The Paradox of the "Good" Student

Race and the Brazilian Education System

Marcelo Paixão

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Programa de Promoción de la Reforma Educativa en América Latina y el Caribe
Partnership for Educational Revitalization in the Americas

In this publication, Paixão provides a detailed analysis of educational gaps by race confronting students in Brazil. His solid analytical framework and use of economics clearly define the persistent challenges students face, and provides policy makers with the tools to improve the educational system for the good of the nation. *The Paradox of the "Good" Student* is one of the most complete and balanced studies of race and primary education in Brazil and is a valuable reference for academics, legislators, and activists.

Judith Morrison
Regional Director, South America and the Caribbean
Inter-American Foundation

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"Man and citizen—be they who they might—
have no asset to offer society but themselves."

—J. J. Rousseau, *Émile*

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Acknowledgments

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Introduction

This paper aims to focus consideration on the racial inequalities inherent in the indicators used to capture the educational performance of the Brazilian population. The pronounced asymmetries experienced by different racial groups in terms of their access to and participation in the Brazilian education system are already well recognized. This paper goes further, focusing on the premise that educational indicators—and consequently societal expectations—for whites and African-descendants are notably and consistently different, overwhelmingly favoring the former.[1]

The evidence of these differences has been captured in important studies based on official national indicators dating to the beginning of the 1990s (see Barcelos 1992, Beltrão and Teixeira 2004, Hasenbalg and Valle Silva 1990, Henriques 2002, Rosenberg 1990, and Warren 1997). Earlier works, including classic studies by Luiz Costa Pinto (1998 [1953]), Florestan Fernandes (1978 [1964]), and Donald Pierson (1971 [1942]), also provide evidence of these differences.

This paper attempts to make two key contributions to the discussion of race and education in Brazil. Its first contribution is the compilation of available educational statistics to create a broader time frame than that typically used by other studies. This paper uses microdata from the censuses of 1980, 1991, and 2000, enabling consideration of educational indicators for Brazilian racial groups over a 20-year time period;[2] other studies generally limit themselves to an analysis of the topic over a single year or, at most, decade. Using this approach, we will be well positioned to analyze some of the main trends demonstrated by those indicators.

The second contribution of this paper is to facilitate qualitative reflection on the racial asymmetries within the educational indicators for the Brazilian population. We thereby aim to generate a dialogue on an issue that is almost always overlooked—albeit inadvertently—by studies on racial inequality in education:

[1]Throughout this paper, the term "African-descendants" is used to refer collectively to Brazilians who are either black or of mixed race. Where data are discussed by racial subgroup, the terms "black" (*preto*), "mixed race" (*pardo*), and "mestizo" (*mestiço*) are used as appropriate.

[2]These data were prepared by the Laboratory for Economic, Historical, Social, and Statistical Race Relations Analyses, Economics Institute, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro State (LAESER/IE/UFRJ).

can these asymmetries be attributed to the Brazilian model of race relations which emphasizes discriminatory channels present within the school, or can these differences be traced to intergenerational underachievement or poverty? It is worth emphasizing that in both these positions, racial inequality in educational indicators is explained by structural issues—the breadth of the relationship between African-descendants and whites is not a determining factor.

The paper is divided into four parts.

- Section 1 analyzes education-related trends for the Brazilian population disaggregated by race and gender. These data show marked and persistent disparities between African-descendants and whites for the 1980–2000 period. Over the same period, gender asymmetries have not only been overcome, but have also actually been reversed to favor females—especially in the younger age group.

- Section 2 examines some of the chief contributors to racial disparity in the Brazilian education system. The section includes a survey of these contributions as identified by human capital theory. The section also discusses pedagogical studies undertaken in Brazil that provide in-depth analyses on patterns of race relations in the classroom.

- Section 3 focuses on the type of student produced by the Brazilian school system and how that product directly reflects the nation's race relations model. The section thus highlights the "good student" paradox alluded to in the paper's title: because African-descendants do not perform as well as whites in the Brazilian education system, they are condemned to marginal, low-paying, low-prestige jobs. Far from this meaning that they are "poor students," they are in fact excellent students in that they have replicated and perpetuated the model of long-standing social and racial inequity that they were taught.

- Section 4 concludes the paper by presenting thoughts on public policy proposals in the educational field, addressing both the education system as a whole and plans to overcome racial inequalities in terms of access to and persistence in Brazilian schools.

1. Racial Disparities Revealed by Education Indicators

This section examines four sets of education indicators by race and gender: illiteracy rates, average years of education, enrollment rates, and educational efficiency and adequacy rates measuring correlations between age and expected grade level.

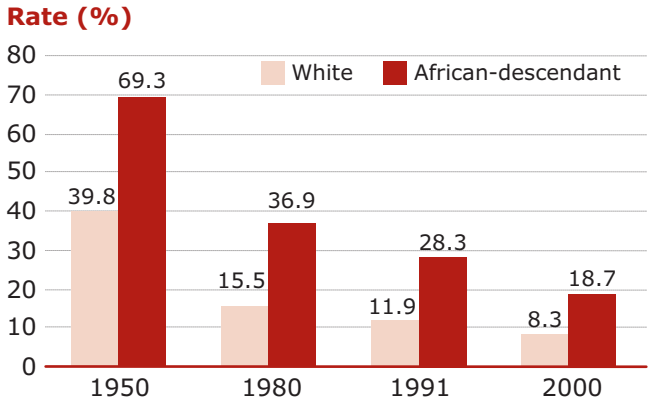
1.1. Illiteracy Rates

Throughout the 20th century, Brazil's overall literacy rate climbed steadily. However, when the data are disaggregated by race, the comparative rates of illiteracy for African-descendants and whites remain strikingly unequal over time.

According to figures from the 1950 Demographic Census of the Brazilian population age 15 and above, the illiteracy rate among whites was 39.8 percent while that among African-descendants was 69.3 percent. Fifty years later, the illiteracy rates among individuals age 15 and above were 8.3 percent for whites and 18.7 percent for African-descendants (figure 1). Although these figures indicate a significant decline in illiteracy for both groups over the past half-century, the relative disparity between rates for whites and African-descendants has grown from 74 percent in 1950 to 125 percent in 2000.

These findings hold when the data are further disaggregated by age. Examining illiteracy data by race in 1980, 1991, and 2000 for groups age 15 and up, 25 and up, 40 and up, and 60 and up reveals that the highest illiteracy rates are found in the oldest population segment. Across all age groups, illiteracy rates were notably higher for African-descendants than for whites during this 20-year period (table 1).

Figure 1: Illiteracy rate of the population age 15 and older by race, 1950–2000



Source: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 1950, 1980, 1991, and 2000 Demographic Censuses.

In 2000, of the 15.3 million Brazilians comprising the illiterate population over age 15, 9.7 million were African-descendants (table 2). Of the 32.7 million of the nation's functionally illiterate—those with some, but not sufficient, literacy—African-descendants accounted for 18.8 million. Thus, the illiteracy rate of African-descendants age 15 and older was 18.7 percent in 2000, and their rate of functional illiteracy was 36.1 percent. The corresponding proportions of illiterate and functionally illiterate whites were

Table 1: Illiteracy rate by race and age, 1980–2000 (percentages)

	1980				1991				2000			
Race	15+	25+	40+	60+	15+	25+	40+	60+	15+	25+	40+	60+
White	16.1	20.1	27.2	38.8	11.9	14.2	20.8	31.2	8.3	10.3	14.5	24.3
African-descendant	37.9	45.2	55.9	71.1	28.3	33.8	46.2	61.9	18.7	23.7	33.1	50.4
Total	25.3	30.4	38.7	51.2	19.4	22.8	31.6	43.4	12.9	16.0	22.0	34.2

Source: LAESER, based on microdata from the 1980, 1991, and 2000 Demographic Censuses.

substantially lower, at 8.3 percent and 20.8 percent, respectively.[1]

Illiteracy rates in Brazil vary by region (tables 2 and 3), with the greatest concentrations in the northeast and southeast. Of the Brazilian population that was illiterate in 2000, over three-quarters lived in these regions: 51.4 percent in the northeast and 26.4 percent in the southeast. Among the functionally illiterate, 40.9 percent lived in the northeast and 33.0 percent in the southeast. In all regions of the country, illiteracy and functional illiteracy rates were higher for African-descendants than for any other racial group.

By region, illiteracy and functional illiteracy rates across all races were highest in the northeast, well exceeding national averages (tables 4 and 5). For example, about 36 percent of all African-descendants age 15 and older in Brazil in 2000 were functionally illiterate; the proportion of the corresponding African-descendant population in the northeast was about 10 percentage points higher. Similarly, the African-descendant illiteracy rate in the northeast was 27.6 percent in 2000, considerably greater than the 18.7 percent rate for the country's African-descendant population as a whole. Although African-descendants in Brazil's remaining four regions had illiteracy and functional illiteracy rates below their national average, in no region were these rates lower than those for whites and other races. Among whites age 15 and up, these rates stood at 19.5 percent and 35.0 percent. Table 6 shows the prevalence of illiteracy by race across Brazil's municipalities in 2000. In about 2 percent of the municipalities (115), the illiteracy rate among African-descendants exceeded 50 percent. Among whites, an illiteracy rate higher than 50 percent was registered in only 12 municipalities. The modal interval for African-descendants was an

[1]The illiteracy and functional illiteracy data discussed here were originally analyzed by Paixão (2003a).

Table 2: Total number of illiterate persons age 15 and older by region and race, 2000

Region	White	African-descendant	Other	Total
North	253,300	949,151	53,980	1,256,431
Northeast	2,061,473	5,793,422	40,416	7,895,311
Southeast	1,926,159	2,096,201	29,552	4,051,912
South	910,475	383,697	15,743	1,309,915
Central-West	306,611	503,199	19,839	829,649
Brazil	5,458,018	9,725,670	159,530	15,343,218

SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 2000 Demographic Census.

Table 3: Total number of functionally illiterate persons age 15 and older by region and race, 2000

Region	White	African-descendant	Other	Total
North	621,691	2,091,197	82,684	2,795,572
Northeast	3,703,889	9,648,603	68,203	13,420,695
Southeast	5,709,772	5,031,004	83,883	10,824,659
South	2,799,697	864,433	36,019	3,700,149
Central-West	831,940	1,167,087	38,590	2,037,617
Brazil	13,666,989	18,802,324	309,379	32,778,692

SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 2000 Demographic Census.

Table 4: Illiteracy rate of the population age 15 and older by region and race, 2000 (percentages)

Region	White	African-descendant	Other
North	11.0	17.0	15.7
Northeast	19.5	27.6	24.8
Southeast	5.8	11.2	7.7
South	6.0	14.1	7.2
Central-West	7.6	12.7	10.2
Brazil	8.3	18.7	12.9

SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 2000 Demographic Census.

Table 5: Functional illiteracy rate of the population age 15 and older by region and race, 2000 (percentages)

Region	White	African-descendant	Total
North	27.1	37.5	34.9
Northeast	35.0	45.9	42.2
Southeast	17.1	26.8	20.5
South	18.3	31.7	20.4
Central-West	20.5	29.6	25.1
Brazil	20.8	36.1	27.6

SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 2000 Demographic Census.

illiteracy rate between 30.0 and 49.9 percent; almost one-third (31.3 percent) of Brazilian municipalities had an African-descendant illiteracy rate falling in this range. In stark contrast, the modal interval for whites was an illiteracy rate below 14.9 percent; over half (54.6 percent) of the municipalities in the country had a white illiteracy rate at this lowest level. African-descendants registered an illiteracy rate at this level in only 20 percent of Brazil's municipalities.

Table 7 displays indicators of the prevalence of functional illiteracy by race across Brazil's municipalities. Here again, the African-descendant population experiences the largest proportions of functional illiteracy at the highest rates and the smallest proportions at the lowest rates. In 18.1 percent of Brazil's municipalities, the functional illiteracy rate of African-descendant residents exceeded 60.0 percent. Among whites, a corresponding rate was found in only 5.2 percent of the country's municipalities. In 21.9 percent of the municipalities, African-descendants had a functional illiteracy rate of between 50.0 and 59.9 percent; whites had a corresponding rate in 12.8 percent of the municipalities. Thus, in 40 percent of Brazilian municipalities, the functional illiteracy rate for African-descendants was higher than 50 percent. A comparable prevalence of functional illiteracy among whites occurred in only 18 percent of Brazil's municipalities. Conversely, the lowest range of functional illiteracy (less than 30 percent) among whites was found in 39.2 percent of Brazilian municipalities—but only in 11.3 percent of municipalities for African-descendants.

Illiteracy and functional illiteracy are thus experienced at widely diverging rates by whites and African-descendants, with the latter disproportionately over-represented among the illiterate.

Table 6: Illiteracy rate in Brazilian municipalities by race, 2000

Illiteracy rate	African-descendant		White	
	Number of municipalities	Percentage of municipalities	Number of municipalities	Percentage of municipalities
50% or higher	115	2.09	12	0.22
30% to 49.9%	1,728	31.38	809	14.69
20% to 29.9%	1,537	27.91	1,043	18.94
15% to 19.9%	1,005	18.25	636	11.55
0 to 14.9%	1,122	20.37	3,007	54.60
Total	5,507	100.00	5,507	100.00

SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 2000 Demographic Census.

Table 7: Functional illiteracy rate in Brazilian municipalities by race, 2000

Illiteracy rate	African-descendant		White	
	Number of municipalities	Percentage of municipalities	Number of municipalities	Percentage of municipalities
60% or higher	997	18.1	284	5.2
50% to 59.9%	1,205	21.9	705	12.8
40% e 49.9%	1,502	27.3	989	17.9
30% a 39.9%	1,178	21.4	1,371	24.9
0 to 30%	625	11.3	2,158	39.2
Total	5,507	100.00	5,507	100.00

SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 2000 Demographic Census.

1.2. Average Years of Education

In recent decades, there has been a pronounced increase in enrollment rates and average years of education by the Brazilian population, particularly among the young. These improved indicators apply to both African-descendants and whites.

Table 8, which captures data at three points between 1980 and 2000 for four age brackets by race and gender, clearly shows that the average number of years of education for the Brazilian population has increased over time. The largest gains—around three years of education, which represents a nearly twofold increase—were recorded for those age 15 and older. Differences by gender and race were apparent, however. Among whites in this age range, the increase was 3.47 years; among African-descendants, it was 3.08 years. For this age group, white females experienced the largest gain (3.59 years) and African-descendant males the lowest (2.86 years). Gains in average number of years of education for the older age brackets were also apparent, although not as large. Among whites, the average increases between 1980 and 2000 were 2.90 years for those 25 and older, 2.64 years for age 40 and up, and 1.61 years for those over 60. The corresponding figures among African-descendants were slightly lower: 2.66, 2.14, and 1.15 years, respectively.

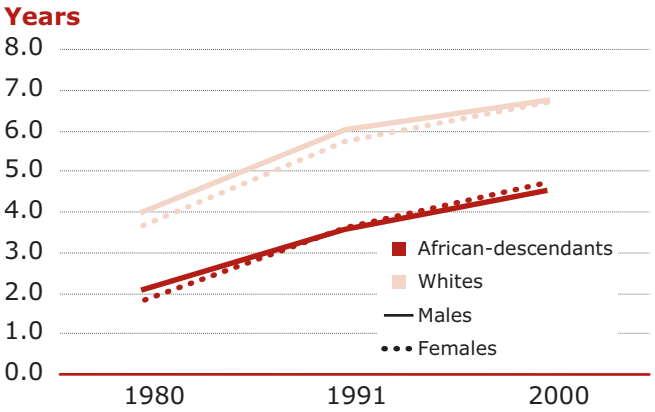
Figure 2 highlights the relative gains made by females in terms of average number of years of education completed. Where older cohorts clearly show that males of both races had more years of education than did their female counterparts, in the two younger

Table 8: Average number of years of education by race, gender, and age, 1980–2000 (percentages)

Race and gender	1980				1991				2000			
	15+	25+	40+	60+	15+	25+	40+	60+	15+	25+	40+	60+
White male	3.65	4.02	3.46	2.72	6.11	6.01	4.93	3.69	6.99	6.77	6.01	4.36
White female	3.49	3.66	2.88	2.19	6.03	5.73	4.35	3.09	7.08	6.70	5.62	3.80
White total	3.57	3.83	3.16	2.43	6.07	5.86	4.62	3.35	7.04	6.73	5.80	4.04
African-descendant male	2.03	2.05	1.56	0.97	3.87	3.62	2.57	1.52	4.89	4.52	3.62	2.12
African-descendant female	1.95	1.85	1.24	0.68	4.05	3.57	2.23	1.18	5.25	4.70	3.46	1.83
African-descendant total	1.99	1.95	1.40	0.82	3.96	3.59	2.40	1.34	5.07	4.61	3.54	1.97

SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 1980, 1991, and 2000 Demographic Censuses.

Figure 2: Average number of years of education of the population age 25 and older by race and gender, 1980–2000



SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 1980, 1991, and 2000 Demographic Censuses.

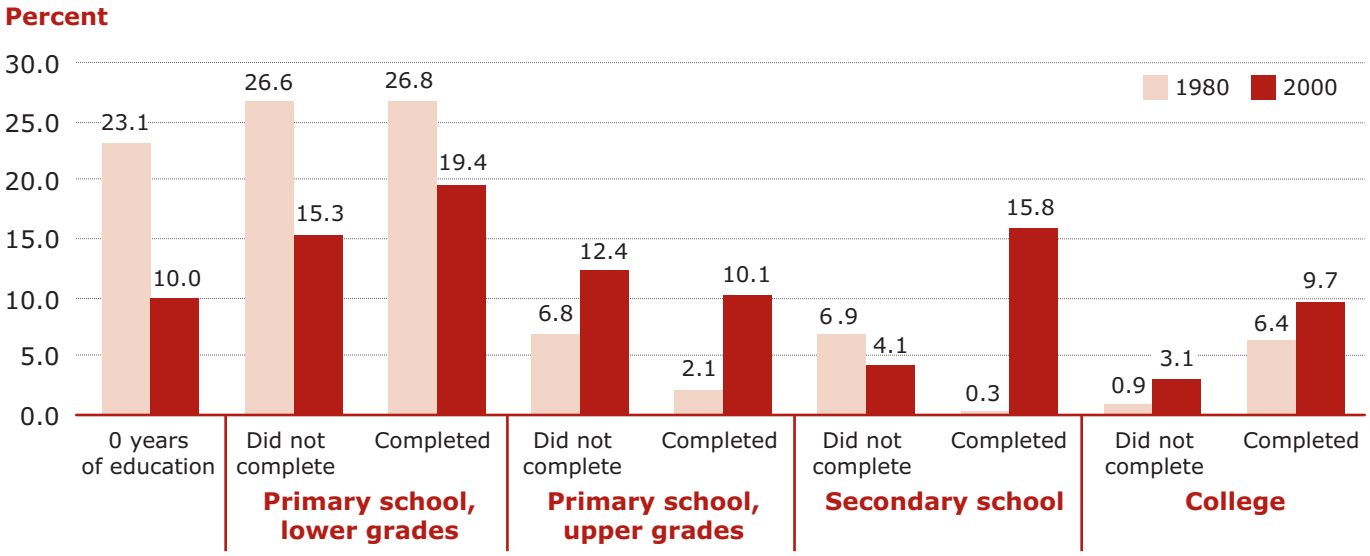
cohorts, the females (with one exception) surpassed the males in average number of years of education completed (table 8).

Despite these gains by both African-descendant and white females, significant racial disparities remained essentially constant—and in fact increased slightly—between 1980 and 2000. Moreover, even though both African-descendant and white females age 15 and older have surpassed their respective male counterparts in average number of years of education, African-descendant females still have an average of 2.07 years less education than do white males.

Another useful indicator in determining a population's educational improvement over time is level of education attained—completion of primary school, secondary school, higher education, etc. In this analysis, data for individuals age 25 and older are disaggregated by race, gender, and level of educational attainment for 1980 and 2000. As figures 3, 4, 5, and 6 show, significant changes occurred between 1980 and 2000 in terms of distributions by gender and race for levels of education among those age 25 and up.

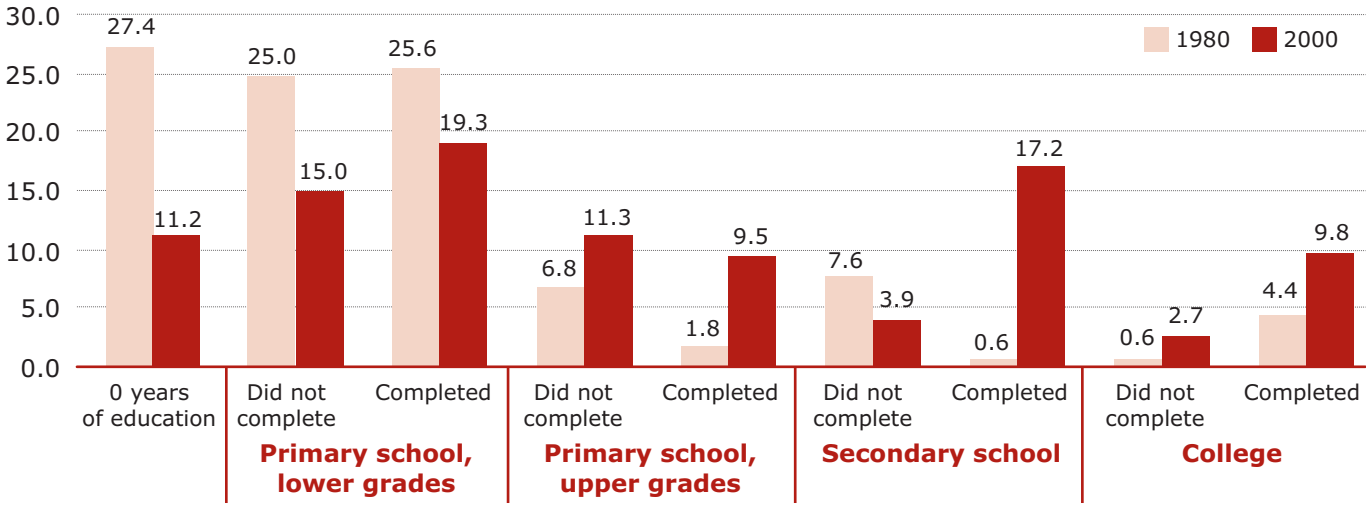
Over the 1980–2000 period, the proportions of white males age 25 and older who had not completed any years of education (not all of whom are illiterate) fell from 23.1 percent to 10.0 percent. Similar declines were found for the proportions of white males age 25 and older who did not complete primary school (from 26.8 percent to 19.4 percent) or secondary school (from 6.9 percent to 4.1 percent). In contrast, the proportions increased for those who attended the lower grades of primary school (from 6.8 percent to 12.4 percent), completed primary school (from 2.1 percent to 10.1 percent), and—especially—completed secondary school (from 0.3 percent to 15.8 percent). Additionally, the percentage of white males age 25 and older who completed college increased from 6.4 percent to 9.7 percent between 1980 and 2000 (figure 3).

Figure 3: Years of education completed by white males age 25 and older, 1980 and 2000



SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 1980, 1991, and 2000 Demographic Censuses.

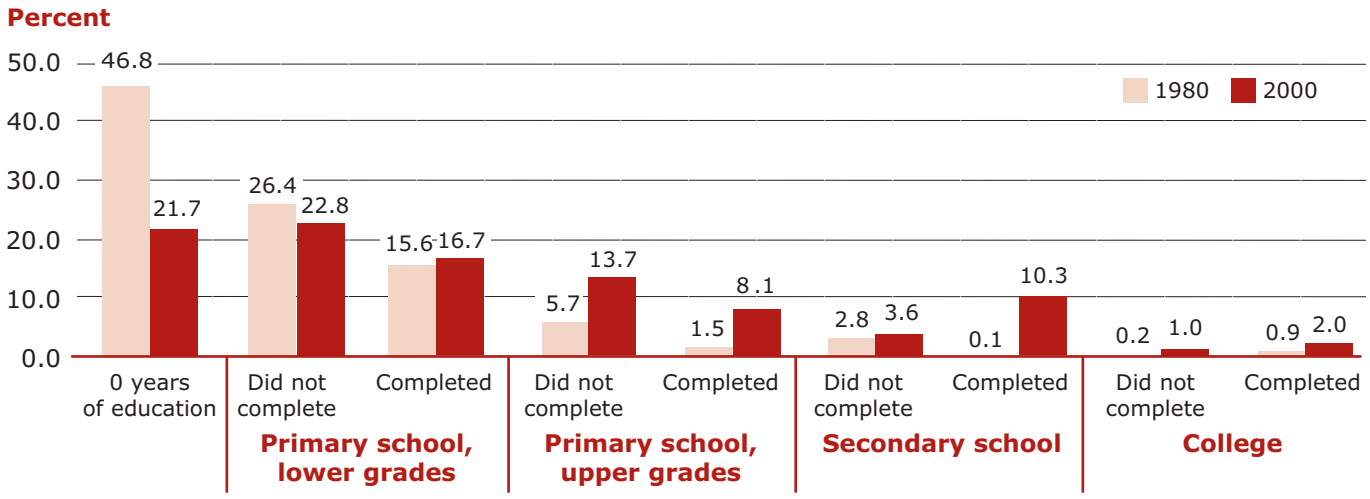
Figure 4: Years of education completed by white females age 25 and older, 1980 and 2000



SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 1980 and 2000 Demographic Censuses.

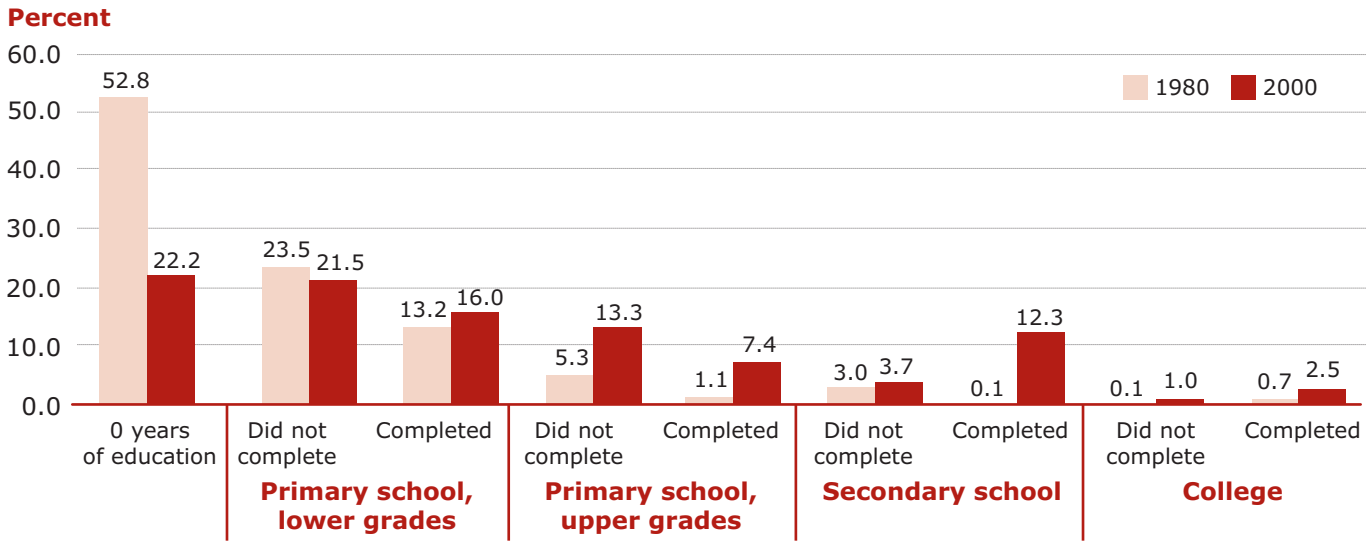
For white women over the age of 25, the increases in participation and completion of education at all levels were even more striking. Between 1980 and 2000, the proportion of white women age 25 and older who had not completed any years of education (but were not necessarily illiterate) dropped dramatically, from 27.4 percent to 11.2 percent. Similar drops were noted for those who did not complete the lower grades of primary school (from 25.0 percent to 15.0 percent), the upper grades of primary school (25.6 percent to 19.3 percent), and secondary school (7.6 percent to 3.9 percent). There were corresponding increases in

Figure 5: Years of education completed by African-descendant males age 25 and older, 1980 and 2000



SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 1980 and 2000 Demographic Censuses.

Figure 6: Years of education completed by African-descendant females age 25 and older, 1980 and 2000



SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 1980 and 2000 Demographic Censuses.

the proportions of white women age 25 and older who completed the lower grades of primary school (from 6.8 percent to 11.3 percent), all the years of primary school (1.8 percent to 9.5 percent), secondary school (0.6 percent to 17.2 percent); and those of this demographic who had completed some years of college (0.6 percent to 2.7 percent). The percentage of this group that completed all four years of college increased from 4.4 to 9.8 percent over the period (figure 4).

Figure 5 shows the changes in distributions by educational level for African-descendant men age 25 and

older between 1980 and 2000. There were relative reductions in the percentage that had not completed any years of education (but were not necessarily illiterate), from 46.8 percent to 21.7 percent; and in the percentage that did not complete the lower grades of primary school (26.4 percent to 22.8 percent). There were corresponding increases for those in this demographic group who completed the lower grades of primary school (from 15.6 percent to 16.7 percent), the upper grades of primary school (5.7 percent to 13.7 percent), all years of primary school (1.5 percent to 8.1 percent), some years of secondary school (2.8 percent to 3.6 percent), secondary school (0.1 percent to 10.3 percent), and some years of college (0.2 percent to 1.0 percent). The proportion of African-descendant males age 25 and older with a college degree increased from 0.9 percent to 2.0 percent between 1980 and 2000 (figure 5).

The changes in distributions for African-descendant females age 25 and older by educational level over the 1980–2000 period were not unlike those that occurred for their white male and female and African-descendant male counterparts. The proportion of women in this group who did not complete any years of study (but were not necessarily illiterate) fell from 52.8 percent to 22.2 percent; the proportion that did not complete the lower primary grades decreased from 23.8 percent to 21.5 percent. Increases occurred for the proportions completing the lower primary grades (13.2 percent to 16.0 percent), completing some upper primary grades (5.3 percent to 13.3 percent), completing all of primary school (1.1 percent to 7.4 percent), completing some secondary school (3.0 percent to 3.7 percent), completing all of secondary school (0.1 percent to 12.3 percent), and completing some college (0.1 percent to 1.0 percent). The percentage of African-descendant females age 25 and older who attained a college degree increased over the period from 0.7 percent to 2.5 percent (figure 6).

Thus, the educational attainment for all four examined subgroups of the Brazilian population age 25 and above increased at least through the lower grades of primary school—which is consistent with the information previously presented regarding the overall increase in the average years of education for these subgroups. Note, however, that progress was clearly unequal between African-descendants and whites. The percentages of whites age 25 and above who had at least a secondary school diploma increased from 7.6 percent and 5.6 percent for males and females, respectively, in 1980 to 28.6 percent and 29.7 percent in 2000. The increases among their African-descendant counterparts were considerably lower: the percentage of male African-descendants having at least a secondary school diploma increased from 1.2 percent to 13.3 percent; the percentage of females increased from 0.9 percent to 15.8 percent.

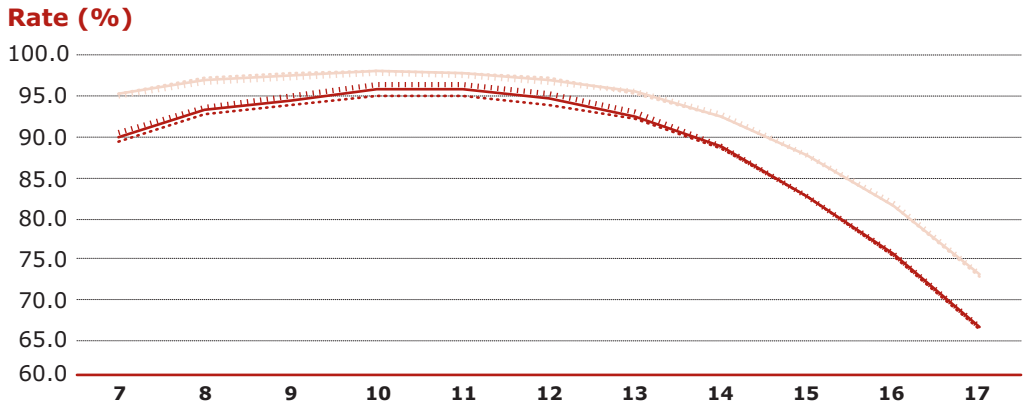
1.3. Enrollment Rates

As the data described above indicate, Brazil greatly expanded its educational network during the 1990s. This nationwide initiative of universal access for all children included efforts to target particular segments of the Brazilian population that had historically been excluded based on ethnicity, race, religion, etc. The strategy has been successful to a large extent—even reducing to some degree racial disparities with regard to access to Brazil's education system, especially at the primary school level (see Paixão and Carvano 2005).

Figure 7 shows enrollment in the Brazilian education system in 2000 for children age 7 to 17, disaggregated by race and gender.

The *net enrollment rate* is the number of students in a given age bracket enrolled at the appropriate educational level, regardless of scholastic performance or grade (due to repetition), expressed as a percentage of the population in that age group. Among whites,

Figure 7: Enrollment rates by race, gender, and age, 2000



	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
White male	94.9	96.7	97.1	97.7	97.4	96.7	95.5	92.5	87.7	81.6	73.1
White female	95.2	97.1	97.6	98.1	97.8	97.1	95.3	92.3	87.5	81.6	72.9
White total	95.1	96.9	97.3	97.9	97.6	96.9	95.4	92.4	87.6	81.6	73.0
African-descendant male	89.3	92.6	93.9	95.0	95.0	93.9	92.0	88.5	82.7	75.4	66.4
African-descendant female	90.4	93.7	94.9	96.4	96.3	95.1	93.0	88.9	82.7	75.6	66.8
African-descendant total	89.9	93.1	94.4	95.6	95.6	94.5	92.5	88.7	82.7	75.5	66.6

Age

SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 2000 Demographic Census.

the net enrollment rate in Brazil exceeded 90 percent for children age 7 through 14. Among African-descendant children, a comparable net enrollment rate (above 90 percent) was seen for age 8 through 13. Net enrollment peaks at age 10, when 97.9 percent of white children and 95.6 percent of black children are enrolled in school.

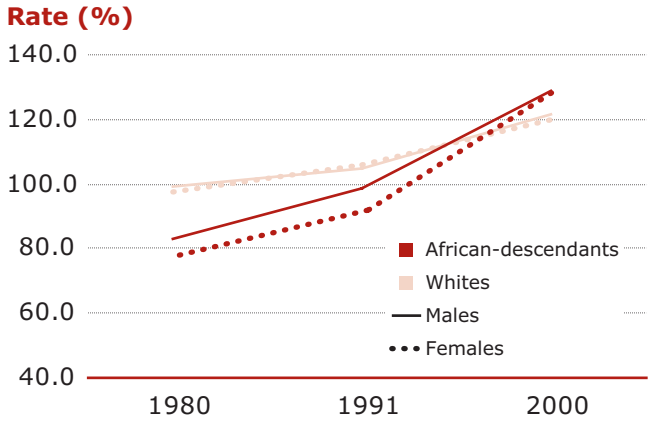
This picture of near-universal enrollment at the primary level masks a significant variation by race. The smallest racial differences exist around age 10 through 12, when the respective net enrollment rates for whites and African-descendants are separated by only about 2 percentage points, and by exactly 2 points at age 11 (97.6 percent coverage for whites and 95.6 percent coverage for African-descendants). But the difference between white and African-descendant net enrollment rates widens at either side of this midpoint, from a difference of 5.2 percentage points at age 7 to 6.4 points at age 17, with African-descendant enrollment always being lower than white.

Net enrollment decreases progressively among adolescents age 15 through 17. By age 17, only 73.0 percent of white adolescents and 66.6 percent of African-descendant adolescents are enrolled in school.

Figures 8 and 9 illustrate Brazilian gross enrollment rates for primary and secondary school disaggregated by race and gender for 1980, 1991, and 2000. The *gross enrollment rate* is the number of students enrolled at a given educational level (here, primary and secondary school) expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group (7 to 14 years of age for primary school and 15 to 17 years of age for secondary school) for a given educational level. Because many students who are actually enrolled in primary and secondary school are older than the eligible population age range, the enrollment rates presented here frequently exceed 100 percent.

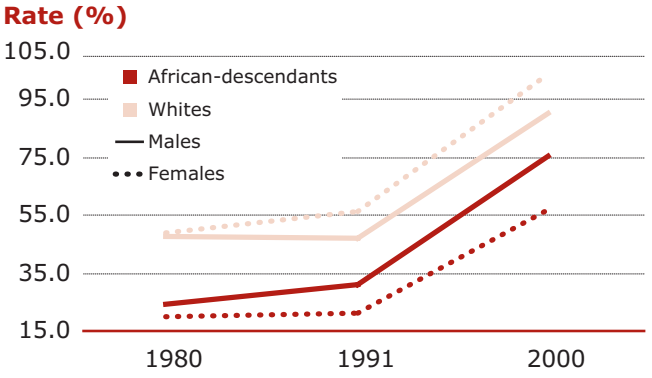
The dramatic increases shown in figures 8 and 9 reflect Brazil's intensive investment in improving gross

Figure 8: Primary school gross enrollment rate by race and gender, 1980–2000



SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 1980, 1991, and 2000 Demographic Censuses.

Figure 9: Secondary school gross enrollment rate by race and gender, 1980–2000



SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 1980, 1991, and 2000 Demographic Censuses.

enrollment rates for primary school among both African-descendant and white populations. Note, for example, the increases in primary school gross enrollment rates for white males and females between 1980 and 2000; these went from 99.0 percent and 97.4 percent to 121.4 percent and 120.0 percent, respectively. The increases for African-descendants at the primary level are even more striking, with rates for males and females increasing from 78.1 percent to 128.6 percent and from 82.8 percent to 129.3 percent, respectively. These increases make gross enrollment rates one of the few indicators—if not the only indicator—showing improvement of African-descendants over whites in the 1980–2000 period.

Closer examination of the data, however, reveals that the increases for African-descendants reflect delays in education alongside improved access to the Brazilian education system. Initially promising primary gross enrollment rate increases are further belied by the secondary school findings (figure 9). Although secondary gross enrollment rates improved dramatically for all subgroups examined, the rates for African-descendants lagged those for whites considerably. For example, the enrollment rate among white males rose from 47.7 percent in 1980 to 90.3 percent in 2000; the rate for white females rose from 48.7 percent to 103.7 percent. For African-descendant adolescents during the same interval, the enrollment rate for males increased from 19.9 percent to 57.0 percent; for females, the rate increased from 24.1 percent to 75.4 percent. The data thus suggest that access to secondary education remained more difficult for African-descendants than for whites.

1.4. Educational Efficiency and Adequacy

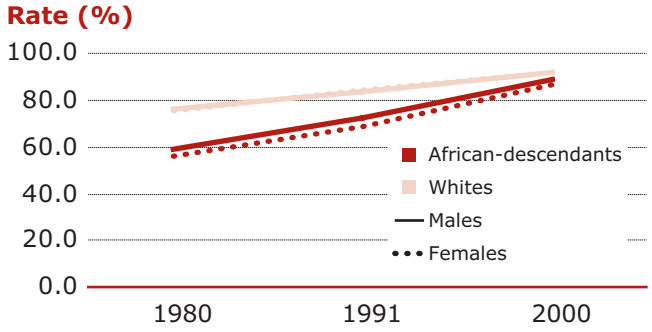
This subsection examines indicators of the efficiency and adequacy of the Brazilian education system in an effort to better quantify and qualify the enrollment data presented above. Specifically, it looks at rates of enrollment by age-appropriate grade levels.

Net enrollment rates, as described above, measure the percentage of students at a given educational level (primary or secondary school) who are at the appropriate level for their age cohort (7 to 14 years of age for primary school; 15 to 17 years of age for secondary school). From 1980 to 2000, Brazil saw substantial increases in net enrollment rates at the primary school level for both genders and for both African-

descendants and whites (figure 10). The rates for white males and females rose from 76.5 percent and 75.7 percent to 91.9 percent and 92.0 percent, respectively. Similarly, among African-descendants, rates increased from 56.2 percent to 87.2 percent for males and from 58.9 percent to 88.7 percent for females. However, there was a substantial difference between the net enrollment rates of African-descendants and whites—a difference that is masked in the gross enrollment rates discussed in the previous subsection.

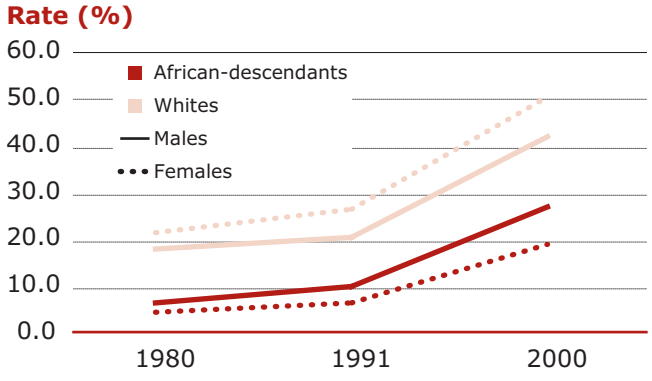
Figure 11 shows net secondary enrollment rates over the 1980–2000 period disaggregated by race and gender. Consistent with previously presented data, net enrollment drops considerably at this higher level of education; this is true for both genders and for both African-descendants and whites. There was, however, an improvement in net enrollment rates during the period covered. The rate among white males rose from 21.8 percent to 50.5 percent, and among white females from 18.5 percent to 42.5 percent. Among African-descendants, the net enrollment rates increased from 5.1 percent to 19.3 percent among males and from 7.1 percent to 27.1 percent among females. Obviously, a large difference persists between the net enrollment rates for African-descendants and whites, greatly favoring the latter; however, this gap did decrease over the period.

Figure 10: Primary school net enrollment rate by race and gender, 1980–2000



SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 1980, 1991, and 2000 Demographic Censuses.

Figure 11: Secondary school net enrollment rate by race and gender, 1980–2000

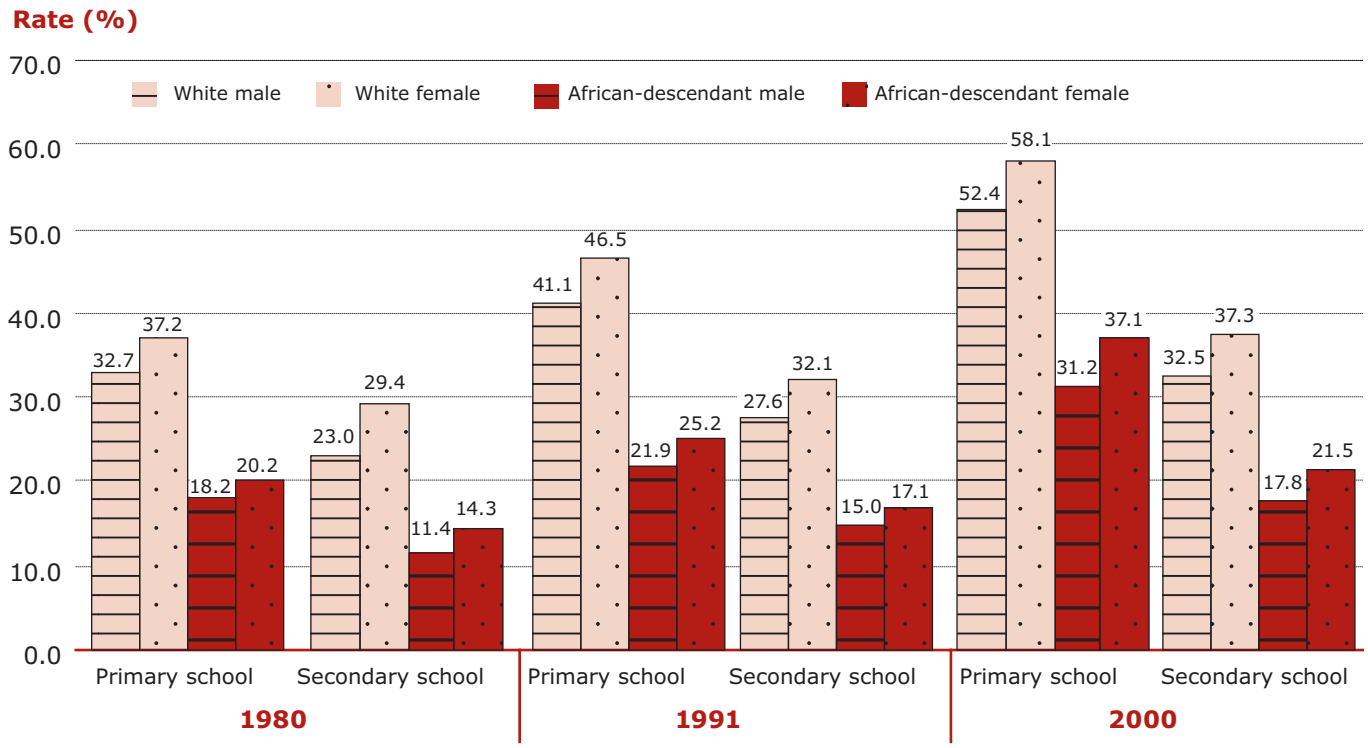


SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 1980, 1991, and 2000 Demographic Censuses.

Figure 12 shows the efficiency of the education system at the primary and secondary school levels. *Efficiency* is the number of students at the "correct" age for enrollment in a particular grade (for example, 7-year-olds should be in their first year of primary school; 17-year-olds should be in their third year of secondary school) expressed as a percentage of all students enrolled in that grade.

The efficiency of Brazil's education system increased over the 1980–2000 period; males, females, African-descendants, and whites all experienced this increase, albeit to differing degrees. The rate of white male enrollment at the appropriate primary school grade rose during the period from 32.7 percent to 52.4 percent; this represented a 60 percent increase in educational efficiency. White females experienced almost as large an increase (56.2 percent), with their grade-appropriate enrollment rising from 37.2 percent to 58.1 percent. The comparable efficiency increases for African-descendants were 71.4 percent for males and 83.6 percent for females, with the former's grade-appropriate enrollment rising from 18.2 percent to 31.2 percent, and the latter's from

Figure 12: Primary and secondary school efficiency rates by race and gender, 1980–2000



SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 1980, 1991, and 2000 Demographic Censuses.

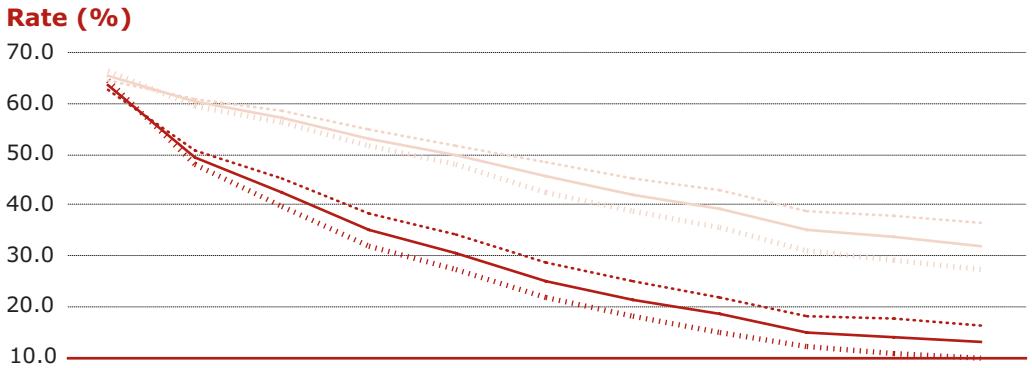
20.2 percent to 37.1 percent. Thus, the efficiency of the education system improved more intensively for African-descendant children than for white children. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the efficiency of the Brazilian education system at the primary school level for African-descendant children in 2000 was essentially the same as for white children in 1980 (figure 12).

Looking at the efficiency of the education system at the secondary school level, it is again obvious that progress has been made for both genders and both racial groups over the 1980–2000 period; however, this progress was insufficient to overcome racial disparities. Efficiency at the secondary school level in 1980 was 23.0 percent for white boys, 29.4 percent for white girls, 11.4 percent for African-descendant boys, and 14.3 percent for African-descendant girls. In 2000, these percentages had risen to, respectively, 32.5 percent, 37.3 percent, 17.8 percent, and 21.5 percent. In other words, the increases in efficiency were not sufficiently robust to close gaps between the genders and races.

Figure 13 shows the *adequacy rate* of children and young people with respect to the Brazilian education system, disaggregated by race and gender. This measure—unlike the efficiency of the education system, which refers to the percentage of students enrolled in a given grade that are the theoretically "correct" age for that grade—shows the percentage of the total population in a particular age group that is enrolled in the grade appropriate for their age.

In all gender and racial groups, the percentage of children studying at the appropriate grade level decreased with age. In other words, the education system's adequacy declined for older students, reflecting the numerous difficulties that children and young people in Brazil face in

Figure 13: Education system adequacy rates by race, gender, and age, 2000



	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
White male	66.4	59.5	56.0	51.5	48.2	42.5	39.0	35.5	31.1	29.2	27.3
White female	64.7	60.7	58.7	54.8	51.8	48.5	45.4	42.7	38.8	37.9	36.8
White total	65.5	60.1	57.3	53.1	50.0	45.5	42.2	39.2	35.0	33.6	32.1
African-descendant male	64.5	47.8	39.6	32.1	27.4	22.0	18.0	15.2	12.3	10.9	9.9
African-descendant female	62.5	50.9	45.3	38.3	34.1	28.6	25.0	22.0	18.2	17.6	16.6
African-descendant total	63.5	49.3	42.4	35.1	30.7	25.3	21.5	18.6	15.2	14.1	13.1

SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 2000 Demographic Census.

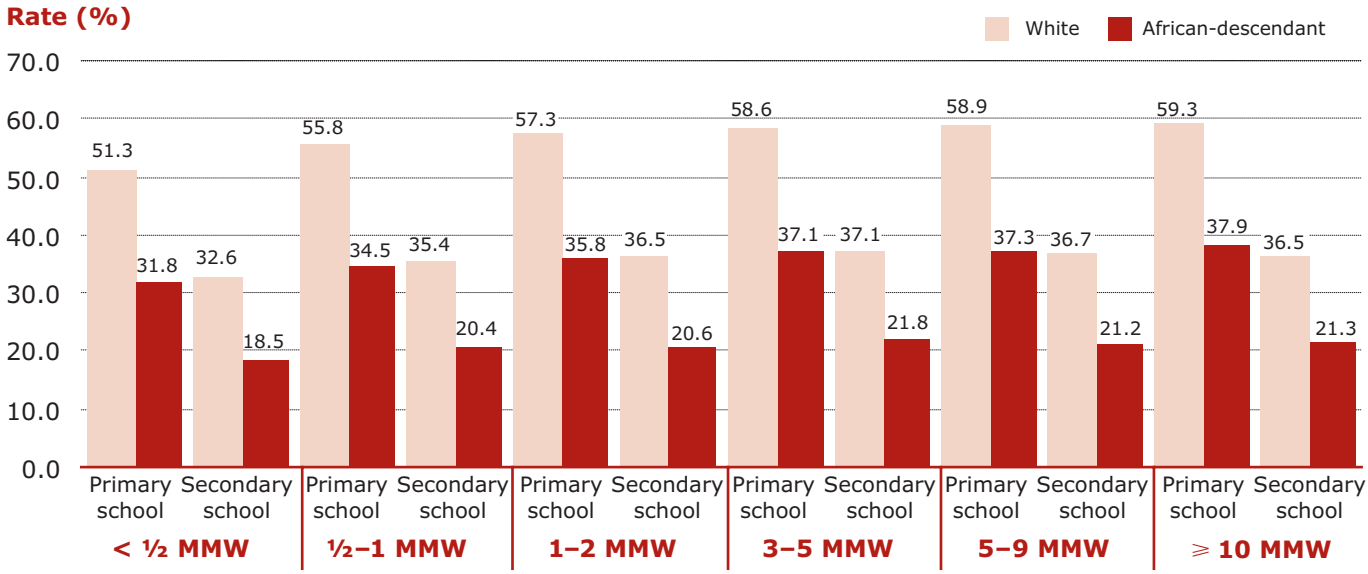
attempting to continue their schooling. Adequacy is not uniform across gender and racial groups; the system fails males and African-descendants more quickly than females and whites. Using extremes to demonstrate this difference in adequacy, the percentage of 17-year-old white females studying at the expected grade (third year of secondary school) was 36.8 percent. The corresponding percentage for African-descendant males was only 9.9 percent (figure 13).

When we compare adequacy rate data to the previously analyzed indicators of educational coverage, we can see that, even though educational coverage is almost universal nationwide, progress with regard to the quality of education has not matched this expansion. This is evidenced by the pervasive differences between the ages of Brazilian students and their enrollment rates in expected grades: clearly, large numbers of Brazilian students are not enrolled at the appropriate grade level. When disaggregated by race and gender, these differences become even starker.

Figure 14 plots data on the efficiency of the education system for subgroups of Brazilian students against per capita household income as measured in monthly minimum wages for 2000. This comparison enables consideration of variation in educational access by race and gender as an outcome of differentiated socioeconomic conditions—a topic further explored in the next section. As the figure indicates, efficiency rates are strongly correlated to household income—demonstrating that the economic conditions of students' families cannot be overlooked in any discussion of the quality of Brazil's education system.

Disparities by race and gender exist equally across all income levels. Thus race, and not just poverty, is an important factor in the educational development of Brazilian children and adolescents. To further explore this concept, we need to look beyond quantitative data on social indicators and mobilize qualitative information in our analysis. That is the core of the next section.

Figure 14: Education system efficiency rates by per capita household income and race, 2000



Source: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 2000 Demographic Census.

Note: Per capita household income is expressed in terms of monthly minimum wages (MMW).

2. Frameworks for Understanding Racial Disparities in the School Setting

Although the data clearly show pronounced racial divisions in participation in Brazil's education system, there is no consensus regarding the determinants of those differences. There are, however, two prominent schools of thought. One group of researchers associates racial differences in educational enrollment and attainment to social constructs such as poverty and class. Specifically, they attribute differential access to and participation in education to the rigidity of the Brazilian class structure and hereditary transmission of status and wealth, rather than to practices stemming from prejudice or discriminatory treatment of African-descendants. They maintain that education is the key to economic and social development, and that once barriers to equal access are overcome, social disparities will disappear. In contrast to these followers of human capital theory are researchers who attribute disparities in educational participation to pedagogical practices in the schools themselves, settings that are perceived as hardly receptive to full integration of African-descendant children. In the following sections, we present and contrast these two interpretations.

2.1. The Human Capital Theory

The human capital theory positively correlates an individual's performance level with his or her average number of years of study and professional experience as the primary factors in explaining social inequalities (see Becker 1965). This theory holds the educational variable to be key to both economic and social development.

In Brazil, the trailblazing study analyzing social inequalities using human capital theory is Geraldo Langoni's classic 1973 book. In this work, the author presents an interpretation of why the Brazilian Gini coefficient grew so significantly between 1960

and 1970, increasing from 0.54 to 0.57. According to Langoni, the reasons behind this increase in performance lay in (1) growing disparities in number of years of study by the Brazilian population during that period; and (2) structural changes within the Brazilian economy that tended to increase demand for more qualified labor, thereby raising that group's productivity level. The Langoni model did not examine the issue of racial discrimination in the job market—a task that, at any rate, would have been inconceivable at the time because of the lack of racial data captured by the 1970 census questionnaire.

The Langoni study became a seminal work in the field, serving as a veritable paradigm for subsequent analyses of the problem of social inequality formulated within a neoclassical framework. According to this model, the core of social disparities in Brazil lay in the unequal distribution of schooling and, to a lesser degree, work experience—the basic ingredients in the formation of individual human capital. Other agents (particularly those of a historical and structural nature) were essentially deemed ancillary characteristics. In the 1980s and 1990s, studies based on human capital theory enhanced their degree of topical and methodological complexity in analyzing the determining factors of Brazilian social inequalities (see Ramos and Reis 1991). However, these studies rarely attributed a more significant role to race relations in assessing the issue, even given the analytical possibilities that emerged with the use of a race category in the National Household Survey and by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics beginning in 1987.

In the mid-1990s, Paes e Barros and Mendonça (1995) drew on the human capital research done to date to conclude that inequalities in education accounted for between 35 and 50 percent of the salary asymmetries in the Brazilian job market, with race alone accounting for only 2 percent of such inequalities. In pinpointing the reason why African-descendants receive less schooling, the standard explanation is that their material living conditions are inferior to those of whites—that is, they are less educated because they are poorer. As one nonacademic commentator—Ali Kamel, news director of Globo Television, Brazil's largest media network and the fourth largest in the world—put it, "Whites make double what blacks and mixed race people make, but we cannot say that the reason is racism; the reason is always that blacks and mixed race people have less education because they are poor" (Kamel 2005, p. 7).

The economic asymmetries between African-descendants and whites are thus explained by disparities in the average schooling of each group, which are in turn explained by the asymmetries in their, and their parents', respective economic conditions—which would again be explained by inequalities in access to schooling. This circular reasoning does not allow us to truly grasp the dynamic of either the asymmetries between African-descendants and whites in the job market or of the existing disparities in access to schooling.

Even though many influential studies based on human capital theory did not acknowledge the importance of the racial dimension in the construct of Brazilian social inequalities, some did. The classic study that used human capital theory as a means of understanding the asymmetries between whites and African-descendants—in this case, in the former state of Guanabara in 1960—was conducted by Valle Silva (1980). In this study, the author underscored that a considerable portion of the difference in earnings between whites and African-descendants could not be attributed to education; given that people of different races/colors who had the same number of years of education had clearly dissimilar levels of

earnings, with whites receiving higher wages than African-descendants. For example, in the city of Rio de Janeiro, the rate of return for whites for each year of study was 12.4 percent, compared to 9.8 percent for African-descendants. According to Valle Silva, 17.6 percent of the remunerative differences detected between whites and African-descendants in that locality and time period were attributable to racial discrimination in the job market.

Valle Silva's contribution was expounded on in other important studies examining racial inequalities in education. The first of these was by Valle Silva himself who, over a decade later, could return to the subject armed with robust data from two national surveys, the 1976 and 1988 National Household Surveys (see Valle Silva 1992). His approach influenced other studies including those by Fernandes (2004), Henriques (2002), Lovell (1992), Martins (2003a, 2003b), Rocha (2005), Soares (2000), Soares et al. (2005), and Telles (2003). These studies—all of which based their findings on econometric regressions—arrived at convergent results regarding the relative weight of the racial discrimination variable in explaining differences in earnings of African-descendants and whites in Brazil.

The findings of these and similar studies rooted in human capital theory and critical of the Brazilian model of race relations are highly relevant. However, they can shift the focus of the debate on educational disparities toward terrain that is excessively anchored in economic variables (marginal labor productivity, average performance level, etc.) while neglecting the essential role of the school as a promoter of civics and a tool for overcoming traditional social roles by people of different gender, racial, and ethnic groups.

Even if we consider education as a determining factor of differences in earnings between different racial groups, we still need to address the question of why inequalities exist in education indicators in the first place. Can we be sure that these disparities do not reflect the larger dynamics of race relations between whites and African-descendants in Brazil? How could such dynamics not affect pedagogical practices in schools and thus determine professional development opportunities and scholastic success? It is thus useful to examine the ways in which pedagogical practices contribute to racism and discrimination in schools.

2.2. Pedagogical Studies in Race Relations

Human capital studies of education rarely take into account information deriving from the pedagogical field. This is common in studies on the problems of the Brazilian education system as a whole and is particularly pronounced when race and gender classifications are involved. Basically, it appears that studies that treat the matter of Brazilian social and racial inequality from a quantitative perspective tend to accord less significance to the qualitative dimensions of the problem, not acknowledging that both perspectives are necessary and complementary.[2]

The remainder of this section presents and summarizes some of the chief contributions from the vast literature on race relations in education. This survey is not in any way intended to be comprehensive. Rather, the objective is to present an initial systematization of the key qualitative agents responsible for producing racial inequalities in the Brazilian education system, namely (1) discrimination in the school setting,

[2]The case for studies on Brazilian racial inequalities that combine quantitative and qualitative data was developed by Paixão (2005). In large measure, the ideas presented here are rooted in those reflections.

(2) the limitations of the curriculum, (3) the nature and contents of formal and nonformal scholastic material, and (4) the role of parents as determinants of living conditions and as a force in confirming or overcoming discriminatory situations originating in the school.

Discrimination and Racism in School

The school environment serves as our point of departure in understanding racial inequalities in access to education. The school—following the family—today represents the main agent of socialization of children and young people. Nevertheless, according to studies on race relations in the school setting, the school in many cases and ways both reinforces and duplicates the traditional asymmetries between whites and African-descendants. As Cavalleiro (2003 [2000], p. 99) notes,

> …the school thus spreads prejudice and discrimination. Although such practices do not originate in the school, they are reinforced by the environment—beginning with day-to-day interactions and the diffusion of hostile values, beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes regarding the African-descendant group.

The first factor generating racial inequality in schools that we will examine is the unequal treatment accorded by teachers and other education professionals to children and young people from different racial groups in the classroom and other venues. In this way, according to educator Nilma M. Gomes (2001, p. 87) we

> …know that the school promotes a standard of teaching, learning, and professorship to be followed; a standard that incorporates a notion of man, woman, and social subject. What paradigm prevails in Brazilian schools? A closer look at the reality will show us that our schools still prefer a white, male, heterosexual, young model.

Cavalleiro notes that teachers commonly differentiate among their students: the

> …fact that teachers used the racial characteristics of their students to distinguish these pupils—"the little brown girl," "the little white girl," "that girl of color," "the little Japanese girl"—constituted a facet that deserves attention. We cannot cease to remember that this differentiation presents a problem, because a racial hierarchy exists in Brazil (Cavalleiro 2001, p. 144).

In this way, the abstract norm or standard—white, male—is tacitly contrasted with the actual diversity of the classroom, exposing the ways in which the education system trains children and adolescents.

Cavalleiro (2001, p. 98), in describing a municipal preschool in São Paulo, points out that the

> …school offers white and African-descendant students different opportunities to feel accepted and respected, and to be positive participants in Brazilian society. Ethnic origin stipulates a differentiated treatment at school.

Such unequal forms of treatment, Cavalleiro observes, manifested themselves through three basic modalities: (1) different probabilities of receiving verbal praise or criticism in school—whether in the classroom or in other settings—for people having different racial appearances; (2) nonverbal practices demonstrating or withholding affection (e.g., hugs, tenderness, kisses) on the part of teachers with regard to children of different racial groups; and (3) pedagogical practices that—consciously or not—end up reinforcing racial stereotypes or the "invisibility" of African-descendants in Brazilian society, be that in a classroom, in formal and nonformal educational texts, or in posters placed on school walls.

Specialized literature similarly emphasizes the social actors responsible for this unequal treatment. Teachers are prominent figures, due to their multiple

interactions with children and adolescents. The teaching practices that lead to the unequal treatment of white and African-descendant children in school reveal a combination of a prejudiced, socially constructed mentality and a lack of preparation in handling racial diversity in the school setting. As educator Maria Cidinha Silvia asserts, the

> …teaching staff in general is unaware of the serious differences that exist in the scholastic performance of African-descendant and white children. The staff does not make links between race/ethnic group, gender, and school performance, nor does it realize how that nonperception interferes with their own conduct. Meanwhile, it is known that perceptions determine relationships, behaviors, expectations, and social interactions (Cidinha Silva 2001, p. 66).

The classroom appears to be an ideal environment for the manifestation of racially discriminatory practices. In her master's thesis examining race relations in schools in Teresina (Piauí State) in the late 1990s, Francisca Souza (2005, p. 112) notes that

> …the classroom and the school as a whole have characterized themselves as a space of conflict where African-descendant girls and African-descendant boys have difficulty positively consolidating their identity and self-esteem. This is primarily due to the customary linking of the African-descendant individual with pejorative situations or things, and by way of crude and unpleasant nicknames or comparisons.

Despite the significant role that the teaching body plays in the formulation of these asymmetric ways of treating children and adolescents from different racial groups, it is worth noting that teachers are not the only group responsible for the generation of such unequal forms of social interaction. We can also point to curriculum coordinators, school principals, and support staff, among others. Cavalleiro (2003 [2000], p. 54), for example, emphasizes that

> …it is possible to detect the lack of questions about ethnic diversity in day-to-day school activities—whether on the part of teachers, the curriculum coordinators, or the school administration; this points to ill-preparation and disinterest on the part of the school to address this issue.

Peers also contribute to the propagation of unequal treatment. Commenting on preschool interactions, Cavalleiro (2003 [2000], pp. 52–53) writes that

> …observing the children in the park also allowed me to witness concrete instances of prejudice and discrimination among them. In that environment, they have the freedom to choose their partners and decide how much time they will spend playing with them. Away from the teacher, they can say whatever they want…in this venue, some explicitly prejudiced language was heard at times when something was disputed: power, physical space, or company. That led me to believe that the use of such language is more commonplace in moments when the Other—who up until that time was participating in the group—is sought to be defeated…in times of dispute, prejudice and discrimination appear as powerful weapons capable of undermining their victims.

Similarly, Cunha (1987, p. 52) points to the racially prejudiced relationship between white and African-descendant peers as one of the principal agents generating asymmetries within schools. Like Cavalleiro, Cunha highlights the impact of racism on African-descendant children stemming from racial aggression by their classmates with a lack of preparation on the part of teaching professionals—not to mention their possible tacit approval of such discriminatory practices—to overcome the problem:

> During times of conflict between children, the African-descendant child experiences race-related verbal aggression. In such situations, teachers and staff often only become aware of the facts and do not know how to deal with them on the level of the significance of racial discrimination. This only reinforces the ideologically pejorative universe that the child consciously and unconsciously knows.

Cavalleiro (2003 [2000], p. 101) also pays considerable attention to the issue of silence that prevails in the scholastic environment when it comes to race relations:

> By keeping silent, the school screams inferiority, disrespect, and contempt. In that environment, today's shame—coupled with that from yesterday and very likely with that from tomorrow—leads African-descendant children to repress their emotions, contain their gestures and words in order to, who knows, go unnoticed in "a space that is not yours."

Another important point Cunha (1987, p. 53) emphasizes deals with obstacles to African-descendant children assuming prominent positions in festivities and other events of great social relevance within the school:

> Situations where the child is kept from occupying a prominent position because she is African-descendant also occur. This is very common at school parties where, for example, the queen of the square dance cannot be an African-descendant girl; or in theatrical skits, where angels also cannot be African-descendant.

The racial hierarchies that exist within the school environment are manifested in myriad ways, primarily in terms of treatment by teachers and support staff; all of these point toward the superiority of the white child in relation to the African-descendant child in terms of aesthetics, expectations for scholastic success, judgment of behavior, and even their very humanity based on racial features. Cavalleiro (2003 [2000], p. 93) interviewed a teacher who—without a hint of awkwardness—explicitly associated African-descendant people and children with "filth, bad odor, bad breath, and lice, which were reportedly on the decline only because of 'our industrial products that ease that smell.'" Gomes points out that, in the Brazilian school environment,

> …the white standard becomes synonymous with artistic purity, aesthetic noblesse, moral majesty, scientific knowledge, and the notion of reason. Peace, beauty, what is good, fair, and true are white. Violence, ugliness, injustice, and strife are African-descendant. Culture distorted as depiction is attributed to whites. Culture distorted as exoticism and/or primitiveness is attributed to African-descendants (Gomes 2001, p. 93).

Not surprisingly, the effects of racially differentiated treatment result in the attainment of differentiated benefits in school on the part of children with different racial markedness.[3] Again citing Cavalleiro,

> A person who is ignored, mistreated, and "neglected" can lose his or her sense of self, acknowledging his or her failure. Such a person can also become extremely demanding of him or herself—not allowing him or herself to fail or make mistakes in any situation (Cavalleiro 2001, p. 155).

As for white children, it is worth emphasizing that this reality only appears to be advantageous. Although they affirm their superior position on several social scales (aesthetic, symbolic, access to social mobility opportunities), they do so as the standard-bearers of an ignorant and limited mindset: "All that is left is for white children to grasp their unreal ethnic superiority and to understand the equally unreal inferiority of African-descendant individuals" (Cavalleiro 2003 [2000], p. 98).

[3]The use of the term "racial markedness" derives from the classic typology of sociologist Oracy Nogueira (1985), who defined the modality of racial prejudice prevalent in Brazil as one of "marking." Such a form of racism differs from the racial prejudice displayed in North American or South African society, which is based on *origin*. Brazilian-style racism is here seen as being based on several criteria of appearance—going far beyond skin color to involve the composite perception of facial and physical characteristics—unequivocally related to an implicitly racist ideology. This theoretical perspective can be found in Guimarães (1999) and Paixão (2005).

Prejudice and racism in the school setting thus exist on several planes, making these institutions inadequate for the full intellectual and emotional development of African-descendant children and adolescents. It seems clear that such a pervasive problem cannot be resolved without explicit effort:

> Many times, the school is not aware of this reality or does not take it into consideration. It is commonly thought that the fight for a democratic school is enough to ensure equal treatment for all. This belief is quite mistaken. Sometimes, the educational practices that are meant to be equal for all end up being the most discriminatory ones. This statement might sound paradoxical but, depending on the discourse and the practice developed, the error of homogenization might be made to the detriment of difference recognition. To suppose that students present in school are all equal and therefore are uniform in learning, culture, and experiences, and that those who do not identify themselves with this uniform standard are behind, special, and slow is to take a position that—in disqualifying a reference—produces domination. How often do we find this concept and perception in the daily activities of our schools? (Gomes 2001, p. 86).

Universalizing access to the school system and democratizing the school environment, rather than fighting this institutional racism, are abetting it, since all citizens will now be exposed to the school system. Gomes refers to the problem of teachers' educational and theoretical background in adequately facing this situation. In this regard, Cavalleiro (2005, p. 82) points out that

> …most of the education professionals have not had the opportunity to systematically study the dynamics of race relations and the fight against racism in Brazilian society. Following this path, they end up incorporating references from common wisdom on the inequalities between African-descendants and whites in Brazilian society into their speeches and practices.

Therefore, today's challenge is to improve the capacity of the staff and other education professionals to address the issue of student diversity within the school setting, both through the curricular plan and educational tools (school textbooks and reading books) they are provided with, and through their theoretical—and even political—training to facilitate their becoming allies in the effort to overcome racial inequalities among Brazilian children and adolescents.

Curricular Limitations

Throughout almost the entire 20th century, concern for or recognition of racial diversity and multiculturalism was virtually absent from Brazilian classrooms.

This changed in 1987, when the Carlos Chagas Foundation published a special issue of its journal, *Cadernos de Pesquisa*, which included a collection of works presented and debates held at the foundation-sponsored African-Descendants and Education Seminar held in December 1986.[4] One-third of this publication was devoted to the theme of the curricula adopted in Brazilian schools since different curricula had been adopted by state or municipal secretaries of education, which bore little resemblance to one another and were largely uncoordinated.[5] Thus, at that point,

[4]An analysis of the treatment given to the topic of race in *Cadernos de Pesquisa*, including in this special issue number 63, can be found in Souza (2001).

[5]Taking part in this curriculum workshop, entitled "Curriculum: Implementation Proposals and Experiences," were Rachel Oliveira and Ismael Antônio Freire, then members of the Council of Development and Participation of the Black Community in the city of São Paulo; Vanda M. S. Ferreira, then Municipal Secretary of Culture for the city of Rio de Janeiro; Manoel A. Cruz, then member of the Afro-Brazilian Cultural Group in the city of Salvador (Bahia State); and Carlos Moura, then assistant for Afro-Brazilian Cultural Affairs at the Ministry of Culture.

> …the curricula proposals geared toward lower classes are misleading and strengthen the myth of racial democracy because, since they do not include the history of Africa, they do not take into consideration the identity of 45 percent of the Brazilian population (Oliveira 1987, p. 64).

Since then, remarkable changes have occurred within Brazilian curricula. Change was first implemented with the approval of Law 9394/1996, containing the new National Education Bases and Guidelines, which states that "the teaching of Brazilian history will take into account the contributions of different cultures and ethnic groups in the formation of the Brazilian people, especially those of indigenous, African, and European origins" (clause 25, paragraph 5). Later, other important initiatives contributed to the progressive readaptation of the Brazilian education system to a multicultural and racially diverse perspective, such as the Human Rights National Program, and the resolutions of the Third World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance, held in Durban, South Africa. Finally, the 2003 Federal Law 10.639 altered Law 9394/1996, establishing the mandatory teaching of Afro-Brazilian history and culture in the Brazilian school system (Santos 2005 [1999]). Report CNE/CP 3/2004 and Resolution CNE/CP 1/2004, which address the curriculum guidelines for the education of ethnic-racial relations and for the teaching of Afro-Brazilian and African history and culture (see Silva 2006 and Souza 2005), regulate this law.

Clearly, the way in which the institutional environment addresses the issue of curriculum parameters has changed profoundly from the first initiative of the Carlos Chagas Foundation in 1987 to the January 2003 passage of Law 10.639. We hold this to be one of the greatest achievements of the contemporary African-descendant movement in Brazil, not only of those within the education sector.[6]

This law follows an alternative perspective developed by education scholars connected to the anti-racist movement, Africanities. This concept is defined by Petronilha Silva (2005 [1999], p. 155) as the

> …ways of being, living, and organizing struggles that are characteristic of Brazilian African-descendants and, on the other hand, characteristic of the marks of African culture—which regardless of the ethnic origin of each Brazilian—are part of their daily lives.

It is difficult to truly measure just how important the concept of Africanities is for education in a dependent and peripheral Western country such as Brazil, whose society has constructed a common perception about Africa, Africans, and Afro-Brazilians, which associates them culturally and/or physically with animal-like, primitive, mystical, and folkloric beings.[7]

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[6]A synthesis of the contents of *Pensamento Negro em Educação* (*Black Thought in Education*) can be found in Silva and Barbosa (1997), with eight articles that summarize the perspective of the educational proposal. Santos (2005 [1999]) provides a good summary of how this institutional environment began to change, starting in several Brazilian municipalities and states, until reaching the federal government arena. The author credits the influence of the African-descendant movement in altering the relevant legislation.

[7]Space limitations prohibit discussion of the motivations that led Brazilian society to have so uncritically incorporated such a backward concept of the people who inhabit the African continent, together with their artistic, intellectual, and philosophical legacy. On the other hand, it is well known that these forms of perception are dynamically connected to the subordinate role that African descendents play in Brazilian society. For a reflection on the African cultural legacy in technological terms, see Larkin Nascimento (2001). An interesting interpretation of this mode of negative understanding of the presence of African-descendants in Brazilian society is given by Guerreiro Ramos (1995 [1957]), in his classic work "Patologia do Branco Brasileiro" ("Pathology of Brazilian Whites"). A more in-depth study of aspects of the cosmology of African religions of Yoruba origin, and the contrast with the rationalist cosmology of the West, can be found in Bastide (2000 [1958]).

The educational alternatives presented by Africanities bring with them a perspective that values both racial diversity within the educational framework (especially in terms of the symbolism and attributes conferred to people with different racial features within the school setting) and the intrinsic wealth of the diaspora's African cultural heritage.

Nonetheless, the new obstacles are clear, especially those deriving from implementation of Law 10.639. Thus, adoption of Africanities will have to overcome two basic challenges: (1) training middle and secondary school teachers so that they are able to educate children and adolescents from a diverse and multicultural perspective that is not limited to the study of African and Afro-Brazilian struggles and culture from their already known folkloric aspects, which frequently end up reinforcing old stereotypes and prejudices; and (2) devising procedures that allow the spirit of the law to be applied beyond the subjects of history and geography to encompass other areas of knowledge (Portuguese, mathematics, the sciences, etc.), as per the objective expressed in the National Education Bases and Guidelines of 1996.

Regarding the first challenge, it is beyond the scope of this paper to present a comprehensive list of the various teacher training experiences in the public and private sectors.[8] However, it seems plausible that the process of providing better education for teachers to ensure full application of the law will require the production of specific educational material, direct engagement with other teaching profession issues, changes in the content at teaching colleges, preparatory courses for primary-level teachers, and multiple efforts aimed at expressing the relevance of an anti-racist perspective for education professionals. In this regard, this issue cannot be separated from the previous discussion of educational practices, and the same precepts will apply.

Regarding the second challenge, the curricular expansion of Africanities, Silva (2006) establishes important contributions that go beyond history and geography in applying the educational perspective of Africanities in mathematics, the natural sciences, psychology, physical education, music education, the visual arts, literature, and sociology.[9] These ideas, in our opinion, are initial suggestions and their content still must be developed in-depth.

Educational Tools and Materials

The studies carried out on racial relations education find school textbooks to be an especially important aspect of their analyses. Research has examined how the different racial and gender groups in Brazil are depicted in educational tools and materials, and the role that such representations can play in terms of the educational progress of white and African-descendant children. Like curricula, racism in school textbooks was the subject of a workshop in the 1986 Blacks and Education Seminar promoted by the Carlos Chagas

[8]Within the private sector, the most ambitious project in teacher training at the middle and secondary school levels that sought to put into effect Law 10.639 was the A Cor da Cultura (the Color of Culture) project, which was promoted by the Roberto Marinho Foundation and coordinated by Ana P. Brandão. The project developed an educational toolkit comprised of 4 booklets, 10 videotapes, and an educational game on the history of the African-descendant population in Brazil since the beginning of slavery to present times. For a study of the set of private sector initiatives that have been adopted to foster affirmative action policies in education, see Cidinha Silva (2006).

[9]The perspective of Africanities in the field of geography is also developed by Anjos (2005). The perspective of Africanities in the study of religion is discussed by Inocêncio da Silva (2005).

Foundation.[10] It is worth noting that research on racism in school textbooks in Brazil has been conducted since the 1950s, beginning with the pioneering studies of G. Holanda and W. Bazzanella (see Negrão 1987). Pinto (1987) provides a synthesis of the topic, drawing on work she conducted to develop her master's thesis, for which she analyzed the illustrations and texts of 48 fourth-grade reading books used from the late 1970s to early 1980s. These books were randomly chosen from an annual list published by the São Paulo State Secretary of Education, covering the period 1941 to 1975. This list sought to guide public and private schools in their decisions regarding educational materials to be used by their students. Pinto puts forth three major conclusions regarding text and illustrations:

- Whites were presented more often in text and images than members of any other racial group. They were used to represent people in general, occupied key positions in the written passages and illustrations, and were portrayed in the most prominent areas of the books. The opposite was true for African-descendants and mestizos, who seldom appeared in prominent positions in text or illustrations.
- African-descendants and mestizos usually appeared in a stereotypical manner: for example, as a caricatured African-descendant maid with strong, markedly African-descendant facial features and a hard body. In addition, the language used regarding African-descendants and mestizos reinforced their subordinate role in Brazilian society.
- The white characters appeared in more diverse situations, in terms of professional occupations (36 in all), many entailing high social prestige and power. In contrast, African-descendants were represented in only nine types of activities and mestizos were present in just five, the majority of which involved menial occupations (Pinto 1987, p. 88).

The above notwithstanding, Pinto notes that

> It is important to emphasize that we found practically no explicit defense of prejudice in the books analyzed. On the contrary, in the explicit declaration of intentions detected in the principles issued and in the demonstrative structure of the stories, one perceives the intention of making the book into a vehicle for openness and the formation of democratic awareness (Pinto 1987, p. 89).

Ana C. Silva used research conducted on five sixth- and seventh-grade Portuguese-language textbooks from the 1990s to point out that the recent changes in the Brazilian institutional and political environment favored some transformations in school textbooks. She notes, "the social representation of Afro-descendants in the books analyzed present the African-descendant subject in a humanized fashion, with civic rights" (Silva 2001, p. 128).

During the 1990s, public authorities targeted school textbooks for a more careful analysis to avoid the spread of a prejudiced, discriminatory message. The constitution of 1988 is one of several legal vehicles that contributed to this shift, together with the National Program of Human Rights—the document presented by the Brazilian government at the Third World Conference against Racism in Durban—and

[10]The special issue of *Cadernos de Pesquisas* (no. 63) covered this workshop as well and included information by Esmeralda Negrão and Regina P Pinto (both of the Carlos Chagas Foundation), Vera Triumpho (Pastoral Negro/Rio Grande do Sul State), Ana C. Silva (Federal University of Bahia State), Joel Rufino dos Santos (then of the History Museum of the City of Rio de Janeiro) and Ademil Lopes (a primary school teacher). The workshop also included a discussion with other specialists and activists on the topic.

the National Education Bases and Guidelines in 1996 (Rosenberg, Bazilli, and Silva 2003).[11]

The National School Textbook Program (PNLD) also helped adjust the behavior of publishing houses and authors of school textbooks. In 1996, this program adopted an educational assessment system for books registered at the Ministry of Education to be used as scholastic material. Although the program has undergone several changes since its inception, it could be said that there has been a ban on open manifestations of prejudicial material regarding origin, race, gender, color, age, and any other considerations generating discrimination since 1996 (see Rosenberg, Bazilli, and Silva 2003).

Today, the PNLD evaluates Brazilian school textbooks and ranks them as recommended with honors, recommended, recommended with reservations, and not recommended/excluded. Only books that are recommended are included in the school textbooks guide and can be selected by teachers as educational tools. The recommendation criteria include the absence of text and images that incite prejudice and discrimination, including ethnic and racial discrimination. Rosenberg, Bazilli, and Silva point out that, in 2001, of the 569 titles analyzed for the first four grades of primary school and the 414 titles analyzed for the fifth through eighth grades, the recommendation rates were 54.4 percent and 62.5 percent, respectively.

[11]In this regard, we should also mention the Organic Laws of eight Brazilian municipalities—Salvador (Bahia State), Goiânia (Goiás State), São Luiz do Maranhão (Maranhão State), Belo Horizonte (Minas Gerais State), Rio de Janeiro, and São Paulo. Also, the constitution of the state of Goiás says that school textbooks must not express any form of discrimination or prejudice. The systematization of the municipal Organic Laws and the state constitutions mentioned by Rosenberg, Bazilli, and Silva (2003) were originally collected by legal scholar Hédio Silva Jr.

The authors note reservations regarding two issues in this context. First, they call attention to a document signed by the Ministry of Education/PNLD, which analyzed the books adopted by teachers after the agency evaluations. "According to the study, the choices predominantly follow a pattern of preference for books in the categories less valued by the assessment" (Brazil Ministry of Education in Rosenberg, Bazilli, and Silva 2003, p. 140). The researchers conclude that "recommendations do not translate into use, just as nonrecommendation/exclusion does not constitute 'non-use' of the book in the classroom by the teacher" (Rosenberg, Bazilli, and Silva 2003, p. 140).

Second—based on analyses carried out by another researcher (Beisiegel)—Rosenberg, Bazilli, and Silva show that most opposition to textbook referral was not due to the illegal presence of prejudiced texts and images. Rather, textbooks were refused recommendation because their contents belied the Brazilian model of race relations. This is in fact the problem, because discrimination against African-descendants tends to occur through socially hierarchical mechanisms, not by the explicit verbal manifestation of racism. In the absence of a full understanding of this reality on the part of the evaluators from the Ministry of Education/PNLD, the authors voice their skepticism regarding the wholesale efficiency of the legal measure.

> As we have noticed, racist discourse rarely presents itself in this form, and even certain texts which take an anti-racist stance could convey racist messages—which can only be captured through relevant conceptualization and methodology. What was absent from the evaluation was the theoretical, conceptual, and methodological refinement that has been guiding research on race relations in Brazil (Rosenberg, Bazilli, and Silva 2003, p. 140).

Other educational tools need to be looked at with regard to possible racist content. In tools such as short stories, traditional folktales, inexpensive and informal

literature, and classical literature, stereotypes and racial prejudices tend to be more common because these were produced over time within Brazilian society, and thus contain and reflect more acceptance of a subordinate role for African-descendants in social, aesthetic, cultural, and political terms than is the case today. Also, educational tools express racially stereotyped and prejudiced conceptions more easily because these are frequently masked in the spirit of jest, fun, or traditionalist ideas (see Souza 2005).

The content of educational tools has recently been undergoing a positive transformation similar to that of textbooks, and it is now more common to find material promoting racial diversity and respect for cultural differences (see Silva 2001 and Souza 2005).

Although this recent progress must be taken into account, we should not ignore the resistance of Brazilian society when it comes to fully implementing these reform measures. The absence of racially stereotyped and prejudiced texts and images does not necessarily imply the valorization of physical and cultural diversity: the lack of mention and images of African-descendants, indigenous peoples, people with special needs and disabilities, etc., means only that the "other" has been totally removed from books.

Negative portrayals of African-descendants and others in existing educational textbooks and materials, while inappropriate, reflect real-world inequalities. Psychologist Edna Roland quite appropriately highlighted this at the roundtable of the Blacks and Education Seminar:

> I have the impression that until now, we have been trapped in this discussion. We complain that school textbooks depict us as housemaids, cleaning servants, dock workers, and that's outrageous but, at the same time, we observe that we can only be hired as housemaids and cleaning servants. We have no chances of improving, no space to participate. Therefore, this is not about building an unreal image of African-descendants in school textbooks, but it does concern thinking about how school textbooks can mirror this reality, showing why this reality exists, and why things are the way they are (Roland 1987, p. 103).

This comment can be applied to the areas of knowledge covered by the Africanities perspective. The fact that we have to fight against racially stereotyped and prejudiced images and texts in educational material should not stop us from reflecting on the way that they present reality—in which racial disparities are undeniably evident. Certainly, school textbooks and tools should not reinforce the popular wisdom of Brazilian racial hierarchies as if these had been naturally produced. However, educational material should rise to the challenge of portraying racial inequalities—which were built socio-historically—in a manner that encourages all children, of all races and gender groups, to view these inequalities critically and inquisitively within the Brazilian school setting.

The Role of the Family

The literature of race relations within the school environment focuses strongly on the role that the families of children and adolescents play in creating asymmetries among ethnic groups in access to education. Four major issues pertain in this regard.

First of all, we can highlight the theme of silence reigning within the family when addressing the multiple forms of racial aggression suffered by African-descendant children. As has already been discussed, it is not rare to find white individuals in the school environment (teachers, educational coordinators, principals, employees, and peers) who verbally abuse African-descendant children and adolescents in an explicit or veiled manner through verbal slurs directed against racial features or cultural standards,

particularly in the sphere of religion. In general, these forms of aggression are manifested in situations of dispute and conflict. These insults can also be elicited without any apparent motive, taking place during a class or game. Once home—instead of receiving support from their relatives—African-descendant children and adolescents may face the silence of their parents and guardians who feel psychologically, morally, and politically defenseless in the face of their plight.

Eliane Cavalleiro, who looked at the influence of the family and its silence in response to the experience of African-descendant and white children at a preschool in São Paulo, states that

> …silence, which reigns there, wants to comfort them and protect them from the suffering which we know they will face. Thus, the family postpones contact with society's racism and with the pain and losses derived from it for a longer period of time.

Henrique Cunha Jr. also describes the prevalence of familial silence with regard to African-descendant children and adolescents victimized by racism in the school environment:

> The accusation made by the child to the parents generates situations of indecision. Parents have the following kind of responses: listening with no reaction; not believing the child due to an assumption that these things do not happen in school; questioning if the facts really occurred or if they are only a way for the child to solve other problems, such as not wanting to go to school or trying to hurt a teacher who is not liked; believing the fact is of no importance; instructing the child on the kind of answers to give in these situations, but feeling uncertain whether the child might get hurt in these situations; complaining at school but doubting in the results obtained…In all situations, there seems to be indecision on the part of the parents, partially due to the fact that they do not believe in the existence of Brazilian racism, or that they systematically try to deny it—since admitting it is admitting to the condition of inferiority. Another reason for indecision is related to the results of protesting the injustice suffered. First because experience shows that such a protest is not taken into consideration by anyone. Second, because sometimes they are afraid the child might be singled out and persecuted (Cunha 1987, p. 53).

Therefore, this silence becomes a kind of unwitting accomplice to the various racist practices taking place in the school environment that reinforce the low esteem of African-descendant children and adolescents and reduce their expectations of professional, personal, and emotional accomplishment.

It seems that scholars who focus on the theme of racial discrimination within the family environment have given little attention to the upbringing of white children and adolescents, especially those who are prejudiced and racist. In keeping with the recent studies that have addressed the theme of white identities (Bento 2003; Rossato and Gesser 2001), such an objective would seem especially relevant since it would allow for greater knowledge of the patterns that shape a prejudiced and racist personality.

Discriminatory parental attitudes toward their children, the second aspect of the family environment relevant to the creation of racial disparities in education, are less passive. These specifically come into play with regard to children who have markedly racial features. Thus, children and adolescents whose racial features are closer to those of whites tend to benefit more from their families than do children and adolescents with more intensely marked African-descendant facial and physical features (or less pronounced white ones). Hypothetically, such behavior would correspond to differing expectations of rising social mobility on the part of parents and guardians, making children and adolescents with white features privileged. Such attitudes are due to and motivated

by unequal racial preference, making parents and guardians prefer sons and daughters with lighter skin, regardless of whether there is an actual economic advantage, for the simple reason that they are "white."

This observation was partially verified by demographer Edward Telles (2003). He categorized this phenomenon, which included a comparison of a school's efficiency rate for siblings of different colors who lived in the same household, as the ultimate test of the influence of racism in determining the socio-occupational trajectories of people of different races/colors in Brazil. In the research he carried out with microdata from the 1991 Demographic Census, all Brazilian families that had school-age—specifically, from 9 to 16 years old—siblings of different races/colors were analyzed. Later, a test was conducted on the education efficiency rate on the part of the siblings of interracial families. Telles observed that at age 10, 47 percent of the white brothers studied were at the correct age. This percentage dropped to 37 percent among African-descendant brothers in the same age group. Among sisters, the racial differences observed were not as acute, but did favor the white sisters. Telles notes that

> the educational differences shown…for siblings of different colors are a rigorous test for the existence of racial discrimination. Even though they may seem small, these differences show the importance of race (regardless of class, family, neighborhood, and various other social or cultural factors) (Telles 2003, pp. 234–35).

Regarding Telles's observations, one should bear in mind that the indicators only show that disparities exist in the efficiency rates of the education system for siblings of different races/colors. The data are not conclusive with regard to what drives that indicator's behavior. The behavior could reflect the differentiated treatment of siblings of different colors either on the part of parents and guardians in the family environment or by peers and teachers in the school setting.

It seems reasonable, however, to assume that both the family and other agents of socialization—such as the school—operate simultaneously. While racial discrimination at school is itself damaging to African-descendant children and adolescents, there is reason to believe that such discrimination is related to practices in the family environment. As Donald Pierson points out in a study on racial relations in Salvador (Bahia State) during the 1930s,

> …miscegenation was also favored by the prestige usually given to the "whiter" child. Colored mothers who, at the time of the research had children who were "whiter" than they were, considered themselves particularly lucky and were similarly evaluated by those around them. A black woman, proudly showing her "whiter" child said: "I am cleansing my race." In Bahia, the expression "improving the race" was also frequently heard (Pierson 1971 [1942], p. 182).

We cannot brush aside the unfortunate reality that African-descendant families rarely provide African-descendant adolescents with viable role models from similar backgrounds whose education has led to higher social and economic status. Understanding the influence of this scenario on the future personal and occupational perspectives of African-descendant children and adolescents and its impact on school performance may be one of the major gaps in the academic agenda of researchers who devote themselves to racial relations in education.

The third aspect we consider here has less to do with the family and more to do with the network of friendships and acquaintances formed within the school environment. Brazilian schools are important meeting places for children and adolescents, making them more than just a venue for formal learning. Meetings, dates, parties, and other forms of interaction are intrinsic to

the school environment and to the other environments structured around the school (cafeteria, access streets between the home and the school, sports fields, etc.).

Sansone (1998 [1996]) accordingly identified the school setting as one of the "soft spots" of racial relations. As Sansone uses this term, it is distinct from the "hard spots" of racial relations, in which to be an African-descendant could be a disadvantage because it is more probable that individuals from the dominant racial group will have discriminatory attitudes. In contrast, in the soft spots, the fact that an individual is of African descent would be a neutral or even advantageous variable, such as in situations in which certain typically Afro-Brazilian artistic, cultural, or religious manifestations are present (*samba*, *capoeira*, *candomblé*, etc.).

Considering Sansone's two theoretical categories, however, we find it very difficult to support his hypothesis that the school environment actually forms a soft spot of racial relations. His concept that being an African-descendant can be a negative, positive, or neutral variable in school environments does not seem adequate in light of the very real difficulties faced by African-descendant children and adolescents within the Brazilian education system, who tend to be excluded from social contact among individuals and their respective cliques.

Specific interactions that take place within the school environment (dating, friendships, fights, etc.) between adolescents of different racial groups might reflect the social shortcomings of the school environment—i.e., the full civic and professional upbringing of future Brazilian adults. After all, a good education system—and here, "good" would also imply being opposed to racism—could build upon the positive relationships between adolescents that take place in the school environment and allow them to become more meaningful.

The face that a disproportionate number of African-descendants are mired in poverty is the fourth and final factor affecting the relationship between the family and the school environment.

To begin with, we should highlight that poverty and the hereditary transmission of social status cannot be left out of the debate on Brazilian educational indicators. This dimension is related to the low levels of schooling of the population of our country and, consequently, is extremely relevant to the entire analysis. The overrepresentation of African-descendants, as compared to whites, within the poorest population plays a significant role in creating racial asymmetries in access to education.

Even if we explain racism in structural terms—that is to say, solely in terms of social interactions—the fact that African-descendants are the poorest among the poor reflects the social and racial discrimination evident in existing racial relationships. These are reinforced by the traditional social roles that whites and African-descendants occupy in Brazil.

Including qualitative variables ends up being a particularly complicated task because such factors are difficult to measure, but this does not make the qualitative aspects irrelevant. That prejudice and racial discrimination exist within the Brazilian education system is a fact proven by myriad studies on the topic. The studies of economists and sociologists who focus on the theme of education almost completely ignore the information on race relations in schools derived from the pedagogical field. This omission clearly illustrates the difficulty of using these contributions to understand the dynamics of Brazilian race relations and their detrimental effects on the social fabric as a whole. Even those authors who subscribe to the theory of human capital and who incorporate the problem of racial inequalities

in Brazil have difficulty including these qualitative contributions in their studies and models. In other words, it is as if the studies focusing on the structural problems of the Brazilian education system could afford to consider pedagogical practices as a mere offshoot of the broader social, economic, and political reality.

These dimensions—the Brazilian education system, corresponding educational practices, prejudice and racial discrimination in the school environment, effective development of children and adolescents in terms of learning, and the harmful effects of poverty—seem inseparable when studying their dynamics at the core of the problem of racial inequalities in the Brazilian education system.

3. Exploring the Paradox of the "Good" Student

The education of children and adolescents has traditionally played a very important role in Western philosophical thought. Werner Jaeger's classicist work *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture* clearly shows the central concern citizen education represented for the Greeks of antiquity: great pedagogical efforts were needed to enable the citizen to participate in matters of public life. More modern philosophers such as Machiavelli, Montesquieu, and Rousseau have also attributed great relevance to the pedagogical process of citizen education in a democratic republican regime, which they view as essential for collective decision making.

We invoke these great thinkers to illustrate the strategic significance of education within society. Precisely through education does a society gain the ability to shape its individuals in its image and fashion. Therefore, as Montesquieu posits, if the objective of a regime is to generate participative citizens, their education must be guided by the principle of civic virtue and teach them to participate in collective life. If the objectives of the regime are to teach them self-interest and self-control, education should distinguish itself through the principle of honor. And, if what is important to the regime is to keep individuals distant from collective decisions and to school them in blind obedience to a tyrant, the foundational principle of the education system ought to be fear.

These examples show that the Western philosophical tradition establishes education in terms of the type of citizen that is desired. In other words, education determines the future social roles each citizen will play in society. Thus, in Aristotle's conception, it would have been unthinkable for the polis to waste time educating a slave in the exercise of citizenship, since such a teaching process would compromise the very nature of that individual's role. Carrying the premise to the Brazilian education system of the 21st century, we see that education continues to support and promote the societal roles that each individual is expected to play. It becomes clear that it is impossible to debate the topic of racial inequalities in educational access without bearing in mind the asymmetrical model of race and gender relations present in Brazilian society.

The Brazilian model of race relations allows for amiable interaction among individuals with distinct racial features, as long as the asymmetric relationships on which these interactions have traditionally been based are maintained. Following Western philosophical thought, whites, African-descendants, and mestizos in Brazil need to know what is expected of them in personal, aesthetic, professional, occupational, intellectual, and emotional terms—among other relevant aspects vis-à-vis each individual's path in life—to preserve the model of race and gender relations. The fact that whites occupy the most prominent social positions ends up becoming accepted as normal.

Conversely, society accepts that African-descendants are relegated to low-prestige, marginal roles. This reality follows a model of race relations that does not question the primacy of the white hegemony which rules the social order.

Therefore, when we think about the unknown value related to racial disparities in access to education, the equation is solved almost automatically. The Brazilian education system, consistent with the long tradition of Western thought, educates people in the exercise of their future social roles. The unequal treatment that African-descendants and whites receive within the Brazilian education system corresponds to the educational process itself, which teaches people with distinct racial features the simple terms of the surrounding reality. Since African-descendants and whites are unequal in the job market, in access to goods for collective use, and in access to public services in general, why would that be different in school, a social setting where children and adolescents learn what they will do in the future?

This reality compels us to reflect on the fact that, with the exception of the more expensive private schools, Brazilian classrooms (especially in the early primary school grades) are usually environments that contain people of different races and ethnicities and have been for some time. Certainly, this situation was better than that of other countries, such as the United States or South Africa, where African-descendant and white children and adolescents were completely segregated until quite recently. Yet, multiracial schools can also allow for the perpetuation of asymmetrical racial relations. The many humiliations experienced by African-descendant children and adolescents in the school setting occur precisely because their interaction with their white peers reinforces existing racial hierarchies in Brazilian society. The racial homogenization at the most advanced levels of education is also entirely in keeping with social premises, where occupational trajectories—and access to more prestigious and qualified roles in society—have been more or less decided upon.

Given the importance of the education system in creating and upholding the strong racial asymmetries that exist in Brazilian society, what is the role of the family? Earlier, we emphasized the important role the family plays in confirming racial disparities in access to education in Brazil. On the one hand, the silence of parents and guardians in the face of the victimization of African-descendant children and adolescents through racism in the school environment can be seen as a timid attempt to protect these young people. That such behavior is incapable of effectively protecting children and adolescents from the psychological problems derived from humiliating racial discrimination makes evident the limited role that the family plays in this case, given the system of subordination in which they live. Therefore, for an economic and political system that relies on people to convince the public that racial asymmetries are inevitable, reluctance to discuss discrimination in the family becomes a somewhat imperfect instrument, especially because of its eminently passive character.

On the other hand, even when the family takes a more active role in amplifying racial asymmetries by granting opportunities for upward social mobility to siblings depending on their races, we must face the fact that parents will seldom admit their true motivations. Therefore, it will always be difficult to gauge the importance of race, given the different moral, emotional, and personal factors that keep parents from making those decisions explicit.

The secondary agents of socialization—such as the education system—thus end up with the main responsibility of teaching societal roles to Brazilian children

and adolescents who have distinct racial features. "Good" students—that is, students who learn the system's lessons well—who have white features will learn that they are naturally predestined to exercise positions of command, prestige, and financial reward. Even if they do not personally come to assume such roles, the problem of racial inequity will remain, since they have been taught the status quo of existing socio-racial hierarchies, which persists regardless of the position each individual attains in the social pyramid. Similarly, good African-descendant students will be those who learn that they are predestined, like others of the same race/color, to fill social roles that are less valued, lower paid, and with lower social prestige. Rejecting this principle will turn good students into bad ones, since they will not be preparing themselves to perform the activities the racist society expects of them. Objectively excellent African-descendant students are terrible students for the racist society. They not only stop preparing themselves to play their expected social roles, but also (even though they may say nothing) act as a disruptive factor to the system simply by enabling themselves (through paths other than those typically offered by sports and popular culture) to be in typically white social environments.

The prominence of this system of unequal social expectations was measured by researcher Vera Figueira (1990) in a study conducted in the late 1980s. Figueira used a questionnaire based on photographs of people with distinct racial features to survey 442 students from public schools that serve low-income students age 7 to 18 (238 whites, 121 mixed race, and 83 blacks) in the municipality of Rio de Janeiro. The findings showed that whites were associated with the following attributes/vocations by the indicated proportions of the respondents: handsome, 95.0 percent; intelligent, 81.4 percent; an engineer, 85.4 percent; a doctor, 92.2 percent. African-descendants were associated with the following attributes/vocations: ugly, 90.3 percent; stupid, 82.3 percent; a janitor, 84.4 percent; a cook, 84.4 percent.

Carlos Alberto de Almeida, a professor at the Fluminense Federal University, conducted a similar study in 2002. In his study, seven photographs of people with distinct racial features were shown to 200 people in the city of Rio de Janeiro (table 9). The results obtained were as follows: the people who looked white were, for 69 percent of the interviewees, the ones that most reminded them of lawyers and, for 66 percent, the most intelligent ones. People who had a more marked African-descendant appearance reminded the interviewees of the following: taxi driver, 65 percent; criminal, 73 percent; poor, 78 percent.[12]

The Figueira and de Almeida studies show that cursory classification by racial type reflects societal prejudices, confirming this paper's chief argument—namely that there is a clear association between racial features and the corresponding expected social classification for different individuals.

Another example related to the paradox of the "good" student has to do with the way in which the African-descendant population has been portrayed by the Brazilian media. Filmmaker Zoel Zito Araújo conducted important research on the soap operas produced by the Globo and Tupi television networks from 1963 to 1997. Araújo found that, of the characters represented by African-descendants in these soap operas, 38.6 percent played the role of housemaids, 35.9 percent played slaves, and 6.0 percent played

[12]Interviewee responses regarding who might be teachers and the perceived honesty or laziness of the persons in the photographs were more evenly divided by race. The low prestige accorded the teaching field might account for the fact that interviewees were almost as likely to ascribe this profession to white versus African-descendant photograph subjects. The splits for perceived laziness and honesty could mean that people see these as personal characteristics rather than reflections of a person's social position.

Table 9: What does each one appear to be? (answers in percentages)

Race	Photo	Lawyer	Teacher	Cab driver	Lazy	Criminal	Poor	Honest	Intelligent
White	1	34	24	10	9	6	1	17	37
	2	6	8	18	13	12	21	24	8
	3	29	16	7	27	9	0	12	21
Total (white)		**69**	**48**	**35**	**49**	**27**	**22**	**53**	**66**
Mixed race	4	6	20	29	15	15	12	8	6
	5	5	14	28	15	20	33	4	4
	6	15	11	3	16	19	9	17	7
Black	7	5	7	5	5	19	24	18	17
Total (mixed race & black)		**31**	**52**	**65**	**51**	**73**	**78**	**47**	**34**

SOURCE: DataUFF 2002.

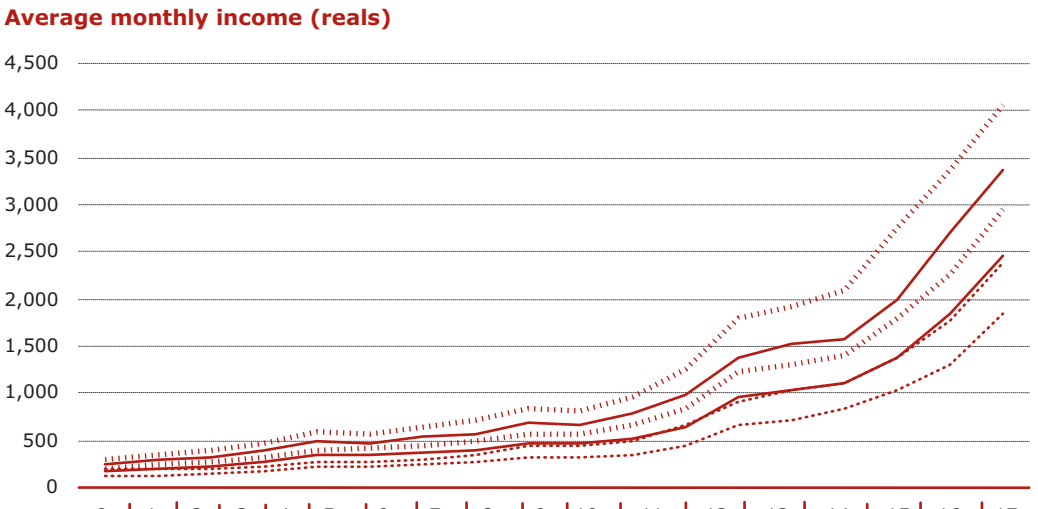
NOTE: The respondents classified the race of the photo subjects as follows: photo 1—98 percent white, 2 percent mixed race; 2—76 percent white, 19 percent mixed race, 5 percent black; 3—30 percent white, 65 percent mixed race, 5 percent black; 4—2 percent white, 84 percent mixed race, 14 percent black; 5—3 percent white, 78 percent mixed race, 19 percent black; 6—1 percent white, 14 percent mixed race, 85 percent black; 7—3 percent mixed race, 97 percent black.

outlaws or crooks. More prestigious professions (teachers, politicians, engineers, and doctors) corresponded to only 6.5 percent of the roles played by African-descendants throughout this period (Araújo 2000). Thus, the image of African-descendants in the media was constructed over time, acting as a kind of television-based course that reinforced traditional stereotypes in Brazilian society.

Figure 15 shows that Brazilian society punishes those African-descendants who dare to challenge obstacles related to discrimination at school. Confirming the results of the literature dedicated to the theme, there is a clear positive association between level of income and average years of schooling. This applies to all Brazilian racial groups and both genders. Thus, the relative distance that separates the average incomes among people with 17 years of study compared to those who have not completed any years of study was 14.0-fold among white men, 12.6-fold among white women, 15.6-fold among African-descendant men, and 15.9-fold among African-descendant women. Unquestionably, formal education plays a critical role in determining the income of people with distinct racial features and of a particular gender.

However, racial disparities are still strongly present even among people who have achieved higher education levels. Confirming the thesis of Valle Silva (1980), we can see that the rate of return on school investment in terms of the average incomes for African-descendant males and females was below the level of return for white males and females. This corresponds to an additional element of the Brazilian racial ethos, which

Figure 15: Average income for main occupation by race, gender, and years of education, 2000



	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Years
White male	289	349	383	475	599	560	650	701	838	816	959	1,248	1,795	1,907	2,094	2,761	3,360	4,053	
White female	188	189	194	222	266	272	302	336	431	432	498	654	902	1,032	1,102	1,372	1,766	2,382	
White total	258	301	323	389	483	459	529	573	687	666	782	978	1,379	1,524	1,565	2,003	2,696	3,370	
African-descendant male	189	235	270	320	406	412	444	484	565	562	653	825	1,235	1,297	1,412	1,803	2,262	2,944	
African-descendant female	115	133	147	175	215	224	242	260	315	312	343	448	668	725	828	1,043	1,300	1,838	
African-descendant total	168	206	232	272	341	347	371	402	474	464	527	645	953	1,035	1,099	1,371	1,838	2,470	

SOURCE: LAESER/IE/UFRJ; based on microdata from the 2000 Demographic Census.

discourages African-descendant adolescents from continuing their studies, thus serving to propagate the asymmetries experienced in the school setting.

It should not be assumed that those African-descendants who drop out of school are bad students. In the racist Brazilian society, good African-descendant students are those who convince themselves early that their low-profile social roles have already been decided and that nothing can be done to change this reality.

In closing, note that this analysis does not subscribe to the notion that structures govern all outcomes and that nothing can be done to counteract the seeming imperatives of the system. On the contrary, the approach taken here argues that the theme of overcoming racial inequalities in the school is a process that takes place concurrent with other efforts to transform the traditional social roles that have been played by the distinct racial groups in Brazil for countless generations.

4. Observations and Recommendations

4.1. Observations

Over the last 30 years, there has been a trend toward universal access to education for Brazil's school-age population. According to indicators derived from the 2000 Demographic Census, the Brazilian education system has already achieved near-universal coverage—enrolling over 90 percent of school-age students—for the population age 7 to 13 years. Additionally, over the 1980–2000 period, illiteracy rates declined, average

years of study increased, and gross enrollment rates for the population as a whole rose.

This period's universalizing trend has effectively reached children and adolescents of all races and ethnicities. In several cases, racial inequalities have been inverted, as with the gross primary enrollment rate, or drastically reduced, as with the gross secondary enrollment rate and net primary enrollment rate. On the other hand, the gap between African-descendants and whites has not changed in other education indicators, remaining fairly constant; this was the case for average years of schooling, where the difference between African-descendants and whites remained approximately two years. While it is true that other educational indicators show reductions in the relative gaps between whites and African-descendants, these changes occurred so slowly that the indexes for African-descendant students in 2000 were very close to those for white students in 1980.[13] Also, the literacy rate for the population age 15 and older reveals an interesting phenomenon: even though the literacy rate clearly increased for all racial groups between 1950 and 2000, the gap between African-descendants and whites actually widened over the period.

The data thus show that the recent expansion of access to the Brazilian education system did not in fact overcome racial inequalities. The indicators analyzed show

- late entry on the part of African-descendants as compared to whites;
- early departure by African-descendant students;
- lower intake among African-descendants than whites as reflected in net enrollment rates, the efficiency of the system, and adequacy rates measuring age-appropriate grade enrollment;
- a level of reentry on the part of people in older age groups that was less intensive among African-descendants than whites.

None of the aforementioned is meant to imply that the trend toward universal access to education has been in any way insignificant. On the contrary, the fact that Brazil's illiteracy rate stood at about 13 percent at the end of the 20th century, when by international parameters it should not have exceeded 5 percent, makes the case for universal access all the more urgent and the political will exercised over the past decade even more admirable. But as long as Brazilian schools do not have the capacity to fully educate (both civically and professionally) all their students in an environment that does not perpetuate discriminatory attitudes, the goal of universal education cannot be said to have been achieved.

In addition to the quantitative indicators that provide information about the quality of the education system, we look to other indicators that are more qualitative in nature and which are related to existing pedagogical practices. We have seen how the various studies developed by specialists on race relations in Brazilian schools have identified the existence of implicit practices that are explicitly discriminatory against African-descendant students. Four qualitative indicators were identified as negatively affecting the scholastic progress of African-descendant children and adolescents in Brazil: (1) various discriminatory practices in effect within the school system, (2) curricular

[13]It is worth highlighting that the data used in this study comprise a 50-year time series, which is particularly significant given the virtual absence in Brazil of such long-term statistical series on racial inequalities. Nevertheless, even though the data show that the literacy rates of whites and African-descendants have dropped sharply from 1950 to 2000, they also reveal that the distance between the two groups has increased. This disconcerting finding cannot be lightly dismissed, given the goals espoused by ostensibly color-blind Brazilian social policies and the implications in terms of perpetuating racial disparities.

limitations, (3) ethnic and racial prejudice codified in educational materials and tools, and (4) the role of the family in tacitly reinforcing racial inequalities experienced at school.

Our quantitative indicators do not capture the reality hinted at by these qualitative measures, which were derived from direct field observations or from reports by people involved in the school environment and collected in semi-structured questionnaires. Future studies could build on this work by attempting to incorporate information derived from other databases—such as the one from the School Census, and the questionnaires of the Primary Education Evaluation System (SAEB) and the Secondary School National Exam (ENEM)—into their analyses.[14] This analytic gap notwithstanding, there is no reason to doubt that these qualitative findings are related to the lackluster school performance of African-descendant children and adolescents.

In any event, the racial discrimination that exists within the Brazilian education system constitutes a recognized case of institutional racism. That is, Brazil's educational institutions—which should in principle perform the fundamental mission of promoting complete civic and professional education for all Brazilians regardless of race, gender, ethnicity, origin, religion, etc.—carry out their responsibilities in a very limited way by reinforcing traditional asymmetries rather than contributing to their elimination. The lack of greater mobilization on the part of public authorities to overcome this scenario, at least until very recently, suggests that this reality tends to be considered the norm by the country's educational public policy makers.

[14]For an analysis of the quality of the School Census databank and the answers to the SAEB questionnaires, see Rosemberg (2006).

This issue leads us to consider the relative impacts of racial inequalities in education and the harmful influence of poverty. Do the structural factors related to the asymmetries in socioeconomic conditions between African-descendant and white children/adolescents play a more decisive role in creating the verified racial disparities than the discrimination that exists in the school environment? The answer is, disconcertingly, both yes and no. Obviously, the high levels of poverty that affect the Brazilian population as a whole have to be taken into consideration when studying the issue of racial disparities in education. However, in incorporating this dimension, two other factors need to be taken into account: (1) the fact that poverty affects the African-descendant population more acutely, thus preventing the issue from being analyzed in a broader fashion; and (2) the forces that create the inequitable socioeconomic conditions of African-descendants versus whites—including those in the education sector—cannot be dissociated from the Brazilian model of race relations.

Therefore, the vicious cycle that trips up human capital scholars—of trying to explain Brazil's racial inequalities by gaps in schooling, schooling gaps by poverty, and poverty by schooling gaps—should be substituted with an interpretation that fully analyzes and incorporates the dynamics of accepted social relations, the individuals of different racial groups, and the corresponding discriminatory practices. Brazil's racism ultimately functions as a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy. African-descendant children today—most of whom live in impoverished conditions that make the continuation of their studies difficult, and who are discriminated against socially and racially within the school environment—will become adults who will play social roles with low prestige, wages, and power. This in turn helps reinforce racial stereotypes, suggesting that certain occupations that are socially valued are not appropriate for African-descendants. This

logic is the dynamic engine of racism as practiced in Brazil. It functions in both the school environment and the family setting, continually reinforcing traditional social and racial hierarchies. Therefore, the issue is not to deny the harmful effects of their families' poor material conditions on the school performance of African-descendant students, but to understand the way in which poverty and racism function as aggravated discrimination and, therefore, play an essential role in crafting racial disparities within the school environment.

It should be noted that the implications of this theoretical approach depart considerably from other theories that claim that current disparities in the Brazilian education system can be tackled effectively by universalizing access to the system (see Henriques 2002). As pointed out in other studies (Paixão 2003b and 2006), such an understanding is flawed because it does not acknowledge that the Brazilian education system has never actually been universal—from either a social or racial perspective—and has never benefited the entire population, or even a certain race-specific contingent. We believe that the color-blind approach that has guided our social policy in general neglects the context of a chronic lack of resources for the effective expansion of the education system. But what does this criticism of color-blind policies mean?

Making all citizens equal before the law set a truly important legal precedent because it prohibited discriminatory practices against individuals. However, failing to acknowledge that certain population segments continued to experience problems (those generated by a lack of necessary financial and human resources and those stemming from racism) has not led to equal access to opportunities for social, professional, and educational achievement for adolescents with distinctly African-descendant features. Whether voluntarily or involuntarily, social policies enacted by public policy makers throughout the 20th century in Brazil did not target African-descendants. Public policy should include efforts to correct existing socio-racial inequalities—in terms of access to the education system, student achievement, and years of schooling—in the educational field. Without such measures, these inequalities will continue indefinitely.

4.2. Recommendations

This subsection presents some public policy suggestions to overcome the problems highlighted throughout this paper. Note that some concrete measures to promote racial equality in education have been adopted, especially on the part of the federal government (these were initiated during the administration of President Fernando Henrique Cardoso and have continued intensively during the current administration of President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva); consequently, some of the ideas set forth here are meant to emphasize the importance of these measures or encourage future adoption of more in-depth measures.

The proposals that follow are geared toward improving the Brazilian education system as a whole—the first set of recommendations aims to improve the system in general; the second particularly seeks to promote racial equality within Brazilian schools.

Policy Proposals for the Brazilian Education System as a Whole

- Progressively increase public education expenditures from the current 4 percent to 12 percent of gross domestic product by 2012.
- Universalize preschool, primary, and secondary school education for the entire Brazilian population at the corresponding school age, regardless of social, gender, ethnic, and racial conditions.

— Ensure universal access to preschool for all 4- to 6-year-olds 5 years after putting the measure into effect.

— Ensure universal access to primary and middle school for all 7- to 14-year-olds 2 years after putting the measure into effect.

— Ensure universal access to secondary school for all 15- to 17-year-olds 10 years after putting the measure into effect.

- Grant all children and adolescents age 4 to 17 who are enrolled in and attending public school (at the appropriate grade level) a scholarship equivalent to the value of minimum wage earnings to ensure that they continue their studies. Students who drop out or fail consecutively would be ineligible for the scholarship.
- Extend similar scholarships to needy students enrolled in private schools.
- Increase allocations to the Fund for Maintenance and Development of Basic Education (FUNDEB) and discontinue any payments of allowances or pensions from the fund.
- Operate all Brazilian schools—both buildings and grounds—on a full-time basis to facilitate the full educational, professional, athletic, and artistic development of Brazilian children and adolescents.
- Mandate the availability of the following resources at all Brazilian schools for use by students and teaching staff:

  — classrooms that are made from durable materials (walls, floors, and ceilings), are equipped with at least a chalkboard and sufficient numbers of desks and lockers to accommodate all students, and are physically appropriate—which entails proper temperature, humidity, lights, space, and acoustics;

  — a maximum of 30 students per class;

  — a library, to be visited on a regular and mandatory basis, equipped with a sufficient number of books to accommodate the students enrolled and with adequate conditions for use;

  — a video and music room for educational and social purposes, the latter uses of which will be determined by educators, parents, and student representatives;

  — a computer lab with Internet access and a sufficient number of computers and equipment to accommodate the students enrolled;

  — sports facilities and a recreational area for both genders;

  — laboratories and spaces for activities fostering technical and scientific curiosity and creativity;

  — a cafeteria with free food for all adolescents and other teaching staff, with a menu jointly determined by teaching staff, nutritionists, and a student representative;

  — a medical and dental clinic open daily, aiming for preventive and ambulatory care for students and teaching staff;

  — workshops and community vegetable gardens for students interested in pursuing these activities;

  — foreign language courses.

- Mandate the availability of the following human resources at all Brazilian public schools (preschools, primary, middle, and secondary) for the development of their educational activities:

  — teachers with an undergraduate degree in education and at least one subject specialization or postgraduate course (at the master's or doctorate degree level) (deadline for implementation: 10 years);

— teaching staff in support positions who have completed at least secondary school (deadline for implementation: 5 years);

— a nutritionist with a relevant degree;

— a sufficient number of social assistants and psychologists to accommodate the student population;

— a sufficient number of doctors, dentists, and nurses to accommodate the student population;

— a sufficient number of librarians with a relevant degree to accommodate the size of the libraries.

- Offer free school uniforms and educational materials for children and adolescents enrolled in the public education system, except in cases where parents expressly oppose such an arrangement, through the three levels of government. The aim of this initiative is to reuse educational materials.
- Schedule field trips and visits at least every 60 days to museums, universities, companies, science laboratories, theaters, movie houses, and other places of cultural, scientific, and artistic interest. Provide public support to these institutions to assist them in implementing and developing these activities.
- Align the in-grade education system with vocational education.
- Adapt the curricula and school environment to the local context, particularly in rural schools located in the country's/states' poorest regions.
- Take preventive actions to provide for the physical and psychological protection of all students at schools located in areas near military zones or under the influence of armed gangs or drug traffickers as a means of keeping adolescents from getting involved in drug dealing and crime, and to attempt to rehabilitate those who have chosen this path.
- Hold direct elections for public school principals.
- Form community councils in all Brazilian schools comprised of members representing administrators, teaching staff, student, parent, and community members.
- Open schools to their neighboring communities over weekends and vacation periods to promote recreational, cultural, artistic, and athletic activities.
- Improve conditions related to the professionalism, salary, and social status of teachers and other teaching staff in the short term, and follow up by improving the physical conditions of Brazilian schools.
- Create a commission for the preschool, primary, and secondary school levels, made up of representatives from all stakeholder groups, including African-descendant, indigenous, and female representatives.
- Set proficiency goals for all students taking the national exams (SAEB, ENEM) in Brazilian public schools.
- Improve the Literate Brazil program guaranteeing the eradication of illiteracy and functional illiteracy among the Brazilian population over 15 years of age, in 5 and 10 years respectively.
- Encourage reenrollment of adults who did not have a chance to finish primary and/or secondary school.
- Broaden policies to combat and prevent child labor.

Policy Proposals to Promote Racial Equality in the Brazilian Education System

- Create a national program to eradicate racial, ethnic, and gender discrimination within the school environment, including preparing teachers for pro-diversity and multicultural education, activities to raise awareness of these issues, and incentives to adopt pro-equality racial practices in schools.
- Totally eliminate racial asymmetries in access to education and differences in levels, failure, and dropout rates of students enrolled with a maximum deadline of 10 years. Material and symbolic incentives should be offered so schools promptly reduce racial asymmetries to zero. Proficiency indicators should be derived from school performance on the SAEB and ENEM exams.
- Give increased emphasis to alternative educational practices that value human rights, diversity, multiculturalism, and equality among ethnic groups, races, and genders.
- Ensure effective implementation of Law 10.639 which introduces African history and the importance of the Afro-Brazilian presence within Brazilian society. Encourage the development of relevant educational material as well as coherent educational practices in the spirit of this law. Seek to apply the law beyond the field of history to, among others, geography, literature, the Portuguese language, philosophy, and—where possible—the natural and social sciences.
- Expand the National School Textbook Program by implementing stricter rules for teachers in the adoption of school textbooks. Prevent the promotion of educational materials and tools that reinforce stereotypes, prejudice, and ethnic, racial, or gender stigma. Support the development and adoption of school textbooks and educational books that respect the multiple facets of human diversity and of the Brazilian people in particular. Establish the practice that school textbooks and other educational books must bear a specific label, clearly showing that they have been recommended, in order to be adopted by public schools.
- Recognize teaching staff and professionals of African descent by adopting measures that contribute to their professional and academic improvement, and by adopting affirmative action policies regarding access to supervisory positions within the Brazilian education system.
- Eradicate religious discrimination in schools, and prohibit prejudice or aggression targeting any creed. In public education, classes dedicated to the study of religion must grant equal time to all religions—including Afro-Brazilian religions—and provide a multicultural context.
- Dedicate special attention to schools located in the areas of remaining *quilombos* (communities originally founded as safe havens for slaves) and indigenous reservations in terms of improving the physical conditions of these schools, training their teachers and other education professionals, and adopting curriculum parameters appropriate to the local context.
- Undertake special actions to fight illiteracy and functional illiteracy within the African-descendant population, establishing deadlines of 5 and 10 years, respectively.
- Adopt a principle of ethnic, racial, and gender diversity when choosing students to participate in activities of prominent visibility such as civic events, artistic and sporting events, and political representations. Incorporate this principle in decorating schools, particularly when exhibiting images of people in murals, posters, and notice boards.

- Name new or unnamed schools after historical figures of African and indigenous origin.
- Institute disciplinary action against teachers and teaching staff, parents and guardians, and—depending on age—children and adolescents who discriminate against students who belong to groups traditionally discriminated against due to race, gender, and sexual orientation. (Practices worthy of taking action against include verbal manifestations, vulgar jokes, and physical violence.)
- Compile statistical data collected by the Brazilian Institute for Geography and Statistics and the Ministry of Education's Institute for Educational Studies and Research, and ensure broad dissemination (including in microdata format) of educational indicators of the Brazilian population. Ensure that all research questionnaires and registration forms distributed to students, teachers, principals, and other teaching staff include a line for indicating race.
- Adopt affirmative action policies—especially through the establishment of special entrance criteria, such as quotas—for African-descendants, indigenous peoples, and people with special needs and disabilities to ensure equal access to the public higher education system.

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