



**Race and work
in the 20th
century: the
origin of racial
inequalities in
the Brazilian
labor market
(1920-1960)**

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**Raça e trabalho no
século XX: a
origem das
desigualdades
raciais no
mercado de
trabalho brasileiro
(1920-1960)**

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Resumo

O presente estudo objetiva analisar as disparidades raciais que pautaram a formação do mercado de trabalho brasileiro, durante o processo de industrialização do país no século XX. Para isso, nos debruçaremos sobre duas obras: “O negro no Rio de Janeiro: Relações de raça numa sociedade em mudança”, publicado por Luiz de Aguiar Costa Pinto e “Negros e brancos em São Paulo” de George Reid Andrews. Ambos os estudos de caso vão demonstrar que, reproduzindo as hierarquias deixadas pela escravidão, a construção do mercado de trabalho livre no Brasil foi pautada pelo racismo estrutural.

Palavras-chave: Racismo; Racismo estrutural; Trabalho; Mercado de trabalho.

Abstract

This article aims to analyze the racial inequalities presented in the formation of the Brazilian labor market, during the country's industrialization process in the 20th century. For that, we will look at two publications: “O negro no Rio de Janeiro: Relações de raça numa sociedade em mudança”, by Luiz de Aguiar Costa Pinto and “Blacks and whites in São Paulo” by George Reid Andrews. Both studies will demonstrate that, reproducing the hierarchies left by slavery, the construction of the free labor market in Brazil was built on systemic racism.

Keywords: Racism, Systemic racism; Work; Labor market.

Introduction

The Brazilian labor market has evident racial inequalities: the majority of vacancies are occupied by white people, especially men. As the positions grow higher, the presence of black men is minimal and of black women is approximately zero². It is known that in those almost four hundred years in which slavery was current, it printed its mark in the Brazilian society. However, it is also necessary to reflect about the disparities that arose after the abolition, specially within the formation of the free labor market in the country's industrialization process.

The industrialization process in Brazil will change the racial profile of the people that work. If during the slavery black and colored population did most of the tasks, the free labor market was not open to these people. As the State was the main agent of the Brazilian industrialization, the maintenance of privileged classes and elite groups was a primordial concern. As far as the workers are concerned, the State created a white working class by promoting an immigration policy in parallel with the neglect of black workers. And the State's efforts to integrate former enslaved people and their descendants into society, which was a proposition that had been planned by the abolitionists, never happened. To discuss this process, this article analyses two studies referring to the largest cities in the country.

"Blacks and whites in São Paulo" by George Reid Andrews was published in 1991. The author collected information about the industries from the period from 1888 to 1988. To approximate the data to Rio de Janeiro's study, here we used the information from 1921 to 1960. In his book, Andrews demonstrated the governments' effort to build the white workforce, the barriers that were imposed for the black and colored population to stay occupied and what alternatives they could have found besides the formal jobs. In addition, he discussed the impacts for this population, that due to the work-related issues had their citizenship threatened.

In the book *"The Negro in Rio de Janeiro: Race relations in a changing society"*, published in 1951, Luiz de Aguiar Costa Pinto made similar observations. The study

² In a survey of the employees of the 500 largest Brazilian companies in 2016, black employees of both sexes make up only 35.7% of the entire staff of these corporations. For black women the condition is even more unfavorable: 10.3% of the functional level. In management positions, the presence of black men and women is very small: we form 4.7% of the executive staff; 6.3% of management and 25.9% of supervisory positions. Among these, 8.2% of supervision and 1.6% of management are black women. In the executive board, its presence is reduced to 0.4%, that is, only two black women, among the 548 directors that compose the research sample (GONÇALVES, 2016 p. 25 to 27).

was part of a research project funded by UNESCO, which brought together authors with the objective of transmitting the “racial democracy” of Brazilians to the world. The 'racial democracy' is a nomenclature that corresponds to the idea of a society where the different races coexist democratically and harmoniously. During the first half of the 20th century, Brazilian sociology and literature argued that this was the reality of Brazil - a country formed by whites, blacks and indians.

The Research Program on Race Relations in Brazil, created in 1951, aimed to "determine the economic, social, political, cultural and psychological factors favorable or unfavorable to the existence of harmonious relations between races and ethnic groups" (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 17).

At the end of 1949, Costa Pinto was invited by his former professor Arthur Ramos, newly installed as director of the Department of Social Sciences at UNESCO, to participate in a meeting in Paris on the racial issue. Based on a demand from the UN, UNESCO decided, at its 1949 General Conference, to establish a program of activities to combat racism for the year 1950. This policy has developed on several levels: scientific debates, studies on racial relations in several countries, publication of books and articles in specialized magazines, and educational programs using the mass media (CHOR MAIO, 1997, p. 5).

Although the study was expected to demonstrate that the Brazilian society was racially democratic³, Costa Pinto reveals the opposite. Exploring the 1940's census data, the author identifies that the labor market imposes various restrictions on black people: not only hiring a minority of blacks and coloreds but reserving high positions for whites. Like Andrews, Costa Pinto also reflected on racist stereotypes and the social and cultural impacts of removing blacks from the formal work. In addition, he articulates the problem of racism at the labor market with education, health, and habitation amongst other social issues. As these are the two largest cities in the country and considering the fact that the conclusions of the Andrews and Costa Pinto deeply coincide, we have in these cases a representation of the industrialization process and of the Brazilian society.

³ 'racial democracy' is a nomenclature that corresponds to the idea of a society where the different races coexist democratically and harmoniously. During the first half of the 20th century, Brazilian sociology and literature argued that this was the reality of Brazil - a country formed by whites, blacks and indians. In the second half of the century, with a series of studies that prove racial inequalities and the advancement of black social movements, the idea of a 'racially democratic' nation was replaced by the facts: Brazil is a racist country.

Although Andrews and Costa Pinto do not refer to the racial issues that they denounce as 'systemic racism' (not least because these discussions started in 1967, after the publication of Costa Pinto), it is important to bring this concept to the table. The fact that black workers were neglected revealed the racism embedded in the institutions such as industries and companies. He also demonstrated the normalization of practices which are based on racist stereotypes and prejudice. But mostly, it demonstrated how racial inequalities impregnated the Brazilian labor market.

Race relations in the labor market

The enslaved were the main labor force in Brazil between the 16th and 19th centuries. Therefore, they were the mainstay of the national economy, at the time, totally dependent of the monocultures and gold extraction. After the abolition it was expected that most of the work would continue to be done by the same individuals. Also, that black free workers (the former enslaved people and their descendants) would be able to enjoy the citizenship and social participation they did not have before. However, that is not what happened. And this is strongly related to the way that modernization occurred, in the first half of the 20th century.

The transition process between agricultural production and industrialization can be classified as 'Revolution from above', a concept by Barrington Moore that explained the industrialization in countries such as Japan and Germany. In "*Social origins of dictatorship and democracy*", the sociologist explains that in the 'Revolution from above' the State was the main agent of industrialization in the country. By provoking an accelerated urbanization, which implied in migration from rural to urban areas, the government controlled the attempts of popular revolutions and the essential conflicts that maintained the democracy. Essentially, the 'Revolution from above' did not cause structural changes in society but kept the privileges of the upper classes (MOORE, 1975, p. 477).

One of the first measures of the Brazilian modernization was the immigration of Europeans which was subsidized by the State. Immigration begins at the moment that former enslaved people were settling down as free human beings and therefore, individuals that should be paid for their work. But the immigration program will "flood the labor market with workers, thus maintaining the low cost of labor" (ANDREWS, 1951, p. 98 and 99). In order for this surplus of workers to exist, the State (aligned with

a rural aristocracy that was complaining about the “losses” caused by the abolition) realized an intervention “at an unusual level in the context of the economic liberalism dominant in the Atlantic world” at the time (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 100).

Two key arguments were justifying the immigration. First, black workers were blamed for the employers’ preference for immigrants because those were considered more educated, prepared or civilized (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 100-101). Second, and equally atrocious, there was a hygienist project in course that aimed the whitening of the population⁴. The idea was that immigrants would increase the number of whites in the Brazilian population. And miscegenation (even in violent relationships between white men and black women) was stimulated with the objective of “lightening” the color of the skin of the next generations.

In the book *“The Integration of Negroes in Class Society”*, published for the first time in 1964, the sociologist Florestan Fernandes discussed the substitution of the slave production mode for free labor market. He states that “the disintegration of the slavery took place, in Brazil, without involving the former enslaved workforce from assistance and guarantees that would protect them during the transition for the free labor system” (FERNANDES, 2008, p. 29).

All this process were “oriented, therefore, not in the sense of effectively converting the 'slave' (or the 'freed') into a 'free worker', but to change the organization of the labor to allow the replacement of the 'black' by the 'white'” (FERNANDES, 2008, p. 52). Thus, “immigrants are given a highly advantageous position in relation to the national element”, which practically “canceled out the possibilities of competition” for black and colored skin workers, that ended up being automatically displaced to the less favored sectors or to the informal work (FERNANDES, 2008, p. 163).

Let us see how the authors who analyzed the labor market of the main Brazilian cities at the first half of the 20th century evaluate issues of race, the formation of the labor market and Brazilian social inequalities.

⁴ At the first International Race Congress held in June 1911, João Batista Lacerda, a doctor, anthropologist, and director of the National Museum of Rio de Janeiro, presented the thesis “Sur les mestis au Brésil”, which intended to extinguish the black race in the country through a miscegenation process that would last a century. In 1929, the First Brazilian Congress of Eugenia takes place, in which Roquete Pinto, also a doctor, reinforces this plan and promises an 80% white country, without blacks or indians, until 2012. Immigration, therefore, constituted a racial strategy (SCHWARCZ, 2007, p. 186-187).

“The Negro in Rio de Janeiro: Race relations in a changing society” was part of a research project funded by UNESCO, which brought together authors to “organize an investigation in Brazil about contacts between races and ethnic groups”, understanding the country as an example. The appointment of Brazil as country in which different races democratically coexisted was mainly due to the fact that Brazilian literature - mostly produced by white intellectuals - disseminated that fantasy (SILVA, 2008, p. 76). These fake ideas suggested a fraternal coexistence between the whites and the non-whites in Brazil, ignoring the segregating reality of our society and publicizing that a so-called egalitarian republic had its benefits.

The Research Program on Race Relations in Brazil, created in 1951, aimed to "determine the economic, social, political, cultural and psychological factors that were favorable or unfavorable to the existence of harmonious relations between races and ethnic groups". In the global context of the Cold War, the decolonization of countries in African and Asian and the perpetuation of great social inequalities, (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 17) the ONU searched for racially democratic answers:

Faced with this scenario, UNESCO, in a phase of extreme optimism, armed with the Enlightenment, went to great lengths to find universalist solutions that would cancel the perverse effects of racialism, xenophobic nationalism and socioeconomic disparities. Brazil was chosen, in perspective compared to the negative North American racial experience, to be one of the poles of problematizing, verifying and overcoming the great dilemmas experienced by humanity in ethnic matters. However, the positive sociability that characterized portraits of Brazil at that time did not prevent social scientists from viewing the UNESCO project as an opportunity to unveil the impasses that existed in Brazilian society and to indicate some possible measures to be taken (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 17).

Contrary to UNESCO's premises, Costa Pinto's study will document “for the first time, in a rational and scientific way (that is, using the observation techniques developed by sociology and social anthropology), the situation of black population in the southeastern Brazil”. Despite the unprecedented fact of bringing this perspective to the academic studies, the facts that these studies demonstrated was “already discussed by the Black Activism in the 1930s; the existence of racial prejudice in Brazil, despite the ideal of racial democracy” (GUIMARÃES, 2003, p. 101).

Costa Pinto elaborated an evaluation of the industrialization of Rio de Janeiro that proves the concentration of black and colored individuals in the poorest sections

of society, as well as in the criminalized housing areas where they are predominant, since the highest positions they reach on the labor market were subordinate positions (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 144).

This author's contribution to the interpretation of issues of race, class and gender is unique: while analyzing data related to work, the author reveals the dichotomies that permeate education, health, geography, justice, among other aspects of Brazilian society. Above, the main discussions that Costa Pinto presents.

Assessing the censuses between 1872 and 1940 of the then Federal District, Costa Pinto notes that the white population increases from 38% to 64%, while the black population is reduced from 62% to 36%. This change is justified by the arrival of European immigrants, by the high mortality rate of black population and what the author calls the “passage” from colored skin people to whites – as a result of miscegenation and the eugenics project. The author does not mention the fact that colored people, who in the slavery period were racially classified by others, acquired the possibility of self-declaration. In relation to this prerogative, and at a time when racial prejudices were very serious, the hypothesis arises that declaring oneself “clearer” could be a strategy, an attempt at self-protection. Although this is a possibility, there is no research that could demonstrate how many people with light brown skin were socially considered whites or self-declared whites – and that is just one of the many issues of the miscegenation process in Brazil.

But the data leads Costa Pinto to important conclusion. From an analysis of the education, Costa Pinto argues that the “the condition of holder of a university degree, in the peculiar racial situation in Brazil, would be reason enough to take a lighter-skinned colored or ‘mulatto’ to declare himself white, and even to be considered as such” (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 159). The same occurred in some work positions: it was not only more difficult for the darker’s skin people to access the “superior” jobs, but also, privileged conditions are sufficient to “whiten” an individual's racial classification. (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 93). That happened with officers in the Brazilian Armed Forces, for example, where there are no black officers at all. This fact not only influences statistics but says a lot about the relations between race and class in Brazil: a worker that reached middle class *could not* be black.

The author also points out that education rates for black and colored populations were higher in Rio de Janeiro than in the country's average, which proves

that “the educational situation of a group” is essentially due to sociological factors. The Brazilian population could have studied more if they had received that opportunity. The ability or interesse toward Education “is completely independent of the ethnic condition” but related to the social issues - (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 155).

Besides that, the author observes that the majority of literate black people do not go beyond elementary education and only 1% of blacks that were educated, completed the bachelor's degree. (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 157 and 159) Consequently, “the educational pyramid reproduced the pyramid of classes”. By that, he meant that the Brazilian society drew its hierarchy in some sort of color gradation scale in which “the 'white doctor' is at the top and the 'ignorant black' is at the base” (Idem, p. 158).

In the matters of work positions in 1940, Costa Pinto found out that most jobs, especially in the areas of commerce and service, were occupied by a majority of white workers. In positions of social prestige, such as in the public service and sectors of the urban middle class, the number of whites reaches almost the totality. Interestingly, the second most important ethnic group in these positions is ‘yellow’ (orientals) - even with a extremely low proportion of them in the general population (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 94-96).

Only in activities that remuneration and social status were lower, the numbers of black and colored workers were greater than whites. For example, agricultural activities – an inheritance from the slavery period. The same for the majority of black workers in domestic services. Finally, they were also the majority at a category called “other inactive activities and conditions” which represented sporadically workers and unemployed – those ones secluded for the formal labor market.

At the factories, the more the status of the job was considered superior, the number of white workers increased, and the number of blacks decreased. One good example is in the category ‘service’ which brings together elements of all ethnicities and a relatively high number of blacks. For positions as butler, waiter, chauffeur of private cars or gardener placed in higher priced hotels white men were preferred, often the immigrants. For “other less qualified functions - washerwomen, maids, cleaning ladies, etc. - especially in private houses”, there were a majority of black women (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 119).

Furthermore, the author denounced that “discussing whether or not there are, in theory, race barriers” is less relevant than thinking about the causes of the inequalities:

The most serious aspect of the problem does not consist in the pure and simple exclusion or admission of people of color in these careers; in fact, the most subtle problem is the preferential selection - by criteria that are not admitted - of non-colored people to enjoy the opportunities to ascend in careers, functions or hierarchical positions that were inconvenient to be occupied by people of color - because “black people should be in the kitchen”, or because it would be “putting the cart in front of the oxen”⁵, or even because “what would the foreigner say about us if we were represented by a niger?”, etc. (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 95).

Regarding the intersectionality of racial issues with gender and class markers, the author brings up relevant arguments to this study. With regards to women, even though the Federal District has proportionally more “extra-domestic female workers” than national averages, this less conservative prerogative is exclusive to white women. Costa Pinto states that “the pattern of the distribution of women of color by the various categories of activity follows the criteria observed in men” (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 115). Regarding schooling data, literacy is higher for men in all ethnic groups. However, for people of color, the difference between men and women is superior than among whites (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 153).

The majority of black women were engaged in domestic services, while in the public service or liberal professions (which had higher status) their participation was around 1%. This is because “beyond the barriers, common to both sexes, of class, of education and of color”, there was the gender barrier, which reduced even more the possibility of black women's social ascension (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 120).

When analyzing data on occupation, housing and education of the black and white population of Brazil, Costa Pinto argues that there is an “ecological dispersion” of men of color who ascend socially and have greater schooling. On the other hand, low-paid and illiterate black men remained concentrated in the poorest areas (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 154). The same is no longer the case with black women, since the

⁵ The expression “putting the cart in front of the oxen” – of very common use in the Brazilian Portuguese – means changing the natural order of things. The normal thing would be the oxen in front of the cart. In this case, the author meant that black workers in some positions would appear as an inversion of the normality.

largest quotas of literate women were concentrated in the same urban space. The author suggests two hypotheses to justify this difference between this geographic movement of black men and women: domestic servants (occupation of the majority of black women) should remain at the employers houses even if they were literate and the fact that “for women of color, the opportunities for social ascension resulting from pure literacy were lower”, making geographic transit impossible for them. (Idem, p. 155)

In the same topic of housing, Costa Pinto demonstrates that the majority of Rio de Janeiro's black and colored population in 1940 lived in the *favelas*. And among the *favelas* population, 70% were black or colored people (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 136). About this subject, it is necessary to point out a disagreement between my reading of the data and the conclusion that the author points out. He claims that there were no “spatial segregation of ethnic groups” in the “ecological pattern of the city” because there were *favelas* next to middle class and upper class neighborhoods in Rio de Janeiro. (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 137) But I would like to point out that even though there were *favelas* in all regions of the city, the fact that blacks were concentrated in those criminalized spaces, were already an indication of geographic segregation. The facts that some *favelas* were (and are) placed in the middle of urban areas does not change the structural inequalities between those who live in the *favelas* and those who live in the neighborhoods where the *favelas* were located.

Within his study, Costa Pinto also points out other issues related to the racist mentality and beliefs of the population of the Federal District. Through interviews with 350 high school students, the author sought to identify “racial attitudes that inspired behavior” among the population of Rio de Janeiro (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 173).

The research sought to measure the degree of acceptance of blacks in situations of lesser or greater intimacy with whites, and in situations of greater or lesser hierarchy. He found “a wave of stereotyped judgments” with most of the responses hostile than sympathetic to people of color. It confirmed the hyper sexualization of the black woman's body, which was judged to be “unfit to marry” but suitable for sexual intercourse - a black woman body were a “preferred object for pleasure (implicitly obscene and extramarital)” (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 117). Besides that, there were the judgment of the ‘mestizo’ as an ‘dual person’ and, therefore, a criminal. Finally, the answers of the research claimed that white population should have “charitable and

assistance obligations in relation to the socially inferior negroes”, considered infantilized and incapable (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 193-195). The phrases and expressions that were more frequently quoted were: “less intelligent”; ‘brawler’; ‘humble’; ‘hard worker’; ‘patient’; ‘works hard and doesn’t get tired’” (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 195) – and all demonstrate how the answers connected black people with a subordinate stereotype.

Describing each of these attributes, the author demonstrated how they are remnants of a slavery mentality and how they distort the fact that the “extreme inequality” that divided whites and blacks was related to social issues. For Costa Pinto, the stereotype “transfers to the irremediability of the biological plane the cause of a situation that is essentially of a sociological order and therefore changeable, the same way that the social organization is liable to transformation” (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 196).

The above notes demonstrate the role played by blacks, or even in a more subjective layer, what is expected of black professionals in the labor market. The absence of blacks in leadership positions can be interpreted as a consequence of the effort to keep these workers occupied with the most subordinate positions, jobs with lower pay and manual tasks. In the study carried out by Florestan Fernandes, previously mentioned, the author states:

The ‘high’ or ‘intermediate’ positions were out of the question because only elements from the dominant class and foreigners or descendants of foreigners could apply for those. [...] Nothing had altered the matter of facts that had produced the inevitable structural maladjustment of the former enslaveds into the competitive regime. The most coveted positions remained ‘closed’ and inaccessible, the ‘open’ positions were selective according to criteria that only episodically could favor a small number of ‘color elements’. The black and the mulatto, who are on the margins of the outbreak of the competitive order, remained in the same situation in their later historical developments (FERNANDES, 2008, p. 164-165).

Costa Pinto points out an absolute predominance of whites in higher positions, mostly among “employers”. Black employers, in a very small proportion, were found only in the manufacturing industry, social services and agriculture. All that leads to the conclusion: if in the slavery 19th century, the social position of ‘lord’ or ‘boss’ was associated with the ethnic condition of ‘white’, in the urban and industrial community of Rio de Janeiro, in the first half of the 20th century, this association has not been changed.

Although Rio de Janeiro was the capital of Brazil until 1960, São Paulo was becoming the largest urban center. Not coincidentally, it was the state that received the largest number of white immigrants. “Negroes e Brancos em São Paulo”, by George Reid Andrews - a study that evaluates the period between 1888 and 1988 - brings fundamental considerations about the issues of race, class and gender in industrialization. He uses the data from the censuses and personal departments of the companies SP Tramway, Light and Power and the textile factory Jafet. For the purpose of comparison with the data from Rio, I selected the notes of Andrews on the period from 1920 to 1960.

Andrews points out that São Paulo received more than two million European immigrants in the four decades after the abolition, with almost half of these transatlantic tickets being financed by the State. In this period, the limits between the employee's duties and the bosses' excesses were not well defined. To combat the brutality with which they were treated, free black workers tried to impose less cruel labor conditions. However, the surplus of workforce and the vulnerability of the immigrant not only ended the black community bargaining power, but also made possible the exploitation of the labor, the unhealthiness of the production lines, the imposition of hours of up to 13 hours a day and the exposure of women and children to risky activities in the factories. (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 186-188) Meanwhile, black men were excluded of the formal occupations. They became a “workforce reserve” - a large army of unemployed, eventually summoned by industrialists to stop strikes, remove union efforts and keep the working class under control (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 109).

In the countryside, immigrants occupied the most desirable jobs and the most prosperous regions. For blacks, the worst working conditions remained - in the Paraíba Valley, for example - with more exhaustive loads and lower pay, on farms that were not sufficiently attractive to whites (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 110). In the city, segregation was similar: the 1920 census shows that the “Brazilians” (with no racial distinction) remain the majority only in the underpaid work categories: 63% in domestic services and 91% in the low positions in the army and police (Idem, p. 112).

Andrews has the same view as Costa Pinto (1998) and Fernandes (2008). He states that as the formal labor market was restricted to immigrants, blacks became “underemployed”: they took care of manual services (such as porters, cleaners, shoeshines and cart pullers), creating sporadic demands. They had only “limited

opportunities” in activities that we now understand as “informal sectors” (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 113). For the author, “domestic service was the only area of the labor market” to which blacks “competed more effectively with immigrants”, which will make “the black domestic servant a characteristic aspect of life in São Paulo” in the beginning of the 20th century (Idem, p. 115-116). In addition to underemployment, the recent experience of slavery provoked other issues - hunger, disease, marginality - and Andrews highlights that “the failure of the State to provide adequate education”, culminated to the lack of educational opportunities and to the illiteracy of the black population (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 122).

From the data analysis of the proletariat of São Paulo factories, we have that “the white worker had secured a privileged position in relation to the black” (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 102), once again, confirming the conclusions of Costa Pinto in Rio de Janeiro. Let’s us see, for example, the distribution of workers by race of the company Jafet, between 1921 and 1931: 92.4% of the employees were white, 4.6% ‘mulatto’ or colored and 3% black (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 156).

Andrews evaluated the Two-Thirds Law: a measure from the authoritarian nationalist Getúlio Vargas government that attested that two-thirds of the workforce in factories should be Brazilians. Because of this law, between the 1940s and 1950s, “the number of coloreds and blacks’ employees in the state's industry more than doubled, reaching 85,344” (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 164). However, the author points out that “these workers were still far outnumbered by the 129,117 Afro-Brazilians who were working in the domestic service or were categorized by the census as ‘inactive” (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 165). In other words, this measure was not enough to remove the black population from informality. In addition, when information about national hires is evaluated in depth, we notice the abysmal differences in job opportunities, based on racial differences. Andrews proves that the Two-Thirds Law was used mainly to employ the Brazilian children of their immigrant employees (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 156). He also points out that the majority of coloreds and blacks worked in daily labors and informal agreements – rarely with a job contract (Idem, p. 158).

The data (1940-1950) also show that blacks were doomed to non-specialized occupations in construction site: “more than half of black beginners, but only a quarter of whites, were hired for the group of manual workers”. For whites, the places reserved for “bus drivers, electricity readers, messengers or chauffeurs - jobs at the ‘service’

sector, which were better paid and conferred a higher status than the unskilled labor" (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 173). Regarding the leadership positions, which the author calls "white collar jobs", black employees were totally excluded: "the most that a black worker could realistically expect was to rise to the level of 'foreman'", that is an intermediate position. Only two black workers, among those surveyed, "were promoted to office positions, and none were ever offered a position of leadership or management. However, these positions were available to white workers" (Idem, p. 191).

Besides not being hired for high positions, blacks found it more difficult to be promoted, suffered three times more punishments and were the biggest losers in mass layoffs - with "workforce reduction" being the most frequent cause of employee layoffs. Black people. Andrews says that in all the companies evaluated, the dismissal orders of employees who did not have performance problems mainly affect blacks and coloreds (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 180 and 184). In one of the companies, São Paulo Light, data indicate that both blacks and whites could be promoted, but the conditions of this mobility show disparities: most blacks who ascend had already performed higher functions before joining the company. The promotion, therefore, only undoes the setback of when they were hired. Other than that, in order to be promoted, on average, a white person would have to work 28.5 months while a black person would work for 40.5 months – and the possibility for a black man to stay so long in the same company was rare (Idem, p. 191). Thus, it is concluded that the limitation for the social rise of black workers in São Paulo occurred in a very similar way as in Rio de Janeiro.

Andrews proves that there was no evidence of a better qualification of the white workers, or any inability of the black ones for the industrial jobs. Besides that, no data would prove differences in the productivity or instrumentalization between the racial groups or show any relation with the hires and education, knowledge or even previous experience – reasons that would rationally justify the preference. Andrews quoted Warren Dean, who proved that there was no significant difference in productivity between Brazilians and immigrants, and Lucio Kowaric, who found that the use of foreign labor in the São Paulo industry was not due to better attributes of the immigrant (ANDREWS, 1991, p. 119). Andrews concludes that the preference for whites, were simply based on racial discrimination and prejudice (Idem, p. 122-125).

Authors who analyze race relations in Brazil recall the studies of Costa Pinto and Andrews. Alfredo Guimarães states that Costa Pinto was one of the first authors

to break with the idea of racial democracy, spread at the beginning of the 20th century. He also explains that his studies will transmit to the academic universe the demands of the Black Brazilian Front, a political movement created in 1931 (GUIMARÃES, 2003). The author also points out that the analysis of the relations between race and class, developed by Costa Pinto and subsequent studies, are fundamental for the understanding of Brazilian society in its complexities (GUIMARÃES, 2004).

There is a converge on the argument that studies like Costa Pinto and Andrews stated to disprove the myth. This is because researches of this nature presents an amount of data that dissolve the arguments of equality (CARVALHO, 2003, p. 175) and because these data demonstrate that social problems in Brazil are essentially related to the racial issues (JAIME, 2016, p. 197).

After analyzing all this information, it is important to highlight some points. The data for Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo coincide in several aspects. Both show how immigration has reduced the possibility of the black and colored population to enter the free labor market, as it has reserved the majority of formal job vacancies for whites. For the black and colored workers, the most subordinate positions were the only option - without the possibility of being promoted or even having labor rights. They were also fired more frequently and when they changed jobs, they could not attempt any social ascendance. Occupying lower paid positions and lower social status jobs, their entire reality was affected: financial difficulties impacted their housing, health, security and the possibilities of the Brazilian blacks' future generations.

In this context, we see how domestic service presents itself as the only work option to which black and colored would have access. What aggravates the situation of social inequality because the working conditions reproduced the slave model: many hours of work; accumulation of function; working sometimes without remuneration in cash - exchanging the workforce for housing, food and clothing. For women, affected by stereotypes of hypersexualization, the risk of violence, harassment or rape was imminent. For men, who dealt with the slavery inheritance in agricultural labor, the risks were low payment (or no payment at all) and physical punishment.

The relationship between work and education is evident: with the argument that black population had no education (even without a proven relation between certain jobs and a bachelor degree), employers reserved the manual labor for them. With little payment and no possibility of social advancement, in addition to exhaustion and

excessive working hours, it was impossible for these workers to educate themselves, learn new crafts or attend any type of school. And their descendants - who from a very early age entered the informal market to contribute to their livelihood – there were also no opportunity to study. Thus, a cycle is formed: the black population does not have access to work because they have no education, and because they do not have a job, they are unable to educate themselves. In the words of Costa Pinto: “the low level of education is responsible for the inferior social position of the colored groups; this social position, on the other hand, is responsible for the low level of education” (COSTA PINTO, 1998, p. 150).

In a comparative study between Costa Pinto Guerreiro Ramos, Chor Maio highlights the author's contribution to Brazilian sociological thinking. For him:

the racial issue in Brazil would be a means by which sociology could detect the factors that hinder social change. In this case, the sociologist, aware of the importance of relative isolation, in view of his commitment to further analysis exempt as possible, it would be up to the role of presenting subsidies to society in the direction of the necessary transformations (CHOR MAIO, 1997, p. 26).

In this interpretation, the author highlights that Costa Pinto's studies can be subsidies for actions to transform social inequalities. At least, they point out a systemic issue that would only be solved when deeply understood and criticized. Although Chor Maio does not include Andrews in this reflection, it is possible to see that this contribution is also present in his work (CHOR MAIO, 1997).

For this reason, and even though this discussion is more recent than both books, it is essential to associate the formation of the free labor market in Brazil with systemic racism. Racism is part of the Brazilian current social order and it were reproduced and confirmed by companies and industries in the formation of the free labor market. When discussing racism, Costa Pinto mentioned the white privileges and explained that in the mentality that runned the researched institutions there was a “place for blacks” and a “place of whites”. Furthermore, racist stereotypes toward blacks and coloreds - lack of intellectual ability, aggressiveness and tireless manual labor – justified the discrimination. These premises were in the mindset of employers, and of society as a whole. Even if there was no segregate legislation in Brazil. In fact, the absence of legislation makes it even more difficult to dissolve racial inequalities: how

to fight a difference of treatment and possibilities that society see as *normal*? Racism in Brazil is a hidden enemy.

Although the authors do not mention this term, it is important to review the discussions about the structural perspectives of racism. The term 'institutional racism' was used first in "Black Power: Politics of Liberation in America", 1967 book by Kwame Ture (Stokely Carmichael) and Charles V. Hamilton. They defined racism as "the predication of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial group and maintaining control over that group" (HAMILTON and KWANE, 1992, p. 3). Treating racism as an institutional issue, the authors demystify the idea that racism is an individual problem. Here is the example that the authors use to contextualize the institutional racism, which is very similar to the situation in Brazil:

When white terrorists bomb a black church and kill five black children, that is an act of individual racism, widely deplored by most segments of the society. But when in that same city - Birmingham, Alabama - five hundred black babies die each year because of the lack of proper food, shelter and medical facilities, and thousands more are destroyed and maimed physically, emotionally and intellectually because of conditions of poverty and discrimination in the black community, that is a function of institutional racism. When a black family moves into a home in a white neighborhood and is stoned, burned or routed out, they are victims of an overt act of individual racism which many people will condemn - at least in words. But it is institutional racism that keeps black people locked in dilapidated slum tenements, subject to the daily prey of exploitative slumlords, merchants, loan sharks and discriminatory real estate agents. The society either pretends it does not know of this latter situation, or is in fact incapable of doing anything meaningful about it (HAMILTON and KWANE, 1992, p. 4).

All of these examples fit the Brazilian reality: 'the lack of proper food, shelter and medical facilities'; the 'physically, emotionally and intellectually' violations, the dilapidated slum tenements (like the *cortiços* or the *favelas*), among other social inequalities between the white and the non-white population.

Silvio Almeida, Brazilian lawyer and writer, explained how these inequalities sustain the Brazilian society. In a book called "Structural Racism", he states that "racism is concretely expressed as political, economic and legal inequality" and creates the social conditions for racialized (non-white) groups to be discriminated in a systemic form (ALMEIDA, 2019, p. 50 - 51).

The way that those inequalities are presented in the job market, as well as in other areas of society, is through the institutionalization of racism. That means:

Institutions are just the materialization of a social structure, or a mode of socialization that has racism as one of its organic components. (...) If there are institutions whose operating standards result in rules that favor certain racial groups, it is because racism is part of the social order (ALMEIDA, 2019, p. 47).

With the discourse that Brazil is a miscegenated country and, therefore, would be free from racial problems, Brazilian society refrains from doing anything significant about racial equality. Otherwise, maintaining the white privilege and the subordination of the black and colored population was part of the society projects.

With this understanding, it is possible to realize how the separation of the black population from the free labor market; the flooding of this market with immigrants; the maintenance of slave practices in domestic work; the isolation of the black and colored population in criminalized areas of large cities; the prevention of them from having access to education; among other practices of racial discrimination that occurred in Brazilian industrialization, have been normalized by the Brazilian society. When we have all this data demonstrating how racism prevented the access to work and consequently took the citizenship of the black community, we testify the institutional character of racism in Brazil. When the culture imprinted in the Brazilian society enables, justifies and reinforces these inequalities of opportunities - there is the systemic racism.

Conclusion

The purpose of this article was to gather the most relevant information on racial inequalities presented in the formation of the free labor market in Brazil. For this, we critically evaluate data on work areas, jobs, hires, promotions and layoffs, both in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo.

This research concludes that after the abolition, it was not possible for the black population to be integrated into Brazilian society. Immigration caused the replacement of blacks and coloreds by whites in the workforce and consequently the marginalization of these excluded people. For most, the only solution was underemployment - housework or sporadic chores. And those black workers who managed to enter the formal labor market had been subjugated, underpaid, passed over and unfairly penalized, especially in cases of massive layoffs.

Deprivation of work generated several other issues: education and housing problems, mainly, but also issues of marginalization, justice, and health. It did not only

harm the integration of this generation of blacks in the society but the development of the next ones.

The hierarchical relationships that slavery imprinted were not removed at the construction of the free labor market. Brazilian modernization was developed from the bottom up with an agreement between the state and the elites. Its conservative aspect was essential to maintain the disadvantages that the black population has experienced since colonization.

When discussing racial inequalities in the labor market, it is inevitably to reflect on systemic racism. The social structure needs to be understood considering power relations. For this reason, this essay sought to bring the debate to the socio-cultural scope beyond the socioeconomic perspective. The entire organization of 20th century society was based on racial disparities - standardizing discriminatory processes, which aggravated the inequalities left in the past hundred years. The place reserved for blacks in the labor market shows a legacy of the Brazilian slave past that could have been mitigated during the modernization period. But otherwise, and because of the racism that structures our society, it has been reiterated, replicated and worsened.

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