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Racialisation in Brazil

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Introduction

The dictionary definitions of the terms 'Racism' and 'Racialization' can be outlined as follows: 'the belief that all members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, especially so as to distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races' and 'to differentiate or categorize according to race'. These terms are often associated with derogatory language or actions directed at people dependent on their racial and physiognomic traits and have contributed to pervasive global inequalities across history. In the case of Brazil, despite comprising a significant percentage of the population, people of black (5%), mixed race (42%) and indigenous (0.2%) origin are consistently marginalized and discriminated against (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics: 2010). In today's circumstances it is an ever contemporary issue; as a nation being built in the wake of colonialism the legacy of slavery still remains and shapes the structure of society in a veiled and complex way. The early development of Brazil was traditionally governed by the Portuguese white elite, leading to policies of 'Whitening' of the population based on notions of Eugenics and Social Darwinism. This in turn has led to problems of classification of colour and race in Brazilian society. However the global portrayal of Brazil is that of a 'racial democracy' with equal rights and opportunities across races and classes, which in fact hides the reality of the racial disparities that can be seen spanned across employment, the media and education. Despite this however there has been huge effort in the creation of a national Brazilian unified identity to further portray the image of racial harmony internationally, such as the institutionalization of the symbols of soccer, samba and The Carnival to represent the nation. In the wake of this however there has been a mobilization of those with Afro Brazilian heritage and a newfound desire to create a Brazilian 'negritude' that promotes black culture, rights and to create a distinct identity. My research into this topic has highlighted the intricacies in the social and racial hierarchies of Brazilian culture that I aim to explore and explain throughout the course of this essay.

Having emerged as a nation out of colonial rule Brazil as a modern country has had to deal with the repercussions of slavery and the lasting mental and social implications that this had on the population, as reflected in the inequalities across classes today. Portuguese explorers invaded Brazil in 1500, so beginning their colonial legacy, and ruled for over 300 years until the colonial government began to collapse in 1821, leading to Brazil gaining its freedom as an independent state in 1822. The Brazilian slave trade however continued to grow, gaining up to 60,000 African slaves a year until the final abolition of slavery in 1888 where the enslaved populations were granted their freedom. The Portuguese in power had originally taken control of the native aboriginal populations to work in mining, sugar cane and cotton production, however around 1550 started to import black slaves from Africa. This alteration in construction was mainly due to the fact that the indigenous inhabitants had become increasingly wary of the Europeans and therefore enslaving them was more difficult. (Shahinian: 2010). As a result of this at the end of The Atlantic Slave Trade Brazil had obtained approximately 35% of all Africans traded, equalling about 3million people (Malheiro cited in Augusto dos Santos: 2002). The Brazilian population was consequently made up of 2/3 people of Black African descent. Nonetheless, despite the end of the slave trade, the state distributed public

land to the wealthy Europeans who could afford to purchase it, therefore forced labour remained prevalent in society for decades after the official abolition (Shahinian: 2010).

Although Afro Brazilian slaves had been granted their liberty they were freed with no compensation, contributing to the economic disparities between blacks and whites in modern society. 47% of those with Afro Brazilian heritage live below the poverty line as opposed to 22% of white people, and 38% of the indigenous population are classified as living in poverty in comparison to the national average of 15.5%. (Diène: 2006). These statistics suggest that historical inconsistencies clearly still remain as an element of the legacy of slavery in terms of racial profiling and stereotyping. In turn, Eugenics described black people as culturally and mentally inferior, which has impacted societal structures and pre 2005 it remained acceptable to refer to indigenous people as 'relatively incapable citizens' (Diène 2006: 4). Despite these clear manifestations of the disproportions of Brazilian culture, in part due to slavery, it is not nationally recognized as a negative part of the nations history, but silenced, 'manipulated and projected as a noble and philanthropic project in favour of the slave' (Afolabi 2009: 23).

Between 1872 and 1940 the white population in Brazil grew rapidly, in part due to natural increase, as the black population growth rate was very low in the colonial period. However the major factor of this phenomenon was that in the postcolonial era the state actively promoted the immigration of white Europeans. The concept of 'Whitening' was a historically active idea as the older generations found it to be the norm to expect their offspring to marry someone whiter than themselves and therefore gain a higher social status in turn (Moraes et al: 2012). Nonetheless, Oliveira Viana a highly respected intellectual endorsed the modern hypothesis of 'Whitening'; at the time the Brazilian government tended to act on the opinions of academics. He reported that the first Portuguese colonists had been part of the blond Germanic nobility that had previously taken charge of their home country whereas the dark haired 'poor' Portuguese only came to Brazil later as they were not intelligent or courageous enough in order to explore themselves (Needell: 1995). Stemming from this view he used Social Darwinism, the idea that people are also subject to the same laws of natural selection as animals, in order to explain the hierarchy between blacks and whites in Brazil; reporting lower levels of intellect and morality in Afro –Brazilians. This is clearly a white supremacist notion and a widely believed one in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

Although Viana rejected pure notions of scientific racism he heavily promoted Social Darwinism and Eugenics, popularising the idea that the 'inherent weakness of people of mixed race would lead to the survival of those with a greater number of European traits and the effective integration of those European types into the European descent group' (Needell 1995: 15). In other words he believed that mixed race people could 'only ascend when they transform themselves and lose their characteristics, when they abandon being psychologically mixed bloods: because they Aryanise' (Viana cited in Needell 1995: 15). Viana's theories therefore clearly marginalized those with non- European phenotypes and created a mentality that elevated further the white population over the mixed race and black. He felt that Brazil was 'lagging behind the pioneers of civility and progress' and in order for it to develop into a powerful nation it needed selected elite rulers, which for Viana were the traditional Aryan and European types. (Needell: 1995). His faith in their creation of this modern state was supposedly shown by the success of their descendants who were 'eugenically selected and tested generation by generation continually appearing in the nations elite' (Needell 1995: 16). This can now be recognized as Eugenics

without a legitimate basis, however as late as the 1940's these racial and cultural stereotypes that were linked with perceived genetic characteristics.

'Brazilians largely considered Mestizos and Mulattos¹ as 'evolving types' who would eventually be assimilated into the white population through the natural selection of Social Darwinism' (Davis 1999:103). The legacy of this policy resonates in society today as Afro Brazilians and mixed race persons are often 'exoticized' so that they are not seen as 'threatening to the ideology of white supremacy' (Afolabi 2009: 174).

Partially as a result of this policy the primitive conceptions of Whiteness and Blackness and the power relations assigned to each remain prevalent in Brazilian society today: by assigning dominance to the colour 'White' people often try to deny their Blackness, thus leading to problems in the classification of race and colour. An attempt to try and define the variety of skin colours in Brazil can be seen in the census categories, and the changes made to them often seem to reflect developments in societal conceptions of race and colour. Dating from 1872 the census categories were created based on the idea that 'Mestizos' must revert back to one of the 'pure races' and therefore four colour groups were created. Each was defined by a formula that stated they must be a member or phenotype of a 'pure race' in the process of reversion (Guimarães: 2011). This suggests the global influence found in racialization and racial classification in Brazil; physiognomic traits used by Brazilian racialisists to distinguish human races became 'convoluted with the European system of classification' (Guimarães 2011: 4).

Since 1940 however changes to the census groupings mean that Brazilians now have to define themselves as 'White' (Branco), 'Black' (Preto), 'Brown' (Pardo) 'Yellow' (Amarelo), 'Indigenous' (Indigeno) or 'Undeclared' (Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics: 1991). However it still remains a contentious issue, as most people do not wholly agree or identify with the categories created; there are disparities between colloquial and census terms and what they each represent. For example 'Indigenous' is largely seen as a cultural rather than racial term and the group 'Preto' in the census is usually used for objects rather than people, therefore can be interpreted in a negative way. (Loveman et al: 2011). Similarly, Pachecho (1987) suggests that the term 'Moreno' is becoming increasingly widely used in idiomatic terms across Brazil to be an inclusive expression encompassing all shades of skin colour yet is not recognised formally (Pachecho cited in Bailey and Telles: 1995). The recent addition of the 'Pardo' category to indicate mixed race means that due to the cultural proclivity to 'Whiten' people can in a sense deny their Blackness by opting for this group (Loveman et al: 2011). It has only been since 1991 that the nomination of the census category became 'race/colour' instead of plainly 'colour', indicating a change in perception of the meaning of these terms to the nation. This classification system is clearly very different to that of the U.S ideologies of White and Black, where colour is largely associated with both race and origin (Nogueira cited in Guimarães: 2011). The Brazilian system on the other hand seems to view Black and White as differing extremes of a colour continuum and values you on how close you may appear to White. The concept of 'Whitening' therefore can be clearly seen to have contributed to negative notions of blackness, in the way that people want to deny their origins in order to conform to the White elite stereotype.

¹ 'Mestizo' and 'Mulatto' are terms used to refer to mixed race people in Brazil, they are now used more loosely but traditionally 'Mestizo' would indicate someone with European and American Indian heritage and 'Mulatto' would infer with both Black and White parentage.

Issues with classification become intertwined with racial quotas and campaigns as there is huge complexity not only in defining your own race and colour, but others perceptions of it as well – especially as conceptions differ consistently between regions within Brazil. For example, in recent years there have been racial quotas put in place for Afro Brazilian and Indigenous people at universities in order to improve opportunities. Although this is an indicator of awareness and positive change, the methods employed are less so: those who classify themselves as ‘Preto’ are required to attach a photo of themselves against a beige background in order to establish whether they fit the ‘typical characteristics of the black race’ (De Santana Pinho: 2010). Despite this being clear racial stereotyping it has also been shown to be an unsuccessful method of fulfilling racial quotas as when two twins with Afro –Brazilian heritage applied one was deemed to be black and the other not (De Santana Pinho: 2010). In addition to this the inextricable links between race and class are not always clear, dating back to Portuguese rule. Many male colonizers raised their mixed race children as White, therefore society saw them as such and they were given privileges based on this designated status. On the other hand, children who were not recognised by their fathers were raised by their (largely) Indigenous or African mothers and thus received the consciousness of the lower class (Davis: 1999). This suggests that White domination prevails even in the creation of perceived racial and hierarchal boundaries.

It is interesting therefore given these class boundaries that seem to be defined by complex notions of race and colour that Brazil envisions itself as a ‘Racial democracy’, yet to many European nations it is largely perceived to be a Black country as it houses the greatest number of Black people outside of Africa (De Santana Pinho: 2010). In 1933 Gilberto Freyre published the book ‘English: The Master and The Slave’ which essentially created the ‘myth of racial democracy’ in Brazil and which has contributed to the globally idealised notion of the country. The book highlighted the positive aspects that permeate Brazilian culture and the celebration of Brazil’s racial mixture or ‘Democracia morena’ spread rapidly as a nation building strategy that was meant to unite the people (Moraes et al 2012: 35). This theory of ‘mesticagem’, the name given to Brazil’s practice of racial and cultural mixing is paradoxical in nature and has contributed to the belief that the historical mix of people in Brazil has created weaker racial boundaries (Moraes et al: 2012). If this was the case however one would expect Brazil to be a unified and tolerant nation, in reality however this ‘mesticagem’ may highlight inequalities between races even further, suggested by the fact that the middle classes are the ones to emphasise how racial mixture is integral to Brazilian society (Moraes et al: 2012).

The national concept of racial harmony in fact means that racial inequalities can be brushed aside as they are not the projected centres of attention and there are underlying disparities across cultures. The common thought is that there has been no racial legislation in Brazil, unlike some postcolonial countries, however this is not the case. For example, in 1621 non-whites were banned from the goldsmith craft and in 1824 blacks and lepers were prohibited from being taught in schools. (Conrad: 1997). The UN National Assembly has found that under this blanket of racial democracy there are ‘symbolic dimensions of culture’ which are policies aimed at protecting cultural diversity, as it is an expression of Brazilian nationality (Shaheed: 2010). The idea of equality between classes allows those in power to exert it and with little consequence as it is not recognised in the common political discourse. There is persistent bias in the legal system such as racial stereotyping in the police force against black and indigenous people, often leading to unnecessary violence. The result of this however tends to be that the police force is backed by the judiciary and the marginalized communities being criminalized. In addition to this there is frequent illegal occupation of indigenous land by national corporations with little

reaction from the state (Stavenhagen 2007) and 'despite the introduction of state policies to reverse the historical oppression against indigenous people one sees continued but yet more subtle manifestations of the historical disrespect for the interests of indigenous peoples and disregard for their welfare and human rights' (Stavenhagen 2007:9). These factors demonstrate that racial harmony is a much-idealised concept, one that is beneficial in the promotion of Brazil worldwide but appears to be detrimental to the nation's marginalised populations.

Clearly despite the 'myth' of racial democracy there are obvious disproportions across society, and ones that can be seen notably in education, employment and the media. Discrimination in employment can be linked back to the postcolonial era, as the dominant idea in Brazil post slavery was that former slaves did not have the mental capacity to develop the country as the 'civilised' Europeans did. By 'Whitening' the population therefore the workforce would be improved through immigration and future miscegenation; the 1978 'Congreso Agricola' showed that the elite were convinced that Europeans were racially and culturally superior as opposed to other races. (Dos Santos: 2002). These ancient notions of intelligence have clearly impacted societal structure and inequalities in employment in the present day; it remains that there are few black people in private and public sector institutions in high positions. This is demonstrated by the fact that in private banks across Brazil Afro – Brazilians have a higher average level of education than whites yet receive a lower salary and seem to display a slower career progression. (Diène: 2006). Despite, or perhaps because of this, education for Afro Brazilians is shown to be comparatively lower as black children are more than twice as likely to be illiterate than White.

However, it is black (especially those from Quilombos) and Indigenous women who are seen to suffer most from inequalities derived from racial discrimination; in 2003 the average monthly income for a White woman was almost double that of the ethnic minorities, with whites earning R\$ 554.60 in comparison to R\$ 279.90. In addition to this, the continuing power hierarchy between race and class is displayed in the fact that research shows approximately 1/5 of Afro Brazilian women are subject to violence in the workplace, largely those who work as maids (Diène: 2006). Intertwined with these postcolonial notions of intellect are those concerning the Black body, which also seems to have impacted on employment structures. Eurocentric notions of beauty and hygiene that were common in the late 19th and early 20th century suggest that the black body reflects its colour, therefore was associated with dirtiness and poor hygiene were a factor, and to some extent still are in a less obvious manner, a factor in job opportunities. Afro Brazilians were required to have 'boa aparência' as a prerequisite for employment; meaning that had to present themselves to be exceptionally clean and tidy in order to combat their genetic 'dirtiness'. Although this description was banned by the congress in 1988 it is still widely used in work advertisements as a euphemism for the preference of those with light coloured skin (De Santana Pinho: 2010). Reichmann (1999) agrees, writing that: 'Boa aparência has become a semantic trick meant to minimize the weight of race... precisely where selective rules are most severe for people of colour: in the workplace' (Reichmann 1999: 249)

Clearly there remain to be discriminatory factors in Brazilian society that are specific to the racialization of the country in particular.

The figure of the 'Black body' is characteristically labelled in the media as well, especially in that of the music industry as the female body is increasingly used as a commodity. Afolabi (2009) writes that:

'dating from the era of slavery the Afro Brazilian has been portrayed as a slave, a domestic servant, a black mammy or at best a 'mulatta', a sexual and sexualised object whose function is to satisfy the perverse desires of the master without any hesitation' (Afolabi 2009:170).

This portrayal of the female black body can be seen to ring true today in the way in which they are shown as erotic stereotypes in music videos and historically in films to be the inherently evil prostitute. (Afolabi: 2009). This depiction can be dated back to the modernization of cinema in Brazil, as it was left to the hands of the European immigrants to develop and they had no obligation to revert the oppressive images of Afro Brazilians on screen (Afolabi: 2009). The media is also still largely controlled by the White population and does not represent Black history correctly:

'Afro Brazilians are not in a position of power to project their own image except as rendered by national or foreign directors who have the financial means to market distorted reality' (Afolabi 2009: 170).

In this way cinematic industries in the media clearly contribute to the social construction of racism as Black people continue to be under represented both on and off screen, yet also enduringly shown as the same 'exotic, folkloric and primitive roles' (Afolabi: 2009). Reports from the UN National Assembly come to the same conclusion; that blacks and indigenous people continue to play stereotyped or marginalised roles (Shaheed: 2010). Even recent films have succumbed to this typecast racialization: 'Orfeu' (1999) and 'Prova de Fogo' (2008) have been criticized to represent the Afro Brazilian as symbolic, fragmented and objectified, leaving them as 'finally diminished to the function of a local colour' (Afolabi 2009: 172).

From this evidence clearly the media in Brazil has huge connection to social movements as social praxis, which can be seen in all areas, this is especially interesting to examine in the popular television programs 'telenovelas' which are a distinctly Brazilian phenomenon somewhat like the European soap opera. Telenovelas are daily programs which can act as a tool for social merchandising, therefore often present and highlight current cultural and political themes; they have been described as a 'vehicle of innovative, provocative and politically emancipatory popular culture' (Joyce 2012:10). The dominant message in these programs has traditionally been to praise the physical attributes of white people as the beauty ideal for all Brazilians; this communication can therefore be incredibly influential as telenovelas are a large part of Brazilian popular culture. (Joyce: 2010). This reflects the nations archetypal conceptions of the White elite and the 'poor' Black for entertainment purposes, therefore dramatizes them to a greater and perhaps less realistic extent, yet leaving the message to be further ingrained into public mentality. However in recent years there has been an active effort to include a more diverse cast and to address racial issues in these programs. 'Duas Caras' (Two faces) aired in October 2007 and was the first program to have an Afro Brazilian as the leading role, it aimed to address racial problems directly through politically incorrect dialogue; the first program of its kind and was initially met with extreme controversy. (Joyce: 2010). The very fact that this show has been created suggests the awareness of disparities in Brazilian culture and society that needs attention drawn to them:

'Duas Caras demonstrated TV Globo's awareness of its diverse audience and its outreach attempt to showcase more media minorities and minority issues' (Rosas – Moreno 2010: 265).

The program draws on all the usual societal labels to make a point and raise awareness: 'Evilasio' is the Afro American leading role who lives on the 'hillside' which is synonymous to the shanty towns or 'favelas' of São Paulo. His lifestyle is

portrayed with all the stereotypical associations that come with it: 'extreme poverty, drug lords and violence' (Joyce 2012: 4).

These discriminatory aspects and representations of Brazilian society suggest that the 'myth of racial democracy' is exactly that, and that the abolition of slavery was to some extent a 'cosmetic measure and that subtle forms of bondage - mental, financial, social, even spiritual still exist in Brazil' (Afolabi 2009: 265). However, both overarching and underlying these discrepancies has been the government's movement to create a national identity in order to unify the country further. This was largely under the rule of President Getilio Vargas who consolidated the federal system of Brazil for the first time and dictated that national symbols became institutionalized (Davis: 1999). Brazilian nationalists created the idea of the 'harmonious Brazilian national family' in the racial democracy and tried to create a unified identity to accompany this notion (Davis: 1999). Brazil constructed nationalism in popular culture based on two predominant aspects, which were the idea of being 'Brasilidade' or having 'Brazilianness', and cultural unity based on racial democracy in which political and ethnic dissident voices would be silenced for the good of the whole (Davis: 1999). However in enforcing this the government did not recognise cultural diversity and resulted in the creation of 'enduring national myths and symbols that successfully marginalised racial consciousness for the rest of the 20th Century (Davis 1999:2). For example, nationalists banned the teaching of foreign languages in order to appear more unified, but this has resulted in the slow disappearance of traditional aboriginal tongues (Anaya: 2009).

Soccer, Samba and 'Carnival' were developed and projected to be representations of everything Brazilian that people from all backgrounds could identify with. Nonetheless even in these 'national symbols' racial inequalities still prevailed: Soccer became professionalized in 1933 which made it into a legitimate sport and should have allowed for participation for people of all backgrounds, this was rarely seen in the public eye as racialization guaranteed that 'only exceptional black players would be accepted for international competition' (Davis 1999: 127). 'Carnival', traditionally a vibrant street parade, has now become recognised globally as an intrinsic part of Brazilian culture due to its perceived symbolic meaning. It was once however a celebration of Afro - Brazilian history specifically which has now been applied to the nation, leading to 'exploitation of Afro-Brazilian heritage with little socio economic benefits', for example in tourism which leads to frustration and alienation (Diène: 2006). The European elites at one point wanted to transform it into a western 'civilised' phenomenon in order to represent the progression of the nation. The result of this was from 1905 to 1914 Afro Brazilians were forbidden from participating in it due to their 'primitive' nature (De Santana Pinho: 2010). In 1975 the black cultural organization (known as a 'bloco afro') named 'Ilê Aiyê' paraded for the first time in an attempt to reconnect with black culture, the public's reaction however was to label it to be 'anti white' and it was nicknamed 'bloco racismo' (De Santana Pinho: 2010). This seems to be especially ironic as the origin of this national symbol is an African one, yet the nation rejects traditional input to be racist. The tourism industry however has adopted the recent dominant discourse of 'Bahianess' (Bahia being labelled the most African state in Brazil) leading to it becoming a show for the 'hedonistic satisfaction of tourists' (Afolabi 2009: 158). The event is a complex topic in terms of cultural diversity as it:

'represents black culture, at the same time it is black culture, even if within in black cultural products are commoditized, sold and consumed' (De Santana Pinho: 2010).

In this way it can be seen as both liberating and exploitative of black culture.

Slavery, 'Whitening' and the creation of a national identity has meant that 'until the early 20th Century Afro Brazilians often looked for dignity, respect and self esteem in references of whiteness (De Santana Pinho: 2010), however now it is 'currently fashionable to be black in Brazil' (Moraies et al: 2012). This changed when black organizations began to seek these elements in diacritical representations of Africa and Blackness (De Santana Pinho 2010: 72). Although the notion that Africans and their descendants had a common 'African identity' started in the mid 19th Century it has only been recently that there has been a mobilization of race and a 'Blackening' accompanied by a new desire to embrace their skin colour and all that it represents rather than deny it. A large proportion of this mentality stems from the state of Bahia, which is home to the 'United Black Movement' or 'MNU' that resembles a human rights organization. This body was founded in 1978 with the intentions of establishing a racial, ethnic and Afro referenced black identity demarcated by solid boundaries that were supposed to be impermeable to racial mixing in both 'biological' and cultural terms (De Santana Pinho 2010: 77). It places key emphasis on embracing negritude as a feeling rather than a colour, the view of which has been so imposed in Brazilian culture over the years.

'Blocos Afros' stemmed from this initial group the 'MNU' and seek to 'defeat racism, respond to social disparagement and create a distinct black identity' (De Santana Pinho: 2010). 'Ilê Aiyê' is the oldest and largest of these organizations and its goal is to recreate a black identity that has otherwise been repressed through the myth of 'Mama Africa' which is conceived as a source of purity where one can recover from the 'mesticagem' and become disentangled from the trappings of Brazil's racial democracy (De Santana Pinho: 2010). Whilst it has gained much cultural and community support the nature of the organization means that it still largely lacks economic funding (De Santana Pinho: 2010). Despite this however, members have recreated Black traditions through the idealised impression of Africa in the form of music, clothes and hairstyles for example. Groups such as these have fought against the idea of a national Brazilian identity in order to reconstruct their own self from their heritage. This has clearly had some success as since the 1970's African American tourists have been visiting Bahia in an attempt to re associate themselves with their African roots (De Santana Pinho: 2010). They have also succeeded in raising awareness in regions outside of Bahia to encourage other Afro Brazilians to embrace their heritage, for example in national campaigns labelled 'Don't let your colour fade into white' (Moraes et al: 2012) and led to the creation of a new law in 2010 passed to promote the appreciation of African and Quilombo history. Clearly in Brazil the growth and development of groups such as 'Ilê Aiyê' are representative of social change and are gaining the power of awareness; they seem to be most vital as an emancipatory tool and as a way for Black people to create their own identity according to their heritage rather than be discriminated against when they cannot, or more importantly do not want to, wholly conform to a White ideal.

In conclusion, research into the processes of racialization in Brazil has shown that there is no absolute way of defining racism or the ways in which it is manifested across society. It seems that the derogatory racial mentalities of the nation were largely established at the time of Portuguese colonial rule; by enslaving the Black and Indigenous populations this automatically established them to be of a lower hierarchical position. This history accompanied with the notions of Social Darwinism, Eugenics and the policy of 'Whitening' in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries fully ingrained in the population the mind-set that White Europeans were the elite and the source of intellect, modernity and culture. In a developing country such as Brazil therefore these recognized racial boundaries take decades to even begin to be broken down. The impacts of both colonialism and post colonialism are clear in this instance, but what illuminates Brazil as a nation in comparison to other states who

had experienced forced modernization and slavery is that racism and the resultant inequalities have been actively denied through the 'myth of racial democracy'. However what seems to have been the most detrimental aspect to the marginalised populations is the attempt to create a 'National Identity': in doing so the original cultures and traditions of Afro Brazilians, and to some extent the Indigenous peoples, have been obscured and manipulated to create the illusion of a harmonized Brazil. Joyce (2012) writes that 'Afro Brazilians are caught in the DuBoisian 'double consciousness' and 'double bind' as they want to be Africans and Brazilians at the same time' (Joyce 2012:268): this seems to encompass the quest for a unique identity that some Afro –Brazilians are now experiencing. Despite this, the recent mobilization of the Black race in Brazil suggests a move towards an increasingly equal nation and an acceptance and pride in one's 'Negritude' that is essential to the beginning of the abolition of racial inequalities.

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