

PERCEPTIONS OVER  
**RACISM**  
IN **BRAZIL**

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Instituto de Referência Negra  
**PEREGUM**



SETA  
EDUCATION SYSTEM  
FOR AN ANTIRACIST  
TRANSFORMATION



# PERCEPTIONS OVER RACISM IN BRAZIL



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*The visual identity was inspired by the work “O Quilombismo” (2002).  
Here is our tribute to the great Abdias Nascimento.*



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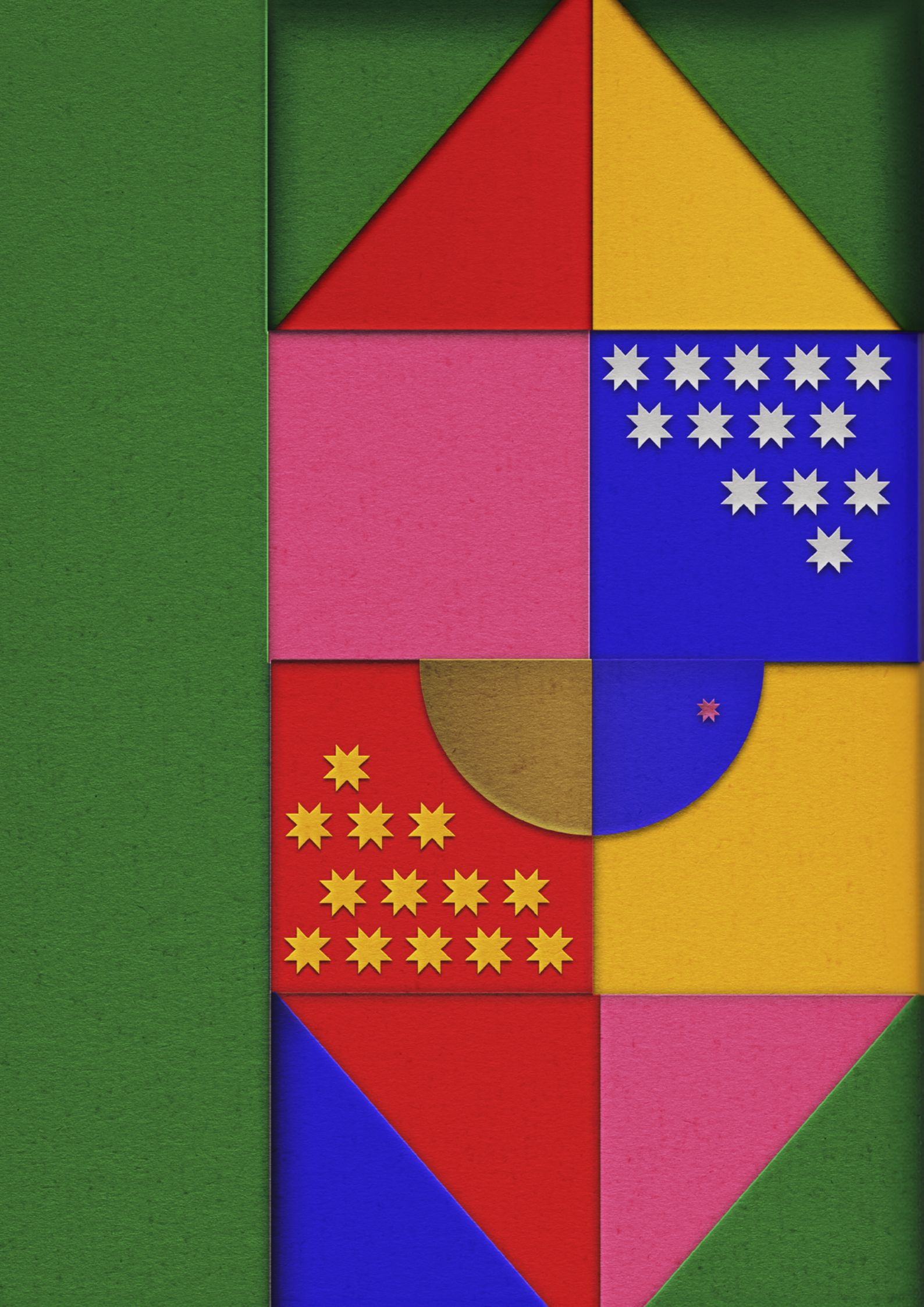
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# 1 - INTRODUCTION

With the aim of understanding how the Brazilian population perceives racism and to foster the creation of campaigns and policies to address racism, the Perception of Racism in Brazil (PRB) research was conducted, an initiative of Peregum – Black Reference Institute – and the SETA Project – Education System for Antiracist Transformation.

This is a nationally comprehensive study with a quantitative methodology and a sample of 2,000 participants. Data was collected in-person by the Intelligence in Research and Strategic Consulting (IPEC) company. In situations where consulting professionals approached individuals, a questionnaire with predefined questions and alternatives related to the research theme was administered. Data collection took place in 127 Brazilian municipalities across the five regions of the country from April 14th to 18th, 2023, with participants aged 16 or older.

The sample of respondents was proportional to representative profiles of the Brazilian population. This universe of surveyed individuals allows for the projection of data to identify the opinion of 167,216,303 people in Brazil on the topics covered in the research. Detailed information about the sample and research methodology can be found in the complete report available on the websites [percepcaosobreracismo.org.br](http://percepcaosobreracismo.org.br) and [projetojeta.org.br](http://projetojeta.org.br).

Based on the research questionnaire, twelve variables were identified to allow for the identification of the profile of the respondents:

1. Municipality status;
2. Education level;
3. Age;
4. Political orientation;
5. Sexual orientation;
6. Municipality size (by population);
7. Whether they have, live with, or relate to someone with a disability;
8. Race/ethnicity;
9. Region;
10. Religion;
11. Family income (in minimum wages); and
12. Gender.



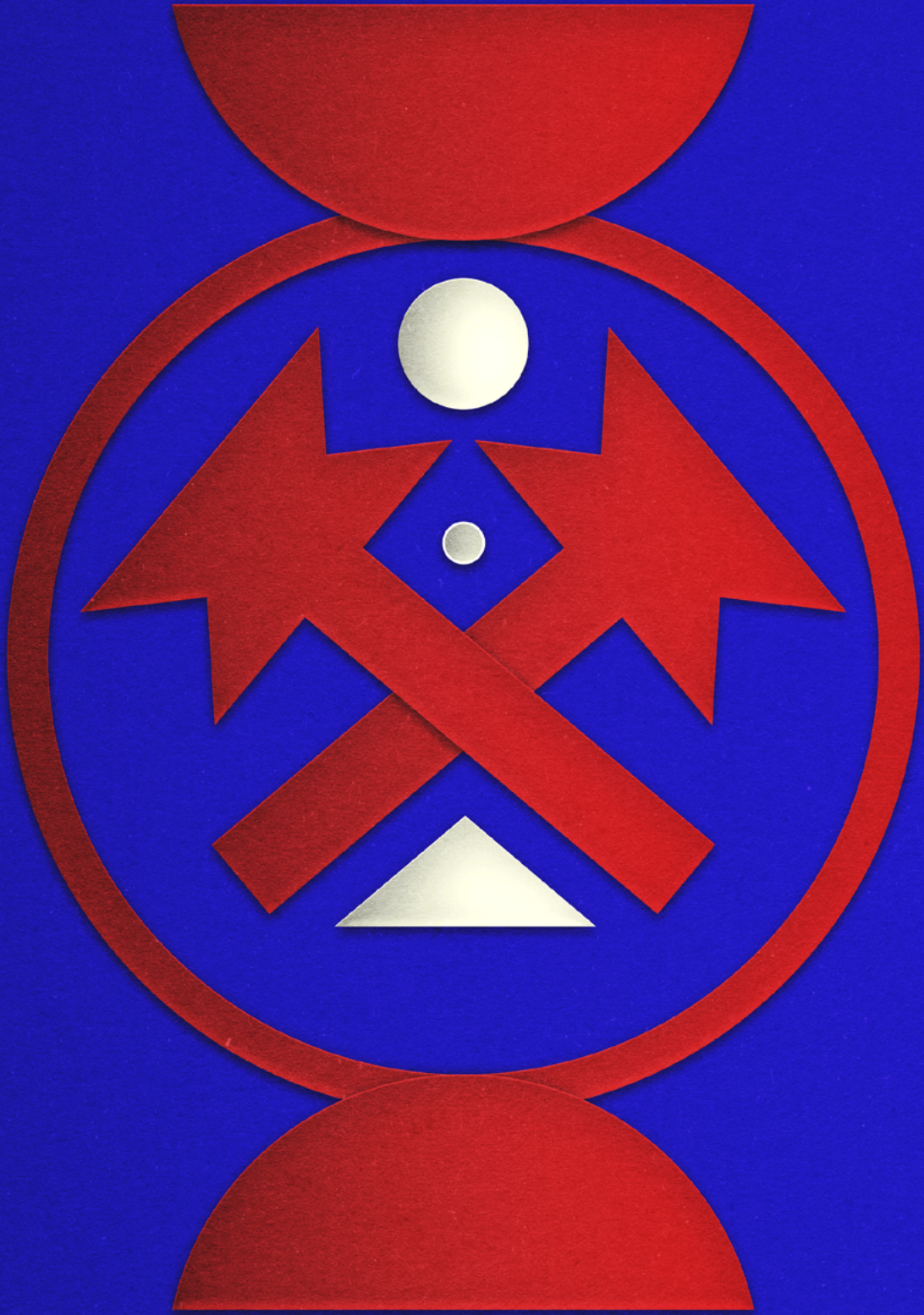


The study chose to analyze the groups of black and brown people separately, rather than grouped together as the Black population, as done in various studies, such as some by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE). This approach was adopted to identify how black people and brown individuals position themselves separately regarding each of the research questions and themes, without disregarding that both are part of the Black population, and without neglecting the social similarities between them.

The analysis of the results of this research takes into consideration intersections of social markers of difference, as intersections between race/ethnicity and class, race/ethnicity and income, race/ethnicity and gender, and many others produce distinct effects. However, the social marker of race/ethnicity is central in the analysis of perceptions about racism in Brazil.

This material is divided into three sections: the first will address society's perceptions of racism and inequalities; the second will cover perceptions of racism in education; and the third will focus on the theme of public policies. Finally, there is a section called "Recommendations," in which urgent issues to be addressed in Brazil regarding the fight against racism and the promotion of racial equity are presented, considering the research themes.









## 2 - PERCEPTIONS OF RACISM AND INEQUALITIES

*Jaqueline Lima Santos  
Ph.D. in Social Anthropology from Unicamp*

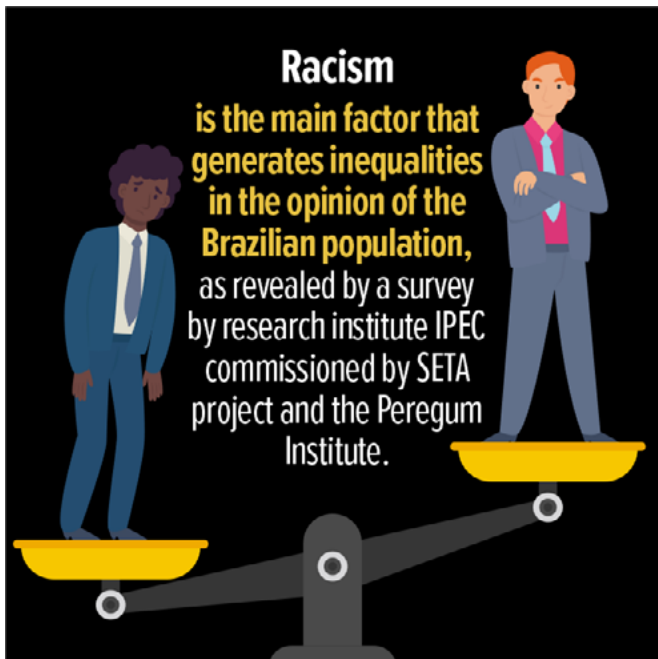
In reflecting on the perception of racism by Brazilian society, this section makes it clear that racial democracy is no longer hegemonic and that there is increasingly more reflection on the impacts of racism in the national context. There is a majority in all social groups, whether black or white, low-income or wealthier, left or right-wing, and among any religious group, that Brazil is a racist country, and that racism is the main factor generating inequalities in the country. Although this perception is widespread, it is more evident among young people, women, and black individuals and less latent among right-wing individuals and white men. Nevertheless, we understand that even groups with conservative positions identify that racism is at the center of generating inequalities in Brazil, and that this is not a perspective solely of progressive groups or those most affected by this phenomenon.

### 2.1. Inequalities

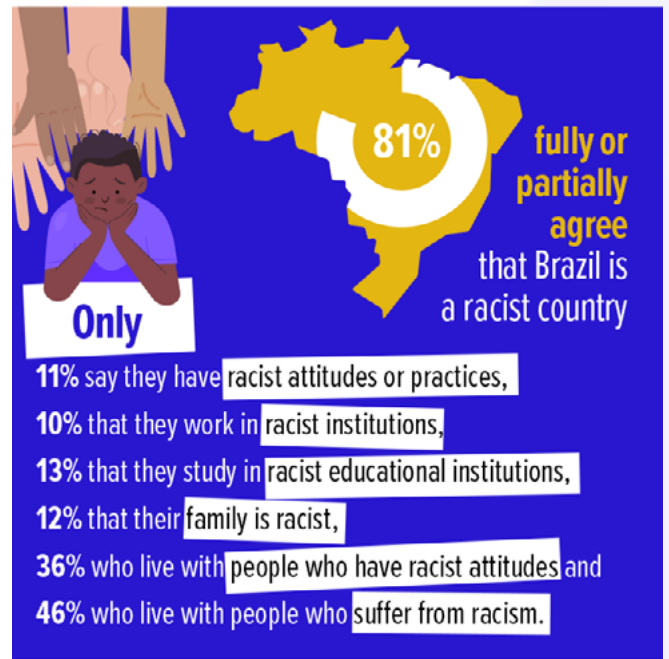
Inequalities result from differential treatment among individuals and/or social groups in accessing fundamental common goods. They can be produced from the belief that cultural, social, and physical characteristics are hierarchizing, thus leading to the unequal distribution of opportunities within the socioeconomic system (Guimarães, 2014; Hall, 2003; Lima, 2012). This phenomenon does not only reside in data on economic distribution but also in the denial of histories, cultures, values, and humanity of non-hegemonic groups, which constitutes an obstacle to their social mobility. If differences inform and define social disparities, they need to be considered for the overcoming of privileges and the construction of a society based on equity (Phillips, 2009).

The sample survey of Brazilian society presented here indicates that the social marker of race/ethnicity is seen as the main factor generating inequalities in Brazil, followed by social class, place of residence, gender or sex, sexual orientation, and place of origin/where one was born.





**Racism**  
 is the main factor that generates inequalities in the opinion of the Brazilian population, as revealed by a survey by research institute IPEC commissioned by SETA project and the Peregum Institute.



**81%** fully or partially agree that Brazil is a racist country

**Only**


- 11% say they have racist attitudes or practices,
- 10% that they work in racist institutions,
- 13% that they study in racist educational institutions,
- 12% that their family is racist,
- 36% who live with people who have racist attitudes and
- 46% who live with people who suffer from racism.



This means that the Brazilian population identifies that the country is racist but has difficulty naming racism in their personal experiences.

Although this research focuses on the perception of Brazilian society regarding racism and not specifically on inequality indicators, we can point out that the data reinforces the population's opinion presented here. According to official indicators from the Brazilian government, the average income from the main job of employed individuals aged 14 or older is R\$ 3,435.00 for white men, R\$ 2,653.00 for white women, R\$ 1,959.00 for black men, and R\$ 1,567.00 for black women (IBGE, 2021); the homicide rate per 100,000 inhabitants is 60.7 for black men, 21.2 for white men, 4.3 for black women,





and 2.4 for white women (IBGE, 2020); among individuals aged 6 to 17 who attended school without in-person activities and who did schoolwork during the pandemic, this percentage is 91.8% among white women, 90.8% among white men, 84.6% among black women, and 82.8% among black men (IBGE, 2020); among individuals aged 14 or older engaged in informal work, we have 46.7% among black men, 45.9% among black women, 32.7% among white women, and 32.6% among white men (IBGE, 2021).


## 2.2. Perception of Ethnic-Racial Identity

Ethnic-racial identity is another controversial topic when discussing racial relations in Brazil, given that the myth of racial democracy, emphasis on miscegenation, racism, and the hierarchical classification of groups based on skin color have been used to discourage the affirmation of identity, especially among historically discriminated groups – black and indigenous people. However, producing data with a racial/ethnic breakdown is crucial for identifying inequalities and establishing state policies and actions aimed at mitigating them. By producing data with a racial/ethnic breakdown, it has been possible to challenge the idea that there are no differences between ethnic-racial groups in Brazil and to highlight the impact of racism in this society.

The criterion of race/color is constantly questioned by common sense, especially by those who believe that Brazil does not have a racial dimension problem, raising hypotheses about how people feel when their racial identity is addressed and whether this theme is relevant in Brazilian society. In this sense, this study sought to identify how the Brazilian population understands and feels about the categories used by official agencies. The data on the population's behavior regarding the race/color criterion presented below break with two arguments from common sense: that Brazilians have difficulty defining their ethnic-racial identity and that this criterion is not an important issue for people — both under the justification built from the myth of racial democracy that emphasizes miscegenation and harmonious race relations in the country.

In general, the results indicate that 8% of the population feels uncomfortable or very uncomfortable in responding to their race/color, 9% consider it difficult or very difficult to respond to their race/color, and 28% consider declaring race/color to be not at all important, which strengthens the current Brazilian classification system.






Contrary to the argument that had been consolidating in common sense, Brazilians do not have a generalized difficulty in identifying color boundaries and declaring their race/color. In general, almost the entire population feels very comfortable and comfortable when asked to respond to their race/color and considers it easy or very easy to define their ethnic-racial belonging, which is more pronounced among black and brown individuals. However, although black individuals are above the average in feeling comfortable and considering it easy to define their race/color, there is also a percentage above the average for those who feel very uncomfortable and have difficulty defining this criterion for this group. Regarding the importance of declaring the race/color criterion, we have a majority that considers the collection of this information very important, and once again, this percentage is higher among black, brown, female, young, low-income individuals, and those with a more left-wing political orientation. Individuals who suffer less from the effects of racism, such as white individuals, higher-income individuals, and those in regions with a lower concentration of black population, are the majority among those who consider it of little or no importance.

### **2.3. Perceptions of Racism in Brazil**

The essence of racism "lies in the total or partial denial of the humanity of black and other non-white people, constituting the justification for exercising dominance over peoples," as stated by Carlos Hasenbalg (1982, p. 69). As a system of political, social, cultural, and economic domination, racism is an ideological operator that ensures the hierarchization of differences among social groups, categorizing them based on their physical and cultural characteristics into superior and inferior races. From this categorization and hierarchization of differences, it standardizes aesthetic, social, and economic patterns and cultural standards of dominant groups and subordinates others, judging them as inferior and robbing them of their humanity.

Campos (2017) presents three analytical dimensions of racism: ideological, practical, and systemic/institutional/structural. The first associates racism with the determination of human behavior by racial characteristics, but struggles to label discriminatory practices based on race as racism, that is, it is an approach to racism in a less explicit and materialized manner. As the author points out, this field





(...) faces a great difficulty in understanding the possibility of dealing with a sociological rather than biological conception of race, with the idea that there are racist institutions capable of structuring the existence of certain agents to the point where they become social categories as “real” as classes, for example. (Campos, 2017, p. 6)

The second-dimension addresses attitudes, practices, and actions as reproductions and predispositions to act in such a way, as if they were ill-considered and not derived from ideologies. Campos (2017) points out that here, “the role of beliefs in the production or reproduction of racial discrimination is not ignored, but only that the former do not have relevant sociological consequences if they do not translate into discriminatory practices” (p. 6). This dimension presents racism as a “subtle” and “implicit” element, and racist practices as unconscious, irrational, and emotive outcomes that reproduce discriminatory practices, not because of the intentional elaboration of racial ideologies by its practitioners.


The third dimension, systemic/institutional/structural, emerges when mechanisms exist in different societies that combat racist ideologies and practices, but it is noted that inequalities between different racial groups are still persistent.

The paradox of this third moment in racism theories lies in the current context, where widespread condemnation of racist ideologies and practices coexists with the reproduction of economic, political, and cultural inequalities among different racialized groups. It is in this enigmatic context that sociologists like Eduardo Bonilla-Silva question “how is it possible to have such a tremendous degree of racial inequality in a nation [like the United States] where the majority of whites claim that race is no longer relevant?” (Bonilla-Silva, 2006, p. 2). (Campos, 2017, p. 9)

The author draws attention to the fact that “there are racist institutions capable of structuring the existence of certain agents to the point where they become social categories as ‘real’ as classes, for example” (Campos, 2017, p. 6). Therefore, he argues that the three dimensions can be integrated into a “tridimensional theory of racism” to consolidate an understanding of racism in its ideological, practical, and institutional dimensions.

Therefore, by considering the ideological dimensions, which seek to justify the hierarchization of socially racialized groups, the practical dimension, which operationalizes this hierarchization through racist attitudes, and the structural





dimension, which ensures the persistence of inequalities and the reproduction of discriminatory practices by maintaining and not questioning a system sustained by beliefs and values that subjugate an entire ethnic-racial segment, the research presented here sought to identify what Brazilian society understands as racism and how it identifies its manifestation based on variables that encompass this tridimensional perspective of racism, allowing each person to respond to more than one alternative about what racism is and how it manifests itself.

The data of this research indicate that progressive groups and those more susceptible to various forms of discrimination, such as black individuals, women, young people, and those with lower incomes, tend to express above-average agreement that Brazil is a racist country. Conversely, those less affected, such as white men, with a more right-wing political alignment, and with more years of life, which could imply having experienced the debate on this issue in a different political context, such as during the predominance of the idea of racial democracy, tend to disagree more that Brazil is a racist country. However, regardless of who agrees or disagrees more, in all these population segments, we find a majority opinion that Brazil is a racist country.

### **2.3.1. Racism, Its Motivating Factors, and Forms of Manifestation**

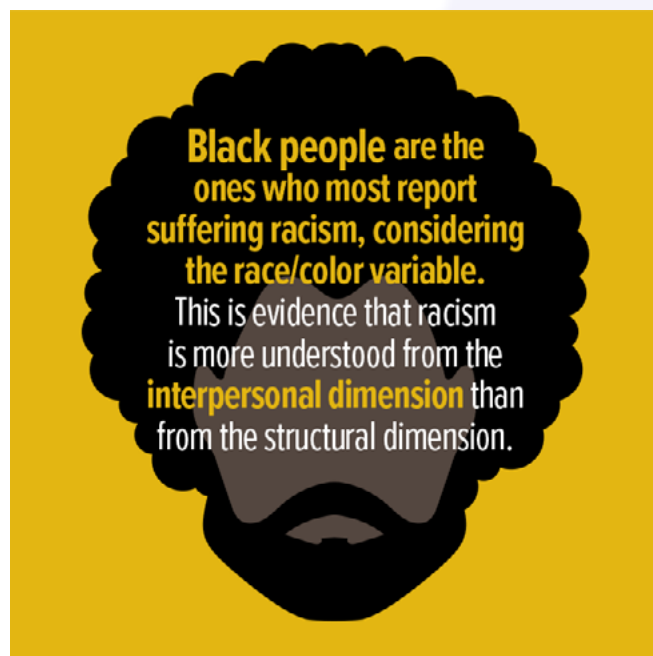
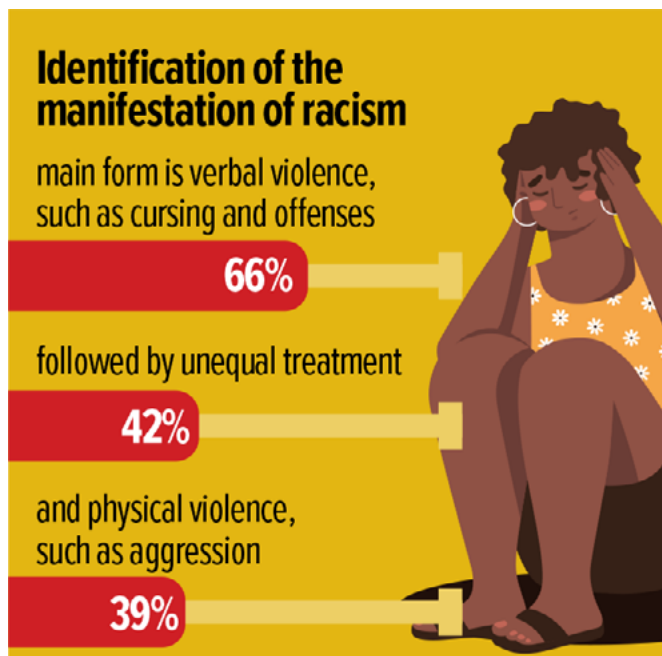
The data below present what the Brazilian population understands as racism, its motivating factors, and how it manifests itself through alternatives that vary between individual and collective dimensions, aiming to identify how the ideological, attitudinal, and structural aspects of this phenomenon are perceived, and how they are present in the social imagination.

As we can observe, the practical and interpersonal dimension remains the primary way of identifying racism, and there is a challenge to broaden the understanding of its manifestation through institutional/structural/systemic avenues, which is more identified by individuals with higher levels of education, higher income groups, young people, and females.

After gathering information on what people understand as racism, they were asked to indicate how racism manifests. The following data indicate that the practical and interpersonal dimension remains the primary way of identifying racism, and there is




a challenge to broaden the understanding of its manifestation through institutional/ structural/systemic avenues, which is better identified by individuals with higher levels of education, higher income groups, young people, and females.



From an ideological standpoint, the study demonstrates that the population identifies racism more as action or practice motivated against social groups rather than individuals, revealing an important understanding of the ideological dimension of racism: individuals experience racism because they belong to a certain group that has been negatively racialized and stigmatized. However, one area where we need to advance regarding society's perception of racism is the systemic/institutional/ structural dimension, as the population believes that the manifestation of racism is more related to conduct and to practices present in interpersonal relations and conflicts than in structural elements. This hinders the understanding of inequalities from a socio-historical perspective that, beyond insults, produces under-representation and unequal treatment of some groups in different institutions.

In the sections regarding motivators, forms of manifestation, and practices of racism, individuals with higher education and higher income demonstrate a greater understanding of the impact of racism in Brazilian society. These individuals are also, as we will see in the education section, those who have had the most exposure, during





basic education, to topics such as education for ethnic-racial relations, African, Afro-Brazilian, and Indigenous' history and culture. However, in the section on public policies, we perceive that these groups are, at the same time, the ones who understand equity the most and the ones who are most opposed to policies aimed at addressing inequalities, such as affirmative actions.

Although the population identifies racism as a problem in Brazil, there is difficulty in acknowledging it as a present element in the private and more intimate spaces of their lives. For example, 44% point to racism as the main factor generating inequalities, 81% consider Brazil to be a racist country, and 51% have witnessed racist situations, but only 24% agree that they have experienced racism, and 11% admit to having racist attitudes or practices. This means that Brazilian society is racist, but a minimal group identifies racism in their own behavior or life experiences. So, where are the racists and the people who suffer from racism? Not even the most progressive groups in the survey, who show greater agreement with the racist characteristics of the country, acknowledge the presence of racism in their everyday living spaces, such as school, work, and family, as well as in their practices. It is worth noting that most individuals identify the educational environment, followed by work and public spaces, as the main places where they have experienced racism. Black individuals are the ones who most agree that they have experienced racism, witnessed racist situations, and live with people who suffer from racism, and who study and work in racist institutions. When intersecting the data, we also notice a more evident experience and greater sensitivity to the topic among black women; at the other extreme are white men.

### **2.3.2. Racism in Daily Life**

If most of the Brazilian population considers the country to be racist, how do they identify it in their social relationships? Similar to the previous item, we sought to understand how this population identifies racism in their daily lives. Once again, we present a series of alternatives that aim to identify the problem through the ideological, attitudinal, and structural triad.

From these results, we can question: where are the people who suffer from racism? Is Brazil a racist country, but its people are not racist? Does the Brazilian population have sufficient understanding to recognize the contexts in which they are subjected to racist situations? There is a difficulty in self-identifying as a person with racist attitudes and





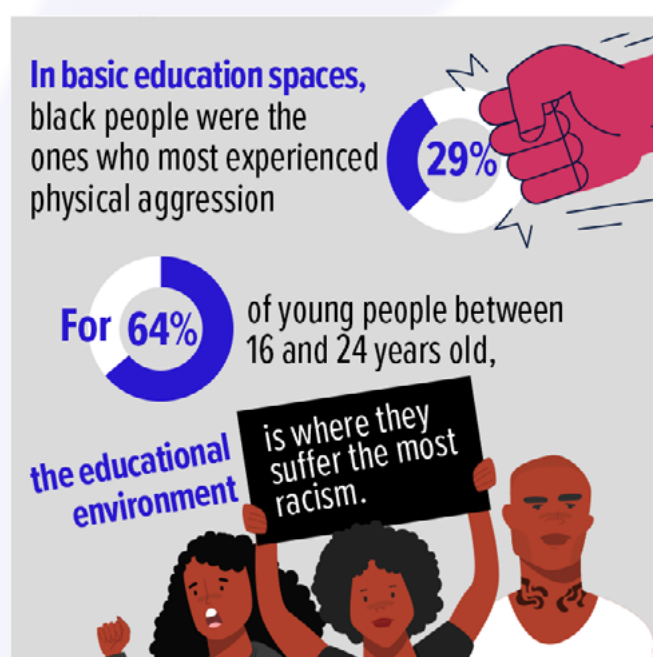
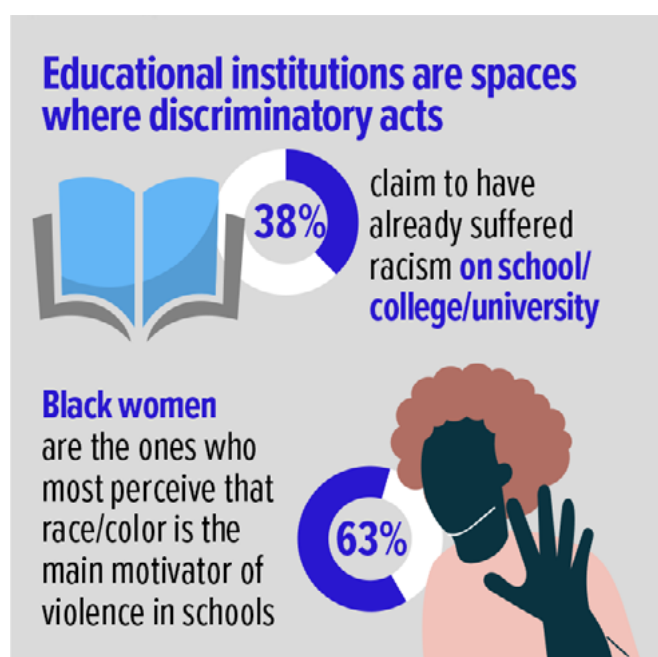
practices, and the identification of this phenomenon lies in the actions of others. This research does not answer these questions but presents a paradox in terms of data.


As the research approaches questions about experiences with racism in the intimate universe of the interviewed individuals, there is an increase in the denial of this phenomenon.

Up to this point, we see a trend where men, individuals with lower levels of education, from smaller municipalities, and those more politically aligned to the right recognize racism as less of a problem in Brazil. Conversely, women, young people, Black and Brown individuals, non-heterosexual individuals, and those from the Northeast region show a greater tendency to critically assess the issue of racism and recognize its forms of expression.

When questioning only those who responded to having experienced racism about the aspects of this experience, we have the following indicators:

It is important to highlight that Black and Brown men and individuals aged 25 to 34 are the ones who most commonly report experiencing violence in public spaces, which correlates with data on public security and violence against young Black individuals. Black and Brown women are the ones who most commonly report experiencing racism in the educational environment, a space marked by racial stigmas that permeate interactions among different social groups in the school setting.





When asked which group experiences the most racism in Brazil, the research provided options including Black people, Brown people, Indigenous people, Quilombolas,, White people, Asians, Latin American immigrants, African immigrants, Asian immigrants, and European immigrants. Respondents identified the following groups as experiencing the most racism in Brazil, in descending order: Black people, Indigenous people, African immigrants, Quilombolas, and Brown people.

Similarly to how Black individuals are the most likely to report experiencing racism, 96% of the population also believes that Black individuals are the most affected by racism in Brazil – a consensus across various social groups, taking into account variables such as gender, race/ethnicity, age groups, income, education level, regions, types of municipalities, municipality sizes, religion, sexual orientation, individuals who interact with those who have experienced racism, and individuals who have witnessed racism or has a disability and political orientation. Other groups that appear with significant percentages as those who suffer the most racism in Brazil, although distant from the Black group (96%), are Indigenous people (57%), African immigrants (38%), Quilombolas (29%), and Brown (23%). Thus, there is an understanding among the Brazilian population that the groups subjugated by the colonial process and slavery in Brazil are still today the biggest victims of racism.

This topic reveals that racism is seen as a problem in Brazil, but people's attitudes and perceptions about how it manifests in everyday life are poorly reflected upon; in other words, racism is recognized as something observed but not present in the groups, spaces, institutions, and behaviors of the respondents themselves. It is worth noting that an intersectional perspective on the data reveals higher percentages of awareness and experience among Black individuals, especially Black women.

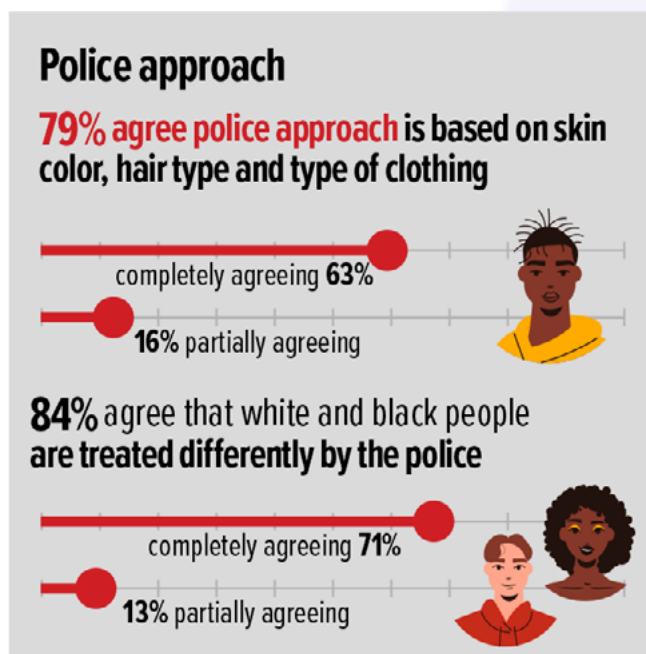
## 2.4. Institutional Racism

The way racism manifests within the structures of society and within institutions, producing unequal treatment and opportunities for certain social groups – in the case of Brazil, Black and Indigenous people – is referred to as institutional racism. This concept pertains to the failure of institutions and organizations to ensure rights and equal treatment for all social groups, which is evident through indicators demonstrating that some groups are favored over others (Werneck, 2013).



Regarding the institutional action of the State, we have the following scenario:

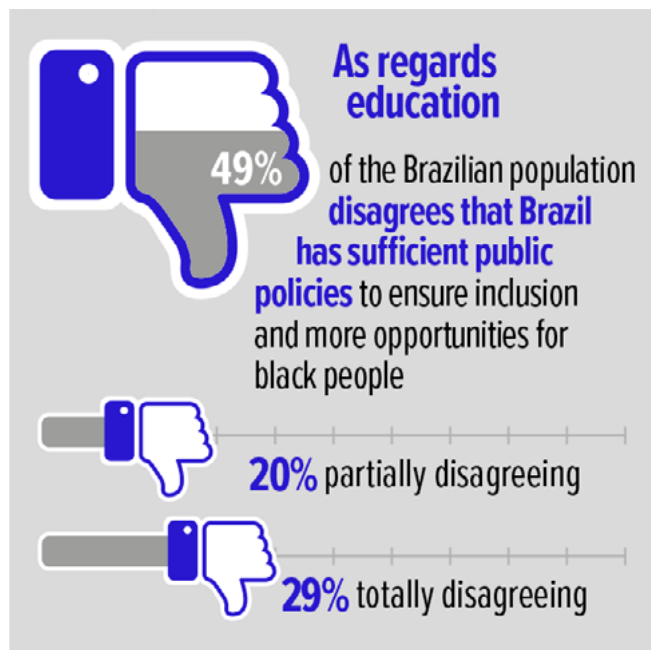
When delving into the dimension of institutional racism, most of the Brazilian population considers that there is differential treatment between Black and white individuals by the police (84%), that Black people are more criminalized than white people (88%), and that police approaches are based on skin color (78%). These are just some dimensions of institutional racism that were directly questioned by the survey and demonstrate the paradox between recognizing this phenomenon and the main forms of racism mentioned above. In other words, society acknowledges the existence of racism - as faced with a variety of options about the expression of racism - and indicates alternatives more related to interpersonal relations. However, in more direct questions about institutional racism by the police and the justice system, society overwhelmingly affirms the existence of this phenomenon. Also, while, in the face of various variables, people first opt for identifying racism as a manifestation of interpersonal relations, they have difficulty identifying racism both in their own interpersonal relationships and in the institutions of their own universe such as their work environment, educational institutions, and family, as well as among the people with whom they interact.



To overcome the issues resulting from the identified racism, the study indicates that more than half of the population (49%) totally disagrees (29%) or partially disagrees (20%) that the country has sufficient public policies to overcome racism, and the majority agrees that the representation of Black people in positions of power would contribute



to reducing structural inequalities (75%, with 61% totally agreeing and 14% partially agreeing). Thus, the study suggests that the inclusion of historically discriminated groups in strategic spaces could fill a gap in institutional actions that would enable the promotion of racial equity.



After questioning how people perceive racism and its manifestation in Brazil, this topic also sought to understand the inequality in treatment between black and white individuals by state institutions, especially in the justice and public security sectors. The data reveals that the Brazilian population perceives unequal treatment, disagrees that the country has sufficient public policies to address this problem, and asserts that changing the configuration of institutions with greater representation of the black population could alter the situation.

## 2.5. Criminalization of Racism

Although Brazil has advanced legislation for the criminalization of racism, Campos (2017) points out that tackling this phenomenon through behavioral enforcement has shown societies that while the practical dimension may be punished, inequalities and barriers between different racial groups persist due to the institutional dimension of racism. Thus, inquiring about the criminalization of racism to identify institutional barriers to this process, this research asked whether the laws penalizing racism in Brazil are sufficient to prevent racist practices both by individuals and by institutions.

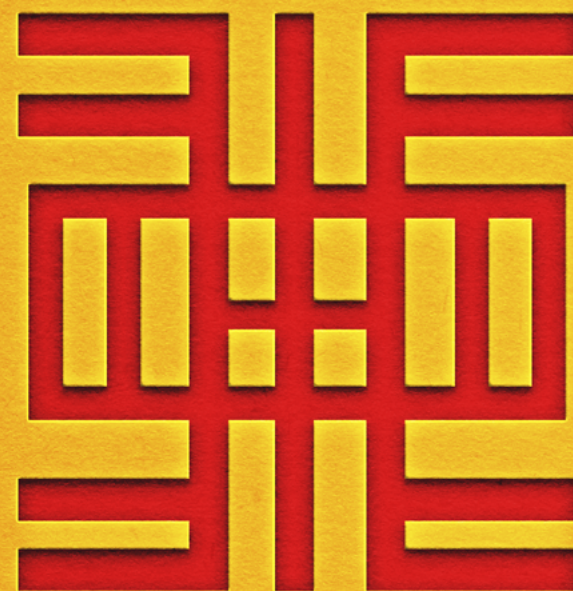
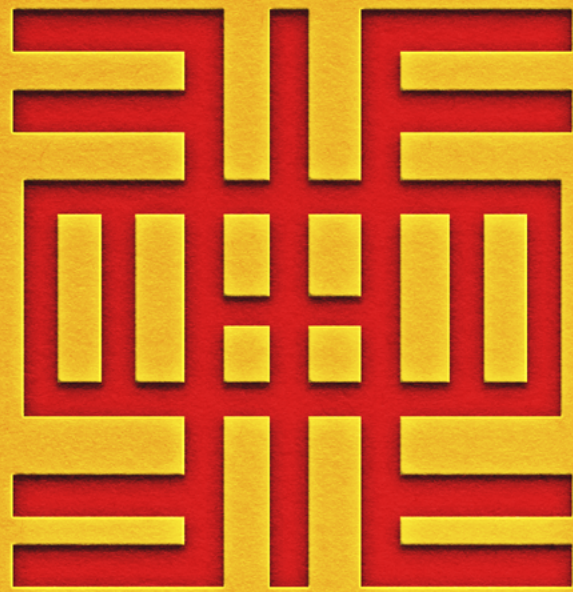
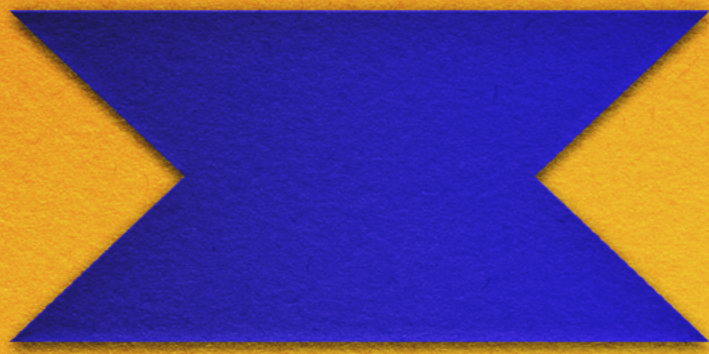




In this item, men demonstrate a more punitive perspective than women, with 26% of them partially or completely disagreeing with the criminalization of racism, while 32% of women hold the same position. When we refer back to the previous categories, it appears that women recognize racism more, while simultaneously advocating for its criminalization less.

Considering the research questions related to perceptions of racism and inequalities, we will move on to the next set of questions regarding education. Therefore, we will be examining issues related to education in the upcoming section.







### 3 - EDUCATION

*Luciana Ribeiro de Oliveira  
Ph.D. in Education from Unirio*

In this section, we address the scope, perception, and importance given to themes related to diversity, difference, and inequalities in the school environment, such as indigenous, Afro-Brazilian, and African histories and cultures, racism, gender, the pursuit of equality between men and women, and how society understands individuals of male and female sexes, the history and protagonism of women, and sexuality and affective sexual attraction among individuals. We will also discuss whether respondents to the PRB survey have experienced/experience violence in school, and what types of violence they have suffered. Finally, we analyze the perception of the importance given to social interaction between people with disabilities (PWDs) and those without disabilities in spaces such as schools, colleges, universities, and the workplace.

An anti-racist education is not achieved with a few hands, but collectively, nurtured by construction, collaboration, and the fight against racism, gestated and birthed by the Brazilian Black Movement, which has always had education as a central issue in its political, social, and pedagogical project for a more democratic and equitable society.

In 2003, Brazil took a significant step towards anti-racist education with the promulgation of Federal Law No. 10.639, which establishes the mandatory teaching of African and Afro-Brazilian History and Culture. A few years later, in 2008, another advancement in the same direction was made with the creation of Federal Law No. 11.645, which establishes the mandatory teaching of History and Culture of Indigenous Peoples. Both laws are legal landmarks that contribute to addressing racism present in the educational institution.





### **3.1. Relevant Themes and Most Learned in Schools: Racism, African History and Culture, Afro-Brazilian History and Culture, and Indigenous History and Culture**

After 20 years of implementation and construction of legal frameworks in Education for Ethnic-Racial Relations (ERER), what we have seen in light of the results of this research points out some important issues to be considered, especially when we think about the path towards an anti-racist education that is in line with the objectives of implementing the legal framework in ERER. At the same time, while these data indicate progress regarding the perception that racism is the most important topic to be studied in schools (69%), and that the most learned topic in school was the teaching of indigenous history and culture (52%), followed by the teaching of Afro-Brazilian history and culture (46%), they also reveal to us that for people who had contact with the researched topics, the way they were addressed in school was more often deemed “somewhat appropriate” or “not appropriate at all.”

The research indicates that 69% of people consider racism to be the most important theme to be studied within schools. When we analyze the groups that understand this theme as more prioritized than the overall average, we have the following panorama:







Those who least recognize:

- 61% of people with elementary education;
- 58% of people aged 60 or older;
- 65% men;
- 63% white men;
- 64% black men.

Men (65%), regardless of declared race/color, are the ones who least recognize racism as relevant and that it should be studied in school, and white men (63%), compared to white women (78%), recognize even less the relevance of this theme.

However, despite racism being considered the most relevant theme to be studied in the school environment, we observe that, among the respondents in the general sample, only 37% learned about racism in school. This scenario becomes more complex when 52% of people who learned about this theme in school indicate that it was approached in a somewhat or not at all appropriate manner.

Other themes are also considered relevant to be studied in the daily school life. However, they appear in a percentage much lower than the theme of racism.

Individuals with higher income, more years of education, and those aged 25 to 34 perceive with greater significance that the theme of Afro-Brazilian history and culture is more relevant to be studied in school.

Indigenous history and culture are considered less relevant to be studied in school by: white individuals (32%), white men (33%), white individuals with a more centrist political orientation (32%), and brown individuals leaning more to the right (31%). Individuals who identify as more progressive in their political orientation, have higher income, more years of education, and reside in the Southeast region perceive with greater significance that the theme is relevant to be studied in school.

Although the theme of racism has been recognized as the most relevant to be studied in schools (69%), it is observed that the other themes directly linked to the legal framework in ERER, such as Afro-Brazilian, African, and Indigenous history and culture, have lower indices than the racism theme itself. In this context, we consider that there may be a difficulty for people to relate the teaching of Afro-Brazilian, African, and Indigenous history and culture, as envisaged in the National Curricular Guidelines and the opinions of





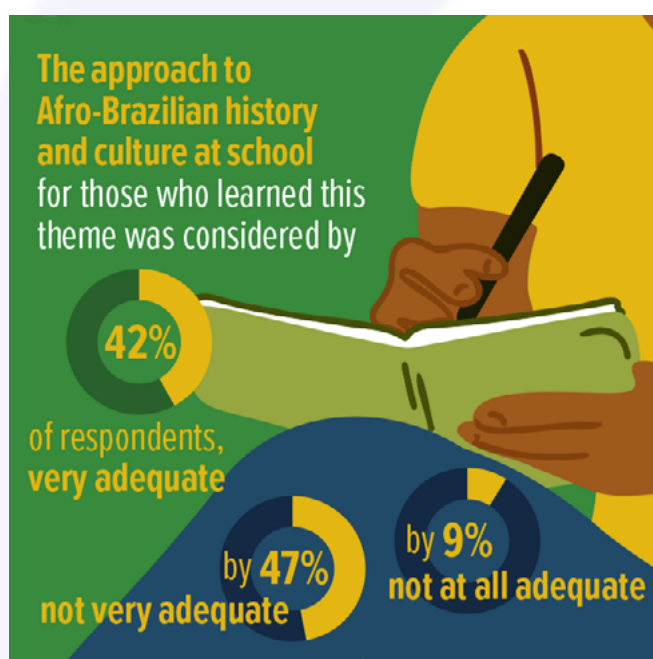
Laws No. 10.639/03 and No. 11.645/08, as important instruments for combating racism. The legal framework in EREER raises an anti-racist political debate, as it proposes, in the terms of the laws, a counter-hegemonic change in the construction and production of knowledge in the educational field, with a “new interpretation of historical processes, a new approach to the construction of knowledge that, until now, has been the privilege of a dominant sector in Brazilian society within schools” (Lins; Oliveira, 2013, p. 15).

Regarding the themes considered less relevant to be studied in school, less than two-thirds of the interviewed people, that is, less than 33%, consider gender, the history of women’s contributions and protagonism, and sexuality as relevant to be taught.

It is important to highlight that African history and culture, the history of women’s contributions and protagonism, and sexuality were the most invisible themes in the school trajectory, both in the percentage of people who consider them less relevant and in the percentage of people who learned about these subjects in school:

- 25% learned about African history and culture;
- 10% learned about the history of women’s contributions and agency;
- 8% learned about sexuality.

Regarding the themes that were most learned in school, we have the following decreasing scenario:





Only 13% of individuals with elementary education learned about the teaching of African history and culture in school. Regardless of race/color, region, income, gender, age, religion, and education level, African history and culture was the least learned theme in school, among the themes of racism, indigenous history and culture, Afro-Brazilian history and culture, and African history and culture.

Among the younger individuals, there is a more significant portion who affirm having studied some of the evaluated themes in their schools, while individuals with elementary education (24%) and almost one-third of individuals aged 60 or older claim not to have learned any of them (31%).

Among the research participants who stated they had learned about African history and culture, Afro-Brazilian history and culture, indigenous history and culture, and racism in the school environment, the approach to these themes was questioned. More than half of the interviewed individuals, across all educational levels, consider the way these themes were addressed in school to be somewhat or not at all appropriate.

For now, it is noteworthy that despite the themes of “racism” and “indigenous, African, and Afro-Brazilian history and culture” being studied in school, the results of the PRB survey indicate that respondents who came into contact with these themes consider that they were addressed in a somewhat or not at all adequate manner. Nilma Lino Gomes and Rodrigo Ednilson de Jesus (2013, p. 32), in the study “Pedagogical Practices of Working with Ethnic-Racial Relations in Schools from the Perspective of Law 10,639/2003,” conclude, among other issues, “that there is no uniformity in the process of implementing Law No. 10,639/2003 in the education systems and participating public schools. It is a context still marked by tensions, progress, and limitations.” Even though the research universe reached individuals who completed elementary, high school, or higher education before or during the implementation of the legal frameworks in EREER, these data can contribute to our understanding of the uniformity and consensus in the Brazilian educational field mentioned by the authors.

### **3.2. Relevant Themes and Most Learned in Schools: Gender, Sexuality, and History of Women’s Contributions and Protagonism**

Regarding themes of diversity, we encounter an even more complex scenario concerning learning and how the topics were addressed in school. Even though the gender theme (31%) has reached a more significant level than that of African history and culture (26%) in terms of relevance, it continues to be one of the most invisible





in the school trajectory, followed by the others: sexuality and history of women's contributions.

More than 85% of the people who responded to the survey did not learn any of these themes. The scenario becomes more complex when we realize that those who met these topics in school consider that they were addressed in a somewhat or not at all adequate manner. We emphasize, therefore, considering the analyses by variables, that younger individuals, those with a higher level of education, and those who identify as more progressive in their political orientation perceive the importance of these themes being discussed in school more, and also that they were addressed in a somewhat or not at all adequate manner.

The history of women's contributions and protagonism was one of the least learned topics in school and, nevertheless, perceived as being addressed in a somewhat or not at all adequate manner according to the respondents' perception. As for "sexuality," although it was one of the least discussed topics in the school trajectory, there is no difference in the perception of whether it was addressed as very, somewhat, or not at all adequate; the percentages are the same among those who had contact with this topic. The theme of "gender," despite occupying a better position than the two previous topics, was also learned, in the perception of the respondents, in a somewhat or not at all adequate manner.

Upon analyzing the data regarding people's perceptions of what we have just described, some reflections become necessary. What is the importance of discussing gender, race, and sexuality inequalities in school? "Is it about social exclusion or the reproduction of discriminatory patterns in our culture? Or perhaps both? The educational landscape in Brazil today presents multiple and profound complexities" (Querino; Lima; Madsen, 2011, p. 130). We bring up these questions especially when we look at the data from the overall sample of this survey and find that 13% of the respondents did not learn any of the researched topics. The younger individuals and those with higher education are the ones who learned the most about these topics in school.

In this context, we believe that epistemological debates and the discussion of topics related to diversity, gender, race, and sexuality are necessary in the educational field, as they stimulate disputes of narratives and can contribute to the democratic shift in the approach to content, curricula, practices, and actions, as well as in teacher training methodologies, and consequently in schools.





### 3.3. Violence in Schools

Regarding the topic of violence, the research reveals data that indicate a panorama of the violence practiced in the school environment. When asked if they have ever experienced any type of violence in school, 63% of the respondents stated they have never experienced such an occurrence. However, despite this data pointing to a positive scenario regarding the perception of violence occurring in the school environment, we have 34% of the total respondents who answered that they have experienced some type of violence in school, with physical and psychological violence being the most cited. In other words, although the percentage of people who reported experiencing some type of violence in the school environment is lower than those who have not, this data is still quite high, especially when we analyze the variables of race/ethnicity and gender. When observing the percentages of responses from women, we find that those who identify as black are the ones who most commonly report experiencing or having experienced physical violence in school (25%), compared to brown (17%) and white (13%) women. Regarding psychological violence, black women also appear with a high percentage (25%), compared to brown and white women (19% for both).

Several studies indicate that schools remain the place where the most significant experiences and violence occur, leading to traumas that persist into adulthood, especially for those who do not fit into society's universalistic standard (IBGE, 2019; UNESCO, 2017; UNESCO/INEP, 2006). For Black, Indigenous, and Quilombola children, the traumatic experiences faced in the school environment, stemming from the racism plaguing our society, result in psychosocial effects that often hinder their educational trajectories, implying that education, a fundamental right, introduces oppressive and dehumanizing values prematurely into the lives of Afro-Brazilian (Njeri, 2019, p. 5), Indigenous, and disabled children.

Among those who reported experiencing some form of violence in school, physical appearance was the most cited, followed by social class. The data becomes more complex when analyzed by race/ethnicity and gender, revealing that black individuals — both men and women — suffered the most violence in school. When asked about the main motivator for this violence, black women (63%) perceive race/ethnicity as the primary driver of violence they experienced in school, followed by black men (57%). White men and women appear significantly lower. According to Lélia Gonzalez (2020), black women experience racism in a “triple” manner: social, racial, and sexual, and “cases of violence against women and blacks occur as a result of rampant racism and sexism” (p. 298).





In this sense, we identify that the racial factor accentuates even more the ways in which the violence experienced in school is more significantly felt among black women and men.

### **3.4. People with Disabilities and Democratic Coexistence**

Through the collected data, we noticed that most survey respondents believe in the importance of coexistence between people with and without disabilities in schools, colleges, universities, or workplaces, advocating for inclusive education. Virtually all surveyed groups consider coexistence important. However, individuals aged 60 and over are the only ones showing a significant difference from the overall average regarding those who consider coexistence very important, with only 87% taking this stance, and 11% among those who consider it somewhat (7%) or not at all important (4%), exceeding, in sum, the average of the total sample, which is 7% between somewhat (5%) and not at all important (2%).

Regarding public thoroughfares such as streets and sidewalks, as well as public spaces like public transportation, universities, schools, and workplaces, the data may appear positive concerning the perception of surveyed individuals regarding accessibility in these spaces. In other words, a significant portion of respondents perceives that there is accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PCDs) in these spaces, with the workplace being considered less adequate than public thoroughfares. However, slightly less than half of the respondents, considering all questions about accessibility, believe that there is no accessibility in both public thoroughfares and public spaces. It is essential to consider that these data provide us with a sample of Brazilian society's perception that a greater commitment from the State to the disabled population in Brazil is necessary, especially in education, from an inclusive rather than a segregated perspective. We cannot overlook the fact that PCDs face multiple structural challenges affecting mobility, safety, and quality access to fundamental rights such as healthcare, education, and housing.

Therefore, we observe that both Brazilian men and women recognize the importance of democratic coexistence between people with disabilities and those without disabilities in social spaces. However, it is essential to remember that we need to advance in the development and promotion of public policies for people with disabilities, especially in





the field of education. Inclusion of students with disabilities in educational networks that ensures access and retention of these young people and children in an intersectional manner is the path to ensuring educational equity (Report, VNDI, 2023).

Considering the block of questions from the survey related to education, we will now move on to the next block. Thus, issues related to public policies will be observed.









## 4. PUBLIC POLICIES

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In this section of the research report on Perceptions of Racism in Brazil, issues related to the thematic axis of public policies are presented and discussed.

For the purposes of discussion in this section, public policies are understood as “planned interventions by the government aimed at resolving problematic social situations” (Giovanni; Nogueira, 2015, p. 18). They constitute a set of governmental and/or state actions that indicate objectives, perspectives, and focuses from which governments and the state produce actions with specific deadlines that impact population groups targeted by such policies (Lima, 2010; Rodrigues, 2004; Souza, 2003; Mello et al., 2011).

The discussion in this section revolves around the perception of the Brazilian population regarding the proposal and implementation of public policies to combat racism and promote racial equity. The adequate and effective implementation of public policies by Brazilian governments and the state is fundamental for discussion, as observed below.

### 4.1. Environmental Racism and Environmental Disasters

Environmental racism is a process that arises, among other factors, from the unequal distribution of negative impacts of industrial development. Considering racism and the ways it manifests in Brazilian society, some of the populations most directly and intensely impacted by these negative effects are Black, Quilombola, and Indigenous populations (Oliveira, 2020).

The perception of the surveyed individuals about racism related to environmental issues shows low indices. A significant majority is not familiar with the term “environmental racism,” and a considerable portion of respondents does not associate racism with environmental disasters.





Overall, most respondents who have not heard of or are unaware of environmental racism constitute a significant majority, regardless of the variables considered relevant to the respondent groups. Additionally, only 14% of individuals indicate environmental racism as a cause for environmental disasters. This is an indicator of the majority of the Brazilian population's lack of knowledge about the relationship between racism and situations such as flooding, floods, landslides, wildfires, and contamination.

Among populations living in urban areas, some of the most affected by government neglect, lack of urban planning, and disorderly urbanization are Black and/or poor populations residing in slums and outskirts. In regions beyond urban perimeters, some of the populations most affected by large-scale projects, such as the implementation of hydroelectric plants, are Quilombola and/or Indigenous communities. Therefore, the negative effects of industrial development disproportionately affect groups in Brazilian society, and this disproportionality is directly related to racism (Oliveira, 2020).

#### **4.2. Public Safety Policies and Institutions**

The issues analyzed here concern the Brazilian state more directly. This is a thematic axis that requires reflection on governments, as well as state security organs and forces and their relations with racism.

The indices in questions about public security indicate that the perception of racism is high in the case of actions by state security organs and agents towards the Black population, and these situations relate to systemic aspects of racism. The actions of the police and the processes of criminalizing the Black population are strongly identified by respondents as related to segregation, stratification, and qualification of social groups considering the variable "race/color".

There is a vast academic literature that critically analyzes the State as a promoter of racial discrimination through its agents and institutions (Santos, 2012). Notably, if we consider the supranational conventions of which Brazil is a signatory and the anti-discriminatory legal frameworks in the country, the Brazilian State should combat discrimination and promote racial equity. However, the implementation of these premises encounters several obstacles, one of which is the lack of preparation of public security forces and adequate equipment in the police and municipal guards (Gomes-Souza; Perilo, 2021).





Based on the indicated data, the need for public policies to combat racial discrimination, as well as policies focused on racial equity, becomes evident. These policies should consider public security organs and agents as potential perpetrators of racism (Santos, 2012), which demands adequate and effective action to combat discriminatory practices carried out by the State itself.

### **4.3. Representation and equity**

Representativeness concerns the conditions and possibilities that different population groups have to access, remain, and influence relevant spaces within the State and civil society institutions. The existence of underrepresented groups is indicative of inequalities in a society, such as the low representation of women and the Black population in the Brazilian parliament (Souza, 2020).

Underrepresented groups may constitute a numerical majority but are of little relevance in spaces and positions of power. Thus, this issue is fundamental for democracies because without adequate representation, inequalities in society are exacerbated. One way to reduce the impacts of group under-representation is through the promotion of equity policies, ensuring inclusion and opportunities for diverse populations.

There is a general trend in perception regarding representativity considering the race/color variable. Black and brown individuals feel less represented in positions of power compared to white individuals. At the same time, the majority of respondents agree that increasing the representation of Black people in politics and positions of power contributes to reducing structural inequalities. We can affirm that here, there is a significant indicator of racism in Brazil, as the low representation of the Black population can be perceived as one of the effects of racial segregation, which favors access to opportunities for some population groups and hinders or prohibits it for others.

We will now observe the perception of respondents regarding the term equity. There are various definitions for this term, as well as various uses of the term in different historical periods. It is worth noting that equity is a principle that guides governments and the state to provide adequate conditions for population groups to access and enjoy rights. One condition for fulfilling the principle of equity is the recognition of inequalities and injustices in a society, as well as the varied demands of its groups.





Thus, it is possible to offer adequate and differentiated conditions for access to opportunities for various population groups, especially those most vulnerable and marginalized, so that they can enjoy their civil and political rights (Giacomelli, 2018).

As observed in the images, the percentage of people in the total sample who know or have heard of “equity” is significantly lower than the percentage of people who do not know about it. Depending on the variable related to the groups of respondents, the rates of knowledge about the topic of equity can be even higher, as is the case with variables such as education and age. The younger and more educated people are, the higher the rates of knowledge regarding this topic.

#### **4.4. Affirmative Actions and Quotas**

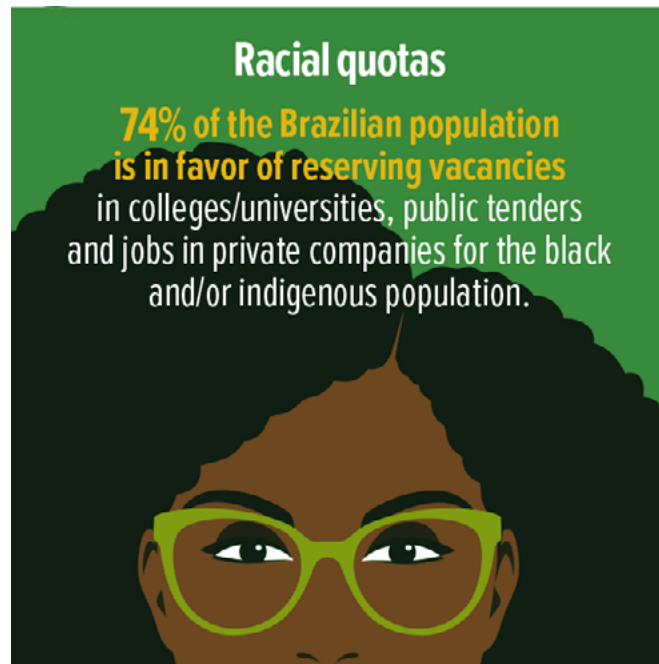
Quotas or reserved seats are a form of affirmative action implemented in Brazil long before the proposition of policies for promoting racial equity. One of the earliest affirmative actions in the country was carried out from the late 19th century for the benefit of white populations, especially those from European countries, offering a series of opportunities to migrants from countries such as Italy and Germany.

If white European immigrant populations were favored with public policies, it is because the Brazilian state has designed and executed racialized public policies for over a century. Therefore, it is important to observe which population groups were initially beneficiaries of this type of racially targeted public policy, as well as the populations that are currently beneficiaries.

Quotas and affirmative actions are directly connected to some questions in the PRB survey. Respondents were queried about quotas in general as a public policy, as well as quotas intended for specific population groups: black and indigenous populations, low-income individuals, people with disabilities (PWDs), women, and LGBTQIA+ population.

The following infographics show the agreement rates of respondents regarding these topics. Additionally, there is an infographic related to respondents' perceptions of whether they have benefited from quotas or affirmative actions, as depicted below.





Although the approval rate of racial quotas is high, the fact that it is not higher than social quotas is likely related to at least two interconnected aspects. Firstly, the low perception among respondents of racism as a systemic process that needs to be addressed with affirmative actions considering reserved seats for black and indigenous populations. Secondly, a widely discussed misconception in scientific literature on the subject: the assumption that affirmative actions for low-income individuals would address the exclusion of both poor individuals and black people simultaneously.

A vast majority of the Brazilian population believes they have never benefited from quotas or affirmative actions.

Given the questions and data indicated here, the approval of quotas by respondents in general is high. However, the percentage of individuals explicitly benefiting from this type of affirmative action is still very low.

Finally, it is important to note that although racial quotas have been the most advanced affirmative actions in Brazil in terms of combating racial inequalities, such actions are far from being sufficient to achieve racial equity. It is necessary to ensure the continuity of this type of affirmative action as well as the adequate and effective implementation of other governmental and state public policies to combat racism and promote racial equity in the country.





#### 4.5. Inclusion Policies and Other Actions

Almost half of the Brazilian population agrees (partially and fully) that Brazil has sufficient public policies to ensure inclusion and more opportunities for black people. In parallel, a little more than half disagree (partially and fully) with the same idea.

Unlike other questions in this section on public policies, there is minimal difference between the agreement and disagreement rates of the respondents regarding this issue (whether public policies ensuring inclusion and more opportunities for black people in Brazil are sufficient or not). However, other questions facilitate the observation of nuances in the perception of the Brazilian population regarding the topic of public policies.

When asked about public policies that should be implemented by the government, 93% of the respondents indicated at least one topic. However, the specific themes related to addressing racism and promoting racial equity were mentioned by a third or less of the respondents.

There are no high indices regarding the proposition of policies whose themes are the confrontation of racism, the fight against racial discrimination, and the promotion of racial equity. Higher indices are observed regarding public policies with generic themes, such as tackling inequalities.

When it comes to quotas for reserving spots for the black population (as discussed in the previous section), the majority of people are in favor. However, in parallel, other types of public policies directly related to the black population do not receive as high and significant indices as the approval of racial quotas.

Promoting racial equity requires public policies focused on the black population and specific themes, such as combating racial discrimination and promoting anti-racist education. In Brazil, this process is far from sufficient. It needs to be greatly intensified and should encompass populations that, historically, besides being impacted by the effects of racism, have not benefited from government or state public policies.

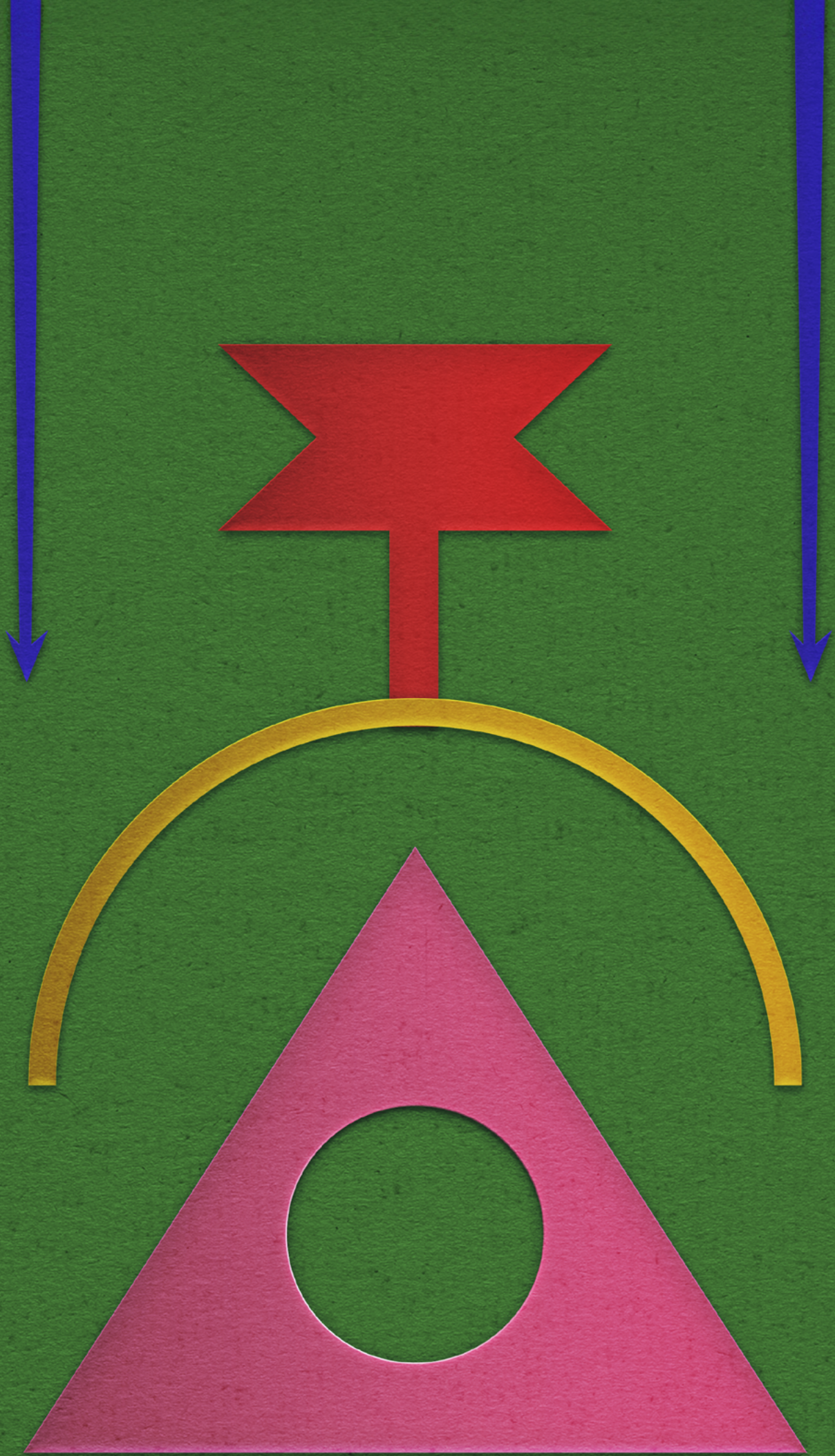




This section presented themes and indices related to the Brazilian population's perception regarding public policy. Thus, here are data and evidence from a groundbreaking survey on perceptions of racism that governments, the state, and civil society could use as guidance, including collectively, to promote racial equity and combat racism.

Considering the block of questions from the PRB survey regarding public policies, we will now move on to the recommendations section. Therefore, urgent issues related to combating racism and promoting racial equity in Brazil will be presented, taking into account the survey's themes.









## 5 RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the results of the Perception of Racism in Brazil survey, the following actions are urgently needed.

### **Specifically in the field of understanding racial relations in Brazilian society:**

Considering that the Brazilian population still struggles to understand the systemic, structural, and institutional factors of racism and predominantly recognizes the unequal treatment between Black and White individuals, we recommend that the Brazilian government:

- Produce materials and campaigns to inform society about the impact of this phenomenon in the country and its role in hindering national development, as well as the importance of not naturalizing it and mechanisms for identifying, reporting, and confronting it.
- Develop programs to combat institutional racism in public agencies, especially in education, justice, and public security.

Considering that the Brazilian population acknowledges the inadequacy of legislation to combat racism in the country, both by individuals and institutions, and understands that increasing the representation of Black individuals in politics and decision-making spaces would contribute to reducing inequalities, we recommend that the government:

- Develop programs and campaigns to provide society with information on how to use legal frameworks in their defense and to train legal operators on the importance of supporting victims, recognizing racism, and enforcing the law.
- Implement legislation reserving positions for historically discriminated groups in appointed positions responsible for shaping public policies and improve the law on reserved positions in public competitions.

Considering that the Brazilian population identifies race/color/ethnicity as the main factor generating inequalities, that Brazil is a racist country, and that there are





insufficient public policies to include historically discriminated groups, we suggest that the Brazilian government, both the Executive and the Legislative branches:

- Engage with society's perception and develop public policies and legislation focused on the issue of racism to address inequalities in the country and promote racial equity.

Considering that the majority of the population feels comfortable declaring their race/color/ethnicity, finds it easy to declare their race/color/ethnicity, and considers it important to declare their race/color/ethnicity, the government needs a national policy that:

- Strengthens the completion of the race/color/ethnicity item in different agencies as a strategy for monitoring racial inequalities.

#### **Specifically in the field of education:**

Considering that the majority of respondents believe that the topics of African history and culture, Afro-Brazilian history and culture, and Indigenous history and culture were addressed inadequately or not at all, the government needs policies for:

- Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of laws n. 10.639/2003 and 11.645/2008, as well as guidelines related to Quilombola school education and indigenous school education; and
- Ongoing professional development focused on education for ethnic-racial relations, equitable practices, and African, Afro-Brazilian, and Indigenous history and culture, targeting teachers, administrators, and technical staff in education departments.

Considering that the majority of the Brazilian population believes that Brazil is a racist country, that race/color/ethnicity is one of the main drivers of violence in schools, and that the most important topic to be studied in schools is racism, it is essential for the government to implement actions for:





- Promotion of anti-racist and anti-ableist education in schools, colleges, and universities.
- Psychosocial support for individuals who have experienced or are experiencing racism.
- Establishment of a process for receiving, addressing, and resolving reports of racism.

Considering that the majority of the Brazilian population agrees that increasing the representation of Black individuals in positions of power contributes to reducing structural inequalities, the government should invest in policies for:

- Cross-sectoral policies focused on reducing inequalities caused by racism.
- Equity actions focusing on the population with disabilities, especially in the education sector, from an inclusive, intersectional, and non-segregated perspective.
- Continuous monitoring of the implementation of Law n. 12.990/2014, which establishes quotas for Black and mixed-race individuals in federal public service exams.
- Encouragement for the hiring of Black, mixed-race, and Indigenous individuals for both permanent and temporary positions in private and public institutions (at the municipal and state levels).

### **Specifically regarding public policies**

Considering that the majority of the Brazilian population agrees that increasing the representation of Black individuals in positions of power contributes to reducing structural inequalities, and supports social and/or racial quotas, the State should invest in the improvement, continuity, and monitoring of the following laws:

- Law No. 12.711/2012, which establishes quotas for Black, mixed-race, Indigenous, and low-income individuals in admissions to federal universities and federal technical education institutions at the middle and higher levels.





- Law No. 12.990/2014, which establishes quotas for Black individuals in federal public service entrance exams.

Considering that most of the Brazilian population points out that Black and White individuals are treated differently by the police and that Black individuals are more criminalized and punished than White individuals, the State needs to:

- Implement the Statute of Racial Equality, established by Law No. 12.288/2010, aimed at ensuring the effective equality of opportunities for the Black population, defending individual, collective, and diffuse ethnic rights, and combating discrimination and other forms of ethnic-racial intolerance.
- Encourage the participation of Black, Indigenous, and Quilombola movements in the formulation of public policies.
- Implement, monitor, and evaluate existing public policies with a focus on Black, Indigenous, and Quilombola populations.
- Formulate public policies to combat racism and promote racial equity initiatives with a focus on Black, Indigenous, and Quilombola populations.







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