

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper pretends to defend the realist formulation of identity, with particular regard to the constitutive categories of race and ethnicity, in arguing for the vindication of Black identity in Mexico. The imperative to reconstruct Blackness within the context of Mexico is born out of the recognition that the population of Afro-descendants live in marginalisation from the political, economic, and social structures of the nation. This is evident not only in the near or actual poverty of their communities' livelihoods but also in the historical negation of their presence and relevance to the evolution of the country. Given this fundamental issue, it is proposed that the consolidation of a collective Black identity may positively contribute to instigating the overall socio-economic development of these Black communities. Identity, and the appropriate mobilisation of a Black identity politics, is thus presented as one of the available tools that may be implemented in the fight for social justice.

As such, the thesis begins by detailing a theoretical framework for a Black subject status to be achieved, derived from the conflation of the intellectual traditions of the African Diaspora, in favouring a dialogic approach – over the Hegelian dialectic – to the process of subjectivity that contributes to producing identity. By providing the theoretical tools necessary for the formulation and projection of a Black identity politics in Mexico, it is aimed to demonstrate how identity and development may positively correlate in order to impact the advancement of these communities. The discourse of solidarity and transformation is already being acted upon in the Costa Chica region of the states of Oaxaca and Guerrero on the Pacific Coast, where the vast majority of Afro-Mexicans reside today, with the significant inauguration of the grassroots organisation, *México Negro*. The national discourse surrounding

Blackness has also manifested itself as the government-sponsored Our Third Root (*Nuestra Tercera Raíz*) project, with the aim of cultivating awareness about what Mexico's participation in the early stage of the Atlantic slave trade, which brought African chattel to the New World, has contributed to the national landscape, though mainly in terms of national culture.

Given these developments, a Black identity politics is currently being propagated in Mexico, though it certainly still continues at an infant stage. By proactively and meticulously deconstructing the colonial undertaking of Blackness, which continues to manifest itself in the Mexican conceptualisation, the task at hand is to encourage Black Mexicans to produce their own counterhistory, out of which will be born a Black subject divorced from the denigrating, invented nature of the colonial Black Other. In this sense, it is assumed that the lack of development of the Black communities is not just a symptom of the economic structure of unequal development (north versus south, agriculture versus industry) and wealth distribution (White versus Indigenous and Black) but also intimately tied with the demeaning effects of the psychological degradation of the Black individual achieved via slavery, colonialism, and the posterior oppression. Thus, the combination of psychological, historical, political, economic, and social repression and their effects on the contemporary Black subject is still relevant in the 21st century. Despite the liberal critique to the contrary, race and ethnicity in politics continues to be a matter of central concern. All in all, this thesis pretends to further welcome Mexico into the tradition of discourse and transformative politics emblematic of the African Diaspora.

Key Concepts:

Race ▪ Ethnicity ▪ Identity ▪ Black identity politics ▪ African Diaspora ▪ Costa Chica