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Systemic Inequalities for Afro-Brazilians

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SYSTEMIC INEQUALITIES FOR AFRO-BRAZILIANS

by

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Abstract:

Brazil is commonly viewed as a racial paradise on the world front due to its highly mixed-race population. Compared to the United States and South Africa, race-based discriminatory laws and racially motivated violence in Brazil have been absent. Despite these factors, African descendants in Brazil have been at a socioeconomic disadvantage since the nation's birth. Brazilian anthropologist Gilberto Freyre put forth the racial democracy ideology, stating that anyone can ascend the socioeconomic ladder no matter their race. This thesis opposes the racial democracy theory by exposing the various aspects in which Afro-Brazilians are systemically oppressed. In education, jobs & wages, living conditions, and violence, Afro-Brazilians are disproportionately hindered, causing generational cycles of poverty.

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Part 1: Historical Foundations

Introduction: Brazil's Racial Democracy

Brazil is a country that is seen as a racial democracy, a society without discrimination or prejudice against nonwhites, unlike other post-slavery countries (Hasenbalg & Huntington 1982). The highly mixed-race population is mainly responsible for the perception of a "racial democracy," a society without race-based discrimination. As a first-generation Brazilian American coming from a family of Afro-Brazilians, I too held this belief until I first visited the country as a study abroad student in 2019. I lived in Gavea, one of Brazil's most affluent neighborhoods, in the state of Rio de Janeiro and immediately recognized the absence of darker-skinned people. I was the only black resident in my apartment complex, and I was many shades darker than the straight-haired brown skin workers. Also, in PUC-Rio, one of Brazil's prestigious universities, I was routinely the only black student in my classes and on campus. I had discovered what the United Nations Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) explored decades earlier: Brazil is a country with immense racial inequality (Maio 2001).

Upon returning to America, I began scholarly research to further understand Brazil's unique racism, which led me to my thesis question: what institutions are currently in place that prevent Afro-Brazilians' economic and social progression? I adopted *Child of the Dark* by Carolina Maria de Jesus as a main source to guide my literature review (2003). De Jesus's diary turned autobiography covers two decades of hardships faced by a single Afro-Brazilian mother living in one of the many favelas in São Paulo during the 1950s and 1960s (de Jesus 1960). The

autobiography unearths various systemic inequalities faced by African descendants in Brazil, ranging from unsanitary living conditions to immense poverty and chronic hunger. To incorporate more recent accounts of the Afro-Brazilian experience, I will also explore themes presented in *City of God* (1997) by Paulo Lins. *City of God* follows the lives of the residents in one of Rio de Janeiro's most notorious slums from 1960 to 1980 (Lins 2006). Although the book is not an autobiographical account, Lins spent many years as a resident in Rio de Janeiro's favelas and spent time researching the violence and oppression to accurately depict many favela dwellers' lives in Brazil accurately.

These two objects of study bring light to the main areas of concern that I investigate in this thesis: living conditions, quality of education, inequality within the job market, health outcomes, and exposure to violence. I will assess living conditions by analyzing housing quality, access to basic utilities such as sewage and electricity, and residential safety. Quality of education includes literacy rates, years of school, quality of learning institutions, and the ability to attain higher education. Analysis of the job market will include unemployment rates, differences in occupation, wages, and job security. Health outcomes will address differences in infant and child mortality rate, life expectancy, and discrimination within healthcare. Lastly, I will explore violence against Afro-Brazilians by inspecting causes for the violence, how police institutions handle criminal activity, and homicide rates.

As will become evident later in this thesis, Brazil has a complex racial categorization due to its highly heterogeneous population. For comparison, mulattoes (lighter-skinned Afro-Brazilians), pardos (brown-skinned Afro-Brazilians), and pretos (dark-skinned Afro-Brazilians)

will be classified as one group. This group will be referred to as “blacks” throughout this thesis in a simplified and American fashion of classifying race where any presence of black ancestry makes one black. The black Brazilian group will then be compared to white Brazilians in all of the categories mentioned in the previous paragraph to expose racial inequalities.

Colonial Brazil: Origins of the Mixed-Race Society

To understand Brazil’s complex racial relations, one must first review its history. In the 1500s at the time of its discovery, Brazil was one of the least profitable colonies within Portugal’s vast empire spanning from Africa to China (Skidmore 2014). Portugal focused its attention, money, and conquerors on dominating economically viable areas, leaving Brazil sparsely populated predominantly by men. The absence of Portuguese women and the virtually uninhibited access to indigenous and African women lead to rampant widespread miscegenation. Miscegenation, or race-mixing, helped populate the country and created an intricate and highly stratified social order. Race in Brazil is not defined by genetic origin, as it is in the United States; it is defined by a mixture of physical appearance, wealth, and property ownership (Green 2012). The saying “money whitens” comes from black Brazilians' ability to ascend social class when sufficient capital is accumulated. However, during the colonial period (1500-1888), white Brazilians controlled production while African and mixed-blood people provided cheap or free labor, preventing them from rising in society.

The manpower from the large African and mixed-race population produced cheap and highly demanded sugarcane, which then drove Brazil to become Portugal’s most prosperous colony. Slavery was a major institution in Brazil and was utilized in virtually every sector of the

economy, notably in mining and agriculture. Over three and a half million slaves were imported to Brazil during the 300-year period of slavery, seven times more slaves than the United States (dos Santos 2002). In the colonial period, newly arriving African slaves were used to work on the expansive sugarcane plantations covering northeastern Brazil (Wood 2014). The enslaved Africans suffered high mortality due to extensive labor and malnutrition, and women had low fertility rates. The children suffered from high infant and child mortality, so a constant importation of Africans was necessary to meet the work demands (Wood 2014).

As a colony, Brazil was only allowed to trade with their mother country, Portugal. Portugal prevented Brazilians from creating printing presses and creating universities as a means of control, but this situation ended when Napoleon's French troops invaded the Iberian Peninsula in 1807. The entire Portuguese court escaped to its most lucrative colony with the help of Great Britain's naval forces. Portugal gave Great Britain the lowest tariff on goods entering Brazil to help repay the debt of safe passage, alongside committing to the gradual abolition of the African slave trade (Skidmore 2014). The royal court created universities, printing presses, and museums to elevate Brazilian life to the standard they enjoyed in Portugal, which pleased the Brazilian people. The Brazilian elite made extensive financial gains once free trade became commonplace, and Portugal's royal court gave stability to the colony by acting as central administration for. Brazil.

Dom João VI, the monarch of the United Kingdom of Portugal, Brazil and the Algarves, ruled the Portuguese empire from Rio de Janeiro even after the French troops were expelled from his country in 1814. Portugal had a revolt in 1822 that led to an assembly known as the Cortes

Gerais to be called in order to write a new constitution. The new constitution demanded that Dom João VI return to rule his kingdom, in turn leaving his son, Dom Pedro I, as prince regent of Brazil (Skidmore 2014). The constitution allowed Portugal to recolonize Brazil as the country was loosely regulated by Portuguese officials for most of its history. Provinces were returned to Portugal's rule, disrupting the existing central rule in Rio de Janeiro. Free trade was banned as the economic monopoly Lisbon had over Brazil in colonial times was restored. The Brazilian elite, consisting of landowners and professionals, that benefited during the free trade now were resentful of the crown who diminished their profits. The last straw was when Cortes Gerais wanted prince regent Dom Pedro I in Portugal. The Brazilian elite showed their autonomy by protesting in the press, and the Cortes took new steps to repress them. After pressure from the elite, the prince regent Dom Pedro I stated, "Independence or death!" in 1822, establishing an independent monarchy (Skidmore 2014).

Changing Times: Is Slavery Viable?

The Treaty of Rio de Janeiro of 1825 was signed by the Kingdom of Portugal and Brazil's Empire, recognizing Brazil as its own independent nation. Great Britain helped negotiate this treaty and, in turn, gained another stride toward Brazilian abolition (Skidmore 2014). The Brazilian monarchy, consisting of the Portuguese royals left behind to rule the country, signed a treaty committed to the end of the slave trade within four years. The British's continuous effort toward abolition may seem philanthropic in nature, but their motivation was profit driven rather than humanitarian. To protect its economic interests, Great Britain had to ensure that the price of free slave labor-produced sugar in Brazil would not be cheaper than the British West Indies

sugar where slavery had recently been abolished (Skidmore 2014). Dom Pedro I returned to Portugal after his father, Dom João VI, died in 1831. His son, Dom Pedro II, was then left as heir to the Brazilian throne at five years old, and a regency governed the country.

Dom Pedro II attained the throne in 1840, and a two-decade period of peace followed. The slave trade ended in 1850, and, in the agricultural sector, the Northeast sugarcane plantations were declining while coffee plantations in the Southeast were expanding. The profits from coffee transformed the nation; railroads covered vast areas, and new middle and upper-class urban groups were formed (Green 2012). These groups consisted of merchants, engineers, and professionals who used their funds to import the latest fashions and inventions from Europe. Alongside material imports came the introduction of new very European ideas of progress and individualism, and a profit-motivated economy.

From 1865 to 1870, Paraguay and the triple alliance of Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay immersed themselves in the seething Paraguayan War. Brazilian soldiers of African descent were granted their freedom for fighting in the war, yet tensions about the institution of slavery grew in the country. Abolitionist ideas appealed to the new urban groups and the military alike; both held hostility toward slavery. The industrialists needed men to be free, to freely acquire money and to freely spend it, and believed slavery was fixed labor that slowed capital formation (Green 2012). The United States abolished slavery in 1865, making Brazil one of the last countries with this institution in the Western hemisphere. The Brazilian elite were worried about not being seen as a civilized modern nation and thus became abolitionists. This change was in name only to appear

like a cultivated society as sentiments of superiority over blacks remained, despite being financially dependent on slavery.

Progress: The Path to Abolition

The new urban groups and European visitors encouraged and abetted slavery revolt through plantation workers' mass flights to the cities. Almost every railroad worker was an abolitionist and virtually every train car had runaway slaves hidden onboard (Green 2012). The slaves from the Northeast could hardly provide the amount of labor needed for the large-scale coffee plantations. Coffee planters faced extreme labor shortages, especially after the end of the slave trade. They needed a larger, flexible labor source than what the institution of slavery was providing. The decline of slaves due to high levels of escape lead planters to prefer abolition to prevent further decline in their socioeconomic position. Also, industrialists believed that substituting slaves with a free workforce would solve Brazil's labor problem while also altering its heavily African racial composition (Green 2012). For instance, São Paulo planters launched a large effort to attract European immigration but failed to attract large numbers of Europeans due to the persistence of slavery (Skidmore 2014).

Internal agents such as the elite, military groups, urban groups, and the slaves themselves pushed for abolition, as external factors also applied pressure on the Brazilian monarchy. Namely, if the nation did not move toward abolition, Dom Pedro II feared that Great Britain might invade Brazilian ports in the way they did to force the end of the slave trade (Green 2012). The 17-year abolition process consisting of three laws began in 1871 when all children of slave mothers born after September 28 were freed. These children were freed without compensation,

and the mother's master had the option of keeping the offspring for labor until the age of 21 (Skidmore 2014). The first national census was held the following year, showing that whites composed 38.1% of the population while blacks, mulattoes, and indigenous persons made up 61.9% of the country (dos Santos 2002).

The abolitionist movement slowed for a decade until successful men of African descent forced the topic of slavery into politics in the 1880s. Famous orator from a traditional land-owning family, Joaquim Nabuco, and respected engineer André Rebouças raised significant funds to finance their abolitionist propaganda (Wood 2014). Congress passed the second abolitionist law in 1885, freeing all slaves 60 years or older. This law did little for the abolitionist movement, as it was rare for a slave to live to that age, and, if they did, the master would benefit from not having to care for them. The second law also did little to appease the masses, and slaves began leaving the plantations in even larger numbers (Skidmore 2014). The military was charged to catch and return slaves, a job they felt was beneath them. The military formally petitioned the princess regent Dona Isabel to be excused from chasing escaped slaves. Escaped slaves formed dwellings on the outskirts of cities while planters began to grant slaves their freedom to prevent them from leaving the plantations (Green 2012). All slaves were freed without compensation in 1888 when the Golden Law was passed with an overwhelming majority. Brazil now had three-quarters of a million former slaves and a massive image issue at hand.

The Product of Miscegenation: A Country Composed of Inferiors

Brazilian elites boasted their European heritage and looked toward England and France as archetype nations (Wood 2014). Due to this obsession with Europe, Brazilians dealt with a

heavily North Atlantic discourse on race. In the 19th century, three schools of the racist theory emerged: historical school, ethological-biological school, and Social Darwinism. These schools of theory are known as scientific racism, a pseudoscientific belief that empirical evidence exists to support or justify racism and racial inferiority. All three schools worked on the consensus that Aryans, more specifically Northern Europeans, were the superior race (Green 2012).

Prominent figures in the scientific racism discourse are Charles Darwin, Spencer Herbert, and Josiah Nott. Charles Darwin inspired Social Darwinism, a theory that natural selection occurs not only in plants and animals but also in human groups and races. Herbert Spencer's view of societal progress aligned with racist ideas that certain races had uncivilized societies. The markings of progress were stronger in Europeans than in Indians and Africans (Wood 2014). Josiah Nott was a polygenist who believed that the races were always separate, placing Africans somewhere between Caucasians and apes (Green 2012).

The vision of a progressive society was Europe, and European doctrine stated that Africans and Indians were inferior people and direct obstacles to progress. Centuries of miscegenation in Brazil had produced a highly mixed-race population, with many being of African descent. The middle class of mixed-race people had played a large role in colonial Brazil. The free mixed-race population was essential to economic and military tasks; slave labor was useless, and no whites were available (Smith 1970). This intermediate group between slaves and owners grew to become Brazil's face as people from Europe and the United States came to visit.

Small scale European immigration had taken place before abolition, and, in 1890, white Brazilians comprised 44% of the population, still the minority (dos Santos 2002). Five years later, Cervante's *Dom Quixote* was published in Rio de Janeiro stating that the Brazilian race was composed of the decadent Portuguese, the primitive Indian, and the backward African (Wood 2014). *Dom Quixote* was a dominant culture review at the time, the authors berated the Brazilian race and championed importation of favorable white races to improve the composition. Brazil's association with high levels of inferior races led to great shame among Brazil's elite, and European immigration began in earnest.

O Branqueamento: The Whitening

Brazil entered a new phase in the late 19th and early 20th century known as "o branqueamento," or the whitening. The whitening theory stated that whites, being the strongest race, would naturally conquer inferior races; Brazilians believed that whites would dominate even at a genetic level (Green 2012). The whitening justification was based on three assumptions: the white race was superior to all others, the black race would eventually disappear, and the process was thought to be already happening.

According to racial theorists such as Afrânio Peixoto and João Baptista Lacerda, Black Brazilians had a lower birth rate, a higher disease rate, and a supposed lack of organization, so their population would not survive over time (Green 2012). The whitening process had seemingly already started due to the lighter-skinned offspring produced from black and white coitus, "proving" white genes' strength (Green 2012). The whitening thesis became the rationale for what they thought was already happening.

The Brazilian elite had specific views for the ideal racial makeup of their country. European whites were seen as more reliable future citizens and better laborers, as former slaves were believed to be less productive. The preferred future citizens were specifically of Northern European origin. To this end, the Brazilian government encouraged European immigration while blocking African and Chinese immigration (Skidmore 2014). However, immigrants came from Italy and Portugal in large numbers and then Japan, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East in smaller proportions. From 1807 to 1903, over 1.9 million people immigrated to Brazil; from 1904 to 1930, another 2.1 million entered the country, financed by the Brazilian government (Skidmore 2014). Brazil imported half a million more Europeans than African slaves and in only 50 years compared to the 300-year endurance of the slave trade. In São Paulo's province, known as the coffee region, whites comprised 88% of the population in 1940 (dos Santos 2002).

Geographical determinism was another tenant of race theory that gained notice in the early twentieth century (Green 2012). The theory stated that the climate of a race's origin determines important aspects of the capacity for learning and the ethics of members of that race. According to this theory, Brazil was doomed to produce racially backward citizens. The tropical climate that produced the indigenous, African, and now Brazilian populations would not nurture civilized, colder climate European types. Brazilian elites were destitute, knowing that no matter the efforts, Brazil would be known as a racially second-rate country, a step behind its European aspirations.

A New Outlook: The Origins of Racial Democracy

Once the Great Depression uprooted neocolonial systems in the 1930s, the culture of scientific racism went with it (Wood 2014). The nations previously revered by Brazilian elites were now in turmoil effectively rendering their ideologies of progress irrelevant. The country was no longer bombarded with European ideals, and Brazilian intellectuals began to redefine the culture from a nationalist point of view. One of the leading representatives for the new vision was Gilberto Freyre, an anthropologist and sociologist who re-envisioned the origins of Brazil's heterogeneous population. In 1933 he published *Casa Grande e Senzala* (*The Masters and the Slaves* 1946), which analyzed the role of sexuality and sex in Brazil's widespread miscegenation (Freyre 1933).

The Portuguese colonizers' inclination to procreate with multiple, non-European races is a positive attribute for nation-building, according to Freyre. They already had over a century of contact with India and Africa's tropics when Brazil was colonized in 1532. The sexual fusion between the Portuguese men and indigenous women helped incorporate local populations into the colonizers' society. Additionally, the Moorish occupation of the Iberian Peninsula gave the Portuguese extensive interaction with African peoples. Freyre presents the disposition to mix as the secret to a small nation like Portugal to conquer and control a vast country like Brazil (Freyre 1933).

Casa Grande e Senzala marked a turning point in perceptions of race within the nation. Unlike early thinkers who favored miscegenation as a way to whiten or cleanse the population, the book caused much of Brazil to see itself as racially or culturally mixed race. The acceptance

of the population's mixed-race origin allowed for less anxiety about what it would mean for Brazil's international status (Green 2012). As depicted in the book, the supposed harmonious nature between slave owners and enslaved Africans suggested that Brazil has always had favorable race relations, a racial democracy, unlike other post-racial societies.

The United States and South Africa have a history of race-based segregation laws and outright violence against African descendants in their nation, while segregation and violence in Brazil is more subtle. The United States defines being black through genetic origin with the one-drop rule, meaning any amount of black blood makes one black, a much easier task due to low levels of racial intermixing levels and a lower proportion of slaves to free white citizens. Freyre stated that "every Brazilian, even the light-skinned blond hair ones, carry in their souls, when not in both soul and body, the mark of Africa or indigenous America," suggesting that defining race at all would be all but impossible (Freyre 1933, 283-84).

A Deeper Look into Brazilian Society: Racial Democracy or Deceit?

Brazil became famous for its self-awarded title of being a racial democracy and gained UNESCO's interest. UNESCO was established in the wake of World War II, and its main goal was to understand international conflict, especially after the tragedy of the Holocaust (Maio 2001). The problem of race was at the center of public attention, specifically in South Africa and the United States. UNESCO approved an anti-racist agenda in 1949 that stimulated scientific inquiry into racism to study motivation, its effects, and possible solutions (Maio 2001). Brazil's mixed population and seemingly amicable relations between the races made it the ideal laboratory to study a success story for post-slave societies.

The studies conducted in Brazil were originally carried out in agricultural areas in the Northeast, the same region that Gilberto Freyre examined in *Casa Grande e Senzala*. UNESCO, headed by Arthur Ramos, initially studied only the Northeast, an area with a high African descent population, to showcase the famed harmonious race relations (Maio 2001). Social scientists wanted a better look at Brazil as a whole and extended the study to urban industrialized areas in the Southeast. Social scientists working in conjunction with UNESCO proposed that the living standards for whites and non-whites should be analyzed, including wages, occupations, and competition in the job market (Maio 2001).

The scientists exposed racial prejudice in all levels of rural society and cities (Smith 1970). Charles Wagley, one of the scientists, concluded that "with rare exceptions," Brazil's upper class are Caucasian in appearance (Wagley 1952, 148). The racially mixed population that Brazil was known for was found in the middle and lower classes. The project assembled mass documentation of prejudice and discrimination against black Brazilians and revealed racial tension throughout Brazilian society (Green 2012).

The earliest explanation of this phenomenon came from Gilberto Freyre, Arthur Ramos, and Donald Pierson, who all believed that Brazilian society was built on class, not race (Smith 1970). Each acknowledged that dark skin was identified with lower status in Brazil, but they claimed it was natural. Blacks began at a lower position due to their slave status, followed by the disadvantageous position they were placed in during the whitening period. European immigrants occupied millions of jobs that could have been filled by the newly free African descendants, preventing the population from attaining economic advancement, according to Pierson (1942,

185). With time and industrialization, it was believed that blacks would be able to catch up, and discrimination would be based on class alone. In his book *Negros in Brazil,* Pierson stated, “If a black or colored person proved himself able, he could easily ascend the social scale” (Pierson 1942, 177).

Both Pierson and Freyre thought Brazil had a more humane model of slavery than in the United States, which allowed upward mobility. *Casa Grande e Senzala* showcased a utopian version of Brazil’s colonial years in the Northeastern states of Bahia, Pernambuco, and Paraiba. Despite promoting the three elements of the Brazilian race, European, African, and Indian, the book covered very little about the indigenous population, practically ignoring their contributions to society. Freyre’s portrayals of colonization and slavery were optimistic, framing slavery as mild (Freyre 1933). His remarks about the institution could only be applied to the role of the house slave who had the easiest life, which is not saying much.

Arthur Ramos, physician and anthropologist, published *The Negro in Brazil* in 1939. A portion of the book was about blacks that had become social whites by excelling in the arts, sciences, military, and politics (Ramos 1939). Freyre stated that many whites had become social blacks, poor and living in shanties like most blacks and mulattoes. Joining the conversation in 1952 with the publication of *O Negro no Rio de Janeiro: Relações de Raça Mudança Numa Sociedade em Mudança* (*Blacks in Rio: Race Relation in a Changing Society*), Costa Pinto also proposed that class was more relevant than race. Brazil's modernization made economic standing a more important factor for discrimination, and racial disadvantages only existed as a legacy to a slave past (Costa Ribeiro 2007).

Unveiling the Myth: A Critique of the Racial Democracy Claim

Racial democracy promotes the utopian dream of a society free from discrimination, but this myth costs the afro-Brazilian people. The Brazilian people's public acceptance of their multiracial identity was presented positively by scholars and politicians alike to counter the shame felt during scientific racism. But, accepting Brazil as the multiracial society made addressing racial inequality difficult, if not impossible (Green 2012). How could a country where every person had mixed blood be racist? How can there be discrimination if there are no clear distinctions between races?

The relatively peaceful transition from slavery, the lack of legalized discrimination and noticeable racial tension, and the history of widespread miscegenation resulting in an expansive system of multiracial classification added to Brazil's racial democracy disguise (Lovell 1999). Overt racism in countries such as the United States, which erupted into a deadly civil war over slavery and the industries and lifestyles that it supported, and South Africa's widely known apartheid, made race relations in Brazil seem docile in comparison. UNESCO uncovered a form of racism that was uniquely Brazilian.

A closer historical look can easily debunk the idealistic nature of the relationship between slaves and masters depicted by Freyre. Free slaves were discriminated against in law, having fewer privileges than their white counterparts, and suffered more severe punishments for similar offenses (Smith 1970). Miscegenation and interracial marriage imply fluid race relations and harmony; however, this is not the case. Interracial marriage was rare, accounting for 10% of all marriages, and it was more common between people of the same class (Skidmore 2014). Middle

and upper-class whites almost exclusively married within their class and race. The European immigrants that came during the whitening were heavily opposed to marriage to a person with any amount of colored (non-European) blood (Smith 1970).

The racial democracy myth put forth by Freyre was not necessarily a lie; it is a belief system that assists all Brazilians with navigating their social circumstances. The myth achieves this action by justifying certain cultural values and societal rules; an example of this would be the fable of three races (Bailey 2004). The fable of three races is taught in Brazil's schools, stating that the Brazilians come from three racial streams mentioned earlier in this thesis. This teaching altered how the populace saw itself; in a national survey asking, "What ancestry the Brazilian population considers itself be?," 68% of participants answered "Brazilian" (Bailey 2004). The national consensus was that race discrimination cannot be possible because all Brazilians are of mixed blood and are nonwhite.

Freyre's ideal of equality was fortified on numerous occasions by outside observations. President Roosevelt visited Brazil in 1913 and stated that it was unlike the United States because any able person of color could attain success if they were worthy (Lovell 1999). While this statement fit into the national discourse on race, the reality was entirely different. Throughout Brazil, blacks are regarded as innately inferior in dependability, honesty, and intelligence. Black physical features are universally seen as less desirable and less appealing than white features, even by blacks themselves (Smith 1970).

Known factors for socioeconomic advancement are wealth, education, and occupation; however, UNESCO's social scientists added another: race (Harris 1964, 61). There are countless

stereotypes concerning people of African descendants, and studies have shown that color prejudice is more prevalent the higher one's position is on the socioeconomic ladder (Green 2012). The racial democracy and pride invoked by Gilberto Freyre are merely a guise; discrimination of afro-Brazilians is the cultural norm.

Part 2: Introduction of Primary Sources

Modernization and Equality: Is it Possible?

Donald Pierson introduced the idea that increased industrialization and modernization will lead to the disappearance of racial discrimination in his publication *Negroes in Brazil* (1942). In this section, I use primary sources *Child of the Dark* by Carolina Maria de Jesus (2003) and *City of God* by Paulo Lins (2002) to discredit Pierson's claim. *Child of the Dark* is an autobiographical account of an Afro-Brazilian woman living in a favela, or ghetto, in São Paulo from 1955 to 1960. *City of God* follows the lives of various residents of an infamous favela in Rio de Janeiro from the 1960s to the 1980s. These novels depict the systemic inequality that occurs without access to education, proper wages, a safe living environment, and protection by the government, which can lead to a generational cycle of violence and destitution. I will compare the realities described in the literary works with a literature review of research articles also spanning the period of both novels to demonstrate that the economic boom that occurred in Brazil during this time did little to alleviate the burden of being black.

The diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus exemplifies the hardships for poor afro-Brazilians. Carolina Maria de Jesus had an informal job of selling scraps, a job that could barely feed her and her three children. The overcrowded favela filled with gossip, fighting, sewage, and waste made life there unbearable. Carolina believed that no human should live "in [the] hell" that is the favela (de Jesus 2003, 19). Although *Child of the Dark* was an international hit and became a symbol to rise above poverty for foreigners, de Jesus' fame in Brazil lasted a short while and she

died in 1977 in poverty (Levine 1994). Most Brazilians have never read her book or even consider her work significant in the Brazilian canon of authors.

While *Child of the Dark* is an autobiography, *City of God* is a work of fiction written by Paulo Lins, a favela resident, who conducted extensive research of favelas for an accurate depiction. The book follows numerous gangsters and the people around them their daily lives. The gangsters believed themselves to be vigilantes protecting the favela against institutional racism by police and other cases of discrimination (Lorenz 2010). As one gangster becomes all powerful on his rise to the top of the drug game, outside agents work to tear him down and the end is the same for all, death. The story has an all too familiar repetition of death; a life is cut down in an instant and is forgotten in the same breath. Unlike de Jesus, Paulo Lins received critical acclaim both internationally and within his country. I believe that the difference is in the story telling; despite Carolina's diary reflecting the realities of many, it was still just her story whereas Paulo Lins was able to incorporate an entire community in his narrative. The extensive research and poetic nature of his writing made the book resonate on a deeper level than what a diary could.

The main sources of racial composition from a national level come from household surveys and demographic censuses; they use only four categories of the race for a populace that utilizes over a hundred terms for racial classification (Lovell 1999). To make matters more complex, individuals may be whitened, classified as lighter, or of a different race due to a combination of physical appearance, status, and wealth. Many of the studies utilized in this thesis compare the category of white to pardo and preto. I have found the differences between pardo

and preto, both African descendants only differing in skin tone, negligible, and condense the two into one category that will be referred to as black. I find the differences in pardo and preto negligible due to the small variations between their statistics, ranging from 1-4 percentages on average, especially in comparison to whites whose statistics are sometimes double that of both pardo and preto.

Education from 1950-1990

Education is recognized as one of the most powerful determinants of social hierarchy and inequality (Andrews 2014). Throughout all societies, the highest classes are the most education while the lower classes are many times illiterate. Proper education influences positive behaviors on the individual level, such as smoking cessation and making better dietary choices. For much of Brazil's history, universal education was not a priority. Poor citizens had restricted access to education until the country underwent urbanization in the 1950s. Before urbanization, primary and secondary public schools were high quality and served the predominantly white middle and upper class. Meanwhile half of all Brazilians were illiterate (Laplane 2019). These schools' original networks began to expand in the 1960s and 1970s to accommodate more children from social classes. The schools, in turn, became less selective, prompting higher-income families to move to private education institutions.

Extreme racial differences appear in national literacy rates by the age of six. National household surveys found that daycare, preschool, and early elementary education for black children were of the worst quality even when compared to educational facilities for white children within the same socioeconomic levels. The national literacy rate in 1987 for white

children was 9.8% compared to 4.5% for black children (Reichmann 2016). As shown in the table below, in 1940, before urbanization, the literacy rate for whites, browns, and blacks was 46.9%, 25.5%, and 18.5%, respectively. Half a century later, in 1991, whites' literacy rates doubled to 84.3% and almost tripled for browns and blacks, totaling 66.6% and 65.3% (Lovell 1999). While urbanization and modernization did increase educational attainment opportunities, the only gap that was closed was between browns and blacks.

PERCENTAGE LITERATE BY COLOR AND SEX: BRAZIL, 1940–1991

	1940			1950			1991		
	Branco	*Pardo*	*Preto*	*Branco*	*Pardo*	*Preto*	*Branco*	*Pardo*	*Preto*
Total	46.9	25.5	18.5	52.7	26.6	23.5	84.3	66.6	65.3
Men	51.2	29.1	21.7	56.2	29.6	26.5	84.4	65.5	65.4
Women	42.6	22.0	15.3	49.2	23.7	20.5	84.2	67.7	65.1

SOURCES: Brazilian censuses 1940, 1950, and 1991.

Percent of literate population separated by color and gender. Source: Lovell 1999.

At all levels of socioeconomic standing, browns and blacks have educational levels regularly inferior to those of whites. Carolina Maria de Jesus “only had two years of schooling,” enough to become literate, before having to get a job to help support her family” (de Jesus 2003, pg. 8). Many lower-class Brazilians, of which blacks are disproportionately overrepresented, forgo attaining a second-rate education in order to provide for their families. Black Brazilians who manage to complete a university degree are less likely to receive proper compensation; blacks who completed college by 1976 earned less than their white counterparts who only had achieved a junior high school education. In 1987, 2% of blacks had completed more than twelve years of schooling, less than 1% finished college (Reichmann 2016). Those who had achieved

higher education were not rewarded with occupations or wages that match their education (Telles 1994).

Jobs & Wages from 1950-1990

Mass immigration during the "branqueamento" caused intense job competition between newly arrived Europeans and native Brazilians, specifically the newly freed blacks. The immigrants went to the most economically developed areas in the Southeast and received favoritism from both employers and the state (Lovell 1999). Blacks were displaced and prevented from entering the most dynamic areas of the free labor market, in turn stalling their advancement for decades to come. Many black Brazilians turned to informal work, including selling items such as scrap material like Carolina Maria de Jesus. Others turn to illegal forms of income such as robbery and selling drugs, as many of the characters in *City of God* had to do in order to survive (Lins 2002).

As discussed in the previous section, occupation and wages are directly connected to levels of education. Considering that blacks have fewer years of schooling than whites on average, it is safe to assume that blacks enter the job market earlier, occupying minor occupations that require fewer skills and lesser wages (Lovell 1999). The repeated cycle of undereducation and overworking adds to blacks' concentration in the lowest strata of the economic hierarchy. The following table shows the average wages for whites, browns, and blacks concerning schooling years in São Paulo in the year 1991. In every bracket for educational attainment, the wage differences between browns and blacks were negligible while whites earned substantially more.

AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGE BY YEARS OF COMPLETED SCHOOLING, COLOR, AND SEX, WORKERS AGED 18–64: URBAN SÃO PAULO, 1991

YEARS OF SCHOOLING BY SEX	AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGE			WOMEN'S EARNINGS AS A PERCENTAGE OF MEN'S		
	White	*Pardo*	*Preto*	White	*Parda*	*Preta*
Women						
0–4	Cr$67,373	.90 %	.91 %	.51	.54	.58
5–8	83,784	.85	.87	.56	.57	.61
9–12	127,717	.80	.79	.57	.61	.61
13+	242,349	.76	.74	.47	.57	.57
Men						
0–4	130,998	.86	.81			
5–8	148,850	.85	.80			
9–12	223,616	.75	.73			
13+	Cr$518,939	.63 %	.61 %			

SOURCE: Demographic census 1991.

NOTE: White monthly wages are in 1991 cruzeiros; *pardo* and *preto* earnings are expressed as a fraction of white earnings by sex; and women's earnings are expressed as a fraction of men's earnings by race.

Average monthly wage by years of school completed, separated by color and gender. Source: Lovell 1999

In São Paulo, an economically diverse area in Southeast Brazil, twice as many blacks occupied low-paying construction and domestic jobs. Whites earned 57 to 73% more than blacks in all economic sectors except domestic work, which disproportionately affects black workers (Reichmann 2016). The following table depicts average monthly wages by gender and race without educational levels as a control. Again, the difference between browns and blacks' wages is irrelevant, while whites earn about 40% more. Wage discrimination was significant and suggests that wage inequality will not diminish, even if blacks attain the proper education and subsequent access to jobs.

AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGE BY COLOR AND SEX, WORKERS AGED 18–64: URBAN SÃO PAULO, 1991

	AVERAGE MONTHLY WAGE			WOMEN'S WAGES AS A PERCENTAGE OF MEN'S		
SEX	White	*Pardo*	*Preto*	White	*Parda*	*Preta*
Women	Cr$129,331	60.76 %	61.27 %	57.5	59.35	61.34
Men	Cr$224,752	58.91 %	57.47 %			

SOURCE: Demographic census 1991.

NOTE: Monthly wages are in 1991 cruzeiros; *pardo* and *preto* earnings are expressed as a fraction of white earnings by sex; and women's earnings are expressed as a fraction of men's earnings by race.

Average wage by color and gender. Source: Lovell 1999.

Discriminatory hiring practices can be credited for the disproportionate rates of black workers in low-skilled manual labor occupations. Perspective employees face obstacles such as the "boa aparência" application, which is the preference of white-passing, i.e., lighter skin and straighter hair (Reichmann 2016). Boa aparência is still used as hiring criteria for jobs, including restaurant workers, store clerks, receptionists, secretaries, and bank tellers. These hiring practices can account for 2.7% of economically active blacks achieving managerial positions while over 55% partake in manual labor (Reichmann 2016).

Health Expectancy from 1950-1990

Low levels of education lead to low-paying jobs, which directly affect health outcomes in the community. The lack of finances limits investments in proper sanitation, reduces emergency and sickness savings, and places families into inadequate housing in high-risk areas (Wood & Lovell 1992). Subsequently, the social services provided are insufficient, and access to healthcare is also stunted. High mortality rates result from the relationship between individual characteristics, public health services, and environmental services (Wood & Lovell 1992).

Individual characteristics would be individual behavior such as health practices and income, affecting other aspects of living such as housing, education, and nutrition. Public health services can include spraying pesticides, waste removal, and availability of clean water, which influences mortality despite individual behaviors.

Between 1950 and 1980, Brazil underwent an extensive demographic and socioeconomic change. The population transitioned from rural to urban, non-agricultural employment increased, and national life expectancy rose 37% (Wood & Lovell 1992). The table below shows that life expectancy for children born to white mothers in 1950 was 47.5 years compared to 40 years for children born to black mothers, a 7.5-year difference. By 1991, whites and blacks' life expectancies rose to 70.8 and 64 years, respectively, with a 6.8-year gap between the two.

ESTIMATES OF LIFE EXPECTANCY AT BIRTH BY COLOR: BRAZIL, 1950–1991

	1950	1960	1980	1991
White	47.5	54.7	66.1	70.8
Afro-Brazilian (A-B)	40.1	44.7	59.4	64.0
White–A-B	7.4	10.0	6.7	6.8

SOURCES: Estimates based on data from Brazilian censuses 1950, 1960, 1980, and 1991.

Life expectancy at birth, separated by color. Source: Lovell 1999.

There are high segregation levels in urban areas, with blacks living in poorer neighborhoods on the outskirts of cities (Wood & Lovell 1992). Poor neighborhoods have inferior schools and low-quality health care if access is available when compared to affluent white neighborhoods. Seventy-eight percent of white households have access to indoor plumbing compared to 53% of nonwhite households (Wood & Lovell 1992). A strong association between child mortality and running water within households has been established; in 1976, child

mortality in homes without running water was 2.5 times higher than mortality in homes with access to running water (Wood & Lovell 1992).

Violence is one aspect of the afro-Brazilian experience as depicted in *City of God*. The recurring theme of the book was that black Brazilians are more likely to be killed or arrested and convicted than their white counterparts; longer sentences are given and served for similar crimes (Reichmann 2016). The high rates of homicide due to violence within favelas, drug or police related killings, can explain the large gap between life expectancy for white and afro-Brazilians. Unfortunately, information on the effect of violence within my target communities was scarce for the 1950-1980 period. The limited documentation of these injustices aid in the view of a supraracial nation.

What Changed for Afro-Brazilians?

The literature review in Part 2: Introduction of Primary Sources shows that four decades of economic development did not terminate skin color as a predictor of life chances (Lovell 1999). Growth and modernization created more opportunities for upward mobility, but it also increased competition in the labor market; the competition made for strong incentives to reinforce racial barriers. Racial discrimination has been outlawed in Brazil since 1951, but manages to function through institutional and social norms (Reichmann 2016). Race-based discrimination in Brazil is not a cultural heritage of a slave past; it results from group conflict over sparse economic resources (Lovell 1999). This being said, racism is a fundamental aspect of Brazilian society's social makeup.

The racial democracy theory helped contain racial tension in the country by demonstrating a united front facade while simultaneously shifting blame for black Brazilians consistently inferior place in society (Lovell 1999). Since the government never placed any formal obstacles to prevent blacks' advancement in society, the blame was placed on blacks themselves. The narrative was changed to viewing black people as a whole as incompetent, which explains the numerous negative stereotypes common within the society (Lovell 1999).

It seems that race relations are more unambiguous than originally believed since the differences between browns and blacks are of little difference and both trail behind whites in the various measures of quality of life (Lovell 1999). Regardless of the enduring official national discourse, blacks continue to suffer discrimination in schools, workplaces, and the public health system. When controlling for levels of education, job experience, and housing conditions, those who identify as black are expected to lose more children to malnutrition and disease, earn less and die earlier than white Brazilians (Reichmann 2016).

Part 3: Brazil Today

Current Race Relations

Brazil has the largest number of African descendants outside of Nigeria (Hernandez 2004). The 2010 census shows that of 191 million inhabitants, 47.73% identified as white and 50.74% identified as black or mixed race. Blacks are heavily concentrated in the Northeast, the most impoverished region, due to the history of slavery. Simultaneously, whites are more likely to live in the more economically prosperous Southern states (Andrews 2014).

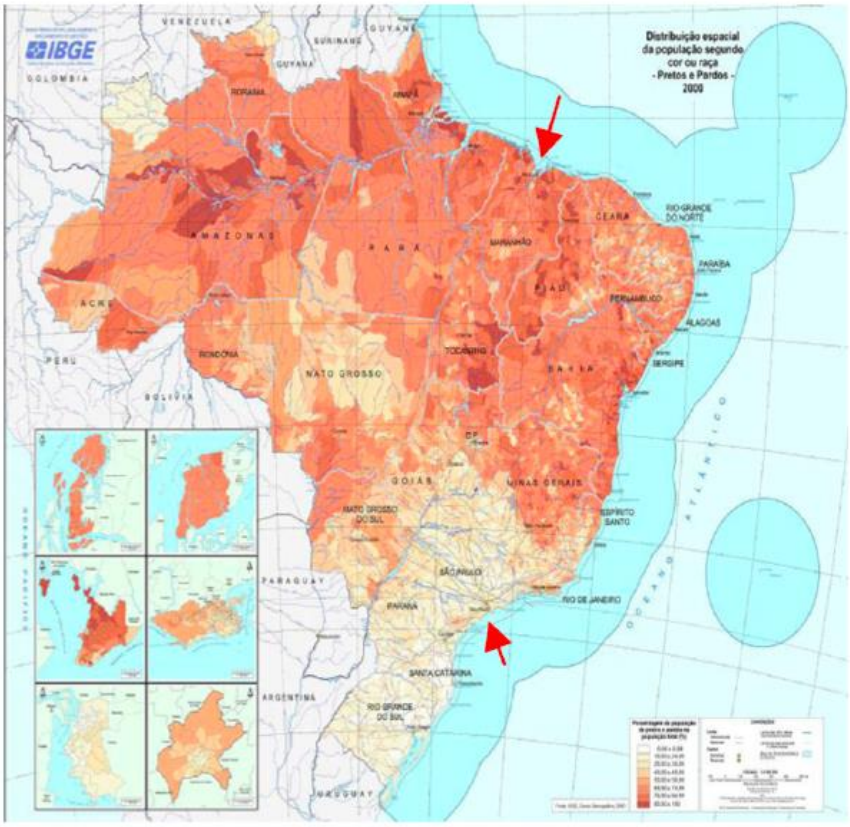

Figure 1. Distribution of Race/Color (Pretos and Pardos), 2000.

Distribution of population by race/color. Source: Pagano 2014

Brazil's highly mixed populace is famous for only existing within the working class and the poor; the middle and upper classes are almost entirely white (Telles 2020). In 1999, 45% of the population identified as black. Of this portion, 64% were living in extreme poverty while whites constituted 54% of the people; they made up only 36% of the poor and 31% of the absolute poor indigent (Ikawa 2009). The wealthiest 10% of Brazilian society holds 87% of the country's income, and 85% of the richest are white. If one were to separate Brazil into two countries by race, the white country would be two and a half times richer than the black (Ikawa 2009). There is even evidence of racial inequality in various high-level occupations throughout the country. From 1980 to 1994, in a group of over 2000 congress representatives, only twenty-nine were black; in over 1000 diplomats, only eight were black; in a group of over 100 generals, only one was black; and in over 600 federal prosecutors, only eight identified as black (Ikawa 2009).

The Human Development Index (HDI) was made by the United Nations Development Programme to measure average achievement in human development's critical aspects. Over 174 countries are rated based on social and economic development alongside the quality of life by combining three variables: per capita income, education, and life expectancy. Brazil ranked 74th; however, when the country is divided in two, one white and the other black, Brazil ranked 48th and 108th, respectively, revealing extreme racial inequality (Beato 2004). The HDI for whites in every state is higher than for blacks regardless of development. In the following sections, I will analyze inequality and discrimination found in education, jobs and wages, the housing market,

and the health system. Finally, special attention will be paid to the disproportionate amounts of violence found within black communities in Brazil as it is an endemic problem.

Unequal Education Opportunities

One of the most crucial factors for social mobility is education. It is the center of both racial and economic inequality, as each additional year of school boosts income by 15% (Otis 2013). Education was not a priority in Brazilian politics until the 2002 election of president Luiz "Lula" Inácio da Silva. In the fourth grade, he dropped out of school to become a shoe shiner and is one of Brazil's least educated presidents. Lula doubled the spending per student and created the Bolsa Familia program, which provides cash stipends to low-income families. The program's conditions stipulated that children up to seven years of age must have regular checkups at health clinics, and children ages six to 15 must attend school. These conditions help fulfill three objectives: reduce poverty and inequality, invest in future human capital, and empower the beneficiaries (Bearman 2019). Today 95% of kids age seven to 14 have access to primary and secondary school. Despite this, nearly four million Brazilian children ages seven to 14, for whom education is required, drop out or receive no formal education (Hernandez 2014).

Brazil's class divisions begin solidifying around the age of five; children go into poor quality public schools or high-quality private institutions depending on economic status. Public schools commonly have ill-equipped buildings that cannot accommodate the student population, often lacking running water and electricity. Teachers are less qualified; a national survey showed that 60% of public school teachers were not in the habit of reading books. In the Northeast, less than half of primary school teachers have completed primary school themselves (Otis 2013).

Teachers often work at two or three schools to supplement their meager wages, meaning that at times they do not show up at all. School days are short, consisting of 4-hour shifts ranging from seven in the morning to 10 at night. Classrooms lack proper textbooks alongside paper and pencils and can have up to 40 students (Otis 2013). In Rocinha, a famous favela in Rio de Janeiro, lessons are sometimes interrupted by shootouts between local gangs. One of Rio de Janeiro's most prestigious private schools, Colégio Teresiano, serves middle and upper classes. Tuition is 700 USD a month, accounting for most of the annual per capita GDP of 970 USD (Otis 2013). Guards protect the area, teachers are college-educated, classrooms are well equipped, and the school day is longer.

Private institutions are of the highest quality in primary and secondary education, but at the university level, public institutions reign supreme. Public universities outperform private ones; they offer better education and lead in research (Laplane 2019). Private colleges and universities specialize in professional skills in the labor market without preparing graduates for top-level positions. Subsequently, admission into public institutions is highly competitive and heavily dependent on the “Exame Nacional do Ensino Médio” (ENEM), the national high school exam. The ENEM was created by the INEP, the national institute of educational studies and research, and the Brazilian Ministry of Education to assess students' performance, analyze the quality of education, and determine whether schools prepared them for higher-level learning. The ENEM has been known to test subjects not taught in public primary and secondary institutions.

Lower-income students who cannot afford private education or ENEM prep courses perform worse on the ENEM than students from private schools and higher socioeconomic

backgrounds (Valente 2016). Black Brazilians have been disproportionately concentrated at the lower end of the socioeconomic standing, which impedes their ability to get into prestigious free public universities. Black students are 25% less likely to score in the higher category of the ENEM when compared to whites, and a strong positive association between parental income and ENEM score has been recognized (Valente 2016). Black students rate their overall quality of education more negatively than whites even when the variables for parental education, income, and region were controlled; the race variable still made a noticeable impact. Consequently, public universities and colleges are disproportionately attended by middle and upper-class white Brazilians.

Students of African descent consistently achieve inferior education levels compared to whites from the same socioeconomic class. Their returns from education in the form of jobs and wages are significantly lower (Hernandez 2004). Whites are three to four times more likely to receive higher education than nonwhites. On average white Brazilians completed seven and a half years of schooling compared to five and a half years for blacks (Arias, Yamada & Tejerina 2004). The effect of race and family income was found to increase as one advances within the educational system; whites originating from higher classes have better chances of passing various academic levels and have more advantages for completing secondary school (Costa Ribeiro 2007). In intergenerational mobility, whites also have better socioeconomic ascension opportunities, demonstrating that racial barriers exist, hindering mobility for nonwhites.

Racial discrimination in educational institutions exists in various ways. Differences in how school personnel treat students based on color are not uncommon; teachers tend to have

lowered expectations and less favorable perceptions of black students. The excessive amount of grade retention and placement of blacks in lower-level and remedial courses leads to grade repetition, which fortifies racial disparities (Marteleto & Dondero 2016). Racially insensitive materials are also found in textbooks that portray blacks as socially subordinate, feral, and negatively stereotyped. Frequently when black students have racist acts directed at them by fellow white students, teachers dismiss it as harmless joking, leaving black students to feel discouraged (Hernandez 2004). Outside of the classroom, black students may not have support at home as three-quarters of households have parents with less than one to four years of formal education compared to whites who have three-fifths of parents who have incomplete education (Arias, Yamada & Tejerina 2004).

Article 206 of the 1988 Brazilian Constitution states that there be equal conditions of access and dependability within schools; however, the dual educational system emphasizes the massive gap between the wealthy whites and poor blacks (Otis 2013). There is an underrepresentation of blacks in primary and secondary private schools and public and private higher learning institutions. Although blacks comprise almost half of the country's population, they only account for 35% of university students. The Brazilian government heavily funds racially exclusive public universities while simultaneously ignoring the poor quality education at primary and secondary schools, which fail to prepare students for the public university exams (Hernandez 2004). The government actively participates in racial discrimination in education, directly contradicting the mandate in the constitution and adding to the disproportionate rates of poor, undereducated blacks.

Race Gap in Jobs & Wages

The Brazilian constitution forbids child labor; however, 10% of black children ages five to 14 work, and in the rural Northeast, it rises to a quarter of the population (Beato 2004). They enter the labor market much earlier and in more significant numbers than their white counterparts. In rural Northeast, they begin working as children and continue working into advanced age (Beato 2004). Blacks account for a higher percentage of the lower class and a lower percentage of higher ranks due to not having equal access to human capital, such as education, and discrimination present within the labor market.

Of the working population, over 63% did not complete primary school, 31% attained four to seven years of schooling, while 13.3% had less than formal education (Beato 2004). When split by race, 24% of the black population has less than one year of schooling, almost three times more than the white working population. Education levels directly affect occupational opportunities, which prevent many blacks from attaining high-level, high-paying jobs. 13.3% of whites have completed college compared to 3.2% of blacks; however, even a college education does not guarantee occupational success; for those who have completed university, whites are three times more likely to become a professional (Beato 2004). This demonstrates clear discrimination and exclusion of blacks from the labor market, where education is a critical factor for employment.

Profession and parental income exemplify the difference in socioeconomic mobility for blacks and whites. Using data from the 1996 National Household Sample Survey (PNAD), 52% of blacks were urban manual workers compared to 43% of whites, and 18% were professionals

and entrepreneurs compared to 6% of blacks. Parental income determines the quality of education and, subsequently, the occupational chances for their offspring. Fifty-nine percent of blacks were the sons of rural workers compared to 49% of whites; this is due to blacks' concentration in the rural agricultural Northeast (Costa Ribeiro 2007). Also, fifty-two percent of blacks were the sons of urban manual workers compared to 43% of whites (Costa Ribeiro 2007). Rural workers are historically the poorest in Brazil, and urban manual workers are also a poor class. Professionals and entrepreneurs are considered high occupational status; 9% of whites are sons of professionals compared to 3% of blacks. Sons of professionals have 15 times more chances of entering primary school. For university, they are four times more likely to attend than sons of rural workers and twice as likely to participate in higher education than blacks (Beato 2004).

Brazil was named second in the world in income distribution inequality in 2001 (dos Santos 2006). According to the 1996 national survey from PNAD, whites earn 82% more in monthly wages than blacks; in 1999, the average monthly income for white men and women was 714 and 417 Brazilian Reais, respectively, while black men and women earned 333 and 195 BR (dos Santos 2006). Blacks make less than whites for the same job, suffer higher unemployment rates, and out of the working black population, more than half are outside of the social security system. More likely to have informal occupations such as street vendors, blacks are more prone to uncertain and vulnerable work (Beato 2004).

Three forms of discrimination have been found within the Brazilian labor market: employment discrimination, wage discrimination, and occupational segregation (Arcand 2004).

One of the more common forms of employment discrimination is the hiring requirement of "boa aparência," good appearance, previously discussed in this thesis. Educational disparities increase employment discrimination as unskilled, uneducated laborers cannot occupy high-level positions. Wage discrimination is explained by employment discrimination and occupational segregation. Blacks, who are heavily concentrated in the rural Northeast, work mainly in agriculture; urban blacks tend to work in the industrial sector as manual laborers because it does not require much skill or education (Arcand 2004). Blacks are at a disadvantage in the labor market as soon as educational inequalities set in, predetermining them to repeat generational cycles of poverty.

Residential Segregation

Urbanization represents the growth of a society in both population and development as it transitions from a rural society to an urban one (Monteiro 2017). At the end of the colonial period, the urban population was only six percent of the country's total population, 56% in the 1970s, and in 2001 almost 82% of the population lived in urban areas. Rates of urbanization are higher in the economically developed Southeast and lower in the traditionally agricultural Northeast (Morais 2015). Between 1940 and 1970, as the country experienced rapid industrialization, rural migrant workers moved to urban areas in mass for job opportunities. Over 43 million Brazilians moved to cities, the wealthy occupied central areas that were planned and had proper infrastructure while the poor lived on the outskirts of towns in favelas (Logan 2015).

Favelas are communities of self-constructed housing built without legal permission (Wei n.d.). Due to favelas' informal nature, many are without public services such as sanitation

systems, electricity, telephone lines, or plumbing. Favelas are built on hillsides located beside rich urban centers. Favela residents provide cheap labor within the urban centers. The hillside placement is susceptible to mudslides; communities have been wiped away in 1966, 1996, and 2001 mudslides (Logan 2015). The favelas are overpopulated and are characterized by unsanitary conditions, pollution, and poor nutrition. Residents live 13 years less than people born in wealthy areas in Rio de Janeiro; child mortality rates are five times higher in favelas than in Copacabana, a popular tourist area (Wei n.d.). Garbage builds up at the base of favelas due to the city neglecting to collect, causing pests and infectious diseases to spread and further contributing to the poor quality of life.

Income inequality is at the heart of Brazil's housing crisis, a shortage of about seven million units directly affecting people who earn less than minimum wage. Twelve million people lived in a favela in 2013; 61-67% of these people are black (Logan 2015). They are associated with extreme poverty and are characterized by a higher number of dwellers per household, higher unemployment rates, lower income, and lower average years of formal education (Morais 2015). Racial segregation within favelas is nonexistent as housing choices are minimal. Racial segregation is more common at higher income levels where options are abundant, and neighbors' race can become a neighborhood selection criterion (Telles 1992).

In actuality, Brazil has enough adequate housing to solve the crisis. New housing units are heavily concentrated in wealthy urban areas where they remain vacant. Population growth occurs primarily in more impoverished areas, but real estate investment is focused on wealthy areas instead of where its actually needed (Logan 2015). The poor are neglected and forced to

live in inhumane conditions solely because the government will not regulate the real estate industry. Afro-Brazilians concentration in favelas and virtual absence in wealthier adequate living spaces minimizes their quality of life greatly. These areas are usually without basic necessities and quality education, making it so afro-Brazilians life chances are lower from the start.

Health Inequities

Health problems within the black community in Brazil can be associated with unsanitary living conditions, insufficient income that leads to poor nutrition, and the flawed healthcare system. Brazilian epidemiological studies commonly credit health disparities to poverty as living in underserved communities inhibit access to healthcare and treatment adherence (Pagano 2014). Poor communities' improper sanitation promotes the spread of diseases and negatively affects child growth. Child growth is an important indicator of health because it is associated with mortality and cognitive and physical development. Analyzing child mortality, maternal mortality, life expectancy, and the segregated dual health system will further reveal the systemic disparities disproportionately killing blacks in Brazil.

Infant and child mortality is twice as high in the Northeast than in the Southeast, and maternal death was seven times higher in black women as of 2001, due to existing conditions and restricted access to healthcare (Pagano 2001). On average black women had 36% less access to prenatal consultation, and in the Northeast, the percentage rose to 46% less (Ikawa 2009). Hysterectomies are overwhelmingly performed on black women even in situations that are not life-threatening, effectively sterilizing women without their consent at times (Beato 2004).

The 2000 Census states that blacks can expect to live six years less than their white counterparts. Brazilian researchers found that blacks die excessively from tuberculosis, diabetes, stroke, HIV/AIDS, alcoholism, mental illness, and homicide (Pagano 2014). Mortality rates for skin infections and digestive or respiratory diseases are 50% higher for blacks with the same ailments (Ikawa 2009). The cause for this gap in mortality is institutional; Brazil's healthcare system is under providing for poor, nonwhite patients simply because they cannot afford or advocate for proper care.

The 1988 constitution recognized health as a right for all, and the unified health system (SUS) was created to serve the entire population (Ikawa 2009). Hospitals are usually understaffed, underfunded, and ill-equipped to handle the volume of patients seeking care. Second-rate service is generally accepted, and the healthcare system's flaws are excused because of the poor conditions of the health care institutions. There are no standardized criteria for determining patient priority, which frequently leads to discrimination. In one instance, a boy was hit by a stray bullet, and doctors did not treat him for over 24 hours because they thought he was a criminal, a decision that cost the boy the use of his lower body (Thamara 2013).

A report on racial inequality conducted from 2009 to 2010 found that 67% of the black population that pursued healthcare had gone to a SUS public health institution. Twenty-nine out of every 100 people did not receive medical attention despite exhibiting need; among whites, only 14 went without care (Thamara 2013). Much like Brazil's primary and secondary education system, private health care institutions are superior in quality. Unfortunately for blacks concentrated in rural areas and on the lowest economic level, private health care is not a viable

option. Forty-four percent of white people are treated at private hospitals, while almost 90% of blacks are treated at public health care institutions (Ikawa 2009). Again, the government actively participates in and supports racial disparities by not adequately funding the healthcare system that predominantly treats poor and black citizens.

Violence

Brazil had the eleventh highest homicide rate out of 199 countries and territories, averaging 28 homicides per 100,000 people (de Souza & Miller 2012). High rates of violence are concentrated within favelas stemming from drug gang rivalries, disputes over debts, and revenge acts. Drug trafficking in favelas began in earnest in the 1980s due to the absence of job opportunities, after-school activities, and government regulation (Wei n.d.). Proximity to highways allowed for easy access contributing to the success of the drug trade. Ease of access to firearms and the labyrinth of alleyways granted criminals opportunities to hide and escape when needed (de Souza & Miller 2012).

Favelas in Rio de Janeiro first appeared at the start of the 20th century when civil war veterans returned without governmental financial assistance. The population grew, and the government attempted housing reform by moving residents to housing projects and demolishing favelas. The reform failed to address root problems such as scarcity of work, crime, and drug trafficking (Boyer 2005).

City of God is set in a 1960s era housing project that fell into drug trafficking and corruption. Paulo Lins analyzes the interactions between class and race within poverty and discrimination (Lorenz 2010). The poor black residents are common targets of abuse by

neighbors, the wealthy, and the police. Young men become gangsters to earn a living and support their families, a feat that cannot be attained by working the scarce low-paying jobs available. Favela residents' average wage is 200 USD a month; youth can earn 200 in a week working for drug gangs (Wei n.d.).

Torture, police abuse, extrajudicial executions of criminals, and murders of innocents are frequent within the novel and reality ("Police Abuses" 2017). The illegal killing of gang members makes members less likely to peacefully surrender, encourages opportunistic murder of police, and makes residents less likely to report crime or act as witnesses. Between 1999 and 2003, police killed over 1000 people during operations; most victims were poor black men from favelas (Wei n.d.).

Historically, the police's role was to preserve racial hierarchy in cities where slaves enjoyed a great range of freedom. Police served as judge, jury, and executioner whenever a slave broke a code of conduct. Today police see themselves as waging war against criminals, and they will do anything to eliminate their opposition (Mitchell & Wood 1999). Unfortunately, people of all classes stereotypically associate criminals with the poor, black, and favelas. Police frequently invade favelas to exact revenge, and the deaths of innocent bystanders are deemed legitimate attempts to discourage crime (Mitchell & Wood 1999). Mistreatment and torture of detainees, adults and children alike, is a significant issue but only among people of lower socioeconomic standing.

Police forces in Brazil have low social status and have no power when dealing with individuals of higher standing. High-status individuals look forward to police overlooking any

infractions, while low-status individuals feel the full force of the law. A former military lawyer stated that military officers assume they have consent to kill when the victim is poor, black, and a thief (Mitchell & Wood 1999). The police as an institution is an agent of oppression and violence against the Afro-Brazilian community. The continued governmental funding demonstrates the official support of the slaughter of the black community.

Conclusion

Africans and their descendants have an instrumental role in the formation of Brazil. Throughout the history of the country, blacks have been freed and then cheap laborers who were used by middle- and upper-class whites and then discarded. Unlike other multiracial societies such as the United States, where there are clearly defined races, Brazil has a color continuum that dictates one's position. The darker the skin, the more likely one is to be lower on the socioeconomic scale. Brazilians believe that racism is a non-structured phenomenon, that is isolated and the cause of individual incompetence (Ikawa 2009). This belief system was further reinforced by the idea of racial democracy theory which promoted the belief that there were no institutional obstacles in place for socioeconomic advancement for any race. Subsequently, any and all race-based inequalities present were the responsibility of the individuals affected.

UNESCO uncovered racial inequality at all levels of Brazilian society proving that race is a key determinant of life chances. The white elite promoted the myth of racial democracy to conceal concrete forms of racial oppression and discrimination (Valente 2016). The presence of whites within the lower rungs of the socioeconomic ladder is frequently used as proof for lack of race-based discrimination but the underrepresentation of blacks in the upper classes prove

otherwise. Brazilians are socialized to see blacks as "others," negatively stereotyped and unequal which allows for discrimination to occur without consequence (dos Santos 2006). Blacks are disadvantaged in all aspects contributing to life chances including educational attainment, the labor market, and in health. Institutional barriers preventing black's socioeconomic ascension have been in place since the founding of Brazil. Visiting Brazil's most impoverished areas is proof that poverty has a color in Brazil, and it is black (Skidmore 2014).

Absence of adequate housing, underfunding of public primary and secondary education, and race-based discrimination within the labor market are all systemic failures that lead to poor life chances for afro-Brazilians. Both *Child of the Dark* and *City of God* depicted the poor quality of life for the people that the Brazilian government failed. Carolina Maria de Jesus' autobiography achieved international critical accolades but within Brazil her work goes unnoticed. Social critic was viewed unfavorably after the rise of the military dictatorship in Brazil which played a role in de Jesus' fall from grace (Levine 1994). In contrast, *City of God* rose in notoriety both in Brazil and internationally. The race subject matter of the already infamous Rio de Janerio favelas and drug gang wars made the book an instant classic. Lin's depiction allowed Brazilians and foreigners alike to get a first-hand view of the lives that result from minimal opportunities; a life of poverty, oppression, discrimination, and death.

After in depth research on the topic at hand, I personally do not see meaningful change to come. Attempting housing reform, as depicted in *City of God*, has failed and unless the government regulates real estate investment the housing crises for poor Brazilians has no end in sight. United States style affirmative action, which requires a certain number of afro-Brazilians

students to be admitted into university has been put in place but has had mixed results. Phenotypically white presenting students have used the affirmative action to get in, under claims of black ancestry, displacing black presenting students on multiple occasions (Madeira & Rangel 2013). The poor quality of primary and secondary education received by poor afro-Brazilian students make it almost impossible for them to get to university level, making the quotas ineffective. Proper training of workers could possibly lead to a decrease in occupational discrimination, but until there is reform within the government and society itself, the life chances for afro-Brazilians will continue to be bleak.

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