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## Examining the Relationship between Participatory Democracy and Nonwhite Domestic Workers in Porto Alegre, Brazil: Issues of Race, Class and Privilege

Alexis Nicole Mootoo  
*University of South Florida*, [amootoo@usf.edu](mailto:amootoo@usf.edu)

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Examining the Relationship between Participatory Democracy and Nonwhite Domestic  
Workers in Porto Alegre, Brazil: Issues of Race, Class and Privilege

by

Alexis Nicole Mootoo

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts  
Department of Government and International Studies  
College of Arts and Sciences  
University of South Florida

Major Professor: Bernd Reiter, Ph.D.  
Rachel May, Ph.D.  
Paul Dosal, Ph.D.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my father Harold who serves as the inspiration in all aspects of my life. I aspire to accomplish all of the goals I have set with his grace and brilliance.

Papa, I am a step away from what you had in mind for me. It is all to honor you!

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## **ABSTRACT**

Brazil is a nation that has professed to be a 'racial democracy' such that race categories are not recognized. This implies that every citizen experiences equal access from a political, social and economic point of view, irrespective of skin color. Nevertheless, palpable racial inequalities exist in Brazil such that there is a primarily white elite class while Brazilians of African descent are typically poor. Male dominance is a worldwide phenomenon. When racial inequities are coupled with male dominance, Brazilian women of African origins suffer as they occupy the lowest socio-economic strata, which often remand them to work as domestics. Some scholars have hypothesized that a participatory democracy model can bring about a shift in these women's lives. Using the participatory budgeting model that was implemented in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 1989 as a point of reference, this paper analyzes the official socio-economic indicator census data for years 2001, 2005 and 2009 in the region. The analysis contends that a participatory democracy model has not brought about any significant change in the position of nonwhite Brazilian female domestic workers in Porto Alegre. The assumption can be made that a participatory democracy model implemented nationwide will not ameliorate the conditions of nonwhite Brazilian women working as domestics. Therefore, other strategies should be identified by the Brazilian Government to address the disparate conditions of these women who have been showcased as neo-slaves in the international community.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The composition of Brazil's population is a key factor in many of its current political debates and dilemma. Globally, Brazil has the largest population with an estimated 203 million citizens as of July 2011. The nation's racial composition is diverse with 47.7% considered white, 43.1% mulatto (mixed with white and black ethnic backgrounds), 7.6% black 0.9% other which includes Japanese, Arab and Amerindian and 0.7% unspecified according to the 2010 Brazilian census. The Portuguese settlement during Brazil's colonization period created a white elite population. The transportation of African slaves to work the fields and take care of the homes of Portuguese colonizers brought another racial dimension to the nation. The mulatto population, also called the *pardos*, resulted from the miscegenation of whites colonizers and blacks brought as slaves during the Atlantic slave trade. Taking into consideration the original indigenous Indians inhabiting Brazil and the miscegenation between the whites, Africans and Indians, the nation of Brazil has citizens whose skin color runs the gamut, from white to black with every shade in between the two.

Brazil's distinctive governmental model recognizes that various ethnic groups exist, yet does not acknowledge race as a means to categorize its population, as do other nations with similar demographic racial diversity. For several decades, Brazil prided itself as a democracy positing equal access to all governmental, educational and socio-economic resources for all citizens, irrespective of skin color. More importantly, Brazil

officially repudiated racist practices that promoted the disparate treatment of nonwhites. In theory, Brazil's democratic system seemed optimum to ensure that the issues of racial inequalities befalling the United States for instance would not occur in Brazil. This is unfortunately not the case. Brazil's population is extremely hierarchical with whites or fairer skinned, light-eyed Brazilians being considered the elites, experiencing the largest amount of wealth, power and prestige. Meanwhile, the people with dark complexions and afro-centric features are on the other end of the spectrum occupying the lower socio-economic stratum. How can this occur when Brazil guarantees equality irrespective of skin color? Based upon governmental policy, Brazil does not categorize its people by race, yet skin color strongly determines levels of success, education and class.

Gender inequality is a recurring problem all over the world irrespective of skin color. As of 2011, the Global Gender Gap Index suggests that women in the United States earn 74.12% of their male counterparts' earnings. In Brazil, women earn 66.79% of their male counterparts' earnings (Index Mundi, 2012). When coupling this fact with skin color being a determinant of social hierarchy, nonwhite women in Brazil are at the very bottom of the social and economic scale.

According to a number of scholars, nonwhites do not have equal access to a years of education, which strongly impedes their ability to secure the type of employment that will guarantee moving out of the lower Brazilian socio-economic strata. Nonwhite women typically are not educated and therefore are forced to become domestic workers, often having to live with their employers. These nonwhite female domestic workers are legacies from slavery. They served their white masters for centuries and although slavery was abolished in 1888, they have maintained their role as nannies, cooks, cleaners and

remain the spine of the current white Brazilian household structure. Often, these women are exploited, begin their employment as children, and are inherited from one white family to another, ensuring that white households run seamlessly. Having these nonwhite women 'holding down the fort' allows for the white elite, to remain elites as they are full participants in political processes that guarantee their successes.

Women who are poor, disenfranchised, and of color, work as domestics for elite families all over the world. This fact does not typically promote discussions highlighting societal disparities. The significance of nonwhite Brazilian women working as domestic workers is noteworthy. The socio-economic trajectory of Brazilian white and nonwhite men, and white women, has evolved over the centuries much like in other nations of the world. On the other hand, nonwhite Brazilian women remain in deficient positions by working as servants, maids, cooks and nannies because Brazilian society forces them to do so (Twine, 1997).

The focus of this thesis is to examine why Brazilian nonwhite women experience social and economic inequality – a status that is manifested by their principal employment as domestic workers. A second focus of this thesis is to examine whether a participatory democracy model has or can enhance the disparities suffered by nonwhite Brazilian servants in comparison to the rest of society. Some scholars would suggest that a participatory democracy model might address the disparity in treatment between Brazil's whites and nonwhites.

According to Pateman (1970), a renowned scholar in the field, participatory democracy is a democratic model that theorizes that representation through voting does

not necessarily yield full democracy. Instead, involvement of citizens spanning all socio-economic strata in political processes and systems from a local, regional, state and ultimately national point of view is optimal. Increased participation can affect a higher level of democratic participation, giving way to greater equality between citizens irrespective of their social class or racial background. To ameliorate the reported blatant inequalities in living standards experienced by poor and nonwhite citizens of Porto Alegre, Brazil and its hinterlands, the Brazilian *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) Party implemented the participatory budget initiative in 1989. The participatory budgeting venture would inspire the buy-in of the entire population of the region, irrespective of their economic and political stations. Porto Alegre's participatory budget yielded a number of social reforms: the number of schools quadruped in a short period of time and water and sewer connections became available in almost 100% of all dwellings, over a ten year period. One could speculate that nonwhite women in Brazil would thrive in a participatory democracy model ameliorating their conditions.

Political science, sociology and history scholars have discussed the effects of the participatory budgeting model on the conditions of nonwhite Brazilians in Porto Alegre, before and after its implementation. Their findings suggest that the infrastructure of the *favelas* (slums) outside of Porto Alegre has improved. This phenomenon, as reported by Baiocchi (2003), could be due to the issue of race and ethnic background never entering Porto Alegre residents' consciousness. Therefore, race is not the cause of the disparate conditions between people experiencing wealth in comparison to people living in object poverty. Some hypothetical conclusions can be derived to explicate this hypothesis. First, the effects of slavery on the psyche of both whites and nonwhites may

continue to have a profound influence on how both classes are viewed and represented. It is still understood that Brazilian nonwhite domestic workers are supposed to take care of and support their white employers as they have done for centuries.

Secondly, the current government of Brazil has initiated a number of affirmative actions and quota systems to broaden the opportunities of non-white Brazilians from an educational, social, employment and land ownership point of view. Nevertheless, whites continue to occupy the glass ceiling with a majority of the wealth and power, while nonwhites remain at the bottom, a situation that is believed to be perpetuated due to a lack of economic resources. The issue of race continues to remain unspoken as an element that causes inequality in Brazilian citizenship. Consequently, there is a strong likelihood that nonwhites' circumstances will remain status quo.

### **Methodology**

In order to analyze the two research questions proposed above, a case study of Porto Alegre will be conducted in order to explain whether its participatory budget model (PB) has enhanced the lives of nonwhite domestic workers over time. Brazilian official data sets for 2001, 2005 and 2009 will be compared in terms of changes in education, illiteracy rate and income levels. Although the Porto Alegre's PB was implemented in 1989, Brazilian socio-economic indicator data was not formalized until 2001. Analyzing illiteracy rates, years of education attained and income levels by skin color in Porto Alegre from 2001 to 2009 allows for conclusions to be made regarding the socio-economic conditions of nonwhite domestic workers in that region before and after the PB. Additionally, PB priorities are officially tracked by local and municipal governments

and these priorities are examined to understand how PB priorities are linked to socio-economic indicators. In terms of participation in the PB, data collected by scholars such as Bioacchi, Nylen and Wampler is utilized to understand the racial makeup of the participants in the initiative.

## **Chapter Overview**

Chapter two presents the evolution of the profession of domestic service. The chapter delves into how Brazilians are classified by skin color. The correlation between skin color and domestic service in Brazil is offered, also discussing the impact of racial science on Brazilian society. The case is made that a master/slave relationship persists between white employers and nonwhite domestic workers. Lastly, the chapter examines the mindset of Brazilian nonwhite domestic workers, exposing some of their experiences in the profession.

Chapter three presents an expansive history of the evolution of Brazil's current democracy. The chapter discusses the effects of colonialism and the influence of the Worker's Party on participatory democracy theory. The chapter continues to define participatory democracy and explain the importance of democratic participation.

Chapter four is devoted to explicating Porto Alegre's Participatory Budget (PB). In order to understand the PB, a brief historical framework of the city and its hinterlands is offered. The chapter explains the ultimate goal of the budget and its structure.

Chapter five describes the demographic population of Porto Alegre by skin color. In this chapter, statistical data is examined to understand how the Porto Alegre PB has affected the socio-economic conditions of nonwhite domestic workers. In this chapter,



conclusions are made regarding how nonwhite domestic workers have fared in the region and presents whether the PB has changed their lives for the better or worse.

## **CHAPTER TWO: NONWHITE BRAZILIAN WOMEN'S LEGACY AS DOMESTIC WORKERS**

Domestic workers have been a part of the mid to upper class Brazilian household framework for centuries. Domestic work encompasses various responsibilities such as: cleaning, tending to children, cooking, washing clothes, and any other function relating to efficiently running a household. Race relations in Brazil have been inextricably linked to the skin color of people holding domestics positions (Sheriff, 2001). A broad range of literature has examined how race, low socio-economic position and lack of education have been strong determinants of why domestic workers are typically women and descendants of the African slave trade (Skidmore, 2010).

Employee/employer relationships can be contentious based upon a dynamic of employers' feelings of superiority over their employees. Employers are often perceived as privileged since they may have been placed in their role through patronage or have had access to higher education that has qualified them to be leaders. These are just two examples of how people attain supervisory or employer roles. For employees in many countries in the world on the other hand, labor laws exist to protect workers from being exploited by their employers.

Domestic work is different from other types of employment. Rollins (1985) states that domestic service is a form of physical labor involving a relationship between two individual women most of the time whose predetermined roles are influenced by their

class, regional, racial and ethnic backgrounds. Taking those circumstances into consideration, the employer/domestic worker relationship does not typically have the same boundaries that are lawfully established between ownership and labor in other types of employment. While most types of employment are in the public sphere, domestic work occurs in the private sphere where employers' behaviors, good or bad, are not perceptible to the general public. Domestic service taking place in the private sphere can lead to the mistreatment of domestic workers going unchecked (Rollins, 1985). Domestic service has been a platform such that women have fallen victim to isolation, emotional and sexual exploitation, humiliation and general oppression spearheaded by their employers. Ehrenreich and Hochschild (2003) assert that women working in domestic service do so because they feel it is their legacy, they are uneducated or because they cannot secure better employment. Based on those circumstances, domestic workers often feel that they are in a position of inferiority and are not able to mitigate any wrongful treatment coming from their employers (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003).

The precarious domestic/employer relationship has been around since the beginning of time. Rollins (1985) posits that household labor originates in slavery beginning during the Roman and Greek eras. As history has evolved and nations have conquered other nations, the conquerors enslaved the conquered and forced them to care for their homes and their children (Ehrenreich and Hochschild, 2003). Latin America leads in terms of the percentage of women in the field of domestic work. Urbanization trends have instigated Latin American women to migrate to major cities, constituting 90 percent of all domestic workers in the world (Rollins, 1985). Domestic service is paramount in Latin American countries, so heads of households, working in public and

private corporations, can be free to conduct their day to day business, without time constraints (Rollins, 1985). Domestic workers remain in the private sphere, not being able to actively participate in the public sphere. Moreover, they can be mistreated and viewed as inferior by their employers. Although these occurrences are typical all over the world and in Latin America, the subject of domestic service in Brazil is particularly controversial. The controversy stems from Brazil's governmental priority to categorize every citizen as equal, irrespective of socio-economic background. Additionally, Brazil has gone as far as labeling itself a 'racial democracy' where, unlike in the United States for instance, color has no impact on the level of access available to any citizen from a political and socio-economic point of view (Caldwell, 2007).

Taking into consideration the established position of inferiority held by a domestic in comparison to their employer, Brazilian public policy positing equality of all citizens is a travesty. Some domestic workers in Brazil are reportedly working fourteen hour days (sometimes seven days a week), treated like children, inherited by family members like property, and are sexually abused by their employers (Twine, 1997). Domestic workers are typically women and are more likely to be nonwhite. How can the Brazilian government pretend?

Although domestic workers in Brazil have mobilized and are rallying for better working conditions, better wages and general respect, the problem persists, raising important questions about the commitment of the Brazilian government – federal and different state – to actually enforce the legal equality of all its citizens.

This chapter will discuss the historical evolution of domestic workers in Brazil, beginning with the effects of colonization on Brazil's demographics and the impact of racial science of the 'white race' emerging as superior and the nonwhite races as inferior. Additionally, this chapter will bring attention to some of the determinant factors of race, education and low socio-economic status becoming pivotal to nonwhite women having a legacy of working in the field of domestic work. The conditions that domestic workers have endured since slavery such as: inferiority, exploitation, and being treated as property and children is documented by a variety of scholars and Brazilian domestic workers. This section is the backdrop to illustrate the current slave-master relationship between domestics and their employers, which perpetuates the white privilege that has permeated Brazilian society since colonial times.

### **Colorism In Brazil**

Brazil does not have official race categories as does the United States for example. Instead of racial categories, people designate themselves in terms of their skin color based upon either Eurocentric or Afrocentric physical features. The colonization of Brazil by the Portuguese brought a white component to a population originally comprised of indigenous Amerindians. The Portuguese colonizers brought African slaves to work the conquered land that was tremendously rich in natural resources. With the effects of miscegenation between whites, Africans, and Indians, Brazil has a population that is exceptionally diverse. It is important to state that although there are no official race categories, the populace has the opportunity to self-designate as either white (branco), black (preto), brown (pardo), yellow (amarelo) and indigenous (indigeno). These categories are listed on official government forms and are part of the Brazilian census

(IBGE, 2010). People self-designated as white have typical Eurocentric features such as white skin, straight hair and sharper noses, and lighter eyes. This category of people is typically from 100% European ancestry. The populace self-identifying as black have Afrocentric features such as dark skin, coarse hair, and broad noses. This grouping of people's ancestral origins is 100% from the slaves brought over during the African Slave Trade. The population self-identifying as brown are people whose skin color spans between white and black since they are the product of miscegenation between whites, blacks, and the indigenous. This population has a mixture of Eurocentric and Afrocentric features. The yellow skin color self-designation relates to the immigration of Asians from the Far East of the world, a phenomenon that occurred all through Latin America. Prior to any colonization efforts, Amerindians comprised Brazil's original population (Skidmore, 2010). For the purposes of this thesis, the people self-designated as blacks and brown are combined and referred to as nonwhite.

### **A Brief Historical Narrative Of How Brazil's Population Evolved**

The development of Brazil's population necessitates presenting the historical background of the nation beginning with being colonized by the Portuguese. The effects of colonization have had profound and everlasting effects on the Brazilian people, whether they classify themselves as white or nonwhite.

The Portuguese established settlements in Brazil in the early 1500s after explorers discovered numerous natural resources (Levine & Crocitti, 1999). Portuguese conquerors had successfully enslaved Africans in Guinea and Angola as free sources of labor. They assumed that they could employ similar enslavement methods with the natives of Brazil

in order to harvest the land. However, the Portuguese colonizers discovered that indigenous Brazilians could not be enslaved as they persistently escaped due to their familiarity with their home terrain. The Portuguese imported African slaves to compensate for the loss of indigenous workers needed to work in the newly discovered sugarcane fields (Skidmore, 2010). Additionally, the imported female African slaves cleaned, cooked, and reared their slave masters' children. Regrettably, female African slaves often satisfied their slave masters' sexual pleasures (Levine & Crocitti, 1999).

As the Brazilian export business became more and more lucrative, the importation of slaves from Africa escalated. It is estimated that by the nineteenth century, over 60,000 African slaves arrived in Brazil each year (Levine & Crocitti, 1999). Brazil gained its independence from Portugal in 1822 and the colonial governmental system fully collapsed by 1824. In 1850, laws freed male descendants of slaves and slaves of particular ages. Princess Isabel, the reigning monarch, officially abolished slavery effective May 13, 1888 (Levine & Crocitti, 1999). Nevertheless, more than three centuries of white Portuguese and European elitism lorded over African slaves created a dichotomy of white supremacy and dark-skinned inferiority.

The miscegenation of white Portuguese, African slaves, Asian immigrants and indigenous Brazilians created a racially diverse population to include every skin color. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with the abolishment of slavery and the nation's modernization ensuing, new industrialization efforts inspired official population whitening public policies that elicited a European immigration trend by Brazil's white elite. The purpose of the whitening phenomenon aimed to reduce the number of people of African and Indian descent deemed inferior (Lesser, 2005).

## **Eugenics And Racial Science**

Eugenics is the foundation for Brazil's demographic characteristics. Eugenics, according to Galton (1904), is defined as "the science which deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage" (p. 1). Eugenics' objective aimed to whiten the population in many countries, including the United States and a number of countries in Latin America. Eugenics set the stage for whites to become the elite class of Brazilian society based upon a perception of genetic superiority and entitlement. On the other hand, eugenics would pave the way for black and brown people (nonwhites) to comprise the lower classes of Brazilian society and often be deemed the underbelly of the Brazilian people. Eugenics dogma is still embedded in the minds of people of Brazil, irrespective of its eventual dismissal as a science (Skidmore, 2010).

Eugenics manifested itself through various forms of racial science experiments that have been the focus of study by a variety of scholars. One of the essays in Harding's compilation authored by Stephen Jay Gould – "Science Constructs Race American Polygeny and Craniometry before Darwin: Blacks and Indians as Separate and Inferior" (Harding, 1993) – discusses how the inferiority and superiority of race were established by measuring the skull sizes of people classified by race. Gould (1993) explains the framework used by scientists who published papers and journals on the subject of eugenics in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Those researchers used polygeny and monogeny as concepts of race. Monogeny claims that the human species is one race. Polygeny claims that the Negro race is a different species from the white race. To that end, whites are considered superior to Negroes needing guidance and protection from the white race



(Harding, 1993). Gould critiques the research of Drs. Agassiz and Morton who studied the skull sizes of hundreds of people from several races to make the case for polygeny (Harding, 1993). Gould posits that their a priori biases instigated findings that whites have larger skulls than Negros. Had bias not driven their findings, the researchers would have found that there is little difference between the skull sizes of white people and black people. Actually, skull size and brain capacity is related to a person's physique, not their race (Harding, 1993).

The German Nazis perpetrated atrocities upon the Jewish race based upon their theory of genetic superiority, founded in eugenics studies. To wit, the Nazi regime forced Jews to undergo a variety of medical procedures to make scientific advances in order to assert that the white race reigned supreme. Eventually, over six million Jews were reportedly killed because they were regarded as parasitic to the human race according to Adolf Hitler and his Nazi regime (Kershaw, 2001). Such early enlightenment philosophers as David Hume (1711-1776) weighed in regarding the issue of race and eugenics, demonstrating that racism was indeed intimately linked to European enlightenment. Eugenics was a scientific and social theory to promote the improvement of the human race by promulgating the superiority of the white race as opposed to the inferiority of the black race. Hume stated: "I am apt to suspect the Negroes and in general all the other species of men (for there are four or five different kinds) to be naturally inferior to the whites. There never was a civilized nation of any other complexion than white, nor even any individual eminent either in action or speculation. No ingenious manufacturers amongst them, no arts, no sciences" (Garrett, 2000, p. 171).

Eugenics had such a profound effect on Brazil's elites that in 1917, Brazil was the first country in Latin America to host a Eugenics Conference (Dávila, 2003). Although miscegenation between whites and blacks was not considered a taboo in Brazil, whiteness was to remain exclusive. Nancy Stepan's work, *The Hour of Eugenics: Race, Gender and Nation in Latin America* (1991) presents a study of eugenics in Latin America beginning during the 1880s and ending at the end of World War II. Stepan argues that the eugenics movement in which extreme racist policies were implemented to eradicate groups considered inferior, such as Jews in Germany and blacks in the United States, were not employed in Latin America (Stepan, 1991). In her text, Stepan examines eugenics policies in Brazil, Argentina and Mexico where gender is the apex of racial improvement through controlling female reproduction (Stepan, 1991). Stepan posits that reproduction and marriage between whites and nonwhites was controlled in Brazil in order to whiten society, the ultimate goal of eugenics (Stepan, 1991). The miscegenation of society would lead to a gradual whitening of the population from one generation to the next. Whites would occupy the elite class, own land and businesses, become the power base in the political and economic arenas, while nonwhites would be better suited for labor work in tropical weather as they were low-grade in morality, prone to criminal behavior, were incapable of learning, and were generally sub-par in nature. This way of thinking generated public and health policies that helped to keep nonwhites in the lower socio-economic strata and less educated (Stepan, 1991). In Reiter's, *Negotiating Democracy in Brazil* (2009), the author presents a detailed historical background of Brazil from its colonization by the Portuguese during the sixteenth century to the development of the Brazilian colored population via miscegenation and eugenics. The author discusses the

government's movement to 'whiten' the population (Reiter, 2009). His book also discusses the 'inferiority' of darker-skinned people as opposed to the 'superiority' of white-skinned people proposed by scientists and doctors. Ultimately, the dynamic of putting people into groups based on either their ability to be 'good' citizens – the whites or the uncivilized, criminal group – the nonwhites, is perpetuated to modern day Brazil and is the driving force behind the inequality between groups (Reiter, 2009).

### **Brazil's Racial Democracy**

Eugenics established the superiority of whites in comparison to the inferiority of nonwhites. Brazil's government actively pursued avenues to maintain eugenics ideology in order to develop a nation whose demographic representation would resemble that of European nations rather than a nation filled with people with dark skin who were thought of as incapable.

Propagating Eugenics theory, European immigrants were recruited for the industrial and technical jobs by the Brazilian government, while the portion of the Brazilian population with ancestral roots in slavery continued to work as agricultural laborers (Skidmore, 2010). Those who migrated to Brazilian urban centers worked in the service field, with nonwhite women principally working as domestics for white families (Twine, 1997). This has led to a complicated phenomenon in terms of race in Brazil particularly since race is not officially recognized as it is in other nations, like the United States. Instead, Brazilians are unofficially classified based upon physical character traits that include eye and skin color, and hair texture (Twine, 1997).

'Racial democracy,' a Brazilian ideology established by famous sociologist Gilberto Freyre, rejected the conception of grouping its population by racial categories (Freyre, 1945). This dogma, that became a great source of national pride, developed after Brazilian's independence through the mid-1940s (Martins, Medeiros and Nascimento, 2004). Using racial democracy conceptualization, Brazil would not suffer the violence other nations experienced due to notions of racial discrimination much like in the United States (Bailey and Telles, 2006). However, Freyre's theory of racial democracy was highly criticized and eventually found to be a complete failure, or at best wishful thinking that never became a reality. While whites continued to be the elite, nonwhites occupied the lower and poorer classes (Bailey and Telles, 2006).

The United Nations Conference against Racism held in Durban, South Africa in 2001 served as the platform for Afro-Brazilian social movements to expose the racist practices in Brazil. The conference was the catalyst for Brazil's racial democracy concept coming to an end. Brazilian elites implemented some public policies that would attempt to level the socio-economic playing field between whites and nonwhites, in the hopes of reversing the idea ingrained in people that *pardos/pretos* were inferior as compared to *brancos* (Telles, 2004).

### **Skin Color, Education And Socio-Economic Status**

While Brazil's 'racial democracy' is elusive, skin color remains directly linked to the level of opportunity or success a Brazilian can attain. The idea that nonwhites should enjoy an equal democratic standing as whites has not yet materialized based on numerous factors that continue to plague the Brazilian population. Some of the factors are education

and employment opportunities. The higher the level of education a person attains, the higher his or her glass ceiling is (Telles, 2004). In terms of employment, a person with white skin is more likely to be hired than a person with nonwhite skin, irrespective of qualifications. Moreover, whites have a greater opportunity to be employed than nonwhites. As illustrated in table 1, the data collected by the IBGE from 2002 through 2006 shows that whites have a higher employment rate than nonwhites (nonwhites include the black and brown people).

Table 1. Distribution of the Population by Type of Activity by Color or Race (in thousands of persons) – 2002 to 2006

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>POP. AT ACTIVE AGE</b>	36,642	37,74	38,138	38,973	39,754
Black/Brown	42.6	41.6	43.4	44.4	42.7
White	56.5	57.4	55.8	54.6	56.5
<b>EMPLOYED</b>	18,111	18,921	19,625	20,072	20,699
Black/Brown	41.6	40.2	42.1	43.2	41.9
White	57.6	58.8	57.0	55.9	57.3
<b>UNEMPLOYED</b>	2,349	2,814	2,400	2,140	2,292
Black/Brown	49.5	48.8	53.3	54.9	50.8
White	50.1	50.5	46.2	44.6	48.6
<b>NON-ECON. ACTIVE POP</b>	16,182	15,639	16,112	16,761	16,762
Black/Brown	42.8	42.0	43.5	44.6	42.7
White	56.3	57.1	55.7	54.4	56.4
<b>UNEMPLOYMENT RATE</b>	11.5	12.9	10.9	9.6	10.0
Black/Brown	13.4	15.3	13.4	11.9	11.8
White	10.1	11.3	9.0	7.8	8.6

Source: IBGE Data 2002 to 2006

One's educational level is directly tied to the type of employment a Brazilian secures. Yet nonwhites do not have the same access to education as whites do, particularly with respect to a college education. In consideration of these facts, the question of equality between white and nonwhite Brazilian citizens is debatable. Another dimension to consider regarding equality of Brazilian citizens is gender. In Brazil, men earn more than women but this is only when men are white. When skin color is thrown in the equation, white women earn more than nonwhite men, which leaves nonwhite women

at the very bottom of the socio-economic scale (Leite, 2005). Nonwhite women with no education do not have any realistic expectation of climbing the socio-economic ladder. This challenges the idea that all citizens in Brazil are equal, irrespective of skin color and gender.

According to Arias, Yamada and Tejerina (2004), earning gaps between whites and nonwhites are attributable to family educational background. Using Mincer earnings regression – the statistical relationship between market wages, education and experience, the authors show “returns to education vary with gradients of skin color” (Heckman, Lochner and Todd, 2003, p.39). Using the *Brazilian Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicilio* (PNAD) national household survey 1996 data, the authors demonstrate that whites receiving more than eight years of education (including college) earn more than nonwhites with the same level of education. Their study also shows that whites have access to higher levels of education than nonwhites. This study breaks down empirical data by Brazilian North, Northeast and South regions. This study does not segregate the data in terms of gender but does indicate that wages are dependent upon educational level (Arias, Yamada and Tejerina, 2004).

Several studies have shown that access to education is paramount to getting a professional job. However, access to free, public universities is highly competitive and circumscribed. Brazil’s federal universities require an entrance exam, the *vestibular* (Htun, 2004), which is administered once yearly and necessitates stringent preparation. Since there are no tuition fees in federal universities, students experience tremendous pressure to do well when taking the *vestibular*. Typically, preparatory courses are required to successfully complete this weeklong exam. Private high schools, principally

attended by middle and upper class white students incorporate these exam preparatory courses in their curriculum. On the other hand, most publicly funded high schools, where the majority of nonwhites attend, do not offer the same preparatory courses for the *vestibular*. In the northeast portion of Brazil, Bahia in particular, data show that the majority of nonwhite students taking the vestibular do not perform well and therefore do not enter university. Hence, the large majority of students entering college in Brazil are white. Although the number of students enrolled in undergraduate studies increased in absolute terms from 2000 to 2007, the net enrollment percentage rate of youths between 18 and 24 years of age practically remained unchanged, around 10%, a very modest performance. Additionally, as far as skin color is concerned, the Brazilian population according to color during recent years has been approximately equal among whites and blacks plus browns from 2000 to 2007. However, the percentage of white students between the ages of 18 and 24 years enrolled in university is more than double for black and brown students. (tables 2 & 3).

Table 2. Enrollment of Brazilian Population by Color or Race (in percentage) – 2004 to 2007

<b>Year</b>	<b>White</b>	<b>Black &amp; Brown</b>	<b>Asian, Indigenous and undeclared</b>
<b>2004</b>	51.4%	46.0%	2.6%
<b>2005</b>	49.9%	49.5%	0.6%
<b>2006</b>	49.7%	49.5%	0.8%
<b>2007</b>	49.4%	49.7%	0.9%

*Source:* IBGE Social Indicator Data 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007

Table 3. Enrollment of White, Black and Brown Students (ages 18-24 years) at Higher Education Institutions (in percentage) – 2004 to 2007

	<b>% White</b>	<b>% Black and Brown</b>
<b>2004</b>	46.6%	16.5%
<b>2005</b>	51.6%	19.0%
<b>2006</b>	56.0%	22.0%
<b>2007</b>	57.9%	25.4%

*Source:* IBGE Social Indicator Data 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007

Leite (2005) discusses the subject of the educational system of Brazil paying particular attention to the educational background of students in the southeast and northeast regions of Brazil. Leite finds that students in the southeast that have parents who have completed more than eight years of education are more likely to do well in the *vestibular* and to enter college. These students are typically white. On the other hand, Leite finds that the majority of students in the northeast region of Brazil have parents who have completed minimal schooling (between one and four years) and are less likely to do well in school. Therefore, they do not do well in the *vestibular* and do not enter college. These students are typically nonwhite (Leite, 2005).

Bourguignon and Ferreira (2007) make the similar argument to Leite's regarding the correlation between parents' education and the educational attainment of their children. The two authors offer that race, regional area and parents' education have a direct impact on their children's access to a college education. Bourguignon and Ferreira conclude that the inequalities between whites and nonwhites in terms of access to an education directly results in whites attaining better employment as opposed to nonwhites having employment in the agricultural, industrial and service industries (Bourguignon and Ferreira, 2007).

Leite (2005) has also shown a direct relationship between the years of schooling achieved and the earning potential of a Brazilian. Consequently, the government of Brazil has instituted a number of affirmative action plans such as allowing nonwhites to enter and complete college irrespective of their scoring on the *vestibular*. In 2003, some federal and state universities enacted quotas. One quota plan allows for 20% of an entering federal university class to be black or *pardo*. There has been tremendous controversy



around the quota because Brazilian students, who would typically never identify themselves in terms of race or color as black, are doing so now to benefit from an education they would otherwise be unable to attain. According to PNAD data of 1996, an analysis of the years of schooling, the earnings and the number of hours worked for white and black workers from age 25 to 45 indicates that blacks received less years of schooling, and earned less than their white counterparts. The difference between whites and blacks in terms of years of schooling is two years. The difference in wages earned (on a monthly basis) between whites and blacks is much larger such that whites earned almost double what blacks earned (Table 4).

Table 4. Workers Aged 25 to 45 Years Old in Urban Areas

	Total			
	# Workers	Years of Schooling	Earnings	Workly hours
Brazil	24,340,567	7.4	597.63	43.41
North	1,215,448	6.8	502.99	44.40
Northeast	4,937,054	6.5	383.38	41.75
Southeast	12,370,650	7.8	692.32	43.69
South	4,087,818	7.6	602.79	43.90
Center-West	1,729,597	7.2	586.23	44.36
	Whites			
	% Workers	Years of Schooling	Earnings	Workly hours
Brazil	60.9%	8.3	737.10	43.62
North	31.0%	8.1	679.03	44.36
Northeast	33.3%	7.9	548.73	41.76
Southeast	67.5%	8.6	819.67	43.72
South	87.1%	7.9	641.98	44.07
Center-West	50.8%	8.2	714.95	43.97
	Blacks			
	% Workers	Years of Schooling	Earnings	Workly hours
Brazil	39.1%	6.0	380.62	43.09
North	69.0%	6.1	424.04	44.42
Northeast	66.7%	5.8	300.72	41.74
Southeast	32.5%	6.2	427.25	43.61
South	12.9%	5.4	338.17	42.72
Center-West	49.2%	6.2	453.23	44.77

Source: PNAD 1996; Author's Calculation

The PNAD data of 1996 demonstrates that the more education a Brazilian receives, the more likely he/she is able to have a position with good earnings potential. According to Leite (2005), these positions are considered professional and administrative. Professional positions include occupations such as physicians, lawyers, professors, as well as administrative and financial officers. These positions require completing sixteen years of education for a baccalaureate degree and eighteen years of education for a master's level degree. Administrative positions have good earnings potential and are typically classified as managers, teachers and department heads. These positions often require a college degree.

Research has shown that whites have far greater access to a college education than nonwhites, thus the professional positions are filled by white Brazilians. This dynamic excludes the large nonwhite population from those positions. In "Race, Gender and Regional Labor Market Inequalities in Brazil", using Brazilian sample census data from 2001, Lovell (2006) examines the inequalities of race and gender in the labor market between whites and nonwhites in São Paulo and Bahia. Lovell (2006) finds that residents of Bahia experienced a lack of access to jobs because of their skin color and their lack of education. The residents of São Paulo with more education and therefore professional occupations are white. In another article, Lovell (2000) finds that regional development is a factor. The more development occurs in a region, the larger the inequalities are in terms of race and gender (Lovell, 2000). Consequently, São Paulo, which experiences far greater development than Bahia, has the largest disparity rate in terms of race and gender in the labor force. In her research, Lovell (2000) introduces the issue of gender discrimination and how women are less likely to have professional jobs in

comparison to men. Since it is already established that whites are more likely to have an education than nonwhites, it can be inferred that the probability of nonwhite women having access to professional or administrative positions is even further reduced. Furthermore, Lovell's (2000) research also shows that nonwhite women are more likely to work as a domestic than white women, irrespective of region (Lovell, 2000 & 2006). In Sao Paulo, 13.7% of white women work as domestic workers in comparison to 46.5% black and 37.7% brown women working as domestics. This difference is significant. In Bahia, the percentage difference of white women (13.1%) versus black (49.4%) and brown (30.7%) women working in domestic service is as staggering. Overall, domestic service is the biggest female employment category in Brazil.

Table 5: Occupational Distribution by Color and Sex, Workers Aged 18–64, Urban São Paulo and Bahia

<i>Occupation</i>	<i>Total</i>		<i>White</i>		<i>Pardo</i>		<i>Preto</i>	
	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>F</i>
<i>A. São Paulo</i>								
Administration	10.6	5.1	12.5	6.1	5.9	2.8	5.2	2.0
Professional	11.6	19.8	13.8	23.2	5.8	9.4	7.4	12.2
Clerical	20.5	30.7	22.1	34.7	16.6	22.3	16.4	16.0
Industrial	37.9	11.8	33.9	10.8	48.0	15.5	48.2	12.4
Transportation/Comm.	9.5	0.3	9.0	0.3	10.9	0.4	10.6	0.2
Service	7.8	8.0	7.0	6.5	10.0	12.0	9.7	11.7
Domestic	2.1	24.3	1.8	18.3	2.8	37.7	2.6	45.5
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Index of Dissimilarity by Sex</i>		40.8		38.6		46.2		49.8
<i>Index of Dissimilarity by Color</i>					20.1	29.6	19.4	34.0
<i>B. Bahia</i>								
Administration	7.2	3.6	13.8	6.2	5.9	3.0	3.2	1.5
Professional	12.3	28.9	21.9	41.3	10.1	26.4	8.3	17.8
Clerical	20.7	25.1	25.0	31.0	20.7	25.0	13.9	14.7
Industrial	36.1	4.1	21.7	2.6	38.4	4.5	47.8	4.5
Transportation/Comm.	10.7	0.3	9.3	0.2	11.5	0.3	9.4	0.2
Service	10.8	9.2	7.3	5.6	11.2	10.1	14.0	11.8
Domestic	2.1	28.8	1.1	13.1	2.2	30.7	3.4	49.4
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
<i>Index of Dissimilarity by Sex</i>		47.7		37.5		49.1		56.4
<i>Index of Dissimilarity by Color</i>					23.4	24.1	35.3	44.5

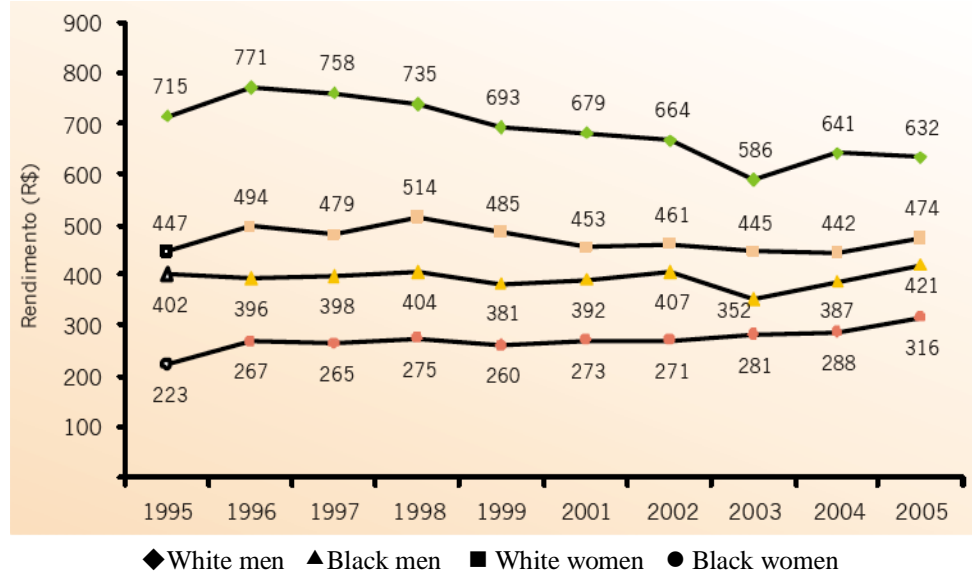
Source: 1991 Brazilian Census Public Use Sample

Concerning the earning power of men versus women in Brazil, The PNAD of 2008 data show that men earn more than women in all positions although the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE) census of 2010 shows that there are more women than men in the nation. According to Downie (2009) in “Latin America’s Worst Gap for Women and Minorities? Powerhouse Brazil”, “men earn 30% more than women of the same age and educational level in Brazil,” although women are the majority of workers in Brazil and in Latin America. Additionally, Downie (2009) states “for minorities, Brazil is ranked at the bottom of the list at 30% disparity followed by Guatemala at 24% and Uruguay at 22%” (p. 6). In terms of statistics addressing gender in Brazilian universities, Jacobs (1996) posits “that Brazil’s universities’ populations are made of 53% women and 95% of these women are classified as white” (p. 155). Women are overrepresented in universities, particularly white women. In Brazilian universities, 38% of professors are female, all of whom are white. These white female professors earn considerably less than their male counterparts (Jacobs, 1996).

These findings indicate that women have less opportunity than men in Brazil – even if they have achieved, on average, higher educational levels. The PNAD data from 1995 through 2005 as illustrated in the table 4 below, indicates that when monthly average wages in Reals (R\$ - Brazilian currency) are compared for white men, white women, black men and black women, white men’s earnings have fluctuated between R\$715 and R\$632 per month while white women earned between R\$447 in 1995 and R\$474 in 2005. The data indicate that black men earn less than white women with average monthly earnings ranging from R\$402 in 1995 to R\$421 in 2005. As for black women, their monthly earnings are dismal, with earnings of R\$223 in 1995 and R\$316 in

2005. Also, nonwhites have far less opportunities for social and economic success than whites. Relative to nonwhite women, the PNAD data spanning from 1996 to 2008 has consistently shown that nonwhite women earned far less than white women in the labor force and in all employment classes, but the disparity in wage earnings is far greater in the professional and administrative positions, principally because these positions require a higher education.

Table 6: Average Monthly Earnings by Gender and Skin Color – 1996 to 2008



Source: IBGE 2006 Brazilian Census Data

This data clearly demonstrates that in Brazil, race trumps gender when it comes to earnings.

### NONWHITE WOMEN ARE THE DOMESTIC WORKERS

Many nonwhite women are remanded to domestic work. When the history of Brazil is examined from its colonization by the Portuguese to the current day, it appears that nonwhite women have occupied the space of domestic work from the onset. It is and has been typical for white families to employ nonwhite women to tend to their children,

clean their houses, wash their clothes and cook their meals. Nonwhite women often live with their white employers to ensure that they are at their beck and call, although this trend is changing based upon the implementation of laws protecting this service sector (Caldwell, 2007). These women often leave their own families and children to tend to the families and children of others. Brazilian domestic workers are called *empregada* or *criada*. Since nonwhite women typically are the poorest cross-section of the population (PNAD, 2008), often they work as *criadas* and have their daughters as young as ten or eleven, who oftentimes also become *criadas* as well, in order to supplement the family income. Starting to work as young as ten or eleven precludes these girls from attending school, a trend that perpetuates their inability to rise socio-economically in adulthood (Goldstein, 2003). Unfortunately, nonwhite women assume these subservient roles because they have no other alternatives.

Cecilia McCallum (2007) writes that, “black women are symbolically and practically associated with domestic work” (p. 55). McCallum focuses her study on Brazilian black women in Bahia because the population composition of the area is principally nonwhite, while elites predominantly self-identify as “white.” McCallum finds that black women’s lack of access to professional work is related to their inability to secure an advanced education leading them to the only work they can qualify, for which is domestic. Actually, according to the research conducted by Reiter (2009), it is typical for nonwhite women to work as domestics, being away from their families and perpetuating the slave-master or parent-child relationship. Whites, and particularly white women, often employ nonwhite women to care for their homes and children while they fill the professional positions taking them away from their families.

*Laughter Out of Place: Race, Class, Violence, and Sexuality in a Rio Shantytown*

by Donna M. Goldstein (2003) includes a chapter that summarizes a day in the life of Glória, an *empregada* who chose to work for several families in order for her to be home with her own children in the evenings. The author recounts joining Glória on one of her typical but grueling workdays in 1991:

I accompanied Glória on many of these fourteen-hour work days and was impressed by her efficiency and competence. Each household presented an exhausting and strenuous array of tasks. She would arrive at the employer's home and immediately change into her comfortable cleaning clothes. They would clean the bathrooms and the kitchen, including the usual large pile of dishes left from several days' worth of meals. She would change the bedding, gather up dirty laundry, get a wash going, then begin sweeping or vacuuming the rooms of the apartment. If the floors needed waxing, she would get on her hands and knees to apply the strong smelling wax, allowing the greasy circles to dry into a thick filmy layer and later returning to remove it by buffing the floor by hand with a dry cloth. She would take a break by looking into the refrigerator and the freezer for what was available to cook with, then descend to the markets on the street to buy any ingredients that might be lacking. Usually, the entire afternoon was devoted to cooking three or four main dishes and an equal number of side dishes, and then, finally, to ironing and folding clothes. By the time Glòria left an apartment, every piece of glass and silver was shining, clothes were cleaned and ironed and put back into their closets, floors were slippery from their new coat of wax, and the refrigerator was filled with cooked foods, meals that would last for a number of days. (Goldstein, 2003, p. 62)

The author also relays that Glòria worked similar fourteen hour days roughly six days a week and since she refused to work for a family and leave her children in the evenings, could not get anyone to sign off on her work card. This work card would allow her to take advantage of governmental programs that could help her and her family but having a presence in her children's lives was more important than having her work card signed. Glòria made roughly \$6 per day or less than \$40 per week, a wage that was higher than if she had worked as a live-in *empregada* for six days a week. Glòria's wages were still insufficient to properly take care of her family. Taking into consideration all of the work performed in comparison to what she was paid, one could easily surmise that her work is parallel to slave work (Goldstein, 2003). Goldstein eloquently discusses how Glòria is a descendant from slavery whose spirit is embedded in the essence of enslavement:

It is easy to calculate that Glòria's childhood was not too far removed from slavery; indeed, her grandparents lived their youths during the final years of slavery. And while Glòria's mother's generation and her own did not experience it directly, its echoes have affected how both see themselves in the world. (Goldstein, 2003, p. 73)

Goldstein makes the connection that through the generations, slavery permeates in the recess of Afro-Brazilians minds. Reiter (2009) concurs:

As domestic work has very low prestige, employers take pains to distance themselves from their servants, using several symbolic mechanisms to stress their distance. Upholding the invention of racial inferiority is one of the most salient strategies to maintain the distance between employer and maid. (Reiter, 2009, p. 75)



Rollins (1985) contends that a large domestic workforce in Latin America is based upon the middle and upper classes' dependency on a lifetime of being served. The lifelong reliance on servitude fosters for employers to view their domestic servants in an inappropriate light. Rollins (1985) quotes Emily Nett regarding the effects of the role of children being raised by servants:

The child takes over adult functions vis-à-vis other adults, but remains *niña* (child) or *señorita* (miss) to the servants, even when a matron or grandmother...The patron may make decisions, but he could never operate his farm without his servants...yet the servant is viewed as a child. This perception of servants as irresponsible children carries over to other employer-employee relationships in Latin America. (Rollins, 1985, p. 41)

With the idea that employers view domestic workers as children, and that Brazil has perpetuated white superiority to be lorded over nonwhites, one can assume that the position of nonwhite domestic workers in Brazil is not optimal. Since the only employment many nonwhite women can secure is as *empregadas*, and the majority of the people employing these women are white, controversial relationships develop between employers and domestic workers. Twine (1997) Reiter (2009) and Goldstein (2003), discuss the issues surrounding the station of women working as domestics in Brazil who are of African descent. The three authors provide a historical framework regarding women of color understanding that their destiny is to become domestic workers. They enter the profession at the young age of ten or eleven and linger in this type of work until the day they die. The three authors also posit that this mentality stems from inherited sentiments of inferiority that perpetuates by their own families and cultural mores but

also by an elite society that benefits from propagating the stereotype of nonwhite inferiority and white superiority. After all, white elites use nonwhite women to perform the duties they feel are beneath them, a relationship very parallel to the slave-master relationships from centuries past.

Twine (1997) eloquently depicts the race relations in 'Vasalia', a town in Brazil where whites have been land and business owners for centuries while nonwhites occupy the bottom of the socioeconomic scale. Typically, nonwhites do not believe that the color of their skin is the reason for their status. Instead, they either believe that they do not have the same opportunities as whites or are not respected by whites because they are considered poor. Twine presents a contentious narrative concerning Afro-Brazilians' denial regarding their ancestral roots in slavery, maybe because it is too difficult. Twine states that this denial is present in the relationships between nonwhite women who work as domestics and their white employers. When Twine interviewed the domestic workers in the town who work for whites and are treated poorly, they accepted the treatment although they realize their power in the household. They seemed to be grateful for the opportunity to work for white families even if their wages were meager. When questioned as to the reason why they are treated in this manner, their response was always because they are poor, not because they are nonwhite revealing the powerlessness of 'racial democracy' ideology.

Reiter (2009) makes the argument that domestic workers in Brazil occupy the excluded group that is marginalized even if it has power in the homes of the white families that employ them – the included group. Reiter discusses the parent-child relationship that evolves between nonwhite *empregadas* and their white bosses such that

women are kept in servitude for a low wage, and are often abused and disenfranchised with no legal recourse. The author posits that domestic workers are kept in an excluded status in order to ensure that nonwhite domestic workers stay in the mental slave/master framework. Reiter concludes that as long as nonwhite women remain the underclass that is responsible for running white households and rearing whites children, the whites can go about the business of being successful and being civically engaged.

Goldstein (2003) examines how disenfranchised nonwhite Brazilian domestic workers use laughter as an emotional release. They laugh to digest their poor treatment, poverty, inability to grow professionally and realization that their circumstances are not likely to be ameliorated since they comprise the lower class. Goldstein (2003) is brilliant in narrating how domestic workers laugh out loud, grasping the power they hold in their places of employment, yet never blatantly leveraging against that power.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, I explained Brazil's racially diverse population. The colonization of the Portuguese and the importation of African slaves for the purposes of servitude inspired the miscegenation of white Portuguese, native Brazilians Indians and African slaves and their descendants. As a result, skin color in Brazil spans the spectrum from white to black and every shade in between the two colors. Despite this point, the dynamic of white privilege remains a Brazilian institution. Since colonization, whites have been the elites whilst the people who are either direct descendants of the African Slave Trade or the product of miscegenation between white people and people of African descent, are considered excluded. This trend persists today.

Racial science and eugenics ideologies promulgated that whites were 'better' human beings while blacks were 'bad'. By the middle of the twentieth century, although there were palpable racially inspired disparities between whites and nonwhites in Brazil, Brazilian elites were successful in disseminating the myth of a 'racial democracy' ideal to its citizenry. This racial democracy presupposed that race was not a classification in the Brazilian population. Therefore, the instance of violence experienced during the United States' race riots would not occur. Brazil aptly maintained the status of racial democracy until the 2001 United Nations Conference Against Racism Conference took place in Durban, South Africa. Afro-Brazilian social movements exploited this conference to announce that Brazil was not a nation of equal opportunity as purported, but rather facilitated blatant racism against nonwhites. The world heard these Afro-Brazilian movements and Brazilian affirmative actions were implemented shortly after the conference.

I have further shown in this chapter that Brazilian women of African descent were brought over as slaves to tend to the homes of their masters and throughout the centuries, have maintained this role. Nonwhite women are typically only able to secure domestic work because they are nonwhite, do not have an education and are essentially expected to do the dirty work that elite white women do not want to do or are too busy to do.

*Empregadas* or *criadas*, maids in Portuguese, work and live in the homes of their white employers making the lowest of wages while being treated like slaves. They work fourteen-hour days and leave their own families behind to tend to the families of others. Often, nonwhite girls as young as ten or eleven must go work as *criadas* in order to assist their mothers financially. Nonwhite women seem to feel that they are supposed to be

*empregadas*, not because they are of color but because they are poor. They the inner-workings of the households they work for, making them quite powerful, yet never wielding that power. Instead they allow themselves to be subjugated much as slaves did in order to survive. The literature has shown that the slave/master mentality is perpetuated in today's Brazilian society and all of the parties know their places: the whites are the all powerful that lord influence over their employees while the domestic servants accept their position of inferiority as a norm. A significant trend in this discussion is that these domestic workers do not make the connection that their positions are attributable to their skin color. They only consider their socioeconomic status as the reasoning for their ability to only work in the domestic service field.

In order to understand how the conditions of nonwhite domestic workers can be enhanced, it is necessary to realize the impact of Brazil's political history. The following chapter offers a brief synopsis of the evolution of blacks' political involvement and discusses the significance of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (PT) or the Workers' Party. The PT Party's focal influence in shaping participatory democratic models to promote a balancing of wealth between the white elites and nonwhites is also examined. Lastly, the chapter includes a discussion around participatory democracy theory that is pivotal to the impact of the *Orçamento Participativo* (OP) or the Participatory Budget (PB) implemented in the hopes of exacting wealth balancing in some region of Brazil.

### **CHAPTER THREE: BRAZIL'S POLITICAL HISTORY AND PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY**

Porto Alegre, the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, one of the largest states in Brazil, has enjoyed international distinction for its participatory budgeting system (PB). This system became internationally acclaimed because of its aim to balance wealth and power between a majority white elite ruling class and a large population of poor and nonwhites. Moreover, the PB's would break the long-established bonds of clientelism linking rich, white patrons to their poor and often nonwhite clients (Abers 2000). The poor and nonwhites constitute the lower echelon of the economic scale, a status maintained since Brazil's colonization in the 1500s. This chapter illustrates how long the white elite class has maintained its position of power and authority in comparison to nonwhites and the poor who have not been afforded the chance to move from their substandard position. This chapter discusses blacks' persistent minimal participation and inclusion in government that has had profound effects in the station of nonwhites, particularly nonwhite Brazilian domestic workers. The next section delves into the theoretical underpinnings of participatory democracy and the nature of participation within a democratic system. Brazilian governmental agents and academic scholars alike recognize that there are palpable disparities between the elite and the rest of the population. A solution to remedy these disparities is participatory democracy rather than exclusive representative democracy.

## The Political History Of Brazil

Brazil has evolved from its founding status as a Portuguese colony in the 1500s to five basic periods of governmental rule: (1) an early republican period of constitutional oligarchy from 1889 to 1930; (2) a revolution and Getúlio Vargas' first regime from 1889 to 1930; (3) competitive politics from 1945 to 1964; (4) military authoritarianism from 1964 to 1985 and (5) re-democratization from 1985 to the present (Skidmore, 2010). Through these five phases of governance, a remarkable consistency exists such that whites have systematically remained in positions of power and the included portion of civil society from a political and economic point of view. Alternatively, people of color have maintained their status as the underbelly of civil society by being excluded politically, socially and economically. The plight of nonwhite domestic workers in Brazil remains status quo from Brazil's colonization to today's democratic status: these women have taken care of the children and the homes of their employing elites with limited opportunity to change their circumstances. Though Brazil is considered a representative democracy with every citizen over the age of 16 having the right to vote, its political history is marred with placating the priorities of the elites at the expense of the rest of its people from inception (Skidmore, 2010). The following sections discuss the extremely limited number of black and brown politicians in the five periods of Brazil's political history; the development of the Workers Party and its leadership to better understand the *Orçamento Participativo* (OP) or the Participatory Budget's (PB) 1989 creation in Porto Alegre. The OP, a governmental initiative initiated to promote complete citizen participation including a cleavage historically excluded, would heal the damage suffered by the poor people of Brazil since its status as a colony to current times.

## **Blacks In Brazil's Politics**

Black political representation in Brazil has been dismal through its five basic periods of governmental polity. During Brazil's first phase of government, after slavery was abolished and through the beginning of the 1930s, the elite's unofficial policy to whiten society for the purpose of eradicating the part of society that was of African ancestral roots played an instrumental role in the total absence of blacks/browns in government. In this period, Gilberto Freyre, Brazil's most renowned sociologist, and a faction of the elite rejected the Nazi ideology that permeated Germany and embraced the notion that Brazilian society comprised of mixed blood people. To that end, Freyre organized an Afro-Brazilian congress to assess the plight of blacks in society and in politics (Johnson, 1998).

Brazil's repressive second phase of governance between 1930 and 1945 banned any black political groups from organizing. While white elites professed harmonious race relations in Brazil, groups such as the Black Brazilian Front experienced severe consequences for exposing the conditions of blacks in society. Brazil politics excluded blacks completely (Johnson, 1998).

Brazil's third political period that embraced racial democracy, changed the nation's political landscape. National parties and mass participation ensued during this political period from 1945 to 1964. Congress passed the pivotal Afonso Law of 1951 that prohibited overt discrimination such as blacks being denied the right to rent hotel rooms based upon their race. While blacks took part in elections and held some offices, their circumstances remained precarious and ignored (Johnson, 1998).



The authoritarian governmental phase from 1964 to 1985 severely hindered black political participation. The military leadership tortured, exiled, banned or murdered groups considered radical or progressive. According to Johnson (1998) “explicit black political activity was considered subversive,” (p. 101). Racial democracy became a myth from the perspective of some Brazilian intellectuals as racial discrimination and inequality became obviously palpable. In the meantime, black movements organized to combat racial discrimination and promote black pride and the improvement of black socio-economic conditions (Johnson, 1998).

The fifth and current phase of governance beginning in 1985, involves the largest percentage of black political representation. A new Constitution enacted in 1988 guaranteed voting rights to virtually every Brazilian citizen, irrespective of their literacy status. The percentage of blacks in Congress continues to be far less as compared to the black and brown Brazilian population, but blacks have the opportunity to run for office without fear of persecution.

Currently, vis-à-vis blacks in Congress, an estimated 29 representatives out of 513 have been elected in chamber seats and of 81 senators, only one is Afro-Brazilian. Nonwhites have principally voted for members of the Workers’ Party (PT) who have had the majority of nonwhites running for elected governmental positions. The PT Party’s political platform has consistently included enhancing the social and economic conditions of nonwhites (Johnson, 1998). Nevertheless, through Brazil’s five political periods, the elite has persistently been white and nonwhites have been the poor and marginalized.

## **Lula Inacio Da Silva And The Workers' Party**

Luíz 'Lula' Inácio da Silva was a founding member of the Worker's Party (*Partido dos Trabalhadores*, PT). Lula, contrary to previous Brazilian leaders, came from a relatively poor family. Lula's family background had much more in common with the historically excluded population of Brazil than the elite class. His work career began in a sheet metal company as a sheet metal worker. By 1979, Lula became a charismatic union leader and led a strike of over 170 thousand sheet metal workers, demanding better wages and work conditions. His success in garnering union reforms spearheaded founding the PT party. The PT Party's original mission included union reforms but as disenfranchised groups learned of the PT's success, the mission of the PT shifted. The landless strongly supported the PT Party and helped to propel the group to national recognition. Eventually, the PT Party sought to bring a socialist form of democracy to a nation that needed reform (Kingstone and Power, 2008). The PT Party's mission was to dismantle the right wing military power base running Brazil during the seventies and eighties that expressly ignored the conditions and needs of the excluded disenfranchised population. The PT's ideology included implementing true democracy to all Brazilians, particularly the excluded enclaves of nonwhites (Kingstone and Power, 2008).

Lula's presidential electoral campaign platform specifically addressed the needs of the landless, the poor and the marginalized. After two failed attempts at running for the office of the president against Cardoso, Lula was finally elected president of Brazil in 2002, winning by a 61% margin (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010). Lula was celebrated because, for the first time, he represented the poor and promised to address the needs of the poor by the implementation of food aid programs, schooling for young

children and reforms for the landless in the agrarian regions (Kingstone and Power, 2008). In terms of the economy, it was expected that Lula would legislate for aggressive economic reforms but rather, Lula proceeded cautiously to not upset a ruling white elite class, a phenomenon that directly contradicted his election platform. Allegations of corruption were made against Lula during his first term but this did not stop him from winning his second term in 2006. Unfortunately, the allegations reported against Lula mirrored the ones alleged by previous leaders (Abers, 2000). The PT Party is considered the largest leftist party in Latin America (Kingstone and Power, 2008). Members of the PT Party have been elected in various senatorial and chamber deputy seats. Lula did not seek to change the constitution in order for him to run for a third term. Instead, Dilma Rousseff, his cabinet chief, became the second PT sponsored president of Brazil in 2010 (Central Intelligence Agency, 2010).

The PT continues to successfully penetrate local, state and national political circles. While the PT's municipal political participation has steadily risen over the years, it has experienced some difficulties in terms of efficacy (Brandford, Kucinski and Wainwright, 2003). To begin, according to Brandford, Kucinski and Wainwright (2003) in *Politics Transformed: Lula and the Worker's Party in Brazil*, the PT has run into difficulty handing municipal governance based upon poor city planning and haphazard urban development. Poor urban planning has caused for multitudes of *favelas* or slums to develop causing for municipalities to become bankrupt, as there is insufficient funding to address the needs of *favela* residents. While the PT party elected municipality officials aim to help the poor living in *favelas*, they are not able to fulfill their campaign promises of correcting poor living conditions since funding is not available. Unfortunately, as basic

public services such as sewage and potable water are often unavailable in the *favelas*, the extreme inequalities between the more affluent in the urban centers and the poor residing in the *favelas* are showcased, causing discord among the rich elites and the poor and the nonwhites (Brandford, Kucinski and Wainwright, 2003).

Secondly, according to Baiocchi (2003) in *Radicals in Power: The Workers' Party (PT) and Experiments in Urban Democracy*, the PT party's elected officials do not have the experience required to successfully manage urban planning projects; are overly optimistic regarding the services they can actually offer to their constituents; are distracted by in-party fighting; and finally, experience constant opposition from the elites who would prefer that their agenda be addressed rather than the agenda of the poor. Lastly, Baiocchi (2003) reports that the PT party has consistently had difficulty pleasing municipal workers who are staunch PT party supporters. Often, PT elected officials are forced to comply with the demands of municipal workers looking for better pay which in turn, makes it impossible for funding raised by tax collection to be spent on social programs. Again, the elected officials make promises to their constituents that they cannot meet while municipal workers enjoy higher wages. If the municipal workers' demands are not met, they can cause extensive dissention and threaten any possibility for re-election.

In the past, the disparities between the white included cleavage and the poor and nonwhite excluded cleavages were entrenched in racist ideology. The elite who are more often white were preoccupied with preserving their power base by any means necessary, even if it was at the expense of the marginalized who are certainly poor and predominantly nonwhite. The PT Party's obstacles in changing this tide have much to do

with an engrained philosophy of catering to the rich and powerful who refuse to share their wealth and who happen to be white.

Irrespective of the problems the PT has had in the localities of Brazil, their party is the most influential in the nation in all of its municipalities, Porto Alegre in particular. The PT Party created the world renowned Porto Alegre Participatory Budget.

### **Democratic Theory**

The participatory budgeting system in Porto Alegre has been hailed as one of the most successful public policy initiatives in Brazil. Understanding participatory budgeting in practice requires an explanation of its theoretical framework centered in democratic theory.

Democracy implies the ideal that the people rule. Democracy's origins as a principle are found in ancient Athens, Greece where the city convened municipal assemblies of adult male residents to create laws, an action that would be categorized as direct democracy (Pateman, 1970). Today, democracy refers more commonly to representative democracy whereas political systems involve elections of city, state and national officials by the people to create and administer laws in their respective jurisdictions. According to Robert Dahl's *On Democracy* (1998), modern representative democracy has five standards: (1) equal opportunity where all of the members of a democratic society are entitled to equal and effective opportunities for making their views recognized by other members; (2) voting equality such that all votes have the same value in an election; (3) understanding where all participants have the opportunity to comprehend why a decision is made; (4) control of an agenda such that all participants

have input in what items are up for discussion and (5) inclusion where all adults are able to participate (Dahl, 1998).

Arguments have been made for and against democracy since its inception. Plato posited that democratic rule would be reduced to demagoguery while Aristotle favored a majority rather than an individual rule (Dahl, 1998). A totalitarian system of rule involves the exclusion of the people's participation in decision-making and is what Aristotle referred to as individual rule. Controversy notwithstanding, democracy addresses the rights of men and women to have input in the development of the public policies affecting them which curbs potential tyranny by an individual and the abuse of elitist power by a small minority. According to Dahl (1998), as long as there is democratic participation, the people have the opportunity to reflect upon the morality of their decisions, making them respect and adhere to the laws stemming from those decisions. Nevertheless, defenders of democracy can point out that famines have not occurred in nations under democratic rule (Sen, 1981). Furthermore, as the democratic peace theory in international relations puts forth, there has not been war between democratic countries since 1815 (Levy, 1988). Finally, history has demonstrated that populations in nations ruled from a totalitarian perspective have banded together to form social movements and collective actions to promote democratic representation in order to enhance their socio-economic and political statuses (Lipson, 2003).

### **Participation In Democracy And Participatory Democracy**

While Dahl (1998) espouses the benefits of modern democratic theory at the hand of the five standards mentioned previously, he also illustrates some of its limitations,

particularly relating to participation. For instance, equal opportunity to participate in the democratic process does not necessarily occur in a representative democracy. In terms of voting, when stipulations are put on voting rights such as literacy or land ownership, an elite class can emerge as having voting rights while the poor and uneducated class do not. There is also the issue of how political representatives are chosen in the first place. Often, it is business owners and the ruling classes who choose candidates and promote them to office so their interests will be represented. The other non-elite cross-section of the population often does not have the political capital to influence who will represent them, making representative democracy suspect (Dahl, 1998).

Current representative democracies illustrate that deficiencies exist. Even when people have the right to vote, they do not necessarily take advantage of that right. This can transpire due to a population's mistrust in available candidates or the understanding that candidates will not represent their interests (Pateman, 1970). The United States, considered the most developed in the world, national voting has never exceeded 63.1% of the population and has experienced decline from 63.1% in 1960 to 56.8% in 2008 (U.S. Elections Project, 2012). The voting participation in the U.S. has reportedly fluctuated based upon a number of factors that include discontent with the political parties involved in the elections, the U.S. involvement in foreign affairs and/or a general discontent with political representatives or how they are selected (Wainwright, 2003).

Table 7. U.S. National Voter Turnout in Presidential Elections 1960-2008

Year	Voting-age population	Voter registration	Voter turnout	Turnout of voting-age population (percent)
2008*	231,229,580	NA	132,618,580*	56.8%
2004	221,256,931	174,800,000	122,294,978	55.3%
2000	205,815,000	156,421,311	105,586,274	51.3%
1996	196,511,000	146,211,960	96,456,345	49.1%
1992	189,529,000	133,821,178	104,405,155	55.1%
1988	182,778,000	126,379,628	91,594,693	50.1%
1984	174,466,000	124,150,614	92,652,680	53.1%
1980	164,597,000	113,043,734	86,515,221	52.6%
1976	152,309,190	105,037,986	81,555,789	53.6%
1972	140,776,000	97,328,541	77,718,554	55.2%
1968	120,328,186	81,658,180	73,211,875	60.8%
1964	114,090,000	73,715,818	70,644,592	61.9%
1960	109,159,000	64,833,096 <sup>5</sup>	68,838,204	63.1%

Source: 2008 election results: [http://elections.gmu.edu/Turnout\\_2008G.htm](http://elections.gmu.edu/Turnout_2008G.htm)

The definition of participatory democracy according to Brazil’s Workers’ Party and Nylen (2002) “proposes a gradualistic democratization of democracy through decentralization and the expansion of opportunities for meaningful participation” (p. 130). Defining participatory democracy from an academic point of view is not simple. Pioneers in the field of political science and modern scholars such as William Nylen (2003) and Alberto Avritzer (2009) alike discuss participatory democracy as a rebuttal to elitist democracy, paying particular attention to the role of citizen participation in the democratic process. Participation is pivotal to democracy theory, as posited by Carole Pateman. In order to make her argument, Pateman (1970) presents Jean Jacques Rousseau and John Stuart Mill’s participatory theories of democracy.

Rousseau’s *The Social Contract* (1762) is a vital component of:

The theory of participatory democracy where his main political theory centers on the individual participation of each citizen in political decision making and in his theory participation is very much more than an adjunct to a set of institutional arrangements; it also has a psychological effect on the participants, ensuring that



there is a continuing interrelationship between the working institutions and the psychological qualities and attitudes of individuals interacting within them (Pateman, 1970, p. 22).

Rousseau's participatory democracy includes economic independence and equality that are necessary in the system, making sure that even if the economic equality is not absolute, it is at least implied and that there is never political inequality. Rousseau suggests:

No citizen shall be rich enough to buy another and none so poor as to be forced to sell himself – and the vital requirement is for each man to own some property – the most sacred of the citizen's right – because the security and independence that this gives to the individual is the necessary basis on which rest his political equality and political independence. (Quoted in Pateman, 1970, p. 25)

Taking these factors into consideration, Rousseau's political theory of participation first encourages participation in making decisions and protects private interests to ensure good government. Rousseau's idyllic model promotes "responsible, individual social and political action through the effect of the participatory process," (Pateman, 1970, p. 27) and where freedom occurs when there is a connection between participation and control. This freedom allows for man "to be and remain his own master" (Pateman, 1970, p. 27). Rousseau posits that as long as laws are brought about from participation, they are more likely to be accepted by the people since although each person is his own master and not master of another, each person must depend upon others and is subjected to laws on an equal basis. Lastly, Rousseau's political theory of participation increases the feeling of community within a population (Pateman, 1970).

When all of the above-mentioned factors are considered, Rousseau's political theory in regards to participation and participatory democracy postulates that there is a relationship between the psychological merits of human beings and the authority in the structures of institutions.

John Stuart Mill's political theory of participation and democracy is an offshoot of Rousseau's and is based upon his fear of democratic interest originating from the interests of the elite. Participation in democracy provides "efficacious securities against this evil" (Pateman, 1970, p. 31). In order to have good government, Mill suggests a two-prong approach: (1) that government provides a great influence to human kind and (2) that the business aspect of government serves in a secondary rather than a primary role (Pateman, 1970). Government should be of an educative nature of participation first where a public-spirited type of character will be fostered through the participation of everyone in that society. Once this 'good' character is fostered, intelligent and virtuous individuals rule government, and the occurrence of rulers participating in unlawful or unethical practices is much less likely. Mill's arguments are linked to Alexis de Tocqueville's conceptualization of the centralization of political institutions and the dangers of the development of a mass society (Pateman, 1970). In his works, Mill strongly states that the notion of universal suffrage is moot if the people have not been adequately prepared to participate in the political process on a local level. In the final analysis, Mill believes that successful government on a grand scale, such as on a national basis, is contingent upon the quality of the participation from a local level. In this way, Mill supports a bottom-up approach to governance (Pateman, 1970).

Participatory democracy, as exemplified by Rousseau and Mill, helps to reduce the potential for tyrannical rule that can be found in representative democracies because the public is directly involved in the decision-making. In representative democracies, factions of power having the opportunity to influence policy decisions even though suffrage is available to all citizens.

However, even when participatory democracies are implemented, the following factors have the potential of prevented them from fulfilling their original purpose (Cooke and Kothari, 2001):

- Participatory democracy models have been successful from an implementation rather than a decision-making point of view. The participation from the masses is only cosmetic and is offered as an appeasement while the top down method of influence and law-making remains.
- Participatory involvement addresses micro processes, such as specific projects, rather than addressing macro processes that often promote social injustices and inequalities.
- Even from at a local level, hierarchies prevail where more affluent and influential citizens drive the decision making, in a sense, perpetuating the rulers being part of the elite class.
- These last two criticisms will be expanded further later in this thesis.

## Conclusion

The theme of this thesis is to understand whether a participatory democratic model will mitigate the disparate conditions of nonwhite domestic workers in comparison to whites in Brazil using Porto Alegre's Participatory Budget's case study. In order to make this case, this chapter offered a synopsis of Brazil's political phases. From the time the nation was colonized, through its imperial, new republic, military regime and second republic stages, a small white elite class has maintained its position of power in terms of political and socio-economic decision-making. Since colonization, that same white elite class has owned all of the wealth in the nation. While the white population has been all-powerful, the indigenous Indians and the African slaves who were brought to work the lands during the African Slave Trade make up the excluded and poor population of Brazil. Another dimension of the population developed through miscegenation of whites, Indians and blacks. The product of the miscegenation of the three races resulted in a population that calls itself *pardo* or brown. Racial science asserted that whites were superior while blacks were inferior. Any persons with black ancestry, including *pardos*, were considered genetically substandard. Racial science is no longer recognized but Brazil's social order is ingrained in its dogma. Brazil's society is stratified with whites as the included elite societal privileged, and the remaining population of nonwhites (blacks, browns, Indians and a small Asian population) being excluded and disenfranchised. The stratified society of Brazil based upon skin color rather than race remains today. It is important to state that Brazil does not recognize race.

As Brazil's political history has evolved, the needs of the poor are always trumped by the clientelism and patronage of the white elite seeking to maintain its

powerbase. Democracy was instituted, but at first was based on voting by the literate only. The literacy requirement compromised the nature of Brazil's democracy. Brazil's rule under military dictatorship severely impeded any democratic developments in the country and promoted severe exclusion of the poor and nonwhites. A new republic was established based upon the outcry for democracy by the disenfranchised. Classes that were traditionally excluded would finally have an opportunity to effect change in their lives by voting without literacy requirements. New leadership under Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of the PT Party would see to the excluded being integrated into society. Lula, the PT Party founder's background was not rooted in the historically elite class so he would fervently rally on behalf of the marginalized.

The PT Party's democratic and socialist ideology required civic participation by all citizens. Civic democratic participation ideally would level the playing field between the elite living in the affluent urban center of the city and the poor and nonwhite living in the outskirts of the city in unsanitary and substandard *favelas*. The PT Party advocates that participatory democracy rather than representative democracy is pivotal to societal change. This chapter offered the theoretical framework of participatory democracy. Participatory democracy requires direct participation as a means to check representative democracy that may not truly represent the public sphere but rather only represents the elite. Brazil's political structure, irrespective of its colonial, imperial, dictatorial or democratic phases has been tainted with placating the elites at the expense of the majority of the people who are poor and are commonly nonwhite (black and brown).

The following chapter will examine Porto Alegre's *Orçamento Participativo* (OP) or translated in English, Participatory Budget (PB), an initiative spearheaded by the PT

Party in 1989 to ameliorate disparities between whites and nonwhites and the poor in the capital of Rio Grande do Sul. The history of the formation of the PB, its objectives, aims successes and failures will be examined in order to understand whether nonwhites and the poor experienced greater political inclusion and socio-economic improvement. In terms of nonwhite domestic workers, an argument will be made whether the PB has made their circumstances better and if so, how. If the conditions of nonwhite domestic workers in Porto Alegre improved with the PB, an argument can be made that participatory democracy models all over Brazil would elevate nonwhite domestic workers from their current status at the bottom of socio-economic scale.

## CHAPTER FOUR: PORTO ALEGRE AND ITS PARTICIPATORY BUDGET

The city of Porto Alegre, capital of Rio Grande do Sul located on the southern end of Brazil, has become internationally renowned because of its participatory budget. The participatory budget of Porto Alegre was implemented pursuant to an accelerated population growth beginning in the 1950s that resulted in the development of slum areas or *favelas* (slums in Portuguese) on the periphery of the city limits. By the 1980s, while the infrastructure of the intercity portion of Porto Alegre was progressive and modern, the *favelas* that arose to accommodate population growth were substandard, lacking in basic provisions such as running water and sewage. The dichotomy in living conditions between residents within the city center and the *favelas* on the outskirts of the city was and continues to be exceptionally disparate.

Porto Alegre is a predominantly European city and as such not typical of Brazilian cities. Given its history of European immigration (Italians, Poles, Germans), it has more poor whites than most Brazilian cities. Nevertheless, the white affluent population lives in the progressive urban center while the minority nonwhite population along with the poor whites resides in the *favelas*.

In an effort to ameliorate the incongruent conditions between inner and outer city dwellers, the local government of Porto Alegre, rooted in the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* or the Workers' Party (PT), after winning the election for city mayor the first time in

1984 (when presidential elections were still controlled by the military) instituted the participatory budget. Porto Alegre soon became the showcase of PT policies and many Brazilians voted for Participatory Budgeting (Baiocchi, 2003). This budgeting initiative would precipitate for the perceived excluded population living in the *favelas* to civically participate in order to adjust the clientelism that was a founding tradition in Porto Alegre municipal government. Allowing for the disenfranchised population of Porto Alegre to participate in the democratic process at the local level would ideally spearhead for municipal spending priorities to not just address the needs of the city elites but would also bring to light the priorities of *favelas*' residents. This would command a greater balance of political and economic power within the population and Brazil's decree of democracy would be avowed.

This chapter will discuss Porto Alegre and its political history heavily influenced by the PT Party. Also, this chapter will examine the PB of Porto Alegre to include its creation and ultimate aims. Lastly, this chapter will present the PB's successes and its obstacles.

### **Porto Alegre**

Given that this thesis focuses on Porto Alegre, an understanding of the political, occupational and socio-economic history of the city is essential. Porto Alegre is the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, one of the largest states located on the farthest southern portion of Brazil. Porto Alegre is considered to be both the commercial and financial centers of Rio Grande do Sul along with being a pivotal trading post due to its proximity to Rio Gauiba, a large river that can be navigated from the city to the sea. As of 2011,



Porto Alegre's city population is 1,355,000 and its metropolitan population is 3,646,000 (Populations-by-city/porto-alegre, 2012).



Figure 1. Map of Brazil and Its Major Cities  
Source: Central Intelligence Agency, 2012

Porto Alegre enjoys the status of being one of the wealthiest cities in Brazil, also being one of the more egalitarian (Abers, 2000). This has not made the city exempt from the social problems that have plagued the nation for several decades such that the white elite class lives lavishly in the urban center while the poor live in more than 250 substandard *favelas* (Abers, 2000).

### **Porto Alegre's History**

Porto Alegre or 'Happy Port' was first inhabited by immigrants from the Portuguese Azores, an indigenous enclave to the region, who were compensated by the Portuguese to prevent the land from being conquered by the Spanish (Abers, 2000). In

1807, Porto Alegre became the capital of Rio Grande do Sul. The city experienced significant immigration from Germans, Italians and Portuguese through the early 1820s. From 1835 to 1845, rebels trying to make Rio Grande do Sul an independent state annexed Porto Alegre during the Farroupilha Rebellion. Loyalist forces ended the rebellion and Rio Grande do Sul remained Brazilian territory (Abers, 2000).

President Getúlio Vargas' origins were in Rio Grande do Sul, and Vargas' left wing political allies, Leonel Brizola and João Goulart made Porto Alegre their political base camp. All the while, the European immigrants of Porto Alegre escaped political persecution in Europe based upon their socialist and anarchist ideologies (Baiocchi, 2003). Taking these elements into consideration, Porto Alegre's political essence shaped, ingrained in participation and democracy.

Beginning in the 1950s through the 1980s, the city and its surrounding municipal areas experienced extensive population growth from Brazilian populations immigrating to Porto Alegre searching for better opportunity. This fact coupled with the concentration of existing income produced serious instability such that one third of Porto Alegre's population was forced at the margin of the urban infrastructure (Abers, 2000). The population shift towards the outskirts of the city limits proved to be extremely problematic as these inhabitants were living in exceptionally sub-standard *favelas* with no access to potable water, sewage, schools, health care or paved roads and experiencing rampant crime (Baiocchi, 2003).

Goulart's presidency, ending at the hand of the military coup of 1964, caused the city of Porto Alegre to become a center of resistance to the military dictatorship that now

governed the nation. Prior to the coup and until the end of Brazil's military rule, Porto Alegre's neighborhood associations operated in clientelism, supporting local politicians in exchange for public works services. Towards the end, these neighborhood associations became combative and began supporting opposition parties (Abers, 2000).

Aleceu Collares of the *Partido Democrático Trabalhista* won the mayoral office in 1984, the first democratic election the city experienced since 1964. His tenure as mayor was unsuccessful based on accusations of corruption and not taking heed to the demands of his constituents (Baiocchi, 2003).

PT Party mayoral candidate Olivio Dutra's 1989 win was built upon a platform to address the disparate conditions of the people in the marginalized outskirts of Porto Alegre in comparison to the inhabitants living more luxuriously in the city center. During his first term, a participatory budgeting system was introduced that decentralized the city's power base that set the public policy making agenda for several decades. The participatory budgeting system would facilitate civic engagement from all of the citizens in the city who would decide how to spend the lion share of the city budget. Porto Alegre citizens would determine the budgetary priorities for their municipalities rather than elected city officials making these decisions. This system was designed and implemented to give a voice to the poor and nonwhites (blacks and browns) who were consistently excluded from the decision making taking place by local and municipal politicians who as always, were part of the white elite ruling class (Abers, 2000).

## **Porto Alegre's Participatory Budget – Its Purpose And Targets**

Porto Alegre's Participatory budgeting is a program whose aim is to promote the empowerment of people through civic involvement and education in order to foster a civil society that is vibrant and fully inclusive. According to Wampler (2004),

Participatory budgeting is a decision-making process through which citizens deliberate and negotiate over the distribution of public resources. Participatory budgeting programs are implemented at the behest of governments, citizens, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and civil organizations (CSOs) to allow citizens to play a direct role in deciding how and where resources should be spent. (Wampler and Avritzer, 2004, p. 16)

Participatory budgeting's objectives break the legacies of social and political exclusion, of clientelism, and of corrupt and inefficient government by promoting transparency and sponsoring the quality of democracy based upon direct participation from constituents. This type of program targets citizens with low socio-economic status who have been historically excluded from having the opportunity to have a voice with regard to governmental decision making.

The *Orçamento Participativo* (OP) or translated in English, Participatory Budget (PB), is a component of Brazilian initiatives, instigated by the PT Party, to deepen and enrich a relatively new democracy that had and continues to be dominated by practices of patronage, corruption and severe social and political exclusion (Abers, 2000; Wampler and Avritzer, 2004; Baiocchi, 2001; Avritzer, 2002). The OP was launched in 1989 in Porto Alegre and its hinterlands. Porto Alegre's population experienced considerable growth that resulted in the creation of city sections considered non-legalized on the

periphery of the capital's city limits. These non-legalized city sections (*favelas*) contained shacks that did not have potable water, sewage systems and were not accessible via paved streets. The substandard conditions of these non-legalized city sections presented a problem for its resident population for over three decades. Moreover, the administrative and financial structure of the city was structurally unbalanced, with insufficient income to address the abject poverty and lack of public works systems in the Porto Alegre *favelas*. The conditions of the *favelas* also presented a public relations conundrum as Porto Alegre and Rio Grande do Sul are considered wealthy regions pursuant to Brazil's standards.

The PT party's intended to preserve diversity, civil liberties, and tolerance and to focus on the interests of the poor and working class (Abers, 2000). The PT Party's political approach differed from other parties by focusing on the plight of the poor and working class. While charismatic leaders founded other parties using a hierarchical top down structure of leadership, the PT commenced by leadership focused on a bottom up leadership structure entrenched in participatory governance. The PT Party's governance objectives were twofold: the first steered policy-making decisions that had always been made by the elite and the middle class populations toward the poor; the second stimulated the civic participation of the poor and the social movements or organizations representing the poor in all aspects of governmental decision making (Wampler, 2004).

The PT Party's first political enterprise pursuant to its mayoral election win of 1988 organized the OP. This budget policy's goals would end the previously high profile economic development projects that included bridge and soccer stadium building and major road paving which were the priorities of the white elite. These new projects included paving smaller roads in the *favelas*, ensuring that running water and sewage

infrastructure was erected in the shantytowns, for public transportation to be made available and lastly for schools and public health facilities to be constructed (Abers, 2000).

In order for this budgetary priority shift to occur and to prevent the elites being the sole agenda setters, the *Orçamento Participativo* (OP) of Porto Alegre would necessitate for neighborhoods of all socio-economic background to organize and discuss what they considered to be their priorities. In turn, neighborhood organizations would present those priorities to municipal elected officials who would be forced to address these concerns since popular participation controlled a substantial portion of the municipal budget (the budget made available excludes pension plan and debt service funds) rather than politicians solely. This phenomenon would address the needs of the poor with the hopes of leveling the playing field between the urban poor and the elites and middle class.

Additionally, social movements that developed in an effort to ameliorate the social, political and economic conditions would have the opportunity to incite their constituents to participate civically which would generate a sense of empowerment in their communities. The *laissez-faire* attitudes of the poor regarding their conditions would change for the better, as their participation would now matter when it never had in the past. Porto Alegre would be an example for the rest of Brazil to follow in order to reverse the reputation Brazil had garnered as a nation whose elitism prevailed at the expense of the poor and nonwhites.

## **Porto Alegre's Participatory Budget At Work**

The budget occurs annually and should not be confused with the representative democratic system where officials are elected every four years. The budgeting system begins with a series of neighborhood, citywide and regional meetings that include constituents and budget delegates who are charged with making spending determination in their respective jurisdictions. Once these priorities are identified, the constituents and budget delegates vote on which priority will be implemented. It is reported that over 200 hundred million dollars are spent per year on services and construction projects as part of the OP. Pension plans and debt service are not included in the participatory budget process (Baiocchi, 2003). As of 2011, 50,000 residents reportedly participate in the participatory budget model. There have also been reports that over 100,000 residents have participated in the budget at the neighborhood level. Its participation has risen steadily since 1989 and is comprised of all types of citizens from diverse political backgrounds and economic status (Baiocchi, 2003).

The participatory budget begins in January with assemblies held to encourage maximum participation. In February, city specialists hold meetings for the purpose of providing technical and systems instruction regarding the inner-workings of the budget. The sixteen districts in Porto Alegre hold plenary meetings along with assemblies focusing on education, health, economic development, transportation and sports. These meetings often experience very large participation of upwards of 1,000 citizens per assembly. The mayor typically attends these larger assemblies to address citizens' concerns. Once these larger meetings have taken place, district budget delegates meet on a weekly basis to determine the needs of the districts and the criteria for their technical

projects. During a second regional session, the regional delegates prioritize the districts' demands and 42 councillors who are charged with representing all of the districts serve on the Municipal Council of the Budget. This council reconciles all of the districts demands against the funding available and proposes and ratifies the overall municipal budget. The mayor has the right to veto the ratified budget. Figure 2 below is a comprehensive schematic of the budgetary process in Porto Alegre (Abers, 2000).

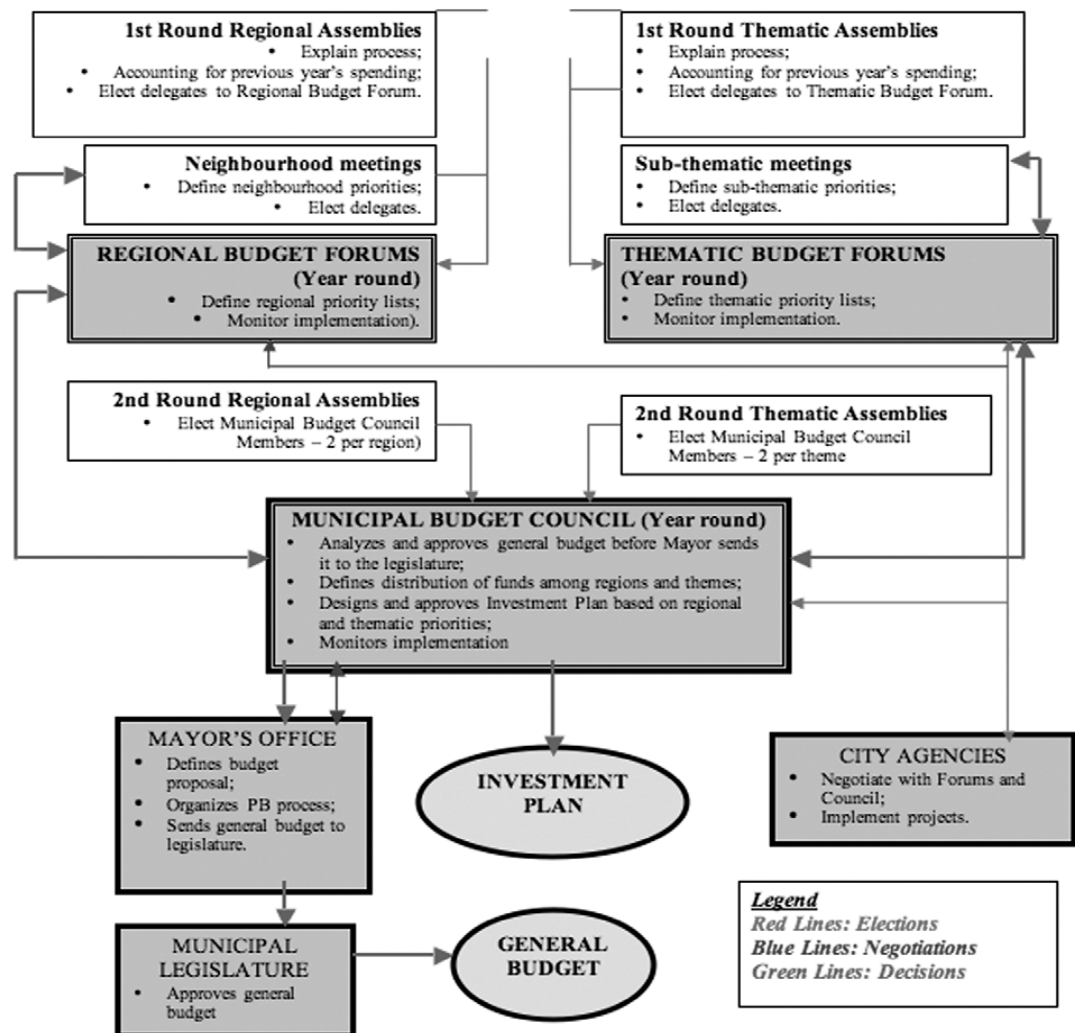


Figure 2. Porto Alegre Participatory Budget Process  
 Source: Abers 2000



Regarding its limitations, the Porto Alegre participatory budget has experienced some setbacks due to lack of funding to address the needs of the city and its municipalities. Another issue is the resistance from the elite. The local elites' priorities are not on the radar of the majority of the constituency, causing conflict. The elite exercise their power by circumventing the efforts of councillors or using the press – elite owned – to sabotage the efforts of participatory budget delegates. There does not seem to be sufficient time to complete projects that are planned and a lack of centralized expertise prevents efficient program implementation. Lastly, and probably more importantly, participatory budgeting has not changed the distribution of wealth between the white rich elite and the poor nonwhites living in the *favelas*. The problem that the participatory budget set out to correct in terms of an egalitarian distribution of wealth has not yet been achieved (Baiocchi, 2003).

## **Conclusion**

Porto Alegre is the capital of Grande Rio do Sul, located in the southern region of Brazil. Porto Alegre and Grande Rio do Sul are considered economically rich according to Brazilian standards. Porto Alegre is now part of an international discourse because of the reported success of its participatory budget. In this chapter, the history of Porto Alegre was discussed, paying attention to the city's ties to the influential PT Party. Porto Alegre was a welcoming region for socialist and communist Europeans seeking political asylum around WWII. Porto Alegre's white elite now included a politically leftist European faction. The composition of the white elite class was a perfect breeding ground for the PT Party to find allies and to entrench itself in local and municipal government. The PT Party's democratic and socialist doctrine promoted full participation in the

democratic process in order to eradicate the severe disparities that exist between the white elite and the poor and nonwhite excluded population. Pursuant to a PT Party mayoral electoral win, the participatory budget was enacted in 1989.

Porto Alegre has been plagued with a population influx that has caused for a large population to be pushed to the outskirts of the city limits. *Favelas* – slums in Portuguese, developed. The *favelas*, inhabited primarily by the poor whites and nonwhites, were so substandard that they did not have running water or sewage. Additionally, the roads to and within the *favelas* were not paved, while these neighborhoods did not have schools for the children and did not include public health facilities. The white elite lived within the city limits where the infrastructure was progressive, the homes were higher scale, and schools and public health facilities were in abundance. The disparity in living conditions was based upon relationships between elected officials and the elite. In exchange for votes, the elected officials made sure to address the needs of the elites. The infrastructure of the white elite in Porto Alegre was so established, that new stadiums and bridges became priorities that were endorsed by politicians instead of addressing the substandard conditions in the *favelas*. The *Orçamento Participativo's* (OP) objective aimed to deal with the horrible conditions in the *favelas* by encouraging the poor and nonwhites to participate in the budgetary decision-making of the city and its municipalities. Participation from all citizens including the historically excluded cleavage of the poor and nonwhite would hopefully level socio-economic conditions such that whites would not own the lion share of the wealth in the city and its hinterlands.

The OP includes an elaborate yearly process where people in poor neighborhoods are educated in order to make informed voting decisions regarding the city budget. The

budget that they vote for does not include debt service and pension plan funds. The meetings are held at every level of local and municipal government starting with the neighborhoods. The OP has experienced some successes as people have participated but the budget has also experienced some limitations based upon the inexperience of budget delegates, and a lack of funding to address the needs of the poor. The PT Party's involvement has experienced some setbacks because it is not able to fulfill the campaign promises made during elections.

The following chapter discusses the demographic composition of Porto Alegre and identifies how the *Orçamento Participativo* has affected the population it was meant to help. The chapter will examine the conditions of whites in comparison to nonwhites (black and brown people) in order to ascertain if domestic workers who are predominantly nonwhite women are faring better from a political, social and economic point of view.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: PORTO ALEGRE'S NONWHITE DOMESTIC WORKERS AFTER PARTICIPATORY BUDGET**

In this final chapter, after having provided all the necessary background information on Brazil, democratic theory, Porto Alegre, the PT, and Participatory Budgeting, I proceed with my research question that explores whether participatory budgeting can effectively alter deeply ingrained social hierarchies and power disequilibria in Brazilian society. To answer the research question, I examine the Porto Alegre Participatory Budget case study to understand how nonwhite domestic workers have fared from a social and economic point of view in that region. Democratic participation of this historically excluded cleavage should lead to a positive change in their life situations, particularly their socio-economic status.

The Participatory Budget of Porto Alegre is recognized as a successful Brazilian participatory democracy model. The purpose of the budget is to balance the wealth distribution between the white elite living in an opulent city-center while the poor and nonwhite population lives in squalor in the *favelas* (slums) located on the outskirts of the city limits. The main focus of this thesis is to identify the conditions of nonwhite domestic workers in Porto Alegre before and after the budget was implemented to understand if the conditions of these women have improved based upon their civic participation inspired by the participatory budget.

This chapter will discuss the demographic composition of Porto Alegre to ascertain the percentage of the population that is white, black, and brown. Blacks and browns are combined to represent the nonwhite portion of the populace. Brazilian nonwhite women do not typically have access to as many years of education as whites, which precludes them from securing professional well earning positions. Additionally, nonwhite women have a legacy in domestic service. African women were brought over as slaves to care for the children and the homes of their masters when Brazil was colonized. The slave masters were white and as Brazil's history evolved, the ruling elite class has remained white. Nonwhite women continue to be in the homes of the white ruling class, taking care of their children, washing their clothes, cleaning their homes and cooking their meals. Nonwhite women make less than minimum wage and represent the most excluded cross-section of Brazilian society. Scholars recognize that nonwhite domestic workers in Brazil do not have the opportunity to change their conditions. They offer various reasons for their status and methods to improve their conditions. Participatory democracy is one method that has been promulgated by the PT Party to ameliorate nonwhites' subpar circumstances.

Data particular to Porto Alegre will be presented in order to compare how nonwhite domestic workers (predominantly women) are doing in terms of education, literacy, employment and wages earned. Census data from the *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (IBGE) of 2010 will provide the requisite information to make some determinations regarding the conditions of nonwhite domestics and how the participatory budget has helped or failed them.

## Porto Alegre's Demographics

In order to make judgments regarding the success or failure of the OP in Porto Alegre, it is important to analyze the most current census data released by the *Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* (IBGE) for the year 2009, reported in 2010. A number of economic and social indicators also need to be analyzed such as identifying how the population is aggregated by skin color, income distribution, years of education and illiteracy, and employment type. These indicators provide background information to make assertions regarding the success or failure of the OP.

The population of the city of Porto Alegre totals 1,409,351 residents as reported by the IBGE census data collected in 2009 and reported in 2010. Of the total population, 1,116,659 or 79.23% identified as white in skin color, 143,890 or 10.21% identified as black, 141,411 or 10.03% identified as brown, and 4,083 or 0.29% identified as either yellow or unidentified (figure 3). The same data source reports that 46.39% of the Porto Alegre population is male while 53.61% of the population is female.

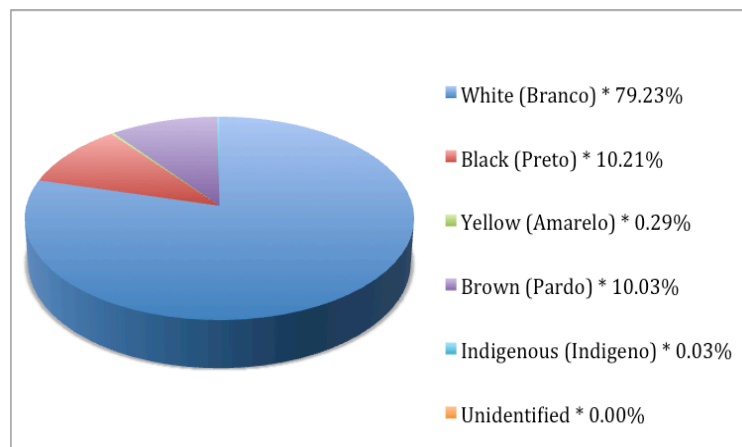


Figure 3. Population of Porto Alegre by Skin Color – 2009 IBGE Data  
Source: IBGE Data 2009

An analysis of the same IBGE 2009 census data reveal that the population is comprised of 513,703 or 36.45% white men, 602,956 or 42.78% white women, 76,715 or 4.80% black men, 76,175 or 5.40% black women, 68,911 or 4.89% brown men, 72,500 or 5.14% brown women, and the remaining categories grouped as yellow, indigenous and unidentified have 3,458 men and 3,933 women (table 6).

Table 8. Population of Porto Alegre by Color and Gender – 2009 IBGE Census Data

White Men	White Women	Black Men	Black Women	Brown Men	Brown Women	Other Men	Other Women	Total
513,703	602,956	67,715	76,175	68,911	72,500	3,458	3,933	1,409,351
36.45%	42.78%	4.80%	5.40%	4.89%	5.14%	0.25%	0.28%	100%

Source: IBGE Data 2009

### Socio-Economic Indicators In Porto Alegre

There are a number of socio-economic indicators that illustrate what class of people is included from a political, social and economic point of view and what are the excluded classes. Those indicators include income distribution. The more financial resources available to a class, the more access they are likely to have. The less financial resources available to a class, the more likely that class is to be excluded from many aspects of society. Another indicator particular to Brazil is education and literacy. The type of employment one can expect to attain in Brazil is often tied to years of completed education. The following section will report the status of whites versus nonwhites from an income distribution, education and literacy perspective as of 2010.

Income distribution is a demographic indicator that is informative since the OP was implemented to attempt to enhance socio-economic disparities through civic participation. This can be achieved by leveling income distribution between classes. In

terms of income distribution using the data provided by the IBGE 2009 census data, the average nominal yearly income of whites as compared to the combination of nominal yearly income of blacks and browns, whites have the lion share of the wealth of Porto Alegre. An analysis of the data indicate that the population earning from 0 to two times the yearly minimum wage (the 2009 yearly minimum wage was R\$5,580 or \$3,062), 60% of whites earn from R\$0 to R\$ 11,680 per year in comparison to 83% of blacks and browns. In terms of the population making three times the yearly nominal minimum wage and over, 39% of whites earn R\$16,700 and over in comparison to 17% of blacks and browns combined. As indicated in the table below, the population that identifies as having white skin enjoys a majority of the wealth of the city of Porto Alegre while the population identifying as black and brown makes up the category of the poorest without significant earning potential.

Table 9. Porto Alegre Yearly Nominal Income by Multiple of Minimum Wage – by Color or Race – 2009

Multiple of Yearly	In Brazilian	Converted to U.S.	Color: White	Color: Black &
0	R\$ 0	\$0	26%	33%
¼	R\$ 1,395	\$765	0%	1%
½	R\$ 2,790	\$1,531	1%	2%
1	R\$ 5,580	\$3,062	12%	20%
2	R\$ 11,680	\$6,398	21%	27%
3	R\$ 16,740	\$9,179	10%	8%
5	R\$ 27,900	\$15,298	11%	5%
10	R\$ 55,800	\$30,602	11%	3%
15	R\$ 83,700	\$45,904	3%	1%
20	R\$ 111,600	\$61,207	2%	0%
30	R\$ 167,400	\$91,811	1%	0%
> than 30	> than R\$ 167,400	> than \$91,811	1%	0%

Source: IBGE – Data 2009

Using the same data set, the ratio of nominal total yearly income by skin color category is noteworthy: the ratio for white/black is 2.3 (whites earn 2.3 times the total nominal yearly income of blacks), the ratio for white/brown is 2.2 (whites earn 2.2 times the total



nominal yearly income of browns) and the ratio for black/brown is 1 (blacks and browns earn the same total nominal yearly income). This means that whites' total yearly nominal income is far greater than that of black and brown people while black and brown people earn the approximately the same total nominal yearly income.

Education is an indicator that is considered essential in order for any Brazilian citizen to improve his/her socio-economic status. Scholars have posited that the more education a person receives, the more successful that person will be. The Brazilian government endorses this correlation (Leite, 2005). No tuition is charged in federal and state universities to all admitted who only need to pass an entrance exam called the *vestibular* (Leite, 2005). Students who attend private secondary schools or schools located in predominantly all white areas receive the essential preparation to take and pass the exam. On the other hand, students of color who attend public secondary schools are not afforded the same preparation for the *vestibular* and typically fail the exam. If they cannot pass the exam, they cannot receive a free college education (Leite, 2005). Federal and state governments have realized the disadvantage experienced by poor and nonwhite students regarding the exam, therefore these governments have instituted entrance quota systems that allow for 20% of self-designated black students to be admitted irrespective of their performance when taking the *vestibular* (Leite, 2005).

Porto Alegre population's school attendance as reported by the 2009 IBGE data demonstrates that between the ages of 0 and 17 years, white and black/brown students attend school at a similar rate. When students reach college age, the group of students from 18 to 24 indicates that 12.4% more white youths attend college than black and

brown youths. An important point to make is that the IBGE 2009 data combine blacks and browns.

Table 10. Children & Youth Attending School from 0 to 24 Years (in percentage) - by Color or Race – 2009

Big Regions, Units of the Federation and Metropolitan Regions	Percentage of Infants, Children, Adolescents and Youths from 0 to 24 Years Attending School by Skin Color or Race							
	White				Black and Brown			
	0 - 5 years	6 - 14 years	15 - 17 years	18 - 24 years	0 - 5 years	6 - 14 years	15 - 17 years	18 - 24 years
Rio Grande do Sul	32.6%	97.8%	86.5%	32.4%	27.4%	97.2%	80.9%	21.4%
Metropolitan Region of Porto Alegre	32.7%	97.1%	86.5%	35.9%	25.3%	95.4%	86.0%	23.5%

Source: IBGE Data 2009

Illiteracy is another indicator that makes the population of Porto Alegre a notable case study. The rate of illiteracy for people identifying as white is 9.2%, the black population has a 25.4% illiteracy rate and illiteracy for the brown population is 28.2% according to the 2009 IBGE reported census data. Since the level of education is a determinant factor in regard to economic success in Brazil, being illiterate severely limits any opportunity for socio-economic growth, putting the black/brown population at a greater disadvantage than whites.

In terms of employment by type and race, the data offered in the 2009 IBGE is not as straight forward for the specific metropolitan area of Porto Alegre as for the other social indicators reported above. The data are available by the North, Northeast, Southeast, South and Central West regions. The table below demonstrates whites living in the southern region where Porto Alegre is located to have a higher level of self-employment, and employers meaning holding supervisory roles. Blacks and browns do not fare as well in the same categories. The data are segregated to include domestic work

either with or without domestic work permit (work permits are a governmental requirement to be allowed to vote). As of 2009, although there are higher percentages of employees with work permits that are either black or brown, there are more people working as domestic workers who are in the black and brown population than white.

Table 11. People of Age over 10 Years, Employed by Type of Occupation by Color or Race in the South Region of Brazil (in percentage) – 2009

Type of Work	White/Branca	Black/Preta	Brown/Parda
Employee with Work Permit	39.6%	43.1%	41.6%
Employee without Work Permit	11.7%	14.2%	15.8%
Domestic Worker with Work Permit	1.8%	5.6%	3.3%
Domestic Worker without Work Permit	3.9%	9.2%	6.6%
Military Worker or Public Servant	6.8%	6.4%	4.5%
Self-Employed	19.8%	15.5%	17.6%
Employer	6.7%	1.2%	3.0%
Manual or Construction Worker	3.7%	3.6%	4.4%
Other Type of Unpaid Worker	5.8%	1.1%	3.2%

Source: IBGE – PNAD Data 2009

Based upon the aforementioned data analysis as of 2009, there is sufficient information to support that whites occupy the higher socio-economic scale, have the most and better jobs and are the most educated in Porto Alegre. On the other hand, blacks and browns earn far less than whites, do not enter university as often as whites do and hold more domestic work positions than their white counterparts, either with or without a work permits. The next section will make the comparison between IBGE census data collected in 2001, 2005 and 2009 to ascertain what differences exist in terms of socio economic conditions based upon income, education and employment indicators. These comparisons illustrate whether there has been any change, significant or not, in the conditions of nonwhites in Porto, Alegre and particularly, nonwhite domestic workers.

## Porto Alegre Participatory Budget Priorities For 2001, 2005 And 2009

Porto Alegre implemented the OP in 1989 to address the subpar living and social conditions of the excluded population by emboldening this cross-section of society to civically engage and participate. According to the *Orçamento Participativo* (OP) priorities of Porto Alegre, in 2009, the most important priority was housing, education ranking second most important, welfare the third, paving the fourth, health the fifth, sanitation the sixth, and economic development was the last. For the year 2001, paving was the first priority, housing the second, and sanitation was the third. For the year 2005, housing was the first priority, education was the second, welfare the third, paving the fourth, economic development the fifth, health the sixth and culture was the seventh.

Table 12. Porto Alegre Participatory Budget Priorities for Years 2001, 2005 & 2009

Porto Alegre Citizen Priorities	Year 2001	Year 2005	Year 2009
1 <sup>st</sup> Priority	Paving	Housing	Housing
2 <sup>nd</sup> Priority	Housing	Education	Education
3 <sup>rd</sup> Priority	Sanitation	Welfare	Welfare
4 <sup>th</sup> Priority	n/a	Paving	Paving
5 <sup>th</sup> Priority	n/a	Economic Development	Health
6 <sup>th</sup> Priority	n/a	Health	Sanitation
7 <sup>th</sup> Priority	n/a	Culture	Economic Development

Source: *Orçamento Participativo* Official Website - 2012

While paving, housing and sanitation were the priorities set forth by Porto Alegre citizens in the participatory budget of 2001, the priorities shifted in 2005 and 2009 to include social factors that would theoretically improve socio-economic status in the region for the people who had not previously been represented. Education and welfare are

priorities that indicate that the people of Porto Alegre have an acute interest in experiencing socio-economic improvement.

### **Comparison Of Indicators In Porto Alegre For Years 2001, 2005 And 2009**

The priorities set forth by the people of Porto Alegre have been examined for the years where official census data was collected in 2001, 2005 and 2009. A comparative analysis of the employment, education and literacy social indicators could indicate that civic participation by the disenfranchised has had some effectual change for the better in the lives of the people the OP is mandated to serve.

To begin, the population of Porto Alegre and its municipal areas has experienced some shift in terms of skin color. The white population has decreased from 86.7% in 2001, to 82.5% in 2005 to 81.3% in 2009. The population of blacks has not experienced any major change between 2001 through 2009 with a slight increase in 2005. The brown population has been on the rise from 6.4% in 2001, to 9.7% in 2005 to 11.4% in 2009.

Table 13. Population by Skin Color – for Porto Alegre and Municipalities – 2001, 2005 & 2009

Population by Skin Color	2001	2005	2009
Total (people)	3,779,116	4,036,126	4,054,000
White Skin Color %	86.7%	82.5%	81.3%
Black Skin Color %	6.7%	7.4%	6.8%
Brown Skin Color %	6.4%	9.7%	11.4%

*Source:* IBGE Data 2001, 2005 & 2009

Population shifts notwithstanding, the majority of the population of Porto Alegre and its municipalities is white.

Regarding years of education, only the data for 2005 and 2009 can be compared because the data available for 2001 is not reported using the same criteria as the later

data. Nevertheless, there is a consistent slight increase in the number of years of study of people 15 years of age for whites and blacks from 2005 to 2009. As for the brown population of Porto Alegre and its municipalities, there is a higher increase in years of education for the same age group.

Table 14. Years of Education of People of 15 Years of Age by Skin Color for Porto Alegre and Municipalities – 2001, 2005 & 2009

# of Years of Study of People 15 Years of Age	2001 *	2005	2009
Total	n/a	8.3	8.6
White Skin Color	n/a	8.6	8.8
Black Skin Color	n/a	7.5	7.8
Brown Skin Color	n/a	6.7	7.4

Source: IBGE data for 2001, 2005 and 2009

\* The data for 2001 could not be reported to make the comparison because the data for 2001 reports the number of years of study of people 10 years of age.

The functional illiteracy rates for whites, blacks and browns can be measured consistently for years 2001, 2005 and 2009 based upon the IBGE data for those respective years. The data analysis indicates that there are relatively high rates of functional illiteracy in Porto Alegre and its municipalities for years 2001, 2005 and 2009. Although functional illiteracy in totality has gone from 13.8% to 10.6% in 2009, people self-identifying as white have a much lower rate of functional illiteracy than blacks and browns. In 2001, people self-identifying as brown had a rate of functional illiteracy of more than 10% in comparison to their white counterparts while blacks had a functional illiteracy rate of 17.7%. There was a substantial decline in the percentage of functionally illiterate brown people in 2005 in comparison to previous years. As of 2009, the number of white functional illiterates is still lower than the functional illiterates in the black and brown skin color categories (table 13).

Table 15. Functional Illiteracy of People 15 Years of Age by Skin Color for Porto Alegre and Municipalities (in percentage) – 2001, 2005 & 2009

IBGE Data Years	Total	White	Black	Brown
<b>2001</b>	13.8%	12.8%	17.7%	23.1%
<b>2005</b>	11.6%	10.4%	15.2%	18.8%
<b>2009</b>	10.6%	9.6%	15.0%	15.0%

Vis-à-vis employment, the official data that is available for 2001, 2005 and 2009 cannot be compared because different criteria are measured when analyzing employment data in conjunction with race. In 2001, when examining the information relating to domestic workers in Porto Alegre, whether white, black or brown, the earnings per month are very low with white domestic workers earning R\$254.02, black domestic workers earning R\$252.46 and brown domestic workers earning R\$225.34 (table 14). The data is not segregated such that the percentage of Porto Alegre's population is broken down by employment type and race in order to make the assertion that there are more blacks and browns in domestic worker positions.

Table 16. Monthly Earnings in Reals (R\$) by Position by Skin Color or Race in Porto Alegre – 2001

	Total Average Monthly Earnings	Worker with Work Permit	Worker without Work Permit	Military Worker or Public Servant	Domestic Worker	Self-Employed	Employer/Supervisor
<b>White Skin Color</b>	804.94	751.62	487.06	1532.20	254.02	732.30	2092.25
<b>Black Skin Color</b>	418.88	456.88	322.45	731.55	252.46	395.12	674.56
<b>Brown Skin Color</b>	458.47	466.39	269.53	1477.18	225.34	359.62	967.06

Source: IBGE 2001 Data

The data concerning race and employment type is not available in the 2005 IBGE data. As for 2009, there is data available to compare employment type in relation to race but not specific to Porto Alegre. As mentioned in the previous section, the data is segregated by region and using data for the southern region where Porto Alegre is located suggests that black and brown people are more likely to have positions as domestic workers than their white counterparts.

The people of Porto Alegre stressed housing as one of their main participatory budget priorities. To that end, according to the IBGE 2009 census data, the percentage of private homes with adequate sanitation jumped from 91.6% in 2001 to 93.9% in 2009 and the homes with no sanitations dropped from 0.5% in 2000 to 0.1% in 2009. In the same data set, the incidence of poverty in 2009 is 23.74% in relation to the entire population of Porto Alegre and its municipalities but unfortunately, the incidence of poverty rate is not broken down by race to make an assessment of what group experiences more or less incidence of poverty.

### **Participation In The Budget**

Levels of participation in the participatory budget of Porto Alegre are directly related to the initiative's success or failure. The sections above have illustrated that the composition of the majority of Porto Alegre's population self-identifies as white by a rate of almost 80%, while the remainder of the population is comprised of blacks and browns. Additionally, the IBGE data show that the same white population has a preponderance of the wealth in the city and its municipalities. The participation rate in the *Orçamento Participativo* by skin color, gender, and educational and socio-economic levels is a topic that must be addressed to ascertain how nonwhite domestic workers are affected.

According to CIDADE, a nongovernmental organization that reports data on the participatory budget of Porto Alegre, the OP that was implemented in 1989 started with a very limited participation number of 1510. The number of participants increased to 23,520 by 2003 (figure 4). According to Gret and Sintomer (1998), the rate of



participation's dramatic increase from the onset of the initiative suggests that participants were highly interested in the effects their involvement would have on their condition.

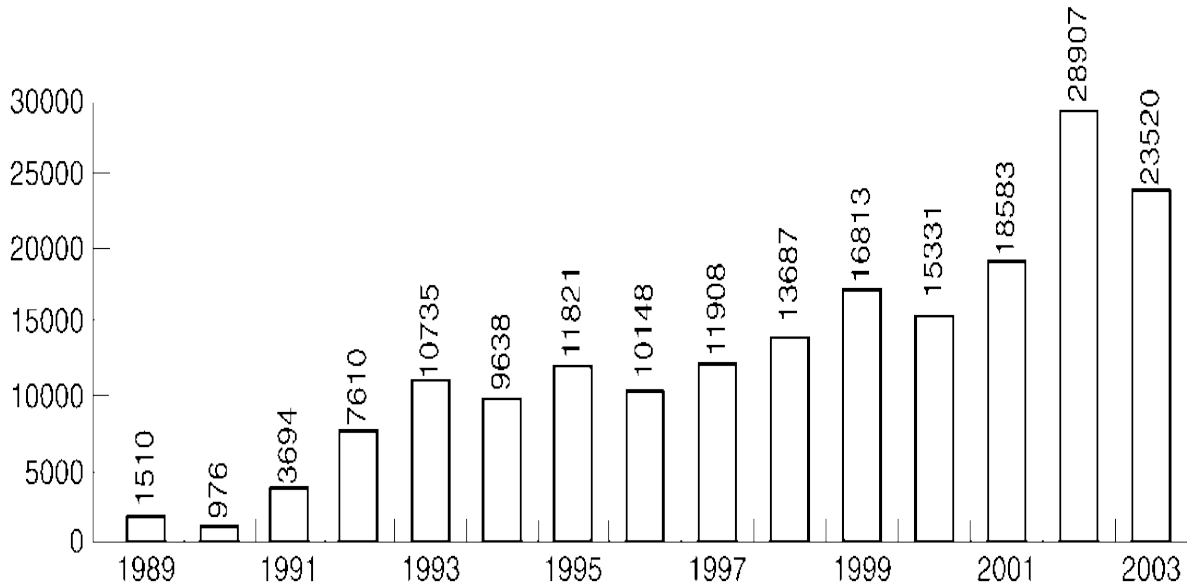


Figure 4. Development of Number of Participants in PT in Porto Alegre – 1989 to 2001  
*Source: Cidade (2005); Fedozzi (2001)*

Since the majority of the population is predominantly white and has the greater share of wealth in the area, the fact that people of color are greatly participating is important to state. According to Baiocchi (2005), the CIDADE of 2001 in conjunction with the data of IBGE data of 2000, reports that a large percentage of women (56.4%) and a considerable percentage of blacks and browns (28.1%) participate in the OP. In the meantime, 30.3% of participants have low income. A staggering 60.3% of the participants only completed primary school – education through the 8<sup>th</sup> grade – (table 15). This phenomenon explains why a chief budget priority is education for years 2005 and 2009.

Table 17. Profile of Porto Alegre *Orçamento Participativo* Participants, 2000

	Citywide Average	All Participants	Delegates	Councillors
Women	55.4%	56.4%	55.0%	27.0%
Low Income	11.4%	30.3%	23.7%	21.4%
Black & Brown	15.4%	28.1%	21.0%	22.0%
Low Education	15.8%	60.3%	39.0%	36.0%

Source: CIDADE 2001; IBGE 2000

Nonwhite domestic workers occupy the female, low income and black/brown skin color categories. No concise data was found in terms of their participation in the OP but it can be assumed that their representation is significant given the cross-sections of people civically engaged in this public policy initiative. “Paths to Social Inclusion: Porto Alegre’s Network of Popular Participation” written by Waiselfisz, Noletto, Bonder, Dias and Chiechelski (2003), a study conducted by a research team sponsored by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to understand how social conditions were affected by the participatory budget in 2003, found that black/brown women actively participated in the OP to change their social circumstances. Their findings were based upon a survey of Porto Alegre OP participants using quantitative and qualitative methods of research. The study does not break down the profession of the participants therefore no definitive statement can be made regarding the specific participation of nonwhite domestic workers.

### **Comparison Of Whites And Nonwhites From 2001 To 2009 – Education And Income**

The OP began in 1989 but socio-economic indicator data for Porto Alegre was collected in 2001. The most current data available for comparison is 2009. From 2001 to 2009, the rate for illiteracy for whites in Porto Alegre has gone from 12.8% to 9.60%; for blacks has gone from 17.7% to 15%; and for browns has gone from 23.1% to 15%.

(figure 5). The brown population of Porto Alegre experienced the most significant drop in illiteracy rate although the white population remains the most literate.

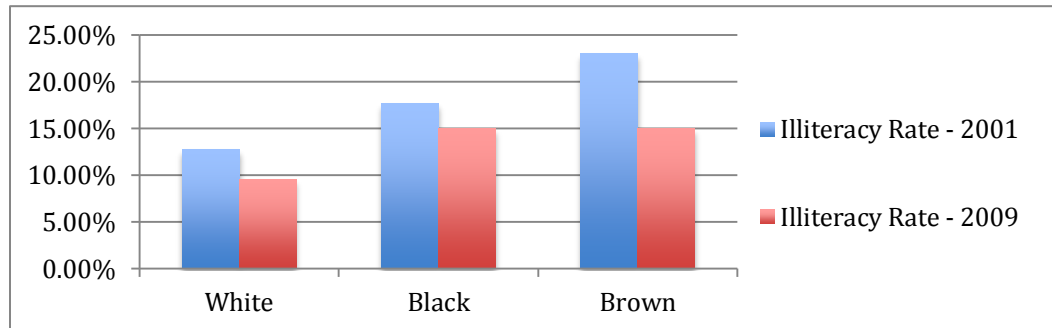


Figure 5. Illiteracy Rates by Skin Color or Race (in percentage) – 2001 to 2009  
*Source: IBGE Data 2001 and 2001 for Porto Alegre and Municipalities*

In terms of education as compared to monthly income (by multiple of minimum wage) the data set examined from 2001 to 2009 in Porto Alegre indicated that whites' average years of schooling increased from 8.5 to 9.5 while blacks' years of education increased from 7 to 8.4, and browns' years of education increased from 6.2 to 7.9. Regarding monthly average income of all workers, the white population's income decreased from 4.9 times minimum wage to 3.3 times minimum wage from 2001 to 2009. The black population's income by multiples of minimum wage decreased from 2.5 in 2001 to 1.9 in 2009. The brown population's income by multiples of minimum wage decreased from 2.8 in 2001 to 2.1 in 2009. (figure 6). Blacks and browns experienced a larger increase in years of education from 2001 to 2009 yet whites still attend school for a longer period of time than both groups. In terms of income, income levels dropped for whites, blacks and browns from 2001 to 2009, but whites continue to earn more than blacks and browns whose incomes levels are relatively the same.



Figure 6. Average Years of Education and Monthly Average Income (by Multiple of Minimum Wage) by Skin Color for Years 2001 and 2009

Source: IBGE Data for 2001 and 2009

Given that the focus of my research is on domestic workers, it is important to illustrate how the number of domestic workers by race has been impacted between 2001 and 2009. The number of domestic workers who self-identify as white has dropped from 6.0% in 2001 to 5.7% in 2009. The percentage of black domestic workers increased from 13.3% in 2001 to 14.8% in 2009. The percentage of brown domestic workers increased from 8.9% in 2001 to 9.9% in 2009. (figure 7). This data is for the southern region of Brazil where Porto Alegre is located. The data specific to domestic workers in Porto Alegre is not available but a fair assumption can be made that the trend in the southern region of Brazil is indicative of the trend in Porto Alegre regarding domestic workers categorized by skin color.

	White	Black	Brown
<b>Domestic Workers in 2001</b>	6.0%	13.3%	8.9%
<b>Domestic Workers in 2009</b>	5.7%	14.8%	9.9%
<b>Variance</b>	- 0.3%	+ 1.5%	+ 1.0%

Figure 7. Population Working as Domestic Workers in Southern Region of Brazil (in percentage) – 2001 and 2009

Source: IBGE Data 2001 and 2009

## Comparison Of Whites And Nonwhites Socio-Economic Indicators From 2001 To 2009 – Porto Alegre, The South And National Averages

An analysis of socio-economic indicators from a national perspective in comparison to Porto Alegre's as the Southern Region of Brazil from 2001 through 2009 assists in revealing whether the Porto Alegre OP has been successful vis-à-vis its poor and nonwhite populations. The socio-economic indicators that are compared below between national data versus Porto Alegre or the Southern Region of Brazil data (where Porto Alegre is located) include functional illiteracy rates, average years of study with corresponding average income by minimum wage, and the percentage of the population working as domestic workers by skin color for years 2001 and 2009. The data relative to the percentage of the population considered functionally illiterate by skin color is available for years 2001, 2005 and 2009.

Table 18. Functional Illiteracy Rates by Skin Color – Porto Alegre Percentage Rates Compared to National Brazilian Percentage Rates for Years 2001, 2005 and 2009

Year	White <i>Porto Alegre</i>	White <i>Brazil</i>	Black <i>Porto Alegre</i>	Black <i>Brazil</i>	Brown <i>Porto Alegre</i>	Brown <i>Brazil</i>
2001	12.8%	20.2%	17.7%	36.3%	23.1%	36.2%
2005	10.4%	17.5%	15.2%	28.7%	18.8%	29.9%
2009	9.6%	15%	15.0%	25.4%	15.0%	25.7%

Source: IBGE Data 2001, 2005 and 2009

Regarding whites, when comparing Brazil's national rates of illiteracy for 2001, 2005 and 2009 versus Porto Alegre's rates of illiteracy by skin color, the national rate decreases from 20.2% in 2001 to 17.5% in 2005 to 15.0% in 2009 with a decrease in rate of 5.2% over eight years. Whereas in Porto Alegre, the rate of illiteracy decreases from

12.8% in 2001 to 10.4% in 2005 to 9.6% in 2009 with a total decrease in rate of 3.2% over eight years. From a national perspective, the rate of illiteracy in the black population decreases from 36.3% in 2001 to 28.7% in 2005 to 25.4% in 2009 with a net decrease of 10.9% over an eight-year period. In Porto Alegre, for the black population, the rate of illiteracy decreases from 17.7% in 2001 to 15.2% in 2005 to 15.0% in 2009 with a net decrease of 2.7% over eight years. Lastly, in terms of the brown population from a national point of view decreases from 36.3% in 2001 to 29.9% in 2005 to 25.7% in 2009 with a net decrease of 10.6% over an eight year period. In Porto Alegre, the rate of illiteracy in the brown population decreases from 23.1% in 2001 to 18.8% in 2005 to 15.0% in 2009 with a net decrease of 8.1% over an eight year period.

Table 19. Average Years of Study with Corresponding Average Income by Minimum Wage – Porto Alegre Rates Compared to National Brazilian Rates for Years 2001 & 2009

Years	Porto Alegre						Brazil					
	White/Branca		Black/Preta		Brown/Parda		White/Branca		Black/Preta		Brown/Parda	
	Average Years of Study	Average Income by Min. Wage	Average Years of Study	Average Income by Min. Wage	Average Years of Study	Average Income by Min. Wage	Average Years of Study	Average Income by Min. Wage	Average Years of Study	Average Income by Min. Wage	Average Years of Study	Average Income by Min. Wage
2001	8.5	4.90	7.0	2.50	6.2	2.80	8.0	4.50	5.7	2.20	5.6	2.20
2009	9.5	3.30	8.4	1.90	7.9	2.10	9.2	3.20	7.4	1.80	7.2	1.80

Source: IBGE Data 2001 and 2009

Table 19 indicates that the years of study for whites increase by one year from 2001 to 2009 while the years of study increase by 1.2 for Brazil as a whole. As the years of study increase for whites, their earning power decreases by 1.60 times the minimum wage in Porto Alegre in the same time frame. When analyzing the earning power of whites on a national basis, the earnings decrease by 1.3 times the minimum wage. For blacks, the years of study increase by 1.4 years in Porto Alegre while the years of study increase by 1.7 nationally. When comparing the earning power of blacks in Porto Alegre

versus nationally, their earning power decreases by 0.6 times the minimum wage in Porto Alegre while the rate decreases by 0.4 times the minimum wage on a national basis. The brown population years of study increase by 1.7 in Porto Alegre in an eight-year period while the years of study increase by 1.6 nationally. In terms of earning power the national average earning power for the brown population, their earning power decreases by 0.3 times the minimum wage in Porto Alegre whereas the rate decreases by the same 0.4 times the minimum wage as blacks on a national perspective. **Therefore, blacks and browns earnings decreased in Brazil, but decreased even more in Porto Alegre from 2001 through 2009 while years of education attained increased both regionally and nationally, OP budget implementation notwithstanding.**

Table 20. Percentage of the Population Working As Domestic Workers by Skin Color – Southern Region Percentage Rates Compared to National Brazilian Percentage Rates for Years 2001 and 2009

<b>Year</b>	<b>White Southern Region</b>	<b>White Brazil</b>	<b>Black Southern Region</b>	<b>Black Brazil</b>	<b>Brown Southern Region</b>	<b>Brown Brazil</b>
2001	6.0%	6.3%	13.3%	13.7%	8.9%	9.1%
2009	5.7%	6.0%	14.8%	12.2%	9.9%	9.1%

Source: IBGE Data 2001 and 2009

In terms of the percentage of the population working as domestic workers by skin color, the data is not available for Porto Alegre specifically in 2001 through 2009, but is available for the Southern region of Brazil where Porto Alegre is located. When comparing the national Brazilian population to the Southern region population the percentage of the white population decreases by 0.3% for both between 2001 and 2009. When examining the percentage of black people working as domestic workers, on a

national basis from 2001 to 2009, the percentage decreases by 1.5% nationally while the percentage increases by 1.5% in the Southern region. For the brown population, the percentage of domestic workers increases by 1.0% in the Southern region while it remains status quo on a national basis from 2001 to 2009.

### **Interpretation Of Findings**

A significant amount of data was presented to attempt to make the case that the participatory budget may or may not have changed the lives of nonwhite domestic workers for the better. Based upon the IBGE data collected in 2009 and reported in 2010, almost 80% of the population of Porto Alegre identifies as white while 10% identifies as black and 10% identifies as brown. In terms of income distribution, as of 2009, whites made considerably more on a yearly basis than their brown and black counterparts. Vis-à-vis education and using the same data set, whites attended school from age 0 to 17 at a similar rate than blacks and browns but when the data was analyzed for college age youths, whites attended college at a higher rate than blacks and browns. In terms of employment, and particularly regarding domestic work, blacks and browns occupied the profession of domestic worker with or without a work permit at a rate of more than double in comparison to their white counterparts.

The priorities set forth by the population that participated in the Porto Alegre participatory budget from 2001 through 2009 shifted from basic paving, housing and sanitation priorities in 2001 to priorities more central to improving socio-economic conditions in 2005 and 2009. From 2005 to 2009, civic participation and priority setting focused on housing, education and welfare. While there is no data available to ascertain



what priorities have been put forth by skin color, it is evident that the participatory budget's goal to promote civic engagement in order to ameliorate socio-economic situations from a local and municipal perspective has been successful to some degree. This claim can be made for four reasons. First, the number of participants steadily increased from 1510 in 1989 to 23,520 by 2003. It has been reported by various sources that participation has increased to over 50,000 by 2011 (Cidade 2011). This indicates that there was a steady interest in what the initiative could do. Secondly, the number of participants who were either poor, women, or nonwhite (blacks and browns) is high which means that the portion of the population that is considered excluded (poor and people of color) experienced greater inclusion in the democratic process. Thirdly, there was a priority shift of the people during the years analyzed which presupposes that the excluded society expressed its priorities rather than the priorities of the elite. Additionally, the Porto Alegre municipal government reported that at the onset of the rollout of the budget in 1989, only 70% of homes in the *favelas* had running water and sewage. As of 2010, 99% of homes in Porto Alegre and the *favelas* alike have running water and sewage. These are tremendous victories for the initiative and these statistics are the reason why the participatory budget of Porto Alegre has been internationally recognized.

In Porto Alegre, the white population continues to enjoy further years of schooling and earn more than nonwhites (black and brown population) when comparing data from 2001 to 2009. While the participatory budget was in place a decade prior, the IBGE did not report data by skin color categories until 2001 but there is an improvement in the years of educations for all skin color categories from 2001 to 2009. On the other

hand, the monthly income average for all categories experienced a drop from 2001 to 2009. Nevertheless, the implementation seems to have diminished the education and income gap between whites and nonwhites. In terms of domestic workers who are the subject of my research, comparative data was not available specific to Porto Alegre relative to employment categorized by skin color. The percentage of the population working as domestic workers comparative data was found for the southern region of Brazil where Porto Alegre is located. Based on the data findings, the number of white domestic workers decreased from 2001 to 2009 but the number of nonwhite domestic workers increased from 2001 to 2009. Taken all factors into consideration, it appears that although the OP has allowed poor nonwhites to participate, it has not changed their socio-economic status vis-à-vis whites.

An important finding regarding official data availability must be mentioned. The Brazilian government makes data available to better understand the socio-economic progression of the people of Brazil. Unfortunately, the information that is made available by the Brazilian government is not sufficiently consistent to make comparisons between the conditions of people of Porto Alegre and its municipalities based upon their skin color from a poverty, education and employment point of view when comparing the data from 2001, 2005, and 2009. One would assume that the criteria used to report information from one census year to the other would be the exact same in order to make direct correlations from year to year. The data reported for all three census years (2001, 2005 and 2009) is inconsistent which presents a problem when attempting to make direct socio-economic indicator correlations from one year to another, when examining data by skin color.

## **Conclusion**

Scholars like Brian Wampler, Alberto Avritzer, Gianpaolo Baiocchi, William Nylen, Marion Gret and Yves Sintomer (Wampler and Avritzer, 2004; Baiocchi, 2001; Nylen, 2003; Marion Gret and Yves Sintomer, 1988) eloquently write about the formation and successes of the participatory budget of Porto Alegre. They report the budget's achievement based upon successfully fulfilled benchmarks of better sanitation and public works' improvements that are spearheaded by greater local and municipal participation. To this end, Porto Alegre appears to have directed a democracy of higher quality. If improving sanitation and public works are the main objectives of the participatory budget, then these objectives have been met.

However, the platform of the budget initiative was to improve socio-economic conditions of people to eradicate the disparities between the elite that is predominantly white and the poor and excluded that are typically nonwhite, through civic participation. Using the data reported by the Brazilian government over several years, there has been improvement in terms of years of education achieved and income earned over the last decade (2001 to 2009) but nonwhites continue to lag behind whites in both aspects. It also seems that these achievements were nationwide and that in Porto Alegre, despite its OP, did not achieve more for its historically excluded groups than the rest of the country with the exception of involvement. Poor blacks continue to be poor but they are highly involved in city-politics.

Given that my research focus is on domestic workers, since the implementation of the OP, the percentage of the white population working as domestic workers in the south

region of Brazil has decreased but the nonwhite population in the same region working as domestic workers has increased. An examination of national percentages of the population working as domestic workers by race versus the percentage of people working as domestic workers in the Southern region illustrates that the percentage of whites working as domestic workers decreases both nationally and in the south. In the meantime, the percentage of people working as domestics who are black and brown experience a decrease nationally but an increase in the Southern region. This means that the OP is not addressing the needs of poor nonwhite women working as domestics while they are participating in the initiative. To exacerbate matters, the data relating to socio-economic indicators in terms of skin color in Porto Alegre are not reported in the same manner from year to year; precluding researchers from making direct comparative correlations necessary to make categorical conclusions about the status of socio-economic conditions of nonwhites and the poor either improving, remaining status quo or degrading since the onset of the initiative. A trait of a high quality democracy is transparency. When official data is presented in such a manner that straightforward trends cannot be made, one has to question the transparency of the democracy. The findings suggest that Brazil democracy may not be as transparent as purported to the world.

## **CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION**

The focus of this thesis was to examine the inequality experienced by nonwhite Brazilian women. They principally work as domestic workers. A second focus of this thesis was to examine whether a participatory democracy model has or can enhance the disparities suffered by nonwhite Brazilian servants in comparison to the rest of society.

Domestic service is an element of upper and middle class households all over the world. Women typically work as domestic workers. They take care of their employers' children, wash clothes, cook, clean, and perform the household functions that their employers either do not care to do, or do not have time to do. The relationship between employers and domestic workers is different from typical employer/employee relationships. In a classical employer/employee relationship in most countries, the discourse between employers and their employees is managed. Employers are not openly able to abuse employees if they are predisposed to doing so for a number of reasons. Laws are in place to protect gross abuses in the workplace. Places of employment are in the public sphere and civil society has an opportunity to not support businesses that allow their employees to be mistreated. Employees form unions that rally for better working conditions and better pay. Because domestic service takes place in the private sphere, domestic workers can be mistreated by their employers with no repercussions other than domestics resigning from their position to find a 'nicer' employer.

The origins of domestic work are pivotal to understanding contemporary domestic service. Domestic service is ingrained in slavery dating back to Roman times when the slaves performed the household work. The tradition of slaves being responsible for household and domestic work is prevalent particularly when colonialism and imperialism are examined. Conquering nations enslaved the indigenous people of the countries they conquered and sent slaves all over the world to become their free labor forces. European nations such as Portugal, Spain, France and England took Africans during the African Slave Trade and sent them to the Americas to harvest resource rich lands. African female slaves were used in the homes of their colonizers as their domestic workers. These African women suffered physical, emotional and sexual abuse by their masters, treatment that went unchecked even beyond the end of slavery.

Unfortunately, in many ways, the master/slave relationship has survived in today's profession of domestic work, especially in Latin America. Domestic workers are typically black or persons of color and in inferior socio-economic positions whereas employers are white and are at the top of the socio-economic scale. Domestic workers work extremely long hours, are not paid regularly or well and suffer emotional, physical and sexual abuse at the hands of their employers. Although domestic workers are reportedly underpaid and mistreated all over the world, the state of affairs for Brazilian domestics is different. Brazil's democracy insists that all citizens are equal irrespective of skin color and gender. Based upon this fact, nonwhite domestic workers should have the same political and socio-economic opportunities as their white and male counterparts. This is not the case.

Brazil's official stance on race is very important to understanding the current situation of domestic workers. Portuguese colonization brought a white dimension to the population. The African Slave Trade brought a black dimension to the population. The miscegenation of whites, blacks and the original indigenous Indians created a population with skin color and features that span from white skin and Euro-centric features (light and/or straight hair, thin lips and noses, etc.) to black skin and Afro-centric features (coarse hair, broad noses, full lips, etc.). In an effort to not incite the racial strife that took place in the United States during the 1950s and 1960s, race is not considered in terms of categorizing Brazilian people of diverse ancestry. Instead, the Brazilian government allows people to self-identify as either white (*branco*) – 100% European descent; black (*preto*) – 100% African descent; brown (*pardo*) – product of miscegenation between white, black, 100% Indian and Asian descent; 100% indigenous (*indigeno*) – the original Amerindians living in Brazil before colonization; and 100% yellow (*amarelo*) – the small Asian population that immigrated to all of Latin America. Irrespective of whether people are officially categorized by race or skin color, Brazilian society has consistently had a ruling elite class of white people while black and brown people comprised the bottom of society.

In an effort to maintain its position of political and socio-economic dominance, Brazil's white ruling elite class 'whitened' society by adopting racial science and Eugenics ideologies to support its platform beginning late in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and ending in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Racial science and eugenics established the genetic superiority of the white race vis-à-vis intelligence and morality, and the genetic inferiority of the black race, suggesting that black people were immoral, unintelligent, prone to crime and

only capable of performing hard labor in harsh conditions. In order to whiten Brazilian society and dilute the black and brown population that was steadily growing, the Brazilian government initiated immigration trends that invited Europeans to occupy the jobs that were created during Brazil's industrialization phase. The white constituency of Portuguese colonizers expanded to include thousands of Italians and other Europeans settling in Brazil and securing high earning positions. Although racial science was eventually discounted and eugenics was repudiated, both philosophies are embedded in the minds of white, black and brown Brazilians. The racial biases against people of black heritage allowed for the white population to own the majority of the wealth of Brazil, serve as the sole political decision-makers, and have access to most of the social and economic resources available in Brazil. Meanwhile, nonwhites (comprised of black and brown people) were the poorest and the most politically excluded with access to minimal socio-economic resources. The disparate conditions between whites and nonwhites in Brazil were palpable and egregious and continue to be today.

Brazil became a 'racial democracy' by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Brazil's status as a 'racial democracy' is credited to Gilberto Freyre, a prominent Brazilian sociologist who posited that the issue of race in Brazil was moot. Brazil proclaimed to be a 'racial democracy' until the racist practices and patronage that allowed white elitism to persist at the expense of a large majority of poor nonwhites was showcased by Afro-Brazilian social movements attending the Conference Against Racism held in Durban, South Africa in 2001. The Brazilian government was forced to implement public policy that confirmed the existence of racial disparity while reporting the contrary.



Affirmative action plans and quota systems were implemented right after the conference in South Africa in order to mitigate the international community's new perception of Brazil as a country that promoted blatant racism. A notable quota system to mention is the one relating to some federal and state universities that required 20% of an entering class to be black. According to Brazilian politicians and academic scholars alike, a college education has become paramount to attain well-paid positions. A lack of education is the reason often cited regarding why nonwhite women are only able to secure work as domestic workers. While it may be true that lack of education has led to limited options, nonwhite females have a difficult time getting into college because of their socio-economic conditions and the likelihood of them being able to attend college is very small. Nonwhite girls as young as ten are forced to become *empregadas* (maids) because they must earn money to help their mothers sustain their families' households. If girls as young as ten must stop attending school in order to work, these young girls are forced to remain in domestic service as a profession in adulthood.

Nonwhite women are perpetuating a legacy in domestic service based upon the color of their skin, their desperate socio-economic conditions and their inability to attend school. According to the IBGE census data for numerous decades, domestic workers earn the least per month for all occupations and the majority of the women in these positions are nonwhite. White employers have a lifelong dependency on nonwhite domestic service that reinforces nonwhite women's legacy in domestic work. When domestic workers in various parts of Brazil were interviewed regarding their conditions, they all reported being underpaid, being treated poorly by their white employers, and working extremely long hours. Scholars such as Twine (1997) and Goldstein (2003) discuss nonwhite

domestic workers being inherited like property or being adopted by their white employers. Nonwhite Brazilian domestic workers cannot possibly understand that they are equal to every other citizen in Brazil under those conditions.

Brazil's political framework evolved from colonialism, imperialism, first republic, military regime to a second republic. Through all of these five phases of governance, a recurring theme was present: a white elite made almost all of the political decisions, owned a majority of the assets in the nation, and took care of its own through clientelism and patronage while nonwhites were disenfranchised, marginalized and exploited. In order to ameliorate the severe disparities between the white ruling class and the majority of nonwhites, paying particular attention to nonwhite domestic workers, the notion of participatory democracy rather than representative democracy has been advanced by social movements, political parties and scholars.

Brazil's current democracy has developed over the years. The new republic of Brazil was established in 1985 with a new constitution enacted in 1988. The new constitution assured suffrage for all citizens sixteen years of age and older with no literacy requirement. The new republic addressed the needs of the poor and nonwhites that were overlooked for centuries. The representative democracy model employed in Brazil hoped to idyllically balance the distribution of wealth in a country that was socially, economically and politically unbalanced.

The Worker's Party (PT), founded by Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva formed in 1980 to fight for better working conditions for sheet metal workers. The PT has become one of the largest leftist political parties in Latin America. The PT Party's political dogma is

democratic and socialist in nature. Brazil ran from a top down political structure since its independence however the PT Party's philosophy adopts a bottom up philosophy of governance via participatory democracy. While Lula ran for president during the national elections of 1985 unsuccessfully, the PT Party won the mayoral election in Porto Alegre.

Understanding the PT Party's idea of participatory governance requires a discussion regarding democracy. Democracy means rule by the people that implies direct democracy. Today, democracy mostly refers to representative democracy whereas political systems involve elections of city, state and national officials by the people to create and administer laws in their respective jurisdictions. Representative democracy does not preclude the elite from representing its own interests in elections therefore representative democracy is not necessarily the best solution in Brazil. The PT Party's method to ensure that all citizens have the opportunity to effect change in their circumstances is a participatory democracy model.

Porto Alegre has become internationally acclaimed due to the reported successes of the *Orçamento Participativo* (OP) initiated in 1989. Porto Alegre is the capital of Rio Grande do Sul, the most southern region in Brazil. Porto Alegre and Rio Grande do Sul are considered an affluent region in Brazil. Due to population growth, in Porto Alegre one third of the population was forced to settle in *favelas* (Portuguese slums) on the city's periphery that were substandard. The rich, living affluently within city limits, maintained their positions through patronage, compensating elected officials with their financial support if their needs were addressed. The *Orçamento Participativo's* (OP) or Participatory Budget (PB) spearheaded change in the atrocious circumstances in the *favelas* by encouraging the poor and nonwhites to participate in the budgetary decision-

making. Participation from all citizens comprising the traditionally excluded cleavages of the poor and nonwhite would hopefully level socio-economic conditions such that whites would not own the lion's share of the wealth in the city and its localities. During the annual OP people in poor neighborhoods are educated in order to make informed voting decisions on how to spend municipal funds. Meetings are held at every level of local and municipal government starting with the neighborhoods.

My thesis findings indicated that the population of Porto Alegre is predominantly self-designated as white. Twenty percent of the population is nonwhite with a large majority of this nonwhite population living in the *favelas*. Although there is no specific data available on residential location by race, it is safe to surmise that nonwhites do not live within the city limits but rather on the periphery as the data show that people earning higher incomes are white and affluence is concentrated within the city limits. Secondly, the data also show that nonwhites have higher rates of illiteracy and attend school fewer years than their white counterparts. Biaocchi (2003) states that a large percentage of nonwhites are participating in the OP. A third finding was that the OP's first priorities were for roads to be paved and sewage lines and running water to be piped into the *favelas* at the onset of the project. More recently, the priorities have shifted to education, housing and welfare.

In Brazil, tertiary education is a requisite to secure occupations with higher earning potential. A fourth finding was that more whites attend institutes of higher education than nonwhites. A fifth finding was that Brazil's income disparity between whites and nonwhites is significant with whites being compensated twice the earnings of nonwhites. Nonwhite women have an even greater disadvantage and are often required to

make a living as domestic workers, a profession that requires no education and that seems to be the legacy of people of African ancestry. A sixth finding was that Porto Alegre's profile in terms of skin color, employment and education is similar to the rest of Brazil.

My concluding findings indicated that nonwhites participate in the PB and their participation has garnered some positive change. Nonwhite income and years of schooling have increased to some degree since the implementation of the OP as it has for whites. Interestingly, the number of nonwhite domestic workers has risen since the implementation of the PB. This finding suggests that the PB has not promoted sufficient socio-economic reform to ameliorate the conditions of these women, irrespective of their participation in the initiative. An important last finding was that the official data necessary to get the full breath of nonwhite domestic workers' socio-economic needs are not available for comparative analysis before and after the PB in Porto Alegre. Brazil's democracy is not as transparent as it purports to be as long as its official data cannot tell a succinct story as to what is going with its people.

If a participatory democracy model does not lessen the number of nonwhite women having to work as domestics, what model will work? Before models are suggested, the ingrained slave/master relationships that are the backbone of Brazil's society where whites are the masters and nonwhites are the slaves must be addressed. Nonwhite women working as domestics often do not want to correlate their poor circumstances with their racial background (Twine, 1997). Mitchell (2010) posits that blacks are more apt to state that they are being discriminated against depending on who is asking. Nevertheless, how can nonwhite women dispel the racial science myth of racial inferiority that has allowed for them to be mistreated, exploited, raped and inherited like

property? That requires for them to become college educated and for them to believe that they can actually excel from a socio-economic point of view. Brazilian nonwhite women are still very much excluded from society therefore the likelihood of their circumstances changing is slim, as indicated by the results of Porto Alegre's PB.

Brazil's past 'racial democracy' model to escape the racial strife that was occurring in the United States during the 1960s has created a racial problem that cannot be fully addressed until racial categories are legalized. A nonwhite cannot claim discrimination if there are no succinct discrimination laws and respective punishment based upon race to protect them. Giving the choice for people to self-identify their race based on their skin color and physical features has proven to be disastrous, particularly when examining the governmental quota systems for college enrollment and its implementation. When convenient, particularly when a free college education can be gained without having to pass a stringent exam, people have identified as black when they are visibly white.

As social movements used the Conference against Racism of 2001 held in Durban, South Africa, to illuminate the world that racism was alive and well in Brazil, new inroads can be made with respect to resolving the race issue with the assistance of the academic community showcasing the clear injustice associated with being nonwhite. Social movements can stimulate change in race relations by educating nonwhites, particularly nonwhite domestic workers, as to why they suffer social and economic injustices. While domestic service as a profession has improved as it is now somewhat legally protected and unions are forming to protect women in this field of work, more has to be done. More research on the effects post colonialism and imperialism may also be an

answer to ascertain how to break the legacy of nonwhites being in this field of work. To quote Dr. Elizabeth Hodge-Freeman, an incoming faculty member at the University of South Florida effective Fall 2012, “the neo-slavery cycle Brazilian black women are trapped in must be broken.” (Faculty Presentation, USF, 2012).

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