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THE ECONOMICS OF RACISM: PEOPLE OF AFRICAN DESCENT IN BRAZIL

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Economic manifestations of racism in Brazil and recent developments

1. The Brazilian National Census has counted, up to December 11, 2000, 169,544.443 inhabitants, of which eighty-one per cent live in urban areas. In Brazil there are 96.9 men for every 100 women. The size of the population of African descent in 2000 has not yet been publicised.
2. Brazil is a federation, made up of twenty-six states and a Federal District, grouped in five geographic regions: North, North-east, Centre-west, South-east, and South. The population is classified¹ in five official categories of colour/race: *branca* (white), *preta* (black), *parda* (equivalent to brown), *amarela* (yellow) and *indígena* (indigenous). Fifty-four per cent of the Brazilian population identify themselves as whites, 5.7 per cent as *pretos* and 39.5 per cent as *pardos*. The population of African descent is the sum of *pretos* and *pardos*, 45.2 per cent of the total population, making up seventy-five millions Afro-Brazilians.² Brazil has the largest population of African descent outside of the African continent and has the second larger African population in the world, after Nigeria. While the less developed North and Northeast regions present the higher proportions of people of African descent, the more industrialised Southeast region concentrate the largest absolute number of Afro-Brazilians.

¹ The methodology used by IBGE relies on self-classification, wherein the respondents choose one of the official categories. There has been considerable debate on the categories and the methodology used. A thorough discussion can be found in Melissa Nobles, "Responding with Good Sense?: The Politics of Race and Censuses in Contemporary Brazil," PhD Dissertation, Yale University, 1995.

² Source: National Domicile Survey (PNAD) of 1998, *Síntese dos Indicadores Sociais*, 1999, IBGE.

Table 1 – Percentile Distribution of the Brazilian Population by colour/race, according to great regions (1998)

	White	Preta	Parda	African descent	Yellow or Indigenous
North(*)	29.1	2.2	68.1	70.3	0.7
North-east	29.7	5.7	64.3	70.0	0.2
South-east	64.0	7.3	27.5	34.8	1.1
South	82.9	3.0	13.5	16.5	0.6
Centre-west	46.9	3.7	48.3	52.0	1.1
Brazil	54.0	5.7	39.5	45.2	0.8

Source: National Domicile Survey (PNAD) of 1998. Síntese dos Indicadores Sociais, 1999, IBGE. Rural population of Rondonia, Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Pará e Amapá not included.

3. There are considerable socio-economic inequalities between white and Afro-Brazilians. Silva³ considers that these inequalities are produced by cycles of cumulative disadvantages, where he identifies two phases in individuals' socio-economic life cycles: social mobility and income acquisition, where Afro-Brazilians would confront greater difficulties in both: to get a certain occupational achievement and to receive the monetary return for the same occupation.
4. Ten million Afro-Brazilians are illiterate, summing up sixty-seven per cent of the total illiterate population in Brazil. While eight per cent of the white population are illiterate, twenty-one per cent of the Afro-Brazilian are in this condition.

Table 2 – Rates of illiteracy of persons fifteen years of age or more, by colour or race, according to great Brazilian regions (1997)

	Total (*)	White	Preta	Parda
North (**)	11.8	7.5	22.6	13.2
Northeast	27.5	20.3	36.2	30.1
Southeast	8.1	5.9	15.1	11.7
South	8.1	6.8	15.1	14.9
Centre-West	11.1	7.7	21.6	13.4
Brazil	13.8	8.4	21.6	20.7

Source: PNAD, 1998 (IBGE, Síntese de Indicadores Sociais, 1999)

() Including yellow and indigenous populations.*

*(**) Excluding rural population*

5. However if we consider functional literacy, defined by UNESCO as the domain of reading, writing, mathematics and science abilities equivalent to a minimum schooling of four primary grades, 22.7 per cent of whites and forty-one per cent of Afrodescendants are functionally illiterate. While whites above ten years of age have 6.5 average years of schooling, *pretos* have 4.4 and *pardos* 4.5 average years, which make

³ Nelson do Valle Silva, "Extent and Nature of Racial Inequalities in Brazil," in *Beyond Racism – Embracing an Interdependent Future*, Atlanta: Comparative Human Relations Initiative/SEF, 2000.

up a difference of 47.7 per cent and 44.4 per cent respectively. The larger distances between Afrodescendants and whites are in the age groups of 0-6 (8.4 per cent) and 15-17 (10,7 per cent).⁴ While *pretos* represent 5.6 per cent of the population, they represent only two per cent of the students in the university; while *pardos* are 39.5 per cent of the population, they are only twelve per cent in the university. It appears very clear that this is an important funnel to hinder the access of Afro-Brazilians to more humane conditions of living.

Table 3 – Rates of schooling by colour, according to the age groups (March 1996-March 1997)

Age groups	African descent	White
0–6 years	23.5	31.9
7–9 years	86.8	95.6
10–14 years	89.0	95.1
15–17 years	69.4	80.1
18–24 years	27.8	31.0
25 or more	1.8	2.7

Source: *Pesquisa sobre padrões de vida, 1996-1997, IBGE (1999b)*⁵

6. According to the Human Development Report 2000, the Human Development Index (HDI) for Brazil, calculated for 1998, was 0.747. Being the ninth largest economy in the world, with a GDP of U\$775 billions⁶ in 1998, Brazil's HDI ranks seventy-fourth among one hundred and seventy-four countries. Paixão⁷ used the same methodology to determine the HDI for the white and the black populations in Brazil. The white HDI would be 0.796, ranking forty-eight – right after Costa Rica and before Croatia - and the black would be 0.680, ranking one hundred and eight – equal to Vietnam, after Algeria and before Indonesia. The income indicators are respectively 0.74 for the white population and 0.60 for the black population.⁸ Life expectancy for the period 1990-95 would be seventy for the white population and sixty-four for blacks. The usual benefit of being a woman in terms of longevity is counteracted by the fact of being black: a Brazilian black woman lives less than a white man does.⁹

⁴ IBGE: PNAD 1998.

⁵ Versão. *Preliminar do Décimo Quarto Relatório Periódico relativo à Convenção Internacional sobre a Eliminação de todas as Formas de Discriminação Racial, Núcleo de Estudos de Violência/USP.*

⁶ Instituto de Pesquisas Econômicas Aplicadas – IPEA (Versão. *Preliminar...*).

⁷ M. Paixão. “Desenvolvimento Humano e as Desigualdades Étnicas no Brasil: um retrato de final de século,” *Proposta* 86, Rio de Janeiro, FASE, September-November 2000.

⁸ Disaggregating by gender, we find 0.808 for white men, 0.657 for white women, 0.660 for black men and 0.515 for black women.

⁹ If we disaggregate by gender, white men have a life expectancy of sixty-nine years, white women seventy-one, black men sixty-two and black women sixty-six years (Paixão, op. Cit., p. 42).

7. Another recent research made by INSPIR¹⁰ and DIEESE,¹¹ based on data collected by the Survey of Employment and Unemployment,¹² found consistent income disparities between black and non-black¹³ workers for all six metropolitan areas investigated. The black population presents a higher rate of participation in the labour market, and is employed in less dynamic sectors of the economy. A higher proportion of that population is employed in precarious jobs and non-qualified activities, starts working at an earlier age, and remains in the workforce for a larger period, while the unemployment rates are much higher.

Table 4 – Rates of Unemployment by race according to Metropolitan Regions (1998) (in percentage)

Metropolitan Region	Blacks	Non-blacks	Difference between rates
São Paulo	22.7	16.1	41
Salvador	25.7	17.7	45
Recife	23.0	19.1	20
Distrito Federal	20.5	17.5	17
Belo Horizonte	17.8	13.8	29
Porto Alegre	20.6	15.2	35

Source: DIEESE/SEADE, INSPIR (1999)

8. A report entitled *Map of the Black Population in the Labour Market*¹⁴ has shown that the differences in unemployment rates between blacks and whites range from forty-five per cent in Salvador to seventeen per cent in the Federal District.

¹⁰ Instituto Sindical Interamericano pela Igualdade Racial, an institute created by three Brazilian central unions (CUT, CGT and Força Sindical), the American AFL-CIO and the interAmerican union ORIT) to promote racial equality.

¹¹ Departamento Intersindical de Estatística e Estudos Sócio-Econômicos, a research centre maintained by unions.

¹² The most important survey conducted periodically in Brazil regarding the labour market, that involves respected institutions like the governmental SEADE Foundation, the Ministry of Labour, various State Departments of Labour, Planning, Science and Technology besides DIEESE itself and other institutions.

¹³ This research has worked with these two race categories which are a combination of colour categories: blacks are the combination of *'pretos'* (dark blacks) and *'pardos'* (light blacks) and non-blacks are the combination of *'whites'* and *'yellows'*. While the combination of *'pretos'* and *'pardos'* is usual in other surveys, to compare them with a non-black category instead of with whites is an innovation of this research. *Yellows* refer to Asians – mainly people of Japanese, Chinese and Korean descent, who, in Brazil have a higher level of education and income.

¹⁴ *Mapa da População Negra no Mercado de Trabalho*, INSPIR/Centro de Solidariedade AFL-CIO/DIEESE, São Paulo, 1999.

Table 5 – Average Monthly Income of Occupied workers, by race, according to Metropolitan Regions (1998) (in R\$ of December 1998)

Metropolitan Regions	Blacks	Non-Blacks
São Paulo	512	1.005
Salvador	403	859
Recife	415	659
Distrito Federal	776	1.138
Belo Horizonte	444	735
Porto Alegre	409	628

Source: DIEESE/SEADE, INSPIR (1999)

9. The income differences between black and non-black workers are also consistent for all metropolitan areas, ranging from an average monthly income of R\$403 for blacks and R\$859 for non-blacks in Salvador to an average monthly income of R\$776 for blacks and R\$1.138 for non-blacks in the Federal District. The most African Brazilian town, Salvador, presents the lowest average income for blacks and the largest inequality between blacks and non-blacks.
10. This research has also demonstrated that the black youth are forced to enter the labour market at an earlier age: in the Metropolitan area of São Paulo, 9.1 per cent of black children in the age range of 10-14 years besides going to school, are already economically active, compared to 6.2 per cent of non-black children. In the age range of 15-17 years, 13.7 per cent of black children dedicate their time exclusively to work and have abandoned school, compared to 8.8 per cent non-blacks. In addition, 4.5 per cent devote their time exclusively to domestic work, compared to 2.9 per cent of non-blacks. While forty-seven per cent of non-black adolescents are able to study exclusively, only 37.6 per cent of blacks are able to do so. The need to work impedes the black youth to get a higher education and as a result to get better jobs and higher income.
11. However, *The Map of the Black Population in the Labour Market* has also demonstrated that a higher education is not a guarantee of social justice in the Brazilian labour market: there are considerable income differences for all levels of education between blacks and non-blacks: taking São Paulo as an example, the average income of a black worker with complete primary level is 84.2 per cent of the average income of a non-black with the same level of education, with complete secondary level is 75.3 per cent and with complete superior level is 63.8 per cent. That is: the higher the education of a black worker, the greater is the difference. It may be interesting to make a counterpoint with the Federal District, where industry employs only 3.9 per cent of the investigated sample,¹⁵ while a great proportion (22.7 per cent) is occupied in the Administration and Public Utilities:¹⁶ a black worker with complete primary level earns 95.6 per cent of the

¹⁵ 8,400 domiciles in the Federal District and 9,000 in São Paulo, of those being investigated 2,500 and 3,000 domiciles/month respectively.

¹⁶ In São Paulo, industry employees 19.8 per cent, commerce 16.7 per cent, services 51.8 per cent, of which Administration and Public Utilities represent 4.7 per cent, and Domestic Labour, 8.4 per cent. In the Federal

average income of a non-black, with complete secondary level 93.9 per cent, and 94.5 per cent if s/he has superior level of education. Perhaps this smaller difference reflects the positive direct impact of the personnel procedures adopted in the public administration.

12. The main conclusions of this important research are the following:
 - there is reiterated inequality for black workers of both sexes in the labour market of all six metropolitan areas investigated, independently of the proportion of African descendants in those regions;
 - racial discrimination is a daily fact and interferes in all spaces of the Brazilian labour market;
 - the impact of racial discrimination surpasses gender discrimination, and combined with it constitutes a scenery of acute difficulty for black women; and
 - no other fact, apart from discriminatory criteria based on the colour of individuals, can explain the indicators systematically unfavourable to black workers.

13. Also using data of the Survey of Employment and Unemployment, Nadya Guimarães is conducting an important project regarding the impact of the industrial restructuring on gender and racial equity in the ABC region,¹⁷ the industrial heart of Brazil, from which she draws some interesting conclusions:
 - after ten years of restructuring, the industry continues to be essentially white and masculine;
 - the significant increase of presence of women in the labour market does not have correlation in industry, where women's rates of participation are stable; and
 - the presence of black workers increases slightly with restructuring of industry.

14. Rates of activity of black workers in the labour market are high, including higher than their participation in the population in active age. The rate of activity of black workers increases with schooling, and is higher than rates of activity of white workers. It appears that selectivity of access that eventually occur in industry reveal barriers of inclusion in this sector and not in the labour market as a whole.

15. Even having a higher level of education, women do not become preferential workers, as it should be expected as a result of the official management discourse about education. Women appear to be having access to higher functions of direction and planning, while this space seem to represent a clear limit for black workers. Women seem to face inequality especially regarding salary differentials.

District, the numbers are industry 3.9 per cent, commerce 14.8 per cent, services 65.5 per cent, Administration and Public Utilities 22.7 per cent and Domestic Labour 12.0 per cent.

¹⁷ Nadya A. Guimarães. "Em busca da equidade: Mulheres e Negros sob o Impacto da Reestruturação Industrial – o caso da Região do ABC paulista," preliminary Version of a paper presented at the Third Meeting of the International Working Group on Subnational Economic Governance in Latin America from a Comparative International Perspective, San Juan, Puerto Rico, August 25-28, 2000.

16. Another interesting study was conducted by Soares,¹⁸ decomposing the earnings differential between white men on one hand, and black men, white women and black women on the other. A difference in earnings would arise due to at least three causes: differences in human capital, different insertions in the labour market or pure difference in wages. According to the author, the results indicate that while the earnings differential for white women is due exclusively to a pure wage differential (i.e., discrimination in the labour market), black males have lower earnings mainly due to differences in human capital (i.e., discrimination suffered during the formation period – in the school system – although they also suffer heavy wage and insertion discrimination). As regards black women, they suffer the pure wage differential of white women (gender discrimination), plus the wage differential of black men, plus an insertion differential, plus a large qualification differential. Using data of September 1998, Soares compares average income for the four groups:

Table 6 – Monthly income standardised for forty working hours (September 1998)

Group	Monthly Income in R\$	% of the Standard Group
White men	726.89	-
Black men	337.13	46%
White women	572.86	79%
Black women	289.22	40%

*Source: Microdata of PNADs standardised by IPEA*¹⁹

17. Analysing historical data for the years 1987 through 1998, the author demonstrates that the differences between white men and women, both white and black, have decreased²⁰ while differences between white and black men remain the same. It seems that this phenomenon reflects the reduction in the gender gap in the Brazilian society and the endurance of the abyssal racial gap. In this respect, Soares makes some important statements:²¹
- The better positioned in the income distribution, the more a black man is discriminated. While poor black men would gain around five to seven per cent with the end of discrimination, the better-off black men would get twenty-seven per cent if they received the same salary structure of white men. According to Soares, the Brazilian society *“does not accept that blacks occupy favourable positions in the income structure and as much as blacks go forward, the more they are discriminated against.”*
 - Black men are in a much worse situation in 1998 than in 1987. The gap with white men has increased and the increase reaches twelve per cent for the worst situated in the income distribution.

¹⁸ Sergei Suarez Dillon Soares, “O Perfil da Discriminação no Mercado de Trabalho – Negros, Mulheres e Mulheres Negras,” Texto para Discussão, Brasília, IPEA, 2000, preliminary version.

¹⁹ Soares.

²⁰ At a rate of 1 per cent per year for white women and 0.7 per cent for black women.

²¹ The political meaning of these statements should take into account that he is a member of the Board of Directors of Social Studies of IPEA, the main governmental research centre, responsible to subsidise the formulation of public policies.

- If the rate of reduction of the last eleven years is maintained, within thirty years there will be no salary discrimination against white women, while in the case of black men the term would be infinite (sic) as there has been no change. Black women are in an intermediate situation.
- There is a vision about the place of a black man in society. This place is of manual work, without strong qualifications in industrial sectors that are not dynamic. If he tries to occupy a different place, he will feel all the weight of the three stages of discrimination on his shoulders.
- Black women bear all the weight of colour and gender discrimination, and even more, suffering the sectoral-regional-occupational discrimination suffered by black men and the salary discrimination suffered by white women.
- As regards public policies, these results point to the possibility that affirmative action policies – in accordance to quota policies – might be useful to combat discrimination. The public power should guarantee access to good education and jobs for black people.

18. There are consistent and dramatic disparities in health between the black and white populations, as regards infant mortality (62.3 and 37.3, respectively for Afro and white Brazilians),²² maternal mortality, mortality by external causes and access to the health system. In spite of having approved a program for sickle cell anaemia,²³ the Brazilian Ministry of Health left it on paper. Aids, hypertension, high prevalence of female sterilisation and septic/illegal abortions are important health problems. Considering health conditions as both a result and a determinant of economic conditions, it is important to focalise racial inequalities in this area:

Table 7 – Percentile distribution of access to piped water and sewage, by colour or race, according to great regions (1996)

Region	Piped water		Sewage	
	African Descent	Whites	African Descent	Whites
North (*)	54.8	63.0	41.6	56.5
Northeast	52.6	64.2	33.5	47.0
Southeast	52.6	89.1	74.8	86.8
South	52.6	77.0	50.0	69.2
Centre-west	76.8	72.0	35.1	43.6
Brazil	64.7	81.0	49.7	73.6

Source: IBGE, PNAD 1996

() Excludes rural population of Rondonia, Acre, Amazonas, Roraima, Pará, and Amapá.*

²² IBGE and UNESCO, Darién J. Davis, *Afro-Brazilians: Time for Recognition*, London: Minority Rights Groups, 1999.

²³ A high mortality genetic and serious disease of high incidence in the Brazilian black population.

19. Housing is also an important factor of quality of life, resulting of access to income and capital and a determinant of health conditions. IBGE classifies housing conditions according to quality of construction, disposal of basic infrastructure services (water, sewage, electricity, garbage collection) and density of occupation. Based on these indicators, housing conditions are classified as adequate, inadequate and semi-adequate. The following conditions have been registered by IBGE in Southeast and Northeast:²⁴

Table 8 – Proportion of domiciles, by colour or race of the head of domicile, according to level of adequacy (March 1996-March 1997) (in percentage)

	White	African Descent
Adequate	54	26
Semi-adequate	34	42
Inadequate	12	32

Source: Pesquisa sobre padrões de vida 1996-1997, IBGE(1999b)

20. Finalising this overview of the economic conditions of Afro-Brazilians, it should be added that there are considerable differences on how whites and Afro-descendants participate in the occupational structure. Positions of employer, managers and planners will be occupied mainly by whites while Afro-descendants will have a disproportionate participation in precarious jobs, such as domestic work. Apart from the economic meanings of this division, it reflects how the power is divided in the Brazilian society.

Table 9 – Occupied population of ten years or older, by colour or race, according to position in the occupation (1998)

	White	Pretos	Pardos
Employees	47.6	49.5	43.2
Military Or public servants	7.4	5.2	5.5
Domestic workers	5.7	13.4	8.4
Self employed	22.3	20.5	24.2
Employers	5.7	1.3	2.1
W/O Remuneration	11.3	10.1	16.6

Source: IBGE, PNAD 1998, Indicadores Sociais 1999

²⁴ Versão. Preliminar do Décimo Quarto Relatório Periódico relativo à Convenção Internacional sobre a Eliminação de todas as formas de Discriminação Racial, 2000.

How economic discrimination and racial discrimination are linked and sustained: A snapshot of history

21. The socio-economic indicators presented in the previous section reveal a perverse reality characterised by numerous inequalities suffered by the Afro-Brazilian population. At the same time they demonstrate the strength and the transmutation capacity and endurance of a discriminatory and excluding system instituted in the present day Brazilian society. The system in force was germinated at the beginning of the Republican period, and it found in the myth of “racial democracy” a solution to solidify and unify the people around an idea of nation, i.e., the Brazilian nation.
22. During the major portion of the twentieth century, Brazil’s white élites were able to affirm the non-existence of racial discrimination in the country, even if the sharp inequalities between blacks and whites were visible to the naked eye. During the last twenty years, it was possible to really challenge the myth of racial democracy, with the support of the increasing amount of data that has been produced by researchers, under the continuous artillery of the Brazilian black militants that denounced the conspiracy of silence. How was this possible? Moreover, why was this necessary?
23. If socio-economic inequalities between blacks and whites are so evident, why is it that the explanatory power of the variable ‘race’ has been systematically denied in Brazil? The disqualification of the variable ‘race’ is operated attributing all the explanatory power to the variable class, which is presented as a simple, natural, and evident social fact. ‘Race’ is presented as a mere appendix, a random detail with no importance: supposedly, blacks are discriminated because they are poor and not the contrary. The poverty of the black population was not explained or was merely attributed to the retarded effects of slavery that would disappear as time passed by.
24. In the last decade, the demand that information about living conditions be produced disaggregated by race/colour by the official agencies and research centres has been the most important claim of the Brazilian Black Movement. In order to combat racism, it was necessary to prove its existence and to prove its existence it was necessary to demonstrate with figures the deep and persistent inequalities between blacks and whites that have been perpetuated through a number of mechanisms. It was necessary to prove that racism was not a phantom in the minds of a few Quixotes, with inferiority complex. Finally, it was necessary to demonstrate that those inequalities were due to racial discrimination.
25. Denial has been central to make the ‘racial democracy’ work. Similar to the fairy tale, it was necessary a pact among all parties so that nobody would say that the king was naked. In order to sustain the tale, invisibility of inequality was of utmost importance: for this reason measures of social conditions by race were nearly banned: in fact, during the military dictatorship, after Brazil ratified the Convention for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, the information about colour/race was eliminated from the census of 1970.

26. Brazil was the country that imported the largest number of enslaved Africans between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. That number is estimated at 3.5 to 3.6 millions, representing thirty-eight per cent of all slaves brought from Africa to the Americas.²⁵ Brazil was the last country in the Americas to abolish slavery. Abolition was finalised in 1888, after a long discussion by the dominant élites about the inadequacy of blacks to become free workers. A large number of European workers were imported, to substitute the black workers previously enslaved. The cost/benefit of the investment in the black labour was not considered adequate, in accordance with the ideas of that time, developed and justified by science: blacks were inferior and together with the indigenous people represented a burden for the country.
27. The concern of the dominant élites with the racial composition of the population has varied through the time and was present in key moments of decisions of public policies. Although the discussion has not been placed from a racial point of view at this time, it seems symptomatic that the insertion of Brazil in the globalisation processes is being made with the massive unemployment of Brazilian workers and the importation of thousands of workers from the countries of origin of the multinational companies. Once more, at a turning point of its history, Brazil seems to consider its people inadequate, and those in power seem to think that it is not worth to invest to change the precarious conditions to which a great majority has been reduced.²⁶
28. According to Nancy Stepan,²⁷ Brazil was the first Latin American country to have a significant organised eugenics movement that shaped science, the social thinking, and public policies. Between the two world wars, congresses and conferences on eugenics were organised and eugenics were associated with important political issues in the country, such as the social legislation on childhood, maternal health, legislation on the family, the control of infectious diseases, immigration laws, and legislative proposals regarding the state control to regulate marriage. Eugenics also stimulated courses on genetics and medical and legal debates.
29. During the first two decades of the twentieth century, the eugenics movement emphasised education, social reform and sanitation as the means to reach the betterment of the race and resolve the ‘national question.’ This was possible, on the one hand, because eugenicists believed that the large miscegenation occurring in the country would lead to a process of “whitening” the population, as a result of the ‘natural’ superiority of whites. On the other hand, they based their beliefs on the neo-Lamarckism presumptions that considered that acquired characters could be inherited.
30. Towards the end of the 1920s and during the 1930s, the eugenics movement assumed a more negative face that resulted of a series of factors: more familiarity with the German and American eugenics, approval of immigration laws in the United States in

²⁵ Katia Q. Mattoso, *Ser Escravo no Brasil*, São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1982.

²⁶ A statement by the former minister of Communication, Luiz Carlos Mendonça de Barros, regarding the heated debates on privatisation, should be registered: “The only thing that breaks the heart...is to see the opposition confound the benefits of privatisation with problems that are inherent to a technologically sophisticated transition in a country of *backward people*.” (*Jornal do Brasil* August 7, 1999.)

²⁷ Nancy L. Stepan. *The Hour of Eugenics – Race, Gender and Nation in Latin America*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University, 1991.

1924 inspired in eugenics, emergence of anti-democratic ideologies that culminated in the creation of a fascist party (Ação Integralista), and the reduction of the European immigration, what produced concerns with the racial destiny of Brazil.

31. In 1933, the sociologist Gilberto Freyre shifts the emphasis from biology to culture, and the negative vision on the African and Indigenous heritage. Although acknowledging a positive contribution of these two races to the constitution of the Brazilian people, Freyre keeps the belief in the European superiority. Together with Fernando Azevedo and other mainstream intellectuals of the first half of the twentieth century, Freyre was responsible for forging a vision of Brazil as a ‘racial democracy.’ Some of the elements of this concept include the idea that Iberian élites created a cordial and harmonious form of race relations.²⁸ Associated to this idea are the ideologised evaluations that slavery in Brazil was a more benevolent institution, with the *close and intimate* relationships between the masters and the slaves that resulted in miscegenation and the concept that the absence of legalised racial segregation after abolition was an evidence of a non-racist society.²⁹ Instead of ‘whitening,’ Freyre will talk of ‘Brazilianess’: an idea of the Brazilian people as the result of a racial fusion, or the fable of the three races.
32. During the 1950s, the sociologists Roger Bastide and Florestan Fernandes, commissioned by UNESCO, co-ordinated a research project on racial relations in Brazil. UNESCO was interested to learn about the Brazilian model. However, instead of documenting the supposed cordial relations, the project acknowledged the existence of prejudice and discrimination. Still, they considered that it was more an economic discrimination that would disappear with the future integration of blacks in the capitalist society. This conception is still quite dominant in ample sectors of society, including among scholars and policy makers that consider that in Brazil what we have is class prejudice instead of race discrimination. At the end of the 1970s, the seminal works of Hasenbalg³⁰ and Valle e Silva finally affirmed that the inequalities between the black and white population are not only a survival of slavery but also the result of effective and present mechanisms of discrimination. Barriers in the education system and the labour market were emphasised.

Policies that have been developed

33. In spite of the sharp racial and gender inequalities, equality is a constitutional right in Brazil, that has signed the International Pact on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1992. Differences of salary and recruiting procedures are forbidden by law.
34. Pursuant the promulgation of the 1988 Constitution that declared racism a non-bailable and unprescriptible crime, and established that the state will protect the manifestations of the popular, indigenous and Afro-Brazilian cultures, there has been a

²⁸ Abdias Nascimento and Elisa Larkin Nascimento. “Brazil: Dance of Deception – A Reading of Race Relations in Brazil,” *Beyond Racism – Embracing an Interdependent Future*, Atlanta: Comparative Human Relations Initiative, SEF, 2000.

²⁹ Op. cit.

³⁰ Carlos Hasenbalg. *Discriminação e Desigualdades Raciais no Brasil*, Rio de Janeiro: Graal, 1979.

significant production of legislation at the national, state (province), and municipal levels. At the national level, it should be referred to the Law 7716/89 that defines the crimes resulting of the prejudice of race or colour, and Law 9459/97 which establishes the punishment of crimes resulting of discrimination or prejudice of race, colour, ethnicity, religion, or national origin.

35. The Constitutions of various states prohibit discrimination in education, ensure access and permanence in school to all persons, propose elimination of discriminatory allusions to blacks, women and indigenous people in school texts, and the introduction of a course on History of the Brazilian cultural and ethnic formation in the official curriculum.³¹
36. However, legal measures to combat discrimination are not sufficient to promote equality: “promotional strategies capable of stimulating the inclusion of socially vulnerable groups are essential.”³² Although the Brazilian Constitution recognises compensatory measures for women and persons with disabilities, it does not make explicit reference to Afrodescendants. In 1995, the National Congress approved the Law of Quotas, that obliges twenty per cent of candidates for municipal elections be reserved for women, but Afrodescendants were not included.
37. The Constitution of the state of Pará (North region) includes two interesting articles to guarantee the economic rights of Afrodescendants: article 322 establishes a period of one year after the promulgation of the Constitution for the emission of the titles of property of the lands of quilombo communities, which was assured by the Federal Constitution, and article 336 states:

The principle of equality should be applied by the Public Power taking into consideration the need to treat unequally those who are unequal, as they were or are unjustly desequalised, compensating the victims of discrimination. Among other compensatory measures taken to overcome de facto inequalities, it should be included the ones that establish preferences to discriminated persons with the objective to guarantee egalitarian participation in the labour market, education, health and other social rights.³³
38. Three Brazilian capitals, Belo Horizonte, Rio de Janeiro and Vitória have approved laws determining the inclusion of Afrodescendants model in advertising contracted by the municipal power. In Belo Horizonte and Rio de Janeiro, the laws establish a minimum quota of forty per cent.
40. In 1996, following a recommendation by the World Conference for Human Rights, a National Program on Human Rights was elaborated after consultation of more than two hundred organisations and debates during the National Conference on Human Rights. The Program proposes specific measures for the Afro-Brazilian population, being seven measures of short, twelve of medium and two of long term. Regarding

³¹ Versão. *Preliminar do Décimo Quarto Relatório Periódico relativo à Convenção Internacional sobre a Eliminação de todas as Formas de Discriminação Racial*, 2000.

³² *Idem*.

³³ Hedio Silva Jr. *Anti-Racismo – Coletânea de Leis Brasileiras – Federais, Estaduais e Municipais*, São Paulo: Oliveira Mendes, 1998.

affirmative actions, and though it does not define the precise timeframe that is meant by 'short,' 'medium,' and 'long' term, the Program offers the following:

- short term measure: support the private sector to develop positive discrimination
 - medium term: develop affirmative actions to give access to technical courses, to the university and to areas of high technology.
 - long term: formulate compensatory measures to promote the black community socially and economically.
41. An important short-term proposal is to support the Working Group for the Elimination of Discrimination in the Job and Occupation³⁴ that should define a program of action to combat discrimination and implement Convention 111. However, the results of this Working Group have been very meagre. The most important actions developed regarding the labour market have been developed by the Multidisciplinary Working Group (GTM) of the Ministry of Labour that, together with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) organised a technical meeting that defined the introduction of information about race/colour in two important forms regarding employment and unemployment,³⁵ to be completed by employers.³⁶ Therefore, it will be possible to monitor the fluctuations in the labour market and the inclusion and exclusion of black workers. The International Consultancy of the Ministry of Labour has developed the project "Brazil: Gender and Race" which organised various seminars to create, within the Regional Labour Departments, nuclei to combat discrimination and promote equality in the labour market. As of June 2000, fifteen nuclei had been created in capitals of all regions.³⁷
42. Regarding the land issue, despite of the fact that five hundred and eleven quilombos³⁸ communities have been mapped,³⁹ twelve years after the Constitution recognised the right of property to these communities who remain in their land for centuries, only a few have indeed obtained their titles. Lack of regulation, conflicts between different governmental branches, pressures from companies and individuals interested in those ancestral lands, lack of political will have maintained the rights of the majority of the communities unattained.

³⁴ A tripartite group, integrated by representatives of employers, central unions and the government that resulted of a formal claim presented to ILO by the central union CUT, denouncing Brazil for not complying Convention 111. Maria Aparecida S. Bento, *Racismo no Trabalho: o movimento sindical e o estado, Tirando a Máscara – Ensaio sobre o racismo no Brasil*, São Paulo, SEF/Paz e Terra, 2000.

³⁵ RAIS – Annual List of Social Information and CAGED – General Dossier of Employees and Unemployed.

³⁶ Edna M.S. Roland, "Discriminação racial no mercado de trabalho e o quesito cor," *Mercado de Trabalho – Conjuntura e Análise* 13, 5, Rio de Janeiro, IPEA/MTE, June 2000.

³⁷ Maria Cecília M. Ferreira and Maria Helena G. Santos, "Programa Brasil, Gênero e Raça: Superando a discriminação no trabalho," *Mercado de Trabalho – Conjuntura e Análise* 13, 5, Rio de Janeiro, IPEA/MTE, June 2000.

³⁸ Quilombos are rural communities of Afrodescendants, who occupy their land since the time of slavery. These communities have various origins. Runaway slaves who escaped the farms created some. Former slaves of their previous owners inherited others.

³⁹ Anthropologists, the leadership, and the Catholic Church believe the number will surpass 1,000.

43. It is necessary to recognise that there have been advancements especially in the last decade. The most important took place at the ‘discourse’ level. Although a number of initiatives have been taken at the national, state and municipal levels, the real key issues remain to be confronted: access to land, education at all levels and especially the university, access to higher level jobs, access to capital, equity in the justice system, and adequate housing.
44. In 1996, the Interministerial Working Group to Develop Policies Valuing the Black Population (GTI) was created by a presidential decree as a response to a national march on the occasion of the tercentennial of the death of Zumbi, the national black hero.⁴⁰
45. In spite of the barriers for the Afro-Brazilians to access the judicial system, this population is increasingly looking for justice in cases of racial discrimination. However, jurisprudence has been oscillating, revealing in many cases the absence of interjection of the basic values proposed by ICERD and the Brazilian Constitution.⁴¹ Through its decisions, the judiciary power in Brazil reveals the discriminatory views of many of its members, deeply embedded in the hegemonic Brazilian culture.
46. IPEA has finally recognised the impact of racial inequalities on the Human Development Index and is developing a project that comprises three lines of investigation: (i) the wealth that is being lost because of discrimination; (ii) the wealth that is not being gained because diversity is not being used; (iii) consequences of discrimination, analysed in two directions, considering discrimination as a basic failure of the market that leads to inefficiency in the allocation of resources and the social consequences of discrimination. IPEA would like to answer what could be the Brazilian human development index if there was no discrimination. To answer this, IPEA is comparing the black and white populations using five hundred variables. While the development of this project should no doubt be hailed, it must be emphasised that action is urgently needed and the black population can not wait any more. In the same way, Brazil as a nation, cannot afford any more to condemn almost half of its population to a despicable destiny: Brazil needs to treat this half of its people with dignity in order to benefit from the flourishing of talents instead of producing a vicious circle of problems.
47. Up to now, the researchers of IPEA emphasise the centrality of education and the fact that inequality is transported from one generation to another, having the educational system as a main channel for racism. According to Barros,⁴² one third of the inequalities is produced in the present generation while two thirds is transmitted from the previous generations. According to him, if we had in Brazil an educational system with absolute equality for blacks and whites, only one third of the difference would be eliminated. His conclusion is that Brazil needs to offer its black population a

⁴⁰ Zumbi conducted a successful rebellion and was the leader of Palmares, a quilombo that resisted the colonial power during almost a century.

⁴¹ Versão. *Preliminar do décimo Quarto Relatório Periódico relativo à Convenção Internacional sobre a Eliminação de todas as Formas de Discriminação Racial* prepared by Núcleo de Estudos da Violência.

⁴² Oral presentation during the Seminar “Racismo, Xenofobia E Intolerância,” preparatory to the World Conference against Racism, November 6, 2000, São Paulo.

compensatory policy in order to eliminate the other two thirds. According to Barros, an educational revolution is needed to compensate the social conditions lived by the black children and the disadvantages that were experienced by their parents. Consequently, he proposes a school of the highest quality, far better than the school offered to the white children, to eliminate the educational gap.

Proposed Policies

48. The theme of affirmative actions is gaining considerable support in Brazil, although it still faces many resistances. We were able to identify bills on the following issues of affirmative action or reparations⁴³ being discussed in the National Congress regarding the black population:
- reparation with compensation for descendants of slaves;
 - measures of compensatory action for implementation of the principle of social isonomy;
 - reserve of plots of land in settlements of the Agrarian Reform;
 - vacancies in public universities;
 - vacancies for black workers in companies;
 - quotas for afro-descendant candidates in municipal elections;
 - racial-ethnic identification in the social security information systems;
 - racial and ethnic representation in films and advertising advertisements transmitted by television channels;
 - fund of reparation for afro-descendants; and
 - quotas of affirmative action to access public positions and jobs, superior education and contracts of the financing fund to the student in the superior level (FIES).
49. Besides these, there are also five bills that propose reserve of vacancies in public universities for students proceeding of public schools.
50. However, affirmative action to access higher education is far from answering all the problems in this area. Heavy investment in education is imperative to break the vicious circles of inequality. To strengthen the public school at primary and secondary levels, to increase the quality of education in the poor areas where the black population lives, to dignify the work of teachers, offering worthy salaries, training and working materials and adequate infrastructure. Discriminatory daily practices and norms should be revised. To increase the daily period students remain in school.

⁴³ Besides these, there are also bills regarding health (sickle cell anaemia and information about race/ethnicity), education (introduction of course on Afro-Brazilian History and Culture in the school system), creation of a week of modern black art and culture, and declaring the twentieth of November, the Day of Black Consciousness, a national holiday.

51. Black empowerment⁴⁴ to develop a sector of black businessmen/women. Affirmative actions should be taken both in the public and private sectors: the public sector should especially analyse the factors that impede the progress of Afro-Brazilians to higher positions and take adequate measures to remove barriers; the private sector should analyse its personnel policies, as regards recruiting, salaries, promotions, and so on, to promote the workforce diversity at all hierarchical levels. Disregulations have deeply affected the rights of workers, especially the ones in most vulnerable social conditions, as is the case with Afro-Brazilians. These policies are extremely harmful and the government should take measures to reverse this tendency and encourage contracted work in order to protect the social rights of workers. Legal protection to domestic workers is essential to guarantee the human rights of a great majority of Afro-Brazilian women. Special programs of training for Afro-Brazilian youth, targeting modern sectors of the market, should be developed.
52. Investment in health offers one of the highest possible returns, as it strengthens the so-called “human capital,” basis of productivity, technological progress and competitiveness.⁴⁵ Without a firm basis on health, the objectives of education cannot be attained. Health is a privileged field to rapidly reduce inequality and is an intensive labour sector that requires the creation of jobs, with various levels of complexity, at all levels of education. Investment in health means investment in people. For five centuries, people of African descent have been dying disproportionately in this country. Affirmative policies, of differential investments, focusing on communities where the black population is a majority should be implemented.

⁴⁴ Jennifer D. Blajberg. “O legado do apartheid formal e os desafios enfrentados na reconstrução e desenvolvimento da África do Sul – 1994-1995” in Kabenguele Munanga (org.), *Estratégias e Políticas de Combate à Discriminação Racial*, São Paulo, Edusp: Estação Ciência, 1996.

⁴⁵ Bernardo Kliksberg, *Desigualdade na América Latina – o debate adiado*, São Paulo and Brasília, Cortez/UNESCO, 1999.