by the domination of abstract and impersonal forms, such as value and capital, and as enslaved labour was producing commodities to the world market, which was structured by these forms, it should be taken into consideration that also the colonial owner-planters were subordinated under their spell. In that light, Castro (1980) argues that economic factors determine owners-planters’ conduct.

“calculating ethos or economic rationality, as the owners-planters were dealing with a valuable property, which had to guarantee the return for the made investment. Hence, punishment should not be seen just as an element of domination but as a means of discipline and, as such, as an intermediation between compulsory labour and profitable production (Hunold Lara 1988:55).

4.3 Plantation slavery: the colonial laboratory of industrial capitalism

4.3.1 Transition to black African slavery as the value-producing unfree labour

The capital invested in the sugar plantations of Bahia and Pernambuco since the mid-16th century contributed to the integration of these areas into the global value chains. It also marked a qualitative redefinition of an earlier system of unfree labour based on indigenous slavery/barter/wage labour into one based on black racial slavery. Slavery was born from the restricted wage labour system as a harsher form of labour exploitation after the experimentation with indigenous compulsory labour. What is argued here is that plantation slavery did not develop here as a residue, continuation or reemergence of the pre-capitalist or non-capitalist mode of exploitation. Instead, it developed as a value-producing form of labour control within the world system of historical capitalism. Once the production ceases to be aimed at acquiring use-values and it becomes oriented to obtaining a massive amount of exchange values for the world market, the forms become subsumed under capital and “become phases of total capital” (Tomba 2013:149-150).

According to the data, enslaved labour was not the norm in the colonies of the New World, including in Brazil, throughout the history of slavery. That is, it was not just based on the imported African people. Cardoso identifies four phases of dominant labour forms during colonial Brazil. An extractive economy based on a barter system with indigenous peoples prevailed from 1500 until 1532. Indigenous compulsory labour was the dominating labour form between 1532 and 1600. Plantation slavery based on enslaved African workers was a dominant form of labour control during the entire 17th century. The diversification of economic activities, emerging urban economy and manufacturing marked the period between 1700 and 1822. However, slavery remained a dominant mode of labour exploitation (Cardoso 1996:88). At the turn of the 18th century, the enslaved people constituted half of the population in Brazil (Franco 1978), meaning that the proportion of freed and free people was already relatively high. The import of enslaved African labour to Brazil (but also to Cuba and the US) peaked in the 19th century. This century also saw sophisticated mixes of labour forms in the entire Brazilian territory, regionally, and within the same locality and enterprise.

Hence, the first experience of labour appropriation in the plantations of Portuguese America was made with indigenous coerced labour, which, however, proved to be a relatively transitory process, although Indians were occasionally used as wage workers and forced labourers even after the colonial slavery based on the enslaved African people was consolidated. The effective colonisation and establishment of the sugar economy in 1532 created demands for food and labour power, reconfiguring the relationship between the native peoples and the European colonial settlers. The experience with Indian coerced labour created one of the pillars of the labour structure for colonial slavery. If from the world system's perspective, the installation of enslaved-labour-based economic systems in the New World served the so-called primitive accumulation in Western Europe, the expropriation of Indians from their land and the super-exploitation of their labour-power served as a means of primary accumulation of capital for the sugar industry attending the foreign demands. The installation of sugar plantations in its first decades counted on acquiring the means of production at no cost, as the colonists acquired labour or land by plunder without having to spend much initial capital.

Indigenous peoples were integrated into the colonial economy and especially into the Bahian sugar industry in various forms. The Portuguese colonists sought to make the original inhabitants useful as food suppliers or sugar cane workers. Schwartz (1985) has identified three different techniques. The colonists sought to integrate them into the coercive labour arrangement in the form of slavery, which was secured to rebellion nations (Castro 1977:200). Jesuits and other religious orders attempted to create an indigenous peasantry through self-reproduction. This peasantry would constitute a "free," or, instead, not enslaved labour, although forced to work for missionaries, government and colonists based on some rules (Cardoso 1996:87). The third technique was employed by laymen and ecclesiastics, namely, to integrate the indigenous peoples into a wage system.¹⁷⁷ To transform Indians into peasants failed. The relationship between native peoples and Portuguese was primarily marked by the struggle of Jesuits and colonists over the form of labour control.

Interestingly, the plantations in Bahia and Pernambuco experimented with indigenous wage labourers as early as the first half of the 16th century. It involved exchanging labour power for wages, which was paid in kind. This may have derived from the fact that enslaving native peoples was forbidden by law since 1570. Portuguese Crown forbade both the Jesuits and colonists to use indigenous labourers unless they were paid like "free" workers. This, however, did not eliminate the

¹⁷⁷ Schwartz even calls it an attempt to create a "capitalistic self-regulating market" integrated by "individual wage labourers" (Schwartz 1985:35).

attempts to subjugate indigenous peoples under compulsory labour arrangements during the entire colonial period. The so-called “just wars” were a legitimate way to obtain indigenous enslaved labour (Cardoso 1996:89; Schwartz 1985:55). After the adoption of African slavery in principal commodity frontiers, the indigenous coerced labour was displaced to poorer areas of Brazil, such as São Paulo and Amazonas. Later on, whenever the planters lacked the labour-power of enslaved Africans, they returned to indigenous labour (Alencastro 2000; Castro 1977:203).

When it comes to the wage system, indigenous workers were paid much less in comparison to whites, free blacks, or African Brazilians. There are indications that the use of indigenous labourers developed into debt slavery rather than a “free” labour market. The creation of a “free” labour market did not work out due to the availability of cheap labourers in the form of indigenous compulsory labour. Still, Indians were hired as wage labourers, especially in the phase of the transition to black African slavery, as well as later whenever the supply of enslaved African workers was running short. To acquire “free” native workers, some mill owners received permission to establish Indian villages near *engenhos*. In other cases, mill owners could hire *aldeia* Indians under Jesuit tutelage or hire them directly. “Free” Indians were mainly used for auxiliary services or tasks of maintenance, peripheral to sugar production, whereas enslaved African workers were employed in jobs directly related to sugar production. Paid labour was also used. Hence, slavery, *aldeia* Indians, barter and wage relations existed together in Bahian *engenhos*, although their combination varied from place to place (Schwartz 1985:55).

As seen in the last section, São Tome Island was the laboratory of plantation slavery, and there was a certain continuation between the formula found there and the system installed in Portuguese America. Some people from Madeira were among the first enslaved workers on the plantations in Brazil. When Alencastro (2000) suggested that this model was transplanted in Brazil in the 16th century, some decades before, Castro (1977) had indicated that it was recreated in Brazil. Its fusion with the labour system developed during indigenous servitude contributed to its recreation. Thus, the new sugar planters took over the labour system developed under indigenous slavery, fusing it with the one created in the Atlantic islands.

There were certain continuities between the labour structure regarding these two labour regimes. Native people were acquired from different geographical and cultural backgrounds. Moreover, sex distribution among the indigenous labour force was, according to Schwartz (1985), incredibly similar to that found later among enslaved labour of blacks. Typically, sixty per cent of enslaved workers were male, and the tendency was to be a young adult. Also, the percentage of married men was low. However, men were accompanied into slavery by wives, children, siblings,

and other relatives. Women constituted an essential part of the indigenous labour force, although they were considered to lack the necessary skills for sugar making. Hence, they were listed in inventories without occupation. However, the evidence from Engenho Sergipe in the middle of the 16th century shows that indigenous women's agricultural skills were acknowledged. Two-thirds of the fifty enslaved workers were women in separate farms, which supplied the engenho's food needs. This might also have to do with the importance of the role of female agricultural labour in native communal labour organisation and division. As Castro (1977) emphasised, agricultural labour was a female occupation.

The transition to black racial slavery as a new form of value-creating and capital-producing unfree mode of labour control seems to have been motivated, first, by planters' economic needs. Secondly, it also had to do with the specificity of the social control and labour discipline required by the plantation system and the constraints and limitations of using indigenous labour. What strongly counted in planters' preference for African enslaved labour were the legal restrictions on the enslavement of indigenous people, discussed in the last sections. The plantation owners recognised that they could not count on the barter or wage system. The system based on *escambo* functioned when punctual services were demanded, such as felling the trees or collecting *pau-brasil*. For sugar production, the planters-owners were looking for stable and continuously available labour-power (Castro 1977:200). Besides these known factors such as epidemics (smallpox), a high mortality rate caused by forced labour in plantations and rupture of native subsistence economies, the constant resistance and reluctance of indigenous peoples to submit themselves to the plantation labour either as enslaved workers or as formally free wage labourers, made their employment unfeasible for the planters. Indigenous people with no experience with intensive agriculture and originating from an economy centred on the production of use-values and not on the market strongly resisted the imposition of continuous labour (Cardoso 1996:83).

The experimental phase ended with the experiment of "free" or "intermediary" forms of labour, either with native or African people. After this, the work in the fields and mills was predominantly done by African enslaved labour (Cardoso 1996:89; Castro 1977:201). The transition from indigenous compulsory labour to African enslaved labour took place for half a century. Fiscal incentives provided by the Portuguese Crown, sufficient capital accumulation and access to (international) credit permitted the plantation owners to acquire African enslaved labour through transatlantic trade. By the 1580s, plantation labour was already racially mixed, as enslaved African workers constituted one-third of Pernambuco's sugar labour force (Klein and Luna 2010). Although enslaved indigenous workers were cheaper than enslaved African workers, the planters were willing

to pay more. The higher cost of Africans was preferred to the effort to obtain compulsory indigenous labour. At the same time, the enslaved workers were acquired for life, guaranteeing continuous access to labour power, which was not possible with the unstable supply of indigenous labourers. The transport cost to obtain Africans may have been lower than the expenses caused by the escape of indigenous workers (Alencastro 2000:116).

The adoption of enslaved African labour as a dominant form of labour control took place in all the European colonies in the middle of the 17th century. Also, in Barbados, which had become the main sugar frontier, planters initially tried transforming the white indentured servants into “temporary chattels”. Finally, they preferred the security provided by properties for life, as shown by Drapeau (2014). In both cases, in Brazil and the Caribbean, subordination to plantation labour was strongly resisted. Both preferred the market of enslaved labour, which guaranteed an abundant, relatively stable and reliable flow of coerced labour. This transition from one labour regime to another happened in the context of rapid expansion of sugar production and internal growth triggered by growing international sugar prices, a growing European market, and possibly peaceful maritime conditions (Schwartz 1985:66).

Black racial slavery as a labour control became dominant when Brazil became the primary producer of sugar to the world market from the end of the 16th century until the middle of the 17th century. It was a sugar boom, which suggests Brazil’s intense incorporation into the commercial networks and the consolidation of black racial slavery. It has been emphasised by several authors, such as Cardoso (1996) and Gorender (1980), that in the conjuncture of these intense moments of insertion, the exploitation of enslaved workers also became more intense. This means that at moments of the peak of the export economy, the exploitation of enslaved workers became harsher, as the possibility to discard and replace low-cost human labour, energy and lives was facilitated by the regularity of the trade of enslaved labour. This replaceability of enslaved workers speaks powerfully for the de-personalisation of labour relations or against paternalism. Thus, it contradicts the allegation that the condition of enslaved workers compared to wage workers was better, as regarding the former, the owners-planters would be interested in keeping and maintaining the workers. In contrast, the wage workers can be fired at any time and are left to care for their subsistence. This reasoning would make sense if we analysed and compared purely theoretical categories. Some studies show that in the 19th century when the price of enslaved labour soared due to the end of the trade, planters were more careful with the expensive commodity. Otherwise, enslaved workers were highly discardable (Cardoso 1996:86). However, it has also been shown that

the 19th-century patterns of violence and exploitation varied according to the degree of the region's and plantation's integration into commercial production for the world market (Cardoso 2008).

Hence, the subsumption of colonial labour under capital started with the subordination of indigenous peoples. However, indigenous labour employed through slavery, barter, or wage system in kind represented obstacles to becoming a limitless form of value-producing labour. Black African slavery, however, became a de-personalised and permanent form of value-producing unfree labour. The introduction of black African slavery represented a transformation within the capitalist system, which was slowly establishing itself. The introduction of legally guaranteed African slavery was an instance of the intensification of production for the world market. As suggested by the last sections, the planters-owners also tried to deal legally with growing structural contradictions between ever-expanding objectives of labour exploitation launched with the sugar production, on the one hand, and the indigenous captivity protected by law, on the other. Planters could force the removal of the restrictions to the total commodification of labour power and its limitless exploitation. It is expressed in the adoption of the Philippine Ordinances in 1603, which enforced property rights in person. Extra-economic compulsion in the form of *State-Gewalt* and direct violence were essential aspects of the movement of capital. Both enabled fixing and tying the deported African workers down to the relation of production in the plantation, where the form of value-producing labour was imposed on them (Moulier-Boutang 1998). With the transition to black African slavery, the planters obtained what they had not achieved with indigenous slavery.

4.3.2 Subsumption of plantation unfree labour under capital: large-scale cooperation

When São Tomé and Madeira Island were the laboratories of plantation slavery, Brazil and sugar-growing colonies in the Caribbean became the laboratories of industrial production. Sugar plantations anticipated a modern large-scale industry, especially regarding labour organisation (Alencastro 2000; Castro 1977, 1980). As with African slavery, a large-scale system of exploitation was inaugurated (Franco 1997:10).

Castro's (1977:185) research on the sugar *engenho* during the first centuries of its implantation made him argue that concerning the productive organisation established in the New World, the *engenho* operating on enslaved labour already at the end of the 16th century was similar to a "capitalist enterprise"¹⁷⁸. It resembled the agroindustrial capitalist *fazenda*. But not only. In

¹⁷⁸ See also Fogel (1989). Blackburn (1997) has shown how plantation slavery, negating individual control over a large part of the labour process, anticipated many aspects of industrial capitalism.

terms of the labour organisation and process, the plantation resembled more the factory¹⁷⁹ of industrialised England of the 19th century than the labour process in the 16th - 17th-centuries Europe, when the first experiences with cooperatives and manufactures were made and when English, German and French wage labour was expanding. It is worth quoting here the entire passage of Antonio Barros de Castro (1980) about this analogy:

The labour process in the slave mill of the 16th century is similar to a contemporary capitalist big farm (plantation). Besides that, it resembles more the labour process in a big English factory at the beginning of the 19th century than the (labour process) characterising the 16th and 17th centuries in Europe. Consequently, it is legitimate to affirm that, inserted in the material process, the slave constitutes an anticipation of the modern proletarian. On the other hand, the seigneur of the mill is absorbed in the machine, which determines his behaviour, in the function of the “needs”, which have nothing to do with his personal will and needs. . . . In a nutshell, these characteristics indicate that modern slavery has essential features in common with capitalism and that these characteristics belong to its *internal conformation*. Therefore, it is not necessary to resort to an “external” connection – and much less to a simple “market criteria” – to note strong similarities existing between modern slavery and capitalism – proximity which could still be highlighted by remembering that the here targeted productive organisation emerges in association with the early days of capitalism, growing and multiplying while being bound to it. (Pp. 92-93, emphasis in original)¹⁸⁰

This passage refers to capital production and reproduction in the New World’s sugar economy. Part of the capital produced by the *engenho* had to be reinvested so that the *engenho* could reproduce itself. In that sense, Castro (1980) also suggests that the reproduction and expansion of the world economy depended on the reproduction of the forces of production in the colonies so that any surplus could be extracted and transferred. In that sense, he argues that “*engenho* made sugar”. This depended on capital, personified by planter-capitalists, complete control over the labour process in the plantation, making it its own valorising process. What developed was a highly integrated system of production.

¹⁷⁹ That argument has been recurrent among scholars of slavery. In *Sweetness and Power*, Mintz (1986) described the *engenho* as a “factory on the field” and cane-cutting enslaved workers as “proletarians”. At the same time, Schwartz uses the same analogy: “The *engenho* was the forerunner of the modern factory” (1985:154). However, these were already the observers of the time, who had put their leg in the “fire-spitting” mill and been amazed by its machine-like formation, and who had drawn this parallel between the sugar mill and modern factory.

¹⁸⁰ With the affirmation that there are strong similarities between modern slavery and capitalism, Castro (1980) takes a critical stance towards Gorender’s (1980) notion of the “colonial slave mode of production”, which would be distinct from the capitalist mode of production and has its own internal laws of functioning. According to the “mode of production” perspective, capitalist traits can exist there, where it is fully established, that is, being based on the “empire of wage labour”. According to Castro, this kind of procedure would be based on the “abuse of the concept of ‘form’, which permits to discard, as an ‘only formal’ analogy, any characteristic in common between social formations, which are distinguished by basic relations of production. The price of this apparent rigour is . . . a brutal simplification of historical reality, in favour of the taxonomy and to the detriment of proper history” (Castro 1980:93n85).

Antonio Barros de Castro uses the descriptions of Jesuits, who visited Brazil in the middle of the 16th century, held public offices and established themselves there. One of them, Fernão Cardim, in one of his narratives originating from 1583, described the sugar mill (*engenho*) as a “machine and an incredible factory” (*uma machina e fábrica incrível*) (Cardim 1975, cited in Castro 1977:178), referring to its modern industrial nature, most of them moved by waterpower.¹⁸¹ *Engenho* did not mean strictly the sugar mill, where the sugar was processed, but the entire estate, comprised of sugar fields, forests, draught animals, ox carts, barges and all kinds of paraphernalia and equipment.

The state, institutions or private individuals owned engenhos. Sugar estates, which royal funds financed, were later leased to private individuals. There were also *engenhos* belonging to religious institutions, but private individuals owned most. The sugar plantation in Bahia and Pernambuco was partly a continuation of the model used in Madeira islands, in the sense that most of the mills depended on cane farmers (*lavradores de cana*), at least until 1650 when this model started to receive criticism for not being economically efficient enough. Until then, these cane farmers provided the mills with the cane and received in exchange one portion, usually fifty per cent, of the sugar extracted from their cane. They had access to land based on grants, purchases, or leases from the mill owner. Most cane farmers produced the so-called “captive cane” because they paid one-third or one-fourth of half of the cane as land rent. These were usually the contract terms in good times. The contracts of tenure lasted from nine to eighteen years. Through these terms, the mill owners also tried to prevent the cane farmers from accumulating sufficient capital and acquiring mills, which could have had implications on competition and the price of cane (Castro 1977).

McCusker and Menard (2004) have called the system in Bahia and Pernambuco a “dispersed system” in distinction of the “integrated system” developed in Barbados from the middle of the 17th century on, when new colonial areas, including Barbados, were integrated into the world sugar market. The “integrated system” was how capital subsumed plantation labour to increase productivity in the economic conjuncture of falling international sugar prices. When the so-called “integrated system” concentrated under capital both the cultivation and processing, the dispersed system was arguably the solution to capital scarcity and helped distribute investment and risk (Schwartz 1985; 2004). This also resulted in one-third of enslaved workers in Bahia being owned by cane producers, who did not have enough capital to own mills. However, as “proto-planters”

¹⁸¹ Schwartz (1985:43) almost poetically says, “It was a glimpse of the industrial future that seared the vision of the preindustrial men who witnessed it”.

(Cardoso 1996), they enjoyed a social status almost as high as the mill owners. It is also argued that what came to be known as the “dispersed system”, the mill owner's maturation cycle and the cane farmers' maturation cycle had to be synchronised, considering the particularity of the crop. Even the “dispersed system” had to be integrated to create standardised units, common rhythms, and dimensions for subordinating labour (Schwartz 1985).

As highlighted by Schwartz (1992, 1985), even if a significant part depended on external cane supply, there were *engenhos* which integrated both operations - cultivation and sugar processing – meaning that both processes were controlled by one or a group of owners. Sugar plantation itself pushed towards a modern work discipline, as already pointed out. The labour of enslaved workers was used in different processes of sugar making, work on the field¹⁸², and industrial-style processing, both organised according to varying notions of time and rhythm. On the one hand, the time and rhythm of traditional agriculture and, on the other hand, the regulated and disciplined labour regime. Both had to be integrated according to a common concept of time and rhythm that task and gang systems facilitated.

How was the labour process organised to operate the complex system of *engenho*? Labour on the field combined both *gang and task systems*.¹⁸³ Such as holing and field preparation were organised in typical gang labour, as enslaved workers stood in rows. Harvesting (between August and May), which had to provide mills with cane in quantities dictated by the capacity of machines and the rhythm of the processing labour, was organised in a task system/piecework. Piecework to stimulate labour productivity was introduced in cane cutting in Bahian plantations as early as the 17th century. The fieldwork was divided into very clearly distinguished tasks. Although the task system could imply assigning tasks to individual workers, in Bahia, tasks or quotas in harvesting were assigned to groups of two (*foice* – a name derived from the cane knife), which seem to have been organised in bigger gangs of two or four dozen at a time (Koster 1817, cited in Schwartz

¹⁸² According to Schwartz, the work in the sugar field was the “essence of production”, although other aspects of sugar production and slavery have received more attention in research. The field was where the enslaved workers spent most of their time (idem.:139).

¹⁸³ Philip D. Morgan (2018), who has studied the characteristics and origin of gang and task systems, two central labour systems employed in New World plantations, argues that these were two extremes, represented by individual tasking, on the one hand, and large-scale organised ganging, on the other hand. Between these two, there were various hybrids like a “system of collective tasking” and “small, relatively unsupervised gangs or squads” (Morgan 2018:1265). According to Morgan, what was determinant in the choice of the labour system were certain specific staple crop-related requirements. For example, sugar required higher surveillance and supervision as production-related operations had to be synchronised, and therefore, the gang system was preferred. Crops that required more delicate treatment went well with the task system. With time, the gang system developed into a task system. Individual tasking was used in the 19th century. None of these labour systems were used only in New World plantations. The gang system was used in 17th-century England. Various industries employing free labour also incorporated the task system and piecework. Marx considered the task system a “new and more subtle instrument of subordination” and best suited to capitalism because it guaranteed a maximum intensity of labour and reduced the need for supervision (Morgan 2018:1293).

1985:109). The *foice* included one enslaved worker – usually a man – who, equipped with a sickle, cut and cleaned the cane, and another worker – usually a woman - who tied the cane together in bundles (*feixe*). According to Castro (1977), the daily quota was enormous – 350 bundles of twelve canes every (equivalent to 4200 canes).¹⁸⁴ Daily rations were also used to collect firewood, which was necessary for fueling the boiling house. At the mill (at the rollers), tasks were assigned to women's teams. In the boiling house, the tasks or quotas seem to have been assigned to teams, but there was also individual tasking.

Outside of the harvest season, gang labour in the holing, planting and field preparation created a new form of social labour. The overseer integrated the workers into the “collective worker”, which became a particular machine. Through gang labour, enslaved workers' labour became the self-valorising value of capital. Gang labour was a large-scale, organised, and hierarchical organisation of labour, supervisory and value-producing.

How every task was calculated according to the daily capacity of enslaved workers illustrates how fieldwork was part of a “calculated and calculating system”. For example, it was estimated how many cartloads of cane one enslaved worker was able to plant per day, how many square meters they were able to clear per day, how many enslaved workers it would take to weed a *tarefa* or cut a *tarefa* of cane in a day. A day was the primary time unit used in the plantations of the Americas. Tomich's (2004) investigation of the labour process in Martinique shows the same. The daily cost of producing a “*tarefa* of cane” for the mill was calculated based on the daily wage of hired enslaved field workers, which was 120 *réis* (Schwartz 1985:139-145). Not that sugar plantations hired enslaved field workers, but the value of the daily wage of hired enslaved field workers seems to have been a reference to the daily cost of the maintenance and supervision of enslaved workers.

Castro (1977) argues that engenho owners were constantly looking for the most productive use of capital and time, trying to improve the productive methods, suggesting that the centrality of the concrete labour process was the “economy of time” (Postone 1993:332). Through all the detailed management of the mill and fieldwork, the sugar planter was the director of the labour process of the plantation. In that sense, a three-roller mill was an advance in terms of increasing the product in a shorter period. However, this was also one of the few technological innovations during the colonial period, as the technological base remained stable in the subsequent centuries. In the face of the growing sugar market, sugar production had to operate on this technological basis,

¹⁸⁴ Antonil ([1711] 1837) called these quotas “hands.”

expanding based on the changes made in a labour organisation. The expansion also depended on the increasing incorporation of new lands and labour in absolute terms, the construction of new mills, and capital concentration in terms of the appearance of proprietors who owned several mills simultaneously (Castro 1977:182). Among these owners of several mills existed large capital owners who held not only mills but also lands and hundreds of enslaved workers. They had economic and political power. The existence of wealthy capitalists, who operated concomitantly in the sugar trade, in the trade of enslaved workers, and in organising production, was relatively common. It was proof of the combination of merchant and planter and trafficker and governor in the same person (Castro 1977; Schwartz 1985), which makes the distinction between merchant and planter, circulation and production little helpful for the analysis of colonial empirical reality.

Castro and Schwartz show that during the harvest season, tasking in cane cutting was integrated and subordinated to the rhythm and speed of the sugar-making labour process in the *engenho*. The *engenho* created a socially differentiated labour force, combining the gang labour in the field and skilled labour in the mill and purgery. Waterpower-based sugar *engenho* introduced an uninterrupted labour regime – the harvesting period abolished the distinction between day and night. The work was organised in two shifts, night and day, to accompany this continuous rhythm of labour. The division of labour in the mill was complex because every task was simplified and repetitive. All the sugar-making phases constituted a technically interrelated process, which regulated the labour rhythm, giving all tasks a pre-determined duration. As the raw material was transformed into the final product, the enslaved workers were identified by their function – *guindadeira* - or by the work instruments - *caldereiro*. The labour process in the sugar plantation was *not porous*, regarding breaks caused by changes in localisation or work instruments. According to Castro (1977:186-189), this distinguishes it from artisan labour or slow and variable traditional agriculture.

During the expansion of *engenhos*, the workday of enslaved labourers was told to be 18 hours a day from September until March (Castro 1977:188). The limit of the workday was the physical resistance of the workers. The enslaved workers were divided into two six-to-eight-hour shifts to work in the mill at night and on the field during the day. Outside of the harvest season, the enslaved workers woke up at 5 am for morning prayers and started working at six, finishing at six in the evening. Besides the sugar-related tasks, the enslaved workers were also assigned other jobs, such as building fences, constructing, digging ditches, and preparing manioc. These jobs added four to eight hours to the workday (Schwartz 1985:141). To that was also added the time the enslaved workers used to work on their plots of land for self-subsistence.

Contrary to the hegemonic view in the works about Brazilian economic formation that slavery as an irrational use of labour is antithetical to the modern relations of production, Castro shows, based on the examination of the labour process and labour organisation in *engenhos* that behind the relations of domination, overseer's brutality and the whip, there were the "conditions of production", which made the *engenho* similar to the capitalist enterprise. At the same time, he suggestively notes that, whereas the enslaved workers produced sugar, they did not produce it, as the "engenho" did¹⁸⁵ (Castro 1977:189).

The features that made the *engenho* the forerunner of the modern factory have been perfectly synthesised by Schwartz (1985), who, in his monumental work about the sugar plantation in Bahia and Pernambuco made extensive use of Castro's (1977; 1980) research. Both studies show that sugar-making was a complex activity. Its relatively sophisticated division of labour made it look like a modern assembly line: the production process was broken down into different parts and simplified into separate tasks. These specific and distinct tasks were performed by specialised individual workers, who were separated from the final product of their labour. As the *engenho* made sugar, the enslaved proletariat repeated the same task monotonously. The only workers who had a view of the whole process were the sugar masters and main overseers, as they had to follow and arrange it from the beginning to the end. The individually performed set of tasks was articulated with each other by the very process in a way that they were "consecutive in time and simultaneous in space" (Schwartz 1985:154). This process that integrated a large number of workers in the field and the mill, working in shifts, levelled out differences in skill, resulting in a "relatively homogeneous labour product", or what Marx called a "labour of an average social quality" (Marx 1976:304).

Gathering many workers under the same capital created a disciplined body of cooperation. *Engenho* was a *machine*, as Fernão Cardim had suggested. The cooperation of workers in the field and the mill resulted in a "productive power", which was social and collective in the sense that it was "greater than the sum of the individuals immediately involved" (Ferlini 2003:139; Postone 1993:327). Thus, the combination and articulation of ganging and tasking in the field and the mill created a "collective worker" or a "collective working organism", which was a "peculiar machine"

¹⁸⁵ Castro (1977) suggests here that in the sugar mill, it was the technical compulsion, the machine's rhythm, which made workers work. The *engenho* itself became the subject, whereas the enslaved workers became the appendage of the machine as if the machine was using the worker.

(Marx 1976:481).¹⁸⁶ This “collective power of labour” becomes the “productive power” of capital, which appears as a “free gift” to capital in the sense that capital does not have to pay for it (Marx 1976:328).¹⁸⁷ The capital was trying to obtain higher profits through collective labour, as it diminished the labour time necessary for producing commodities on a much larger scale and more extensive space than in the Mediterranean and Atlantic islands. Collective labour also saved labour through the continuity of the articulated tasks and imposition of the general rhythm of production (Ferlini 2003:140). Thus, in the colonial period, the labour of enslaved workers was already demanded as a specific form of collective labour (Gama 1983:91-92). This kind of labour organisation in the manufacture-like production in the *engenho* transforms the enslaved worker into “the fragment of himself” (Marx 1976:482), as it occurs with the industrial proletariat first in the manufacture and later intensified in large industry. Nevertheless, even if this collective power was created by capital, it was the violent compulsion derived from the direct and one-time enslavement of workers to planters-owners, the personifications of capital, which subordinated the labour of enslaved workers to this power.

When capitalists buy labour-power, they pay for the individual commodity, but they have in view combined labour-power. They are purchasing the enslaved worker, as they are interested in obtaining *human energy*, a particular type of energy that could be concentrated and used intensely by means of “social organisation of slave labour” (Fernandes 1976:16).

This kind of “collective worker” created by combined labour, as discussed above, was the source of *absolute surplus value*¹⁸⁸ in the colonial economy, besides other sources such as the extension of the workday in association with the coercive control of labour-power and reducing the standard of subsistence (Fernandes 1976:20-22). In that sense, productivity refers to a technical process and a combination of labour. This view clashes with a widespread view regarding slavery as an irrational labour regime and an obstacle to capital. This view is hegemonic in classical Brazilian

¹⁸⁶ To Marx (1976:481), simple cooperation and manufacture produced a “collective working organism” comprising multiple individual specialised workers. The combination of these different labourers resulted in a productive power, the “productive power of capital”. Besides subjecting the individual workers to the “discipline and command of capital”, the manufacture also created a “hierarchical structure amongst the workers themselves,” which will be seen in the next section of the chapter in the context of the sugar plantation. The observers of labour organisation in the plantations of Bahia in the 17th century, mainly Jesuits, like Antonil ([1711] 1837:31), conceived plantation as a human organism: “the slaves were the hands and feet of the seigneur of the *engenho*”, the seigneur was the head, and the overseers were the arms. It is argued that Antonil’s metaphor was either influenced by Aristoteles’s concept of property as the physical extension of the seigneur (Vainfas 1986:98) or derived from the Christian medieval tradition (Marquese 1998:62). However, Marx also made use of this biological metaphor to describe the modern capitalism since co-operation and manufacture until large industry, thinking it in terms of “productive powers”.

¹⁸⁷ According to Postone (1993), this “free gift” is measured regarding material wealth.

¹⁸⁸ Fernandes (1976:20-22) argues that enslaved workers produced “absolute surplus value”. However, capitalist production requires an appearance of a historical category called “relative surplus value” in Marxist terms.

works about slavery and capitalism and is best articulated by Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1962). According to him, employing enslaved labour in tasks beyond production *strictu sensu* was the sign of the dispersal of capital, hence, the expression of irrationality.¹⁸⁹ The only aim was to keep the enslaved worker occupied, which created a pure “illusion of work” for the planter. Hence, in the system of slavery, the most immediate interest was the control of workers, not an intent to increase productivity but to keep the authority over the workers. The capitalist ethos, that is, “production for production”, is in slavery substituted by “production for slavery”, or slavery existed for the “sake of slavery” (Cardoso 1962).

Cardoso (1962) did not perceive rationality in the enslaved labour organisation. Florestan Fernandes (1976) shows that the labour combination had a structural and dynamic character, illuminating the meaning of the extended working day and especially the increased productivity through cooperation. Moreover, the coercive control of violence was not used only to intensify the working day or to repress. It derived from the fact that the “combined labour entailed a discipline, which eliminated from violence and brute force the characteristic of being an end in itself” (Fernandes 1976:21). Fernandes, hence, argues that extending and intensifying the working day was not an end in itself, just to preserve slavery or the authority. On the contrary, this organisation constituted a rationality to increase productivity for accumulation.

This “*collective working organism*”, as discussed above, is a “*form of existence of capital*” (Marx 1976:481), and the enslaved worker who was subsumed to the “collective worker” performed *capital- and value-producing* labour. The description of the labour process and organisation in the *engenhos* of Bahia and Pernambuco demonstrates the process of capital production and value creation in colonies. Before I discuss the social, legal and cultural hierarchies within this “collective working organism”, I will stop on another element from the above-quoted passage of Castro (1980). This element made the *engenho* a modern capitalist enterprise, namely the economic determinations of the will of the planters.

Differently from Cardoso (1962), Castro (1980) and Fernandes (1976) look behind the individual will of planters. In the capitalist mode of production, what determines the need for labour is the capitalist’s objective to exploit labour to produce value and surplus value and ensure the expanded reproduction of capital. However, what is the aim of colonial planters regarding their enslaved workers? Castro answers that the objective is to appropriate labour, in quantity, quality,

¹⁸⁹ Cardoso (idem.) based his argument on Weber’s understanding of slavery as an irrationality opposed to capitalist rationality.

specification, and intensity, “which was conditioned by the productive apparatus of their property, respecting, naturally, some norms regarding the “exhaustion” of the slave” (Castro 1980:94).

Castro does not relate the “meaning of colonisation” with European commercial interests as Prado Jr. did or with a primitive accumulation of capital in Europe, as Novais did. If there is any meaning at all, to Antonio Barros de Castro (1980), the “meaning of colonisation” thesis is valid insofar as it implies an installation of the colonial system. However, the posterior development is no longer explained by it since the colonial society will acquire an internal dynamic and reproduce itself. Once the “complex productive apparatus” in the New World has been installed, the new greater purpose would be internal: to attend to the needs of the socio-economic structure and guarantee its *reproduction*.¹⁹⁰ According to Castro (1980), the “colonial project” regarding commodity production persists, but the socio-economic structure also starts constraining the political and merchant interests.

In this frame, the conduct of the planter, the owner of the *engenho* in the New World, was subordinated to the “needs”, which did not have to do with their personal desires, will or mentalities, as it has been expected to argue. Among many of the aspects that distinguish modern slavery from Antique slavery, Castro (1980) affirms that in the former, the planters, differently from the owner of enslaved workers in the latter, were subsumed to the economic determinations. I find it essential to point this out because the planters in the above-mentioned work of Cardoso (1962) were regarded as irrational agents determined by the patrimonial culture. The planters could maintain their patriarchal conduct, but they had to reproduce the *engenho* according to economic rationality to stay in competition, which imprinted other determinations on their behaviour. Although the mill owner is the director of the labour process, the mill cannot be governed by the owners' will. Instead, the anthropomorphised mill started dictating the actions of the planter (Castro 1980:87).

Castro's contribution is to show that the relations of production based on exploiting enslaved workers are not more or less rational than any other labour regime whose aim is profit creation in the market. Moreover, this labour regime is not only associated with capital through the world market but is intrinsic to the capitalist mode of production. However, Castro's (1980) interpretation has some shortcomings. He mentions that the productive enterprise installed in the colony was integrated into the international labour division emerging in the 16th century (Wallerstein 1974). Nevertheless, by affirming that after the installation of the productive system, its meaning was purely internal, that is, its own reproduction, he does not elaborate on how the colonial enterprise

¹⁹⁰ The “external-internal” divide was central to the Brazilian debate regarding the national socio-economic formation.

and local labour regimes continued being shaped by the value relations in the world economy. He affirms that “the productive system worked, reproduced and transformed by enslaved workers, is forged in the systematic production of commodities, and is submitted to the determinations derived from that, including those which derive from the evolution-with-transformation of capitalism” (Castro 1980:105).

Castro’s (1980) affirmation that the enslaved worker was the anticipation of modern proletarian sheds light on the interconnection between these two types of labourers in two different temporalities and spaces, diachronically. However, what lacks is an understanding of the synchronic co-existence of these two categories of proletarians as contemporary in the same temporality and as part of the same general social organisation of labour, interconnected within the same space of the world economic system,

Slavery and the economic regime are not here subordinated to the same determinations, capital and profit, which creates a relation of exteriority in the sense that slavery has an internal determination and the productive enterprise an external one. As suggested at the beginning of this chapter, it is more effective to understand slavery as part of the unit of contradiction, a unit, in this case, being the capitalist world system, as it would help to overcome the relation of exteriority and segmentation derived from that.

Unlike the actions of planters, the conduct of enslaved workers is not determined by socio-economic mechanisms, that is, by the productive regime, although in “industrial slavery” (Marx 1973), the enslaved proletarian appears as an anticipation of the modern proletarian. Differently from wage labourers, who in constituted capitalism are integrated into the relations of domination, defined by “dull economic compulsion”, the enslaved workers adjust to the “productive apparatus” by violence and persuasion (Castro 1980:93-94). Indeed, enslaved workers were not directly dependent on markets or wages for their subsistence. However, one cannot wholly agree with this affirmation for several reasons. First, instead of comparing enslaved proletarians and wage proletarians as concrete historical categories, Castro (1980) compares them here as abstract and theoretical categories. Secondly, the economic determinations do not have to act on the enslaved

workers directly but indirectly.¹⁹¹ Thirdly, the wage relation in constituted capitalism does not exclude extra-economic violence, which I tried to elaborate on based on specialised secondary literature in the second chapter regarding the importance of direct (legal, interpersonal) and indirect (economic) violence. This means that extra-economic coercion in the form of expropriation is a continuous feature of capitalism.

As already mentioned above, some authors (Drapeau 2014; Linden and Roth 2014) have applied Marx's (1976) notion of "formal subsumption of labour under capital" when conceptualising the subsumption of plantation unfree labour under capital, which I find problematic. As has been discussed already in the first chapter, "formal subsumption," the main characteristics of the "manufacturing period" of capitalism in the British case, implies that capital appropriates and subsumes various existing labour processes from earlier periods, as it finds them, and transforms them in "instrument[s] of the valorisation process," that is, to create surplus value and valorise itself (Marx 1976:1009, 1012, 1017). The subsumption is *formal* because capital has not yet assumed direct control over the labour process.

Based on the discussion carried out in previous pages, one cannot maintain that the labour subsumption in colonial Brazil took the form of subsumption of "previous social relations", which *already* relied on forced labour and enslavement and were put at the service of value creation, as sustained by Drapeau (2014:86) regarding Barbados. In colonial Brazil, the capital found an indigenous communal organisation. Capital did not subsume labour "as it found it", as it happened in Europe, maintaining previous forms of the labour process and transforming labour gradually into wage labour. Instead, the installation of large-scale sugar enterprises in Portuguese colonies introduced a new form of economic exploitation and labour organisation. This implied a transition from the production of use-values to the production of exchange-values, without the capital and labour relation assuming the *free* exchange of objectified labour for living labour. It implied an appropriation of indigenous and African peoples from their lands and subsuming their labour under

¹⁹¹ According to Clegg (2020), indirect economic determination also shaped enslaved worker's reproduction. First, the fluctuation of the price of enslaved workers in the unfree labour market or the price of commodities in the world market can influence the life chances of enslaved workers. Second, disciplinary violence has limitations, which is why other kinds of incentives, including monetary, were used to influence enslaved workers' productivity. In some way, this monetary incentive reflected the wage of enslaved labour. Third, if the enslaved workers valued their own lives and welfare, they had to follow the rules and orders given by those whose conduct was constrained by economic structures conditioning the markets. Hence, indirectly, these were also placed on enslaved workers. Fourth, greater physical violence indeed distinguishes enslaved workers from wage labourers. However, economic forms of coercion also worked on enslaved workers: the unproductive enslaved workers risked not only punishment but also the chance of being sold. Thus, the reproduction rules of enslaved workers were also subordinate to economic determinations, as those who were not complying with the norms of productivity could not have been guaranteed to reproduce themselves and their families (Clegg 2020:93n55). Furthermore, violence cannot be analysed in a vacuum. Finally, it was a way to subsume the enslaved labour to the rhythm dictated by the world market (Tomba 2013c).

new plantation labour, being refined along the way. With African slavery as the primary form of labour control to produce sugar commodities, labour exploitation became much harsher as the sugar-producing regions were incorporated into the international division of labour. Thus, the plantation economy cannot be defined by “formal subsumption” because capital assumed direct control over the labour process created during colonisation. Furthermore, it also contained a technical element, which was precisely what motivated Castro (1980) to compare the *engenho* with large-scale industry, with the capitalist enterprise from the beginning of the 19th century. What it shared, however, with formal subsumption of the period of manufacture, is that the form of labour and land exploitation took place in absolute terms, that is, by the extraction of absolute surplus value, which was obtained by labour combination (as discussed above), the extension of the length of the working day, the intensity of labour, as well as extensive use of labour and land. Production of surplus value does not just aim at producing commodities for sale (Tomba 2013c) but also to reproduce the productive enterprise.

In the spirit of “formal subsumption”, asserts Banaji that the incorporation of “backward countries” as colonies in the world economy was based on a “process of the mediation of capitalist (value-producing) relations of productions by archaic (“pre-capitalist”) forms of subjugation of labour, which assumed historically unprecedented dimension” (Banaji 2011:62). The point here is, however, that in Brazil the so-called “archaic labour forms” were created with the colonisation, when the new socio-economic system in colony was forged. It was incorporated into the value relations of the world economy in the 16th century, which was capitalist in its character. In other words, “[t]he capitalist mode of production produced slavery and new forms of slavery, which were not residues of previous epochs, but a genuine product of capitalist modernity” (Tomba 2013b:151). If a qualitative shift of labour regimes existed in the colonial economy and society, it was a shift from an extractive economy based on indigenous labour regimes to plantation forced labour. The latter was first experimented with indigenous compulsory labour, which was transformed gradually into black racial slavery based on the labour of enslaved Africans.

4.3.3 Slavery regimes

Labour division

The way gang labour and task system in the field and the mill created a “collective worker” based on the technical articulation of tasks had a disciplinary and value-creating character. Common

labour brought together free and enslaved workers as they toiled side by side in the factory and on the field, as they were integrated into common labour organisation and dynamics and were immersed in alike rustic and poor living conditions (Franco [1969]1997:213). Despite this combined effect of labour, plantations' labour force was socially differentiated, meaning that social organisation of labour articulated varied forms, although slavery remained a dominant mode of labour control. The *engenho* regime was not divided only skill- and occupation-wise but also racially, ethnically and as well as in terms of legal status and gender, which, in turn, contributed to occupational and social stratification but also served as a way to reinforce daily production and appropriation of the product. Therefore, I will understand the labour division in racial, gender, occupational and legal status terms in the plantation as a disciplinary and value-extracting practice of control, which should be conceptualised as a differentiated “local expression of a world-historical process” of value production (McMichael 1991:324).¹⁹²

Schwartz denominates the employment of a particular labour mix – enslaved labour, coerced wage labour, free labour combined with colour and gender hierarchies – within one region, sector, local and enterprise, involving different degrees of coercion, a “slavery regime” (Schwartz 1992:39). The existence of the diversity of “slavery regimes” permits to argue that slavery did not have a uniform character as “lower form of labour.” Every “slavery regime” corresponded to different labour demands and work requirements depending on the economic activity, the size of the production unit and available technology. Hence, the structure and composition of labour-force, in other words also the form of the social organisation of labour, was determined by peculiarities of the type of production, how they attended to the planter's goal to appropriate labour and how they responded to the demands for tropical commodities in the world economy. It is necessary to stress that the absolute right to property guaranteed by law to the owners of enslaved workers says little about how labour was appropriated from the enslaved workers in a desired quantity and quality. As shown in the last section, it included a sophisticated orchestration of the field and factory labour to obtain the product.

“Slavery regimes” also varied regionally (Cardoso 2008), within the same economic sector as well as from plantation to plantation, influenced by the demand for tropical products imposed by the world market or often depending on whether the plantation was administered by religious orders or by lay property owners, or whether it was situated in the coastal areas or inland, where colonial power was scarcely present (Cardoso 1996:90). The degree of labour diversity which could liberate

¹⁹² According to McMichael (idem.), “local commodity production relations” should be understood as “local expressions of a world-historical process.”

the free people from manual and heavy tasks depended on the size and profitability of the unit of production (Franco 1997:216). The smaller the unit, the less differentiated the tasks (Klein and Luna 2010). The slavery regime also changed over time. Also, various degrees of coercion existed. Although physical violence and its constant threat were always dominant and present, the demands of sugar production created a need for other methods of appropriating labour, including skilled labour. According to Schwartz, this demonstrates a high level of flexibility in slavery (Schwartz 1985:131).

In this section, I will focus on how the internal social, economic and legal hierarchies of the slavery regime played a role in the appropriation of the product. It will be illustrated mainly based on Stuart Schwartz's (1985)¹⁹³ and Brazilian researchers' extensive research on the sugar economy in northeast Brazil during the colonial period. As has been shown, since the beginning, plantation labour has been relatively mixed. Although at the beginning of the implantation of the sugar economy in the lands of Brazil, the white immigrant Portuguese was the propertied strata and occupied most of the managerial and skilled positions of the *engenho*, it was common to have in the middle of the sixteenth century enslaved African workers in skilled positions. The first Africans were acquired in the 1540s. In 1548, at the *Engenho São Jorge* in Bahia, the sugar master and the purger and kettleman were Africans, as they were known mainly for their sugar-making skills from the Atlantic islands and agricultural and iron-making culture in West Africa. Hence, the first imported enslaved Africans were not only field hands, but many also had skill and experience in sugar production (Luna and Klein 2010). Schwartz shows that in 1591, when the transition from indigenous labour to African enslaved labour occurred, 37 per cent of *Engenho Sergipe's* workforce comprised Africans and Afro-Brazilians. By 1638, the workforce was wholly African and Afro-Brazilian (Schwartz 1985, 2004:188). In the 16th century, Portuguese colonisers had envisioned a labour organisation model according to which whites occupied the positions of skill and management and black enslaved workers laboured in the field, substituting indigenous workers, who occupied the auxiliary jobs. In reality, the slavery regimes turned out to be much messier and mixed.

According to Schwartz, in the context of the expansion of the sugar economy, the main challenge was to obtain skilled labour power. Portuguese gradually turned from indigenous labour to black Africans to acquire skilled labour, and this was a tendency in all the plantation systems of

¹⁹³ For his descriptions of the labour organisation in Bahian *engenhos*, *Engenho Santana* and *Engenho Sergipe*, Schwartz (1985) compares the inventories made in Bahian *engenhos* with the accounts of an Italian Jesuit André João Antonil, who stayed in Bahian Captaincy from 1681 until he died in 1716.

the New World. Several reasons have been considered to explain this transition. They have to do with economic justification, such as productivity and racial prejudices. Planters saw advantages in the use of enslaved African workers rather than free or enslaved indigenous people. How one form was valued over the other can be observed in their market prices as well as in the differences in wages paid to indigenous labourers in comparison to whites, free blacks, and Afro-Brazilians (Schwartz 1985:70). The anti-enslavement laws regarding the native peoples also played a significant role, as they were curbing constant and regular access to labour-power. Thus, the transition to the labour of Africans and their descendants involved another change, namely, the one from a skilled workforce, which had primarily consisted of free and white workers, to sugar-making specialists and artisans who were either enslaved workers or free people of colour (Schwartz 1985:313-37, 2004:189).

Based on the inventories made in fifty *engenhos* and cane farms of Recôncavo between 1713 and 1826, there was already a complex mix of free/unfree and paid/unpaid labour and a racial and gender division. The inventories listed eighty different occupations or skills for 1900 enslaved workers. Around three per cent of enslaved workers exercised several occupations. Field hands were always the majority and constituted over half (even 2/3) of the enslaved workers listed with occupations. This pattern characterised the plantation monoculture production until the end of slavery, as confirmed by the inventories of the labour force in the *engenhos* of Recôncavo in 1870-1887, when fieldhands constituted eighty per cent of the enslaved workers (Fraga Filho 2006). Regarding the sexual division of labour, although men in the fields worked side by side with women, enslaved male workers aged 14 to 50 composed most of the field hands. Indeed, until the middle of the 19th century, there was a strong gender imbalance among enslaved workers in *engenhos*. It was common to have two males for one woman¹⁹⁴ (Schwartz 1985:149).

As these inventories show, the world of the dark proletariat was the work in the fields, where most enslaved workers spent most of their time. Enslaved domestic workers, artisans and a few managers made up only one-fifth of enslaved labour. The enslaved workers employed in *fábrica* were about ten per cent of the total labour force, but they were highly varied, as much as the

¹⁹⁴ This gender balance also seems to oscillate together with the rise and fall of the slave trade and with the oscillations in the world market of sugar. When, during the 18th century, the plantation labour force became more balanced in terms of gender, the male coefficient increased again when sugar production faced an expansion at the end of the 18th century after the Haitian Revolution, recovering its old pattern. However, it fell again in the second half of the 19th century, when the Northeast started to lose its young enslaved males to the growing coffee industry in the southeast. In 1887, in some mills of Recôncavo, the number of women was higher than that of men. In the middle of the 19th century, the coffee plantations in the southeast reproduced the same gender imbalance as it had existed in the sugar mills, having, on average, from two to three males for one woman. It was precisely at that time that the manuals about the administration of enslaved workers written by planters suggested stimulating stable unions to create a vigorous and disciplined labour force (Marquese 2010).

enslaved domestic workers in terms of their price and the artisans (Schwartz 185:151). Field hands were almost always enslaved workers, usually black and predominantly African but also Brazilian-born. In the harvest season, free rural poor were also hired for meagre remuneration (Schwartz 1985:313).

Hence, the enslaved workers co-existed in the same space and did the same tasks as free and freed workers, particularly in intermediate technical and artisanal positions and managerial functions. Besides being occupied by free, freedmen/women and enslaved workers, this stratum was also racially mixed, including white, brown, and black workers. However, considerable economic inequalities and hierarchy characterised this group of skilled workers.

The manufacturing process - the operations of sugar-making in the grinding mill, boiling house and purging of sugar – produced a stratum of unskilled as well as skilled and semi-skilled workers who were watched by overseers and slavedrivers (Ferlini 2003:182). Both were either free persons or enslaved people. As a key function in the engenho, the sugar master directed all the operations. When freeman (the inventories show no mention of women occupying this position), he was the highest-paid employee after the administrator/overseer. He had to watch the production and prepare through training, vigilance and castigation workers who would labour for planters and cane farmers (Ferlini 2003:192). There were moments when the sugar master was the only free white man. Over time, black and *pardo*, free or enslaved workers, replaced the wage labourers as sugar masters. The sugar master had an assistant, who had an assistant at night shifts, who also received a small pay. Some skilled positions, such as kettleman, were held by freemen but later by enslaved workers. Antonil's exposition and the inventories of the Sergipe Engenho show that when enslaved workers were labouring in boiling houses, they were usually Brazilian-born, criollos or mixed race, who had learned the skill at an early age (Antonil 1965, cited in Schwartz 1985:145). This shows that part of the rationalisation of labour management was educating enslaved workers early to occupy artisan and overseer positions. The adapted and trained enslaved workers called "ladinos" (Brazilian-born and Portuguese-speaking), were more valuable than *boçais* (the imported enslaved Africans), which was represented in the higher purchase price, and they were usually chosen for occupations that required more skill (Antonil 1966, cited in Castro 1977: 203; Cardoso 1996), which, as already mentioned, suggests that enslaved workers, as the subordinated plantation workers, were fabricated within the production process itself (Ferlini 2003:202). At the same time, ladinos were also more rebellious, contesting slavery: "good worker[s], but bad slave[s]" (Ferlini 2003:200).

Schwartz shows that during the 17th century, at the Engenho Sergipe, the sugar-making specialists, overseers, and the managers of enslaved workers were employed based on an annual contract and received a substantial salary (*soldada*). Sometimes payments were made in kind, e.g., in food or lodging, which was then discounted from the wages in money. Payment in kind was probably standard because of the lack of currency in the colony. *Soldada* employees usually needed permission to work in other plantations during the *safra*, showing that the mobility of the wage labourers was controlled at that time. However, working in other plantations was not uncommon (Schwartz 1985:315).

Another category of wage workers should also be mentioned here, namely *engenho* artisans, such as blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, shipwrights, boat caulkers, and coppersmiths. They worked on a daily or piecework basis and received daily wages (*jornal*). Their labour was essential during the harvest, although not directly related to the field or *fábrica* work. Another paid worker category was unskilled labour, who offered short-term and occasional services. They were the products of the plantation system, which had created a category of free but not proletarianised workers. This group had been present in the colony since the establishment of the sugar economy and constituted the occasional labour pool for the plantation. They were involved in itinerant agriculture and were, to different degrees, subordinated to the influence of the big property, either as employed directly or living at its margins (Franco [1969] 1997; Gorender 1980). Usually, their services consisted of carrying out tasks that were considered improper or too dangerous to enslaved workers. They were the lowest-paid workers and, together with the subsistence farmers, constituted the rural poor. By the end of the 18th century, they were listed as people without occupation, residing on or around the plantations. They comprised freedmen and freedwomen of colour, resulting from miscegenation and manumissions (Franco [1969] 1997; Schwartz 1985:317).¹⁹⁵ However, wage workers never substituted the enslaved workers completely in skilled jobs, as a significant number of skilled enslaved labourers were used in these occupations, meaning that in different proportions varying over time, these labourers of different juridical statuses were working side by side.

The level and methods of payments and one's positioning in the plantation labour division were determined by skill, legal status, and racial hierarchies. At the beginning of the 17th century,

¹⁹⁵ This group of free rural poor, "without the proper place or reason to be" in Brazilian society, was denominated by Franco (*idem.*) as *ralé*. They did not own the property of the land where they were residing; hence, they lived in constant vulnerability. Neither were they directly "necessary" for the commercial production. They offered occasional services to the plantation owner, with whom they kept paternalistic dependency relations. As both Schwartz and Franco demonstrate, this group of people was present in colonial society since the inception of the sugar economy.

Engenho Sergipe's bookkeeping used racial designations for coloured workers to justify the wage rate for performed labour. The same happened also in the artisan labour market. Later, it seems to have disappeared, suggesting that most of the workforce was mixed-race and black. Schwartz also argues that the skill and experience of mixed-race persons often tended to suppress ascriptive denomination. However, certain race thinking had been present since the beginning of the colonisation, as the initial labour hierarchy imagined by the Portuguese consisted of free white managers and skilled labour, black and African field labour and compulsory indigenous workers in auxiliary posts.

Although such racial and colour designations diminished, they did not do away with the continuing patterns of discrimination based on colour. Skilled mixed-race workers earned less than white skilled workers for the same service, often more than fifty per cent less. Indigenous artisans earned less than blacks, and blacks less than whites for the same service. By the end of the 17th century, freed and free people of colour had become an integral part of the workforce, working together in the same space with enslaved artisans on whom the plantation depended at that time. By the end of the 18th century, the *criollo* workforce was already significant (Schwartz 1985:321-324).

The changing social structure in productive units was related to structural and conjunctural changes in the world economy. Since the 1650s, new slavery-based sugar economies in the Caribbean islands, British and French Antilles, were integrated into the capitalist world economy, contributing to Europe's declining sugar prices. This, in turn, triggered a crisis in the Brazilian sugar economy, which was, however, overcome in 1690 with the increasing sugar prices in the context of European colonial wars (Ferlini 2003:113-116). The changes in the world economy provoked a response from the planters regarding rearranging the composition of local labour regimes in Bahian sugar plantations (Schwartz 1985:327). First, it can be traced to the increasing wages (principally daily wages between 1622 and 1700), which coincided with the falling real wages and, thus, purchasing power due to the rise of food prices. Therefore, in the context of falling sugar prices and hardships for the sugar economy, planters transferred part of their decline in profits to their workers. A loss of real income also explains why the white immigrant workers left the salaried specialist occupations, which were then occupied by freedmen of colour, which might have contributed to the decline of wages (Schwartz 1985:327).

Second, between the beginning of the 17th and the 18th century, the number of paid employees was cut in half, and their diversity declined at Engenho Sergipe. Several artisan positions, even important technical positions (e.g., purger) in the mill, had disappeared from inventories, which suggests that they were taken over by skilled or semi-skilled enslaved labourers.

Schwartz related these changes to the impetus of engenho administrators to reduce annual costs (Schwartz 1985:328). Vera Ferlini (2003) explains the disappearance of artisanal functions and the deterioration of wages by the increasing social disqualification of labour in colonial society. However, she adds other critical explanatory elements—the manufacturing labour division. The need for artisans was reduced insofar as the functions were simplified, as they were increasingly appropriated by manufacturing and subdivided into tasks executed by less qualified workers (Ferlini 2003:199). To specific labour categories, as more skilled enslaved workers, it meant a light social ascension; to artisans, it meant joining the rows of rural poor.

Third, the social composition of the *engenho* labour force changed as the presence of free and freed blacks and *pardos*, as well as enslaved workers as artisans, managers, and specialists, increased. In 1580, it was observed in the Engenho Sergipe accounts that twenty whites were considered necessary for the mill's operation; by the 17th century, enslaved workers were increasingly occupying the specialist and managerial positions alongside the growing number of free persons of colour. In some *engenhos* (e.g., *Engenho Santana*) all the sugar workers were black. In 1705, the most prestigious job, that of sugar master, was occupied by the enslaved person. By the 18th century, approximately twenty per cent of the engenho enslaved *labourers* were artisan and *fábrica* workers. Emerging opportunities for enslaved persons and freedmen of colour to occupy specialist positions seem to have been related to the need to reduce costs. However, whether there were effects on quality and productivity is unclear. This mobility did not eliminate racist prejudice or discrimination, however. For example, in the moments of difficulties for the Brazilian sugar industry in the world market, the planters blamed the “rudeness” and ignorance of enslaved workers and coloured freedmen/freedwomen in specialist positions for the loss of Brazilian position in the international sugar market, although at some point making these internal changes were considered economically advantageous, too (Schwartz 1985:329-330). The advocates of scientific methods and innovations saw these being incompatible with the capacities of *pardos* and blacks in the skilled jobs of sugar-making. These accusations referred to racial prejudice because the Caribbean colonies, which had occupied the Brazilian position in the world economy, were also operating with enslaved labour.¹⁹⁶ New technological developments also required and imposed an accelerated rhythm and intensified exploitation of labour, a context in which any kind of enjoyment of leisure through dancing and singing started to be demonised.

¹⁹⁶ See McCusker and Menard (2004) for the innovations employed in the Barbadian sugar industry under British colonisation to become the world's leading producer. Regarding the compatibility of technological changes in Cuban sugar mills and enslaved labour, see Tomich (2004).

From the viewpoint of planters' responses to the world economy's structural transformations, their primary resource seems to have been the reconfiguration of the labour composition in slavery regimes. This also confirms Fernandes's (1976) affirmation that the adjustment in the "combination of labour" in terms of tasks, skill, gender, skin colour, place of birth, and legal status was the means of appropriating surplus value.¹⁹⁷

All in all, the census of 1788 of six Bahian parishes shows that by the end of the 18th century, a tripartite social hierarchy of *engenho* had emerged: the free whites occupied the positions of owners and administrators, the skilled positions were occupied by mixed-race enslaved, free and freed persons and the field hands were mainly Africans and blacks. The place of birth, colour, and gender (as will be seen below) defined the placement of enslaved workers in the occupational order (Schwartz 1985:334-335). Mixed-race enslaved workers were favoured in acquiring skills or holding positions in the plantation house. Although they constituted only six per cent of enslaved people in the 18th century, they occupied more than twenty per cent of the managerial, artisanal, and household positions. However, if only the skilled labour in the *engenhos* is considered, Brazilian-born blacks (*criollos*) were slightly more represented than black Africans. They had the same distribution of occupations as Africans, only with a slight advantage in becoming enslaved domestic workers (Schwartz 1985:152).

However, by the end of the nineteenth century, the ethnic composition in Recôncavo mill seems to have changed again. The inventories of the enslaved population show that only 10.2 per cent were Africans, and mixed-race persons constituted 65.3 per cent of the labour force. It shows that the mills operated predominantly with Brazilian-born labourers at that time. Nevertheless, half of the enslaved population was still constituted in 1870-1887 by the labourers between 11 and 40 years old (Fraga 2006:34).

¹⁹⁷ This conclusion differs from the argument of Marquese (1997) that the planters were not interested in increasing productivity, as until the 18th century, they "were not interested in technical improvements". He makes the observation, particularly in the face of the crisis of the sugar economy, which was triggered by two events: first, the discovery of gold, which drew a large part of the enslaved labour to the mineral extraction, resulting in the elevation of its value, and second, increased competition in the world market. According to Marquese, the planters did not look for cost-saving solutions through better resource use, for example, which was already done in other colonies and could increase Brazilian sugar's competitiveness. Instead of reducing variable costs, their response was restricted to the sphere of power, that is, the authority of owners-planters over their subordinates (Marquese 1997:152-153, 1998:97). First, Marquese employs the "mentalities"-argument of planters and a voluntarist principle that the will of the planter managed the *engenho*. Second, the study of Schwartz (1985) permits us to conclude that although planters did not make technical changes, they responded to the market mechanisms by searching to diminish variable costs through the labour organisation. Thus, "combining labour" (Fernandes 1976) was the primary mechanism to respond to conjunctural changes, not technical improvements, at least not until the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century. The colonial planters also reacted to the sugar price fluctuations triggered by the entrance of new colonial centres in the world system by approximating the centres of power to guarantee the prices, facilitate credit and prohibit the lien (Castro 1984:56-57).

The free labourers never reached more than ten per cent of the entire labour force of the mills in Bahia. The same proportion of free labourers to enslaved labourers could also be observed from the census of 1825 made in the sugar mills of Vila de Mogi Mirim in São Paulo. The proportion of free labourers oscillated between one and ten per cent, decreasing the higher the number of resident enslaved workers (Luna and Klein 2005). This also speaks for the centrality of the enslaved workers in all mill positions and the cane farms tied to it. The same pattern of labour regime that existed in sugar plantations was later reproduced in coffee production in the 19th century in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro (Luna and Klein 2005:81). However, the employment of “free” labourers was spreading by the end of the slave trade in 1850 in all the regions of Brazil and especially in the northeast, in coffee producing areas remaining, however, pretty low until 1880 – seven per cent (Mello 1978) and in the plantations of the northeast supplying the dominant labour-power in 1870 (Palácios 1996). Thus, in 1882, several mills employed the labour-power of free and freed people for money and food during the harvest in skilled positions and as cane cutters, including freed women of colour. However, labour-power availability was unstable and could not guarantee the constant labour needs of *engenhos*, possibly because the free blacks and *pardos* had other employment opportunities. Planters often tried to restrict “free” labourers’ mobility to ensure continuous access to their labour-power. In that context, payment schemes for enslaved workers emerged. Some enslaved workers were paid for the extra labour on Sundays or holidays. The labour scarcity also created a system of hiring enslaved workers (Fraga Filho 2006:37-39).

Whereas Schwartz emphasises the economic rationality behind the changing racial and colour compositions of plantation labour regimes, other authors have also drawn attention to the particular racial thinking of planters in managing the enslaved workers. For example, planters are argued to take advantage of racist assumptions about the mental and physical abilities of persons of different races or persons of colour in assigning them to different occupations. Racist preconceptions justified the superiority of African workers over indigenous workers. Race-thinking also reached into the understanding of the value of native-born and mixed-race enslaved individuals, who were educated for specific artisan and supervisory roles. It was considered that they were wittier and better fitted for skilled labour, resulting in criollos and *pardos* occupying many jobs that required skill in the 18th century. This favouritism had to do with the sophisticated interweaving of “racial perceptions”, “personal attachments”, and “cultural bias. African-born enslaved workers (*boçais*) were seen as “strangers, pagans”, “untrustworthy” or “dangerous” (Schwartz 1985: 330). However, others have shown that Brazilian-born and racially mixed enslaved persons were also considered as “vagrant, insolent, uppity, and ungrateful” and most rebellious

(Vilhena 1969, cited in Schwartz 1985:331). How planters learned to exploit these stereotypes about the physical and mental abilities of certain racialised groups, as well as biases related to gender for the organisation of modern production and capital accumulation, demonstrates how “racial knowledge” was central to “managerial knowledge”¹⁹⁸.

Overseers in the mill and slavedrivers (*feitor*) in the field were responsible for labour management. Through their labour, the propertied class could control the plantation labour. For example, in the farms of Sergipe and Ilhéus, the absentee planters controlled the labour force through the overseers (Ferlini 2003:183). On top of the labour hierarchy in the plantation, the overseers were responsible for managing the farm, fiscalising services, guaranteeing the discipline of the enslaved workers, and applying punishment authorised by the planter (Moura 2004:159), but frequently exaggerating with penalties. At each stage of the sugar production, the overseers supervised the tasks in the mill, boiling and purging house, aiming to produce the largest quantity of sugar to be sold to Portugal. In the beginning, this position was occupied by the Portuguese. Later, although in some plantations, field and mill foremen and drivers continued being freemen, in most of them, both freemen and enslaved individuals, mostly *pardos*, performed these managerial tasks. When the overseer and the driver were enslaved persons, most frequently in the 18th century, they were Brazilian-born enslaved persons of colour and not enslaved black African persons (Schwartz 1985:318-319). Overseers had to learn to employ and treat enslaved workers in a way that would extract the most labour out of them (Castro 1977:203). They were responsible for intensifying the labour of enslaved workers and, through the whip, synchronising the rhythm and the time of the work in the field and the factory with the rhythm of the world market and later with that of the stock market (Tomba 2013b). With Law no. 04 of June 10, 1835, the physical integrity of the overseer, either an enslaved, freed or free person (and his family), receives legal protection against the aggression of enslaved workers, which would be interpreted as an aggression against the productive system (Campello 2018).

Also, a reward system and occupational incentives were associated with production. Enslaved workers, especially skilled ones, could receive rewards, hardly in cash, but mostly in kind.

¹⁹⁸ This point about the connection between racism and managerial knowledge has already been made by Du Bois ([1935] 1992). Esch and Roediger (2009) have further explored this relation in the context of broader labour history, arguing that the roots of modern scientific management are in plantation slavery. This study borrows pretty much from Aufhauser (1973), who has studied and searched to explain how the theory and practice of the owners of enslaved workers about labour administration corresponded to F.W. Taylor’s school of scientific management. Although these works refer to 19th-century liberal industrial capitalism, when labour management in large-scale industry was already in the order of the day, plantation slavery was part of this context. Theories about the administration of enslaved labour also emerged in the 19th century in Brazil. The most known one is elaborated in Taunay’s *Manual do Agricultor Brasileiro* (1829) (Marquese 2010). Moreover, the labour organisation in colonial sugar plantations in Brazil already anticipated this dynamic in some of its elements (Castro 1980).

Some assistants of skilled workers could also receive wages, showing that “cash” incentives were given to skilled enslaved workers. These wages and rewards could be used to increase loyalty and encourage productivity, being connected to enslaved workers' performance (Schwartz 1985:330). According to Starobin (1970:98-99), “slave wages were part of the complex system of discipline by reward”, comprising the technique of controlling enslaved workers. Cash also tended to intensify occupational and racial distinctions, but it was also a strategy to extract more surplus labour. At the same time, skilled enslaved workers were performing the same work for lower wages than free men or women. This shows that economic compulsion could be used together with direct coercion in slavery regimes.

Different punitive systems also distinguished between skilled and unskilled enslaved workers and field and *fábrica* labour. Differently from the enslaved field workers, who were known to suffer from extreme forms of brutality and cruelty of drivers, within the sugar mill, direct coercion was not the most effective way of control in all situations. In some cases, the cooperation of enslaved workers was needed, especially in more complex activities such as the operation of mills, which required more skill (Schwartz 1985).

It is also important to emphasise that although skilled free engenho employees constituted a certain “labour elite” when social prestige and wage were considered, they were not considered far above the enslaved workers, especially if these free workers were persons of colour. The artisans lived better than other workers and unskilled enslaved workers, but they had a pretty low social position (Schwartz 1985:332). Between enslaved and “free” labour was a continuity, according to how they responded to economic demands. Despite the legal distinction, the “free” workers approached and distanced themselves from the enslaved workers. As suggested by Schwartz, from the planter-owners’s viewpoint, “slave labour and free labour were not two separate worlds, but rather, two points along a continuum, each with its advantages and economic conditions”. Either could be used (Schwartz 1985:252-253). However, they were not interchangeable. On the one hand, the commodity production and exchange abstracts from legal, skill, racial and gender differences; on the other hand, if labour organisation is looked closer, these distinctions are intimately related to the commodity and value production.

The previous pages argued that the way the social hierarchies were produced and tied to the division of labour was part of a complex racialised and gendered labour management, which aimed at extracting a product of desired quantity and quality from enslaved workers as well as from other coerced as well as “free” labourers. The way the enslaved workers occupied the skilled positions belies Marx’s (1976) as well as Wallerstein’s (1974) affirmations that slavery, in its essence, is not

compatible with industrial and skilled labour. Valuing skilled enslaved labour may have been a means whereby planters-owners tried to achieve specific economic ends, such as reducing the production costs, as the salary of “free” or *pardo* craftsmen was more costly than simply unpaid enslaved black workers or mixed-race enslaved workers. Schwartz (1985) argues that creating opportunities for social mobility could have been part of labour control and providing positive incentives to improve product quality. For Saffioti (1976:163-164), even if creating opportunities for skilled enslaved workers represents a more sophisticated form of exploitation, this might also reflect a not-total reification under slavery, permitting certain mobility among the enslaved workers.

Sexual division of labour

The slavery regime should also be understood in terms of the sexual division of labour. Brazilian social historiography of the last fifty years has explored the gender aspects of slavery. The aim is not to exhaust this discussion but to present some elements in the studied bibliography regarding enslaved women's productive and reproductive labour.

Schwartz shows that on the market of enslaved labour, enslaved women were as much commodities as enslaved men, as they were extracted from their “communities” of origin, sold, bought, traded, hired and transformed into the property of somebody else. However, the value of the labour of enslaved men was higher than that of enslaved women. In the plantation, the existential conditions of enslaved men or women were relatively similar, although they exercised different functions (Schwartz 1985:165). Both worked side by side in gangs in the cane fields and mills, although they were exerting different tasks. What strikes the eye is the importance of the economic role of enslaved females in extra-domestic, gang-based labour in the field and factory, producing export staples to the “alien” consumers and proletarians. When the non-working-class women’s “histories” start from the family or domestic (re-)production, from what they move out and in, then the black enslaved women begin their history as coerced labourers, alienated from their bodies and right to constitute a family and the domestic sphere.

Enslaved women were present in both field and mill as well as in reproductive functions, although approximately two-thirds of the field hands were constituted of 15-45-year-old enslaved male workers. Gangs in the field were composed of both men and women. Sexual division of labour in the field was determined mainly by physical force. Hence, men were doing the heavier tasks of

holing, field clearing and wood-cutting, but when it came to weeding and cane cutting, men and women were working side by side in gangs of two, as already described above.

The sexual division of labour can be observed also in the sugar mill. Neither free nor enslaved women occupied any managerial occupation, overseers or sugar masters in the seventeenth or eighteenth centuries. Still, enslaved women were prevalent in two sugar-making processes: grinding/milling sugarcane and purging. Both required a certain level of skill, care, and attention. At Engenho Sergipe, in Bahia, women performed most of the tasks in the milling house. Men appear rarely listed. Hence, these women - *moedeiras*, *calumbás* and *guindadeiras* – were handling the most advanced sugar grinding technology of the time – the vertical three-roller-based mill. As in other parts of the *engenho*, the workers worked in shifts, usually two during the 18-20-hours working day. Their work was supervised during the day by the mill overseer and at night by his assistant, who in the 18th century was often an enslaved worker (Schwartz 1985:143), most probably a male.

By making the physical force less necessary, the machine permits the employment of the labour of individuals with little muscular power. When Marx talks about the introduction of the machine in factories, he emphasises that on the one hand, it substitutes the workers, then, on the other, it “becomes a means for employing workers of slight muscular power . . . [and] [t]he labour of women and children was, therefore, the first result of the capitalist application of machinery!” (Marx 1976:517). However, as we can see, the machines already in sugar production seemed to favour women’s labour power. Women in their African countries of origin were commonly involved in agricultural labour of subsistence, and, when enslaved, they were absorbed by the “*fábrica*”. Milling needed little physical force, but it required some skill and a lot of attention. Attention was critical as “industrial accidents” were highly frequent. The risk of losing a finger and a whole arm was very high. Enslaved women with mutilated bodies were a familiar image in plantations. It appears that the grinding mill devoured both cane and human bodies. Women were used because they were considered more docile and prone to repetitive labour (Ferlini 2003:207). Considering the riskiness and danger of the job, Mott (1991) explains the use of enslaved female labour in milling houses with their lower value.

In the boiling house, as described above, the work was done mainly by men, but women, called *calumbás*, were usually employed to keep the lamps lit. However, as with milling, most purging tasks were performed by women. Although men carried the forms in and out of the purging house, *purgadeiras* were claying the pots to start the purging process. They also did the job of separating the sugar. Women were separating and drying the platforms under the direction of two

more experienced enslaved women, the *mães de balcão*, or the mothers of platforms. Only women were listed as purgers in 1739 at eight Bahian engenhos (Mott 1991:146).

Although skilled enslaved labourers occupied purgers, grinders, and other positions in the purging and milling house, there is no record that free black or mixed-race women were employed for these occupations and received any payment. However, records from 1669 at Engenho Sergipe show that free women were employed to work in the fields. They received twenty per cent less than men for their labour.

It must be added that this kind of sexual division described above characterised the big properties, which also had a mill. However, a significant part of the cane was provided to *engenhos* by smaller properties of tenant farmers and sharecroppers, who also employed enslaved labour. In these smaller properties, women and men did the same tasks. Women also did the more demanding tasks such as field clearing and wood cutting and carrying.

Saffioti (1976) argues that the economic exploitation of the labour of enslaved women was more elevated than that of men. Enslaved women, besides working in the productive process in the field and mill, took care of the reproduction process of the labour-power. Mott (1991) shows that the working day of enslaved women was between 12-15 hours outside of the harvest season. During the harvest season, it was probably higher. When the planters-owners did not guarantee the alimentation, and the enslaved labourers had to provide their own subsistence, reproductive work increased in quantity, and the total labour of enslaved workers together with it. It was more common in Bahian sugar estates not to produce food items, which were bought from nearby farms, which not only provided the sugar plantations but also the population of Salvador and the interior of Recôncavo with food products (Luna and Klein 2005:67; Schwartz 1985). The same pattern was observed by Fragoso and Florentino (2001) in sugar plantations in Rio de Janeiro, differently, however, from São Paulo sugar plantations, which also provided their labour force with food products. On some occasions, the enslaved population was conceded plots of land to provide part or all of their subsistence needs. The studies on Caribbean slavery have shown that women were actively involved in the cultivation of provision grounds, which were distributed on a gender-blind basis, as well as in huckstering on their “own account” (Beckles 1991; Green 2006). So far, I have not found similar studies regarding the role of enslaved women in Brazilian subsistence farming to corroborate this argument. However, this is probably also the case in Brazil.

Although the most significant part of historical studies on slavery has concentrated on domestic slavery (as well as on artisanal work), the enslaved domestic workers usually comprised only ten per cent of the enslaved population in plantations. At the same time, one-quarter of women

in Bahian plantations were listed in occupations related to domestic services, such as cooks, lace makers, seamstresses and other domestics, and none were listed in managerial, artisanal or transportation-related occupations (Schwartz 1985:151). In Maranhão, in 1750, one enslaved woman, Monica, was listed as *feitora* (Schwartz 1985:529n85).

The knowledge gap about the sexual division of labour in households and families of the enslaved population, in general, has slowly been filled by scholarly work since the 1980s, when micro-histories started to receive more attention. One systemic aspect of labour control in secular plantations was to hinder or at least not promote structured family life among the enslaved population¹⁹⁹. It was most probably related to the owners' preferences for young, enslaved male workers, which resulted in an elevated gender imbalance. It was determined less by the need for labour-power in the mill but mainly by the need for large quantities of field hands. Another factor might have to do with the supply of enslaved men in the slave trade, as African traffickers were more reluctant to trade women. In general, a relatively limitless source of cheap labour-power through the slave trade did not provide motives to stimulate unions among the enslaved population. This configured a demographic situation in which, in most of the plantations, there were two men for one woman until the mid-19th century, sometimes even three. Gender imbalance did not only characterise the extensive Bahian plantations. It was also reproduced in sugar plantations of West São Paulo at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries (Schwartz 1985). In the 1820s, importing was still cheaper than encouraging "natural" reproduction in Bahia (Galloway 1968, cited in Castro 1977:206). What is called a "natural" reproduction of enslaved people came to be discussed more seriously and was suggested even in the manuals about the management of enslaved labourers in the 19th century (Marquese 2010).

Compared to the instability of families among the enslaved population, the owner families were structured. Saffioti (1976:166) argues that owner families could be structured only because the families of enslaved persons were unstructured. This dialectic is best expressed in the practice of incorporating enslaved women as "black mothers" (*mães-pretas*) or as wet nurses (*amas-de-leite*) in the reproductive cycle of white families, whereby the enslaved women themselves were expropriated from the possibility of creating their own reproductive space (Giacomini 1988:57). In the 19th century developed in urban centres an active rental market of wet-nursing enslaved women, as the owners were hiring out the labour-power of their enslaved workers in the postnatal period

¹⁹⁹ This was different in plantations directed by religious congregations/orders. Jesuits (also Benedictines) emphasised the need to encourage marriages, family formation and natural reproduction, whether for moral reasons or not (Schwartz 1985).

(Alencastro 1997:63). Another aspect was the sexual exploitation of the bodies of enslaved women by the owners, while to the wives was saved the place of housewives. Both were subjugated to the logic of patriarchal domination but experienced oppression in a particular way according to their social position.

Whereas the domestic role of enslaved women is better understood, women exercised reproductive tasks more broadly at *engenhos*. They were known to be responsible for the infirmary among the enslaved population, receiving childbirths and taking care of the sick and injured (Mott 1991). They also were sewing clothes and preparing food for the enslaved population. In that sense, the reproductive and nursing labour was not restricted only to the domestic/familial sphere, especially if the family was not the central institution in slavery, at least not during its first centuries. Another phenomenon talks about the importance of the role of black, *pardo* and elderly enslaved women in the plantation's reproductive work. Schwartz (1985:397) identifies among the household types of Engenho Santana a "synthetic household" composed of elderly women and young unmarried men. It seemed to contain arrangements in which older women, not participating any more in fieldwork, were assigned to care work – housekeeping and cooking duties – for newly arrived unmarried men and facilitate their fast socialisation in the plantation value-producing labour (Alencastro 2000:150). Whatever the form of family, according to Mott (1991), it might have offered a vital support structure in slavery due to the elevated physical and emotional labour exploitation in plantations and the combination of labour force from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In that sense, the care work of enslaved women was necessary for the daily reproduction of enslaved labour. Moreover, conceding plots of land to provide their own subsistence, on the one hand, was justified by planters with the reduction of maintenance costs, and, on the other hand, it fell on the shoulders of enslaved women. The female reproductive work may have contributed to the more cost-efficient production management.

All in all, production and reproduction form a dialectically related whole. If "the capitalist process of production, therefore, seen as a total, connected process, i.e., a process of reproduction, produces not only commodities, not only surplus value, but it also produces and reproduces the capital-relation itself; on the one hand the capitalist, on the other the wage-labourer" (Marx 1976, cited in Brown 2012:73). Roughly said, commercial production in plantations counted substantially on the reproductive labour of enslaved women, who had a fundamental role in the reproduction of the labour-power of enslaved workers and the planter-enslaved labour relation itself.

The sections about slavery regimes and their historical change have shown that enslaved workers were one of several categories of (mainly) unfree labourers used in sugar plantations during

the colonial period insofar as they satisfied the labour needs of each situation, according to the demands for tropical goods in the capitalist world market. This would permit us to argue that enslaved workers should not be understood from the viewpoint of the slave mode of production, neither were they anomalous proletarians in a capitalist world system. Nor was slavery a single, indivisible phenomenon, as Marx and Wallerstein understand it. Its historical occurrence is highly variable, even within one colony. How the labour structure in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, legal status and skill was organised and reorganised in time shows the elevated flexibility of slavery as a mode of labour control, able to adapt for centuries to the changing circumstances and demands of the world economy. Thus, the non-homogeneity of slavery will disturb the core notions of Marxist theory regarding the uniform character of slavery as a “lower form of labour” and its incompatibility with the free labour characterising the capitalist world market (Boatcă 2014).

4.4 The production and reproduction of slave-mercantile capital

4.4.1 Slave-mercantile capital

Two economists from the University of São Paulo, Pires, Julio Manuel and Iraci del Nero da Costa, have scrutinised whether capital was present in the colonial economy. They affirm that Castro (1980, 1977), with his argument that *engenho* was a capitalist enterprise, was near to establishing a category of “slave mercantile capital”, which would be a “form of existence of capital” in “modern slavery” (Pires and Costa 2020). According to them, Gorender (1980) also mentioned the existence of capital in colonial slavery. However, it was governed by specific laws of the “slave mode of production”, which was essentially distinct from the capitalist mode. Pires and Costa (2000; 2010; 2012) reject the perspective of slavery as a particular mode of production governed by its own laws. Instead, they argue that there is a slave-mercantile capital, which is a capital in the sense that it is a value that valorises, thus, surplus value. This feature approaches slave-mercantile capital to industrial capital, anticipating, in fact, the latter, and is compatible with the *capitalist mode of production*, as the “conditions of capital development were closely connected to the development of capitalism on a global basis” (Pires and Costa 2012:156; 161), being dependent and subordinated to it. Nevertheless, it is a “particular form of capital” since it is based on “the production of commodities” by the labour of enslaved workers. Therefore, they call it a “slave-mercantile capital” (Pires and Costa 2010:15). What approaches it to industrial capital and distinguishes it from commercial and usury capital is that its valorisation is founded on the creation

of surplus through the *production* of commodities and not only in their circulation and distribution (Teixeira 2010:205). All in all, this is to say that “[s]lavery was the consequence of capitalism, a way how capital-form emerges in the periphery of the system and how it incorporated the colonies in the international division of labour” (Teixeira 2010:216).

Some insights of their theoretical contribution are valuable to continue thinking about some of the issues raised by Franco (1978), which I find fundamental for the understanding of the relationship between modern slavery and capitalism: how did the figure of enslaved worker enter the process of production of surplus value and capital, how it supported and was sustained by the production of surplus value, reproducing concomitantly its own labour-power as well as that of European wage labour?

Pires and Costa (2000; 2010; 2012) observe that on various occasions, Marx suggested the existence of a fourth form of capital when he argued that the production of surplus value was present in the New World from the moment cotton production in the US South was incorporated into the world market. Pires and Costa maintain that the same kind of capital existed in the colonial period.²⁰⁰ In my view, they suggest that in modern colonial slavery, enslaved labour was redefined as value-creating and capital-producing labour.

What are the conditions of existence and subsistence of slave-mercantile capital? The existence of slave-mercantile capital was conditioned by the “emergence and maturing of capitalist mode of production” in the early modern era in the 16th century, which created the conditions for the slave-mercantile capital to expand and consolidate. “Slave mercantile capital” was subordinated to the European world economy, defined by the capitalist mode of production. Hence, this capital was “subordinated to capitalism itself” (Pires and Costa 2012:15). Therefore, in this context was configured the forms of producing to the world market and local market by “‘ industrial’ slavery, that is, the producer of surplus value, which . . . under the aegis of slave-mercantile capital enabled the integration of New World to the European world-economy” (Costa 2010:64).

Other elements should be present for the existence and subsistence of slave-mercantile capital. First, there is slavery as a mode of labour control and a source to obtain enslaved labour. The existence of a source depends on two criteria: legal and political institutions which permit

²⁰⁰ They critically combine Prado’s ([1942] 1999) idea of a colony as “a commercial enterprise” and Gorender’s (1980) “colonial slavery” notion. However, they reject the idea that colonial slavery constituted a distinct mode of production with its own laws. To be defined as a mode of production, it must be independent, which was not the case with colonial slavery, as it was subordinate to other determinations. For the same reason, Ciro Cardoso’s notion of a “dependent mode of production ” is unsatisfactory (Pires and Costa 2012:156-157). See more about their critique of this notion in Pires and Costa (2010). Hence, the slave-mercantile capital category permits the resuming of the productive sphere without the mode of production category (Teixeira 2010:205).

enslaving people as well as a concrete physical source, which guarantees the constitution, replacement and augmentation of the squad of enslaved workers; second, economically, there are no other alternatives to enslaved labour; third, there is a market to absorb the commodities, produced by the labour of enslaved workers; fourth, there is a presence of individuals who have resources to guarantee the supply of enslaved labour through capture, sale or rent; and fifth, there are individuals, who through the exploitation of enslaved labour pursue valorising value and who have the necessary resources to mobilise the means of production and captive labour-power. Pires and Costa (2000:95) understand that the owners of plantations and enslaved workers were capitalists and personifications of “slave-mercantile capital”. Differently from industrial capital, it is a dependent capital. It cannot reproduce itself by itself, depending on external sources, first, to obtain labour-power, and second, to realise the value. It depended on commercial capital, creating the objective conditions for its production and reproduction²⁰¹. Later, it provided loan capital to productive enterprises to obtain labour power and means of consumption and production from Europe. At the same time, it monopolised the placement of colonial products in the world market (Pires and Costa 2000:93, 96).

The initial investment provided by loan capital was fundamental for establishing the sugar economy. However, as argued by Castro (1977:217), after some time, the price of selling commodities had to start covering the costs of production: worn-out equipment, consumer fuel and exhausted enslaved workers. Although planters lived highly indebted (that is being repeated by all the scholars of colonial political economic history), the reproduction of the enterprise also depended on its internal functioning, having relative autonomy, even from the viewpoint of producing to the local markets. Recent revisions of Brazilian historiographical works and new works about monetary history have shown that differently from what has been believed so far, credit markets in the Atlantic system were more complex, and there was a significant offer and circulation of coins in colonial Brazil (Carrara 2020; Cerqueira Lima 2021).

In theoretical and abstract terms, the capital production process in colonial slavery, as demonstrated by Pires and Costa, does not differ much from the capital production process based on the exploitation of wage labour. The capitalist should have the initial capital to purchase necessary labour-power by buying wage labour or enslaved labour. Although the employer pays the wage worker after realising labour, it still happens before selling the commodity in the market. Hence, the payment should derive from the profit from the previous market cycle of the realisation of

²⁰¹ Frago and Florentino (2001) have shown that merchants of Rio de Janeiro had certain autonomy from the metropolitan and ultra-metropolitan merchants. Many invested their capital in the export economy.

commodities. That is, the living labour is exchanged for dead labour. In the case of slavery, the capitalists must have initial capital (most often in colonial Brazil loan capital) to buy an initial stock of labourers before the workers start labouring. Means of production and raw materials (wood, copper, etc.) are needed. In the case of enslaved labour, the owner-planter must also spend capital to acquire items for the maintenance of workers, in case the planter is responsible for it, either by buying food products from abroad, from the domestic market or growing them in the farm. Even if enslaved workers were responsible for providing their own subsistence, planters carried some costs, as maintenance included, besides alimentation, clothing, and some health care and supervision. According to Schwartz (1985), the most common method in Bahia and Pernambuco was the combination of these two.

In production, the commodities (maintenance and means of production) should be consumed productively to create the product, whose value should be higher than the initial product. Hence, surplus value is created, which is the net product, after deducting the depreciation and maintenance costs from the gross product. The capital necessary for acquiring and replacing labour power should still be deducted from the surplus value. Finally, the commodities should be realised in the world market and transformed into money-form, which should result in more *money-capital than initially invested in the production process and guarantee the restart of the valorisation process* (Pires and Costa 2010; 2000). Hence, the surplus value created by enslaved labour, i.e., the net product of enslaved labour, is the difference between gross product and depreciation and maintenance of enslaved workers.²⁰² “Surplus value – the added value - is therefore capital value” (Pires and Costa 2012:158).

Based on the study of the *engenhos* of Bahia during the colonial period, Stuart Schwartz (1985) shows that in the 17th century, profits mainly ranged from 5 per cent to 10 per cent a year (a return of 2000\$ to 3000\$ on an *engenho* worth twenty thousand dollars), 10 and 15 per cent of profit were considered already extraordinary. Furthermore, the surplus is invested productively since the potential profits deriving from the farms and mills are invested in the acquisition of new factors of production, including the acquisition and replacement of enslaved workers (Alencastro 2000:38). Common argument among Brazilian sociologists and historians (Fernandes 1976; Gorender 1980), has been that a significant part of the plantation’s capital was immobilised or dead,

²⁰² To Marx, surplus value (i.e., net product) was equivalent to the difference between gross product and labour-power cost. More simply, surplus value is the value the workers produce after producing the value necessary to reproduce their labour power, that is, the unpaid part of the labour time. Castro (1977) does not use “surplus value” but “value”, and as he assumes that enslaved workers produced their own maintenance, he does not include it in the labour cost. Pires and Costa (2010), like Clegg and Foley (2018), include maintenance among enslaved labour costs and insist that enslaved labour produces surplus value.

as the enslaved workers formed “almost totality” of planter’s capital funds. Schwartz (1985) has shown how the acquisition and replacement of enslaved workers constituted one-fifth of the investment in sugar mills and half of the investments of cane farmers, which provides the means for the regular growth of productive activities. Enslaved workers constituted 20 per cent of estate value. Labour power constituted an essential expense of plantations – enslaved workers, 25 per cent, and salaried workers, including sugar-making specialists, 20-30 per cent. According to Schwartz, it is challenging to calculate wealth for the colonial period because documentation is lacking, and accounting practices mixed capital-stock expenditures with current expenses. What shows the valorisation of capital in time is that when at the beginning of the 17th century, a mill could be erected for 8000-10 000 cruzados (3600\$), by the end of the century, the average value of a Bahian mill was about 15000 cruzados without enslaved workers and 18000-20000 cruzados with them. However, it is also important to mention that capital could multiply because, in the 16th century, labour-power was obtained through the capture of indigenous peoples or the use of unpaid or low-paid labourers, and the land was acquired by grants, which, however, became less common at the beginning of the 17th century. Any improvement in the region or the proximity of the mill, in terms of infrastructure, also quickly increased its value. This, in turn, allowed credit expansion (Schwartz 2004:192-193).

To finalise this section, it should be said that Pires and Costa (2000, 2010, 2012) have made an essential contribution to the understanding of capital production based on enslaved labour, as until the emergence of the dependency school in the 1960s, colonies were studied as mere appendices of European economies and thereby giving an impression as if there was no production of capital (Frank 1967). First, Pires and Costa argue that capital produced during colonial slavery shared features with industrial capital. Second, enslaved labour is a surplus value-creating and capital-producing labour. Third, there is a connection between capital produced by enslaved labour and the inclusive capitalist mode of production governing the world economy.

Nevertheless, denominating this capital as “slave-mercantile capital” places some limitations on the potential of this notion. First, it is strictly limited to enslaved labour, which does not allow contemplating in the capital production non-enslaved labour forms, such as coerced or “free” wage regimes or tenancy, largely present in the colony.²⁰³ Secondly, even if the “slave-mercantile capital”

²⁰³ Although in the colony and after the official end of the colonial status, the non-enslaved (formally free) labour was broadly present in Brazil, the notion of “slave-mercantile capital” elaborated by these authors is limited only to enslaved labour. In elaborating the theory of capitalist slavery in the US South, some US scholars have taken into account also the presence of “free” wage labour in the process of capital production, in the sense of evaluating the profitability of different labour forms and the movement of capital accordingly (Clegg and Foley 2018).

category permits the discussion of the production of capital in the sphere of production with enslaved labour and it resolves several limitations that the mode of production notion represents, in essence, it is considered a transitional concept to be overcome with the abolition of slavery, marking a transition to a specifically capitalist mode of production based on the regime of “free” wage labour, bourgeois ideology and industrial capital. Capital, to Pires and Costa, is founded on the person's legal status, which is essential to a specific relation of production. It results in capital being defined as capitalist only in the regime of formally free labour. The economists of the University of São Paulo continue reproducing the relation of exteriority between centre and periphery, enslaved labour and “free” labour. Thereby, they still follow a mechanistic notion of historical development according to which the abolition of slavery would result in the capitalist relations of production, following a shift to industrial capital and “free” wage labour. As the authors themselves clarify, they do not consider “colonial slavery” as a “kind of capitalism” (Pires and Costa 2012:156), and the slave-mercantile capital would be non-capitalist due to being based on enslaved labour. Hence, as argued by Teixeira (2010), it permits an understanding of capital production in the colony so that there is no need to recur to the mode of production category. However, it should be added that Pires and Costa create a vacuum regarding the question to which economic system enslaved labour and slave-mercantile capital produced in the Portuguese colony belong. In that sense, they leave slavery and the colony undetermined. There is capital but no capitalism, although capital is subordinated to the world economy governed by the capitalist mode of production.

Third, they argue that the development of industrial capital and bourgeois society attached to the development of capitalism represent limits to the slave-mercantile capital. This is an argument that cannot be, however, accepted because, as it will be shown in the next chapter, in the context of liberal and industrial capitalism of the 19th century, slavery was perfectly compatible with industrial capital and bourgeois ideology, hegemonic in the capitalist world-system, and they even intensified it with the relocation of slavery to the new agricultural frontiers of coffee production in São Paulo (sugar in Cuba and cotton in the US South). The study of the justifications of slavery by the owners in the 19th century through such arguments as the right of private property and free trade has made Marquese (2002:69) conceptualise slavery under liberal and industrial capitalism as “liberal Atlantic slavery”.

4.4.2 Enslaved labour as surplus-value-producing labour

Enslaved labourers produce commodities whose value is higher than the cost of their labour-power (maintenance and depreciation), creating surplus value. Other essential elements are present for the money to become capital. There is an accumulation of past labour in the form of raw materials and means of production. Acquired surplus value is used productively or reinvested by obtaining new raw materials, land and labour-power. However, this still does not resolve the usual misbelief that enslaved labour does not create surplus value. According to this misbelief, it is a “fixed capital” because of the fixed price paid for the enslaved workers at the moment of purchase, and as classical Marxists would allege, fixed capital, which is tied up for a long time in machines, machinery, buildings, etc., does not produce surplus value.²⁰⁴ Some authors show that in the bookkeeping of owners-planters, enslaved workers were also accounted as means of production, as things, and as machines, which should support the claim that enslaved workers do not produce surplus value. It seems that the only way to face this question is to approach it with the very Marxian conceptual-technical tools.

Interestingly, one solution to this conundrum was provided by a Brazilian Marxist-feminist sociologist in the 1960s and 70s, a decade that produced many other works that went beyond certain Marxist orthodoxies that had dominated social theories until then. Many of these works have also been contemplated in this dissertation. Besides Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco and Antonio Barros de Castro also Heleieth Saffioti.

Heleieth Saffioti was one of the first Marxist-feminist scholars to study in the academy the domination of women in Brazil in the second part of the 1960s (Pinto 2014). In *The Woman in the Class Society: Myth and Reality*, her habilitation thesis first published in 1969, Saffioti seems to have faced very similar epistemological difficulties as the scholars of slavery or other modes of unfree labour arrangements, which did and do not fit into the classical pure form. Saffioti ([1969] 1976:138) argues that “the interpretive distortions, modelled in abstract schemes and stripped of heuristic value, of what the Brazilian history has been the object, could induce the scholar of the conditions of women in the national society to assimilate this condition with the woman of Medieval Europe and, there, to explain it in the function of a supposed feudal economy”. If Brazilian women were relegated to Medieval Europe, modern colonial slavery was considered to be the revival of the antique socio-economic organisation or the survival of the medieval world.

²⁰⁴ The argument that enslaved workers were not exploited in the technical Marxian sense is also based on that (Clegg 2020).

Saffioti's interpretation of the political economy of enslaved labour attempts to overcome these abstract models. Being influenced by such Brazilian thinkers as Caio Prado Jr., Celso Furtado, as well as her supervisor, Florestan Fernandes, in her book, Saffioti argues that modern slavery, which is different from antique slavery, should be understood only in the context of the great agricultural exploration established in the Americas in the 16th century under merchant capital in the context of the developing international capitalist system. This system, which was implanted in Brazil, was oriented to profit. The employment of enslaved labour was highly rational, in Weberian terms, as it was oriented to the purpose of capital accumulation. Enslaved labour is a commodity that can mobilise great capital (Saffioti [1969] 1976:142-143). Regarding obtaining the enslaved workers in the market, Saffioti ([1969] 1976) alleges the following:

Thus, by acquiring one slave, the capitalist entrepreneur spends a certain *amount* of value, which, operating like fixed capital, is gradually transferred to the product. Hence, the capitalist entrepreneur anticipates the payment (...) for the labour-power, whose value is realised in the commodity and, later, in money, slowly and fragmentarily. . . . Evidently, the purchase of the enslaved person, that is, *all of his labour-power* to be actualised [*atualizado*] in the process of future labour, constitutes one of the factors, which makes this type of labour-power expensive. Nonetheless, the capital invested in the enterprises of colonisation was highly profitable. (Pp.: 144, second emphasis added)

It is essential to highlight that Saffioti clarifies the functioning of the heteronomous form of labour commodification. As I argued in my second chapter, what is purchased with the enslaved worker is the total labour-power once and for all. Thus, the relation established between the colonial planters and enslaved labourers is that the former is the owner of the person of enslaved worker and, therefore, also of the labour-power of this worker and the entire labour product. Moreover, the value of the enslaved worker is transferred to the product gradually, and the enslaved labour cost in terms of depreciation is transformed into the instrument of production in great agricultural establishments aimed at capital accumulation. However, the employer must also spend some money-capital as variable capital²⁰⁵ to maintain the enslaved worker.

Gorender (1990:36-37) has highlighted that although the owners of enslaved workers buy an instrument of labour, a material good, a property, which permits the economists to regard the capital allocated to the enslaved worker as fixed capital within the labour process, the enslaved worker is a “subjective agent”, what unites the enslaved worker with the industrial proletariat in the labour

²⁰⁵ “Variable capital” is the money that is exchanged for labour-power, which adds value to the commodity (Clegg 2020:86). Marx calls the value of labour-power commodity variable capital because it is the only variable element in the valorisation process (Frings 2019).

process. According to Marx, what takes the form of fixed capital is not the enslaved worker, as a concrete being, but the money invested in their purchase.

According to Saffioti, slavery might not be compatible with “developed capitalism” because the money-capital form taken by the variable capital in paying salaries has a vital role in commodity circulation. For a long time, it has been believed that since the product was realised in foreign markets, slavery represented a barrier to the development of the fully capitalist system. Moreover, since enslaved workers did not participate in the domestic consumer market, the employment of this kind of worker was a barrier to “the development of national productive forces, and as an obstacle to the new articulation of capitalist sub-systems imposed by the advancement of British industrial capital” (Saffioti ([1969] 1976):145). Later, I will discuss the consumption part. This point is important from the point of view of the internal market, as well as when Brazil will be used as the market to receive foreign consumer goods. However, the conversion of commodities into money took place in the world market, that is, in the capitalist world economy, supposing an expansion of the buying power of the growing class of wage labourers and urban population in Europe. This indeed constitutes an old issue of the condition of dependency of the colony and, later, of the periphery. However, as reminded by Mello and Slenes (1980), this is not the problem of slavery only. It is a problem of forced and coerced labour, more broadly, which continued to exist after the abolition of slavery and emanated from the proper system of the capitalist world system, which is based on unequal exchange and transfer of surplus value.

Nevertheless, the point is that seeing the enslaved worker only as a fixed capital, recovery of the values spent by the capitalist in block or fragmentarily, obscures the formation of surplus value and, subsequently, the functioning of the “capitalist system of production” (Saffioti 1976:144). As already seen, enslaved labour is the source of surplus labour, which the planter appropriates in the form of surplus value. The appropriation by the planter of surplus value created by enslaved labour permits capital accumulation. However, the planters had to provide daily minimum conditions for the reproduction of the labour-power of enslaved workers if they wanted to continue using it. Thus, the payment for the labour-power of enslaved workers is made by variable capital, which is

exchanged for value-creating labour. Whatever the “form assumed by variable capital,²⁰⁶ whose function is to permit the production and reproduction of labour-power of enslaved workers, in it resides the explanation of capitalist accumulation” (Saffioti 1976:145).

Enslaved labour was reproduced through reward in Brazil, not in money, but as a means of subsistence. This can be demonstrated when enslaved labour is divided into time and space. Enslaved labour was reproduced when labour-power was put into action to produce goods necessary for the subsistence of the very workers and their dependents. Enslaved labour was unpaid when the enslaved labour was employed in the commercial sector (Saffioti 1976:146), constituting the surplus labour time, thus, surplus labour.

Therefore, enslaved workers' and wage workers' labour power are partially rewarded, but both yield their entire product to the employer. Both generate surplus labour, the source of surplus value, “the secret of capitalist accumulation” (Saffioti 1976:146). In these terms, Saffioti argues that Brazil developed a “partially capitalist economy,” which was “oriented to profit and producer of absolute surplus value, through the massive use of slave labour-power” (Saffioti 1976:146). Evidently, there is a labour hierarchy in the world system in which enslaved workers receive the lowest reward for their labour and, at the same time, are subjected to the highest degree of direct coercion (Wallerstein 1974).

To capture concrete historical situations, it would be essential to go beyond the distinction between enslaved and free labour founded on abstract comparisons. If these two labour forms are abstracted, free labour is cheaper, as no initial capital investment is necessary to purchase the enslaved worker. This so-called immobilised capital for at least three years would be classified as irrationality. However, in a historically concrete situation in which colonial export enterprises were constituted and in which they acted, the labour of enslaved Africans was much more profitable to great planter-owners than the alternative contemplated and also used in the 19th century – the import

²⁰⁶ On several occasions, Marx (1976) maintained that wage-form could include payments in kind. For example, in *Capital*, he writes that at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries, the English capitalist farmers and landlords paid part of the wages to their agricultural workers in money and the rest “in the form of parochial relief”. As a phenomenon mainly related to the “putting-out system” of “domestic industry”, Marx considered it a “direct robbery from the worker’s necessary consumption fund in the formation of surplus value, and therefore in the formation of the fund for the accumulation of capital”. On another occasion, he describes how the best-paid categories of the British proletariat in coal and other mines received part of their wages in kind, that is, in the form of “cottages and coal for firing”. Later on, he mentions that the enslaved African is a paid worker, as she receives her “minimal wage” or the “means of subsistence in the “form of *naturalia*, which are fixed both in kind and quantity – i.e., he receives *use-values*” (Marx 1976:750, 820, 1031, 1033, emphasis in original). Thus, his “minimal wage” was made up of means of subsistence. However, as observed by Saffioti, Marx also maintains that “*developed* capitalist production rests indeed on the assumption that the labourer is paid in money”, that the wages paid to the workers “in means of subsistence . . . under capitalist production (...) can be but an exception. . . . But the creation of surplus value – and, consequently, the capitalisation of the advanced sum of values – has its source neither in the money form of wages nor in the form of wages paid in kind, nor in the capital laid out in the purchase of labour-power, out of the conversion of a constant into variable magnitude” (Marx 1977b:216, emphasis added, 222).

of labour power in the regime of “temporary servitude”, as shown by Furtado ([1959] 2007:43). This is also demonstrated by Mello (1978) that enslaved labour remained most profitable labour form until the beginning of 1880 in Brazil, also in the allegedly most advanced and dynamic coffee production regions.²⁰⁷

These assumptions have been reviewed mainly during recent years, as there have been attempts to advance with Marxist theorisation of capitalist slavery (e.g., Clegg 2015a, 2020; Clegg and Foley 2018; Frings 2019). According to Frings (2019), there would be no contradiction in speaking about “fixed variable” or “variable fixed” capital.²⁰⁸ Clegg (2015a, 2020) argues that as the money exchanged for labour-power is, according to Marx’s definition, a variable capital, enslaved labour cost is a variable capital. The money paid for the labour-power of enslaved workers can take either a fixed form (purchase) or a circulating form (maintenance costs; rental). The issue is that the form of variable capital depends on the *form of labour*. In the case of the wage labourer, the variable capital is constituted of the wage; in the case of the enslaved worker, the variable capital is the minimum maintenance, including the expenses with basic subsistence such as food, clothing, medical care and housing. Variable capital can take both fixed and circulating forms. To purchase an enslaved worker in entirety is to make a long-term, that is, fixed investment in variable capital, but part of the total cost of the labour-power of enslaved workers, that is, the cost of maintenance, constitutes part of the circulating capital (Clegg 2020:86; Clegg and Foley 2018:2n2). At the same time, all variable capital circulates like wages when the enslaved worker is rented (Anderson and Gallman 1977). What is unique about enslaved labour is that the capital invested in it can be versatile as it takes different forms, making it more complex to comprehend its role in the accumulation process.

It is sufficient to argue that a commodified labour-power producing absolute surplus value and capital in a system gradually moving towards a generalised commodity form is part of capitalism. A generalised commodity form does not mean that everything has become a commodity all the way down (and it cannot even happen in capitalism) but that subsistence is increasingly

²⁰⁷ Mello (idem.) shows that until 1881, enslaved labour was a profitable form in the coffee sector. Only when the price of enslaved labour started to decline (but not rents of hire), signalling the approaching abolition, did the owners-planters start giving up using enslaved labour. Until then, it was much more profitable to invest capital in enslaved labour as in other equivalent values. When coffee planters started to abandon the idea of employing enslaved labour, there was already a solution to labour scarcity in the coffee regions: state-financed immigration of European workers to be employed in plantations under the *colonato* labour regime.

²⁰⁸ Frings exemplifies this point with industrial proletarian villages, where housing was part of the wage. In that case, the construction costs of houses would be fixed as well as variable capital. The fact that the purchase price of an enslaved worker is a fixed capital does not contradict in any way that enslaved labour is a value and surplus value-producing labour. It represents a “variable capital in a fixed form of circulation” (Frings 2019:437).

acquired through the market. The economy and society are moving in that direction in the long term.

According to Marx, the division of labour time into necessary labour time and surplus labour time in slavery is concealed behind the property relation, which is the basis of the absolute domination of the masters over the enslaved workers. The owners have bought the enslaved workers, and it appears that their whole labour power is unpaid. This could be considered the type of mystification in the relation between “slave-mercantile capital” and enslaved labour, different from the relation between capital and wage labour, in which the wage is a mystification of the exploitative relationship. The wage labourers think they are paid for the entire labour time. Enslaved workers entered into another relation of commodification of labour-power than wage labourers. The meaning of enslaved labour is in the production of commodities for sale. Unlike wage workers, in principle, enslaved workers did not acquire their subsistence through the market to reproduce their labour power. However, as the studies about the domestic market²⁰⁹ (Fragoso and Florentino 2001; Fragoso, Florentino and Faria 1998) and the “peasant breach” (Cardoso 1996) demonstrate, first, the colonial domestic market was much more significant than understood earlier²¹⁰. Secondly, enslaved workers had their role in its stimulation through the commercialisation of their produce acquired from the subsistence plots.

How the maintenance of enslaved workers was guaranteed varied from region to region, from plantation to plantation and from time to time. In some places and times, planters purchased

²⁰⁹ Another tendency also gained force since the end of the 18th century, namely the increasing separation between mercantile production and production for subsistence in big plantations (Franco 1997). Many researchers have shown the growth of domestic food markets since the last decades of the 18th century. As shown by Fragoso (1998), on average in Paraíba Valley, in the first quarter of the 19th century, one-fourth of the expenses of export farms were destined to purchase food products.

²¹⁰ Fragoso, Florentino and Faria (1998:53-64) argue that the colonial domestic economy was much more complex than believed until the 1980s. They show that during the worst decades of the world sugar market (1759-1798), sugar-producing *engenhos* in Bahia and Sergipe doubled, and sugarcane cultivation spread to other regions. The expanding sugarcane production responded to the growing demand of the domestic market. In Bahia, at the turn of the 19th century, small and medium establishments, with, on average, 11,7 enslaved workers (only 17 per cent of the enslaved workers were in plantations with more than 150 enslaved workers), produced a significant part of this cane. The property of enslaved workers was very widespread in the entire colonial territory at the end of the 18th century. In 1785, 98 per cent of the 217 *engenhos* in what is nowadays the north of Rio de Janeiro used enslaved labour, but enslaved labour was also used in other agricultural activities, such as in manioc production (58 per cent of the farmers) and in cattle-raising (42 per cent of the farms). Hence, enslaved workers produced sugar, cotton, tobacco, leather, spirits, cacao, rice, indigo, etc., for the domestic market. Moreover, export-plantation was not self-sufficient, as its subsistence and functioning depended significantly on the domestic market. Therefore, farms emerged, which employed enslaved labour but produced for the internal market, which was also able to accumulate a significant amount of capital to boost the Atlantic trade of enslaved bodies. Already in the 17th century, commercial and extensive cattle farming developed in what is now North of Fluminense, using the family labour of enslaved workers and supplying plantations with draught animals. Since the beginning of the 18th century, different regions of colonial Brazil became economically more integrated as, first, São Paulo, and then, Minas Gerais and Rio Grande do Sul supplied the Rio de Janeiro region with food products. The farms oriented to the commercial production of food products for the domestic market used different labour regimes, including enslaved labour, peasant family labour, and wage labour (paid in money and kind).

and provided food, either grown or purchased from regional farmers or abroad. Manioc flour was the main staple; whale meat or jerked salt beef were also included. Others allowed the enslaved workers to work on their own provision grounds on Saturdays and during the time left after completing an assigned task²¹¹. The most common was the mix of these two methods.

When the planters guaranteed maintenance, the rations were rarely sufficient, resulting in the enslaved workers having to look for extra sources for alimentation by hunting, fishing, or stealing cane or food crops. This shows that the paternalistic relation based on mutual obligation, as emphasised so much by the Jesuits from the religious and moral point of view, did not function in practice. The maintenance of enslaved workers was constantly running below the acceptable standard of subsistence, as observed from the reports and observations of Jesuits²¹² and travellers. Enslaved workers were overworked, brutally punished, undernourished, underdressed, and abandoned during the sickness in the colonial period (Marquese 1998:81). Later, some planters provided their enslaved workers with provision grounds, making them responsible for their own subsistence, which obviously, extended their already elevated workload. Although maintenance did not directly relate to enslaved workers' performance, it was a form of reproducing their labour power and represented the variable part of the planter's capital. Making these observations is essential to understanding the participation of enslaved workers in commodity production and consumption and, hence, how enslaved workers' labour-power entered the general circulation of commodities.

This regime of additional labour, that is, the concession of plots of lands already existing in the custom, known in the Caribbean as the "Brazilian system", was formalised in law in Brazil by a Royal Charter on January 31, 1704 (Diégues Jr. 1954, cited in Castro 1977:205). According to Castro (1977), at some point, planters recognised that conceding land to enslaved workers would not harm sugar production. It would only mean a slight deviation of labour: in twenty days of labour, one enslaved worker would produce enough manioc flour for an entire year for him- or herself and for another person. The planters believed that "working for oneself" also resulted in increased productivity: working on one's own land would result in a double product than when

²¹¹ Schwartz (1985) points out that enslaved workers complained that one day per week was insufficient to provide necessary subsistence. Enslaved workers preferred the task system because after completing the task, they were free to use their time as they preferred. This principle was probably ignored during harvest when enslaved labourers worked 18 hours a day. Moreover, as Morgan (2018) suggests, the tasks might have been so heavy that the execution may have consumed the entire day, or the tasks were assigned one after the other.

²¹² As told by Hunold Lara (1988), the complaints of Jesuits concerning the bad treatment of enslaved workers by planters were targeted at the salvation of the souls of planters rather than anything else.

labourers had done the same work in the land of the planter, as observed by a 19th-century traveller, Maria Graham (Graham 1956, cited in Castro 1980:99).

This system revealed a clear division between necessary labour – usually once a week dedicated to the subsistence of enslaved workers (including providing their food, often also thick fabric for their own use, as well as small services exchanged among themselves) – and surplus labour – production of commodities for the market and appropriated through direct domination by colonial owners-planters. It shows that there is a relation of exploitation behind the relations of absolute domination, which has been usually obfuscated (Castro 1977:205, 1984:52-53). Castro (1977, 1984) argues that the ownership implied in the direct enslavement of labour conceals what Marx called “the real transaction” of the capitalist mode of production: the totally unequal repetitive exchange of value-producing labour for minimal means of subsistence (1976:1064). What distinguishes unfree labour from “free” dependent labour is that the constantly renewed transaction is disguised by the relation of total domination and the use-value of wages “paid” in kind.

In the 1950s and 60s, the hegemonic view in the Brazilian social theory was that these two forms of organising production – one for export and another for subsistence – constituted different, although articulated, modes of production. One of the conceptualisations derived from this interpretation was that the plantation was externally modern and internally archaic, forming a relation of “integrated duality”. In contrast, Franco ([1969] 1997) interprets these two as constitutive of each other. Both production for profit and production of means of subsistence constitute a “unit of contradiction”, in which the meaning of direct production and consumption lies in the “mercantile activity”²¹³. Large property was born as a specialised unit aimed at producing highly profitable monoculture, which constituted its core economic activity. The profit principle was the dominant principle, which determined its activity: when the world-economic conjuncture presented a possibility or a necessity, or when the planters needed to make investments or labour-power was lacking, they did not hesitate to withdraw their assets – land and labour – from the subsistence production and direct them to the mercantile production, even if it was harming the dependent labourers living at the margins of the plantation. In these cases, subsistence was acquired

²¹³ Everything in the farm “acquires the meaning in the production of items, whose value is substantiated only when penetrating the market and, when reduced to its quantitative expression, represented in a certain sum of money. Everything in the farm . . . was structured to enable the constitution of mercantile unit of production. . . . Slavery . . . , the character of latifundium, conditioned all this complicated formation, giving them the *appearance* of an autonomous unit of production and consumption [B]ut the same traits – slavery and latifundium – derive from the need of adjusting the production of coffee to the international markets and which were, ultimately, defined by the nature and requirements of these markets” (idem.:196-197, emphasis in original). Franco (idem.) concludes that it would be insufficient to characterise these big establishments and make sense of the relations found in them by referring to the internal organisation of farms. The internal organisation of the plantation would gain explanatory power only in the association with the capitalist mode of production, which dominated the world markets.

outside the plantation, from abroad or from the regional small producers. This dynamic could also destabilise apparently static social and economic relations between planters and their dependents²¹⁴. Thus, the internal organisation and social relations of the plantation were oriented to the “systematic and disciplined economic activity aiming at profit” (Franco 1978:33-39).

At this point, the logic of the overexploitation of enslaved workers can be illustrated by the appropriation of *excess surplus value*. Although Marini ([1973] 2000) had sustained that super-exploitation works in the case of the enslaved workers in exceptional situations, only when there is a constant supply of their labour-power capable of attending to the demand of owners-planters, I would argue that this is precisely what characterised most of the Brazilian modern capitalist history in which slavery as a mode of labour control existed, principally until 1850, when human trade was officially closed. As one of the aspects of the logic of overexploitation, the planter-capitalist manipulates the “dead times”. From the planter’s perspective, “dead time” is the time enslaved workers spend producing their subsistence needs, the reward measured in time. It is that time that the planter wants to regulate and, when necessary, diminish it and increase the time the labour-power is expended usefully from the viewpoint of commodity production. In the words of Marini ([1973] 2000:127-128): “When the slave economy is being subordinated to the capitalist world-market, the deepening of the exploitation of slave is accentuated, as it interests the proprietor to reduce the dead times for production and make the productive time coincide with the time of worker’s existence”.

The direct appropriation of labour through the overexploitation of enslaved workers may be achieved by extending their working day beyond the acceptable physical limits, diminishing their reward below the standard of subsistence, or intensifying labour through the division of labour in the labour process. It resulted in enslaved workers’ premature exhaustion by death or incapacity. However, the condition is that the worn-out labourers could be easily replaced. It is expressed in the seven years of enslaved worker’s useful existence, showing the tragedy of the dispensability of proletarians necessary for the system in the early phase of capitalism. Here, we can literally talk about the expropriation of lives. It was common for planters to try to extend the working day. For example, they were struggling against the stoppages of work on Sundays. They tried to keep the

²¹⁴ In a situation where planters’ profit interest prevailed, subtle relations of dependence with her dependents were easily broken. For example, when she needed to expand the production, the planter did not hesitate to expulse the residents from the land, who had the right to use the land in exchange for services (Franco [1969] 1997:107, 1978:42-43).

mills working after sundown. They contested making Saturday available for enslaved workers for their own subsistence production. Waste was a sin!²¹⁵

Cardoso (1988), who studied the provision grounds granted to enslaved workers as a “peasant breach” within the slave-holding economy, argued that these had an economic function to reduce the cost of maintenance and *reproduction of labour-power* for the planter. Moreover, he also considered it a mode of labour control, as the grant was revocable, and it tied the enslaved workers to the estate, inhibiting their escape.

Besides that, as the economy of enslaved workers, the plots are told to provide a certain “margin of autonomy” for workers as an essential economic and psychological factor (Castro 1977). In that sense, more than being a “medieval residue” or sign of backwardness, in the particularity of economy based on slavery in the context of the capitalist world economy, the visibility of the time that the enslaved labourers worked for themselves also inserted a space of struggle against super-exploitation in the economic system, a struggle to reduce the surplus labour time available to the planter²¹⁶. It also opened possibilities to commercialise the surplus, which allowed accumulating a little fund (*pecúlio*) to buy oneself out of slavery (Cardoso 1988).

4.4.3 Colonial appropriation of surplus value

Since the beginning, the colonial units guaranteed their expanded reproduction by expropriating human labour from Africa. The surplus value produced by enslaved labour and other mainly coerced labourers in the colonial units of production was directly or indirectly appropriated by super-exploitation by the colonial planters, personifying the “slave-mercantile capital”. Only part of it stayed with the planter class, as the surplus value entered a complex division of colonial appropriation. Hence, we can talk about three types of appropriation in colonial capitalism, which are overlapping, and not two, as maintained by Fernandes (1976:20). The surplus accumulated in trade and super-exploitation of enslaved workers entered in another “circuit of appropriation”, which was legal, economic, fiscal, and political at the same time, constituting a “colonial appropriation,” and thus, the “realisation of colonial exploration” (Fernandes 1976:22). It was a

²¹⁵ The cane had to be milled within 24-48 hours. One English traveller observed that the owners “use the slaves very strictly in making them work immeasurably, and the worse they use them, the more useful they find them” (Pudsey 2000, cited in Schwartz 2004:177).

²¹⁶ As Tomich (2004) shows, based on his study on 19th-century Martinique, this time division, which was simultaneously the division of space, became the object of struggle between enslaved workers and the owners. It was evidence of how enslaved workers also weighed a struggle against exploitation.

fundamental mechanism to redistribute surplus in the world-system (Wallerstein 1974). The transfer of surplus value from the productive sector to other agents, including the “mercantile sector”, was also secured (Alencastro 2000). This surplus value appropriated from enslaved labour was distributed between the planter class, other colonial economic agents, the Crown (using the mechanisms of association, concessions, and taxes) and its employees. The lion part was transferred from the productive sector to the “mercantile sector” - to merchants, either metropolitan or from the hegemonic centres of the world economy (Alencastro 2000; Fernandes 1976:21).

However, a significant part of the surplus value produced by the super-exploitation of colonial labourers also stayed in the colony, supporting the domestic economy, which, as demonstrated above, was not as insignificant as usually believed. After the political emancipation of Brazil, agricultural surplus as well as funds liberated from the slave trade also stimulated the urban-commercial and urban-industrial complex, including the formation of the urban-industrial working class, as argued by Fernandes (1976), suggesting that accumulation based on enslaved labour played an important role in internal primitive accumulation of capital. Recent studies about colonial Brazil have focused on the internal causes of capital accumulation, refuting Prado’s emphasis on external trade. This focus on internal conditions has been best elaborated by Frago and Florentino in *Arcaísmo como projeto* ([1993] 2001), who argue that the colony had relative autonomy and a significant part of the capital produced by the labour of enslaved workers remained in the colony. This perspective has been criticised for ignoring the broader capitalist structures, global hierarchies and power relations (Marquese 2013a; Teixeira 2010).

The entrance of colonial “commodities” and “surplus value” in the broader mercantile circuits, metropolitan economy, and hegemonic capitalist economies contributed to the production and reproduction of the emerging working class and the development of manufacturing and large-scale industry in Western Europe. The entrance of the fruits of colonial labour – commodities and wealth - in the capital circuits in the world economy (Fernandes 1976) contributed to a “commodity fetishism”, as their source – the labour of enslaved workers, the zero wage proletarians – was mystified. In that sense, one of the aims of this chapter has been to reveal the relations of productions from which the circulating commodities, surplus value, capital and wealth originate.

The link with the hegemonic economic centres in Europe also existed in terms of importing equipment to reproduce the productive enterprise in the colony.²¹⁷ In the face of the need to

²¹⁷ Schwartz contests the argument that colonial planters' import of luxury objects weighed a lot. His quantitative analysis demonstrates that the expenditure on luxury items was little relevant, only rarely exceeding 10 per cent of the capital (Schwartz 1985: 212-8).

reproduce the productive units and pay for several economic and political agents, the question is, how big must the exploitation rate of enslaved labour have been to pay all these agents, plus still generate a net profit for owners-planters? The profit from the expropriation of enslaved labour had to be so high that it was not profitable to transform the non-enslaved population for centuries into wage labourers. That means that enslaved workers had to produce also differentials of surplus value, or a considerable amount of excess, which made it constantly more profitable to employ enslaved labour and keep the trafficking business going. This surplus value was extracted from enslaved labour obviously by direct coercion (which also combined with other incentives, although being a minority), which made slavery a “peculiar institution of overexploitation” (Clegg 2020).

4.5 Conclusion

The Portuguese colonial productive system oriented to the production of commodities to the world market for profit operated mainly based on the totally expropriated, violently open and legally guaranteed value-producing mode of unfree labour, the enslaved labour. The Portuguese-American colonial exploitation, a peripheral form of capitalism based on a particular form of social domination, derived from the differentiated movement of capital. This chapter has articulated several points to discuss the functioning of this particular form integrated into the world economy dominated by the capitalist mode of production. First, the work of Alencastro indicates no contradiction in considering the trade of enslaved bodies as the first global unfree labour market and a fundamental space for the reproduction of labour power for the colonial enterprise. The specificity of the production of this type of labour-power sold in the market, according to Manolo Florentino (2014), was the expropriation of human beings from the African continent and their transformation in commodities to feed the colonial productive system characterised by the absolute form of accumulation of capital. The constitution of private property and labour commodification in colonial capitalism took place via the expropriation of African people and their enslavement. Hence, here, the “freeing” of the direct producers from their conditions of labour occurs through other means than in the case of propertyless wage labourers in the core countries of capitalism. However, state violence is also the primary mechanism here, mainly through the wars, producing necessary labour for the colonial economy. Second, the studies of the scholars studying the historical relation between law, slavery and the management of enslaved labour permit to show that the consolidation of black African slavery in the 17th century as the dominant unfree form of value-creating plantation labour was guaranteed by a complex body of metropolitan laws as well as by the private punitive

power. This suggests a division of controlling labour between the public and private agents. Third, Brazilian scholars of political economy, historical sociology and economic historians examined in this chapter have contributed broadly to the understanding of the sugar plantation and its resemblance to the capitalist enterprise due to its form of labour organisation based on large-scale cooperation and its orientation to commodity production to the world-market for profit. This large-scale cooperation based on distinct “slavery regimes” involved gendered, racial, legal, ethnic, and technical labour divisions. Complex combinations of these distinctions, which changed over time according to the interrelations with the world economy, constituted a disciplinary technique of labour control and a particular form of plantation labour’s subsumption under capital. Last but not least, as Brazilian political economists, sociologists and historians suggest, capital was present in the colonial periphery of the capitalist world system in the form of “slave-mercantile capital”, implying the production of surplus value by enslaved labour. Hence, they suggest no incompatibility between the unfreedom of workers, on the one hand, and the production of surplus value and capital, on the other.

This massive expropriation of labour power (Roberts 2017:12), based on what Ferreira da Silva (2019) has called “total violence,” contributed to both the amassing of wealth and the production of capital. The market of enslaved bodies was a source of accumulation by expropriation to produce merchant and trafficker capital. As shown by Brazilian scholars, this accumulated wealth could become a productive capital in the metropolitan countries, the colonial agricultural sector, and later, in the 19th century, imperial urban-commercial and urban-industrial sectors. At the same time, the labour of totally expropriated enslaved workers constituted the value and surplus-value-producing plantation labour in the colonial productive system, contributing to the “slave-mercantile capital” articulated with the capital in the metropolitan centres of the capitalist world economy.

The works of Brazilian scholars on colonial slavery permit to demonstrate that slavery was neither a pre-capitalist nor a non-capitalist labour form. It was not a uniform and homogeneous institution. Nor was slavery the only form of labour control in the colonial economy. Slavery was a flexible institution, considering how it changed over time. It was intertwined with other forms of free and unfree wage and unwaged labour within the colonial space and the free and unfree dependent labour in the capitalist core. Hence, although slavery was a dominant form of value-producing form of labour control during the colonial period, there were, in fact, different slavery regimes regionally, within the same sector as well as within the same productive unit depending on how they responded to the labour demands created by the changes in the world economy. If the labour mix was complex in the colonial period, it was complexified even further under the

hegemony of industrial and liberal capitalism in the world economy, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

5. Labour mixes in the 19th century: the critique of the “transition” argument

With the “ambiguous triumph” of “free” labour (Buck-Morss 2009:88) in the core countries of the capitalist world economy in the 19th century, slavery emerged as the opposite of freedom and a barbaric institution contrary to civilisation. As discussed previously in this dissertation, at the end of the 17th century, Locke had included enslaved workers and “free” servants under the same category of *servants*, not seeing any moral wrong in indentured servitude supplying workers for the British colonies and defending slavery as a way of disciplining the impoverished and masterless masses and maintaining social order in England itself (Buck-Morss 2009:88). By the mid-18th century there was a turn, as slavery was condemned as an utmost form of despotism. With the emergence of the conception of “normal employment” at the beginning of the 19th century in terms of “voluntary” labour represented by “free” wage labour, indentured servitude, serfdom, and slavery were lumped together as “involuntary servitude” and as such contrasted to the former (Steinfeld 1991). This distinction, however, was also marked by spatial division between European nations and their colonies, as well as racial and legal differences (Buck-Morss 2009). The laws of many European nation-states manifested social and legal *othering*, as they “relegated slavery to colonial territories alone while reiterating the emancipatory virtue of metropolitan soil” (Alencastro 2007:150), despite the continuation of the restricted forms of wage labour (Moulier-Boutang 1998; Steinfeld 1991) and penal slavery in public works in Europe right in the 19th century (Patterson 1982:44). Hence, slavery, serfdom, and other forms of coerced labour, overlapped by non-white labour, were considered as incompatible with bourgeois values and capitalism, and as such they were considered belonging to the past that Europe had overcome (Boatcă 2014; Tomich 2004). In capitalism, they survived only as anomalies.

However, this discursive shift appeared when the slave trade and the exploitation of enslaved workers in colonies and peripheries reached their historical peak. It was associated with the demand for sugar, coffee and cotton in the core countries of the capitalist world economy. Whereas in the hegemonic industrialising countries, the awareness about New World slavery was increasing, the labour discipline in British factories resembled that in plantations moved by enslaved labour, and the expanding metropolitan proletariat was denouncing its condition as wage slavery (Buck-Morss 2009:89).

Hence, the argument that capitalist transformation and industrialisation would necessarily result in overcoming slavery, as sustained by the mode of production debate, has been contested by political-economic research on 19th-century slavery. Some US-American historians and social scientists, among whom can be highlighted Blackburn (1997), McMichael (1991), and Tomich (2004), have returned to Marxian critique of political economy to explain the paradoxical renewal of slavery in Brazil, Cuba, and the US South under liberal industrial capitalism, while it was disappearing in other regions of the Americas. Slavery not only persisted or intensified but also experienced qualitative transformations and diversification in such a way that these researchers distinguish 19th-century slavery from its earlier forms.

McMichael (1991) has argued that slavery of the 19th century was inserted in a qualitatively different world-historical socio-economic context than in previous centuries, which also ended up reformulating the content of slavery. Under the British hegemony, the world market was structurally reorganised in the sense that industrial capitalism transcended the segmented markets of the colonial system and created unified global commodity circuits reproducing industrial capital. In that context, capital articulated different labour systems, free and unfree, wage and non-wage, into global labour intermediated by global value relations. Although distinct social forms of labour, these value relations determined enslaved labour and “free” wage labour. The reorganisation of global finance to expand and unify commodity circuits was fundamental for the reproduction of wage labour in the core countries of capitalism. Within the industrial regime, enslaved labour became one of several forms of capital- and value-producing labour, which expanded with the development of wage labour relations. In that sense, slavery is an instance of a “world-historical process” (McMichael 1991:321-326).

Hence, the 19th-century social organisation of labour should not be considered only regarding the crisis of slavery and the transition from slavery to “free” labour. Unlike the already classical argument that industrial capital led to the weakening and, finally, to the abolition of slavery in the Americas, the “second slavery” scholars emphasise its “partial relocation” and revival in the first moment of the rise of industrial capital. Slavery not only expanded but was also relocated and redefined in the context of historical expansion and the global recomposition of social relations of capital (Tomich 2004:xi-xiii). When colonial slavery was gradually in decline in the British and French Caribbean, new historical structures of slavery (*escravismo*) appeared in Brazil, Cuba, and the US South (Chalhoub 2015:162; Marquese and Salles 2016). In a nutshell: “British capitalism had destroyed West Indian slavery, but it continued to thrive on Brazilian, Cuban and American slavery” (Williams 1944:176), as new agriculture frontiers of cheap commodities produced with

enslaved labour were incorporated into the rhythm and cycles of capital. This happened under the reconstruction of the capitalist world economy as the direct political control of sources of production in colonies, which had been articulated to the world market through the mercantilist policies, was gradually substituted by more complex economic control over the flow of commodities between core and periphery (Boatcă 2014; McMichael 1991:322; Tomich 2004:77). Also, the Haitian Revolution contributed to the radical alteration of the world market of coffee and sugar. Besides putting an end to slavery in Saint-Domingue, it planted an element of fear among the owners of enslaved workers throughout the Americas about possible insurrections at any moment. Another factor that also played a role in the decline in the British and French Caribbean was the restricted availability of labour-power produced by the abolition of slavery (Marquese 2013b).

In the face of these points, this chapter will explore the Brazilian historiography about the social organisation of labour in the context of the transformations in the world economy under 19th-century liberal industrial capitalism. The new social historiography of labour since the 1980s does not confirm the hypothesis about *linear transformation* from enslaved to “free” labour, followed by proletarianisation as an “inevitable end-point” or the “only historical alternative” (Wallerstein 2000:246). If, during the colonial period, there had been several “slavery regimes” which varied from one region to another or even from one plantation to another, these developed into complex regional and national labour mixes after the official end of colonialism, a process that can be understood as a “permutation of labour relations” (Linden 2011). The simultaneous co-existence of enslaved labour, diverse forms of compulsory labour and “free” labour continued characterising these mixes. The chapter is constructed so that first, I will examine the historiographical works about the so-called “second slavery”, which have studied the quantitative and qualitative metamorphosis of slavery as new agricultural frontiers – coffee, sugar and cotton – were integrated into the world economy dominated by industrial capital under British hegemony. Second, examining the studies about the legal and discursive changes concerning slavery shows how it was legally reframed and discursively justified according to the liberal values of the right to private property, suggesting that slavery was not incompatible with liberal ideals. Third, although slavery continued to be a fundamental material base of economy and society, the historiography of labour in the 19th century has shown how, in parallel, former enslaved workers, Africans freed from slavery and indigenous populations as well as free poor peasants were subsumed under capital in novel and regionally distinct forms of compulsory labour arrangements to attend the changing labour needs in different productive sectors. This suggests that labour arrangements, usually presented as an intermediary between slavery and free labour, developed into new forms of compulsory labour.

Fourth, if several of these novel labour arrangements are examples of formally free persons being subordinated to compulsory labour arrangements, then renting enslaved workers became a broadly used labour arrangement to respond to the labour needs in the mining industry in the 19th-century Minas Gerais. Hence, in the last chapter, I will examine the work of the historian Douglas Libby about the hiring of enslaved labour by British capital in the gold mines of Minas Gerais, as the ownership of enslaved workers was prohibited by British law and local free labour was available in the semi-proletarian form.

5.1 Reproduction of slavery under liberal industrial capitalism

During the last decades, some scholars of North America, such as McMichael (1991) and Tomich (2004), have resumed the slavery and capitalism debate from the viewpoint of critical value theory. One of its outcomes is the “second slavery” analytical construct of Dale Tomich (2004) to make sense of the reconfiguration of slavery under the changing value relations of world capitalism in the 19th century. To explain the reorganisation of slavery in the Americas, these scholars borrow from critical value theory’s redefinition of Marxian studies of capital. According to this redefinition, the essence of capitalism is not merely the place-specific relations of production (19th-century industrialising England) but the universalising relations of exchange, with the commodity form being its primary expression.²¹⁸ Accordingly, slavery has not been thought of in the nation-state context. Moreover, capitalism has not been reduced to wage labour, although it has been vital for the formation of the capitalist world economy since its inception. Instead, slavery is being analysed as part of capitalism as a social system born out of historically specific, multi-dimensional and transnational integration of diverse labour forms mediated by exchanges in the world economy, in which money becomes capital by intermediating production, consumption, circulation and distribution as a unified whole (Parron 2022, 2023; Tomich 2004). According to the Marxist perspective, value is a historically specific form of wealth in capitalism. As a social and spatial

²¹⁸ Here, a short footnote about the commodity form in capitalism, as understood by Marx, is needed. To Marx, compared to previous social formations, capitalism is not characterised by producing useful products to satisfy certain human wants (use-value). Instead, in capitalism, the physical products are also produced for exchange (exchange-value). It implies that products contain a special “social substance”, human labour, the substance of value, expressed as exchange-value. In capitalism, wealth appears in the form of value. Thus, a commodity in capitalism has a double character: it is concomitantly a use-value and exchange value, which is historically specific. Labour contained in commodities is simultaneously concrete labour (to produce use-values) and abstract labour (human labour in general). In other words, under capital, the material product is redefined as exchange value and concrete labour as abstract labour, conditioning, in turn, capital accumulation. In that regard, enslaved labour under capitalism can also be considered concomitantly a specific social relation and value-producing labour (Parron 2022). Hence, the “second slavery” scholars borrow from Marx’s claim put forth in *Capital* that world markets have a historically specific role in transforming concrete labour into abstract labour and creating capitalist money.

relation, it forms through the worldwide synchronisation of labour processes under competitive pressures. Under the global commodity circulation, capital (re)organises labour and ecology according to its socio-metabolic needs, synchronising production units, markets and the world economy. Once integrated into the circuit of capital, enslaved labour becomes a specific form of value-creating and capital-producing labour (McMichael 1991; 1999; Wallerstein 1991a). Politics or the State-*Gewalt* (Parron 2022; Tomba 2013a) is fundamental in synchronising these different moments into a unified whole and intermediating between concrete and abstract labour as the use of labour, nature, and capital circulation depend on legal regimes, state power and the relation between social forces.

With the focus on value relations, the “second slavery” scholars recognise that value has determined the commodity form of raw materials, instruments of production and labour, including enslaved labour, since the dawn of capital. Like Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco’s (1978) conceptualisation of the colonial moment of capitalism, they also draw from Marx (1976) to theorise about 19th-century slavery. They borrow from Marx’s two-fold understanding of commodities and labour. As much as capital redefines use-values as exchange values and concrete labour as abstract labour, the materiality of commodities and the specific conditions of concrete labour also determine capital accumulation (Rosdolsky in Parron 2022:689). As global value relations develop, markets expand and become integrated, and different modes of labour exploitation are integrated into the web of world capital accumulation and thereby also reshaped. In this process, concrete labour becomes a “totality of different modes of labour embracing the world market”.²¹⁹

In that light, Franco (1978) conceptualised enslaved labour as part of the general social organisation of labour since the 16th century under the emerging world market and the determination of capital. She considered the reproduction of free labour in the metropolitan and enslaved labour in the colonial countries of capitalism as mutually determining. In other words, she envisioned consumption, circulation and production constituting a unitary whole. Scholars theorising about the transformations of slavery in the 19th century argue that a qualitatively different world capitalism emerged, dominated by value relations as its primary organising force. They show that a cluster of world labour relations emerged under the industrial capital, mediated by the exchange. Hence, industrial capital reconfigured world labour and changed the relation between

²¹⁹ “It is only foreign trade, the development of the market to a world market, which causes money to develop into world money and *abstract labour* into social labour. Abstract wealth, value, money, hence *abstract labour* develop in the measure that concrete labour becomes a totality of different modes of labour embracing the world market” (Marx 1971:253).

slavery and other labour forms. As new world regions were incorporated into the global circuits of capital, value also reorganised black slavery, creating “world-historical conditions” for its reproduction, rise and fall (Parron 2022:691; Tomich 2004). Thus, the changing reproduction and the rise and fall of slavery in the Americas should be explained by the changing material and value composition of capital and the changing constellation of global capital circuits under industrial capitalism, including the changing cluster of world labour relations (Parron 2021).

When explaining the rise of “second slavery” under industrial capitalism, scholars tend to consider slavery between 1780 and 1860 as homogeneous, uniform and continuous. However, Parron (2022; 2023) shows how, even during this period, the contradictions generated within industrial capitalism modified New World slavery, contributing to its rise and, finally, to its fall. In that sense, he distinguishes between two moments of industrial capital accumulation, in which changing global value relations, mediated by imperialism, geopolitical competition and class struggle, changed the spatial relations of the world accumulation of capital, creating historical conditions for the changing relation between industrial capital and slavery. These moments were the “cotton cycle” and the “iron cycle”.

The first industrial revolution, animated by cotton, implied a changing composition of capital. In Britain and abroad, this reshaped rural and urban relations, the relations between capital and labour and between production and consumption according to industrial capital’s requirements for expansion. New patterns of demand for raw materials and new patterns of consumption of proletariat and urban middle class driven by industrialisation, urbanisation, population growth and proletarianisation in North-Western Europe and North America had led to the reconfiguration of the global value relations by integrating new geographical areas to it. The reproduction of wage labour in industrial centres started to depend even more on cheap raw materials (cotton) and food products (coffee, sugar, tea, wheat) produced through the exploitation of several labour forms. These changing demand and consumption patterns made industrial centres more dependent on the raw materials and temperate and tropical foodstuffs produced in the peripheries, leading to higher specialisation in the peripheries. In turn, the growing production in peripheries also contributed to these structural socio-economic dynamics in the capitalist core (Parron 2022; Tomich 2004:59-60).

As industrial capitalism, with its new machinery system, started to depend heavily on cheap labour, raw materials, and food, neither local sources nor the British Caribbean could guarantee the provision at large scale and low prices. Hence, the mechanisation between 1780 and 1820 and its generated needs produced several contradictions within industrial capitalism, which generated several crises: underproduction due to expensive raw materials, the crisis of reproduction triggered

by expensive foodstuffs, overproduction caused by unsold finished goods and deepening class struggle. In response to the crises, the British elites designed an international free trade regime of food and resorted to new imperialism in the Indo-Pacific. These solutions integrated into the global commodity chains the enslaved-labour-produced sugar, coffee and cotton in Cuba, Brazil and the US, wheat produced by peasants and petty commodity producers in the Atlantic and Mediterranean, and new colonial markets for finished industrial goods in Asia (Parron 2022; 2023). That reorganised the global value relations. New commodity frontiers emerged in Russia, Prussia, Sicily, India, China, and the Americas (Parron 2022).

In the context of mass consumption and mass production, slavery became one of several competing forms of commodity-producing labour integrated into the global value relations (McMichael 1991:327; Tomich 2004:87). Several transformations in the world market triggered the change in the meaning of enslaved labour in the 19th century. First, the price competition in the world market and the growth of wage labour made productivity more critical. Second, the new commodity frontiers using enslaved workers did not monopolise commodity production anymore but had to compete with several other forms of labour organisation elsewhere in the world economy as the range of forms of labour control widened. Third, concomitantly, slavery and other free or unfree labour forms contributed to the expanded reproduction of wage labour-capital relation (Tomich 2004).

Besides the demand for cheap materials, with the expansion of the wage labour-capital relation, enslaved labour became fundamental in reproducing this relation. Although capital integrated concrete labour relations into global labour since its inception with the emergence of the world market in the 16th century, the “second slavery” scholars argue that it is particularly with the industrial capital that it appears as “social materialisation of labour mediated by world money and global markets” (Parron 2023:176). With the changing value relations becoming global, wage labour, as concrete labour, became the “synthesis of multiple determinations” (Parron 2023:165). As the metropolitan workers became increasingly dependent on wages to obtain their subsistence in the market, this double dependence (on markets and wages) made the value of their labour power, that is, wages, equivalent to the exchange value of their basic needs (food, clothing, housing, and energy) (Parron 2022). As pointed out by McMichael, Parron and Tomich, cheap food (and cheap housing and energy) was vital for diminishing the value of labour and, hence, for increasing the surplus value. This led to several tariff reforms in Britain and designing a global free trade regime of food, creating a global value chain of food. Besides increasing the purchasing power of wage labourers, the cheap calories (sugar and wheat) and stimulants (tea and coffee) produced by

enslaved workers and other coerced labourers in capitalist peripheries reduced the labour time necessary for the reproduction of the labour-power of wage workers, diminishing the value of their labour power and increasing the surplus labour time creating surplus value (McMichael 2013).²²⁰ Thus, with the production of commodities for the world market, the value of non-British and non- and semi-wage labour started to determine the exchange value of British wage labour (Parron 2022, 2023). In other words, the New World slavery and other coerced or unpaid work were not external to value production but, in fact, determinants of value itself.

Besides the increased need for cheap raw materials and food, Britain sought new consumer markets for its manufactured goods, such as textiles. However, as only a partial output could be consumed by British workers due to their low wages to guarantee higher profit rates for capitalist employers, British capitalists were searching for markets for their manufactured products abroad (Luxemburg [1913] 2003). As discussed in the second chapter, capital's expanded accumulation in Britain could not occur on its own basis, as pointed out by Rosa Luxemburg. Capital resorted to incorporating new geographical peripheries into the global value relations to guarantee its socio-metabolic needs and its thirst for expanded reproduction. As British or the US markets could not attend to these needs, British imperialism in the Indo-Pacific became a fundamental instrument to open spaces of commodity production and consumption in the parts of Asia and to incorporate them into the capital circuits (Parron 2022, 2023).

Parron (2022, 2023) shows how the crisis of cotton-led industrialisation around 1830-1840 and the second industrial revolution centred on coal and iron created historical conditions for the crisis of New World slavery. The "revolution in fixed capital"²²¹ again transformed the socio-metabolic needs of capital and, hence, the global value relations by including new geographical dimensions to the world capital accumulation, which again resignified slavery (Parron 2022; Tomich 2004).

In the US, these restructurings, which pushed the shift from slavery towards formally free labour, coincided with the inflow of migrants, the surplus population created in Europe, so much so

²²⁰ According to Marx (1976:274): "the labour-time necessary for the production of labour-power is the same as that necessary for the production of those means of production; in other words, the value of labour-power is the value of the means of subsistence necessary for the maintenance of its owner."

²²¹ The so-called "iron cycle" was represented principally by the emergence of big corporations as a result of the concentration and centralisation of capital. World money was increasingly invested in the built environment and railroads. Railroads intensified the transformations in the international labour markets that concentration and centralisation of capital had triggered: circulation of people, emigration of unemployed agricultural and industrial labourers, and increased competition between farmers previously protected by physical isolation forcing many to go out of activity. The large-scale investments in the means of production and large corporations, counting on long-term and large-scale loans, also reconfigured the financial markets. (Parron 2022; Tomich 2004)

that the depeasantisation in Europe paralleled the repeasantisation in the US. The internalisation of railroads and mass migration combined differently with local land, labour and money markets and produced distinct socio-political and economic effects in the North and South of the US. According to Parron (2022; 2023), it partially explains the tensions between the North and South of the US in the mid-19th century.

Parron (2023) articulates the “second slavery”, new imperialism, food regimes and the second industrial revolution into a unitary historical framework of world accumulation, permitting us to conceive the changing relations between these dimensions of accumulation. Each was engineered as the solution to the contradictions created by industrialisation and the capital-wage labour nexus. The “second slavery” responded to the underproduction of inputs, enabling value creation in capitalist centres. Free trade of foodstuffs was the response to the reproduction of the workforce and permitted the regulation of surplus value. New imperialism was the answer to the overproduction of manufactures by creating new colonial markets. The second industrial revolution was the solution to capital overaccumulation, reorganising the conditions for value production. Parron argues that every one of these solutions intensified and speeded up other crises. The position of slavery changed over time within the developing capitalist world economy in which labour-time of value reshaped the urban-rural relations, relations between capital and labour and between consumption and production (Parron 2022; Tomich 2006). In other words, all these intertwined dimensions of world accumulation created a world economy very different from the Age of Revolution and made slavery politically and socially problematic. In that sense, Parron proposes to combine the political and economic dimensions to explain both the rise and crisis of slavery in the 19th century. The crisis of slavery in the Americas is usually explained through the political actions and decisions of abolitionists and the enslaved people, but, as argued by Parron, they can be better understood if placed in the context of material transformations related to global value relations.

However, the gradual fall of slavery in the Americas was accompanied by the rise of diverse compulsory labour forms, which coexisted with and substituted enslaved labour, as will be discussed in one of the following sections of this chapter. The abolition of racial property changed economic functioning, as labour was no longer acquired through the slave trade, and enslaved persons were no longer used as collateral for bank loans for land purchase (Parron 2022). Nevertheless, the expropriative element continued in the economy as formerly enslaved persons did not benefit from wages and were excluded from the land market, as labour and land markets were racialised. The formerly enslaved workers were classified as “free” according to a “narrow framework of free labour ideology” (Cooper et al. 2000), which established an unambiguous

distinction between free labour and slavery. These compulsory labour relations in the Americas and beyond, migrant labour²²², debt bondage, indentured labour, contract labour, coolie trade and others, could fall in either pole (Parron 2022). Marini, whose work was discussed in the third chapter of this dissertation, argued that the super-exploitation of incipient wage labour and various compulsory labour relations in Brazil in the second part of the 19th century played the same role as slavery in the creation of value and reproducing wage labour in the capitalist core.

Before I endeavour to discuss the transformation of slavery into compulsory labour forms in 19th-century Brazil, I will scrutinise the historiographical works about the rise of “second slavery” in Brazil. Scholars have focused on how the increasing demand for cheap tropical commodities (cotton, sugar and coffee) imposed by the high-productivity commodity circuits was attended by the owners-planters in Brazil, who expanded the use of land, labour, and raw materials, as well as elevated the exploitation-expropriation of enslaved labour, racial violence and upgraded the technology (Blackburn 1988; Marquese 2015; Marquese 2019; Tomich and Marquese 2015).

In Brazil, the “second slavery” analytical category has been used to analyse the particularity of the production based on enslaved workers in the context of the formation of the world market of coffee in the 19th century. By building on the authors (Castro 1984; Fernandes 1976) who had shown qualitative changes in slavery in connection with the changes in the world economy,²²³ the historians aligned with the “second slavery” concept have placed the discussion about slavery back into the framework of global value relations and capital accumulation after the decades of the domination of the research of the micro-histories of slavery.

Tomich and Marquese (2015) have pointed out that slavery that developed since the end of the 18th century in the coffee economy was different from the previous slavery regimes in terms of

²²² Large-scale investments in fixed capital in certain parts of the North Atlantic resulted in massive and accelerated circulation of uprooted labour and commodities in the world. According to Lewis (2010), fifty million Europeans emigrated to the Americas, and fifty million left India and China during the 19th century. These two currents were two sides of the same coin. The non-European peasants became more susceptible to super-exploitation as coerced labour. The narrow free labour ideology helped to humanise the coercive forms of labour exploitation. Moreover, the import of precarious labour into the Caribbean and other regions benefitted the British Empire as it permitted delegitimising the resistance of formerly enslaved workers to the super-exploitation of labour (Parron 2022).

²²³ Fernandes (1976) has distinguished three phases in Brazilian history, each corresponding to qualitative readjustments of slavery. Antonio Barros de Castro (1984) has discussed the dynamics of the decline and rise of agricultural frontiers in the Brazilian context.

massive enslavement of Africans between 1808 and 1850, first through transatlantic trade²²⁴ and then through voluminous internal trade of enslaved bodies,²²⁵ but also concerning the intensity of exploitation and coercion. Moreover, in his book *Feitores do corpo, missionários da mente*, the historian of the University of São Paulo, Rafael Marquese (2004), shows how, in the 19th century, scientific management and the quest for capitalist profits shaped a new kind of economic rationality, which incrementally substituted the Christian one. Also, capitalist calculation defined production based on exploiting enslaved workers' labour.

Coffee consumption had entered the social fabric of the capitalist core metropolitan countries, particularly in Holland, in the second half of the 17th century, so much so that it became known as the “luxury of the poor”. However, the pattern of consumption had remained relatively stable until the coffee leap in the world economy related to the new productive plantation that emerged and consolidated in the 1830s and 1840s in Paraíba Valley in Brazil (comprising the lands of the provinces of São Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Minas Gerais), producing first to the expanding European markets and from the second part of this century onwards mainly to the US market, whose most significant part (90 per cent) of coffee came from Brazil (Marquese 2015:114).

The coffee frontier's constitution and rise in Brazil's centre-south counted on several factors. It was tied to the massive import of enslaved Africans and to the opening of new lands, which at the beginning of the century had been basically unoccupied or sparsely occupied by squatters or smallholders, which were expropriated by capital with the support of the state. The royal government promoted the occupation of these new lands during the first decades of the century through the concession of generous *sesmarias*. This consolidated a typical plantation economy aimed at mercantile activity and profit²²⁶ (Franco [1969] 1997:170). In that sense, the primary accumulation had to start anew, a process that had been seen already before in Pernambuco (Zona

²²⁴ During the first decade of the 19th century, 10,000 enslaved human beings entered Rio de Janeiro. This number almost doubled in 1811-20, reaching almost 19,000 enslaved individuals (26,680-32,770 in Brazil, according to different estimates, see Florentino 2014:67). A significant part of this labour-power was directed to the coffee plantations. A considerable part of this increase was also related to the demand triggered by the Portuguese Royal family's transfer to Brazil and the opening of ports for free trade after 1808 (Tomich et al. 2021). The opening of ports in 1808 permitted the owners of enslaved workers in Portuguese America to establish direct contact with the world market. The most significant number of enslaved Africans were imported through the Port of Rio de Janeiro in 1828 and 1829, that is, 45,000 and 47,000, respectively, which corresponded to abundant coffee harvests in 1833 and 1834 (Marquese and Tomich 2015:36, 46). One million and 220 thousand enslaved workers embarked in the ports of the centre-south of Brazil between 1808 and 1850 (Marquese 2015:122).

²²⁵ Two hundred twenty thousand enslaved workers were dislocated to coffee areas in 1850-1881 (Marquese 2015:122).

²²⁶ Initial capital came from several sources. Although access to money was scarce, the monetary networks were developing, allowing the accumulation of savings, which could finance coffee production. The gold cycle had allowed the accumulation of capital, but also foreign capital, the business of troops, slave trade, and merchant houses of Rio de Janeiro provided capital to the emerging coffee economy (Franco [1969] 1997:22, 207-208).

da Mata) and in Bahia (Recôncavo) at the turn from the 16th to the 17th century or in Maranhão and Campos dos Goitacases in the final decades of the 18th century (Marquese and Tomich 2015:22). The new coffee farms of Paraíba Valley were more extensive, more capitalised, employing a higher number of enslaved workers, which contributed to a substantive concentration of enslaved property and land (Marquese 2019:149). Although the ownership structure of enslaved workers and the dimensions of land property varied,²²⁷ the most significant part of coffee production occurred in farms that concentrated extensive territorial areas and many enslaved workers (Marquese 2019:160). Later, the construction of the railway in the centre-south of Brazil contributed to the expansion of the coffee economy as it permitted the opening of new lands. Coffee production was not only stimulated by the demand for coffee in increasing quantities and rhythms, which initially elevated the commodity's price and resulted in the expansion of plantations. As Marquese, in collaboration with Tomich et al. (2021), argues, Paraíba Valley changed the world coffee production and created a profitable mass market of cheap, low-quality products in large quantities for the expanding European and US markets.

The shift from coffee as a luxury product to a mass product in the context of the reorganisation of the world economy under industrial capitalism and a response to the new resistance patterns of enslaved workers also changed the patterns of labour exploitation (Marquese 2019). The rate of labour exploitation, represented in the metric tons produced per enslaved worker, had increased six times since 1790 based on the data about productivity in the plantations of Saint-Domingue.²²⁸ In Saint-Domingue and Jamaica, one enslaved worker was expected to cultivate, on

²²⁷ Classical historiography in Brazil had sustained an argument that coffee production was based on extensive production units employing a hundred or more enslaved workers. Historiography since 1980 has, however, belied this hypothesis and, based on previously unstudied sources, shown that coffee production integrated many small- and medium-scale proprietors, employing fewer enslaved workers than previously believed. However, studies also show that although the property in enslaved workers was highly disseminated, such municipalities as Bananal and Vassouras demonstrated an elevated concentration of property in persons. Between 1821 and 1880, very big proprietors (owning more than 100 enslaved workers and corresponding to 9 per cent of the owners) concentrated 48 per cent of the enslaved workers; together with big proprietors (owing from 50 to 99 enslaved workers), they made up 21 per cent of proprietors owning 70 per cent of the total number of enslaved workers. These enslaved workers were acquired before the end of the slave trade. Moreover, the ownership of numerous enslaved workers did not necessarily imply latifundium. Hundreds or thousands of enslaved workers of very big proprietors were often distributed between various contiguous farms. Such a form of labour organisation permitted better control of workers (Marquese and Tomich 2015:50-52).

²²⁸ Brazilian coffee production increased exponentially. During the first years of independence (1822-23), coffee production doubled compared to pre-independence, reaching 13,500 tons. In 1833, Brazil produced 67,000 tons, equivalent to the total world production in 1790. As shown by Tomich et al. (2021), in the French colony of Saint-Domingue, approximately 158,000 enslaved labourers worked in coffee plantations in 1789, producing 32,000 metric tons of coffee. Almost a hundred years later, 285,000 enslaved labourers worked in coffee plantations of Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo and Minas Gerais, producing almost 350,000 metric tons. That is to say that when 0.22 metric tons per year per enslaved worker were obtained in Saint-Domingue, this proportion was 1.23 in Brazil. This refers to productivity, which was six times higher. When Saint-Domingue's productivity was compared only with the production of Bananal, the district in the Paraíba Valley in 1854, then with 7,662 enslaved workers was produced one-fourth of the former's production, that is, 8,100 metric tons of coffee (Tomich et al. 2021).

average, 1000-1500 coffee plants, and in Cuba, 2000 plants, which was equivalent to the rate of exploitation of Brazilian enslaved workers in Paraíba Valley in its initial years. Estimates from 1860 have registered that with the specialisation of plantations, enslaved workers were required to cultivate 3800 coffee plants (Marquese and Tomich 2015:54). Other sources report 5000 thousand coffee bushes in 1878 (Fragoso and Rios 1995:200), which represented a significant labour intensification in comparison with the Caribbean pattern (Marquese 2008:2004), and which was not left without a reaction from the side of enslaved workers who were using a variety of means to resist these labour demands, imposed by gang and task systems.

In the beginning, it was not mechanisation, as in sugar production previously in Brazil or contemporary Cuba, that allowed the increase in the rate of exploitation to elaborate mass production for the mass consumption of coffee. The rise in productivity – measured in metric tons per worker – is derived instead from labour's material and social organisation. Coffee production in Paraíba Valley increased the scale and changed the organisation of the spatial economy.

Marquese (2010) has studied the forms of administration of enslaved labour based on the spatial organisation of the farm environment, which was fundamental in imposing a type of discipline and labour rhythm existing in coffee plantations. Based on many visual sources,²²⁹ in collaboration with Tomich et al. (2021), he discusses how a terrace for drying coffee leaves (*terreiro*) constituted the centre of the coffee production activity. Around the terrace were organised the residents of enslaved workers and the storehouses and work buildings, either in rectangular or triangular form, depending on the topography. Hence, the barracks of enslaved Paraíba Valley workers were integrated into the workplace. Compared with sugar production, which integrated the field- and manufacturing labour, the rhythm in coffee production was dictated by this nucleus, which had an essential role in coordinating the labour of enslaved workers in space and time. Labour control was founded on rigorous codes of confinement, expressing a prison and militarised character. This nucleus of the plantation, combining the living and working areas, commanded the collective labour process, established social hierarchies, and allowed social control over enslaved people (Marquese 2010:96-98; Tomich et al. 2021).

Super-exploitation imposed on captives was permitted by the combination of two primary modalities of labour organisation – gang system and task system – also used in other New World's big farms (Marquese and Tomich 2015:54). As already discussed above, both modalities had been

²²⁹ Marquese (idem.) has studied the new mechanisms of labour appropriation in coffee farms of Paraíba Valley based on several visual materials, for example, the paintings of the Italian painter Facchinetti, paintings of Georg Grimm, photo documentation of Marc Ferrez, woodcuts of J. B. Wiegandt.

employed already in sugar production in the 17th century and task system was also used in British factories. Compared to previous coffee plantations, Paraíba Valley stood out for its scale²³⁰. The gang system, a collective work of groups of 20-25 enslaved male and female workers, administered under a unified command, implied that every labourer was responsible for a row between coffee plants, having to work in unison following the rhythm of more rapid labourers, all supervised by overseers, who were compelled to appropriate the possible maximum labour from the workers. The vertical allocation of coffee bushes along hillsides, with great spacing between the rows, permitted the overseers to easily supervise the gangs in weeding and cropping, consequently imposing a higher number of coffee plants per worker. Hence, the rationale behind the technique of planting the coffee bushes was labour control (Marquese 2008).

During the harvest period, the farms in Paraíba Valley mixed gang labour with an individualised task system. The latter compelled every enslaved worker to collect the largest possible quantity of product under the threat of punishment in case the quota was not reached. If the quota was exceeded, the workers could receive a monetary reward instead of free time. Whereas work was collective, punishment and reward were individual. A monetary reward was also provided for extra work on Sundays. Money incentives gave the planters the means to bargain the labour time of enslaved workers between surplus labour time in mercantile production and necessary labour time in subsistence production on provision grounds. Regarding the tasks, the planters explored the individual limits of every enslaved worker to the maximum. In that sense, in harvest, the use of gang labour, in combination with the emphasis on the highest maximum quantity and individual measurement, allowed the imposition of a vast amount of labour on enslaved workers (Marquese 2008:201-202). With that kind of labour organisation and quota system, neither the coolies of Ceilão nor the peasants of Java could compete with the exploitation of Brazilian enslaved workers (Marquese 2015, 2019:159-165).

In 1860, the processing and sorting of coffee beans became mechanised, stimulated by the scarcity and high cost of labour-power. This increased the exploitation of enslaved workers, as the machine dictated a faster labour rhythm, which allowed the processing of a greater quantity of coffee bushes. It also liberated part of the labour force for fieldwork (Marquese 2019). Young Brazilian-born male enslaved workers, who were sold to the new coffee frontiers through domestic trade in 1870, were submitted to much harder patterns of exploitation than they were used to. They

²³⁰ As demonstrated by Marquese in collaboration with Tomich et al. (2021), compared to the earlier coffee farms, the ones of Paraíba Valley were significantly more extensive, aggregating from 250 to 500 enslaved workers. Also, the gangs of enslaved workers were much bigger. For example, one documented farm, Fazenda Flores do Paraíso (Valença municipality of Fluminense part of Paraíba Valley), included 316 alqueires and employed 454 enslaved workers.

were forced to remain in the *senzala* square, obey rigid disciplinary protocols and meet an enormous workload. This triggered many tensions and was one of the differences between old and new coffee frontiers (Marquese 2013b:310).

Coffee production is one of the fascinating cases to illustrate how the global value relations, which, according to McMichael, Parron and Tomich, were in the 19th century dominated by wage labour, although not quantitatively, was entangled with various competing unfree and non-wage labour forms. At the beginning of the century, Brazilian enslaved-labour-based production competed with declining coffee regions in British colonies where slavery was abolished and with other centres of production operating on enslaved labour such as Cuba and on compulsory labour arrangements such as Java. Java initiated with free peasant labour but pursued subordinating it to new mechanisms of coercion (Marquese 2013b). The Dutch colony, Java, in Indonesia, reveals how the integration into the world market organised by industrial capital created new forms of exploitation of coerced labour or readjusted old ones to the new conditions of the world economy and how these arrangements of unfree and compulsory labour were put in competition with each other. Recognising that with free labour in large units of production, it was hard to compete with Brazilian production due to its proximity with European markets and employment of cheap enslaved African workers, in 1830, the Dutch colonial state imposed on free Indonesian peasants a land rent paid in product. It compelled the peasants to allocate one-fifth of their lands to grow items determined by the government. Unlike the plantation operating with enslaved workers in the Americas, the production and labour process in peasant family units was not supervised and, therefore, not controlled directly by capital. The state fixed the price, which permitted the colonial powers to appropriate a colossal surplus from peasants (Marquese 2015:123; Marquese and Tomich 2015:55).

Marquese and Tomich (2015) have highlighted that the novelty of Paraíba Valley lies in its unprecedented scale in relation to previous frontiers. Slavery in Brazil was a radically modern labour regime. Coffee, the means of alertness and control, was inseparable from the urban industrial societies and the work rhythm dictated by the clock. Besides promoting one of the most intense flows of enslaved Africans to the New World, the Paraíba Valley planters also destroyed, within only three generations, one of the richest forests in the world. The historical landscape of Paraíba Valley was shaped by the signs of modernity: mass consumption, mass enslavement, and mass destruction of nature (Marquese and Tomich 2015:56). With the study of coffee production in Paraíba Valley, the authors establish a tight connection between the expanding industrial proletariat Britain and the US and Brazilian dark proletariat of enslaved workers, hence mass consumption and mass production, as part of the interdependent formation of the global working class.

By emphasising the qualitative transformation, reproduction, rise and fall of slavery in the 19th century within the same mode of production, that is, the capitalist mode of production, the scholars of “second slavery” make an essential point regarding flexibility, adaptability, and viability of slavery under the 19th-century industrial capitalism, instead of declaring it to be moribund. At the same time, they deviate from the argument, hegemonic these days, that these were principally the human actions and decisions that led to the crisis of slavery. They argue that abolitionism and the resistance of the enslaved should be analysed within the context of global value relations. Moreover, the analysis of the mass consumption of metropolitan proletarians and mass production by enslaved workers in increasingly specialised peripheral economies illuminate even more the questions raised by Franco about the interrelation of enslaved workers in Brazil and wage workers in Europe and the US since the dawn of capital in the 16th century.

Some scholars, like McMichael and Parron, recognise that value relations have created world labour through the world market and world money since the dawn of capital in the 16th century. However, the “second slavery” scholars tend to draw a sharp distinction between the first and the second slavery, as “two qualitatively distinct relations of slavery and processes of slave development” (Tomich 2004:69). Transformations in the 19th-century world economy led to the qualitative change in slavery in the sphere of production and the change of its meaning in global value relations. Although the qualitatively different world economy in the 19th century was dominated by value relations under industrial capitalism, which reconfigured the meaning of slavery, arguing that it included radical reconstitution and destruction of relations characterising the “first slavery” is not convincing in light of the contributions discussed earlier in this thesis. When one can speak of “micro-slavery” or “first slavery” in Brazil, then only in the first half of the 16th century, when indigenous workers were used as forced labourers to produce use-values²³¹. That “slave as productive labour took precedence over the slave as a commodity”,²³² suggested by “second slavery” scholars as a shift characterising the 19th-century mass slavery, was, according to Alencastro (2000), an essential feature of the productive system of the colonial regime of exploitation established in the South Atlantic in the 16th century under the capitalist world economy in formation. It has already been discussed above that *escravismo*, as a colonial productive system founded on slavery, as a legally guaranteed mode of labour control (Alencastro 2000:32), emerged in the 16th century in the Atlantic islands. At this moment, slavery became a more competitive

²³¹ About the indigenous slavery as the “first slavery”, see Schwartz (1985).

²³² This argument sustains that those profits during the colonial period depended more on the slave trade than on the competitive organisation of labour (McMichael 1991:327).

labour form than free labour in the Portuguese Atlantic context. The slave trade became productively attached to the colonial productive system (Alencastro 2000:32) under the pressures of the emerging world economy. This tends to speak in favour of Wallerstein's argument about slavery as a mode of labour control since European colonial expansion into the New World and not as a consequence of the 19th-century expansion of industrial capital (Tomich and Zeuske 2008), even if more centres of production worked by enslaved labour were included in the circuit of industrial capital which of course caused many radical changes in existing socio-economic structures. At the same time, as I have tried to show during this chapter, several features that have been emphasised as novel characteristics of the 19th-century productive and labour processes were present in the 16th and 17th-century sugar plantations, for example, the industrial character of production as well as forms of labour organisation (gang and task systems) even if these became more intense in the 19th century. No wonder Castro (1980) has argued that the 16th-century labour organisation in the sugar mill resembled the 19th-century industrial agriculture in the periphery and the large-scale industrial factory in the core. In the 16th century, colonial Brazil was inserted in the incipient international division of labour, which was becoming consolidated in the 19th century under industrial capital. Hence, it makes much more sense to argue that processes established in their embryonic forms were reconfigured, deepened and intensified over the centuries.

The "second slavery" scholars tend to overemphasise the novelty of world markets in the 19th century. Although in the mercantile period, trade relations were politically organised, so the world market was segmented. With the fall of the colonial system, previously politically organised relations became direct economic relations. However, one should not downplay the world market's earlier relevance, as Castro suggested (1980). Castro has already shown the limits of politically determined commodity prices by the metropolitan powers during the colonial period. In that sense, he suggests that metropolitan domination had been more porous than usually assumed.

It would be more interesting to discuss the changes and continuities through various technical-economic transformations triggered by integrating new agricultural frontiers into the world exchange relations, which influenced the social labour organisation and changed social structures. The inter-colonial market competition of productive centres using enslaved workers is suggested by Castro (1984) to characterise the period before the 19th century, which explains the logic of the decline and rise of commodity frontiers. The colonial production was less rigid than the "second slavery" argument allows to conclude. It was included in the system of the flows of the world market. As observed by Franco ([1969] 1997:217), the "rigidity of colonial monoculture and its dependence on shifting capitalist system made it cyclical: any modification – as bigger

availability of lands, higher profitability of enslaved labour, simple technical invention – permitted an advancement of a new centre, liquidated the previously hegemonic one”.

Studies which have highlighted the qualitative change in slavery in the 19th century tend to rely on Marx’s (1976) observations about the US South and Cuba. Before the 19th century, slavery there would be circumscribed to local needs and had conserved a “light patriarchal character”, but insofar as the production becomes directed to the world market, the production itself starts to turn around the “production of surplus value for the sake of surplus value”, resulting in the brutal increase in the exploitation of enslaved workers, the extension of the working day, and the reduction of their life expectancy. Brazilian scholars have shown that the integration of production based on enslaved workers into the world market had critical consequences on the labour process, triggering its internal reorganisation and intensifying labour exploitation in the 19th century. However, as shown, it occurred also in the context of the colonial sugar economy. Brazilian political economist Antonio Barros de Castro (1980:101), the researcher of Pernambuco’s sugar economy, has drawn attention to the fact that Marx overestimated the previous “closure” as the “second slavery” scholars tend to underestimate the earlier integration to the world market and global value relations.

5.2 Law, discipline, and labour in liberal capitalism

5.2.1 Slavery in law in imperial Brazil

The global socio-economic and political transformations triggered by the Era of Revolutions and the emergence of British political and economic hegemony under the domination of industrial capitalism shaped the Brazilian imperial legislation regarding the slavery regime. The changes in the capitalist world economy and geopolitics interacted with the strengthening of the sugar economy in the northeast and the growth of coffee production²³³ in the southeast of Brazil, for what the planters demanded legal guarantees for the continuation of slavery in the context of fear triggered by Haitian Revolution. Discipline, control, and expropriation of enslaved labour took new dimensions with liberal-industrial capitalism and expanding consumer markets constituted by the growing industrial proletariat and middle classes in the core countries of capitalism.

With the independence and foundation of the Empire of Brazil (September 7, 1822), the newly founded state inherited all of the colonial legislation, which provided a legal basis for maintaining the mode of labour control based on slavery. The civil life in the empire, including the

²³³ The participation of Brazilian coffee in the world market increased from 18 per cent in 1820 to 52 per cent in 1850 (Parron 2011:25).

civil status of enslaved workers, continued to be regulated by Book IV of Philippine Ordinances until being partly substituted by the Free Womb Law of 1871, which conceded “civil rights” to enslaved individuals ²³⁴ (Campello 2018).

The first Constitution of Brazil promulgated in 1824 sanctioned slavery by remaining silent about it (Marquese 2002). More specifically, the Constitution attributed the condition of citizen only to those born free (*ingênuos*) and born into slavery but had obtained their liberty (*libertos*). However, the latter did not have the same civil and political rights as the former (Mattos 2000). The Constitution did not apply to enslaved individuals, and it implicitly admitted that there was a category of people who were not citizens because they were enslaved. At the same time, Article 179 of the Constitution and Article 179 of the Criminal Code of 1830 considered enslaving “a free person, who is in possession of his liberty” a crime (Campello 2018).

Concomitantly, article 179 of the Constitution guaranteed a full right to private property, which served as a basis for the maintenance of slavery as a labour control under the aegis of liberal ideology (Marquese 2002; Mattos 2000:10). In the words of Mattos (2000: 34), “[t]he maintenance of slavery was legally anchored in . . . the principle, typical of liberalism: absolutisation of property right, which could be confiscated by the State by means of compensation.” In that way, the right to private property sanctioned by law guaranteed the owner-planter class property in persons, which ensured planters' permanent access to the productive capacity of enslaved human beings. Two points that had appeared in the Constituent Assembly (dissolved on November 12, 1823) were left out of the final text but strongly expressed the attempt to formulate slavery in terms of liberal ideas of contract and property. First, the Bill of 1823 of José Bonifácio de Andrada e Silva, the Constituent Assembly member, was supposed to be the guideline for the new Constitution and preview a “gradual manumission” of enslaved individuals. “Gradual manumission” in Bonifácio’s speech in the Constituent Assembly was justified with interest to protect private property: “turn the captive ‘worthy of freedom’, emancipate them gradually, and at the same time honour the ‘contracts between seigneurs and slaves’ to not corrupt the sacred principle of individual property” (Bonifácio 1977, cited in Vainfas 1988:48). The liberal formula of contract, watched by the state, which entered in the Article no. 265 of the project but was finally excluded, was ironically pointed out by Caio Prado Jr. ([1963] 1994:57) as the “perfect portrait of bourgeois liberalism”: “The Constitution recognises the contracts (!) between masters and slaves, and the government shall keep watch over

²³⁴ The civil status of enslaved individuals was modified with the Free Womb Law (Law no. 2040, September 28, 1871), besides abolishing slavery for the children of enslaved mothers. It revoked the dispositive to reverse the status of freed persons and allowed enslaved people to own property to obtain manumission without needing their owners' authorisation. I will talk more about the implications of this to labour relations (Campello 2018).

their enforcement.” Some decades before, the southern states of the US had formulated slavery in terms of the liberal ideals of private property in their “slave codes”, already before the cotton boom²³⁵ (Oakes 1990).

When it comes to criminal law, there is a discontinuation between the colonial and imperial periods, as the Book V of Philippine Ordinances was substituted by the Criminal Code (1830), the Criminal Procedure Code (1832) and specific legislation. However, there are significant continuities regarding framing the enslaved individuals as the person in law. Despite being considered a movable good by civil law, enslaved individuals were legally capable according to criminal law and, like that, subordinate to the Criminal Code (Campello 2018). The owner did not have the right to the life or death of their enslaved workers. However, at the same time, enslaved workers continued not to have a right to denounce their owners due to their power to punish, according to Art. 75 of the Criminal Procedure Code of 1832 (Campello 2018).

The Constitution of 1824 (art. 179, § 19) prohibited whipping, torture, and hot-iron branding, which had been allowed by the book V of Philippine Ordinances to both – free and enslaved people – in the case of theft, for example. Moreover, the Art. 60 of the Criminal Code prohibited the penalty of whipping, but not for enslaved workers. However, it set a limit of fifty whiplashes daily (Art. 60) (Cunha 1985:436). Nevertheless, the limit on whiplashes established by the Art. 60 applied to the punishment under the judicial regime. The punitive power of planters in the domestic sphere was regulated by Art. 14, § 6 of the Criminal Code and allowed “moderate punishment” in the case of “justifiable crimes”, as it had also been stipulated in the Ordinances (Campello 2018). Enslaved workers were subordinated to these punishments until 1886, which confirms that the restrictions established by the Constitution applied only to free and freed people (Wehling 2006). In the case of severe abuses by owners-planters, the enslaved workers could request their sale (circular n. 263, of November 25, 1852, of the Ministry of the Empire), or in the

²³⁵ In the “Age of Revolutions”, the preeminence of duty and obligation was substituted by the preeminence of individual rights. According to Oakes (1990:62-72), the southern states of the US formulated their constitutions according to the triad of “life, liberty and property”, inspired by John Locke’s liberal political philosophy. Accordingly, slavery was defined as a denial of rights, written in the law in terms of the “exception” of enslaved people from the rights of free citizens. Maryland’s “Act for the Liberties of People” of 1638 located the enslaved people in parentheses, and in the South Carolina Slave Code of 1712, the enslaved people were excluded from civil society. In the 19th century, the laws regulating slavery became very specific. By commenting the definition of freedom and from that stemming definition of slavery, given by one of the most prominent antebellum proslavery legal theorists, Thomas R. R. Cobb, James Oakes (1990:69-72) argues that “[o]nly in a society where freedom was understood as the primacy of rights could “*absolute or pure slavery*” be defined in simple Lockean terms as “the condition of that individual over whose life, liberty and property another has an unlimited control””. Like that enslaved individual, as a threat to private property, was located outside of society. Since their earliest slave codes, the southern states formulated slavery in the language of private property, which was compatible with the liberal political culture. Accordingly, in 1852, the legislature of Alabama determined that slavery granted “on the master property in and the right to the time, labour and services of the slave, and to enforce obedience on the part of the slave, to all his lawful commands” (Oakes 1990:69-72).

case of a well-founded fear of mistreatment, the owner-planter could have been made to write a term of security (provision in article 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code). According to the scholar of slavery and law in imperial Brazil, Arno Wehling (2006), it could be said that these mechanisms were most probably inefficient, colliding with planters' interests, who made use of the constitutional right to private property to justify abusive punishments (Malheiro [1866] 1976:38n22).

The increasing fear of the insurrections of enslaved people among the owner-planter class as an aftermath of the Haitian Revolution and increasing incidents of rebellions in Brazil, whose most vital expression was the Malê Revolt in Salvador of Bahia in 1835, led to the harshening of the punitive apparatus and establishment of measures to control the movement of enslaved people. In the face of an increasing number of enslaved labourers imported through the trade and increasing risk of rebellions, the intervention of the state and its legal apparatus had to become more effective in fixing the workers in their value-producing positions in the plantations to permit the continuation of the agricultural production without interruptions, which was reached with the amendments made to the Criminal Code and creation of new laws restrictive of the mobility of enslaved people as well as free Africans. Insurrections continued to be treated as a severe crime by law (Wehling 2006; Zaffaroni et al. [2003] 2011).

As a response to the massive Malê Revolt (1835), which united enslaved and free people, nationwide Law no. 04 of June 10, 1835, was promulgated to intensify the control over enslaved people. This Law would elevate terror to a new level by broadening the range of those who could be the subjects of the death penalty. It created a norm which protected not only the owners and their families but also individuals (and their families) who were responsible for the management of enslaved labour in the plantation productive process, such as overseers (Campello 2018), legitimating the intensification of the labour expropriation.

The law typified the insurrection of enslaved workers as a delict punishable by the death penalty (Art. 2). The Criminal Code (Art.113) considered crime the insurrection, which was defined as a gathering of "twenty or more slaves for freedom through force" (Campello 2018). The punishment for the organisers could be the death penalty (the highest penalty), galley service (forced labour) perpetually or for fifteen years. The rest was applied whipping. Moreover, in Bahia and Rio de Janeiro, laws were passed that restricted the mobility of free Africans and enslaved individuals after certain hours and on certain days, being unable to move even with the pass of the owner (Wehling 2006; Zaffaroni et al. [2003] 2011:425-426). Although, almost until the end of slavery, the enslaved people were subject to severe types of punishment, essential laws were passed in the 19th century, such as the abolition of the slave trade in 1850, Free Womb Law in 1871, which

declared free the offsprings of enslaved mothers, the emancipation of enslaved individuals of more than 60 years old in 1885, and finally the abolition of slavery itself in 1888. The Free Womb Law will be discussed in the last section of this chapter in the context of regulating labour relations, which involved freed people.

5.2.2 Redefinition of slavery on a liberal basis

When the conventional view has been that slavery and liberal ideology are incompatible, since the 1970s, some Brazilian and US scholars (Bosi 1992; Cunha 1985; Franco 1976, 1993; Marquese 2002; Mattos 2000; Oakes 1990) have questioned this incompatibility. Both the southern planters in the US and the Brazilian owner-planter class redefined slavery, the slave trade, and the autonomy of the private productive sphere according to the liberal ideology enforced by law (Marquese 2002; Oakes 1990).

In the context of political emancipation and the foundation of the national state in Brazil, several proposals emerged about extensive state intervention in the private power of planters over enslaved workers in plantations and the gradual emancipation of the enslaved population. However, these emancipatory projects were defeated, and the first Constitution of Brazil sanctioned slavery (Marquese 2002:63). According to Marquese (2002), at the beginning of the 19th century, the owner-planters preserved the autonomy of the private-productive sphere, which had already existed in the colonial period. Nevertheless, they redefined it based on the liberal constitutional order, as the ownership in persons was articulated discursively as the right to private property protected by law. Thereby, the division of responsibilities between the state and the private interests concerning the control of the enslaved population was preserved. The state apparatus of violence was directed to the control of enslaved people outside of the units of production, not interfering in the productive units regarding the questions of discipline and labour exploitation.

Hence, in the 19th-century liberal order, amid agricultural expansion, the owner-planter class understood liberty in terms of conserving the subjugation of people under slavery by legal coercion. Accordingly, in the new agricultural frontiers of Brazil, the US South, and Cuba, “freedom, without mediations, of capital, required a total subjection of labour” (Bosi1992: 209). Capitalist relations did not need mediation through the contract to appropriate labour. It was done directly through the legally guaranteed coercive attachment of workers to the productive system, but the aim was the same: to enhance the capitalist relations of production.

It was also from the perspective of protecting the right to private property that the right to manumission was kept as a customary right. According to Cunha (1985), the right of manumission of those enslaved workers who presented their value, remained the private right of the owners-planters until 1871, when it was incorporated into the Free Womb Law. Hence, transforming it into a written law had been deliberately opposed by the owners, as in its customary form, it enabled them to maintain control not only over the enslaved people but also over the freed people. Leaving the manumissions (in fact, revocable) in the hands of the owner class enabled the creation of a dependent population, which in the 19th-century context would serve two aims. First, it maintained in the hands of the owners-planters the control over the enslaved people as well as over the new “dangerous classes,” made up of free non-whites, freedmen and -women. This category had grown significantly since the beginning of the 19th century. Secondly, in the face of the persisting and growing labour needs, it guaranteed the availability of labour-power by maintaining the freed population in the condition of dependency, as the aggregates in the margins of the plantations were available whenever needed. The “reserve free labour” also supplied foodstuff to the nearby towns and villages (Cunha 1985:436-437).

That economic liberalism in the 19th century could very well combine with the subjugation of enslaved labour by legal coercion is reflected in the defense of the “free” trade of enslaved bodies by the propertied classes²³⁶ (Bosi 1992:198-200). Hence, the formation of the coffee economy, particularly the large productive units in Paraíba Valley between 1835 and 1850, did not count only on the pressures of the world market but also depended on the political action to create an institutional framework at the national level to kick-start the productive activity and control the world market. To reopen the transatlantic trade of enslaved bodies to guarantee the source of labour-power, the organised coffee planters²³⁷ could annul the imperial law of November 7 1831, which had made the trade illegal. The coffee planters were using liberal discourse about free market and private property to justify the continuation of slavery and trade of enslaved bodies as well as rebuking any state interference in the relations of owners and enslaved workers, resorting to the support of the Constitution of 1824, which had crystallised the principle of free enterprise (Bosi 1991; Marquese 2002). In that context, the trade was reopened, resulting in the import of 238,000

²³⁶ According to Celso Furtado, Brazilian liberal economists were more loyal to Adam Smith than the British and US Americans (Furtado 1959, cited in Bosi 1992:207). This is not so much out of the place if we consider that Smith himself justified slavery in colonies morally, although not economically, except in very large-scale plantations.

²³⁷ The pro-slavery forces were formed by the coalition of moderate ex-liberals and “*ex-caramurus*” with the more capitalised rural landowners from centre-south – the base that formed the future Conservative Party (Marquese and Tomich 2009).

illegally enslaved Africans in the second part of the 1830s, a number which reached 308,000 Africans in the 1840s. After 1831, a situation appeared in which all the imported enslaved people were formally free. However, the state did not question the effective ownership of landowners. New frontiers in Rio de Janeiro, Minas Gerais and West of São Paulo, which emerged after the official end of the slave trade in 1850, already had to count on the internal trade to obtain labour power (Marquese and Tomich 2015:49). As suggested by Parron (2011:287-303), also after the end of the slave trade, the imperial state continued protecting the private property rights of coffee planters in the mass of workers whom they kept in captivity in their properties.

As observed by Marquese (2002), the nature of the legal order of the slavery regime was captured prudently by Perdigão Malheiro in his *Ensaio Histórico-Jurídico-Social* ([1866] 1976). As suggested by Marquese, in this work, Malheiro did not mention the State rule, which would interfere with the sovereignty of the plantation and regulate the exploitation or discipline of enslaved workers. Instead, Malheiro tackled the issue of owners' rights in their enslaved labour force. By echoing the slave codes in the US South, he wrote that “the master has the right to obtain from the slave every possible advantage, that is, to demand his services gratuitously in the way and manner that suits him most.” In the footnotes, he adds that this right is the necessary consequence derived from the property rights that masters held in their enslaved workers. At the same time, the planters were “prohibited to abuse the strength, the condition, the age, the sex of the slave, demand excessive, incompatible services.”

Moreover, they were responsible for the maintenance of enslaved workers regarding subsistence, clothing, and medical care, as it should not be forgotten that they were human beings. Hence, based on that, Marquese (2002:64) has concluded that the non-intervention in the private-productive life on plantations implied a separation between private interests and public power. By that, the State would have secured the reproduction of the structures of social hierarchies prevalent at that time and the reproduction of capital, with its implications for expropriation and exploitation of labour.

Whereas the lawyers of the time framed their defence of owners according to the Lockean liberal theory of natural rights²³⁸, the owners-planters articulated the principles of liberal political economy in defending the non-intervention of public powers in the private-productive life of

²³⁸ In his defence of the owner of enslaved workers, Raimundo José Viana, the lawyer Francisco de Melo Coutinho Vilhena argued in 1874 the following: “The slave is an entity deprived of civil rights; it does not have property, individual freedom, honour and reputation; his entire right as a human creature is reduced to that of the preservation of life and the integrity of his body; and only when the master infringes [this] right that incurs a punishable crime. There is no crime without violating a right” (Mattos 1995:204).

planters—any intervention of what, how and how much to produce would cause economic dysfunction. The owners-planters alleged to know best what to do with their factors of production – lands, capital, and labour (Marquese 2002:65-66).

One could say that the protection of private property, which had prevailed in the colonial period and had sustained the private punitive power, was reframed under liberal ideology and was written in the Constitution of 1924 (Marquese 2002). The reformulation of slavery in the new political, legal, and ideological framework made explicit the contradictions of the fundamental principles of the bourgeois socio-political and economic order - the right to freedom and the private property right. The legally guaranteed property right in the person of enslaved workers ensured the planters and traffickers of enslaved bodies the right to freely commodify, rent and hire the labour-power of others and the conversion of expropriated labour into legitimate economic gains. As affirmed by Franco (1993:53), “against the grain”, in the liberal capitalist order, the enslaved person is not a contrary but rather a coherent figure; in other words, the enslaved person is an “emblematic figure of liberalism as an authoritarian potential.”

5.3 Labour mixes in the 19th century: permutation of labour relations

The first section of this chapter discussed that the hegemony of industrial capital in the world economy had triggered a shift in the global agricultural frontiers, intensified slavery in areas where it had been previously inexistent, or given it a new life. If in the 19th century, Brazil experienced the most significant inflow of black Africans who were enslaved to produce coffee, sugar, and cotton, and mine minerals, which were highly demanded in the international markets, then on the other hand, in 1816-17, the enslaved population represented approximately 31 per cent of the total population (Cardoso 2008:74). According to the first national census of 1872, from the total population of ten million, the total enslaved population was 1,5 million, of whom 1,2 million

were listed as economically active.²³⁹ Thus, the segment of the free population was gradually growing, forming three-fourths of the total population in 1872. Within this segment, the so-called “free” labourers did not necessarily proletarianise (Cardoso 2008; Franco 1997) in the strict meaning of the term. As discussed, the non-enslaved population was present in the colonial period. In the year of the abolition of the slave trade, these free people constituted 75 per cent of the entire population. It has been characterised as heterogeneous, racially mixed, mainly miserable, dispersed on the national territory (Cardoso 2008), “free” from the means of production (Moura 1998) and nomadic (Franco [1969] 1996), in search of its means of subsistence. Although somewhat marginally incorporated into the commercial sector that defined the hegemonic imperial economic structure, these dispossessed workers, including freedmen and freedwomen, blacks, *pardos* and indigenous peoples, the rural poor, European and Asian migrants were along the 19th century subjugated to different forms of compulsory labour arrangements. Hence, we can witness that capitalist development implied the transformation of labour relations from one coerced labour form to another and subordinating the free population under various compulsory labour arrangements, which were integrated into the complex mix of labour patterns, varying regionally, among economic sectors and enterprises. As affirmed by Cardoso (2008), considering that this heterogeneous “free” population constituted more than half of the population in the middle of the 19th century, they can no longer be regarded as a simple intermediate category.

In the last chapter, I discussed these mixes in terms of “slavery regimes” (Schwartz 1992:39) in the colonial northeastern sugar economy. The “slavery regimes” varied regionally, representing differences in the cane production in Pernambuco and Bahia, gold and diamond mines of Minas Gerais, coffee farms in Paraíba Valley, the urban economy in Salvador and Rio de Janeiro, sugarcane plantations in Rio de Janeiro (Cardoso 2008:74). The patterns of the subjection of

²³⁹ Of these 1,2 million economically active enslaved people, 808,000 were employed in agriculture, and 320,000 were absorbed in coffee production. Most of them did not work in coffee or sugar farms. Minas Gerais province, with the largest enslaved population in the empire, has been considered unique because of its farming sector, which produced for the domestic market and employed the most significant part of the enslaved labour. Less than a quarter of the 382,000 enslaved people in the 1870s were working in coffee production. Enslaved workers and free labourers were employed in cattle ranching, food processing, and grain growing. At the same time, enslaved workers also constituted skilled and semi-skilled labour. Pernambuco had quite a similar distribution pattern of enslaved labour, as 30-40 per cent of the labourers were occupied outside the plantation complex in the 19th century. Cotton production, ranching and food production also absorbed enslaved labour. There, enslaved workers were occupied in export agriculture and the production of staples – rice, jerked beef, manioc flour, tobacco, cotton, poultry, pig and product, grains, corn - for the local market. Regarding the distribution of the property of enslaved persons, the coffee and sugar zones had productive units with a high concentration of enslaved workers. In contrast, elsewhere, they were pretty equally distributed in small holdings. Interestingly, in 1872, 345,000 economically active enslaved workers were only indirectly related to agricultural activities. There were, for example, 95,000 enslaved workers listed as day labourers. They were also in textile factories, domestic service, and construction. They constituted a vital labour force in urban activities. All in all, as it can be seen, in the 19th century, the labour of enslaved workers was very broadly used in any possible economic activity (Klein and Luna 2010:102-109).

enslaved workers varied: coercion was milder in the poorer and smaller farms of the northeast but harsher in the more affluent areas and more extensive plantations. Enslaved workers, various coerced and “free” labourers, were living and working together in the less capitalised northeastern sugar farms, especially during the harvesting season. However, it was less common in wealthier regions or bigger plantations, whose owners could afford an enormous amount of enslaved workers (Cardoso 2008:74). The heterogeneity of slavery regimes is argued to have shaped the diverse forms of subjecting freedmen and freedwomen of African origin, Brazilian born criollos, indigenous people, free rural poor and European migrant labour to new forms of compulsory labour (Fragoso 1996).

What has been defined as the long and slow “transition” from slavery to “free” labour in the 19th century (Cardoso 2008) seems to be an expression of the further complexification of the patterns of labour relations, ranging from sharecropping, subsistence economy, labour tenancy, traditional forms of rent, indentured servitude, contract labour. As had been observed already by Prado (1979), various of these employment relations were intermixed not only throughout the country but also within one single region, in a single farm enterprise, and within the worker families. He observed that they tended to shift back and forth, even from one season to another. Contrary to those who had defined them as “traditional and feudal” (Ianni 1961:33) or as “feudal residues” (Singer 1961:71-2),²⁴⁰ Prado (1979) had maintained that under the appearance of feudal features of employer-worker relations, these were essentially commercial, economic relations of exploitation, sustaining the Banaji’s argument (2010) about disguised wage labour.

Amid this so-called transition in the context of the shift and emergence of new agricultural frontiers, increasing demand for agricultural commodities and scarcity of enslaved labour created by the end of the slave trade, the owner-planter classes in the Americas were forced to employ enslaved workers together with wage workers, sharecroppers and peasants (Tomich 2004:70f). As shown by André Gunder Frank (1967), at the same time, the workers, propertyless or mere workers on their unviable lands, were forced to obtain their means of subsistence by selling their labour-power in different forms: either for money (wage workers), or for products (payment in kind), or for the right to use land (tenants), and either by paying with money (renting), paying with product

²⁴⁰ As traditional and feudal, contrary to labour for money wages, Otávio Ianni (idem.) and Paul Singer (idem.) considered them different evolutionary stages in the direction of capitalist socio-economic structure. At the same time, wage labour and leasing land through tenancy were just formally capitalist, as under the appearance of economic relations emerge the real relations of personal subordination, which are the signs of servitude and should be considered as “feudal residues” (Singer idem.). It was the “feudalism coexists with capitalism” thesis. By not fitting into the category of the ideal-typical proletarian, they were the expressions of non-capitalist or incomplete capitalist relations. They had to be overcome by the capitalist development pushed forward by the national industrial bourgeoisie.

(sharecroppers) or paying with labour (unpaid, forced labour). The form of the expropriation relation, or their combination, is tied to the dominant economic structure and relation. That is, it depends on the capitalist interests of owners, which, in turn, are shaped by their participation in the capitalist economy. Hence, the use of one mode of labour control or their combination depends on the changes in the capitalist economy, which enables and requires the planters-owners to organise their production in various manners and exploit their land and labour in different ways. In a situation in which the supply of labour is abundant, money wages and short-term contracts might be preferred. In situations of labour scarcity, payment in kind and forms of tenancy enable to tie the workers to a particular owner and are more profitable. In any case, non-cash labour relations are not strange under capitalism (Frank 1967:263-265).

As much as the employer could choose between the different forms of labour arrangements, single workers could obtain simultaneously income from several labour regimes: individual small property, sharecropping on somebody else's land, tenancy on a third's land, wage labour during harvest time, and commercialisation of one's own home-produced products. Previously discussed examples demonstrated an elevated fluidity in labour relations (Frank 1967:272) and are evidence of the "permutation of labour relations" (Linden 2011:23-26). In the 19th-century context, it speaks for the flexibility and complexity of slavery, which, instead of being a homogeneous institution, could adapt to the rapidly changing demands of the expanding capitalist world economy through centuries (Boatcă 2014).

Furthermore, such forms of labour organisation as labour tenancy (*arrendamento*), *colonato*, indentured servitude, and peonage, which have been usually presented as intermediate stages between slavery and freedom, represented strategies to bind formerly enslaved persons, indigenous populations, free poor peasants, and European migrants to particular owners in new forms of compulsory labour (Baronov 2000:94ff.). In principle, the workers subsumed under these coercive and super-exploitative labour arrangements were formally "free" as they were not enslaved. The sequence of intermixed labour patterns was a reality in the 19th century, but it continued until after the abolition of slavery.

How different labour forms emerged, disappeared, and reconfigured at the centre or the margins of the coffee economy of Paraíba Valley (Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo) from the end of the 18th until the end of the 19th century illustrates very well the dynamic of *transformation* in terms of binding the formally "free" workers to new compulsory/dependent labour arrangements. The incorporation of new emerging agricultural frontiers into the international division of labour and capital circuit fuelled the expropriation process without necessarily leading to proletarianisation.

Since the end of the 18th century, when gold mining lost relevance and a new coffee frontier developed, the number of enslaved workers in the São Paulo region grew, exceeding by far the population active in the subsistence economy. Although living at its margins, the free population was integrated casually into the plantation system and thereby to commercial production in the 19th century. The Brazilian-born free and poor dependent workers, black, brown and white, since the beginning of the 19th century, were providing many different temporary services and were employed in various forms such as muleteers (*tropeiros*)²⁴¹, besiegers (*sitiantes*), grocers, resident farmers (*moradores*), aggregates, day-labourers (*camaradas*). The relation of domination through indebtedness between the landowner and such categories was established in the exchange of favour and protection (in the form of habitation and maintenance) for services (Franco [1969] 1997:82).

The resident farmer (*morador*) in alien lands, or finally, the salaried day labourers (*camarada*) emerged as a consequence of the increasing commercial land exploitation for coffee production in Paraíba Valley, which had destabilised previous village life and led to the disappearance of small independent peasants. The constitution of these social categories, aggregates²⁴² and others emerged gradually with the transformation of land into private property and the expansion of commercial agriculture based on enslaved labour, which contributed to the land concentration.²⁴³ Whereas unproductive land was liberated for the use of *agregado* without presenting loss for the owners (Franco [1969] 1997:99), *camarada*, a category that provided services in exchange for a salary, emerged as a result of the incorporation of previous village life into economically articulated society.²⁴⁴

The international and national pressures to make the slave trade illegal forced coffee planters to search for new sources of labour power. Although the coffee planters in Paraíba Valley and the West of São Paulo remained faithful to slavery until its abolition in 1888, the fear of labour scarcity

²⁴¹ Muleteers appeared at the fringe of the economy organised for the production and commercialisation of coffee. They transported export commodities and subsistence items to supply the farms, using donkeys for transport, thus being situated at the point of encounter between rudimentary technology and big commercial enterprise of the 19th century (Franco [1969] 1997:67ff).

²⁴² These aggregate farmers were planting their subsistence in these marginal lands in exchange for several services related to production, administration, supervision and protection of plantations (Lamounier 2007:356).

²⁴³ In the new conditions, the *agregado* reconfigures its mode of life, representing a continuation of the old world of *caipira* under new conditions, enjoying the free availability of land and participating in small coherent groups.

²⁴⁴ *Camaradas* were often employed in peak moments to carry out different activities in coffee production and small tasks around the plantation (Lamounier 2007:356). As in the other categories mentioned above, the relationship “salary in exchange for labour” that *camarada* had with the landowner also included personal submission. The subjection is expressed in the situation of indebtedness: the salary for services is being paid in advance, which transforms the worker from a “hirer of his labour-power” to a “debtor of means of subsistence” (Franco [1969] 1997:103).

led them to experiment with free labour. Already in the 1820 and 30s, the owners employed Brazilian free labourers as well as migrant labour (Galvanese 2022) under such arrangements as sharecropping and indentured servitude (Chinese coolies and Azoreans), although their proportion within the labour force remained very low – seven per cent – until 1880 (Marquese 2019; Mello 1978). The experiments with labour arrangements not based on enslavement initially had a short life. Unlike the northeastern owners-planters, the southeastern coffee planters depended almost exclusively on the labour of enslaved workers. At least in the coffee sector at the end of the 1850s, it was still considered an insufficient alternative to mobilise “free” labour for agricultural needs massively. This returned, however, as a solution in the context of the abolition of slavery (Marquese 2013b). *Colonato*, which became the main substitute of enslaved labour in the coffee-growing southeastern region, particularly in the West of São Paulo, counted on European migrant labour, studied extensively by José de Souza Martins (2003, 2013). When the financing of the first experiments with foreign labour counted on the surplus extracted from the exploitation of enslaved labour, paid directly by owners-planters, from the 1886s onwards, the import of European migrants to work under the *colonato* regime was subsidised by the federal as well as the provincial states (Fernandes 1976:23-24; Martins 2013b). *Colonato*, defined by José de Souza Martins (2013:10) as the “coerced labour of free men”, was a diversified and complex contractual labour regime. It was based on a multiple-task system, which combined the sale of labour-power for wage and a product and unpaid labour, in addition to direct subsistence production. Martins (2013) discards that *colonato* would comprise a rural proletariat because the wage element constituted less than half of the total payment. The arrangement counted on family and not individual labour, including production for direct subsistence. These characteristics, however, will not prohibit thinking of *colonato* as an expropriative labour regime or semi-proletarian labour arrangement, which contains a sale of labour-power in multiple forms for a wage paid in money and kind, part of it being also unpaid, to produce commodities for the world market for profit (Frank 1967; Prado 1979; Wallerstein 1974). The contract labourers sell their labour power and that of the family members, including children. Hence, it includes a labour relation, in which, according to Martins (2013) as well as Stolcke and Hall (1983), contracting a family instead of an individual worker had a double effect: the rural employer was able to have access to more labour-power at low cost, whereas the use of a family constituted a form of labour control.

In the context of the disorganisation of slavery, planters were subsuming free people under coerced labour arrangements (coolie labour, *colonato*, indentured servitude). This supports Franco’s affirmation that planters of old and new coffee frontiers expected that under the new forms of

labour organisation, they could redefine and re-edit the previously existing subjection. Direct domination becomes a technique of control through the fixation of labour to defend economic interests. To Franco ([1969] 1997:228, 243), they do not constitute any survival or revival of previous “backward” patterns, but they are *recreated* with the aim of capital accumulation.

Northeast is also an example of how substituting enslaved African workers in sugar production gradually developed into labour arrangements, which bound the local free peasantry to coercive forms. Until 1860, the northeast concentrated fifty per cent of the enslaved population. In the middle of the century, there were three enslaved workers for one “free” worker in the sugar plantation.²⁴⁵ In the second part of the century, the northeastern sugar mills mainly exploited the labour of non-enslaved workers (Fragoso 1996:171). Several factors shaped the social organisation of labour, particularly in Pernambuco, in the context of new emerging labour needs in the face of the expansion of sugar production as a response to the increasing international demand. It was created by the changes in the world economy as a result of the vacuum left in the sugar supply due to the insurrection of the enslaved population in 1791 in Saint-Domingue and the decline of sugar production in the British West Indies in the middle of the 19th century (Klein and Luna 2010). Several governmental measures and policies shaped the labour regimes, contributing to the long process of expropriation and, hence, impoverishment of the local peasantry, which was subordinated under the new system of labour control (Palácios 1996). Other factors during the nineteenth century were the abolition of the trade of enslaved bodies, the increasing price of enslaved labour and the sale of enslaved workers to the southeastern coffee planters. This internal trade was fed mainly by indebted planters. Even if the enslaved population was declining²⁴⁶, by the mid-1880s, the sugar produced in Pernambuco accounted for almost half of Brazil's exports. The decline of the enslaved population was partly caused by the loss of enslaved labour to the southeastern coffee plantations. Between 1850 and 1880, 760 enslaved workers left Pernambuco annually. However, if illegally exported enslaved workers were also considered, the outflow was between 1000 and 1500 enslaved workers annually, totalling between 23,000 and 38,000 enslaved workers during this period, as estimated by Fragoso (1996:172). Moreover, 40 per cent of enslaved workers who were manumitted in Pernambuco (between 1885 and 1888, the number is estimated to

²⁴⁵ According to Fragoso (*idem.*), between 1839 and 1850, Pernambuco had imported 1100 and, in some years, three thousand enslaved workers annually. In 1842, 54 per cent had an African origin. At the same time, already in the middle of the 19th century, some of the wealthiest plantations had, on average, 74 enslaved workers for 49 “free” workers (Eisenberg 1974:146).

²⁴⁶ In 1850, there were 145,000 enslaved persons in Pernambuco. According to the census of 1872, this number had fallen to 106,000, and in the following decade, it had decreased further to 85,000 (Eisenberg 1974:147).

be 21 000) were forced to continue working for their previous owners for two to three years or pay them the sum corresponding to their value (Fragoso 1996:173).

As shown by Palácios (1996), by the middle of the 18th century, Pernambuco already had a significant mass of “free” poor peasants comprised of freedmen and -women, runaway enslaved workers, and freed native people. From this segment came the categories of workers who initially fulfilled the labour needs of local owners-planters and who, with time, substituted the enslaved labour in cotton farms and sugar plantations. Thus, for about a hundred years, different labour forms co-existed in sugar and cotton plantations, tied down as value-producing labour. As part of the economic reforms under the Marques de Pombal’s administration in Portugal (1750-1777), these “free” poor peasants were integrated into the cotton production for export to supply the needs of manufacturers in Manchester and Liverpool. Commercial cotton production spread among the subsistence peasants. However, sugar production for central and northern European markets increased the demand for labour power. As there were no legal means to force the free population to sell their labour power to the sugar export plantation, the necessary labour force for the plantation was produced by expropriating free poor peasants²⁴⁷ (Palácios 1996).

Palácios highlights various expropriating measures, which were carried out by the state at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century to create a labour force effectively available for the subsumption under planter capital, as well as to create a category of small producers supplying the food products for the urban consumption. The colonial state took the following measures: (1) military recruitment of free and poor population; (2) prohibition of cotton cultivation by poor and free peasants, who owned less than six enslaved workers; and (3) from 1799 onwards, confiscation of tropical forests and expulsion of autonomous manioc planters. The result was the disintegration of the peasantry and the formation of a labour pool for the plantation, which was made up of different categories of free and poor peasant farmers, who were subordinated in various ways along the 19th century to the sugar and cotton export economy.

As shown by Palacios (1996), first, many “free” and poor peasants opted to keep their autonomy. They escaped to the frontiers of arid lands to reproduce their traditional modes of living

²⁴⁷ It did not happen without resistance. As registered by Palácios (idem.), some years before the prohibition of the slave trade in 1831, the workers started to perceive themselves as the labour pool of the plantation. Various attempts of the state to register new births and deaths were met with revolts in 1828. Moreover, several revolts occurred because of the cotton production crisis ten years later. The state announced the registration of births and deaths (Regulamento de Registro) and the imperial census right after the official end of the transatlantic slave trade in 1850. The free and poor population interpreted the registry and census as the state’s attempts to subordinate them to the new form of slavery, forcing them to work in plantations, so much so that the registry was nicknamed the Law of Captivity. As shown by Palácios (idem.), the mendicants of Italian capuchins were called to help break the resistance, disconnect the image of slavery from plantation labour and thereby legitimate the “labour to others.”

and distance themselves from the reach of the state. Second, there were the free poor tenants (*moradores*), who were composed of Creole inhabitants, the descendants of “administrated” and enslaved native people, but also descendants of freed Africans, mainly *pardo* (Martins 2013). As stated by Martins (2013), Palácios (1996), and Fragoso (1996), they had been inhabiting the lands of cotton and sugar plantations already before the measures of expropriation. Nevertheless, as argued by Palácios (1996), the expansion of the sugar plantation, as well as the violent measures of the State, had contributed to the expropriation of autonomous peasants, and hence to their transformation into tenants, which resulted in an expansion of this labour system. Their significance increased not only because of the growing but still relatively marginal labour demand by the expanding sugar plantations and cotton farms, their use for private armies, but also due to land scarcity for economically feasible production. To use the land for subsistence production, the tenant farmers had to do unpaid labour on the plantation by working 2-3 days per week (*condiceiro*) or 20-30 days a year (*foreiro*). In addition to the unpaid labour of 20-30 days a year, called “yoke” (*cambão*), the *foreiro* still had to pay an extra sum (*foro*) to the planter (Fragoso 1996). Both forms were ways for the planter to secure access to labour for free or at a meagre cost, appropriating the full labour product for the worked days and guaranteeing an extra income from land rent (*foro*). This group was gradually subsumed under capital. For decades, they inhabited and laboured in the same space with enslaved workers, but with the end of the slave trade and the sale of enslaved workers to the southeastern coffee plantations, the amount of labour that tenants had to provide to continue having access to the land increased. Thus, the tenancy system based on permanent agricultural labour emerged (Martins 2003, 2013).

Another bigger group that appeared from the expropriation process, according to Palácios’s (1996) research, comprised of small, poor peasants, robbers, “beggars”, “vagrants” and “vagabonds” wandering on the country’s territory, looking for casual jobs here and there. Some were objects of public charity and very often treated as a “police question” (*questão de policia*). Many of them exercised temporary wage labour and day labour. They were primarily unskilled seasonal workers, usually employed during sugar production peaks, such as cane harvest. The salaries were relatively low, fluctuating with several other factors, which either decreased or increased the supply of labour-power, such as dry seasons in neighbouring regions or the development of roads and communication networks. Moreover, the landowners also used the sharecropping (*parceria*) (Fragoso 1996).

Especially in the international conjuncture of low sugar prices, these forms of extracting surplus value, based on weak cash nexus and unpaid family labour, enabled reduced labour costs

and increased the resistance of sugar production.²⁴⁸ In the context of labour scarcity, owners-planters seemed to prefer labour arrangements such as tenancy and sharecropping (partially intermediated by the market combined with direct coercion). The familiar base of this labour arrangement (women and children) permitted the planter to appropriate unpaid labour and use it as a form of labour control, like *colonato* (Fragoso 1996:176).

The southern economy has been considered as a subsidiary economy, called the “periphery of the periphery” by social scientists, as it did not have a direct integration with the international market but rather supplied the export-oriented plantations of the southeast, which far from being self-sufficient, were reproduced in the market. Its economy also used different forms of labour control involving slavery, peonage, and peasant labour. Peon was employed in extensive cattle farming on large tracts of land (*estância*). This labour regime involved dispossessed propertyless workers, who exchanged their labour power for the right to use land, housing, and food. In the last instance, they could also be paid in cash. Hence, what we see here is a mode of capital accumulation in the domestic economy, which combined the raw material production by peon labour to the industrial production of dried meat employing enslaved labour, which, in turn, reproduced the southeastern plantation producing commodities to the world-market by using enslaved labour (Fragoso 1996:178-179). In 1858, the enslaved population in Rio Grande do Sul constituted 25,1 per cent, and in 1887, 0,89 per cent of the total population.

The Amazonian region combined agricultural and extractive activities with subsistence production and articulated diverse forms of labour appropriation, from peasant labour to compulsory indigenous labour. From the second part of the 19th century onwards, the local labour organisation was associated with industrial capital’s demand for rubber. This demand grew mainly after the 1890s with the development of the pneumatic industry²⁴⁹ (Fragoso 1996:183). When the plantations of the West of São Paulo partially fulfilled their scarcity of labour-power from European migrants, the Northern productive units of rubber²⁵⁰ (*seringal*) attracted the migrants from the

²⁴⁸ Fragoso (1996) describes the slow pace of technological development in the mills of Pernambuco: in 1854, one per cent used steam-based energy and 19 per cent waterpower; in 1871, 6 per cent of the mills used steam power. In Cuba, 70 per cent of the mills worked on steam power by 1860. The irony is that Cuba’s sugar production employed enslaved labour and other forms of directly coerced labour, belying the myth about the incompatibility of slavery and technological development. In Brazil, the sugar plantations employed a free population under coerced labour arrangements and counted with generous government subsidies to develop sugar mills.

²⁴⁹ In 1892, Brazilian rubber production corresponded to 61 per cent of the global production, and even after 1910, Brazil was responsible for 50 per cent of the world’s rubber consumption. Fragoso (1996:183) also shows that the export of rubber grew between 1852 and 1900 by 1488,960 per cent, whereas in the total of Brazilian exports, it comprised 2,3 per cent in 1850, reaching 28,2 per cent between 1901 and 1910.

²⁵⁰ The rubber plantation was the unit of production, which was composed of trees called *Hevea brasiliensis*, from which latex was extracted.

northeast of Brazil, who escaped the draughts, especially in the 1870s.²⁵¹ The “rubber rush” changed the region demographically and dramatically modified its landholding structure. The activity created an interest in land ownership, which triggered interest among the owners of rubber plantations (*seringalistas*) in legalising the land possession, constituting thereby big properties (Fragoso 1996). The central relation of production in *seringal* was based on the indebtedness of rubber tappers (*seringueiro*). The never-ending indebtedness was produced and reproduced through the truck system, according to which the workers were obliged to guarantee their subsistence by purchasing food items at high prices from the plantation’s shack, which were also added interests. Hence, the relation of indebtedness, which characterised the relation between the workers and the owners of the *seringal*, was a mode of labour control as it tied the workers to the units of production, restricting their mobility. Instead of considering this labour arrangement as a pre-capitalist relation of production, as suggested by Fragoso (1996), it could be regarded as an “extreme variation of wage-labour in the condition of super-exploitation” (Martins 1994:1) or as coerced wage-labour, as the mechanism of expropriation of labour-power ensured capital accumulation. The surplus labour produced by rubber tappers was expropriated by the commodity chain, which was itself based on the logic of indebtedness. The supplies of instruments and maintenance, derived from the *casas de aviamento* situated in Belém and Manaus, were sold on credit to owners-planters. The link of the indebtedness chain encompassed the relations between these *casas de aviamento* and exporting companies, which were controlled by foreign capital²⁵² (Fragoso 1996:184). Although rubber production in the Amazon entered decadence after it moved to the Southeast Asian colonies of Great Britain and Holland, the debt slavery itself was revived in the middle of the 20th century in the context of the expansion of the agribusiness capital in the Amazon (Martins 1994).

Studies about labour organisation in the 19th century, before the abolition of slavery, show that labour forms were combined in complex mixes not only nationally and in each region but also within agricultural establishments. The same phenomenon was also present in the emerging manufactures, factories and construction sites, where enslaved workers, freedmen- and women and wage labourers were working together (Mattos 2008), which asserts the possibility that also

²⁵¹ According to Fragoso (1996), in 1872, the North had been the least populated region of Brazil (concentrating only 3,3 per cent of the population). With the development of rubber production and the influx of northeastern migrant workers, the population of the North increased between 1872 and 1920 by 227,6 per cent (from 332,847 to 1,090,545 inhabitants).

²⁵² Since 1913, rubber production moved to Southeast Asian colonies of Great Britain and Holland, which could compete in the world market for low-cost labour and labour-intensive production.

industrial capital may employ enslaved labour, as it will be discussed in more detail in the section about the system of renting enslaved labour. Furthermore, what can be seen is that in the context of 19th-century liberal capitalism, enslaved labour was gradually substituted by arrangements in which labour was subsumed under capital in diverse compulsory forms. Hence, labour-power commodification did not take the contractual form of free exchange between “formally” equal commodity holders. Often, it developed instead into forms of labour appropriation by expropriation through legal and direct coercion.

5.4 The system of hiring enslaved labour in the 19th century

In this section, I will discuss the system of hiring enslaved labour as an instance of *modern* labour arrangement in the modern capitalist world system. It corresponds to another form of labour-power commodification, labour appropriation, and capital production. Nineteenth-century liberal industrial capitalism provided an economic context for the increase and expansion of slavery as a peripheral mode of labour control. In this context, the previously not-so-relevant form of commodification of labour power proved particularly important in addressing the emerging labour needs in several economic sectors in Brazil. It constituted an employment relation in which workers belonged to their owners, but the use-value of their labour-power was hired to the third party. The system of hiring enslaved labour was a form of labour appropriation based on expropriation, which was adequate to the demands of capital by being more flexible and mouldable than the permanent ownership of enslaved workers. It was a highly profitable form of labour control for foreign capital-owned mining companies while providing an alternative source of income to big planters and big and small owners enslaved workers.

In what follows, I will discuss the contributions of some Brazilian economic and social historians who have studied the 19th-century system of hiring enslaved labour from the critical political economy perspective. First, I will discuss the hiring system in the context of 19th-century liberal capitalism in Brazil. Second, I will describe the types of hiring of enslaved labour. Third, I will discuss the case of the rent of enslaved labour by British capital in the Morro Velho Mine in Minas Gerais to illustrate the compatibility of this rental system of enslaved labour with industrial capitalism. Fourth, I examine in theoretical-categorical terms the social relation central to this labour arrangement and its ambiguities appointed by the legal debate in the 19th century.

5.4.1 Types of hiring of labour power of enslaved workers

Four different modalities of hiring labour-power of enslaved workers were known: (1) either by personal contact between the lessors and the lessees or their agents; (2) by personal contact between agents in major cities to whom the owners had consigned their enslaved workers, and the lessees or their agents²⁵³; (3) by public auction; or (4) self-employed and wage-earning enslaved workers sold their labour-power directly to employers [in Portuguese: *escravos de ganho* or *ganhadores/ganheiras*]²⁵⁴ (Karasch 1987; Linden 2011:65; Reis 2019; Soares 1988a). What unites all of these four forms is that the enslaved worker is physically and legally forced to perform labour for another person. The rent (i.e., wage) is paid directly to the owners in the three first forms. In contrast, in the latter case, the reward for labour is paid to the wage-earning enslaved worker, who is obliged to give a fixed amount to the owner (Linden 2011:22). Not bringing the agreed amount of money could result in a punishment. Wage-earning enslaved workers enjoyed more freedom of movement than other enslaved workers, whose labour power was hired or rented under the first three arrangements. They could move around and often lived in separate dwellings.²⁵⁵

Hence, there were enslaved workers who earned wages. Rented enslaved workers (*escravos de aluguel*) may also have received a certain wage. Rented enslaved workers, who earned wages and were rewarded either in money or in kind, usually in kind, were quite common in the plantation

²⁵³ When consignment houses were dealing only with enslaved workers, the commission houses were authorised to purchase, sell, and rent enslaved workers or any other commodity as well as give credit (Karasch 1987:46). The companies or agencies in Rio de Janeiro involved in the retail slave trade, like actual “employment bureau”, which proliferated particularly from the 1830s on, leased their own or the property of other individuals, sometimes also acted as brokers. Brazilian or Portuguese merchants controlled most of these houses, but French, English, and German merchants were also involved in the trade. If the companies leased out the enslaved workers of other individuals, they received a fee for this service. Nevertheless, direct personal contact remained the primary means of obtaining enslaved labour, and newspaper advertisements were essential (Soares 1988b:55-59).

²⁵⁴ Linden (2011) uses the term “slaves-for-hire” to denominate these kinds of enslaved workers who sold their labour power. This term does not, however, convey an essential element that they were wage-earning enslaved workers renting out their labour power. In that sense, Reis’s term, *escravos de ganho* (earning slaves), represents this dimension better. In Brazil, João José Reis (2019) has studied the *ganho*-system in Salvador, the capital of Bahia province, whereas Soares (1988a) has studied this form of slavery in Rio de Janeiro. Usually, the earning enslaved workers, men and women, were, since the end of the 17th century, occupied in street labour. Men were usually transporters, carrying (free) people and all kinds of objects, whereas women were selling all kinds of goods. As enslaved workers, they were obliged to pay weekly a certain sum from what they had gained to their owners (Reis 2019:15; Soares 1988a). The street workers could be enslaved workers, freedmen, women, and free people.

²⁵⁵ It is fascinating, deviating quite significantly from what is expected, that Reis (2019) includes enslaved workers as transport workers as part of the urban working class. Also, the revolts carried out by transport workers of all kinds, including enslaved workers, are defined as strikers, in that sense not being the exclusivity of urban industrial proletarians only. Reis (2019) defines a strike as a paralisation of labour, and the form of organising in a strike did not owe, according to him, to the models of mobilisation of European proletarians, which would dominate later among Brazilian proletarians and immigrants. In that sense, Reis is aligned with Du Bois’s ([1935] 1992) definition of enslaved workers’ revolts as strikes. To him, the subaltern workers seem to constitute the “motley crowd” or a “many-headed hydra”, the metaphor of Linebaugh and Rediker (2000) for a multivariant working class.

system. As discussed in the previous chapter, wages were often used as an incentive for skilled enslaved workers. In this case, enslaved workers did not sell their labour power in the market, although it included a market relation in which the owners rented out the labour-power of their skilled enslaved workers to third parties.

Hence, there were three modalities of wage-earning enslaved workers²⁵⁶ (Linden 2011:23). First, there was an arrangement in which the owner compelled the enslaved workers to perform wage labour for another owner. The worker obtained no or only part of the wage, and the owner collected all or part of it. Either the owners fixed the price of the labour-power, or the enslaved workers actively searched and negotiated the value of their labour power (Bolland 1995:128). Second, the enslaved workers could receive from their owner a wage for extra effort in “bonuses, either as gifts or as incentives,” or as a “payment made for extra work in task system or for working overtime” (Bolland 1995:127). Third is voluntary labour by enslaved workers for an employer or a fellow enslaved worker for a wage (Turner 2006:39).

Receiving a wage is conventionally antithetical to the condition of being enslaved, as it usually implies a formal freedom of the worker. In cases where enslaved workers were paid for their labour power, the “conceptual abstraction of the slave’s labour-power from the person” (Bolland 1995:125) becomes particularly explicit. Wage-earning enslaved workers, whereas being the property of others, sell their labour-power in the market, having to provide from it their subsistence and often also habitation. The property regime implied in the labour relation concomitantly determines how the surplus the worker generates will be distributed.

In this chapter, I am dealing with the rent of the labour-power of enslaved workers (*aluguel de escravos*), in which the labour-power of the enslaved worker is hired out by the owner through the rental contract to the third party, the owner of the means of production.

5.4.2 The diffusion of the hiring of labour power of enslaved workers

Besides the purchase, the rent of enslaved labour was another standard modality of obtaining labour power in colonial Brazil.²⁵⁷ When the institution of slavery entered into decline at the beginning of

²⁵⁶ If there were many cases in which enslaved workers earned wages, which approached them to wage labour, then the wage workers with limited freedom to exit the labour relation (often in situations of labour scarcity) approached the enslaved labourers. The problem of the “freedom” of wage labour was discussed theoretically and historically in the second chapter.

²⁵⁷ The enslaved worker was an alienable commodity, like that being an object of different kinds of transactions in the market. The property right gave the owner the right to sell, rent, donate, inherit the enslaved workers, use them as a mortgage, etc. See Gorender (1980) for all the possible transactions. The rent of enslaved workers was more common in Brazil and Cuba than in the US (Bergad 2007:195).

the 1880s (Marquese 2016; Mello 1978), and it was no longer profitable to purchase enslaved labour, the rental practice was still going on. The practice of renting enslaved labour started to spread at the beginning of the 19th century, not only in the export sectors but also in growing cities. Renting enslaved labour increased considerably after 1810 in the context of the expanding capitalist market relations, the growing slave trade, and the growth of urban economies. There was an increasing demand for domestic services, “street-earning”, and “hands” in general (Soares 1988b:71-72). The newspaper announcements of the rent of enslaved labour at the beginning of the 19th century represented “a change in the form of exploitation of Africans and creoles” (Santos 2015:180-81) associated with the emerging industrial economy. This form of commodifying labour-power seems to have consolidated, especially after the official end of the transatlantic slave trade in 1850, which elevated the rental value of enslaved labour (Cravo 2019:164; Libby 1988). That means there was more offer and demand as the source of acquiring enslaved labour through transatlantic trade was no longer available. The practice also spread because it was profitable for those renting enslaved labour. At the same time, there was a high demand for labour-power and enslaved labour in particular, especially from the part of the growing coffee sector, sugar production and mining activities, contributing to the increasing market value of enslaved labour. After the end of the slave trade and the sale of urban enslaved workers to coffee plantations, the advertisements for the sale and purchase of enslaved labour declined considerably, and the advertisements seeking and offering enslaved labour for rent predominated the announcements (Soares 1988b:74).

During the entire existence of slavery, planters used to rent enslaved workers to manage their labour force. It was common among planters to rent enslaved labour to each other, which had to do with the fluctuations of the prices of commodities in the world market and the seasonal demands of labour-power. Often, enslaved workers were rented from third parties, from individuals who lived from the application of their money in the purchase of enslaved individuals, whom they rented or destined to work for wage (Gorender 1980:181). Based on the narratives of 19th-century travellers in Brazil, Maria Graham and Henry Koster, Gorender (1980) wrote that the owners were peculiarly concerned with their property in enslaved workers. In the sugar production in Pernambuco and coffee plantations in São Paulo²⁵⁸ and Rio de Janeiro, planters employed day labourers or rented enslaved workers for risky tasks such as felling trees. According to Maria Graham: “the death of one Negro in the farm would be a loss of value; the death of a hired slave would result only in a small compensation; the loss of a free Negro would often mean even savings

²⁵⁸ Lamounier (2007) makes the same point about the employment of “free” Brazilian-born people in coffee plantations as *camaradas*, as independent workers, contracted for a service, for a task, as day labourers.

in their wages if he did not have a child to claim them” (Graham 1956, cited in Gorender 1980:195). The fact that rented enslaved workers were easily discardable indicates that their value was lower than that of the purchased enslaved workers.

There were also diverse patterns of subjection of enslaved workers in cane plantations in Pernambuco and Bahia, the gold and diamond mines of Minas Gerais, and coffee plantations in Paraíba Valley. In labour-intensive coffee estates in São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, under the whip of the demand of the world market, labour exploitation was more violent in the middle of the 19th century than in the poorer states of the north and northeast. Different seasonal or conjunctural production phases have specific implications on the labour demand and degrees of exploitation. The peak in production implied overwork for enslaved workers and resulted in their faster exhaustion. During the harvest, the labour time could last eighteen hours. However, the planter could also employ extra labour in these moments by renting skilled enslaved workers from other owners. Using temporary workers, such as *jornaleiros* from poor peasant families, was common. The temporary employment of “free” workers from peasant families in plantation economies was, to some degree, frequent in all regions. The plantation system, which had produced a mass “free” population involved in itinerant agriculture, was in different degrees subordinated to the influence of the big property, either by being employed directly or living at its margins. The free population was employed for riskier jobs and services that were not trusted to enslaved workers or involved occupations related to cattle raising (Gorender 1980).

At the beginning of the 19th century, a large rental market developed in big cities of Brazil, such as Rio de Janeiro²⁵⁹, Salvador, and São Paulo. Enslaved workers were rented to be employed increasingly in mining, manufacturing and industries since 1840, in urban services, in public works, including the construction of public buildings, streets, public squares, canals, docks, filling swamps,²⁶⁰ in railway construction, construction of roads and bridges, domestic services, and in hundreds of small establishments, which were looking for workers with specific skills (Cravo 2019; Freitas 2009; Lamounier 2008; Libby 1988; Mattos 2008; Soares 1988b, 2003).

²⁵⁹ Among the *brasilianistas*, an important work about the life of the enslaved population in Rio de Janeiro has been published by Mary Karasch (1987). She shows how the enslaved workers who hired their labour-power worked in multiple professions and that the practice of hiring artisan and skilled labour of enslaved workers was widespread in the first half of the 19th century. Besides the private individuals who rented and lived off the wage earned by skilled labourers, the municipal government rented out skilled labour of enslaved workers as much as it was usual to rent enslaved labour to the municipal government. Renting a *ladino* was also practised when the owner wanted to keep the legal title in their property.

²⁶⁰ For these jobs, convict labourers, enslaved people undergoing punishment, rented enslaved workers, and free Africans were used. Rented enslaved workers used to be skilled stone-layers (Karasch 1987:198).

What became common was the rental of artisan enslaved labour. Enslaved workers dominated all the professions. With the arrival of the Portuguese royal family in Brazil bringing along an elevated number of foreigners, the practice of hiring enslaved labour spread and with that, their rental value increased. It became common to invest money-capital in enslaved workers, teach them a craft or a profession (or let the employing establishment do that), then sell them for a “higher price or rent their talents and labour” (Luccock 1942:72, 134-35) and then appropriate the income from the hire. Instruction elevated the market value of enslaved workers (Gorender 180:453). By observing this practice, the English merchant Luccock (1942), after he arrived in Brazil in 1808, called this group a “new social class.” Individuals owned between 5 and 25 enslaved workers. The ownership of enslaved persons was very spread in the tissue of Brazilian society. Most usual were the households with 1-2 enslaved workers. The recent historiography also shows that hiring 1 or 2 enslaved workers at a time was widespread. The daily journals were full of announcements of this type. At the same time, there were, of course, individuals who hired out their enslaved workers in large numbers to large-scale economic enterprises such as industries, coffee plantations and mining companies, which I will discuss later in this chapter.

A Brazilian economic historian, Luiz Carlos Soares (1988b, 2003), who has studied the employment of enslaved labour in manufactures and industries of Rio de Janeiro in the 19th century, shows that the practice of buying enslaved workers to instruct them in some craft, to valorise their value, to rent or sell them later, may have been associated with the revocation in 1808 of the decree which had prohibited industrial establishments in Brazil during the colonial period when political control was exercised over commodity production and commercialisation through the colonial system.

The journals of the 19th century were full of announcements of private individuals wanting to rent enslaved workers who exercised different crafts (tailors, shoemakers, carpenters, blacksmiths, etc.). Enslaved labourers were often leased by individuals, small manufacturers and artisans who could not afford to purchase them or needed certain temporary services. Enslaved workers could be instructed and trained by their owners, by other individuals who had a license and made their living like that, or in workshops and industrial establishments. This training in industrial establishments constituted an apprenticeship, during which the workers were also used in tasks and, after the training, were probably employed (Soares 1988b:71-72).

As Soares (1988b) shows, personal contact between the lessee and lessor at given addresses was common. The payments for the contractual period were made monthly and often in advance. The rent was called a “monthly wage” or a “day wage” in everyday language. The lessees were

responsible for maintaining employed enslaved workers during the lease period and were obliged to return the workers in good condition. Enslaved workers could be returned for a refund for the remaining period if they did not please the lessee.

Based on his research, Soares (2003) concluded that there was no particular inherent incompatibility between industrialisation and slavery. In that sense, industrial capital accumulated based on enslaved labour²⁶¹. Moreover, the nascent manufacture²⁶² and industries²⁶³ in Rio de Janeiro at the beginning of the 19th century employed enslaved labour until the 1840s. In almost all industrial activities, the enslaved workers performed the same tasks at the same skill level as free workers, Brazilians, or foreigners. Both categories of labourers were working together in the same spaces. After the 1850s, the fluctuations from one year to another of the data about the proportion of Brazilian and migrant workers and enslaved labourers employed in manufactures show that many enslaved workers were hired or employed for money-wage. Often, the factory owners employed their own enslaved workers, as well as enslaved workers rented from various owners. The most easily fired workers were the wage workers and leased enslaved workers (Soares 1988b:216), showing that the system of hire provided an essential element of flexibility.

Soares (1988b) mentions the end of the African slave trade and the demand for enslaved labour by coffee plantations as the primary factors why the practice of renting enslaved labour by manufactures and workshops in urban centres declined as the price escalated. The price of enslaved workers increased, and the cost of hiring skilled enslaved labour increased. It was not any more affordable for small and medium establishments to employ enslaved workers. It also became more profitable for factory owners to sell their enslaved workers to coffee planters, who were willing to

²⁶¹ According to the census of 1872, the total industrial labour force was 18,091; of those industrial workers, 2135 were enslaved workers, and 9458 were born abroad (Soares 1984, cited in Klein and Luna 2010:111).

²⁶² The studies about the employment of enslaved workers in manufactures – 35 at the end of the 1840s and 89 ten years later in Rio de Janeiro – have questioned the thesis of incompatibility between enslaved labour and industrialisation. Both Soares (2003) and Mattos (2008) have shown that free labourers and enslaved workers were working next to each other in different proportions. Both rented enslaved workers and wage-earning enslaved workers worked in industrial establishments. Soares (1988a, 2003) calls the latter – the *ganhadores* – as *formal wage workers*, arguing that their relationship with industrialists resembled that of the wage workers. Due to the wage element, Soares (1988a:131) calls this form of slavery in the hiring regime a “wage breach” in the urban economy of enslaved workers. There were “monetary relations of purchase and sale of labour-power” in which “the employers had the right to the productive labour capacity, appropriating the fruits of labour as well as the surplus labour produced by the worker” (Soares 2003:9). There were industrial sectors which employed a mix of enslaved and free worker, and there were sectors (textile) which only employed free workers.

²⁶³ Until 1840, industries were small, constituting rather craftshops. Some bigger manufacturers employed a few dozen free and unfree industrial workers. However, there were also bigger establishments, employing a hundred enslaved workers in 1810, or some hat manufactures, which employed between 30 and 40 industrial workers in 1830. In 1840, there was an industrial boom in Rio de Janeiro and other parts of Brazil, related to the fact that Brazil had become the main producer of coffee for the world market. Hence, there was significant population growth, and public industrial policy favoured the increase in the number of manufactures (Soares 2003:1-3).

pay higher prices (Costa 2008:61). At the same time, according to Alencastro (1988), the labour needs were increasingly fulfilled by the Portuguese immigrants or by “free” poor Brazilians who had to live from wage labour and whose presence in the labour market had also increased²⁶⁴. The inflow of Portuguese proletarians also diminished wages and enabled manufacturers to impose lower rewards for labour. Thus, the inflow of Portuguese workers induced the decline of urban slavery and its modification. The enslaved workers were moved away from wage labour into domestic service. At the beginning of the 1880s, enslaved labour was no longer employed in large manufacturing firms (Soares 1988b:220).

In 19th-century Rio de Janeiro, the dynamics of renting enslaved labour and hiring enslaved labour for a wage were intertwined with the transatlantic slave trade, the arrival of (mainly Portuguese) migrant workers, including Azoreans, and the commodification of Brazilian labour, as analysed by the social historian Alencastro (1988). The imperial capital provided the market for multivariant labour forms, over which the planters, miners and urban employers tried to exercise control. Although, until 1850, the urban and rural labour markets of Rio de Janeiro and its provinces were dominated by enslaved labour, two categories of Portuguese migrant workers also emerged and grew in numbers: skilled and unskilled proletarians. When the artisans and skilled proletarians returned to Portugal after three or four years of work, the dispossessed, impoverished proletarians from the islands had another destiny (Alencastro 1988).

By contesting the dominant historiography about the inflow of migrant wage labourers only from 1850 on, Galvanese (2022) has demonstrated that the economic and political elites started to look for alternatives to enslaved labour before the law of eradicating the slave trade was passed in 1831. Although made illegal, the contraband trade of enslaved workers to Brazil continued. Alencastro (1988) and Galvanese (2022) argue that a new element in Portuguese migration was introduced in the 1820s. This was related to the perceived future labour scarcity by landowners in the face of the agreement signed with Great Britain in 1826 regarding the suppression of the transatlantic slave trade and the promulgation of the Law of Feijó on 7 November 1831 to eradicate the slave trade (Lamounier 1988). Already in the beginning of the 1830s, there was an inflow of a new type of Portuguese migrant workers originating from the islands of Azores and Madeira to fulfil the rural and urban labour demands of owners-employers (Alencastro 1988; Galvanese 2022). In coffee plantations, urban labour markets and public works, they were subordinated under similar

²⁶⁴ Alencastro (1988) identifies three moments in Rio de Janeiro’s labour market in the 19th century: 1) the African moment, which extends until 1850; 2) the Luso-African moment, which goes until 1870; and finally, 3) the Luso-Brazilian moment when freed and free Brazilian substitute the Portuguese.

conditions as “the *indentured servants* who disembarked in North America and the Antilles” (Alencastro 1988:36),²⁶⁵ so much so that the metropolitan authorities of Portugal and Brazilian newspapers of the time denounced this form of subjugating migrant workers originating from the Azores and Madeira as “white slavery”.

The import of these formally free proletarians to Rio de Janeiro and Bahia was organised by private “companies of colonisation” founded in the mid-1830s²⁶⁶ (Galvanese 2022). These impoverished proletarians were subjected to various forms of extra-economic coercion, which restricted their autonomy. As described by Alencastro (1988), in exchange for the maritime travel expenses, the migrant workers were not allowed to disembark without the authorisation of the captain and the ship representatives. Employers interested in employing “free” workers “bought” the “tickets” of newly arrived migrant workers as they reimbursed the owner of the ship for the transport and maintenance costs of the workers during the transatlantic crossing. Contract workers’ time of service was fixed between the employer and the ship representatives. The labour contracts of European migrant workers in the Empire of Brazil were first regulated by the law of contracts issued on 13 September 1830 and then by its refined version, the Law of Service Rental, published on 11 October 1837. Unlike the law of 1830, the one of 1837 exclusively regulated labour relations with foreigners. According to the law, the contract workers were obliged to work for a fixed time to pay back the debt they now owed to their employers. The workers could refuse the service if they made the due payments. If they failed, they could be imprisoned until they paid back the money they owed. Evading the contract and absence from service could also result in imprisonment until they restituted the owners. If they could not pay, they would have to work for the employer for free (Galvanese 2022; Gorender 1980:564-566; Mendonça 2012). Thus, the owners who employed “free” labourers could rely on state intervention to guarantee compliance with the contract. The law guaranteed that the workers were tied to their employers. Almost always, indenture contracts implied three years of unpaid labour (Alencastro 1988). According to Alencastro (1988), there was a certain overlapping between the trafficking of enslaved workers and the trafficking of indentured servants, as the same individuals known for the former were involved in the latter. As the

²⁶⁵ Indentured servitude was a mode of labour exploitation and control used in British and French colonies before the enslavement of African people, coexisting with the latter during its early phase (see Eric Williams 1944 more about that).

²⁶⁶ The prominent figures of the empire created the *Companhia Colonizadora da Bahia* (Colonisation Company of Bahia) in 1835, and the *Sociedade Promotora da Colonização do Rio de Janeiro* (Society for the Promotion of Colonisation in Rio de Janeiro) in 1836. However, their existence was short-lived, as the former finished its activities in 1837 and the latter in 1840 (Galvanese 2022).

transatlantic slave trade was abolished, the trade of Africans was metamorphosed into the trade of “free” dispossessed workers from the Azores and Madeira Island.

Alencastro adds that in the capital of Brazil, the impoverished migrants and semi-skilled Brazilian-born and Portuguese-speaking enslaved workers (*ladinos*) even competed for the same jobs. For example, collecting water from the city’s public fountains and supplying almost the entire population, which used to be done by the wage-earning enslaved workers (*escravos de ganho*), was from 1849 on provided exclusively by the workers originating from the islands of Azores. This provoked protests by wage-earning enslaved workers and their owners.

The converging but competing interests of planters and mill owners, northeastern sugar and São Paulo/Rio de Janeiro coffee planters had kept the labour market extra-territorial by acquiring labour power through the transatlantic slave trade. They continued doing it so partially after its official end through the import of migrant labour.²⁶⁷ Nevertheless, during the functioning of the slave trade until 1950, high urban salaries in Rio de Janeiro motivated the speculators to acquire Brazilian-born and Portuguese-speaking semi-skilled enslaved labour (*ladinos*) from the countryside to hire them in the city. At the same time, African-born enslaved workers (*boçais*) imported through the slave trade were sold to plantations and mines. After the official end of the slave trade, a movement in the opposite direction occurred. The arrival of foreign proletarians led to a decline of the salaries. This, in turn, made the owners of urban enslaved workers – especially the unskilled – sell these captives to rural owners (Alencastro 1988:39), who were also looking for labour-power due to the end of the inflow from the African continent. Concomitantly, the massive demand for labour-power by coffee plantations raised the value of enslaved labour, another factor that withdrew the enslaved workers from the urban centres. This proves Soares's (1988b, 2003) hypothesis regarding the decline of enslaved workers' employment in manufacturing and other industries.

Simultaneously, the capital city remained the centre of renting enslaved labour for urban peripheries. Small properties owned by urban citizens also created a demand for labour-power intermediated by urban agents. For example, in 1864, with the start of the Civil War in the US, cotton production spread in Brazil. In that context, one cotton planter from the rural area of Rio de Janeiro, from Irajá, announced in the *Jornal de Comércio* that two hundred enslaved workers were

²⁶⁷ However, the use of migrant labour in coffee plantations until the 1880s seems exaggerated, as it did not exceed seven per cent (Mello 1978). In other regions of Brazil, as in Pernambuco, the alternative to enslaved labour was not migrant labour. There, cotton farmers and other employers made use of existing enslaved workers and tried to respond to the labour scarcity by transforming small poor peasants into contract labourers (labour tenancy) relying on the state to carry out the expropriations (see Palacios 1996).

wanted for rent for ten years to be employed in cotton production in a “very salubrious place” and added that enslaved workers were going to receive “the best treatment” and the owners were safeguarded “the best guarantees” (Alencastro 1988). It was an establishment where the rented enslaved workers would be employed and managed as wage labourers. On the other side of the coin, Alencastro registers an announcement from 1864 by the owner of three hundred enslaved workers, exclusively destined to rent.

5.4.3 The rent of enslaved labour by British capital in Brazilian mines

One fascinating case in which the system of renting of enslaved labour, the transatlantic unfree labour market, commodity production to the world market, gold mining, the enslaved labour market of Rio de Janeiro, proletarianisation/semi-proletarianisation in Brazil and Europe, British capital, Brazilian imperial state and neo-colonialism, converge, is the exploration of Morro Velho Mine in the 19th century, studied by Brazilian economic historian, Douglas Libby. Douglas Libby’s (1984, 1988) study about enslaved labour and British capital in Minas Gerais is very informative regarding several aspects of the practice of hiring enslaved labour by British capitalists to explore Morro Velho Mine but also other mines in Minas Gerais owned by other joint-stock companies such as The Imperial Brazilian Mining Association (IBMA). In the following, I will discuss Libby’s research published in *Trabalho escravo e capital estrangeiro no Brasil: o caso de Morro Velho* (1984) and in *Transformação e trabalho em uma economia escravista Minas Gerais no século 19* (1988).

The 18th-century gold cycle in Brazil had depleted the mineral surface deposits in the vast area. All the gold was drained from the colony to partly feed the development of British manufacture (Furtado 2006), also playing an essential role in stabilising the British gold standard (Cardoso 1996). British capitalists started to explore the leftovers in 1824. As stated by Prado, they “pick up the sad loot of the past adventure and introduce a new, although mild, encouragement in the Brazilian mining industry” (Prado 2013). This time, neo-colonial exploitation was accompanied by “light industrialisation”.

After the official end of colonialism and the opening of harbours and trade, British capital started to make direct investments in Brazil without the intermediation of the agents of the collapsed colonial system – Portugal and Spain. The Brazilian Constitution of 1824 created a favourable institutional environment, allowing the imperial government to grant mineral concessions to foreigners (Evans 2013). This “mineral rush” to Latin America was part of the “fever” that had taken account of the City of London in the 1820s and 30s. Many joint-stock

companies were created to explore the mineral resources in Latin America²⁶⁸. As part of this “investment bubble”, one of the first on the scene was IBMA, founded in London in 1824. Its capital amounted to 210,00 sterling. IBMA had bought a piece of land at mine Gongo Soco in Minas Gerais in 1826, starting its activities with nearly 300 workers, including English and Brazilian “free” workers (including freedmen and -women) and enslaved workers²⁶⁹. Another company lured by the shiny mineral in Brazil was St John d’el Rey Mining Company, founded in London in 1830. It purchased the Morro Velho Mine in 1834, together with 136 enslaved workers²⁷⁰. Libby (1988) stated that due to its large scale and integration between various operations, mining required an unprecedented amount of labour-power and the division of labour, which was more sophisticated than the one in the textile industry.

Thus, the company agents did not arrive in Brazil with a group of “free workers” who disappeared in a matter of seconds upon their arrival to explore the virgin and empty frontier lands, as had happened to Mr. Peel in the anecdote told by Marx (1976) inspired from Wakefield. The company acquired a stock of enslaved workers by purchasing the mine. Libby (1984, 1988) shows that during its entire activity in the Morro Velho Mine, the company used a labour mix composed of mainly enslaved workers, local Brazilian wage labourers (including former enslaved workers) and European wage workers²⁷¹. Besides that, at different times, usually due to labour scarcity, the company also imported other workers from abroad. Ninety Chinese miners were employed between 1879 and 1886. In 1851, the company imported Portuguese from Madeira Island and 35 Cornish lads (*rapazes de Cornwallha*) from Cornwall to work as *broqueiros* and underground work assistants (Libby 1984:105). Libby does not explore under which kind of labour arrangement the Chinese workers and the Portuguese from Madeira were employed. He qualifies them as “industrial

²⁶⁸ The gold mines of Minas Gerais in Brazil were not the only favourite destinations of the British capital. The copper mines in Cuba were also massively explored. The joint stock companies created in the 1820s and 30s to explore these mineral resources were British-registered, British-funded and British-managed, using “local” labour power, mainly enslaved labour, at the time when Britain was leading an international anti-slavery campaign (Evans 2013).

²⁶⁹ In the 1830s, the number of enslaved workers had reached 400.

²⁷⁰ This number had increased two years later to 263, valued at 20,000 pounds. According to Evans’s (2013) estimates, at the beginning of the 1840s, the Anglo-Brazilian companies owned a total of 2000 enslaved workers, a majority of them acquired through the slave trade, which became illegal after the Treaty between Britain and the Empire of Brazil came into force in 1831.

²⁷¹ In fact, according to the contract of acquiring the mine, the company was obliged to have three-thirds of its labour force constituted of “free” labour. The average number of enslaved workers remained higher than “free” workers until 1879. The presence of enslaved labourers was impressive until 1855. Between 1839 and 1847, they represented 85 per cent of the non-European labour force. In 1863, there were 1691 enslaved workers, most of whom were hired. Europeans never constituted more than 8 per cent of the total social labour of St. John; most of them were administrators or skilled workers (Libby 1984:87).

workers.” However, at that time, it was ubiquitous in the Americas that Chinese workers, such as coolies in Cuba, were employed as contract workers under 3-year contracts. Although in low numbers, Chinese workers were also employed for a short period in coffee production in Brazil (Marquese 2019). As discussed in the previous section, from the beginning of the 1830s, the Portuguese dispossessed proletarians from the Azores and Madeira Island were imported to Brazil and contracted under labour arrangements resembling indentured servitude. They were employed in coffee plantations, public construction works and urban services (Alencastro 1988; Galvanese 2022).

In different phases of St. John’s functioning, the labourers with different legal statutes employed under distinct labour arrangements worked next to each other, although performing not always the same tasks. Libby argues that Brazilian semi-proletarian and enslaved workers performed the same functions. European workers mostly carried out administrative tasks and supervision. Freitas (2009:85) shows, based on his research about labour relations in other mines in Minas Gerais, that white European and Brazilian wage labourers usually supervised enslaved workers. Until the end of the 1850s, the most expressive part of the total social labour of the enterprise was enslaved labour, which was mainly employed under rental contracts. Although at the beginning of the 1850s, due to the official end of the transatlantic slave trade and growing coffee production and public sector, it was challenging to obtain enslaved workers, since the end of the 1850s developed a dynamic rental market of enslaved labour.²⁷² The rented enslaved labour was spread in all the regions of Minas Gerais studied by Libby. According to the census of 1872, the rental of enslaved workers appeared under the category of “wage labourers” (*jornaleiros*). It constituted 12,2 per cent of the total male enslaved labour force in the province (Libby 1988:94). As already discussed above, the specificity of this kind of enslaved “wage” labour is that these are not the workers who get paid for their labour. Their owners are paid, although the enslaved worker received a “reward” in the form of maintenance. Libby (1988) demonstrates, based on the census of 1872, that this kind of enslaved labour arrangement had spread significantly during the 19th century and that the agricultural sector was taking advantage of the possibility of temporary transference of the labour-power of enslaved workers. It is possible that this form of labour control spread particularly after the end of the Atlantic slave trade when the value of enslaved labour swelled. The

²⁷² Renting enslaved labour was also known in colonial times in Minas Gerais, especially during the 18th-century gold rush and probably among the owners of a few enslaved workers, as mineral mining required labour mobility. The first documented hire rates come from the accounting books of the Real Extração, the first royal diamond monopoly founded in 1772. The company leased enslaved labour from local owners. (Bergad 1999:198; Freitas 2009) Between 1783 and 1791, the average number of owners leasing enslaved workers to *Real Extração* was 217 (Bergad 1999:201).

owners rented enslaved labour to more profitable activities of the agricultural cycle or other sectors²⁷³, thereby valorising their property in enslaved persons obtaining higher returns from the allocated capital.

Why hire and not purchase?

Why did St. John d'el Rey managers not buy enslaved workers but hired their labour? According to Libby (1984), the company interacted with the available local labour regimes, but as a British company, it was also restricted by British laws. At the time, when British anti-slavery groups were moving international anti-slavery claims, there appeared evidence that British capitalists (and not any more archaic colonial elites) were employing enslaved labour in ex-British colonies as well as non-British territories. In 1842, a bill was presented to the English parliament (*Act for the More Effectual Suppression of the Slave Trade*), which prohibited British subjects from buying, possessing and hiring enslaved workers, whether within the dominions of the British Crown or anywhere else in the world.²⁷⁴ As a result, British capitalists who had invested their capital in enslaved labour, either through purchase or hire, initiated a broad lobby to prohibit the law from entering into force.²⁷⁵ The material researched by Libby (1984) reveals that the St. John's directory in London justified their opposition to this law by arguing that it would mean a loss of already invested capital and eventually quitting their activities in Brazil, which would mean a loss to British commerce. According to the directory, there was no alternative to enslaved labour. Moreover, neither had the enslaved workers an alternative if left in the streets.

²⁷³ Based on Libby's (1988) estimations, the 12 per cent of "wage" enslaved workers totalled approximately 20,000, possibly employed through rental contracts in Minas Gerais. Only 2000 were absorbed by the foreign mining companies. The rest were destined to export agriculture (coffee) and commercial agriculture of subsistence production for the domestic market. Interestingly, the textile industry did not make use of such labour arrangements. The reason seems to have been the relatively high price of renting enslaved labour, for example, in Morro Velho. Eighty per cent of the hourly-paid workers in textile establishments were made up of exceptionally poorly paid orphans, children and women, whose yearly income was two times lower than the rent, maintenance and premiums of first-class enslaved workers, 191\$000 and 376\$560, respectively.

²⁷⁴ Evans (2013) studied the petition against companies owning enslaved workers abroad, which was moved by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (BFASS) and presented to the House of Lords in 1841 by Lord Brougham. He writes that the bill's framing entered a very controversial and disputed ground and faced several barriers. First, appointing the shareholders as the guilty ones was allegedly complicated because, allegedly, not all of them knew that they had invested in an enterprise owning enslaved workers. However, when the Brazilian Mining Company shareholders voted on whether to emancipate the enslaved workers of the Gongo Soco in 1841, most of them did not approve it. Secondly, the anti-slavery field was in the middle of conflicting interests between protectionists and free traders, between BFASS and the Chartists who considered wage-slavery at "home" the priority issue. Third, the affected mining companies resisted the approval of the Act (Evans 2013:124-5).

²⁷⁵ The mining companies did not only have supporters among the Members of Parliament, but they were able to mobilise the support of politically and economically influential persons from the financial circles (Evans 2013:126).

The Lord Brougham Law, which was finally promulgated in 1843, prohibited the ownership of enslaved workers by English citizens. However, it did not say anything about past transactions, meaning that British capitalists could keep the workers they acquired. Nor did it mention anything about the rent of enslaved labour. The mining companies had been able to legitimise the ownership of enslaved workers and secure the right to hire enslaved labour from 1843 onwards. Until the end of the 19th century, this form of using enslaved labour became common in joint-stock mining companies. Thus, what emerged here was a “corporate slave-holder” using enslaved labour outside of the plantation.²⁷⁶

Enslaved labour versus free labour

Libby (1984:61) shows that the company justified using enslaved labour as a solution in the context of labour scarcity: “The necessary amount of free labour-power which could be employed did not exist”. The existing semi-proletarian labour was considered “unreliable,” in contrast to enslaved labour, which was considered reliable, indeed. The superintendent of St. John argued in 1830 that “[i]n Rio de Janeiro free labour is literally non-existent. . . . We do little or nothing without slaves. We must have a sufficient number of slaves to become independent of the caprice of occasional workers, or we have to make an equivalent force to come from England” (Libby 1984:61). As British proletarians were considered too expensive, for the next fifteen years, until 1850, there was a clear preference for enslaved labour.

However, it was not that “free” labour was unavailable in Brazil. In 1800, enslaved persons constituted less than half of the population in Brazil (Prado [1945] 2011). In Minas Gerais, according to the census of 1831-1840 and 1872, in 1830-40, the average participation of free labour in the total labour force²⁷⁷ of the province was 63,26 per cent, against 36,7 per cent of enslaved labour. In 1972, these proportions were 81,07 and 18,93 per cent, respectively. According to Libby’s own aggregated data, the proportions were 78,64 per cent and 21,36 per cent, respectively, suggesting that the participation of enslaved labour was underestimated in the census. In 1831-40, higher than the proportion of enslaved persons in the entire population of Minas Gerais (31,39 per cent) was the participation of enslaved workers in the labour force. For the comparison with other

²⁷⁶ According to Kelly (2017:200-202), “[t]hese slave-owning mining companies were unusual not only in their use of slave labour outside of the plantation environment but also in the way that ownership of slaves was spread across potentially hundreds of shareholders.”

²⁷⁷ Libby (1988:53) includes domestic servants among the economically active population, as it would be difficult to separate domestic labour from the economic life based on subsistence agriculture in the 1800s.

regions, in 1872, in Rio de Janeiro, the participation of enslaved workers in the labour force was 46,20 per cent, confirming that enslaved labour remained very important in the urban-commercial and industrial economy almost until the end of slavery (Libby 1988:53-54).

What the superintendent St. John did not find at the beginning of the 19th century was the large quantity of “double free” proletarians, who had nothing else to sell except their labour-power, in other words, “free” wage labour. In Minas Gerais and other parts of Brazil, some aggregate tenants had access to land and were not pressured to live from wage labour. Furthermore, *camaradas* also provided services occasionally as day labourers (Franco 1997; Lamounier 1995). However, they did not provide labour power for the type of regularity that the plantations and large-scale mining required. This regularity could be guaranteed only by another kind of expropriated labour, unfree and unwaged but reliable, which had attended the labour demand of the colonial economy and continued doing so until after the end of the transatlantic slave trade. Moreover, as it will be shown later, the research on the rates of return from the use of enslaved labour and, mainly through the contracts of hire (Libby 1984; Mello 1978) confirm that the use of unfree labour was highly profitable to both, the owner-lessor and employer-lessee, which seems to weaken the argument that enslaved workers were used for decades only due to “pressure” because free labour was not available.

Libby’s (1984) data indicate that after the end of the slave trade in 1850, the employment of Brazilian “free” labour increased in St. John. However, most of the wage labour was derived from among the smallholders, enjoying a certain self-sufficiency. They were not forced to sell their labour power because they were semi-proletarians in the sense that they still owned a piece of land, from where they extracted part of their means of subsistence and commercialised the rest. It was why there was a collective absence of workers during planting and harvesting, as the workers tended to work on their lands. Neither was a labour law guaranteeing the fixation of “free” workers in the workplace—the labour laws from 1830 until 1879 regulated the rural migrant labour relations. The first Labour Law that regulated Brazilian-born workers' labour relations was issued only in 1879.

Indeed, commercial subsistence agriculture was prevalent in Minas Gerais already during the colonial period (Prado [1942] 1999). In the 19th century, it played an essential role in supplying the region of Rio de Janeiro with food products. Libby’s (1984, 1988) explanation about the self-sufficiency of its smallholders until 1850 is that it might not have derived only from the access to land but also from the ownership of enslaved workers. During the 19th century, Minas Gerais was the province with the most significant number of enslaved people (Klein and Luna 2010). Slavery

was very spread in the social fabric, and it was commonplace among households to own from one to ten enslaved workers²⁷⁸, which was facilitated by the availability of cheap enslaved labour. Enslaved workers' labour was appropriated by smallholders and commercialised to obtain essential goods.²⁷⁹ However, between 1831-40 and 1872, the relative proportion of semi-proletarian labour in the Minas Gerais increased almost four-fold, becoming numerically more critical in the operations of St. John in 1850, although reaching majority only in 1880. Libby (1988) explains that this expansion did not involve any systematic process of land expropriation, pressured by the movement of agricultural elites.²⁸⁰ The land was, to some extent, available. According to the hypothesis of our studied author, what limited its use was the limited access to the extra-familiar labour-power, that is, enslaved labour, due to its rising value after the official end of the slave trade and its absorption by the coffee planters who were able to pay the higher price. This made enslaved labour unaffordable to a significant segment of the free population, which was not able to secure its subsistence anymore through agricultural activities, being forced to semi-proletarianise. Hence, the mid-19th-century “free” labour in Minas Gerais was semi-proletarian, still possessing the land but unable to survive on it. As suggested ironically by Libby (1984, 1988), what partially explains the proletarianisation of “free” labour is the enslaved labour or its increasing scarcity.

How was enslaved labour hired?

According to Libby (1984), St. John d'el Rey acquired its initial stock of enslaved workers when the company bought the Morro Velho Mine. Until the promulgation of the Lord Brougham Law, the company acquired enslaved workers in Rio de Janeiro's market. After the promulgation of the Law, renting enslaved workers became the primary strategy to obtain enslaved labour. The enslaved

²⁷⁸ Based on Klein and Luna (2010), in the 18th century, one-third of the households in the towns of Minas Gerais owned enslaved workers. In 1718, 60 per cent (2120) of all these households had five or fewer enslaved workers. Twenty-one per cent of the households had from 6 to 10 enslaved workers.

²⁷⁹ Fragoso and Florentino 2001 argue that owning enslaved persons in a slave-holding society demonstrated social status independently of the economic condition of the owner. However, Libby's (idem.) reasoning also shows that, for example, small farmers, by owning enslaved workers, resisted entering the wage system, as by having access to enslaved labour, the household could appropriate the surplus product. When this resource fell off, the smallholders saw themselves gradually proletarianising, although remaining semi-proletarians, keeping subsistence agriculture as an auxiliary activity. Cravo (2019) shows that at the beginning of the 19th century, the access to property of enslaved people in Minas Gerais supported the social mobility of the “free” and freed population. This also happened in Rio de Janeiro, as Santos (2015) shows. The incapacity to renovate the property rights of enslaved persons after 1850 led to the proletarianisation of previous small and medium owners.

²⁸⁰ In the same year of the abolition of the slave trade, in 1850, Land Law was approved, which could have theoretically served to carry out such expropriations but which, according to Libby (1988), remained a dead letter in the Minas Gerais province.

workers hired from other bankrupted mines were gradually added to the purchased workers²⁸¹. Interestingly, the hiring scheme itself was described as a “*pay in advance as many years wages as will make up the market price of the negro.*”²⁸² It is quite curious that “wage” meant the “rent” that employers paid to the owners of enslaved workers. As I will discuss later, the yearly rent payments, when summed up, totalled much more than the purchase price of enslaved workers. The rent also included the interest for the owner, which was the rate of return from the system of hire or a gain capitalised by the owner.

Enslaved labour was hired in manifold ways until 1867 from other companies of Minas Gerais province (Libby 1984: 62-63). Two years after the promulgation of the Law, in 1845, a contract was signed with a bankrupted Brazilian Company in London, whereby St. John acquired the Cata Branca mine and hired the enslaved workers, which was the main interest in this transaction. Between 1845 and 1858, 385 enslaved workers of Cata Branca were transferred to Morro Velho. They were workers who were already trained in mining work. Between 1839 and 1857, the number of enslaved workers increased from 398 to 1166, and that of “free” workers increased from 88 to 600. In 1864, 2,500 men and women worked in the mine. In 1867, at least 68 per cent of hired enslaved workers²⁸³ came from other mines in the province.

Capital accumulation based on hired enslaved labour

As the company reports studied by Libby (1984) suggest, enslaved labour was not just more reliable because there was a given abundance of it compared to “free” labour, which was increasingly semi-proletarianising and oscillated between wage labour and subsistence agriculture. Enslaved labour was also more reliable because employers could exercise control over it. It is not accidental that the company kept until “the end” a significant proportion of enslaved labour within its labour mix, although its share diminished with time. The same is argued about the coffee sector in the West of

²⁸¹ As mentioned before, during the investment bubble in the London stock market, many mines were bought in the Americas to explore directly their mineral resources. Many companies founded for that purpose went bankrupt.

²⁸² It was reported to the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society in 1851 that the British capitalists had found a way to use enslaved labour without owning enslaved workers. Hence, they did not contradict the Law, which became an empty letter (Evans 2013:127, emphasis in original).

²⁸³ The rent of one enslaved male worker was 90\$0000 per year (1835-1838), and of the female worker 60\$000. In 1839-1842, 100\$000 and 70\$000, respectively (Libby 1984:94-95).

São Paulo and Paraíba Valley (Marquese 2013b; Mello 1978; Slenes and Mello 1980) and the sugar sector in the northeast.²⁸⁴

The advantage of the hiring system, from the point of view of the lessee, is that although it is more expensive than purchase (as it also includes depreciation and interests), after the end of the contract and exploitation of enslaved labour during the most productive years of the workers (at age 20-30), the employer did not have to continue maintaining them (Libby 1984:137). To the owners of enslaved workers, this practice offered direct monetary benefits. To St. John, the hiring system, especially when it could hire labour from bankrupt mining companies, was beneficial for several reasons. It could get access to workers who were expropriated entirely from the means of production, including their persons. They were already disciplined within the enslaved labour regime and were trained in mining activities. Hence, they possessed the necessary skills and talents, which made them ready to be exploited for “heteronomously determined purposes” (Linden and Roth 2014).

According to Libby (1988), the advantage of hiring enslaved labour went beyond contracting “free” labour. The employer’s control of enslaved workers extended from work to home; it could choose the rented enslaved workers as it was convenient for the “productive organisation.” The employer decided the housing location and most of the alimentation. In the case of accidents, they also defined “the adequate treatment and the time of necessary recovery” and controlled essential data. The availability of labour was secured. Despite contractual restrictions, the enslaved workers could be “fired” without significant problems or costs to the enterprise if necessary. According to the contract, the enslaved workers could be used during their most productive years (at 20 to 40), and the worn-out workers could be discarded later (Libby 1988:330-331). The number of hired enslaved workers could be reduced through some mediations; for example, they could be rented or subleased to others, such as public institutions, as stated in contracts.

²⁸⁴ Brazilian historiography has spent a significant amount of ink arguing that there were “traditional” and “archaic” planters of the Northeast and Rio de Janeiro who acquired and owned enslaved persons due to the motives of prestige or ostentation and were tied to the institution because of nostalgia. In contrast, the West of São Paulo coffee planters were allegedly modern, innovative, and forward-looking. Hence, they were (proto-)capitalists as they did not confront the process of abolition, pacifically looked for innovative solutions to the labour problems, and employed “free” labour. Mello (1978) shows, based on empirical analysis, that this distinction made no sense, as all the planters adhered to enslaved labour until the last decade of slavery, which was done from the reasoning of profitability of enslaved labour in comparison to any other capital investment. The notion about the end of slavery reached the consciousness of planters at the beginning of the 1880s, which was signalled by the decline in the value of enslaved workers but not in the rate of hire, which remained stable. Moreover, if there are differences, these are related to different historical timings and economic and political conjunctures in which economic agents enter the market. The capitalist or pre-capitalist mentality is not the primary determinant. If there were planters with the so-called pre-capitalist mentality, then this was superimposed by the practices motivated by economic interests (Mello 1978).

British capitalists seemed to have been particularly attached to enslaved labour as its hiring proved advantageous due to the “absolute diligence” of enslaved workers (Freitas 2009:87), and it tended to be cheaper compared to the Brazilian semi-proletarians and European migrant workers. The wages of day labourers were fixed at a level that oscillated around the rent rate of enslaved workers plus their maintenance and were usually above it (Gorender 1980). In 1867, enslaved labour was 25 per cent cheaper than “free” labour and 45 per cent more affordable in 1879 (Libby 1998:360).²⁸⁵

In the labour hierarchy within the world capitalist system, enslaved workers yield all the value to the capitalist and receive the lowest reward compared to other labourers (Wallerstein 1991b). Libby (1984) demonstrates that in St. John, the reward was received in kind, in the form of maintenance, to which bi-weekly premiums and overtime compensation were added. Besides the trimestral rent payments to the lessor of enslaved labour, which included interest, the lessee was responsible for the maintenance of the workers, including housing, food, and medical care. After the promulgation of the Lord Brougham Law in 1843, the enslaved workers started to receive a bi-weekly premium, which was a kind of wage, as well as payment for overtime (Libby 1984:98-99). In the accounting system, the labour costs – the price of enslaved worker (until 1843), the rent of enslaved labour, maintenance, bi-weekly premiums and payments for overtime – appeared under the item ‘labour costs’ which also included expenses with “free labour”, that is, wages. They did not appear under an item of “fixed capital” or “instruments of labour”, which would be used by so many as an argument that enslaved workers, as fixed capital, do not create surplus value.

The official working day of enslaved workers between 1838 and 1847 was twelve hours (with the labour force divided into two shifts). When workers in England (and Brazil) were mobilising to reduce the working day, the working conditions of enslaved labourers used by English capitalists abroad came under scrutiny. As a result, in 1848, the working day was reduced to eight hours (workers started working in three shifts), but only for some categories. Even though medical reports about the working conditions narrated that one of the causes of high mortality rates was

²⁸⁵ The expenses with enslaved labour increased during the enterprise’s activity in the Sabará Province (from 1834 until 1885) by 7,7 per cent, and the expenses with “free” labour increased by 46 per cent (idem.). Libby (1984) presents data regarding the labour costs to the company (fixed and circulating form of variable capital) for two available years: 1867 and 1879. In 1867, the most expensive enslaved worker (classified by the company as the “1st class slave”) cost annually 349\$594, from which more than half was constituted of rent (220\$000), the rest was made of maintenance (63\$034) and premiums/overtime (66\$560). The cost of wage labour amounted to 465\$000. In 1879, the total cost of enslaved labour had increased to 376\$560, of which 250\$000 was constituted of rent, maintenance comprised 60\$560 and 66\$560 of premiums and overtime (Libby uses here the same calculus as for 1867, although the rate of premiums and extra work hours may have increased). The annual cost of wage labour had reached 682\$000 by 1879 (Libby 1984: 108).

overworking, overwork might have been used to preserve the 12-hour working day, although the allowed was eight.

The exploitation rates, or the surplus value rate, for every labour category employed in St. John also show that enslaved labour was the most profitable. In simple terms and metaphorically, surplus value is this part of the working day that the worker labours for the employer; the rest of the day is dedicated to producing the equivalent of the value of labour-power²⁸⁶. The surplus value's magnitude is equivalent to the value of the commodity minus the value of its constituent elements. The rate of surplus value²⁸⁷ is the proportion by which the surplus value exceeds the costs of labour-power (variable capital), which is here constituted of rent, maintenance costs and premiums/payment for overwork. The rent paid for the enslaved labour appears to the employer as a labour cost, like a “wage” paid to the owner. However, as it is a “wage” paid not to the workers but to their owners, it is also part of the surplus value.

According to Libby's (1984) data, the rate of exploitation of enslaved labour varies between 598 per cent (1875) and 61 per cent (1880). However, in these years, it was twice as high as the exploitation rate of Brazilian “free” labour (proletarian and semi-proletarian) and 12 (1876) - 8,7 (1880) times the rate for European workers (which also included the administrative workers). Enslaved labour was more profitable than Brazilian semi-proletarian and European proletarian labour (Libby 1984:110-111). Both proletarians yielded all the value to the employer, but the reward for slave labour was much lower than the one for wage labourers, although the former's exploitation rate was twice as high. The exploitation of enslaved labour is a source of excess surplus value, which is derived from the possibility of forcing the labourers to toil harder by direct violence and “paid” less than wage workers. This excess surplus value emerges when enslaved workers produce

²⁸⁶ Although the point has already been made above, it would be essential to repeat here that the purchaser does not buy “actual labour” but “potential labour” or “labour-power”, and the money exchanged for it is, according to Marx, variable capital. In the case of the system of hire, “all the variable capital circulates like wages” (Clegg and Foley 2018).

²⁸⁷ Libby (1984:110) presents the rate of exploitation for every labour category in St. John for 18 years, and the data is available for seven years. Based on the data about the net profit in 1867, Libby (idem.) calculates the share of enslaved labour (1450 enslaved workers) in it according to its proportion in the total social labour of the company to understand how much profit is produced in this year. Then, the share of enslaved labour in total surplus value is divided by the labour costs for this same year to get the rate of exploitation, which for the year 1867 was 83,1 per cent, while in 1875, it was 598 per cent. The rate of exploitation is also calculated for every component in the total labour force; thus, in 1867 and 1875, for the free workers, it was 72 and 287 per cent, respectively, and for European workers, 10 and 53 per cent, respectively. The rate of exploitation varied according to the gold content of extracted raw ore. It is assumed that every individual participates equally in the production of net profit.

more surplus value than wage workers, which owners capture in the form of *rent*.²⁸⁸ From the workers' viewpoint, it implies a partial expropriation of their subsistence fund.

The rates of exploitation before the abolition of slavery in 1888, when “free” semi-proletarian labour was more available, started to approach each other, which makes Libby (1984:111) conclude that “within the short period, there would be no difference between the exploitation of these two types of labour”. However, even if the exploitation rate were equal, in the case of enslaved labour, one part of the product is still expropriated as an excess, and the reward is kept much lower than the wage of the “free” labourers. Even if the maintenance costs, together with different allowances to enslaved workers plus rent, are equal to the wages, the exploitation of enslaved workers can be deepened, and productivity increased in absolute terms by the control of labour through the means of violence.

The higher rate of slave exploitation demonstrated that enslaved workers could be forced to work with greater intensity and “paid” less than wage labourers, who were only partly forced to sell their labour power, having the other part guaranteed by subsistence farming. The irregularity of the appearance of wage workers and the lack of data about how many days per year they worked makes it complicated to compare the exploitation rates of enslaved labour with that of wage labour. Other studies about the employment of hired enslaved labourers and wage labourers in public works show that the latter worked fewer days per week than the former. At the same time, the rates of exploitation of enslaved labour in the large plantations in the US South fell in the same range – 305 per cent in 1859.²⁸⁹

Hence, Libby's (1984:65) work permits us to conclude that the labour of rented enslaved workers represented three elements: it was the cheapest, the most profitable and the most exploited. In fact, despite fluctuating world markets, increasing the price of hire, and frequently occurring accidents in mines, which also demanded human lives, there were only a few years that the company did not earn profit and could not pay generous dividends.²⁹⁰

Libby (1984: 139) argues that the preference for enslaved labour was comprehensible as it was more profitable: “The rates of surplus value indicate that capitalism is plainly capable of using

²⁸⁸ Enslaved labour generates a higher surplus value because the owners of enslaved workers had at their disposal means of physical coercion to force them to labour harder or because their maintenance costs were lower than the current wage (Clegg and Foley 2018:2-3). Clegg and Foley (2018) consider the excess surplus value by comparing the profitability of enslaved labour in the Antebellum South and wage labour in the US North.

²⁸⁹ Data from Clegg (2020), who has used the sources of Ransom and Sutch (1977:3-5, Appendix A) and Ransom and Sutch (2001).

²⁹⁰ In 1875, it gained the highest profits of the imperial period; the dividend was five pounds per share (Libby 1984).

traditional or non-capitalist elements when the situation requires and when it provides advantages.” This argument also weakens the hypothesis that the company was “pressured” or “forced” to use enslaved labour. Enslaved labour was way more profitable, even if it was expensive at that time, and the rent of enslaved labour was even more costly. However, it remained cheaper than Minas Gerais's “free” semi-proletarian labour.

The rate of return of the owners of enslaved workers

The hiring system was not just profitable to the employing company but also to the owners, who appropriated a significant part of the labour product of enslaved workers. In the hire system, enslaved workers were rented for interest. That means some people lived from the application of their money in purchasing enslaved workers who were supposed to yield interests under the rental contract or wage-earning (Gorender 1980:181).

Regarding the productive agents, hiring enslaved workers was fundamental to guarantee labour power in times of scarcity. To the owners who used their expensive enslaved workers, particularly after the end of the slave trade, the system of hire presented immediate monetary gains. Libby affirms that the supply of enslaved workers for rent was exceptionally high at the end of the 1850s and in the 1860s, and it seems to indicate that big owners needed liquid capital by taking their enslaved workers from agricultural production and renting them to the mines and other public and private enterprises.

Libby (1984) and Cravo (2019) mention “mortgage renters” of bankrupted mines, who were hiring enslaved labour to St. John and other mining companies. Cravo (2019) again mentions that most of the individuals who rented their workers for public works in Minas Gerais – to construct the bridge of Santa Barbara, the Paraibuna Road and Paraibuna Bridge – were small owners in the 1830s and 1840s. Only some were big coffee planters who owned more than a hundred enslaved workers and were able to hire out 60 per cent of their labour force to the provincial government. Libby shows that the profit earned by owners by renting enslaved labour to St. John was 18-24 per cent. That is, it was much higher than the price paid for the enslaved persons in the market, and it was what St. John spent more than they would have paid if they had been allowed to purchase the enslaved workers directly.

The 19th-century travellers also registered a rate of return from the rent of unskilled enslaved labour as high as 30-40 per cent of the purchase price. This means owners recovered their money spent on the purchase in 2,5-3 years (Gorender 1980:205). Compared with the rates of return

received from the hiring arrangements (enslaved workers labouring 182,4 days a year, ten hours a day) for the construction of Santa Barbara Bridge, it was 19,4 per cent in 1867 and 17,2 per cent in 1868. The owners who had hired their enslaved workers to construct Estrada da Corte earned 37,4 per cent of gross return in 1872 and 38,3 per cent in 1873 (Cravo 2019).

Cravo and Godoy (2019) demonstrate that hiring enslaved workers was also profitable for owners who had leased their workers to construct the Paraibuna Road. Some big coffee producers and owners found it more profitable to rent enslaved labour to the Provincial Government than to use it in coffee production or to rent it to mining companies, for example. The rate of return from the hire to the Paraibuna Bridge was 57 per cent. The owners appropriated the resources invested by the public treasury in the construction of bridges and roads by using the hiring system (Cravo 2019:177).

Libby's (1984) hypothesis is that owners applied this money in other activities than just for immediate personal consumption, and he suggests that it was applied in the banking system. Thus, big landowners of Minas Gerais used all their resources, including enslaved labour, to produce liquid capital to be employed in the new financial activity: investment of loan capital in the expanding coffee production and other dynamic sectors of the Brazilian economy.

The rental contract

After the Law of Lord Brougham entered into force, the company developed a plan to secure enslaved workers by offering incentives and better guarantees to the owners. There were contracts for 99 years which concealed the virtual sale to avoid tax payments, but according to the two censuses mentioned above, short contracts were the most common. The rental contracts of St. John varied between three and five years (5,5 years seem to have been the time that owners could recover their initial investment). Rent payments continued even if enslaved workers had died in the workplace. They would be cancelled only in the case of escape. In both cases, the contract parties had to be informed. The lessee was responsible for maintaining the workers and providing medical care without any discount on the rent payments. There were also one-year contracts, with payments made per trimester or semester. The contracts distinguished between two price classes: first- and second-class enslaved workers, male and female. The most expensive were the first-class enslaved male workers aged 20-40. The distinction might have to do with the age and health of the workers, as well as skill. Also, the length of the contract seems to have had to do with the "useful" and

“productive” life of the workers (Libby 1984:96-97). Contracts, including almost the same terms, were made between other mining companies and the owners of enslaved individuals. The contract made in 1860 between the Anglo-Brazilian Gold Company and the mortgage creditor also had an item that, in the case of pregnancy, the rent payment would be cancelled for six months. However, lessees were obliged to care for the person as if she were their own.

Moreover, the company was also allowed to sublease enslaved workers according to the same contract conditions (Freitas 2009:99). Other contracts made between the parties stipulated that workers could be returned with three months’ notice (Libby 1984:100). The contracts did not mention anything about the discipline or labour exploitation, in terms of the length of the working day, the number of working days per year or the use of coercive measures. It shows that the mining companies had free hands regarding labour exploitation and the organisation of the lives of enslaved workers. The only concern was not letting them die, which would have represented a financial loss. Nothing else but the owner's authorisation was necessary for the rental contract. The contract of hire was negotiated privately, showing the owner class's power and political influence (Santos 2015).

The rigidity and flexibility of slavery: capitalist rationality

Those who argue that slavery is incompatible with capitalism use the argument that the economic system based on enslaved labour is rigid. This rigidity means that “the quantity of hands of one stock of enslaved workers remains unchanged despite variations in the quantity of labour demanded by different seasonal or conjunctural phases of production” (Gorender 1980:216). The advantage of “free” wage labour is that the capitalist can hire and fire the worker whenever necessary, a resource that the owner-planter using enslaved labour allegedly lacks. One resource that the planters were argued to have was to keep their enslaved labour force minimal and intensify the exploitation of enslaved workers during the high season or higher market demand. During the low season and low market demand, they could ease the exploitation and employ the workers in other plantation tasks, such as construction, maintenance, and subsistence production, which implied that enslaved workers had to perform many different functions. Hence, the number of purchased enslaved persons, their employment and use according to the market fluctuations and seasonality of production refer to planters’ rationality in organising the production process. At the same time, this rigidity is connected to another argument about the unfeasibility of slavery, namely that this fixed number of workers, which had to be used during both moments of production, peak and downtrend, prohibited technological innovation (Gorender 1980:222). The hyper-exploitation of enslaved

workers during the peak season was degrading. However, the owners also had the resources to hire their enslaved workers to other planters or hire them from other planters in times of labour scarcity during harvest time. Even during an increasing import of enslaved workers in the first half of the 19th century, the workers were hired for harvest time in coffee and sugar plantations. During the harvest time, the sugar mill owners used to hire to each other enslaved workers who were skilled in certain sugar production tasks. Arguably, the practice of hiring spread, especially after the end of the trade, as the need for labour-power became more urgent, especially in coffee production (Fraga Filho 2006:37; Gorender 1980:228). Van Delden Laerne had observed that in the 1880s, it was common to hire enslaved workers in coffee plantations, their number being over one-third of the total enslaved population (70 of 240) of Ibytira farm (Gorender 1980:228). Thus, hiring introduced an element of flexibility into the production system, representing an extra cost to the hirer, of course, having to pay not only the parcel referring to the amortisation of the price of the enslaved individual but also interests. However, it would be necessary to compare the rental price of enslaved workers and the wages of “free” labourers, which might have been so high that economically, it was still advantageous for the planter to hire enslaved labour.²⁹¹

Libby (1984) constantly emphasises that the management of free and unfree labour in St. John was subordinated to capitalist rationality. In the context of crises, the company was always forced to cut labour costs. The most manipulable were wage workers, who could be fired anytime. It was also relatively easy to diminish the expenses of enslaved labour by hiring the workers to a third party, such as a provincial government, as the contract allowed subletting. How the company managed its labour force to respond to different political and economic conjunctures shows it was searching for the most profitable fix and mix in which every labour form responded to a particular need.

Extraction of labour effort and the control of enslaved labour

The relationship of hire implied that enslaved workers were not under the control and supervision of their owners. They were subordinated to the industrial disciplinary regime under the supervision of their employers and overseers. It cannot be said that in this “employment relation”, enslaved workers acquired more autonomy over their bodies than if they were labouring under the control of the owner. In terms of the means of production and subsistence as well as their persons, they

²⁹¹ Clegg (2015a) and Clegg and Foley (2018) compare the rent of enslaved labour and the wages of free labour.

remained as expropriated as before. Libby suggests that the same social relation of domination that existed between enslaved workers and their owners was reproduced in the relations between the enslaved workers and British employers who expropriated the enslaved labour in practice. As the employer was dealing with the alien property, particular care had to be taken, and the terms of the treatment were pointed out in the contract.

Libby (1984:111) mentions “capitalist rationality” in particular, which implies “enhanced organisation and elevated rhythm of productive processes” and is used for the extraction of absolute surplus value. Libby contests Joaquim Nabuco, who was the central abolitionist intellectual and writer in the 19th century, as well as a good part of Brazilian social scientists (Cardoso 1962; Costa [1966] 1997; Furtado [1959] 2007; Gorender 1980; Ianni 1972; Prado [1942] 1999),²⁹² who have argued that slavery was an inefficient and irrational labour form and therefore incompatible with industrialisation. He proves the opposite, showing with his study that

slave labour is not only adaptable to the organisational changes dictated by capitalist rationality . . . but could also, as a basic labour-power, effectuate these changes. Slave labour thus did not represent any structural hindrance to the development of new production relations introduced by nascent industrial capitalism. Regarding individual tasks, the enslaved worker can specialise insofar as specialisation is defined by a simple concentration on one activity subordinated to the rhythm of industrial labour. (Libby 1984:139)

Libby’s argument has to do with slavery as a labour regime, which expresses elements of flexibility. Moreover, “adaptability” does not imply passivity. Industrial capital subsumed enslaved labour in a way that it created an industrial regime of labour organisation with control and discipline, thereby taking advantage of the “best” of two worlds: industrial labour organisation and slavery. On the other hand, British industrial capital “adjusted” to the “colonial heritage”, making use of the “tradition”. Libby prefers thinking on the established relation between the British capital and slavery through the lenses of hybridity between “tradition” and “modern”, permitting us to think about the presence of both in industrial capitalism as well as in slavery. His research suggests that the legal statute of workers does not determine labour productivity. Indeed, skilled enslaved labour was perfectly adapted to technological changes. Moreover, the wage does not in itself

²⁹² Most of these classical works, according to Libby (1984), reproduce a view, or a prejudice, regarding the incompatibility between slavery and industrialisation, considering enslaved workers as “inefficient”, “irrational”, “irresponsible”, and a hindrance to technological development and the use of sophisticated machinery. This type of view goes back to the conclusions of Joaquim Nabuco, who declared that enslaved labour was an obstacle to industrialisation. One reason for this irrationality was derived from the fact that the enslaved workers appeared as a mere means of production or instrument of production, as she was bought and used as any other material of production. According to Ianni (1972), this represented a risk to planters as they had to maintain enslaved labour even in times of crisis. This type of irrationality would be eliminated once the full capitalist mode of production was established.

stimulate industriousness or innovation. Neither is enslaved labour, in essence, in contradiction with these aspects.

Industrial labour organisation under the dictate of “capitalist rationality” was the way to appropriate enslaved labour. If “the price paid for a slave is nothing but the anticipated and capitalised surplus value or profit to be wrung out of the slave” (Marx 2010a:795), then the rent paid for the enslaved workers is the price in parcels plus the interests of the purchase as well as the depreciation “wrung out of the slave.” Establishing a labour hierarchy between workers might have been another strategy to increase productivity and establish discipline, as was the case in sugar and coffee plantations, as seen in the previous chapter. As a form of promotion in 1833, the Imperial Brazilian Mining Association appointed enslaved workers as overseers (Freitas 2009:88).

Enslaved labour guaranteed that the production would not stop, as “free” labour was considered “unreliable” for a long time. The control over enslaved workers was kept with a particular mix of punishments and incentives. As already mentioned, specific incentives were used to discipline workers. Although the hired enslaved workers were alien properties, the employer had the right to use corporal punishment. The British capitalists kept a repressive system to control the unfree workers, as proved by the regulation of corporal punishment established in 1847. There was also a system of fines for disobedience (Libby 1984:124-5). However, other means of governing the enslaved workers outside the workplace also existed, such as organising their religious, cultural, and family life. Monetary incentives were used as a form of compulsion to force the enslaved persons to work harder and with more discipline, as the benefits could be revoked in the case of unproductiveness or disobedience, and fines could be applied (Libby 1984:124). The bi-weekly rates²⁹³ varied according to the occupation.

Control outside of the workplace

Labour appropriation does not include only the actual labour process or “rational organisation of labour”. It can be facilitated by controlling the reproductive sphere, as Linden (2011) suggested.

²⁹³ Enslaved female workers labouring with *pilões* (pestle for grinding substance) received 0\$120 as bi-weekly premiums. This increased to 0\$320 in 1867. Stone carriers (also women) received 0\$480, earning 0\$800 for overwork. In the underground sector, those who earned in the beginning 0\$160 started to earn 0\$320, with the possibility to earn from 2\$560 to 3\$200 for extra hours. One enslaved worker could have an annual “salary” between 66\$560 and 83\$200, and if married and with children working, the family wage could reach 100\$00. In comparison, in 1858, one messenger could earn 320\$000. At the same time, the warehouse reported that in 1867, one bushel of corn cost 2\$343, one bushel of beans 2\$817, and one arroba (14,7 kg) of beef meat cost 3\$000. (Data from the Annual Report of 1868 of Saint John d’El Rey Mining Company cited in Libby 1984:99) Moreover, the annual income of the family of enslaved workers was equivalent to 10 per cent of the price of the first-class enslaved workers of this period, which was 1:000\$000 (Libby 1984:99).

The borders between work and non-work in the case of enslaved workers were not clear, at least in plantations and mines. It was even more emphatic in domestic work. In St. John, as shown by Libby, the time outside of work was controlled, even on Sundays, which, in fact, was considered the time of “leisure” but still was fulfilled by the disciplinary rituals, which gathered all the enslaved workers – old, young, male, female – for the military-like ceremony (Sunday Revista) to grant manumissions twice a year, pay premiums, payments for overwork, and announce the candidates of manumissions.

The Company also had a policy of manumission (Libby 1984:103) until 1885, a policy of freeing the “deserving” - the obedient and well-behaved - workers, according to which not only its own enslaved individuals but also the hired ones from Cata Branca were manumitted. The announcement of candidates of manumission did not imply signing a new contract with enslaved workers, according to which the latter would be formally free, but subjecting them to forms of compulsory labour on average for seven years, as discussed by Chalhoub (2015), arguing that such arrangements created a form of “contract labour.”²⁹⁴ In the case of hired enslaved workers, the announcement of candidates for emancipation meant the workers entered the probation period. In that sense, this policy was part of the strategy of rule and discipline to increase labour productivity and encourage subordination. However, one question remains: which kind of contract was made with freedmen and -women, and how was it guaranteed that they continued working in the mine after manumission?

From hired enslaved labour to “free” labour?

Interestingly, although not an essential part of the labour force until the last decade of the 19th century, many manumitted enslaved workers, acquired through the rental contract, continued working for the company. They were transformed into workers who had “nothing to sell but their labour power” and became the most “reliable” and “regular” labour power (Freitas 2009:92; Libby 1984:138). Several rental contracts between the employing company and the owners of the province

²⁹⁴ Conditional manumission introduced an element of social and legal ambiguity between slavery and freedom in the 19th century. It is known that the rate of manumission in Brazil was high. Nevertheless, 30-40 per cent were conditional manumissions. Chalhoub, based on “critical legalism,” criticises the argument about the linearity of the transition from slavery to freedom, from bondage to contractual and free labour. The contract does not mean “free” labour. Contract labour has been considered coerced labour, in which workers have been submitted to “debt bondage and various forms of criminal sanction for the breach of contract” (Chalhoub 2015:163).

stipulated that after the end of the contract, the enslaved workers had to be freed²⁹⁵. However, ways were found to guarantee that these freed persons entered the ranks of the company's wage labourers. It would be interesting to know whether an economic compulsion forced these newborn proletarians to stay working in the company as they lacked other opportunities in the region, as Libby asserts, or the company also used specific measures to bind them to the employment relation. Libby does not explore whether English capitalists used some measures to fix the freed workers to make them continue working for St. John. He calls the change from the condition of an enslaved worker to that of a proletarian uncritically a "transference." It also becomes understandable why the rented enslaved workers are considered by him a "transitional" category between slavery and wage labour. He suggests that the most easily "controllable" part of "free" labour, "for approaching the condition of proletarian", was the one "created" by the "transference" from enslaved labour to "free" labour. Thus, according to this reasoning, St. John was fabricating its wage labourers, and the formerly enslaved workers stayed as they did not have many other employment alternatives in the province. The company was motivated to keep those who had gained technical skills, who would be, according to Libby, also more controllable than the workers from semi-proletarian households.

As I explored in the second chapter, in England, the capitalists used the law to punish their workers for the breach of contract, an instrument made available to them by the Master and Servant Act, which was abolished only in 1875. Until then, it was relatively usual to restrict the mobility of wage labour. In Brazil, in the face of the instability of the supply of semi-proletarianised workers, hiring enslaved labour was apparently the resource capitalists resorted to accumulate capital. Due to the scarcity of enslaved workers to hire, fixing free labourers might have become necessary.

The previously mentioned Sunday ceremonies were important in the gradual transition to a wage-labour system (Childs 2002). Furthermore, St. John tried to control and fix workers through the housing complex that it constructed and provided to the wage workers, which made it a typical company town, which was also common in England and the US then. Libby (1984) calls it a paternalist instrument, which, however, is still broadly used by employers. The workers were also given a credit book to facilitate their purchases between wage payments (Libby 1984:82-3). Therefore, another way of binding the workers, hinted by Libby, might have taken place through the debt relation, as Brazilian and foreign workers were buying food from the company warehouses, which implied that the workers spent a part of their wages. Hence, it appears that the "free" workers

²⁹⁵ Some of the requirements were not fulfilled. The contract with the bankrupted Brazilian Company required that the rented enslaved workers had to be freed after the end of the contract. The workers were kept in slavery with the agreement of the owners, allegedly supporting a gradual manumission (Libby 1984).

were repetitively indebted to the company and the money spent in the warehouse was discounted from the wage of the following month. In principle, this system seems to classify as a truck system; however, more information is needed to reach this conclusion.

Binding “free” persons was a common practice in the coffee plantations of São Paulo. In the 19th century, the imported European migrants were subordinated to three different labour arrangements: sharecropping, labour-leasing (*locação de serviços*), and the Brazilian form of the sharecropping system, *colonato* (Lamounier 1995:192). Labour-leasing²⁹⁶ constituted a three-year contract between the planter and the worker. Also, labour tenancy was a form of bondage.

Although not mentioned by Libby, St. John might have used the Labour Leasing Law to bind the Portuguese workers from Madeira Island, but this law did not regulate the labour of former enslaved workers. For the first time, this was regulated by the Rio Branco Law (also known as the Free Womb Law), issued in 1871. According to Lima (2009), this law was strictly made to regulate the labour of freedmen and -women. As it freed the newborn children from slavery, it also “regulated and gave new juridical substance to manumission through labour hiring or ‘service rental’ contracts” (Lima 2009: 402) by respecting the private property rights of owners. As written by Mattoso (2016), the owner of the mother of the newborn had two options: either receive state compensation or make use of the freeborn as a “free” but unpaid labour until the age of 21. The decision had to be made when the child became eight years old. According to the first option, the children were given to one charity institution, where they were going to work until the age of 21. When children stayed with the owners, they were left to the latter’s arbitrariness, as the law did not regulate this labour relation in terms of the length of the working day, sanitary regime or alimentation, which made from the freed young person a “free slave” (Mattoso 2016:200) and made from this manumission scheme a “veiled servitude” (Campello 2018). Other enslaved workers who were freed under the Law were obliged to sign seven-year labour contracts (Eisenberg 1987:177, 196, 201-2), and if they were vagrants, they were compelled to work for public establishments (Lima 2005:302, 2009). Manumission papers which were emitted after that law included service obligations.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ The Labour-Leasing Law was issued in 1837. It punished those who breached the contract with imprisonment. The labour-leasing system was created to resolve the problem of migrant workers’ debt, as the planters carried the costs of immigration, but also to respond with harsher measures to the “collective refusal to work” (Lamounier 1995:194).

²⁹⁷ This kind of fixed-term contract had been customary before; the law just gave this practice a legal framework (Lima 2009).

In 1879, a Labour Law [Lei de locação de serviços] was issued to regulate rural labour relations. The Labour Law²⁹⁸ established distinct conditions for Brazilians, immigrants, and the freed people. For example, the contracts for European immigrants were fixed at three years, for Brazilians at five years and for freed people at seven years. In the case of breaking the contract, punishment in the form of imprisonment and forced labour were foreseen. Also, collective resistance to this restricted wage system was punished. According to Lamounier (1995), it could be seen as the first anti-strike law. Hence, individual manumissions and long-term contracts were used to bind formerly enslaved workers to previous owners, who became new employers, legitimised by both the Free Womb Law and the Labour Law.

It was in 1871 that the manumission of enslaved workers in St. John started to increase in significant numbers (Childs 2002). Libby (1984) does not mention the types of contracts signed with the freed people. However, the existing legislation offered possibilities for binding them and the “free” workers²⁹⁹ to their previous owners or lessees. The overview of the changes in labour legislation regulating diverse labour relations illustrates the possibilities employers had to fix the freedmen and -women to the labour relations. The mining case discussed in this chapter does not provide evidence about the subordination of formerly enslaved workers under coerced contract labour arrangements. It might be related to Libby’s restricted study object (1984), lack of evidence about it in company reports or the proper interpretive stance chosen by the author. Namely, Libby argues that since rented enslaved workers were a transitional category between slavery and proletarian condition, once being a proletarian, in theory, the worker should only experience economic compulsion. In the 19th century, extra-economic means of coercion were used in many agricultural and urban enterprises in the periphery and the core of the capitalist world system to

²⁹⁸ This Labour Law (Decree No. 2827 of March 15, 1879) was not really enforced and it was revoked in 1890.

²⁹⁹ The argument that “free” labour was irregular raises a question about the laws that regulated labour contracts in the 19th century. Lima (2009:410) suspects that “the labour arrangements that involved payments and wages, short-term contracts, were not formalised”. He has shown that since 1830, all labour laws were related to the concerns of the planters to maintain labour supply in the face of the possible scarcity of enslaved labour and were therefore created to regulate the rural labour relations and were oriented to migrant labour. The Lei de locação de serviços (Law No. 108 of October 11, 1837) was a law which regulated migrant agricultural labour and formally free labour and, in principle, did not apply to Brazilian workers. This law regulated rural labour relations until 1879 when the new Labour Law entered into force (Lamounier 1995; Lima 2009). Portuguese colonial law, which remained in force in Brazil until after political emancipation, was very restricted regarding labour relations, as it covered only domestic and no other labour service. As discussed earlier, there was no specific set of laws to manage black enslaved labour as there was Code Noir in French colonies (Lima 2009:399). Allegedly, the law that applied to Brazilian-born workers was the Imperial Commercial Code from 1850, which, in article 226, defined “trade” and included the hiring of “anything” or any service. It covered “contract work” for a fixed time and price. Nevertheless, it is probable that the “juridical apparatus”, which provided the legal principles to deal with other workers, also regulated the labour contracts of Brazilian-born wage labourers. (Lima 2009:401-402) Lima does not consider “contract labour” to be wage labour since short-term contracts define the latter. As I have discussed earlier in this work, “contract labour” could be classified as “restricted wage-labour” (Moulier-Boutang 1998), as the fixed contract bounds the worker to the employer for a fixed time and often breaching the contract is punishable by imprisonment.

bind workers to employment relations. Thus, it is also probable that this occurred in British-owned mining companies.

Capitalist or not?

Libby's (1984, 1988) study critically contributes to understanding slavery's capitalism from the perspective of the rent of enslaved workers in the mining industry explored by British capital. On various occasions, Libby calls the enslaved workers an embryonic proletariat or an essential element of the working class. He approaches the free and enslaved labour to each other without emphasising the one over the other as more compatible with industrial capitalism. His conclusion tends to contradict the dominant tendency in Brazilian historiography. He argues that "during all this period, it is the slave who, by obtaining liberty, came to constitute the more authentically proletarian free labour, given that the process of proletarianisation of his comrade, the smallholder, is gradual, as it was not expropriated of his means of production at once" (Libby 194:142).

Accordingly, in various parts, Libby (1984) suggests enslaved labour was capitalist labour. The rental system provided the capitalists with one of the essential features of a "free" wage labour regime: mobility. With the establishment of the highly concentrated productive enterprise, the hiring system made it possible to use enslaved labour in places where it was most demanded so that owners did not have to dislocate together with the enslaved workers. In that sense, it contained one of the most desirable qualities of the "wage system" to capitalists: the possibility to use the labourers in their most productive years and discard them without additional costs or social obligations. Concomitantly, it demonstrated the flexibility of the institution of slavery and its capacity to adapt to the particular labour needs of specific productive sectors intermediated by the world economy (Libby 1984:144).

Then again, Libby argues that "industrial capital" was compatible with "traditional" or "pre-capitalist" labour forms, which were managed according to "capitalist rationality." He considers St. John a "hybrid enterprise" because the non-capitalist elements were created or managed according to capitalist rationality. In other words, although slavery was a "pre-capitalist labour" form, it was compatible with industrial capital and subordinated under the capitalist logic. As pre-capitalist labour for being unwaged and unfree, enslaved labour produced absolute surplus value. This argument could be approached from the viewpoint of the combination of capital accumulation based on expropriation and accumulation based on exploitation, as elaborated in the first chapter. At the micro-level, St. John, under British capital, employed a wide range of labour forms, including

enslaved labour, semi-proletarian and proletarian wage labour, European and Brazilian, indentured servants, and contract workers, using them as a diversified source of income. Therefore, it is an excellent example of the “permutation of labour relations” (Linden 2011) in the 19th-century liberal industrial accumulation regime, which was hegemonic in the world economy. St. John combined the forms of labour exploitation and expropriation, considering the economic objectives of capital production. In an existing economic conjuncture of the 19th century in terms of the availability of labour power in the mining region, international and national legal restrictions, international political scenario, and the local needs of production, even after the end of the slave trade, the hiring system continued being the most profitable form of appropriating labour in St. John. It enabled the owners and employers to adapt to the unpredictable economic situation that characterised the “market revolution” (Wood 2013: 580).

At the same time, Libby’s definition of capitalism in the book's conclusion is not ambiguous: capitalism means “free” wage labour. He argues that enslaved labour “has an important evolutionary role in the transition from one mode of production to another.” Thereby, with this conclusion, he seems to align with the perspective of “articulation of modes of production” (Hindess and Hirst 1975), according to which “the old slave regime” constitutes “a slave mode of production”, but it is subordinated to the “capitalist mode of production”. Hence, “the relations of production of every mode of production should be studied from inside out” instead of “outside-in”, echoing the criticism of Gorender (1980) to the so-called “circulationists” such as Prado ([1942] 1999), who considered the “external” element as structuring. In that sense, Libby still reproduces the relation of exteriority between unfree and free labour, although considering them combined and overlapping. He assumes that capitalist logic was “grafted” (Marx 1976) on the production based on enslaved labour with the penetration of foreign industrial capital, to which the enslaved labour had to adapt, enabling productive forces to be developed. By that, Libby seems to suggest that once the rental form of slavery became subordinate to the capitalist mode of production and capitalist rationality, its content was reconfigured, and it became the producer of surplus value for the sake of surplus value.

At the same time, Libby (1984, 1988) considers the hiring system of enslaved workers a transitional category between slavery and freedom. This is, however, a problematic argument because it contains a teleological, mechanistic, and linear understanding of history, as slavery would necessarily evolve into “free” wage labour, the core defining element of capitalism. Identifying these labour forms between slavery and freedom as “intermediate forms” in transition places them in the non-place in history. Hence, the focus would be much more on the evolutionary goal than on

understanding their *raison d'être*, for example, why the economic agents who are personifications of capital acquire labour-power in one form and not another in a specific historical context. Moreover, the rental system could evolve into other compulsory wage labour arrangements, which bound formerly enslaved workers to employment relations, as in the case of the “conditional manumission”, discussed later in this chapter. Hence, the relationship of enslaved labour with capitalism is ambiguous. It is in but not capitalist (Clegg 2015b).

Libby (1984) concludes that “the relations [of production] were in transformation” in the 19th century insofar as “the capital factor is being modernised, whereas labour factor is adjusted to this modernisation, provoking an emergence of another labour category – free labour” (p. 144). However, although capital’s modernisation would finally require “free” labour, enslaved labour would also contribute to the transition from the “slave mode of production” to a “specifically capitalist mode of production”. Moreover, Libby (1984, 1988) also indicates that the proletarianisation process, particularly in Minas Gerais, was distinct from the so-called paradigmatic English case. In Minas Gerais, the free proletariat did not emerge from the dispossessed peasantry but from the ranks of formerly enslaved workers, among whom the rented enslaved workers had played an important role. Nevertheless, given the legal instruments and paternalistic measures that capitalists of the last quarter of the 19th century had at their disposal, it is highly probable that under conditional manumission, the wage labour of newly freed workers took the form of compulsory labour. From a broader macro-historical perspective, Libby’s study is essential to show that enslaved labour enhanced and furthered the capitalist relations of production. As such, it was a crucial element of the working class.

5.4.4 Legal and social ambiguities in 19th-century labour relations

Based on what was discussed in this chapter, I will synthesise the elements of employment relations involving the hiring of enslaved labour. In this arrangement, the owners of enslaved workers commodify the latter’s labour power. The owners keep the property in the person of the enslaved worker, whereas they transfer to the owner of the means of production the right to use the labour-power and its possessor for a determined period. The lessees who acquire the use right may or may not own enslaved workers. However, by buying labour-power for a determined period, they acquire temporary property rights in labour-power. In Brazil, in the 19th century, the rental contract was signed for 5-5,5 years, which was the time for the recovery of the initial investment made by the owner in the enslaved labour at the moment of purchase of enslaved worker. It usually coincided

also with the most productive years of the worker. However, depending on the intensity of exploitation, the lives of enslaved workers could be used up in seven years, on average. In this labour relation, the relation between capital and labour is mediated by the third party, the owner of the worker.

The owner enjoys the “right of increase” (Proudhon [1840] 1994:118), collecting the rent from labour. Gorender (1980) says that if the enslaved worker was bought from the trafficker by its new owner, the owner paid the entire value of the worker. When the enslaved labour was hired, the lessee paid to the owner-lessor in parcels the price of the worker during the hire plus amortisation, that is, the wear and tear of the worker, as well as interests. In this relationship, the workers are forced to perform “wage labour” for their owners³⁰⁰. It is not nonsensical to call the rent a wage. It is how the British capitalists called it in their accounting system. In the 19th century, rent, interest, and maintenance costs were called *jornal* (a day’s salary for a day’s labour). The *jornal* of the enslaved worker was almost equivalent to the wage of the “free” labourer. For example, the wages of the journeymen employed next to the enslaved workers were determined by the labour costs of the latter and not vice versa. Gorender (1980) mentions that the journeyman’s daily wage was equivalent to the enslaved workers’ rent and alimentation or was a bit above it.³⁰¹ In the daily jargon of the time, rent was also called a “monthly wage” or a “daily wage”. Moreover, from the lessee’s viewpoint, rent (plus maintenance) was circulating like a wage. The difference was that the “wage” minus estimated maintenance costs were paid directly to the owner unless the enslaved worker was not rented through the commission house. This would have added the commission fee for intermediation service (Soares 1988b).

In the case of wage labour, exploitation implies the appropriation of the labour product, as the use of labour-power is rewarded according to labour-power’s average market value equivalent to the value of commodities necessary for its reproduction. Regarding the hire of enslaved labour, the appropriation of the rent, disguised in wage, implies an *expropriation of* enslaved labour, as it reduces enslaved worker’s consumption fund. In that sense, it can be called *superexploitation* (Marini 1973).

From the worker’s viewpoint, the rent was a surplus value wrung out of him. The surplus value, the unpaid labour of enslaved workers, is shared between the lessor and lessee. The property

³⁰⁰ We are dealing here with a form where a “slave performs hired labour for a third party for the benefit of his owner” (Linden 2011:19-20).

³⁰¹ This is also confirmed by Bergad (1997:204), that the “wage rate for free labour was 18 per cent of the first-class enslaved worker, this is a figure close enough to the 20 per cent gross rate of return derived by owners who rented their enslaved workers, to speculate that it may have been close to the actual hire rate for enslaved labour, at least in 1857”.

right of the enslaved worker guaranteed the proprietor the right to appropriate an interest from this transaction. Meanwhile, the employer-lessees, who gained the right to use enslaved labour as they wanted, obtained the right to appropriate the unpaid labour produced by the worker. At the same time, the enslaved worker toiled for three persons: the owner of their person and the temporary owner of their labour-power, plus having to provide for their subsistence.

The rented enslaved workers are no longer physically under the dominion of their owners but become subject to the responsibility of the lessee “as if they were their own slaves” (Soares 1988b:194). The maintenance costs of hired enslaved workers were distributed differently. The terms were stated in rental contracts. It may have been that the owner and the employer shared maintenance costs: the former carried the medical and clothing costs, and the latter alimentation.³⁰² In the case of longer-term contracts, the employer carries all the maintenance costs.

As a commodified labour power, it entered into the circulation of commodities. The labour relation constituted around the rental contract in capitalist slavery was such that an institutionally equal relation configured between two commodity owners, where the owners of enslaved workers hired out labour-power to the owners of mines, factories, and land, who provided a ‘net return’ over and above the maintenance of enslaved workers (Mandel 1976:49). This arrangement resembles uneasily the child labour in 19-century English factories. Wage labour performed by enslaved workers also belongs here.³⁰³ There is also an analogy with contemporary capitalism that closely resembles the system of hiring enslaved workers, although in a different legal regime, that is, subcontracted labour.³⁰⁴

The discussion that conditional manumissions created in the middle of the 19th century among jurists sheds light on the arrangement of hiring enslaved labour. As emphasised by social historians, such practices as hiring, conditional manumission and “wage”-slavery created legal and social ambiguities in labour relations (Chalhoub 2015), which gave headaches to the jurists of the time but were used by planters and employers for their own advantage. Chalhoub (2015) recovers

³⁰² Compared with wage-earning enslaved workers, the owner wanted to regain the anticipated capital plus interests within the shortest possible time. With 300 working days per year the owner recovered in two years the anticipated capital. Rarely did the owner cover the living costs of enslaved workers (Spix and Martius 1961, cited in Gorender 1980:206).

³⁰³ Wage labour performed by enslaved workers was known in all Americas. Johnson (1995:417), in his study of wage labour in Buenos Aires and notary’s accounts of the use of this kind of labour at the turn of the 18th to 19th century, suggests that “in long contracts, wages, minus estimated living expenses, were commonly paid directly to slave owners by employers of hired slave labour.”

³⁰⁴ Subcontracting is a triangular employment relation in which the possessor of labour-power is not selling her labour power. However, the worker is contracted out by temporary agencies, workforce agencies, franchises, or other “multilayered contracting” arrangements. It tends to obfuscate who is responsible for the worker’s protection (Shamir 2016).

the discussion held between October and December of 1857 about whether the enslaved persons who entered the contracts of conditional manumission were free and whether their offspring were free. Some members of the Institute of Brazilian Lawyers, such as Caetano Soares and Perdigão Malheiro, argued that the children of conditionally manumitted mothers of enslaved persons were born free. They had started with the assumption that “the slave who had been granted conditional liberty became free from that moment on, irrespective of the limitations imposed on his freedom due to the obligation of rendering further services” (Soares and Malheiro 1857, cited in Chalhoub 2015:171). They compared “conditional manumission” with other compulsory labour arrangements, such as “contract labour”. They questioned whether any *obligation* to perform labour could be considered bondage (in the meaning of slavery). They argued that the obligation to deliver services, for example, under such contractual labour arrangements as *colonato*, should not be considered bondage. Creating such an equivalence between obligation and bondage would not enable us to distinguish between the “slave as property” and the “slave as someone able to perform labour”. They argued that these two things were not the same “as was clear from the fact that a proprietor could have a legal title to a slave and still grant to someone else the right to enjoy the labour such a captive was able to provide. Conversely, a person could be nominally free, such as an agricultural labourer hired under the law of 1837, and still must perform labour under a contract that established criminal sanctions for its breach” (Chalhoub 2015:174).³⁰⁵

The jurists concluded that in the “civilised world in the making”, it is possible that “a person could be both nominally free and subjected to forms of compulsory labour” (Chalhoub 2015:174). In the spirit of Linden (2011), under economic compulsion, formally free workers may sell their labour power voluntarily for a wage under a contractual labour arrangement, which might bind the workers to a specific employment relation for a determined time and subjugate them under the control of their employers so that they cannot break off from it, as breaching the contract is punishable by law. As argued in the second chapter, free-wage workers are in thrall of capital, being forced to sell their labour power (Marx 1976). However, they can also be bound to a particular capitalist in specific economic and political circumstances.

³⁰⁵ Interestingly, this point about ambiguity was taken up again later in different political circumstances. The reasoning, which in 1857 and 1863 had permitted to defend the illegality of slavery, was used later to defend the abolition law that would subjugate the freed people to further years of compulsory labour. The abolition of slavery in 1888 placed “slavery” and “freedom” into two opposing camps, obfuscating, thus, the points of encounter (Chalhoub 2015).

5.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have made a rereading of the historiographical studies emerging since the 1980s about the 19th-century social labour organisation in Brazil, questioning the argument about the inevitability of the “transition” from slavery to freedom, followed by proletarianisation. The examination of the works about 19th-century slavery, framed as “second slavery,” has shown how the emerging industrial and liberal capitalism and expansion of wage labour relations in the core countries of capitalism in the 19th century implied a relocation and metamorphosis of slavery in the agricultural frontiers in the New World, which were incorporated in the global value chains. Brazilian historian Rafael Bivar Marquese has discussed Brazil's rise as the primary coffee producer in the 19th century. The expanding consumption of European and US proletarians was tied to the massive expansion of large-scale production, accompanied by land concentration, expropriations of local peasantries and quantitative and qualitative metamorphosis of slavery. The exploitation of enslaved labour became more intense, and the mechanisms of disciplining and managing enslaved labour were harsher. At the same time, the commodity production based on enslaved labour contributed to the new mode of accumulation based on relative surplus value by cheapening the wage labour in the industrialising core. It exemplifies the point of Dörre, Tomba, Fraser and Bielefeld feminists about the articulation of expropriative and exploitative forms of labour appropriation through the world economy, as both were synchronised by industrial capital and State violence to the clock that governed it. As suggested by Marquese (2002), Cunha (1985), Mattos (2000) and Bosi (1992), the maintenance of value production based on enslaved labour under liberal capitalism was guaranteed by legal and discursive reframing of slavery in terms of the liberal principles of the right to private property and free market, which according to these authors indicates that there is no incompatibility between slavery and liberal capitalism.

The investigation of the rich research on the social history of 19th-century rural labour relations shows how the changes in the capitalist world economy implied transformations in local labour regimes, in the sense that former compulsory labour forms were transformed into new coercive arrangements. “Free” population could be subsumed under compulsory plantation value-producing labour arrangements in the new and old agricultural frontiers. In other words, labour forms shown as intermediary stages between slavery and freedom developed into what Baronov (2000) has described as various ways of binding formerly enslaved workers, indigenous populations, and free poor peasantry to the plantation labour in new forms of coerced labour, such as indentured labour, labour tenancy, peonage, *colonato*. Often as compensation for the scarcity of

enslaved labour, the allegedly “transitional” forms entered the mix of enslaved and disguised wage labour arrangements in the middle of the 19th century, hence being part of the sequence of different labour patterns which continued until after the formal end of slavery, indicating a complex “permutation of labour relations” (Linden 2011).

At the same time, in the 19th century, besides the ownership of enslaved workers, the hiring of enslaved labour became another modality whereby labour-power became available and was obtained by the owners of the means of production. In its broader sense, enslaved workers could sell their labour power for a wage, a practice which spread in big cities such as Rio de Janeiro and Salvador. Alternatively, the owners hired out/sold it temporarily to private entrepreneurs or for public works. The system of hire was found to be a possible and a more adequate way of obtaining labour power than the ownership of enslaved workers or “free” labour in the mines of Minas Gerais owned by British capital, as the examination of the work of Douglas Libby has demonstrated. In the face of British regulations to prohibit British citizens from owning enslaved workers abroad, the irregularity of the semi-proletarianised labour in the province of Minas Gerais and the end of the transatlantic slave trade, the hiring arrangement turned out to be highly profitable, combining the flexibility of “free” wage-labour and reliability of slavery.

The employment relations, which gradually started to substitute the ownership of enslaved workers in the 19th century, such as hiring enslaved labour, contract labour, labour tenancy, colonato, peonage, and day labour, have their specificities. However, they also reveal the possible approximations between “free” wage labour and enslaved labour regarding the social and legal ambiguities. The legal debate in the middle of the 19th century reached some important conclusions which corroborated the argument that frontiers between apparently opposite labour relations were not so clear-cut. As the scrutiny of the work of Chalhoub (2015) has shown, the distinction made by 19th-century legal theorists between “slave as property” and “slave as labour,” based on conditional manumission, had two implications. On the one hand, there is no impediment that the proprietor, who had a legal title to the enslaved workers, still hired out/sold to the third-party enslaved worker’s labour capacity. On the other hand, a formally free person could be bound to a compulsory labour arrangement guaranteed by the laws of 1830 and 1837. As much as the owners-planters in the capitalist peripheries subsumed their former or current enslaved workers, native peoples or free peasantry to novel compulsory labour arrangements to transform them into capital- and value-producing plantation or mining labour, in the capitalist core, it was not outside of the curve either, that employers had in their hands legal means to bind their wage workers to the “coerced contract

labour” arrangements. Hence, in the 19th century, capital subsumed labour under different mixes of expropriated and exploited forms of labour integrated into global value relations.

Final conclusions

Throughout this thesis, I have responded to the questions raised in the introduction. At the end of every chapter, I have presented partial conclusions. Therefore, I will not return to all the issues articulated in the text. For a short recapitulation, this thesis's theoretical aim has been to contribute to the renewal of the Marxist political economy of labour by rethinking critically the concepts of labour and the working class. The epistemological aim has implied resorting to the Brazilian historical social science as an instance of peripheral knowledge and evaluating its potential to contribute to the renovation of the Marxist political economy of labour and, thereby, to global sociology. The aims have been motivated by the limitations identified in the 19th-century social science paradigm, in which the Marxist political economy is rooted, in taking into account the coerced (unfree) labour (waged or not), the labour forms from geographical and social peripheries, in the conceptualisation of capitalist labour and working-class formation. In other words, by defining capitalism by “free” wage labour, or the 19th-century urban industrial proletariat in England, orthodox Marxism has relegated modern slavery and other forms of coerced (unfree) labour (waged or not) to the past. Theoretically, free labour and unfree labour are seen as antithetical and incompatible in the capitalist formation, and unfree labour has been left out of the ambit of capital production.

Moreover, the abolition of unfree labour is being conceived as the condition for the transition to capitalism, followed by an inevitable transition to wage labour. If unfree and other forms of coerced labour continue existing in capitalism, then only as anomalies or residues of past modes of production. Partly, these limitations of incorporating peripheral realities in the global sociological theory-making have to do with the enduring asymmetry in the global production and circulation of knowledge. Hence, the endeavour to critically rethink the categories of labour and working class formations theoretically, epistemologically and historically from the viewpoint of modern colonial slavery and other compulsory forms of labour (paid or not) has brought the Brazilian historical social science and its socio-economic realities into dialogue with critical Marxist social science from the capitalist core's academic circles. The dialogue I have constructed articulates such notions as expropriation, exploitation, commodification, coercion, and capital accumulation in historical capitalism. In what follows, I will present the main contributions of this dissertation.

One of the points that I have tried to demonstrate in this dissertation is that the perspectives of critical Marxist political economy from the Global North and the Brazilian historical social science converge and diverge on the theoretical and conceptual debate about the renovation of the Marxist critique of political economy from the margins. The knowledge production from the Global South regarding colonial and peripheral realities anticipates and elaborates further on various formulations of the World-Systems Analysis, the Global Labour History, the current capitalist slavery studies and the debate on ongoing “primitive accumulation”.

The rereading of Marx's works from the viewpoint of slavery's role in capitalism and capital production suggests that particularly *Grundrisse* and *Capital* contained ambiguities and a non-linear view of history. These ambiguities have often been lost in posterior Marxist formulations and permitted that the theoretical categories developed based on the English path to capitalism have been transformed into the substance of capitalism. The scrutiny of the readings of Marx *at and from the margins* (Anderson 2010; Krisis 2018) has shown how the non-linearity of his later works can be identified in his treatment of enslaved and industrial wage labour as opposites but mutually indispensable to each other in the 19th-century capitalist world-economy. It appears in his conceptualisation of formal, real and hybrid subsumption of labour under capital not as stages but as contemporaneous and interdependent modes of accumulation. Ambiguities become visible in his depiction of the sale and purchase of the labour-power of enslaved workers as well as enslaved and other coerced labour forms as surplus value-producing once integrated into capital circuits. Nevertheless, although significant historically and marginally even in the theory of capital, slavery and other kinds of coerced labour entered as anomalies and residues in his theory of capital.

Unsatisfied with Marx's conceptualisation of slavery, serfdom, coerced paid and unpaid labour as instances of primitive accumulation belonging to the pre-history of capitalism, both Marxist dependency theorist André Gunder Frank (1967, 1978a) and Marxist feminist thinkers of the Bielefeld School (Bennholdt-Thomsen 1981; Mies [1986] 2014; Werlhof 1984) proposed to think of them as integral to capitalism and functional to capitalist accumulation of capital on the world scale. Whereas Frank formulated violent super-exploitative practices in European colonies and later peripheries in terms of “primary accumulation” feeding into the capitalist process of capitalist accumulation, the Bielefeld Marxist feminists conceptualised female unpaid labour as “primitive accumulation” reproducing for capital for free the labour-power commodity of exploited male workers. Both considered the “primary” or “primitive accumulation” as ongoing and a constant companion of capitalist accumulation. These super-exploitative practices, as “internal

colonies” of capitalism, reproducing the wage-labour relation, imply the expropriation of unpaid labour by force or coercive institutions and are created and recreated anew by capital itself.

Authors who have resumed during the last decades the debate about “primitive accumulation” as enduring and structural in capitalism also argue that accumulation through *Landnahme*, dispossession or expropriation has played a fundamental role in capital’s expanded accumulation throughout the entire capitalist history until today (Dörre 2015, 2018; Fontes 2010; Fraser 2016; Tomba 2013b). From a relational perspective, the “occupation” of non-commodified activities and areas, unpaid labour, reproductive activities, super-exploitative labour relations, and “confiscation” of capacities and resources are the “necessary other” of contractual labour relations. These authors emphasise an expropriative element in labour relations determined by direct violence, symbolic-cultural and state legal-regulatory mechanisms. In other words, through *State-Gewalt*, capital creates expropriable areas and categories of labourers (if they do not exist yet) and synchronises them to global value relations. Global capital accumulation depends on creating wage differentials, hence areas, spaces and labour categories from where absolute surplus value can be extracted to support the production of relative surplus value (Tomba 2013b, 2013c). Nevertheless, most authors tend to conceptualise the expropriative forms as “external” and “previous” to *capital’s* expanded accumulation, although within the system of capitalist formation.

I have shown that in the 1970s, the world-systems perspective had, in fact, proposed a solution to the “exteriority” problem. As a Neo-Marxist outcome of the critical debate of the primitive accumulation notion in the 1960s and 70s, its contribution consisted of upscaling the unit of analysis from the nation-state to the world economy. From the world-systems perspective, the combined co-existence of unfree, non- or semi-wage modes of labour control, such as slavery, serfdom, tenancy, sharecropping, and other coerced labour, along with wage labour, are all alternative forms of capitalist labour arrangements determined by the world system and integral to capital accumulation. Workers produce value for others in all these arrangements, and labour-power is employed as a commodity. The scholars related to the Global Labour History take the subordination of labour under the imperatives of capital as the central element in their definition of the working class constituted of “subaltern workers”. Thus, the common class basis of all the subaltern workers is the “coerced commodification of labour-power”, regardless of whether the workers own their labour-power or whether the coercion is economic or extra-economic (Linden 2011). Understanding that labour-power commodification in capitalism can take different forms enables conceptualising specific forms in distinct historical moments and geographical spaces

synchronously and diachronically. It permits breaking the opposition between free and unfree labour and considering them part of a broad continuum.

The combination of a specific form of labour-power commodification and the production of commodities by unfree labour to the world market has been one of the central topics of Brazilian historical social science since the 1940s to make sense of the particular path to capitalism marked by colonial conquest and slavery. Caio Prado Jr.'s ([1942] 1999) seminal heterodox Marxist interpretation of Brazilian national formation placed modern slavery and colonial exploitation within the European modern capitalist project, launched with its commercial and colonial expansion. Slavery and wage labour appeared as part of the historical continuity of great agricultural exploitation, connecting capitalism's colonial and peripheral phases. The subsequent Marxist Dependency Theory (MDT) made essential advances in thinking of the transregional entanglements in world capitalism, structured as an asymmetrical centre-periphery relation. Whereas super-exploitation of labour was understood by Ruy Mauro Marini ([1973] 2000) as the typical mode of accumulation of "dependent capitalism" that was configured in 19th-century independent Brazil, it had to be understood as the consequence of "unequal exchange" in the world economy and as the peripheral counterpart of the configuration of the accumulation regime based on the relative surplus value in the large-scale industry in England.

According to another but somewhat dissident dependency theorist, Maria Sylvia de Carvalho Franco ([1969] 1997, 1978), Marx, as well as Brazilian Marxist perspectives developed until the 1970s, had created a relation of exteriority between colony/periphery and metropolis/core and consequently also between the forms of labour organisation that characterised them. Despite being combined, free labour and slavery were treated as belonging to distinct modes of production. In contrast, Franco's more open and global formulation of the capitalist system understood slavery and free labour as unitarily determined categories within the same mode of production. They were understood as relational categories determined by the differentiated movement of capital since the 16th century. In fact, she anticipated some of the central tenets of the world systems perspective by seeing both as different moments of capitalist development and entangled through the world economy. The way slavery was reconfigured in the 16th-century context as a value-and capital-producing mode of labour control was determined by capital, and as such, it reproduced the metropolitan free labour and itself.

She conceived modern colonial slavery as a particular form in the general movement of the private appropriation of the means of production. Like the proletarianisation process in England, slavery in the New World was understood regarding the separation of workers from the conditions

of their labour and the development of the private property regime. Given the constitution of the modern capitalist property regime in the 16th century and echoing the ideas of “Black Marxism”, Franco defined the modern colonial enslaved worker as the “total expropriated”, expropriated from the means of production and their person. Hence, in the form of black African slavery in the 16th century, there was a large quantity of expropriated labour integrated with large-scale commodity production based on the absolute exploitation of land and labour.

By articulating such categories as property, person and expropriation, the historical analysis of slavery in the colonial moment of capitalism permitted her to elaborate conceptually on a particular form of private property regime based on the “totally expropriated” labour reproducing and being reproduced by capital. As a mode of social domination, the property form defines the form of labour market and the form of labour appropriation. If one of the conditions for money to become capital is that labour-power has become a commodity sold in the market by its “free” proprietor, another kind of free seller of labour-power, distinct from the doubly free wage labourer, characterised the historical situation of the early phase of capitalism: the free owner and seller of alien labour-power. In the 1960s, decades before the Global Labour History scholars, Franco suggested that Marx’s theory of purchase and sale of labour-power had to be liberated from its limitations if we want to think of slavery and capitalism as compatible. Such reconstruction permits us to think of a transatlantic slave trade as a labour market, where the labour of enslaved individuals, not owners of themselves and their labour-power, was traded by traffickers. This implies that labour-power can become a commodity, and labour can be capital- and value-producing, excluding the conditions that the labourer must be free and that the commodity form of labour products has become general.

Similarly, a black feminist post-colonial sociologist, Denise Ferreira da Silva (2019, 2022), in dialogue with the contemporary scholarly work on racial capitalism and “primitive accumulation”, has notably contributed to formulating expropriation as the colonial form of labour appropriation, mediated by another type of private property regime - slavery. The expropriation of total value by total violence is enabled by a colonial economic-juridical architecture. As such, it is not “temporally previous and analytically exterior” of *capital*, as the recent revisits of the primitive accumulation debate have predominantly affirmed.

Critical to the Marxian theory of value, which excludes colonialism and slavery from the value and capital production, Alencastro (2000), Castro (1980), Ferreira da Silva (2019, 2022), Franco (1978) and Saffioti (1976), discussed in this dissertation, permit to conceptualise the “totally expropriated” workers as capital- and value-producing proletarians in a particular moment of

capitalism, determined by the creation and expansion of the capitalist world economy. Moreover, they suggest that these two forms of expropriated labour, personified by enslaved and “free” wage workers, were unitarily determined categories under capital and indispensable to each other through the synchronisation of exchange relations and commodity production in historical capitalism. The interrelation of these distinct forms of commodity-producing labour through the global value relations since the dawn of capital refers, on a more abstract and conceptual level, to the capital logic of constantly producing and reproducing in a new form the interconnection between expropriation and exploitation as part of capital’s drive for expansion and accumulation. Regarding this point, there is a dialogue between peripheral and core knowledge production. Although most Northern scholars argue that expropriation as a form of labour appropriation is integral to capitalism and “necessary” for reproducing labour appropriation based on exploitation, it is not a capitalist form of capital accumulation. Moreover, unlike the Southern scholars discussed here, they also tend to leave modern slavery (colonial and the “second slavery”) out of the sphere of capital.

In dialogue with the previous conceptual discussion, I have shown how the historiography of slavery and capitalism provides detailed historical evidence about the production and reproduction of totally expropriated and commodified labour through the slave trade, which was synchronised to the commodity-producing plantation system in the Americas, subordinated under the capitalist world economy. This synchronisation through diverse political, economic, legal and social factors generated, according to Alencastro (2000), the colonial system of exploitation in the South Atlantic. As a complementary bipolar system, it combined the looting of African people and American agricultural commodity production on robbed native lands. The historical research of Alencastro (2000) and Florentino (2014) permits us to argue that the transatlantic slave trade was the first global (unfree) labour market. The social and economic production and reproduction of labour-power for the colonial productive enterprise started with the violent “expropriation of masses of people from the soil” (Marx) in the African continent. The violent mechanism of expropriation was war, in which African States played a significant role. The work of Florentino (2014) demonstrates how the enslaved labour market was itself a source of accumulation based on expropriation. The accumulation of trafficker and merchant capital was based on the appropriation of social labour without equivalence throughout a long chain of transactions starting in the interior of the African continent. This accumulated wealth is known to participate in the genesis of industrial and financial capital in hegemonic capitalist centres as well as in the creation of “slave-mercantile capital” in the colonial economy while stimulating the domestic economy in subsidiary areas as well as the urban-commercial and urban-industrial sectors in the 19th-century Brazil.

The transformation of the bodies and labour-power of enslaved workers in alien properties, economically tradable commodities as well as hyper-disciplined value- and capital-producing unfree plantation labour relied on a colonial juridical-economic and political architecture, including a complex body of metropolitan and colonial laws as well as private punitive power of owners-planters (Hunold Lara 2000; Marquese 2002)

The reproduction of enslaved labour through large-scale trade was fundamental in enabling, shaping, reproducing and expanding the system of production in the Americas according to the requirements of world capital accumulation. Like Sidney Mintz in the 1980s and the scholars related to the “entangled modernities” perspective, Brazilian historians (Castro 1977, 1980; Ferlini 2003) conceptualised the colonial sugar plantation as a “capitalist enterprise” since it resembled the 19th-century British modern large-scale industry, especially in terms of the *labour organisation* determined by competitive pressures and the machine. In that sense, the colonial plantation was conceived as the laboratory of industrial production. A detailed historical research of Schwartz (1985) has shown how the labour organisation in sugar *engenhos* entailed a complex hierarchy based on gender, race/ethnicity, legal status, and skill, which changed according to the transformations in the world economy (Schwartz 1985), demonstrating at the same time the racialised and gendered dimensions of capital accumulation. The social combination of labour in the *engenho* under the synchronising powers of capital, the state and the overseer’s violence constituted a “collective worker”, a “particular machine”, which was the fundamental source of “absolute surplus-value” (Fernandes 1976). The focus on the valorisation process through the industrial production of commodities by enslaved labour permitted some Brazilian economic historians (Pires and Costa 2010; Teixeira 2020) to argue that capital emerged in the periphery of the world system in the form of *slave-mercantile capital* and through that the colonies were integrated to the international division of labour.

I have demonstrated how the scholarly work from the global periphery studied in this dissertation contributes to the relational understanding of slavery in the colonies/peripheries and metropolitan/core free labour as unitarily determined categories and integrated into global labour. They also make substantial theoretical and empirical contributions to conceptualising enslaved labour's role in global capital production. However, their formulations often tend to essentialise the metropolitan proletariat, the “free” wage labour, and conceptualise it as a uniform labour form. Although in ex-colonial societies, it is evident that post-slavery labour regimes developed into coerced labour arrangements of free persons, extra-economic coercion is hardly considered a constituting element of wage labour. As developed in 19th-century England, the wage labour

relation is usually understood as intermediated by market relations and transformed into an abstraction. The narrow free labour ideology opposes serfdom and slavery to “free” wage labour, thereby obfuscating the grey zone between them and playing down the coercion constituting the wage labour and capital relation. In that sense, another suggestion of this thesis has been that instead of polar opposites, “free” wage labour and enslaved labour could be conceptualised as a continuum. Although constituting the extremes of the continuum, they can also approach each other regarding their form and content in specific historical moments. This becomes particularly evident if we follow the historical development of wage labour and consider the intermediate forms between the two so-called opposites.

Critical scrutiny of recent historiography about wage labour in England has shown that until the mid-19th century, a common form of labour was restricted wage labour (Moulier-Boutang 1998) or coerced contract labour (Steinfeld 1991). Whereas the enclosures between the 16th and 18th centuries had produced a mass of poor, loose and rightless workers, state violence played an important role in disciplining the dispossessed workers for the value- and capital-producing labour. Criminal punishment for the breach of contract, foreseen in law, was a widely used instrument during the early development of market relations. Even during the heyday of industrialisation in the 19th century, when mechanisation, centralisation, and concentration of capital had put in motion a large mass of dispossessed workers, employers used legal mechanisms to fix workers to their employment relations. It was particularly evident in branches where workers were formally subsumed under capital, and mechanisation had yet to become dominant.

Given this historical empirical reality, such analytical constructs as “coerced commodification” (Linden 2011) and “dependent labour” (Moulier-Boutang 1999) can be particularly valuable to define the common class basis of subaltern workers and against which also the modern proletariat could be historically measured. Hence, I have proposed to decentre the “free” wage labour as the defining form of capitalism and not regard freedom as the norm of wage labour. In that light, the typical Marxian pure form, the “free” proletariat, was not the empirical norm of wage labour until the end of the 19th century. However, it became hegemonic in the world economy, dictating global value relations. From the viewpoint of the world economy, until the 19th century, the coerced and restricted wage labour in the metropole and the enslaved labour in the colonies shared the history of capital’s challenge to fix down and discipline the available workers for value- and capital-producing labour, a reason why it might make sense to argue that capitalism was born from “dependent labour” (Moulier-Boutang 1999).

The “free” wage labour, which started to represent normal employment in 19th-century Western Europe and was identified by civilisation, liberal values, and capitalism, is denounced by Marx himself as a new form of servitude and analysed as a mode of labour control in a commodity-determined society. Accordingly, Marx, as well as several Marxist scholars (e.g., Banaji 2003; Screpanti 2017), have exposed the two-fold coercion and subordination of the “free” wage labour: historically produced and continuously reproduced collective subordination under the domination of collective capital, on the one hand, and the sale of obedience for a wage to capitalists, on the other. In other words, differently from workers who were directly enslaved to particular planters once and for all, modern proletarians could be understood as being indirectly and repetitively enslaved to capital. As stated by Banaji, freedom may be relevant at the level of total social capital. However, at the level of individual capitals, capitalism is defined by the production of surplus value, which may occur through the labour arrangements in which labour is expropriated through extra-economic coercion (Banaji 2003).

With the ambiguous triumph of “free labour” in 19th-century Europe, defined in bourgeois ideology by self-ownership and voluntary sale of commodity labour-power, slavery and serfdom as “involuntary servitude” started to be considered incompatible with bourgeois values and capitalism. At the same time, the examination of the “second slavery” debate has shown that the capitalist transformation, the hegemony of industrial capital and wage-labour relations in the world economy did not do away with slavery. Instead, New World slavery was relocated to new commodity frontiers and reached its historical peak in the first half of the 19th century. Moreover, the “narrow framework of free labour ideology”, which the abolition experiences also reinforced, created a rigid distinction between “free” and “unfree” labour, obfuscating the social and legal ambiguities of labour relations. Consequently, a broad range of post-slavery coercive labour relations in post-colonial societies have been classified as intermediary and transitory in the process of adjusting to the new logic of freedom.

The Brazilian historiographical works in the 1970s and 80s tended to analyse slavery as a uniform and relatively static labour regime or a mode of production. The “second slavery” scholars, in contrast, demonstrate how it was transformed under the qualitatively different world capitalism in the 19th century. Thus, the examination of the works about 19th-century “second slavery” (Marquese and Tomich 2015; Parron 2011, 2022, 2023) has shown how the emerging industrial and liberal capitalism dominated by global value relations as its primary force relocated and intensified slavery in the new agricultural frontiers of the Americas. With the large-scale production of cheap commodities for the industrial markets, the exploitation of enslaved labour became more intense

due to the militarisation and industrialisation of labour exploitation influenced by the competitive pressures in the world market. Besides the impacts that the production of tropical commodities to the world markets had on slavery in terms of labour organisation, the “second scholars” also permit to explain to which extent the tropical foodstuff produced by enslaved labour contributed to the changing accumulation regime in the core countries of capitalism. Socio-metabolic needs of capital did not depend only on feeding the machines with cheap raw materials; it also depended on cheap labour-power. Hence, the tropical foodstuff produced by enslaved workers in the Americas became important to lower the value of wage labour as cheap stimulants and energy entered the subsistence of wage labourers, contributing to the increased margins of surplus value in the core countries of capitalism. Indeed, enslaved labour is value-determining as the commodities it produced entered as wage foods in the subsistence needs of wage labourers, determining the exchange value of their wages. In that sense, wage labour became the determination of many different labour relations as the industrial capital integrated them into the cluster of global labour, mediated by global value relations.

In Brazil, the legal and discursive reframing of slavery within the liberal principles of the right to private property and free market guaranteed the maintenance of value production based on enslaved labour under liberal capitalism. This indicates that there is necessarily no incompatibility between slavery and liberal capitalism. As Franco (1993) argues, slavery can be understood as an authoritarian potential of liberalism.

Slavery intensified in some regions, principally in the coffee regions of Paraíba Valley (as well as in sugar-producing Cuba and cotton-producing US South), and was accompanied by the reconfiguration of labour relations in the imperial territory of Brazil. In the southeastern coffee estates, enslaved labour remained the dominant form. Still, it also co-existed with indentured servitude and coolie contract labour within the same plantation. Concomitantly, the land concentration due to the expansion of commercial production generated a diversity of dispossessed and dependent non- or semi-proletarianised workers living on plantation margins and being casually integrated into the commodity production. In other regions and sectors, enslaved labour was gradually substituted by other forms of compulsory labour arrangements of free persons. The binding of formerly enslaved workers, free migrant workers, indigenous populations, and free poor peasantry to the plantation labour in new forms of coerced labour, such as indentured servitude, labour tenancy, contract labour, peonage and *colonato*, is an expression of the transformation of relation of production without the establishment of typical wage labour.

Moreover, the work of Douglas Libby demonstrates how slavery developed into other modalities, such as the system of renting enslaved labour, which was found to be a possible and more adequate way of obtaining labour-power in the gold mines of Minas Gerais owned by British capitalists in the 19th century than the ownership of enslaved workers or the employment of semi-proletarianised workers. In the face of British laws prohibiting British citizens from owning enslaved workers abroad, the irregularity of semi-proletarianised labour and the end of the transatlantic slaved trade, the hiring system turned out to be a highly profitable labour arrangement, combining the flexibility of “free” labour and the reliability of slavery.

Hence, the critical rereading of the Brazilian historical social science, since the works of Caio Prado Jr. until the so-called “new historiography” about 19th-century labour relations has enabled us to question the “transition argument” about the evolutionary development from unfree to “free” labour followed by proletarianisation as the condition of capitalism. As the Brazilian case demonstrates, new national, regional, and local labour mixes emerged as local expressions of changing capital composition and changing global value relations, integrating the cluster of world labour. Rather than considering the so-called intermediate forms between free and unfree labour as transitional, destined to wither away, it is their emergence and participation in the sequence of different labour patterns, in other words, the “permutation of labour relations” (Linden 2011), that should be explained.

The so-called transition from enslaved labour to free labour was developed in the 19th century into complex labour patterns of free and unfree, coerced waged, and non- and semi-waged labour. Capital had at its disposal a broad range of labour relations. Messy labour patterns, which continued until after the formal end of slavery (1888), express social and legal ambiguities, which the free labour ideology based on formal freedom is limited to capture. On the one hand, the owners in Brazil could hire to the third party enslaved worker’s labour capacity. On the other hand, formally free persons could be bound to new compulsory labour arrangements. As much as the planters in the capitalist peripheries subsumed their former or current enslaved workers, native peoples, or free peasantry to novel forms of compulsory capital- and value-producing plantation or mining labour, in the capitalist core, it was not outside of the curve either that employers in England were using law to bind their wage workers to the “coerced contract labour” arrangements until 1875, employed child labour or earned profits through super-exploitative subcontracting system. Both coerced contract labour in Europe and the formally free persons subordinated to compulsory labour arrangements demonstrate the social and legal ambiguities between freedom and unfreedom.

Capital production under slavery is not essentially distinct from capital production based on “free” wage labour, but it takes a different form. Even if they preserve their particularity as concrete social relations, they are transformed into abstract labour under the determination of capital and value and, as such, are interrelated through global value relations. Furthermore, as demonstrated by the Brazilian scholars in this work, slavery was neither a homogeneous nor a rigid labour regime, unable to adapt to the changes in the world economy. The works about colonial “slavery regimes” as well as about the 19th-century “second slavery” reveal that slavery was instead a flexible labour regime considering how it changed over time and was intertwined with other forms of free and unfree wage and unwaged labour, not only within the colonial and imperial spaces but principally with the free and coerced dependent labour in the capitalist core. The incompatibility between the metropolitan wage labour and peripheral enslaved labour and the radical contrast drawn between them does not seem to sustain itself, as these labour categories were not only tightly interconnected through global value relations in the world economy, but they also shared a common labour history through the fixation and disciplining of expropriated labour in different degrees for the value-producing positions. Its substitution in 19th-century dependent and liberal capitalist regime developed into complex mixes of labour arrangements in Brazil, which in some moments resembled the labour mixes in industrialising England, regarding the socio-economic conditions and presence of coercive measures.

Despite this multilayered development of historical labour relations, the argument that capitalism is necessarily identified with industrialism, that is, machinery and urban industrial wage labour, intermediated by impersonal market mechanisms, is very much rooted in social scientific analyses of historical and contemporary labour relations. As shown in this dissertation, the southern perspectives and their dialogue with the critical Marxist political economy from the Global North can provide essential elements for the renewal of the Marxist political economy of labour. Thinking Marxist political economy not only from the centre but from the margins implies expanding and reconstructing some of its central presuppositions about labour exploitation, working-class formation and capital production and reproduction.

The theories and historiography produced in global peripheries, where the entrance to capitalism happened through colonialism and slavery or other forms of unfree or compulsory labour, may reveal the limitations of the definition of capitalism as a mode of production by one property regime, one commodity form of labour-power and one form of labour appropriation as well as the binarism it has generated in social-scientific research. Systematic theorising, which includes peripheral knowledge, may contribute to the construction of global sociology, which takes

into account other labour forms beyond “free” wage labour and the relations between them within the capitalist mode of production as a singular whole.

A fundamental theoretical implication of analysing Brazilian historical social science in dialogue with the metropolitan Marxist political economy is that not only one form of labour defines capitalism. Instead, labour through various social arrangements becomes subordinated to the value creation and capital production. In other words, free and unfree labour, waged and unwaged, is subsumed under capital. Modern slavery, which subordinates human beings to externally determined aims, appropriating the total value through the violent confiscation of human capacities, bodies, and powers and harming people’s capacity to reproduce their lives or expropriating their lives altogether, can be understood as the most radical form of subsumption of labour under capital.

In this dissertation, by focusing on the case of Brazilian historical social science, I have tried to show how the incorporation of global southern perspectives can make relevant contributions to global sociology, which goes beyond the dichotomic understanding of capitalist development, which has been prevalent in the orthodox Marxist tradition and the dominant social scientific paradigm in general. Moreover, it shows that concepts such as history, capitalism, capital, class formation, and labour exploitation are in dispute, and the debates around them are far from resolved. Resorting to peripheral knowledge production has allowed us to show how colonial exploitation, slavery, and other coerced and unwaged labour arrangements can be analysed as integral to capitalist historical development and capital accumulation. Indeed, as argued in this dissertation, capitalism as a totality is inconceivable without reference to labour forms, which do not fit into the typical double-free wage labour.

As the dissertation focused on the political economy of coerced/unfree and unwaged labour in historical capitalism in *longue durée*, the works in Brazilian historical social science were chosen by having this focus in mind. Therefore, some relevant aspects were omitted. Although the dissertation has contemplated the dimensions of race and gender, particularly when it comes to the racial justification of enslavement of African peoples as well as racial/ethnic and sexual division of labour in plantation labour organisation, a more systematic intersectional analysis of slavery in the South-Atlantic system of colonial exploitation from the viewpoint of race/ethnicity, gender, and labour, should be carried out. Moreover, the analysis of collective subjectivities had to be left out. Although micro-histories of labour since the 1980s have given particular attention to the political organisation of enslaved people, those could be more systematically connected with the structural analysis of the global political economy, which Marquese (2006) has done to some extent.

Furthermore, the thesis proposal initially included an investigation of Brazilian historical social science regarding the configuration of post-abolition labour relations and incorporating a case study of contemporary labour arrangements to explore historical continuities and ruptures, transformations, and reinventions. However, the scope of the thesis was already extensive. Hence, the study of the post-abolition period was left for future research. As far as the research on rural labour relations after abolition suggests, the logic of “permutation of labour relations” (Linden 2011) continued with the reproduction of the 19th-century compulsory labour arrangements up until the 1950s (Martins 2013; Prado 1979). Since then, the rural labour force has been semi-proletarianising, being, however, accompanied by absolute pauperisation of rural populations (Garcia and Palmeira 2001), the most perverse side-effects of which has been the reinvention of slavery in the form of peonage in modern capitalist agricultural frontiers in the Amazon region (Martins 1994). From the viewpoint of the renewed Marxist political economy of labour, the post-abolition rural labour arrangements should not be analysed as past stages of “free” wage labour. Instead, they could be conceived as determined by the capitalist world economy, as disguised wage-relations, in which labour-power is employed as a commodity and labour appropriation has taken the form of expropriation, since beyond surplus labour, part of the subsistence fund has been appropriated, potentially enabled by mechanisms of extra-economic coercion. The attention to the extra-economic forms of coercion - symbolic-cultural and state legal-regulatory mechanisms – would bring under scrutiny the interaction between post-abolition labour forms, continuation of the hierarchies of social domination inherited from slavery as well as the pauperisation of people freed from slavery. From the world systems perspective, it could be asked, how does the absolute surplus value, appropriated from racialised agricultural forced labourers or semi-proletarians, sustain the high-tech agroindustry in the periphery and the core?

When the 19th century was the century in which capital had at its disposal a broad range of historical labour forms, from wage labour to chattel slavery, the 21st century seems to be the reinvention of the 19th century at a more advanced technological level. On the one hand, we observe that the 20th-century Fordist regime, with its employment society and “exploitable worker-citizen” (Fraser 2016), which was consolidated in the capitalist core and some economic sectors of the semi-periphery, is in the process of losing its hegemony. On the other hand, it goes together with the rise of the so-called “cognitariat” (Hardt and Negri 2004) as well as the precarisation of larger fractions of workers who live from labour (Antunes 2013). If the wage workers are facing precarisation through “secondary expropriations” (Fontes 2010), then the surplus labour is being increasingly absorbed by all kinds of modalities of outsourced, subcontracted, part-time, non-contractual, zero-

contract, temporary, “uberised” work, developing since the 1970s under financial capitalism. Whereas extreme precariousness, flexibility, and informality are forms of labour control, commodification has also penetrated the affective, subjective, and intersubjective realms (Nies and Sauer 2018) as capital is exploring effectively the spiritual capacities of the “cognitariat” and its tendency of self-exploitation (Hardt and Negri 2004). Hence, the contradictory logic of capitalism reproduces itself: capital’s higher technological composition in some parts of the world creates wage labour relations and the “colonies” of expropriation in other parts, which have become spaces of capital’s valorisation.

As the long history of capitalism has shown, precarious labour arrangements in which labour is expropriated instead of exploited have been reinvented and reproduced as spaces where significant amounts of absolute surplus value can be appropriated. This is no longer the specificity of capitalist peripheries. In contemporary financial capitalism, including the capitalist core, the so-called residues or intermediary forms have become a fundamental source of capital valorisation. In that sense, institutionalised racism, sexism, and the borders to restrict the movement of migrant workers without citizenship operate as extra-economic means to create global labour hierarchies and inequalities, which are the sources of differentials of surplus-value sustaining capital’s expanded global accumulation.

We can witness labour arrangements employing the non-citizen migrant workers in the North and poor black and brown youth in the South outside of contractual relations and without labour rights, which makes possible their limitless exploitation regarding the length and intensity of the working day, paying salaries way below the necessary minimum. If they can be conceived as expressions of how capitalism is reintroducing and renewing under new ideology bygone labour forms of protoform of capitalism (Antunes 2020), they could also be understood as a re-encounter with the labour relations of historical capitalism’s colonies and peripheries. Contemporary forms of expropriation do not resemble only the sweatshops and jobbing of 19th-century England but with expropriation through the super-exploitation of enslaved African workers as well as the system of hiring enslaved labour. They do not refer to the past stage of “real capitalism” but to always present “periphery”. Capitalism is produced and reproduced through the constant encounter and interrelation between social and geographical centres and peripheries. This should not obfuscate the fundamental challenge of critical theory to perceive that the emancipatory goal is not to lift the expropriated merely to the ranks of the exploited but to overcome the capitalist forms of domination altogether, whether through exploitation or expropriation.

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Summary

This dissertation has revisited the Brazilian historical social science (1940-2022) as an instance of peripheral knowledge and critically explored its contributions to the renewal of Marxist political economy by rethinking the concepts of labour and working class from the viewpoint of coerced (unfree) and non-/semi-waged labour in historical capitalism, in dialogue with critical political economy from the Global North. It has been argued that by defining capitalism with “free” wage labour, the 19th-century social science paradigm, in which the Marxist political economy is rooted, has limitations in taking into account the coerced (unfree) and non-waged labour, particularly the colonial and peripheral forms of labour control, in the conceptualisation of capitalist labour and working-class formation. Partly, these limitations of incorporating peripheral realities in the global sociological theory have to do with the enduring asymmetry in the global production and circulation of knowledge. By investigating Marx’s own ambiguities, the older and newer criticisms of the Marxian notion of the “so-called primitive accumulation”, the world-systems perspective, and the Global Labour History, several proposals to broaden the notion of capitalist labour were identified. These include upscaling the unit of analysis from the nation-state to the capitalist world-economy, considering expropriation based on extra-economic coercion as integral to the capitalist logic and labour-power commodification as a common class-basis of all the subaltern workers.

Based on the investigation of Brazilian historical social science about the relationship between modern colonial slavery and capitalism, I identified some fundamental theoretical-historical formulations in dialogue with classical Marxism, which have regarded the Brazilian path to capitalism from the viewpoint of structural transregional entanglements as a “unit of contradiction” and not as a “relation of exteriority”. It was demonstrated how rethinking such notions as property, expropriation, and labour-power commodity – central to Marxian value theory – from the viewpoint of black African slavery, the “necessary other” of free labour, is particularly fruitful to analyse the general social organisation of labour and value and capital production on the specific moment of capitalist history, determined by the creation and expansion of the world economy.

With the proposition to decentre the “free” wage labour as the defining form and moment of capitalism and freedom as the norm of wage labour, the dissertation explored the wage labour from the viewpoint of coercion and subordination. By investigating the recent literature about the history of wage labour in England, it has been demonstrated that the typical form of wage labour until the

last quarter of the 19th century was “unfree contract labour” or “restricted wage labour.” Given that colonial slavery was not historically related to metropolitan wage labour only through the exchange of commodities in the world economy but also through the shared history of capital’s challenge to fix down and discipline the available expropriated workers for value- and capital-producing labour in different modalities of exploitation. The “free” wage labour, presented as “normal employment,” is a mode of labour control in a commodity-determined society, subject to double coercion and subordination, as Marx and several Marxist scholars suggested.

The examination of Brazilian historical social science has demonstrated how modern colonial slavery could be reconstituted as the totally expropriated, violently open and legally guaranteed value- and capital-producing labour in the South-Atlantic system of colonial exploitation, which was determined by the capitalist world economy. The bi-polar system of exploitation, integrated into the world system, is shown to be constituted of the transatlantic slave trade as the first global (unfree) labour market, rooted in the violent expropriation of people from the African continent through wars, on the one hand, and of the colonial economic system of production, understood as the “capitalist enterprise” due to its *labour organisation* resembling the modern large-scale industry, which was at the same time surplus-value and capital-producing.

The critical scrutiny of the Brazilian so-called “new historiography” has permitted us to question the “transition” argument about the evolutionary development from unfree to “free” labour followed by proletarianisation. It has demonstrated that instead of the substitution of slave labour by typical double-free proletarian, the previous “slavery regimes” were transformed in different sectors and regions into new mixes of enslaved, coercive, and semi-proletarian labour arrangements by the middle of the 19th century. Hence, under industrial and liberal capitalism dominating the world economy, in the new frontiers of commercial agriculture, plantation slavery went through a qualitative and quantitative metamorphosis. At the same time, the use of slave labour was enabled by the legal and discursive reframing of slavery in terms of the liberal principles of the right to private property and the free market. Moreover, labour arrangements, known as intermediary stages between slavery and freedom, developed into new coercive labour arrangements. In Minas Gerais, slavery developed into other modalities, such as the slave hiring system. Hence, 19th-century labour mixes present several social and legal ambiguities.

Kurzfassung

In dieser Dissertation wurde die brasilianische historische Sozialwissenschaft (1940-2022) als ein Beispiel für peripheres Wissen aufgegriffen und ihr Beitrag zur Erneuerung der marxistischen politischen Ökonomie kritisch untersucht, indem die Begriffe Arbeit und Arbeiterklasse unter dem Gesichtspunkt der erzwungenen (unfreien) und der nicht/halb bezahlten Arbeit im historischen Kapitalismus im Dialog mit der kritischen politischen Ökonomie des globalen Nordens überdacht wurden. Es wurde argumentiert, dass das sozialwissenschaftliche Paradigma des 19. Jahrhunderts, in dem die marxistische politische Ökonomie verwurzelt ist, mit seiner Definition des Kapitalismus durch "freie" Lohnarbeit die erzwungene (unfreie) und nicht entlohnte Arbeit, insbesondere die kolonialen und peripheren Formen der Arbeitskontrolle, bei der Konzeptualisierung der kapitalistischen Arbeit und der Bildung der Arbeiterklasse nur begrenzt berücksichtigt. Diese Einschränkungen bei der Einbeziehung peripherer Realitäten in die globale soziologische Theoriebildung haben zum Teil mit der anhaltenden Asymmetrie in der globalen Produktion und Zirkulation von Wissen zu tun. Durch die Untersuchung von Marx' eigenen Ambiguitäten, der älteren und neueren Kritik am Marx'schen Begriff der sogenannten primitiven Akkumulation, der Weltsystemperspektive sowie der Global Labour History wurden mehrere Vorschläge zur Erweiterung des Begriffs der kapitalistischen Arbeit ermittelt. Dazu gehören die Ausweitung der Analyseeinheit vom Nationalstaat auf die kapitalistische Weltwirtschaft, die Betrachtung der auf außerökonomischem Zwang beruhenden Enteignung als integraler Bestandteil der kapitalistischen Logik sowie die Betrachtung der verschiedenen Formen der Kommodifizierung der Arbeitskraft als gemeinsame Klassenbasis aller subalternen ArbeiterInnen.

Ausgehend von der Untersuchung der brasilianischen historischen Sozialwissenschaft in Bezug auf die Beziehung zwischen moderner kolonialer Sklaverei und Kapitalismus wurden einige grundlegende theoretisch-historische Formulierungen im Dialog mit dem klassischen Marxismus identifiziert, die den brasilianischen Weg zum Kapitalismus unter dem Gesichtspunkt struktureller überregionaler Verflechtungen als "Widerspruchseinheit" und nicht als "Verhältnis der Äußerlichkeit" betrachtet haben. Es wurde gezeigt, wie das Überdenken von Begriffen wie Eigentum, Enteignung und Ware Arbeitskraft - die für die Marxsche Werttheorie von zentraler Bedeutung sind - unter dem Gesichtspunkt der schwarzafrikanischen Sklaverei, dem "notwendigen Anderen" der freien Arbeit, besonders fruchtbar ist, um die allgemeine gesellschaftliche Organisation der Arbeit, des Werts und der Kapitalproduktion in dem spezifischen Moment der

kapitalistischen Geschichte zu analysieren, der durch die Entstehung und Expansion der Weltwirtschaft bestimmt wurde.

Mit der Zielsetzung, die "freie" Lohnarbeit als bestimmende Form und Moment des Kapitalismus und die Freiheit als Norm der Lohnarbeit zu dezentrieren, untersuchte die Dissertation die Lohnarbeit unter dem Gesichtspunkt von Zwang und Unterordnung. Die Untersuchung der neueren Literatur über die Geschichte der Lohnarbeit in England hat gezeigt, dass die typische Form der Lohnarbeit bis zum letzten Viertel des 19. Jahrhunderts "unfreie Vertragsarbeit" oder "beschränkte Lohnarbeit" war. Die koloniale Sklaverei war also nicht nur durch den Warenaustausch in der Weltwirtschaft mit der metropolitanen Lohnarbeit historisch verbunden, sondern auch durch die gemeinsame Geschichte der Herausforderung des Kapitals, die verfügbaren enteigneten Arbeitskräfte für wert- und kapitalproduzierende Arbeit festzulegen und zu disziplinieren. Die "freie" Lohnarbeit, die als "Normalbeschäftigung" dargestellt wird, ist selbst eine Form der Arbeitskontrolle in einer warenbestimmten Gesellschaft, die einem doppelten Zwang und einer doppelten Unterordnung unterworfen ist, wie von Marx und mehreren marxistischen WissenschaftlerInnen vorgeschlagen.

Die Untersuchung der brasilianischen historischen Sozialwissenschaft hat gezeigt, wie die moderne koloniale Sklaverei als total enteignete, gewaltsam geöffnete und rechtlich garantierte wert- und kapitalproduzierende Arbeit im südatlantischen System der kolonialen Ausbeutung, das von der kapitalistischen Weltwirtschaft bestimmt wurde, rekonstituiert werden konnte. Das bipolare, in das Weltsystem integrierte Ausbeutungssystem konstituiert sich einerseits aus dem transatlantischen Sklavenhandel als erstem globalen (unfreien) Arbeitsmarkt, der in der gewaltsamen Enteignung von Menschen des afrikanischen Kontinents durch Kriege wurzelt, und andererseits aus dem kolonialen ökonomischen Produktionssystem, das aufgrund seiner der modernen Großindustrie ähnelnden Arbeitsorganisation als "kapitalistisches Unternehmen" verstanden wird, das zugleich Mehrwert und Kapital produziert.

Die kritische Betrachtung der so genannten "neuen Geschichtsschreibung" Brasiliens hat es ermöglicht, das "Übergangs"-Argument über die evolutionäre Entwicklung von unfreier zu "freier" Arbeit, gefolgt von Proletarisierung, zu hinterfragen. Sie hat gezeigt, dass anstelle der Ersetzung von Sklavenarbeit durch typische doppelt freie proletarische Arbeit die früheren "Sklavereiregime" bis zur Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts in verschiedenen Sektoren und Regionen in neue Mischformen aus versklavter, gezwungener und halbproletarischer Arbeit transformiert wurden. Unter dem industriellen und liberalen Kapitalismus in der Weltwirtschaft erfuhr die Plantagensklaverei in den neuen Grenzen der kommerziellen Landwirtschaft eine qualitative und quantitative Metamorphose.

Gleichzeitig wurde die Nutzung von Sklavenarbeit durch die rechtliche und diskursive Umgestaltung der Sklaverei im Sinne der liberalen Grundsätze des Rechts auf Privateigentum und des freien Marktes ermöglicht. Darüber hinaus entwickelten sich Arbeitsverhältnisse, die als Zwischenstufen zwischen Sklaverei und Freiheit bekannt sind, zu neuen Formen von Zwangsarbeitsverhältnissen. In Minas Gerais entwickelte sich die Sklaverei zu anderen Modalitäten, wie dem Sklavenverleihsystem. Es zeigt sich also, dass die Arbeitsverhältnisse im 19. Jahrhundert mehrere soziale und rechtliche Ambiguitäten aufweisen.