

## The Black Body in Donald Pierson's Thesis *Negroes in Brazil*

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### Abstract

*This article aims to present the way the black body is approached in Donald Pierson's (1900-1995) doctoral thesis. The question to be investigated is: how does one of the first studies on racial issues carried out in Brazil treat the black body? The theoretical framework was defined by authors from the social sciences. The thesis was considered as a historical document. A content analysis was made based on the following codes: the work's physical structure, notes on the second and the first introductions, and approaches about the body. The results suggest that the black body did not properly qualify as an object of study, but it reveals an element that identifies both biological aspects and the movement of black bodies. It is concluded that resuming the investigation initiated by Pierson about blacks in Bahia is relevant because it allows the understanding of black body markers in the Brazilian context.*

### Resumo

*Este artigo tem como objetivo apresentar a abordagem do corpo negro na tese de doutorado de Donald Pierson (1900-1995). A questão a ser investigada é: como um dos primeiros estudos sobre questões raciais realizados no Brasil trata o corpo negro? O referencial teórico foi definido por autores das Ciências Sociais. A tese foi considerada como um documento histórico. Uma análise de conteúdo foi feita com base nos seguintes aspectos: estrutura física do trabalho, notas da segunda e da primeira introdução e abordagens sobre o corpo. Os resultados sugerem que o corpo negro não se revela exatamente como objeto de estudo, mas se trata de um elemento que está relacionado a aspectos biológicos e do movimento dos corpos negros. Conclui-se que retomar a investigação iniciada por Pierson sobre negros na Bahia é relevante por possibilitar o entendimento de marcadores do corpo negro no contexto brasileiro.*

A recent article titled "Myths about physical racial differences" by Linda Villanose, published by *The New York Times* on August 14, 2019, shows us that bodily differences between black and white people are still used today to justify the enslavement of blacks who were transported to the American continent, especially the United States (focus of the article). The article states that these supposed racial differences are still very much present in the ways doctors in the US recommend appropriate treatment to their patients, particularly when prescribing drugs to manage pain. According to Villanose (2019), recent research (2013; 2016) points out that pain for black and non-black people (whites and latinos) is felt differently, indicating that black people are more tolerant of pain than other ethnic groups. In terms of treatment, black people receive unequal treatment compared to white people in the US health system (Villanose, 2019, p. 4). This form of inequality contributes to justify the prejudice and racial discrimination surrounding black bodies. Even though we are in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the different treatment of bodies across ethnic groups remains unequal.

Historically, in Brazil, studies concerning the "body" appear relevant when associated with notions of race, ethnicity, and race relations in the country. A key author in this field is Câmara Cascudo (1924), whose folklorist studies were enhanced by the concept of race to understand popular culture. Further to this, we can add studies about physical appearance and origin; ethnicity and race, developed by authors like Nina Rodrigues (1988 [1932]), Gilberto Freyre (2013 [1933]), Florestan Fernandes (1978), Roger Bastide (1943; 1996 [1941]), and Donald Pierson (1967 [1942]), whose thesis serves as our object of study. This last author, despite being North American, provided, alongside the other mentioned authors – including a French researcher (Roger Bastide) –, a significant contribution to Brazilian sociology.

Corrêa (1988) recalls that in the 1930s and 1940s, Brazil was marked by the arrival of modernity in the English language, with letters being exchanged between Brazilians and Americans, and a growing presence of foreign researchers such as Ruth Landes, Charles Wagley (Wagley, 1977); and Donald Pierson. Some took residence in Rio de Janeiro, where they studied indigenous societies, while others, such as Pierson, elaborated his fieldwork in Salvador, Bahia. After defending his thesis in Chicago, he returned to Brazil and settled in São Paulo, where he lived for about two decades. In their own way, these researchers contributed to a methodological and theoretical reorientation ongoing in Brazil at the time.

Between foreign and Brazilian researchers, bonds of friendship and cordiality were created. There was, for example, a friendship between Arthur Ramos and Donald Pierson

(Corrêa, 1988). In addition to what Corrêa (1988) points out, in the Introduction to the Second Edition of 'Negroes in Brazil', Pierson (1967 [1942]) creates an important record of Gilberto Freyre's understanding of race relations in the country. It is worth remembering that for Freyre (2013 [1933]), race relations and prejudice were not due to any ethnic or racial issues.

This article aims to present the way that the body is approached in Donald Pierson's doctoral thesis, published as a book titled *Negroes in Brazil: A Study of Race Contact at Bahia*. Roughly speaking, Pierson's book follows the theoretical and methodological guidelines of the Chicago School and defends the idea that in Brazil there exists a kind of racial democracy that contrasts that of the United States (Pierson, 1967 [1942]). For the author, racial prejudice in Brazil is defined according to a social class scheme, and can engender social mobility. This is distinct from the United States, where such social mobility is ineffective (Pierson, 1967 [1942]). The question to be analyzed is: how does one of the first studies on racial issues carried out on Brazil, the doctoral thesis *Negroes in Brazil* by Donald Pierson (1900-1995), treat the black body?

Considering that Pierson remained in Brazil for almost two decades and contributed to the formation of the first Brazilian sociologists, teaching both undergraduate and graduate level classes and influencing Brazilian researchers such as Oracy Nogueira, Florestan Fernandes, and others, we believe that understanding the notion of the body present in his work will help us understand how this notion was being constructed within Brazilian sociology.

From the methodological point of view, this research is based on the analysis of bibliographic references. In this way, one can understand that a document is a precious and irreplaceable source of information that can contribute the unveiling of a research problem in a given sociohistorical reality (Cellard, 2008). Therefore, Donald Pierson's *Negroes in Brazil: A Study of Race Contact at Bahia*, published as a book by the Southern Illinois University Press in 1967 [1942], will be considered here as a document for analysis.

To interpret this information, we carried out content analysis, which is considered a method for textual analysis that goes beyond numbers, focusing on "types," "qualities" and "distinctions," which in turn precede quantification (Bauer, 2004.) Thus, paraphrasing Bauer in the context of content analysis, a text's corpus can allow the researcher to draw inferences regarding "values, attitudes, stereotypes, symbols and cosmovisions" (2004, p. 193). Furthermore, Bauer (2004) also highlights that the majority of texts submitted to

content analysis results from another purpose; in other words, they are not produced as research materials, as is the case of the documents we acquired.

The construction of a theoretical framework was outlined using other authors from sociology of the body as a basis, including Le Breton (1990; 2013); Mauss (2004); Shilling (2007), and authors that study social thinking in Brazil, such as Oliveira (1987); Corrêa (1988); Oliveira and Maio (2012). Apropos, we clarify that our focus was not to build the entire history of sociology of the body in Brazil, due to the limitations of the research and researchers; instead, we sought to present a view of the body in the work by a foreign author that came to Brazil in the year of 1937, and who eventually settled in the country for nearly 20 years (Oliveira, 1987; Oliveira; Maio, 2012; Corrêa, 1988; Silva, 2012).

### **Outlining the body of research**

Donald Pierson was a North American sociologist who lived between 1900-1995 (Silva, 2012). For part of his life, Pierson was a travelling sociologist. He lived for around 20 years in Brazil; he was in Europe for some time, as well as in different places in the United States, where he lived his last days in a small city in the south of the country, Leesburg, Florida. He is the author of important books and articles, some written in Portuguese and others written or translated into English. From these works, we emphasize: *Cruz das almas: a Brazilian village*, 1949 edition, published in Washington/DC in 1951, which was funded by the Smithsonian Institute in the United States; *'O homem no vale do São Francisco'*, edited by the Ministry of Interior in Brazil and by the São Francisco Valley Superintendence (Suvale), in Rio de Janeiro, 1972; and, *Negroes in Brazil*, his classic work on racial issues in Brazil, supervised by Robert Park.

Notably, Donald Pierson's arrival to pursue his doctorate in Brazil and his subsequent stay as a professor was related to a larger project by Robert Park, his intellectual mentor. According to Becker (1996), alongside William I. Thomas, Park (1992 [1915]) was one of the most important and influential professors in Chicago at the time; he was responsible for the foundation of a "school of activities." For the authors, a school of activity consists of a group of people that gathers to perform the same activity, despite not using the same theoretical background or conforming to the same school of thought. Thus, Chicago is understood by Becker (1996) as a school of activities that dedicated itself to educate researchers under the umbrella of research of urban sociology, through approaching different theoretical tenets.

The first work published by the Chicago Sociology Department was *The City: Suggestion for the Investigation of Human Behavior in the City Environment*, in 1915, by Park. He was the first self-taught academic on racial relations in the United States (Raushenbush, 1979). His research is considered foundational due to the acknowledgment and emphasis he gives to empirical studies or fieldwork present in people's life histories and in the concept of human ecology – which would serve to consolidate investigations of urban sociology. Focusing on this school of activities project, Donald Pierson came to do fieldwork for his doctoral thesis in Brazil. His stay was in Salvador (Bahia), between 1937 and 1939. In that period, he performed research and concluded the thesis “Negroes in Brazil: A Study of Race Contact at Bahia.”

After defending his thesis in 1939, Pierson came back to Brazil to teach. It is worth mentioning that, in Brazil, he supervised and taught the first generation of sociologists in the Free School of Sociology and Politics of São Paulo (Escola Livre de Sociologia e Política de São Paulo). In 1941, he had already created the department of postgraduate studies, including the internships for his students abroad, which was taken up by Mário Wagner Vieira da Cunha, Oracy Nogueira, Juarez Brandão Lopes, and Levy Cruz (Oliveira, 1987; Oliveira and Maio, 2012).

According to Corrêa (1988), it is worth noting that the relations built between Brazil and the United States occurred due to the presence of researchers from North American universities and those in Brazil. Researchers from Colombia and Chicago particularly stand out. We can divide the influence of those outsiders and researchers in Brazil according to the region where they taught. While some settled in Rio de Janeiro, others, such as Donald Pierson, went to São Paulo (Corrêa, 1988).

Additionally, Pierson was responsible for promoting the idea of São Paulo as a laboratory. The tradition of considering the city as a laboratory is recurrent in the studies by the School of Chicago, mainly in those supervised by Park, who, in his research, considered the city a privileged place for the appropriation of aspects related to both micro- and macrosociology (Martins, 2013). As previously mentioned, the initial purpose was to turn São Paulo into another Chicago in the early 20th century; in other words, to turn it into a kind of dynamic research laboratory. In the case of Chicago, the city itself would be the laboratory (Park, 1992 [1915]); in Brazil, São Paulo would become an open-air laboratory of sorts; with Donald Pierson being responsible for its institutionalization (Pierson, 1949).

The Free School of Sociology and Politics of São Paulo was founded at the same time as Donald Pierson's return to Brazil. It was the first school of Social Sciences in the country, at which foreign academics were invited to teach. Their aim was to educate the new generation of sociologists to occupy a prominent role in economics, politics, and management. To the qualified education of future sociologists, the need to promote a closer relationship between Brazil, North America, and the European continent was added, with emphasis on France, as well (Oliveira, 1987). It was a group, so to speak, of foreign specialists; who, according to Oliveira, were "taking Sociology in the direction of standards and ideals of scientific work," when "positive investigation" and "field research" were introduced to the Brazilian sociology tradition (1987, p.36). The group was composed of Emilio Willems, Roger Bastide, Jacques Lambert, Claude Lévi-Strauss, and Donald Pierson.

### **Focusing on *Negroes in Brazil***

Based on content analysis, Bauer (2002) claims that the textual corpus to be analyzed, in this case the historical document (Donald Pierson's thesis *Negroes in Brazil: A Study of Race Contact at Bahia*), is open to a multiplicity of possible questions. However, it is necessary that the analysis proposed determines its own codification. In our case we added to Bauer's understanding (2002) the intertextual perspective, which is the way the researcher comes into direct contact with the researched work and the elements that stand out to or are highlighted by the researcher. The highlighted elements for our analysis are: (a) the work's physical structure; (b) notes on the work's second and first introductions; and (c) approaches to the body, which constitutes an attempted answer to the stated research problem.

#### a) The work's physical structure

Donald Pierson's thesis *Negroes in Brazil: A Study of Race Contact at Bahia*, was originally published as a book in the United States by the Southern Illinois University Press in 1942. However, this edition, the one we analyzed, was published with some revisions and modifications in 1967. The version that we used has a dark green hard cover, with the author's identification and the book title on its spine, and a small symbol on the main book cover. It was printed on offset paper in the United States and, obviously, due to the period, it presents rather yellowish pages, but none of them had any marks of highlights or scribbles before acquisition. The thesis was divided into 11 chapters, distributed across six parts, as well as its pre-text elements: appendix, glossary, works cited, bibliography, index by name, and index by themes. The main content, disposed in chapters and separated into parts,



includes: part 1 – The setting – I The Seaport of Bahia; part 2 – Slavery, which contains two chapters: II – The coming of the Africans and III – Casa Grande & Senzala; part 3 – Miscegenation, with chapters IV – Race mixture and the Crumbling of the color line, V – Intermarriage; part 4 – Race and social status, whose chapters are: VI – The Rise of the mixed-blood, VII – The present ethnic composition of the classes in Bahian society, VIII – Racial ideology and racial attitudes; part 5 – The African heritage, divided in IX – Os africanos and X – The Candomblé; and finally, part 6 – The Bahian racial situation, composed by the single chapter, XI – Black and White at Bahia.

Regarding the pre-text elements, it is worth highlighting a foreword by Herman R. Lantz, professor at Southern Illinois University. This foreword is dated January 1966. It also has a foreword from the 1967 edition written by Donald Pierson himself, in which he clarifies that this edition was revised with a new introduction, including some data that were revisited, and a foreword from the 1939 edition, written by the author while at the Free School of Sociology and Politics of São Paulo, in October 1939. The work amounts to 420 pages in length.

b) Notes on the second and the first introductions to the work

The introduction to the edition published in 1967, signed by Donald Pierson in July 1965, raises important elements for discussion. The first is an initial clarification that the name “Brazil” on the title of the book does not mean that the study was carried out in the entire Brazilian territory. He stresses that, as shown by the subtitle, it represents a study on racial contact in Bahia, which he classifies as a case study. Thus, based on this excerpt, Pierson (1967 [1942], p.xix) brings the research’s guiding questions to a new dimension, contextualizing them to Bahia’s case, as follows:

How precise was the identification of the Bahian racial situation at the time? Has this situation changed since? How representative of the situation throughout Brazil was, and is, that of Bahia? Do we know any more today than we did then regarding the circumstances which produced it? (Pierson, 1967 [1942], p.xix).

On the other hand, despite reconsidering a set of previously proposed questions and searching for new empirical data for his thesis’ updated edition, published in 1942, Pierson (1967 [1942]) equally acknowledges that changes over the past 20 years must also be considered.

Brazil is thus in process of transition from a predominantly rural, agricultural and pastoral society, with a rather rigid class system, to an urban and industrialized society, where class lines are somewhat less important, and other elements of the economic, political and sociological structures are changing. (Pierson, 1967 [1942], p.xxiii).

In this introduction, Donald Pierson highlights the difference of the racial situation in Brazil from other countries or societies, approaching the controversial thesis that associates racial issues that of social class in Brazil. On that topic, he directly criticizes Roger Bastide (1943) by saying that:

The line which separates him (the man of color) from the branco', Bastide (1943a:2 9-30) once wrote, 'as the descendant of the African rises in the community the doors of the houses of the brancos open to him. This certainly does not describe a situation of race prejudice (Pierson, 1967 [1942], p.xliii).

The author goes on to claim that:

In their analyses of the local 'racial' situation several writes in Brazil refer of course to the relationship of the colored with the brancos; but almost without exception the relationship described is with the brancos of the upper and middle classes, almost never with the brancos of the lower class. (Pierson, 1967 [1942], p.xliiii).

Pierson (1967 [1942]) suggests that, differently from the United States, where there is a clear economical and racial divergence between white and black people, in Brazil, this interaction does not happen the same way. Most of the Brazilian population is made up of white and black people of lower classes; therefore, the racial issue constitutes a variable irrespective of social class.

Contrary to the 1967 introduction, the 1939 introduction is very concise, written by Robert Park. While in the revised edition there were a series of questions carefully phrased by Pierson, in this other introduction, some serious problems can be identified. Two can be displayed as crucial: (a) the statement that, in Brazil, there is no racial issue:



One thing that makes the racial situation in Brazil interesting is the fact that, having a Negro population proportionally larger than United States, Brazil has no race problem. This is, at any rate, what might be inferred from the occasional and apparently disinterested reports of visitors to that country who have ventured to inquire into the subject. (Park, 1942 in Pierson, 1967 [1942], p.xliii).

The second aspect that we consider crucial in the position taken by Park (1942 in Pierson, 1967 [1942]) regards (b) the statement that, in Brazil, the blood of black people tended to disappear. "(...) is the tendency of Brazil to absorb the Negro" (Park, 1942 in Pierson, 1967 [1942], p.lxxix). This aspect was certainly the most controversial and was the object of criticism by Brazilian and foreign intellectuals who studied the racial issue and especially the situation of black people in Brazilian society, such as Florestan Fernandes (1978) and Roger Bastide (1943).

#### c) Approaches on the body in the work

In fact, there are few references to the concept of the body in *Negroes in Brazil* (Pierson, 1967 [1942]). Thus, we can say that in the most classic writings, as we can characterize Pierson's book, the body is treated as an organic nature of human beings as an absence-presence. The idea of absence-presence was recovered from Shilling (2007), who claims that the body was not neglected in studies, but was often treated implicitly. Le Breton (1990) asserts a similar argument.

While scrutinizing Pierson's work, it was observed that it pictures miscegenation in Bahia as a way to demonstrate the existence of blood mixing during the 1930s. In this work, Pierson (1967 [1942]) dedicates an entire chapter to slavery in Brazil, emphasizing that it was characterized by the gradual and continuous growth of intimacy by personal relations between masters and slaves. According to him, this trend would humanize institutions and undermine the character of formal relations.

As black people were forced to convert to Catholicism and to the permeabilities of the feasts and celebrations of white people, which in turn they reconfigured, the phenomenon received special attention in the reading presented by Pierson (1967 [1942]), a trait that in the end supported his thesis. Based on reports by Anselmo da Fonseca, a Bahian abolitionist, in an excerpt from the book in chapter II – The coming of the Africans, the process of obligatory conversion of the black people to Catholicism becomes evident, as well as practice of inscribing on the body or to its parts or organs, as seen in:

Thus, the able Bahian abolitionist, Anselmo da Fonseca, reports the case of a Negro in Rio Grande do Sul whose wrists were tied above his head and, after honey had been poured over his nude body, was left to the insects (Pierson, 1967 [1942], p.47).

As noticeable, the treatment of black bodies were thus objectified, denoting in the previous citation the reality of the cruel corporeal costs of slavery, remaining at a far distance from civilization. At the same time, the body is treated like an organism, in a Cartesian view (Ozawa-de Silva, 2002). There are significant differences between the approach to the body in Western and Eastern world. For the western world, the body is treated with strong inspiration in the Cartesian paradigm, while the eastern way of seeing the body is attentive to aspects that involve the body in a more holistic manner, which include aspects of spirituality in this scope (Ozawa-de Silva, 2002).

From another perspective, if we take into consideration Le Breton's (1990) view that the body is a factor that delimits the individual, setting borders between the I and the other, in this case the body of the other is that which is given to insects, refusing them a (re)action. Given that their wrists are tied over their heads, there does not seem to exist a projection that this body that suffers, feels pain, and is punished, could belong to an individual. Here we can remember the words of Villanose (2019), when she said that black people are seen and treated by the medical sciences as beings who endure all pain.

Further, in another excerpt from the same chapter, the author shows the processes of mutilation that the bodies of black people were submitted to in that particular context. It is the historical record that shows how black people were treated during the abolitionist period in Bahia. The source of the record being from Anselmo da Fonseca, who was a Bahian abolitionist.

Anselmo further reports the raping of small children, the use of stocks, the fracturing of teeth with a hammer, the filling of razor slashes with salt, the castration of males and the amputation of the breasts of females, and "murder at the slightest whim" (Pierson, 1967 [1942], p.47).

Despite the description of body parts and a noticeable degree of "strangeness" by Donald Pierson on the way these mutilations occurred, one is able to catch a glimpse, during reading, of a sharper concern from the author on the "pain" of black people, portraying these episodes as cruelties. Here, then, one can infer the development of a sensitivity by the

author who faced castrations and amputations suffered by the bodies of black people. At this point, we agree with Le Breton (2013) on building an anthropology of pain when he emphasizes that pain constitutes something more harmful than the body's suffering, understood here as a biopsychosocial construct.

It also seems relevant to highlight the meaning of the pain that is present in the way the author presents Brazilian society, where blacks were seen as beings who did not have the capacity to feel pain. This idea is not only present for blacks, it can also be extended to women - especially with regard to labor pain - and especially those from low-income social classes in Brazil today. If, on the one hand, we can make this record in relation to Brazil, it is worth emphasizing that studies aimed at understanding the meaning of pain among black populations - despite being scarce - have been developed. Here we highlight the work of King (2008), whose central idea is that the relationships that are established through pain make it possible to understand many rules of the game. Notably, we emphasize that pain is used as a tool of resistance against racism, but, paradoxically, it is also seen as a way of maintaining social control.

After a short discussion on the body, present in the second chapter for Negroes in Brazil, the theme is once again mentioned in the following chapter, the third, titled "Casa Grande & Senzala". It was translated by the author himself in a footnote on page 71, as "The big house and slave quarters" (Pierson, 1967 [1942], p.71.) In this chapter, Donald Pierson builds a profitable dialogue with Nina Rodrigues, author of *Os africanos no Brasil* (1988 [1932]), as he records the intense fieldwork carried out by Rodrigues (1988 [1932]) during her many years with black people in Bahia.

It is in the second chapter that Pierson (1967 [1942]) describes the relationship between white and black people in Bahia as something rather friendly. He also defends the existence of religious syncretism there, presented through the intrinsic relationship established in Afro-Brazilian religions between the Orixás and the Catholic saints. He shows, in these festivities and celebrations, be it of holy or profane origins, the existence of African cultural elements, such as Candomblé, Lundu, Batuque, and Carnaval. He also suggests that, in these moments, such manifestations represent dances and uses of the body (PIERSON, 1967 [1942].) Based on Rodrigues's (1988 [1932]) reports on Carnaval, Pierson states:

Rodrigues was impressed with the enormous crowd of Negroes and mixed-bloods which accompanied the floats, 'singing African songs, dancing African dances and applauding the images on the magician's float. The scene was one of a colossal candomblé traversing the streets of the city, although police regulations at that time forbade the public appearance of the cult. (Pierson, 1967 [1942], p.100).

Quoting a passage in which Nina Rodrigues refers to mixed-blood persons, Pierson highlights Rodrigues' astonishment about the way blacks and mixed-blood (mestizos) played carnival through the city streets.

Alongside reports of manifestations related to Candomblé during Carnaval in Bahia, Pierson also mentions Lundu and Batuque.

Much enjoyed by Brazilian Negroes were certain dances like the lundú and the batuque, evidently of at least partial African origin, although they perhaps also contained certain Portuguese and native Indian elements. (Pierson, 1967 [1942], p.100).

It is performed by an individual of each sex moving their bodies to the monotonous tone of an instrument, always in one measure, and with scarcely any action of the legs or feet. (Pierson, 1967 [1942], p.104).

By emphasising the body in the context of *Negroes in Brazil* and giving attention to certain excerpts (Pierson, 1967 [1942],) it is possible to see that the body is referred to as an element that identifies black people in two ways. First, by treating their body parts as organs, the author approaches a biological view of the body (Ozawa-de Silva, 2002), where a social incidence on the body does not allow it to escape its physical condition (Le Breton, 2013). In this sense, we indicate the physical and moral miseries that these bodies are submitted to. Second, he relates the body to movement, as it does when describing dances and their expression by the body in the text, which would demonstrate a closer relation to culture, despite the fact that this had not been his aim.

The author equally defends that the personalization of master-slave relations is better explained by the accommodation, in certain circumstances, of the slave's subjugated condition, than to the generosity of the master. We interpose, in this context, the relationship between the black body and the suffered racial discrimination to the blood of black people and its tendency to disappear in Brazil as a result of racial miscegenation, recurrent in the country.

Nonetheless, to embark on the question of the body itself, it is necessary to pay attention to a concern that seems plausible despite the historical context in which the book is set, the 1930s. The question becomes indispensable: what body is it about? In the words of Le Breton (2013), we frequently forget to name the body, because often we displace it from the condition of the humanity that it embodies; that is exactly what happened to black people in Brazil. Therefore, it is not only necessary to embody black men and women, but to display elements that express the construction of these corporealities.

### Final remarks

*Negroes in Brazil* (Pierson, 1967 [1942]) is an historical document relevant to Brazilian sociology; it addresses the racial issue in Brazil, particularly in Bahia, and defends the existence of substantial differences between racism in Brazil and the United States. Among other important formulations, Pierson (1967 [1942]) argues that racial prejudice is nothing more than a spontaneous disposition to maintain social distances, resembling his supervisor and intellectual mentor Robert Park (1992 [1915]), to whom the marginal man is a product of intercultural conflicts. A point to be criticized is the fact that Pierson uses the artifice of generalization to justify the importance of his study. The research took place in Bahia, but his data was taken as if the racial issue analyzed were from Brazil.

As previously seen in the discussion of the results, some elements about the physical structure of the work were highlighted in this analysis; with the introductions to the two editions and the approaches to the body, which is reflecting the scope of this article. As it turned out, the body is not the direct focus of Pierson's studies. We can see the relationship with the body mediated by race relations in Brazil, especially in Bahia. In this context, the body is treated as a set of organs, an organism that is composed of parts that make up a whole. This aspect brings Pierson closer to studies that take a more Cartesian perspective on the body, as we could expect from the authors of his time, since his work was built in the first decades of the 20th century. In addition, Pierson also deals with the body related to the physical condition, paying attention to movement, especially at the moment when this author describes the dances and manifestations of black people, such as Candomblé, Batuque, and Lundu. Notably, despite building this rapprochement, the author does not seem to have the intention of forging a closer relationship with culture.

It is clear, however, that the black body in Pierson's work (Pierson, 1967 [1942]) did not properly qualify an object of study, but instead represented a way of identifying both

biological aspects and movements of black people. There is an absence/presence of the body in Pierson's book. This proposition signals that it is possible to think about resuming the investigation started by Pierson on black people in Bahia, alongside other equally important projects of a sociological nature, such as this embryonic effort to problematize the body, based on the notion of the black body, specifically. It is necessary to scrutinize these paths, in order to configure the corporeality of black people and their identity processes in Brazil.

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