Poverty, Race and Gender Discrimination in Intersection, Salvador, Brazil

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ABSTRACT

"The central question of this research concerns how poverty is related to 7 familial and social conditions and, in particular, to sex and the self-declaration of color. Relations between groups would be the source of prejudice; gender discrimination and racism can be understood within the framework of intergroup competition for scarce resources (Maslow 1942; Sherif et al 1966), according to the perspective of realistic intergroup conflicts (Campbell 1965, 1965a) or Tajfel's (1983 pp.305) theory on prejudice as a symbolic competition in relations between categorizations, social asymmetries and discrimination. The quantitative analysis is based on a database containing beneficiaries of social policies provided by the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Alleviation, focusing on gender and race inequalities amongst poor people in the State of Bahia, Brazil. Data includes eight million individual people or three million families who have, at some time, applied for social policy benefits, and could currently be considered beneficiaries or potential beneficiaries. The factors related to poverty are analyzed focusing on families rather than individuals. Results show that social policies have been able to reduce the impact of poverty and race inequalities. However, racism operates in the society, since poverty - particularly extreme poverty - is more frequent and likely among households with indigenous, black and *parda* (mixed) heads of households, even after controlling other individual, familial and contextual factors. Heads of households with a lower educational level, female and young, indigenous, black and *parda* heads of households are likely to have poor or extremely poor families, particularly in the smaller municipalities".

Keywords: Poverty, Race, Gender, Social Policies

JUSTIFICATION AND THEORETICAL APPROACH

Racism in Brazil is structural, reflecting more than four centuries of slavery, and is reproduced in institutions and civil society, in daily and family life. In the last 13 years affirmative policies were implemented to promote the inclusion of the black population in public services. More than six million Africans were captured, trafficked to Brazil and enslaved there between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. After the abolition of slavery, freed blacks remained marginalized, and were not included in the labor market or given voting rights, or the right to education, health and ownership of land or property. They occupied marginal areas and survived by looking for any kind of informal work, as they were replaced as workers by millions of European and Asian immigrants in the new republican economy, and becoming victims of the goal of the program of the government to "whiten" the Brazilian population. The Brazilian population was predominantly black, illiterate, and slave or descendant of the enslaved, and, until the beginning of the 20th Century, was defined in the newspapers and by Brazilian *intelligencia* as "bestialized" (made beasts) - a reason for national shame (Carvalho, 2004). Brazil was the last country in the world to officially abolish slavery, in 1888. As a result, blacks in Brazil have the worst rates of morbidity, mortality, and illiteracy, and have lower educational levels and higher poverty rates. There are incidents of racism witnessed on a daily basis in the media, social networks, public spaces, institutions and even among members of the

same family, but prejudices and discriminatory attitudes are denied and hidden, masked by a belief that there is a peaceful miscegenation process and an alleged racial democracy in Brazil. Racism is reproduced according two basic ideas: the myth of racial democracy, since Brazilians believed over centuries that miscegenation was a harmonic, specific and even a glamorous process in the nation's history, and that the goal of population "whitening" (as an ideal promoted by government policies to attract European migration after the end of slavery) was a high value objective, in intersection with inter-gendered and inter-class relationships and practices, that continues to this day.

With the return of democracy, Brazil has implemented various social policies, covering more than 30 million people with Conditional Cash Transfer, or CCT, (named *Bolsa Familia* in Brazil), to reduce poverty and eliminate hunger. More than 2 million units of affordable housing were created, and more than 2 million people over the age of 65 or disabled were provided with a minimum monthly wage. Despite these efforts, there are still families and individuals with health problems and vulnerabilities (such as race and gender discrimination) that are suffering (Vala 1999; Edge 2006; Shavers 2007). One of the barriers to full citizen inclusion is the racial disparity that has characterized Brazilian society, institutions and micro-relationships.

Concerning gender discrimination, families with male heads of household occur less frequently among beneficiaries, and are less likely to live in extreme or moderate poverty than families where the heads of the household is female. Moreover, this gender pattern of discrimination is replicated in all municipalities. Poverty studies have explored different hypotheses and analyzed results to establish consensus from various countries on the relationship between gender and poverty. Several authors have found a higher prevalence of poverty amongst women, especially amongst those responsible for the families, giving rise to the hypothesis that there would be a process of feminization of poverty (Lagarde, 1992; UN 2002, 2007). However, Chant (2006), among other authors, demonstrate that this hypothesis is not proven in general, since this descriptive data simply reflects the over-representation of women in the populations studied. But, in controlling other factors, it is shown that women, including those responsible for their families, have the same probability of poverty as men with the same level of education and occupation.

According to Chant (2006), the concept of the feminization of poverty is non-specific, as it does not highlight which aspects of poverty would be more relevant to women, and lacks evidence. The gender indices of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) somehow reflect poverty by sex, but do not prove the hypothesis of the feminization of poverty, presenting conceptual and methodological deficiencies. For this reason, the concept of women's empowerment is now adopted, which allows the design of affirmative policies in order to overcome gender inequalities in the intersection of other vulnerabilities, such as poverty and race inequalities.

This conceptual change requires replacing the concept of feminization of poverty with the feminization and democratization of power, an objective that is beginning to be explained transversally in the various social policies of Brazil. Gender affirmative policies are justified in previous studies that found that women are likely to invest resources in family, particularly children (Lloyd & Blanc 1996; Molyneux & Thomson 2011); and that CCT are being able to increase women empowerment and self-esteem (Rego & Pinzani, 2013)

Poverty is related to other social conditions and, in particular, to gender and color. The relationship between poverty, gender, and race disadvantages is a relevant issue to understand

how this intersections works in Brazil and to reorient policies in an integrated way in order to reduce poverty.

METHODOLOGY

In the case of this study, it is obligatory to consider the characteristics of the information source. The National Register of Beneficiaries of Social Policies, *CadÚnico*, is a database containing data from all the people who, at some time, had applied to receive social benefits. It was created by and is coordinated by the Ministry of Social Development and Hunger Alleviation and its objective is to capture information about the beneficiaries of programs included within the CCT Bolsa Familia which are designed to deliver benefits to women. Every two years, the beneficiaries must re-register in the municipalities of residence to confirm their registration and poverty condition. People who have already reached their economic autonomy are excluded from the *CadÚnico* after a period of observation. Currently more than 80 million people in Brazil are registered.

The quantitative methodology analyzed eight million people registered at the *CadUnico* in the State of Bahia. Most of them receive some benefit from social policies, whereas others applied for it but were not considered sufficiently poor or had had their benefits suspended (Britto et al 2004; Campello 2013).

In this article I will present preliminary results focusing on both gender and race inequalities amongst poor people in the State of Bahia, Brazil, based on information from quantitative methodology. Although the main objective of the database was not oriented to analyze gender and race inequalities, it is still possible to use the available information to explore this specific topic within poor populations.

All the variables were recalibrated from the database of individuals (8 million) into family units of reference (3 million households) and a multinomial regression was applied, defining the dependent variables as three levels of poverty - non poor, poor and extremely poor. Sex, gender and other control variables were included in the model as independent variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the State of Bahia, families with female heads corresponded to 39.5% of the total (IBGE, 2010). However, as social programs promote the registration of women as being responsible for families and deliver the benefits to her in the *CadÚnico*, the proportion of female heads of households is much higher than in censuses and surveys, achieving 85.4%. The member of the household in charge of the beneficiary family expresses a programmatic rule to promote gender empowerment, since it should be mainly women who should receive the benefits. This specific rule determines a greater effect of female over-representation as responsible for families from that source of information, generating an additional bias, and forcing one to consider other inequalities associated to gender discrimination.

The race/color variable of the person of reference in the family presented 81,791 cases with missing information, which were eliminated from the database. Considering valid cases, the majority of households are headed by a person declared as "*parda*" (mixed race: 70.8%); the minority groups are black (12.5%) and white (15.9%). Indigenous people head only 0.3% of the households. (Table 1).

Table 1
Percent of households according to the race/color declared by the person responsible for the household (heads of the households), Bahia, Brazil. April 2014.

		Salvador		Middle Municipalities		Small Municipalities		TOTAL
Extreme Poverty	No benefits	74.129	16.6%	77.313	17.3%	294.608	66.0%	446.050
	CCT	115.300	8.7%	172.690	13.0%	1.044.470	78.4%	1.332.460
Moderate Poverty	No benefits	50.486	21.3%	47.881	20.2%	138.823	58.5%	237.190
	CCT	35.734	12.3%	68.705	23.6%	186.937	64.2%	291.376
No Poor	No benefits	60.015	9.6%	124.133	19.9%	438.462	70.4%	622.610
	CCT	15.156	10.0%	43.116	28.4%	93.548	61.6%	151.820
Total	No benefits	184.630	14.1%	249.327	19.1%	871.893	66.8%	1.305.850
	CCT	166.190	9.4%	284.511	16.0%	1.324.955	74.6%	1.775.656
TOTAL		350.820	11.4%	533.838	17.3%	2.196.848	71.3%	3.081.506

Source: Primary estimations, drawn from *CadÚnico*, April de 2014.

Regarding the level of poverty in territories, the smaller the municipality the higher the number and proportion of families that live in extreme poverty. The largest group covered by the CCT is that of extremely poor families living in small municipalities (78% or 1.044 million families). (Table 2)

Table 2
Households distribution according to poverty level, benefits received and size of the municipality where families live, Bahia, Brazil, April 2014

	Individuals Frequency	Individuals Percent	Heads of Households Frequency	Heads of Households Percent
White	1036782	11.4	374455	12.5
Black	1201048	13.2	478184	15.9
Asian	36258	0.4	13653	0.4
Parda-Mixed	6742520	73.8	2123193	70.8
Indigenous	29301	0.3	10230	0.3

Source: Primary estimations, drawn from *CadÚnico*, April de 2014.

Families receiving CCT are the highest in number when headed by a *parda* (mixed) person (1.26 million of families). Although more than half of families registered at *CadUnico* receive the benefit, the highest coverage of CCT is in families headed by an indigenous person (the smaller group) - 69.2% of them receive the benefit i.e. 7,079 families). The second highest group in benefits coverage are families with black heads of the family (60.2%), and the third highest in benefits coverage are those headed by *parda* individuals (59.5%). This pattern corresponds to the level of poverty of these groups, suggesting that discrimination by color would not be operating in public decisions on resources distribution. This pattern is repeated in both small and middle-sized municipalities, where indigenous groups are concentrated. In the capital, Salvador, a population which is predominantly *parda*, primarily it is the mixed heads of households who are receiving the benefit (48.7%), followed by those with black heads of households (47.7%), which also corresponds to the population distribution by race/color in the city. (Table 3)

Household distribution according to race/color of the heads, benefits received and size of the municipality where families live, Bahia, Brazil, April 2014

		Salvador Capital		Middle		Small		TOTAL	
White	Other	10873	61.1	29491	53.6	135970	45.1	176334	47.1
	CCT	6929	38.9	25529	46.4	165663	54.9	198121	52.9
Black	Other	52296	52.2	34851	41.0	103329	35.2	190476	39.8
	CCT	47757	47.7	50144	59.0	189807	64.8	287708	60.2
Asian	Other	719	53.4	1288	54.6	3907	39.3	5914	43.3
	CCT	628	46.6	1070	45.4	6041	60.7	7739	56.7
Pardo-Mixed	Other	113923	51.3	168060	45.2	577039	37.7	859022	40.5
	CCT	108043	48.7	203915	54.8	952213	62.3	1264171	59.5
Indigenous	Other	259	65.2	797	32.3	2095	28.4	3151	30.8
	CCT	138	34.8	1672	67.7	5269	71.6	7079	69.2
Total	Other	178070	52.1	234487	45.4	822340	38.4	1234897	41.2
	CCT	163495	47.9	282330	54.6	1318993	61.6	1764818	58.8
TOTAL		350.820	11.4%	533.838	17.3%	2.196.848	71.3%	3.081.506	

Source: Primary estimations, drawn from *CadÚnico*, April de 2014.

All households, with differing colors of the head of the household, are living mainly in extreme poverty (more than 50%), with a higher proportion among those with black and *parda* heads (55.8%), followed closely by those headed by indigenous and Asian (54.7%). These proportions of extreme poverty are highest in smallest municipalities, where 60.5% of extremely poor households are mainly headed by black, *parda* or indigenous people. In Salvador these proportions are lower (51.1% of black and *parda*, and 50.1% of Indigenous and Asian heads of households). But middle-sized municipalities present a minority of households living in extreme poverty, with the higher proportions being among households with black or *parda* heads. (Table 4).

Table 4
Household distribution according to race/color of the household heads, poverty level and size of the municipality where families live, Bahia, Brazil, April 2014

Color of the household head/ Poverty		Salvador Capital		Middle Municipalities		Small Municipalities		TOTAL	TOTAL
White	Extreme	8340	46.9	21286	38.8	161558	53.6	191184	51.1
	Moderate	5092	28.6	12890	23.5	46562	15.5	64544	17.3
	Not Poor	4343	24.4	20728	37.8	93071	30.9	118142	31.6
Black	Extreme	51113	51.1	38391	45.2	177127	60.5	266631	55.8
	Moderate	25960	26	19427	22.9	46718	15.9	92105	19.3
	Not Poor	22910	22.9	27072	31.9	69123	23.6	119105	24.9
Asian	Extreme	675	50.1	878	37.3	5910	59.5	7463	54.7
	Moderate	354	26.3	552	23.4	1538	15.5	2444	17.9
	Not Poor	318	23.6	925	39.3	2484	25	3727	27.3
Pardo-Mix	Extreme	5113	51.1	38391	45.02	177127	60.5	266631	55.8
	Moderate	25960	26	19427	22.9	46718	15.9	92105	19.3
	Not Poor	22910	22.9	27072	31.9	69123	23.6	119105	24.9
Indigenous	Extreme	675	50.1	878	37.3	5910	59.5	7463	54.7
	Moderate	354	26.3	552	23.4	1538	15.5	2444	17.9
	Not Poor	318	23.6	925	39.3	2484	25	3727	27.3
Total	Extreme	110952	50	163043	43.9	9932	59.4	1182177	55.7
	Moderate	57121	25.8	85339	23	240591	15.7	383051	18.1
	Not Poor	53711	24.2	123051	33.1	379325	24.8	556087	26.2
TOTAL		341286		516050		2139550		2996886	

Source: Primary estimations, drawn from *CadÚnico*, April de 2014.

The Chi-Square Tests for all these cross-tables are highly significant (0.00). The higher coefficients of correlation of the color of the head of households with poverty and with CCT, considering different levels of urbanization, are always among *parda*, indigenous and black household heads, respectively.

Therefore, the highly significant correlation between the color of the head of the household and their poverty level confirms that color works as a factor of discrimination in the competition for resources in the metropolis, medium-sized, and small localities. Besides that, decisions made in policy distribution to reduce poverty do not reinforce color/race discrimination, On the contrary, the coverage of benefits corresponds to the equality injustice that characterizes Brazilian society, and is able to compensate or to include the most discriminated against and vulnerable families, working favourably for affirmative policies in other sectors.

Finally, I estimated a multinomial model to know the weighting of different factors that impact upon poverty levels (dependent variable; "not poor" was the category of reference). In the case of the color of the head of the household, the reference category was "white". Results show that factors related to poverty, such as a female household head, a low level of education, living in a complex family, migration, overpopulation at home, and the lower level of urbanization, increase the probability of being poor and extremely poor. Even controlling all these factors, the color/race of the head of the household plays an important role; households with an indigenous, black or *parda* head are more likely to be poor or extremely poor, (1.6, 1.3, 1.2 times more) compared to households with a white head. (Table 5).

House overcrowding (number of household members divided by number of rooms in the house) was used as an approximation of competition for scarce resources inside the house. Results confirm that the higher the house overcrowding, the higher the level of poverty, even when controlling other variables.

In another article, disaggregating these results by size of municipality and for beneficiaries and no beneficiaries of CCT, complex results were also found. The beneficiaries of the PBF, families with black and *parda* heads of all settings, are less likely to be poor than those households with white heads. Both results suggest that the CCT would be mitigating the color/race effect in determining poverty by delivering the benefits on the basis of the low income of these households only. Color self-definition is the best indicator and the preferred method for collecting this variable in Brazil. However, in a country where the myth of racial democracy and population whitening goal still prevails, the stereotypes constructed promote the persistence of the underreporting of the black color as part of the population. (Bento 2002).

In relation to age, families with young family leaders have families that are more susceptible to poverty and extreme poverty than those of over 60 years of age who are responsible (reference category), with the highest risk being among those who are much younger (between 18 and 24 years of age).

On the other hand, with the implementation of affirmative policies in recent years, the number of people moving between racial categories increases. Both tendencies, understatement and declaration changes, generate racial bias in the data collected and cause difficulties in observing and interpreting the effects of color on other socioeconomic variables. This paradox indicates the need to develop better methods to identify the effects of the race/color variable on poverty and other socioeconomic variables, and to explore how and to what extent race/color contributes to poverty and inequality (Egede, 2006; Shavers, 2007)

Table 5
Coefficients of Multinomial Regression for Levels of Poverty

Poverty (Ref. Not Poor)	Exp(B)
Nuclear	1.515***
Unipersonal	.893***
Extended	1.045***
Composed (ref.)	.
Female head of household	1.612***
Male head of household	.
Black head of household	1.270***
Asian head of household	1.139***
Parda head of household	1.216***
Indigenous head of household	1.677***
White head of household (Ref)	.
Education 0	1.494***
Education 1-4 years	2.136***
Education 5-7 years	2.291***
Education 8-10 years	1.650***
Education 11-17 years (Ref)	.
Age low than 15	14.537***
Age 15-17	10.418***
Age 18-24	8.918***
Age 25-35	7.745***
[Age 36-59	6.052***
Age more than 60 (Ref.)	.
1 person by room	.244***
2 persons by room	.612***
3 or more people by room	.
No migrant	1.147***
Migrant (Ref)	.
Salvador, capital	.707***
Middle municipalities	.416***
Small municipalities (Ref.)	.

Gender and race/color inequalities are significantly relevant, since female, indigenous, black, and *parda* heads of households have a higher probability of being poor or extremely poor than do their white counterparts. Gender and race discrimination also intersect with young heads of households in determining poverty, which should be considered in the design and implementation of CCTs.

Some studies in the United States observe large variations in self-defined color/race when classified by a third-party observer, indicating the difficulty in categorizing people from multiracial families. Williams (1996) indicates that there are complex interactions between race and other socioeconomic variables, since they cannot adequately measure racial variations, showing the need to also explore the themes of racism, migration, acculturation and an integral approach to socioeconomic inequalities.

CONCLUSIONS

Poverty is analyzed considering gender and the race characteristics of the person of reference in families, as well as age, education, family generational composition, migration, social policies received by households, and local contexts. Gender and race/color inequalities are significantly relevant, since female, indigenous, black and *parda* heads of households have a higher probability of being poor or extremely poor than their white counterparts.

The level of poverty (income per capita) is strongly related to the gender, race and age of the head of the households, family and context characteristics and the provision of economic benefit from CCT for families.

Links between inequalities, poverty and these vulnerabilities can be identified to improve policies oriented to reduce poverty and discrimination. New components oriented to black/*parda* and youth heads of households could contribute to increase the effects of CCT in mitigating poverty.

The problem identified in the research suggests that both poverty and other vulnerabilities intersect in the conformation of poverty, when measured as income or material goods, but that there are also pre-existing relational assets or vulnerabilities, or that are created with the integration of policies in the family context, which should also be considered in order to build a multidimensional view of poverty, and can provide relevant knowledge for the improvement of social policies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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