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Covid-19 Pandemic and Social and racial Inequalities: The Effects of Necropolitics in The Brazilian State

PANDEMIA COVID-19 E AS SÓCIO RACIAIS DESIGUALDADES: OS EFEITOS DA NECROPOLÍTICA NO ESTADO BRASILEIRO

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to analyze the consequences of socio-racial inequalities in the structuring of the Brazilian State and the necropolitical effects in the coronavirus pandemic. It appears that the incidence of structural racism, due to the historical process of the elements of elimination and exclusion of black people, reveals the crisis of the Democratic State of Law to guarantee social benefits for the whole community. In this sense, within the pandemic reality, the necropolitical effects of this socio-racial inequality end up determining the uneven direction of health care policies and leaving the vulnerable population at the social margin, in a Sofia's choice of the necropolitics. To outline the present theoretical proposal, the study will make a documentary analysis of the official data of social and racial inequalities in the country, as well as the rates of spread of the coronavirus in the Brazilian scenario, in order to portray the impacts of the necropolitical barriers of the absence of assistance policies in the Covid-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Socio-racial inequalities; Necropolitics; Coronavirus pandemic; Assistance Policies; Structural Racism.

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RESUMO

O presente estudo tem como objetivo analisar as consequências das desigualdades sócio-raciais na estruturação do Estado brasileiro e os efeitos necropolíticos da pandemia do coronavírus. Verifica-se que a incidência do racismo estrutural, devido ao processo histórico dos elementos de eliminação e exclusão dos negros, revela a crise do Estado Democrático de Direito para garantir benefícios sociais para toda a comunidade. Nesse sentido, dentro da realidade pandêmica, os efeitos necropolíticos dessa desigualdade sócio-racial acabam determinando a direção desigual das políticas de saúde e deixando a população vulnerável à margem social, numa opção de Sofia pela necropolítica. Para delinear a presente proposta teórica, o estudo fará uma análise documental dos dados oficiais das desigualdades sociais e raciais no país, bem como das taxas de disseminação do coronavírus no cenário brasileiro, a fim de retratar os impactos das barreiras necropolíticas da ausência de políticas de assistência na pandemia de Covid-19.

Palavras-chave: Desigualdades sócio-raciais; Necropolítica; Pandemia do coronavírus; Políticas de Assistência; Racismo Estrutural.

1 INTRODUCTION

The coronavirus pandemic has brought international concern to the realization of health law in an effective way. In view of the high contagion power of Covid-19 and the rapid contamination curve and the number of deaths, the World Health Organization recommended that countries adopt measures to restrict mobility and social isolation, in order to avoid the collapse of systems nations' health care.

In the context of the Brazilian reality, the contamination scenario of Covid-19 occurred in an increasing and exponential way, being the third country with the largest number of infected and dead. Such a situation denounces the difficulty of the Brazilian health system to reduce contamination rates and to implement

public health policies that can resolve the effects of the pandemic.

The dysfunctionality of the health law denounces the deficiencies of social benefits in an equal way for all citizens, in a context of vulnerability due to socio-racial inequality, which separates the subjects by their social condition, their economic weaknesses and by the structural racism that is rooted in the formation of the rule of law in Brazil.

In this perspective, when observing the process of historical and social formation in Brazil, we find that the bonds of slavery and racial discrimination reverberate in contemporary society and lead to the vulnerability of peoples and the ineffectiveness of social assistance in an isonomic way.

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Such conjectures are evidenced in the necropolitics, as a substrate for a policy of eliminating black bodies, which were no longer seen as commodities in post abolitionism, but started to be weakened and neglected of their fundamental rights, especially the right to equality and equality. dignified life.

Faced with the reality of the pandemic, the necropolitics presents itself as an empowering tool for determining the population that will have access to health and those that will remain in the forgotten areas, in a truly announced tragedy. While in Europe, faced with the possibility of health collapse, health professionals made Sofia's Choice by age criterion, here, in Brazil, Sofia's Choice is a necropolitical decision that reinforces socio-racial inequalities that have never been overcome in the past in the rule of law.

Within this scenario, socio-racial inequalities are obstacles to the effectiveness of the right to health for the entire population, which leads to the potentialization of pandemic incidence in the social sphere. Under this aegis, the present research aims to analyze the necropolitical effects in the pandemic scenario of the Brazilian reality, from the investigation of the historical trajectory of

the country's social formation, in order to demystify the symbolic structure of racism and the inequalities of the peoples.

To outline the present theoretical proposal, the study will make a documentary analysis of the statistical data of structural racism and the effects of the necropolitics in the reality of the coronavirus pandemic in the country. In addition, the theoretical foray will use a critical-reflexive approach on the obstacles of the necropolitical effects for the realization of equality in the Democratic Rule of Law.

2 THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC SCENARIO: A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF CONTAMINATION IN BRAZIL

The Covid-19 virus, known scientifically as SARS-CoV-2¹ or coronavirus, had its first cases of contamination in the city of

Wuhan, China, between the months of November and December 2019². The new virus discovered and of origin unknown was presented with high power of contamination in a short period, from the local transmission between contaminated and non-contaminated people.

¹ Zhou P, Yang XL, Wang XG, Hu B, Zhang L, Zhang W, et al. 2020.

² Ibidem, 2020.

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It is noteworthy, however, that the contamination no longer occurs at the local level and was verified throughout the country of China, leading to the formation of the first epicenter of the disease, in which it was no longer possible to control the beginning of the lineage of the contamination of the viruses among people, therefore being considered as the virus of community transmission and with high power of lethality.

With a period of silent incubation, the coronavirus presented itself as an acute respiratory syndrome, with disastrous effects on human health, leading to an increasing number of deaths, which crossed the borders of China and became an international concern.

Beginning in January 2020, we witnessed rapid contamination of the virus by countries, which led to the accelerated formation of new epicenters of the disease and put the global health system at risk of containing contamination and high lethality. In this scenario of health uncertainty and the potential risk of collapse of the health system, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization³ classified the virus as a global pandemic, being considered as one of the great health challenges of the 21st century.

³ World Health Organization, 2020.

In the absence of effective and immediate measures to contain the Covid-19 epicenters in countries, the World Health Organization⁴ recommended that nations adopt preventive protection mechanisms to contain contamination curves through social isolation, as long as science does not provide effective responses to slow the waves of viral loads in the population.

In this line of intellection, we have watched countries close their territorial borders and start to adopt preventive measures of social distancing and restriction of rights to avoid the collapse of the health system and the consequent lethal tragedy of Covid-19 contamination. Following this aegis, we observe the institution of the mechanisms of the lockdown and quarantine of contaminated as mandatory instruments of adoption by the population.

As stated by the World Health Organization⁵, quarantine was planned as a measure to separate infected people from living with the population that has not yet been affected by viral load, in order to control, in a local way, the emergence of new cases and deaths. The lockdown measure was thought of as a national measure for closing face-to-face activities,

⁴ *Ibidem*, 2020.

⁵ *Ibidem*, 2020.

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for a specified period, and restricting fundamental rights, such as commercial and educational law, to avoid the collapse of the health system in the face of the formation of the high contagion epicenters of coronavirus.

In line with the determinations of the World Health Organization, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights - IACHR issued Resolution n° 01/2020⁶, on April 10, 2020, in order to guide and direct the prevention strategies to be adopted by the countries of the Americas, signatories to the aforementioned IACHR, with support for the fulfillment of the human rights of all peoples. Resolution n° 01/2020 points out that, when claiming the exercise of fundamental rights in pandemic times, countries must make a balanced assessment of the essentiality of human life in an emergency situation.

The discussion brings to light the essentiality of human existence in the pandemic reality, and the executive heads of nations must observe the contamination and lethality curves for the adoption of restrictive measures of rights in favor of the right to health, which, at that moment, represents the bastion the condition of

surviving and existing. From this perspective, the restriction of the exercise of commercial and educational rights must be based on temporary and exceptional relativization, while the coronavirus waves present the risk of the collapse of the health system.

Given this context, countries began to adopt preventive measures during the course of the year 2020, while vaccine production was being studied and tested to ensure effectiveness against the coronavirus. Indeed, after a year of the Covid-19 contamination being recognized as a pandemic by the World Health Organization, we are still observing the effects of contagion and the high mortality rate.

Added to this reality, the new strains of the coronavirus, which presented a high power of adaptation to geographical spaces in the global sphere and its high capacity for mutation, which caused new waves of contamination and high deaths in countries that seemed to be overcoming this pandemic process. In addition, the new waves caused by the mutations have formed new epicenters of the disease with disastrous effects in realities of complete exhaustion of the health system.

⁶ Comisión Interamericana de Derechos Humanos. Resolução 1/2020.

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According to data from the World Health Organization⁷, on May 12, 2021, SARS-CoV-2 contamination reached 159,268,576 and 3,311,504 deaths. Such data reveal that we have not yet stabilized the potential of the virus and, for that to happen, it is necessary that vaccines are available to the entire global community, to guarantee the true immunization against the viral load of the coronavirus.

According to official data from the World Health Organization⁸, the countries most affected by the number of contaminated and which today represent the main epicenters of the disease worldwide are the United States, which, until the date of May 12, 2021, presented about 32,940,832 cases of contaminated and the rate of 588,518 deaths in the country. Then there is India, with 23,340,426 people infected and 254,225 deaths. In the third position worldwide in cases of Covid-19 we have Brazil with the amount of 15,285,040 contaminated and 425,711 deaths from coronavirus.

In the Brazilian scenario, the first cases of coronavirus were due to the importation of the virus from the Europe region, which represents the cradle of contamination, at that time. The first case of contamination

of Covid-19 was found by the Ministry of Health⁹, on February 26, 2020, with a 61-year-old patient who had symptoms of the disease, shortly after returning from a trip to Italy, the country which, at the time, was one of the main epicenters of contamination by the virus.

Since then, the country has reached a curve of increasing contamination of cases and deaths, starting to be considered as a virus of community transmission, in which it is no longer possible to identify when the line of contagion occurred in the population. Data from the Ministry of Health of Brazil¹⁰ and the World Health Organization¹¹ point to the situation of public calamity and health crisis in the country, being in the world ranking in the third position of the countries with more contamination and cases of death of the disease.

As stated by the University of São Paulo¹², the portrait of the pandemic in Brazil is a reflection of known serious health problems in the Brazilian nation, such as the lack of sufficient beds in hospitals, inefficient access to health care and insufficient hospital materials and supplies. Added to this reality is the absence of

⁷ World Health Organization 2020.

⁸ World Health Organization 2021.

⁹ Ministry of Health of Brazil 2020.

¹⁰ Ministry of Health of Brazil 2021.

¹¹ World Health Organization 2021.

¹² University of São Paulo 2020.

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effective public health policies for the entire population, such as access to drinking water, sewage, regular housing, which mark the inequalities and vulnerabilities that Brazil has always witnessed.

In this line of intellection, the health reality and the inefficiency of effective public policies on access to health potentiate the effects of the coronavirus pandemic and contribute to an increase in the viral load in the country. In view of the fragility of the national health system and the precarious living conditions of the vulnerable, the numbers of contaminated and dead people pervade a necropolitical criterion of a tragedy announced by the interference of state apparatus in guaranteeing the exercise of the sanitary right for the entire population. .

The contagion and propagation scenario of Covid-19 gained even greater contours in January 2021, when a new strain of coronavirus was recognized in the state of Amazonas, in Brazil, scientifically recognized as a P.1 variant. According to studies by the National Institute of Infectious Diseases in Japan¹³, variant P.1 presents the power of impact in the population in a more severe way, from

¹³ National Institute of Infectious Diseases in Japan 2021.

mutations N501Y and E484K, capable of making the virus more resistant to immune system.

The second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, with the P.1 variant, led to the real collapse of the health system, with a lack of beds and oxygen in hospitals. According to Fiocruz Amazônia¹⁴, hospitals in the city of Manaus, in the state of Amazonas, have become real human asphyxiation chambers, in which the lack of respirators and oxygen has led to the suffocation of the population that was hospitalized in the wings of the health units. intensive care in state hospitals.

The conjuncture of the number of deaths during the months of January and February 2021, in the state of Amazonas, revealed the harshest and cruelest face of the pandemic in the country, with indelible and necropolitical effects of the human tragedy. It is noted that the new waves of contamination and the new epicenters of the disease make it evident that we are still far from overcoming the health crisis and that the most effective measures are the preventive mechanisms of isolation and social distance, considering that, despite vaccines have already been produced, these are not available to the entire population.

¹⁴ Fiocruz Amazônia 2021.

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3 STRUCTURAL RACISM AND NECROPOLITICS IN THE FORMATION OF THE STATE OF BRAZILIAN LAW

From these lessons that are outlined, we infer that despite the contamination of the coronavirus having its forms of contagion in a democratic way, it can generate the infection for the whole population, when it is observed the insufficiency of the exercise of the sanitary right and the social vulnerabilities that mark the Brazilian reality, we realize that there is an interference of inequalities in the contamination curve of Covid-19, in the access to beds of intensive care units and in the high number of lethalties due to viral load.

Thus, we can establish that the portrait of the Covid-19 pandemic in Brazil is based on the effects of the necropolitics, which determine the choice of who will live or who will die in the Democratic Rule of Law, from the inequality of access to health in pandemic times.

In the wake of this process, it is necessary to analyze the historical formation of the rule of law in Brazil, in order to investigate the roots of socio-racial inequalities and the symbolic materialization of the necropolitics in the structure of Brazilian

society and its contemporary effects. Urges that the portrayal of the Brazilian past and history requires a process of rescuing the period of slavery in the country, which solidified the social structure at the expense of the decimation of the black population and the subjugation of their experiences, their cultures and the identity of the black people .

In this line of intellection, the historical-social analysis of Brazil is not an easy approach, since it leads us to revisit the suffering and massacre of black people, who were exploited and humiliated under the aegis of the economic growth of colonial activity, in a policy of extermination and oppression. According to Schwarcz¹⁵, the currents of slavery have crossed the paths of Brazilian society, leaving indelible marks that are embodied in structural racism and the necropolitics of the black people.

This time, when analyzing the period of slavery, we are bringing up the ancestry of all black people who suffered the cruelest face of Brazilian society and were reified as commodities. Faced with this situation, despite being a historical process of suffering for the black population, its investigation is necessary to understand the marks of racism that petrify in the social

¹⁵ Schwarcz 2019.

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structure and, until today, they present themselves as mechanisms of exclusion and vulnerability of the black population. In the lessons from Holanda¹⁶, it should be emphasized that slavery represented a lucrative trade of capitalist logic, which provided labor for work on the landowners' crops, without cost, since the bond between the slave and its owner was submission and payment was made with life itself, which was dedicated to serving the white capitalist elite, through the oppression and humiliation of black people.

According to the Cameroonian philosopher Mbembe¹⁷, the roots of slavery were solidified in the justification of maintaining the sovereignty of those who profited from the exploitation of human life. Therefore, all atrocities were allowed to weaken the black population, by shackling their bodies and enslaving their souls, with the decimation of their culture, customs and dignity.

It can be observed, therefore, that by de-characterizing the identity of the black people and separating them from their lands, the exercise of sovereignty over black people would be decisive for their subjugation, as internal weaknesses would

be cruel measures capable of humiliating and silencing the pains of black bodies. As pointed out by Agamben¹⁸, slavery was a biopolitical process aimed at the double slavery of the black people. The first slavery was the forced displacement of peoples as a commodity. The second results from the racial separation of white and black peoples, which created the concept of racism as an instrument of inequality between dominant and dominated peoples.

In this line of intellection, Fernandes¹⁹ points out that the separation of peoples into races by the biopolitical criterion of slavery brings about the reconstruction of the concept of race, taking into account the structures of marking racism. The human being ceases to be identified by his subjectivities and qualities and starts to be recognized by racism, between dominant and dominated peoples. Such a structure petrifies racism as a political criterion for the formation of the slave state, by the instrument that Foucault²⁰ defined as the biopolitics of the colonial capitalist logic, revealing the murderous function of the State that authorized to kill in the name of economic interest.

¹⁶ Holanda 1995.

¹⁷ Mbembe 2018b.

¹⁸ Agamben 2007.

¹⁹ Fernandes 2008.

²⁰ Foucault 1999.

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In the view of Hilário²¹ (2016), this false idea of the capitalist rationality of economic profit from the sale of black bodies in a colonial market makes modern slavery even more cruel, by using racism to differentiate hegemonic peoples from those who were destined to die. In this same sense, Mbembe²² ponders:

Slavery and the economic system of the plantation alone configures a state of exception, and there is the triple loss of enslaved man: of his home, of the right to his body and of his political status, that is, he becomes the undead. In this triad, there is no communication or correspondence, and the spectacle of violence as a protocol for the control and dissemination of terror takes place on this body. Humanity was dissipated so that it could become

property, or a “personified shadow”, for even its human expression is included in possession. The apartheid terror promises to “save” the population through the state of exception, preaching sterilization without consent and extermination policies.

In a historical-social turn of the Brazilian scenario, it is observed that, after the abolition of slavery, in 1888, racism did not dissolve from the structural formation

of the State. In fact, what we realize is that the abolition of slavery was forged by the whites when the colonial system of selling slaves was no longer profitable. In fact, the abolition of slavery did not promote voluntary freedom for slaves, but the disposal of a vulnerable population that was no longer of interest to the ruling class.

As Nascimento²³ points out, the abolition of slavery did not promote a benevolent freedom for slaves, as it tried to be sustained in the country's historical process. Instead, the discursive element of the abolition of slavery was an economic criterion, given that the transformation of the means of production needed specialized and wage labor. Furthermore, European countries were already in the process of abolishing slavery and the continuity of the practice in the Brazilian scenario would break with foreign trade relations.

Slave labor was replaced by the wage labor of immigrants who entered the country. In the lessons of Nascimento²⁴, such a change in the social paradigm represented yet another strategy for the exclusion of black people who were not welcomed in the new economic reality of the market that was

²¹ Hilário 2016.

²² Mbembe 2018b, p.16.

²³ Nascimento 1978.

²⁴ Nascimento 2019.

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installed and were on the margins of the country's development, as disposable substrates.

In the teachings of Góes²⁵ "the abolition of slavery in Brazil ended the trade of black people, but it did not eradicate the captives that imprisoned them." The pseudo-freedom of the black population has not managed to break free from the bonds of racism, which mark the currents of slavery and, even nowadays, demonstrate the practice of structural racism.

Racism became the gear of the policy of separating the territorial spaces of social coexistence from whites and blacks, in areas of access and areas of forgetfulness, destining for the newly liberated population only the poverty and vulnerability of the social spheres, in a process of annulment, once again, of the identity and dignity of the black population. Mbembe²⁶ defined this process as necropolitics, which is the policy of extermination and exclusion of the black body from social spheres.

The Brazilian necropolitics reproduces the structuring of racism in a symbolic way in society, when the State did not propose policies of reparation and inclusion for the

marginalized population. The jobs were occupied by immigrants to the detriment of providing training for the newly freed black people who were here. This choice is a consequence of the necropolitical effects that reinforce the remains of slavery.

In this sense, Moreira²⁷ considers that the struggle of the black people has ceased to be for the achievement of the freedom of bodies to be the struggle for the right to exist with dignity in the community and to be recognized for their qualities and not for their skin color. , which reverberates recreational racism in populations.

Another necropolitical process that took shape in the Brazilian social formation, after the abolition of slavery, was the State's attempt to create a false racial democracy, presenting the black population as objects to be domesticated.

This conjuncture reveals itself as yet another process of making the suffering of the black people invisible, by relativizing the atrocities of slavery as an iconographic allegory of the portrait of white domination, under the justification that black people accepted their process of slavery, as portrayed by author Gilberto

²⁵ Góes 2019, p. 12.

²⁶ Mbembe 2018a.

²⁷ Moreira 2019.

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Freyre²⁸ in his work *Casa Grande e Senzala*.

In tenderness, in excessive mimicry, in the Catholicism in which our senses delight, in music, in walking, in speech, in the lullaby of a little boy, in everything that is a sincere expression of life, we almost all bring the black influence. Of the slave or *sinhama* who rocked us. Who gave us to breastfeed. She gave us something to eat, herself crushing the food ball in her hand. Of the old black woman who told us the first stories of animals and haunted haunts. The mulatto woman who took the first animal on its feet from such a good itch. The one that initiated us into physical love and conveyed to us, through the creak of the bed of wind, the complete sensation of man. From the kid who was our first toy companion²⁹.

It should be noted that this method of neutralizing the effects of slavery for blacks arises from the process of the necropolitics of forgetting atrocities and decimating peoples in the name of the dominant colonial system. Added to this reality is the attempt of false racial democracy to whiten the population by seeking to create discursive interpretations of history from the idea of colorism and its

mischaracterization of the identity of the black population, portraying black bodies from the perspective of what is more similar to white people.

According to Diwan³⁰, the necropolitical strategies for making the black body invisible reinforce the symbolic power of racism in the social space, which did not end with the abolition of slavery and founded its roots on the logic of social development. In this scenario, the creation of the figure of the black as a criminal profile stands out, under the bias of racism, which reinforces social inequalities and reserve the areas of neglect of society for blacks.

It should be noted that the State, which should promote public policies for the reparation and social inclusion of blacks in the community, based on the effectiveness of the Welfare State, turns against the black population applying its face of State of Penance, aiming at black the State's repressive apparatus. From this perspective, Mbembe³¹ established that necropolitics is reinforced as a policy of extermination when the government chooses to direct elimination policies, which symbolically rescue the bonds of slavery through structural racism.

²⁸ Freyre 2002.

²⁹ *Ibidem* 2002, p. 301.

³⁰ Diwan 2007.

³¹ Mbembe 2018a.

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As she [the rabble of new slaves] is stigmatized and no one even wants to go near her [...], the school and health, for example, that are destined for her are degraded. Chronic public insecurity, since the absence of real opportunities sends a part of this class to crime – in men, the typical figure is the criminal, while in women it is the prostitute –, results from this abandonment. After all, there are those among the excluded who don't want to identify with the 'poor sucker' who works for crumbs to be 'nice carpet'. Finally, everything that we have identified with the great Brazilian problems – such as, in addition to those listed above, the 'low productivity' of the Brazilian worker – is related to this secular abandonment [and structural violence, to add]³².

In the wake of this situation, the formation of the Penal Code after the abolition of slavery sought to reinforce structural racism in the necropolitical effects of the state of exclusion of black people by criminalizing capoeira and creating the crime of loitering. As Reis³³ points out, capoeira is part of the African cultural expression, carrying with it the ancestry of

the people who were removed from their lands and placed on slave ships to serve the white slave elite. It happens that, from the

construction of the criminal profile of the freed blacks, capoeira started to be associated with the practice of an offensive and violent act, in a complete subsumption of racism in the Brazilian legislative structure.

The crime of loitering, on the other hand, was typified in conjunction with the crime of begging, as conduct considered morally reprehensible and which undermines the safety of the community, evidently creating a criminal profile. In this regard, the vulnerable population that did not have access to conditions worthy of survival and lived on the social fringe started to be blamed for their own condition of poverty. The black population ceased to be a slave to be persecuted as guilty of the atrocities that the state's necropolitical conjuncture placed it, revealing the opportunity for the black peoples' exclusion and marginalization policy.

In the contemporary reality, we observe that the marks of structural racism still reverberate in directing the necropolitical effects to the marginalized population who find themselves hostage in the application of the State of Penance as a way to silence the population by attributing to the potential criminal profile the subject who is black, poor and who suffers from social ills, in a process of culpability for social vulnerability.

³² SOUZA 2017, p.105.

³³ Reis 2011.

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Indeed, it is observed that structural racism remains rooted symbolically in contemporary social construction. This conjuncture is exposed when the data on public violence in the Brazilian reality is analyzed and we verify that the greatest lethal potential is of the suspect potential that is black, in a real observation of structural racism in the state necropolitics. The Brazilian Public Security Forum - Brazilian Public Security Yearbook³⁴ revealed that about 74.4% of the victims of lethal violence in the country are black. In addition, the same report also noted that about 79.1% of the victims of police actions are black. On the other hand, in comparison with the comparison of violence data with the occupancy rate of Brazilian penal establishments, it is observed that 66.7% of the prison population are composed of blacks.

Given this scenario, we realize that the social spaces that blacks are mostly in are related to prison rates and the approach to public security with blacks, reinforcing the targeting of the State of Penance for marginalized peoples, to the detriment of the Welfare State.

In this line of intellection, Souza³⁵ considers, therefore, that structural racism is the substratum of Brazilian necropolitics, and cannot be analyzed as isolated indicators, considering that the historical process of social formation in the country destined the marginalization of black peoples. and the determination of social inequalities as obstacles to the effectiveness of the material equality of peoples in the Democratic Rule of Law.

Socio-racial inequalities are structured, in contemporary times, as necropolitical effects of the emptying of social spaces by the marginalized population that are destined to remain in the areas of neglect, in which there is the precariousness of basic services essential for human survival, such as the right to health, the right to education and the right to regular housing.

4 THE NECROPOLITICAL EFFECTS OF SOCIALRACIAL INEQUALITIES ON CORONAVIRUS CONTAMINATION: PORTRAITS OF A SOFIA CHOICE FROM BRAZILIAN REALITY

From the lessons presented and the outlining of socio-racial inequalities in Brazil, it is imperative to observe the

³⁴ Brazilian Public Security Forum - Brazilian Public Security Yearbook 2020.

³⁵ SOUZA, 2017.

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impacts of the necropolitics on the contamination and lethality curves of the coronavirus pandemic. It is important to note that Covid-19's viral load has no relation to any territorial or biological brand, presenting itself with a high contagion power, which crossed all the borders of nations and presented itself as a highly adaptable virus.

Through this line of intellection, observing the international panorama of contamination of the first and second waves of the coronavirus pandemic, the World Health Organization³⁶ declared that transmission is democratic and affects the entire population in all social spheres. However, the impact that the coronavirus pandemic has on the poorest countries reveals that social inequalities accentuate the curves of contamination due to the precariousness of the health system, which has never guaranteed the achievement of the minimum existential for the vulnerable population.

This situation gains contours in the Brazilian scenario when it is observed that there is a real crisis in the health system, given the interference of the right to health for the entire population and the absence of beds in hospitals. According to research carried out by the University of São

Paulo³⁷, Brazil does not have the capacity to withstand the growing increase in those infected, as within three months the health system would collapse.

Under this aegis, the effects of the coronavirus pandemic in the country is the portrait of an announced tragedy, which externalized all the socio-racial inequalities that already existed in the community with the precariousness of the existential minimum in the areas of neglect that the most vulnerable populations are in.

In the lessons of Albuquerque Júnior³⁸, after the period of abolition of slavery in the country, the population that was left on the social fringe in the new capitalist logic, started to concentrate around the shopping centers, in forgotten and precarious areas, with housing irregular and distant from the effectiveness of minimum rights for survival. Meanwhile, the ruling classes occupied central areas of commerce, with access and guarantee to essential rights. This socio-spatial inequality demonstrated that, despite the freedom of enslaved peoples, the State did not create mechanisms for reparation and inclusion for the liberated population, who began to live on the social fringe, in a necropolitical process of exclusion.

³⁶ World Health Organization 2021.

³⁷ University of São Paulo 2020.

³⁸ Albuquerque Júnior 2007.

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This socio-spatial determinism wide open by the marks of structural racism led to the emergence of favelas in the country, with the appearance of irregular housing, without adequate physical structures to guarantee the shelter of the population. In addition, the slum process includes the precariousness of the State's social assistance for the vulnerable population.

As Souza³⁹ adds, the term favela was used for the first time to refer to the risk areas of the Canudos War, an armed conflict between the Brazilian army and members of the community that followed the religious leader, Antônio Conselheiro. The war took place in the period from 1896 - 1897, in the interior of the State of Bahia and, with the advance of the conflicts, the community started to take refuge in the risk areas.

The concept of a favela started to be expanded to define all the irregular housing that plagues the country. In the 20th century, the slum process was intensified with the rural exodus of the population to large cities in search of better living conditions in the industrial period. However, when settling in the cities, this population was unable to be employed and started to live in the favelas, far from social assistance and in the shadow of the

marks of socio-racial inequalities that structure the Brazilian State.

In a contemporary tour, we observed that favelas are still present in the Brazilian scenario and remain concentrated in the vulnerable population and without access to the minimum existential to guarantee their survival. It should be noted that, although the Brazilian rule of law is formally supported by the 1988 Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil, which establishes fundamental rights and guarantees on an equal basis, the reality that is outlined reveals the material absence of equal access to social benefits by citizens.

When observing the data from the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics⁴⁰ - IBGE we find that about 13.6 million people live in slums in Brazil. In addition, about 67% of the total population of the favelas are black people, in an evident mark of structural racism that fuels the necropolitics and destines the most vulnerable peoples to live on the social fringe, within the areas of neglect and in need of effective social assistance. compliance with fundamental rights.

³⁹ Souza 2017

⁴⁰ Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics 2020.

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Within this line of intellection, the IBGE⁴¹ Newsletter on Social Inequalities by Color or Race in Brazil, noted that the precariousness of blacks' living conditions is consolidated in the percentage of 75.2% of the poorest population in the country. Still in that study, it was found that the per capita income of the black population is 75% lower than the income of the white population. Based on these conclusions, the necropolitical effects of structural racism that mark the country's inequalities are undeniable, demonstrating that the absence of reparation policies keeps the population vulnerable in the line of oblivion.

Given this scenario of precarious housing and the absence of adequate spaces for the realization of the fundamental rights of the vulnerable population, how to adopt measures of isolation and social distance for those who have never had regular housing? These obstacles to social inequalities enhance the effects of the spread of the virus in the country and demonstrate that compliance with preventive measures is illusory for the vulnerable population that has never had the minimum existential guaranteed.

In this perspective, when observing the deficiency of the health system and the

complete precariousness of basic sanitation, drinking water of the poorest population living in the country's slums, the difficulty of complying with sanitary measures to contain the coronavirus is revealed. This reality reveals the socio-racial weaknesses that Brazil has always presented, but never managed to overcome.

In this wake of intellection, the collapse of the health system in Brazil becomes even more threatening in view of the absence of beds in intensive care units for the entire population and the risks of contamination that spread in the scenario of precarious social conditions and health conditions of the population. Here, the choice of who will live is based on the criterion of social inequality with necropolitical consequences.

Under this logic, when the international scenario experienced the health system crisis in the hardest phase of contamination of the pandemic, health professionals in the countries of Europe adopted the difficult choice of offering the few beds that remained for the younger population, establishing a age criteria of greater chances of survival and who would be more likely to die from the effects of virus contamination. This difficult choice was named as the sanitary Sofia choice, in reference to the work *The Choice of Sofia*,

⁴¹ Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics 2019.

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by William Styron, from 1979, which tells the story of a Polish woman trapped in a concentration camp with her two children and is given to she had a hard time choosing to save just one of them.

It turns out that within the Brazilian scenario of socio-racial inequalities, Sofia's choice is a necropolitical choice, in which, given the absence of social benefits for vulnerable groups, the destination of the people who are going to die is due to the lack of access to health in the precarious system. Restroom. The necropolitical choice is even more tragic, because, in fact, it is a choice made underpinned by the country's socio-racial historical process, which was defined before the pandemic existence that we experience, in view of the interference of social benefits and the insufficiency of beds and doctors for the population. vulnerable.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The contamination of the coronavirus pandemic brought about the fragility of the health law and its potential collapse in the face of the high number of cases and deaths in the country, being considered as one of the biggest health problems of the 21st century. It turns out that the effects of the contamination curves are heightened in view of the precarious precariousness of social benefits.

Such reality is verified in the Brazilian State when it is analyzed, due to its historical-social process, that there is the presence of minority and vulnerable groups that live in areas of forgetfulness and precarious living conditions, due to the marks of structural racism that symbolically is petrified in contemporary reality with the lack of equality of the realization of fundamental rights for human survival.

Within this context, the pandemic situation becomes even more tragic when faced with the barriers of socio-racial inequalities. It is observed that, in view of the absence of beds, in Europe the Sofia Choice was adopted to decide who would allocate the hospital spaces. Already here in Brazil, Sofia's Choice is necropolitical, which determines that access to beds and health is intended only for groups that have access to the sanitary law effectively, leaving the areas of forgetfulness, once again, to the social margin, in complete health vulnerability.

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