

CLASPO Summer 2006 Report

Communication and Citizenship: Assessing recent policies of racial inclusion within the media and communications sector in Salvador, Brazil.

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Introduction

This report is the result of two months of field research carried out during the Brazilian winter of 2006 in Salvador, Brazil. The original focus of my field work was an examination of top-down public policies for racial inclusion in the media and communications sector in Salvador, stemming from the First Municipal Conference on Policies of Promotion of Racial Equality in the City of Salvador¹ in May of 2005. After getting acquainted with the field, I realized that a much richer ground exists in terms of concrete action for racial inclusion in the activities of non-governmental and social movement organizations, which are taking media production into their own hands and simultaneously pressuring larger media outlets to change their image to one that better represents the Brazilian population.

Research Objectives

The purpose of my summer field research was to gauge the extent of racial exclusion in the media in Salvador, Brazil, as well as to evaluate any existing or proposed initiatives designed to combat racial inequality in the Brazilian media and communications sector. I was particularly interested in the role non-governmental and social movement organizations have played and continue to play in the formulation of policy measures for racial inclusion. I chose the *Instituto de Mídia Étnica* (Ethnic Media Institute) as a case study due to its unique, among Bahian NGOs that work to promote racial equality, focus on the media and communications sector. The relatively recent establishment of the *Instituto de Mídia Étnica* makes it a particularly interesting case due

¹ 1ª Conferência Municipal de Políticas de Promoção da Igualdade Racial da Cidade do Salvador

to the opportunity to follow the development of the organization from its initial formative stages, at a time when racial inequality in communications is finally gaining the attention it necessitates on the national political agenda.

Overview of Methodology

The research methodology used for this study relied primarily on qualitative research methods, including key informant interviews, participant observation, content analysis, and a case study of the *Instituto de Mídia Étnica*. Due to the *Mídia Étnica*'s central role in the project, an alignment was necessarily developed with the organization to assure basic convergence between my objectives as a researcher and the goals of *Mídia Étnica*.

Content analysis was performed on commercial print media (the newspapers *A Tarde* and *Correio da Bahia*, as well as various magazines sold at local kiosks) and television in order to estimate the extent of Afro-Brazilian presence, and to evaluate representation of Afro-Brazilian events, cultural symbols, and individuals. Additionally, grassroots alternatives to mass media, such as the community newspaper *Jornal do Beirú*, the radio program *Tambores da Liberdade*, and online journalism websites were examined from a comparative perspective.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with NGO coordinators, activists, public officials, communications sector employees, and university professors engaged in communications research. Respondents were selected by virtue of the “snowball effect” – that is, existing contacts provided references for new potential interview subjects.

By fortunate coincidence, two significant conferences took place in Salvador during the time period of the study, both of which I was able to observe. One was the Second Conference of Intellectuals from Africa and its Diaspora,² which brought together more than 1,200 academics, political leaders, and cultural icons from around the world in order to forge links and share expertise between African nations and nations of the Diaspora. The second was the 28th National Conference of Communications Students,³ whose central theme this year was “Combating oppressions.” These conferences provided a remarkable opportunity to interact with and learn from various scholars concerned with issues of race and democratization of communication. In addition, CIAD in particular also functioned as a key event around which life in the city of Salvador was organized during the five days of the conference. I was fortunate in being able to observe the extent and type of media coverage that such an event received.

At the outset of the project, the main obstacles to data collection were the numerous activities and work holidays associated with the annual São João festival, when many Bahians travel to the interior, and the World Cup. It was nearly impossible to schedule anything until after that time period. Another issue I encountered was people’s more relaxed attitude toward punctuality and keeping scheduled meetings.

As far as the limitations of my methodology, I realize that there is a fair amount of bias inherent in the process by which interview respondents were recruited. Although I obtained contacts from a variety of people, the vast majority of references came from the *Instituto de Mídia Étnica*, which may have led to an incomplete picture. However,

² CIAD: II Conferência dos Intelectuais da África e da Diáspora.

³ ENECOM XVIII: Encontro Nacional dos Estudantes da Comunicação.

particularly in Brazil, personal references are very important to gaining entry and trust, so while impossible to avoid, bias should be acknowledged and taken into account.

Historical and Present-day Context

In order to understand contemporary Brazilian race relations and the discourse on racial inclusion in Brazilian media, it is necessary to examine the historical context within which race has been socially constructed and continuously redefined.

After the abolition of slavery in 1888, the Brazilian economy was still largely agrarian, characterized by clientilism and the consolidation of wealth and political power in the hands of a few white families mainly involved in the production of coffee and cattle. The need for agrarian workers, coupled with theories of scientific racism imported from Europe, led to a government-sponsored promotion of Brazil as a destination for millions of European immigrants as part of a concerted attempt to whiten the Brazilian population.

In the 1930s, President Vargas made it his goal to unite Brazil around a consolidated national identity. To create a unique hybrid Brazilian culture, samba, carnival, capoeira, and various other traditionally black cultural forms were co-opted into the nationalist project, stripped of their association with Blackness and Africanity in the process. Thus, Brazilian nation-building of the first half of the 20th century was coupled with a celebration of miscegenation and “whitening,” which would lead to the eradication of the black element in the Brazilian “race.”

In the 1950s, to the casual observer (particularly one from the segregationist U.S.), Brazil looked like paradise of racial conviviality and exceptionalism as

propounded by Gilberto Freyre, who spoke of a more benign system of slavery and generally harmonious relations between owners and slaves resulting in the development of “racial democracy” in Brazil. Freyre argued that the high level of miscegenation was both evidence of and contribution to the lack of racial tensions in Brazilian society.⁴ The dramatic socio-economic rift between the “haves” and “have nots,” with the majority of the population belonging to the latter group, also helped to frame class, rather than racial, inequality as the prevailing social problem of black Brazilians. However, as studies conducted in the 1970s by Hasenbalg and Dzidzienyo and began to show, race was always an independent variable, and not subordinate to class conflicts.

When Brazil finally returned to democratic government in 1985, following nearly two decades of military dictatorship that essentially eradicated Brazilian civil society, numerous black non-governmental organizations were established and helped to push Brazil’s racial inequality to the forefront of political discourse. However, the ideology of racial democracy has proved difficult to dismantle in society as a whole. To this day, many people still evoke the high degree of racial mixture and the appropriation of African cultural forms into the national Brazilian culture as proof that Brazil doesn’t have a “race problem.” They cite class inequality as the principal social issue, pointing to examples of Afro-Brazilians who have achieved socio-economic success and fame as evidence of the insignificance of racism in Brazilian society. However, looking at only two of the many indicators that reveal inequality, one can already understand the gravity of the situation: one only 2.5% of non-white Brazilians attend college, compared to

⁴ Telles 2004, 174.

11.7% of white Brazilians;⁵ the average income of a white male is 113% more than income of the average black male.⁶

While today over 45%⁷ of the Brazilian population self-classifies as *preto* or *pardo*⁸ (in the city of Salvador, “the most African city in Brazil,” this number is 86%)⁹ mass media continues to represent the nation as predominantly white through its TV shows and *telenovelas*, magazine photos, news stories, and advertising. When Afro-Brazilians do appear, they are frequently framed in a stereotypical manner, having little control over their own images.¹⁰ In the communications sector, few Afro-Brazilians occupy decision-making positions in media production. This is aggravated by the fact that most media is produced in the more economically developed Southeast – Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, areas where the white population is relatively larger – roughly 55 and 75 percent, respectively.¹¹

In addition to the problem of racial inequality in the communications sector, potential media producers who would compete with existing mass media networks also face a significant structural barrier in terms of obtaining licensing or concessions. Brazilian mass media is very highly concentrated in the hands of a few families who also hold political and economic power. National public television is comprised of eight television networks, six of which are privately owned: Globo (the Marinho family), SBT (Silvio Santos), Manchete (the Bloch family), Bandeirantes (the Saad family), Record

⁵ PNUD 2005, 69.

⁶ PNUD 2005, 64.

⁷ PNUD 2005, 46.

⁸ *Preto* and *pardo* are census terms roughly translated as black and brown.

⁹ Secretaria Municipal de Saúde de Salvador 2006, 14.

¹⁰ See Araújo 2000, Rodrigues 2001, Stam 1997.

¹¹ Telles 2004, 19.

(The Universal Church of the Kingdom of God), and CNT (Paulo Pimentel).¹² There are also two public networks, TV Educativa, tied to the federal government, and TV Cultura, tied to the government of São Paulo.¹³ In Salvador, there are only five public channels: TV Educativa, TV Aratu, Itapoan, Band, and TV Bahia. Very little of the programming is local, most of it retransmitted from the national networks, primarily Globo. For example, on TV Bahia, only five programs per day are locally produced. Additionally, Salvador has only three major privately-owned newspapers – A Tarde, Correio da Bahia, and Tribuna da Bahia. Thus, communication channels are highly concentrated and difficult to penetrate, especially for media producers that lack the substantial capital and political power necessary.

Organizations Visited and People Interviewed

The trajectory of my research was one originating from the case of the *Instituto de Mídia Étnica* and spiraling out toward other organizations and people that could shed light on the topic of racial inclusion in the media.

Instituto de Mídia Étnica

My initial contact with the *Instituto de Mídia Étnica* occurred in January, 2006, during a visit to Salvador. I had met the founder and current executive director, Paulo Rogério Nunes, previously through an online network of people engaged with social projects and volunteer work in Bahia. Paulo Rogério, as well as several others of the

¹² In November 2005, a new and very relevant network, *TV da Gente* (Our TV), was founded in São Paulo. It is owned by Netinho, an Afro-Brazilian celebrity, and its target audience is the Afro-Brazilian population. It currently broadcasts for 12 hours a day in partnership with Bandeirantes. However, in the Northeast it is retransmitted over public television only in Fortaleza and is not available in Salvador.

¹³ Jambeiro 2000, 77.

Mídia Étnica staff, graduated from POMPA, a program which trains young communications students and facilitates their insertion into the job market.

The *Instituto de Mídia Étnica* was founded in October, 2005, with the objective of “carrying out research and projects for racial promotion in communications, assuring the rights of the black population in the use of technological tools. Based on the concept of ‘communication as a human right,’ the *Instituto de Mídia Étnica* aims to struggle for a transformation that will lead to a greater participation of Afrodescendants in media production.”¹⁴ The board of directors consists of five Afro-Brazilian communications graduates and activists, responsible for different areas – executive, administrative, communications, projects, and pedagogy. In addition, there are seven associates that contribute time to the organization. The idea is that each of the directors will lead a working group or committee for the development of his/her area. The directors and associates work part time as volunteers, between classes and work.

In spite of its infancy as an organization, and despite a lack of full-time paid staff, *Mídia Étnica* is well known and respected in Salvador among those involved with issues of race, which speaks to the efforts of its directors. Many times when I would begin talking about my project with someone, they would tell me I should contact *Mídia Étnica*. The *Instituto* is part of a cohesive network of people and organizations struggling for racial inclusion in various spheres and walks of life, which may be officially referred to as the *Movimento Negro Unificado*. It has very strong ties to SEMUR (Municipal Department for Reparation¹⁵), where one of the *Mídia Étnica* directors works in the communications department. Additionally, it counts in its political council such

¹⁴ Quoted from a bulletin produced by *Mídia Étnica* about the founding of the organization. My translation.

¹⁵ SEMUR: SEcretaria MUunicipal da Reparação

prominent scholars and media professionals as Abdias do Nascimento, film director Joel Zito Araújo, UNDP Adviser Luiza Bairros, and Lindinalva Barbosa of The Palmares Foundation. It is also partnered with the Afro-Brazilian community organization Ilê Aiyê, and the Steve Biko Institute.

Since its founding, the *Instituto de Mídia Étnica* has coordinated a number of different projects, including the release of its own newspaper, *Correio Nagô*, independent media coverage of several local events tied to Afro-Brazilian issues, as well as publicity campaigns valorizing the African element of Brazilian culture and denouncing racism.

During the 2006 Carnival in Salvador, the *Instituto* functioned as a center of observation and assistance to victims of racial discrimination and religious intolerance, supported by SEMUR and UNDP. It offered services such as recording reported occurrences of discrimination and racism, providing counseling and assistance to victims of discrimination, and observing the working conditions of security rope holders during the carnival parades.

On June 12, “Dia dos Namorados” (Brazilian Valentine’s Day), the *Instituto* organized a public event of poetry and music as part of a campaign to elevate the self-esteem of the black population and simultaneously denounce the stereotyping and invisibility of black couples in the media.¹⁶

One of the *Instituto*’s continuous activities is the independent coverage of events and issues of interest to the Afro-Brazilian population. I had the opportunity to accompany the communications director, André, on a trip to the interior city of Cachoeira, where he filmed and photographed the annual *Festa da Boa Morte* – a

¹⁶ Pamphlet released by *Instituto de Mídia Étnica*. “Neste 12 de junho, Reaja ao racismo: Beije sua preta ou seu preto em Praça Pública.”

religious celebration of The Sisterhood of Our Lady of the Good Death which combines elements of Catholicism and Candomblé. Articles and reports produced by the *Instituto* are circulated online on the *Instituto*'s own website, as well as on portals such as *Afropress* and *Mundo Negro*, and in the online and print newspaper *Ìrohìn*.

The *Instituto* participated in and helped to facilitate both the CIAD II and ENECOM XVIII conferences, bringing to the table the discussion of racial exclusion in communications. At ENECOM, the *Instituto* played a key role in developing the theme of Combating Oppressions in the media, including racial, gender, sexuality, and religious discrimination.

One of the biggest challenges for the *Instituto* currently is lack of funding and resources. The municipal government provides material assistance during events it uses *Mídia Étnica* to promote, such as the carnival racial discrimination observatory. However, for the development of projects such as classes and workshops for the community the *Instituto* needs full-time staff, infrastructure, computers, and video equipment. Fundraising and obtaining sponsorship is at the top of the agenda. From the point of view of the *Instituto*, the most promising sources of sponsorship are foreign, particularly U.S., corporations and foundations, which have the advantage of greater resources as well as a more supportive attitude toward organizations that focus on Afrodescendant populations. During the time of my research, I assisted the *Instituto* in writing a letter of inquiry for an Intel Foundation grant. In addition, I facilitated a meeting between the *Instituto de Mídia Étnica* and the International Leadership Institute, a U.S.-based non-governmental organization “with the goal of empowering communities

of color by promoting leadership, justice, peace, and democracy.”¹⁷ If a partnership between ILI and the *Instituto* were established, ILI would serve as a representative of *Mídia Étnica* in the U.S. for the purposes of increasing visibility and attracting philanthropists.

Future goals of the *Instituto* include functioning as a research hub and producing publications and seminars on the subject of racial inclusion in the communications and technology sectors. It aims to set up an online portal through which a network of activists will monitor public policies and issues concerning the black Brazilian population (similar to the networks Cipó participates in, described below). Additionally, the *Instituto* plans to serve as a community center, providing workshops on information technology and ancestral history and culture to local youth. Members of the community will be able to interactively learn about their history and cultural heritage while themselves participating in the process of cultural production through the creation of videos, music, games, webpages, and multimedia. As interest develops, the *Instituto* hopes to also develop further projects in such areas as computer simulation, three-dimensional design, and software development – skill sets that are currently concentrated in the Southeast of Brazil.

CIPÓ – Comunicação Interativa

I was referred to *Cipó* by Dr. Giovandro Ferreira of the UFBA Department of Communications because of the organization’s work involving the monitoring and critical interpretation of mass media representations of children and adolescents, and advocacy in support of the interests of Brazilian youth. *Cipó* presents an interesting

¹⁷ International Leadership Institute Website. www.internationalleadership.org

comparison to the *Instituto de Mídia Étnica* despite not addressing directly the question of race, but instead focusing on youth from socio-economically disadvantaged areas. The *Cipó* model and many of its goals are in line with what *Mídia Étnica* plans to achieve in terms of community development. *Cipó* provides a comprehensive eight month training course for underprivileged youth from three of the poorer areas in and around Salvador, training the participants in media production and preparing them for insertion into the communications sector. Additionally, *Cipó* facilitates collaboration between young people, who receive training and produce media; schools, which receive curriculum materials developed by *Cipó* students; and media professionals, who receive feedback and input from youth on the representation of young people.

In addition to the professionalization course, *Cipó* is engaged in advocacy for the rights of youth. It is the executive center of a national network of media and public policy monitors focusing on the representation and interests of young people, linked together through an internet portal entitled *Sou de Atitude*.¹⁸ Through this portal, over two hundred young communications activists, trained through *Cipó* workshops, share information about the experiences and conditions of youth in 20 Brazilian states and the Federal District. Additionally, *Cipó* is a hub of the *ANDI - Agência de Notícias dos Direitos da Infância* (News Agency of Childrens' Rights) network and the *Rede de Monitoramento Amiga da Criança* (Friend of the Child Monitoring Network).

Although *Cipó* does not explicitly mention race or racial inclusion in its bulletins or on its website, from talking to Jorge and Angelica, two of the interns who completed the professionalization course and are now working with *Sou de Atitude*, I understood that the questions of racial equality and racism are addressed within various workshops.

¹⁸ "I have attitude." (www.soudeatitude.org.br)

Additionally, because program participants are selected from low-income and suburban communities, which are predominantly black, almost all of the students are Afro-Brazilian.

Secretaria Municipal da Reparação

The Municipal Department of Reparation (SEMUR) is the municipal organ that deals directly with the promotion of racial equality in Salvador. Regarding racial inclusion in communications, SEMUR recognizes that the two objectives are to penetrate mass media, and to create and support alternative media projects. As the Secretary of Reparation, Dr. Gilmar Santiago, explained to me, the first objective is challenging due to the fact that mass media, especially in the Northeast, is in the hands of the political and economic elites, such as Bahian governor Antônio Carlos Magalhães (ACM). The *Estatuto da Igualdade Racial*, proposed in 2003 by Senator Paulo Paim (PT, Rio Grande do Sul) and approved in the Senate after some editing, includes a section on the media and communications, which proposes that no less than 20 percent of actors in television programs and in commercials must be Afro-Brazilian.¹⁹ However, the *Estatuto* is yet to receive approval in the Chamber of Deputies.

The second objective of developing community media projects is also difficult due to the scarcity of resources. A seminar organized by SEMUR convened community radio stations (both transmitted over loudspeakers installed in public squares, and FM) to discuss the question of promoting content that addresses the racial question. However, many of these community stations are not licensed – a difficult and highly bureaucratic process. Additionally, the stations need funds to stay open, usually acquired through

¹⁹ Estatuto da Igualdade Racial (Substitutivo). Capítulo IX, art. 74, 75.

advertising. Thus, they end up being more like commercial stations run by a private individual rather than community radio stations. However, there are some examples of racially conscious radio programs, such as the weekly *Tambores da Liberdade* produced by the *blocos afros Malê Debalê* and *Ilê Aiyê*, and the hip hop show led by DJ Branco in Bairro da Paz.

SEMUR is also interested in working with the *Movimento Negro Unificado* on the publication of a regular newspaper that would seek to represent the diversity of opinions and positions within the black movement, but a project like that requires resources and sponsors.

Jornal do Beirú

This community newspaper was indicated to me by my contacts at Cipó. Beirú is a working class neighborhood, relatively removed from the city center, many of whose residents remember when it was still forest and farmland a mere three decades ago. Beirú refers to the name of a former slave who became a leader in the region and founded a *quilombo* (maroon community). The neighborhood was renamed in 1985 to Tancredo Neves, but the residents are fighting to return its original name. This pride in the neighborhood's history and heritage is evident in the newspaper, which is produced by and for the community, and distributed freely. Founded in 2002, the four-page newspaper at one time came out every 2-3 months.

Article topics have included serious problems in the neighborhood (lack of paving, sewage removal, resources for local schools, and empty promises from politicians), questions of general interest to the population (universities adopting racial

quotas, religious tolerance of Afro-Brazilian religions), local history (the founding of Beirú, local personalities and leaders), and cultural information (local music bands, sports teams.) What is particularly striking about the content of this community newspaper is the high level of racial consciousness it exhibits. Published interviews inquire about racial discrimination suffered by residents; editorials discuss the debate on racial quotas; informational articles discuss early African writing systems ignored by the Eurocentric worldview.

Jornal do Beirú is staffed by part-time community volunteers, some of whom are journalism graduates. At one time having its own office, which contained a small community library, the newspaper is now suffering from lack of funding. According to the vice-director, Velame, they receive more support from foreign NGOs than from the government. The paper is looking for sponsors, but prefers not to involve itself with politicians in order to assure its independence and reputation.

Jornal A Tarde

Despite the many obstacles on the path to a racially equal and inclusive mass media, there has been some notable progress on the part of at least one local newspaper, recognized by many of my respondents, including those from SEMUR and the *Instituto de Mídia Étnica*. In the past couple of years, *A Tarde* has exhibited a much greater level of concern and attention toward Afro-Brazilian cultural expressions, events, leaders and public figures, as well as social issues and problems. According to one of my respondents, there are days when over half of the news material covers Afro-Brazilian issues. For example, on the opening day of the CIAD conference *A Tarde* came out with

a special section entitled “Saudações, África” commemorating the event with 12 pages of articles and pictures, most of them full color. Other events that received ample coverage were the *Festa da Boa Morte* in Cachoeira, debates on racial quotas in the university system, and public demonstrations against police racial profiling.

Particularly notable has been the change in attitude towards and the improved representation of Afro-Brazilian religions. During the ENECOM conference, in a panel on religious tolerance in the press, Dr. Jaime Sodré illustrated the progression of references to Candomblé in Bahian newspapers from the 1920s, when the religion was persecuted by the police and denounced as devil worship, through a period when it was portrayed as a pitiable remnant of a barbaric past, until the present day, when articles began to utilize Candomblé terms and to include a glossary with explanations of those terms. Today one can find a full page spread with beautiful fotos on the anniversary of an important Iyalorixá (female Candomblé leader). Much of the work involved in changing the image of *A Tarde* with regard to its treatment of Afro-Brazilian culture and religion can be credited to Afro-Brazilian journalist Cleidiana Ramos, who began her career at *A Tarde* covering Catholic masses, and later branched out to other religions and took the initiative to approach Afro-Brazilian religion with a greater amount of care and research than had been afforded to it previously.

Policy Implications

To a large extent, the process of conquering communication channels by the Afro-Brazilian population in Salvador is bottom-up, originating in civil society and frequently turning for assistance to organizations abroad. The organ of the municipal government

that provides the most support, SEMUR, does not have the resources necessary for assisting with the production of community-based media that addresses the race question. In order to function more effectively as a Department of Reparations, SEMUR requires access to more funding for enacting those reparations. The *Estatuto da Igualdade Racial* originally included a proposal to create a National Fund for the Promotion of Racial Equality, but the wording of that chapter was changed to simply refer to “financing of initiatives to promote racial equality,” and mentions of any specific amounts were removed. Thus, it remains to be seen how financing will be guaranteed for the implementation of the various proposals for racial inclusion.

In terms of changing the image of national television networks, a significant amount of hope is placed in the *Estatuto da Igualdade Racial*, which, if approved in the Chamber of Deputies, will guarantee a minimum of 20 percent of roles in television programs and commercials to Afro-Brazilians. However, while 20 percent would be a good start, it does not come close to representing the Afro-Brazilian population of Salvador, which is four times that number.

The *Estatuto da Igualdade Racial* focuses primarily on television, not specifying any kind of regulations for print media, such as newspapers and magazines, or billboard advertising. The first article, no. 73, which states that “the production distributed via organs of communication will appreciate the cultural heritage and the participation of Afro-Brazilians in the history of the country,”²⁰ does not make it clear in what way this appreciation will manifest itself or be evaluated and enforced. It is notable, however, that during the editing process, the article guaranteeing 20 percent of roles to Afro-Brazilians

²⁰ Estatuto da Igualdade Racial. Capítulo IX, Art. 73. A produção veiculada pelos órgãos de comunicação valorizará a herança cultural e a participação dos afro-brasileiros na história do País.

acquired a paragraph indicating that of these 20 percent, half of the roles would go to Afro-Brazilian women, recognizing the important gender dimension of racial exclusion especially evident in the media.

Possible Areas for Further Research

This research can be developed and augmented along several trajectories, some of which I plan to pursue as I continue my field work during the fall semester. One of the areas that can be explored in greater detail is the process of licensing and concessions for television and radio, and the proposed measures for the democratization of the media.

The problem of the concentration of Brazilian media not only impacts the Afro-Brazilian population in terms of inadequate representation, but also Indigenous peoples, women, homosexuals, and persons of low socio-economic status in general, given that the majority of the means of communication are in the hands of a few wealthy white men in the Southeast. Thus, it would be interesting to observe how the movement for racial inclusion in the media contributes to the movement for the general democratization of communications, and vice versa.

Another possible topic for further exploration is the transfer and allocation of funds for projects associated with the promotion of racial equality. For instance, where does the money that SEMUR utilizes come from, what are the policies that regulate these funds, and where are there opportunities for improvement.

It would also be interesting to analyze the process by which the newspaper *A Tarde* came to improve its representation of Afro-Brazilians, and what factors precipitated this transformation – whether it was related to a change in the hiring

practices and demographics of the editorial staff, pressure from the *Movimento Negro Unificado*, a greater appreciation for Afro-Brazilian culture given the large influx of tourist money that it brings, or due to some other combination of causes.

Finally, moving somewhat away from public policy and into the realm of media studies, I am interested in exploring the issues inherent in working towards and demanding a more “accurate” representation of Afro-Brazilians in audiovisual media, namely television. Surely it will not be enough to assure that 20 percent (or some greater number) of bodies on television are black. In a country where over 90% of people have access to public broadcast television,²¹ how Afro-Brazilian *telenovela* characters, talk show hosts, and reality television participants are cast and portrayed sets up models of cultural Blackness for their audience. The meaning, or rather meanings, of black culture in Brazil will continue to concern Afro-Brazilian media producers as they work to broaden their space in the mediascape.

Research Needs of Local Organizations

Increased visibility, power over self-representation, and the prerequisite access to means of media production and ownership, in both the material and intellectual sense, are the primary goals of the Afro-Brazilian activists, artists, and media professionals engaging in projects such as the *Instituto de Mídia Étnica*. While skills and experience are not lacking, scarcity of funding is the largest impediment to the multitude of projects the *Instituto* has on its agenda. My respondents agreed that the government needs to play a larger role in promoting the presence of Afro-Brazilians in communications. The issue

²¹ Straubhaar, 30.

of racial inclusion in the media still needs to become a more important national concern, to engender action and the distribution of material resources. The *Instituto* would like to see a national agency, similar to the one existing in Canada, which would regulate diversity within the media. Additionally, financing should be made available specifically for Afro-Brazilian filmmakers, in the form of grants and lines of credit. However, in addition to lobbying for public policies, it is equally important for the Instituto to create its own means of media production within the community, to have self-determination.

One of the challenges to increasing a self-sustaining market for ethnic media, expressed by the Instituto, is a current lack of “conscious consumption.” The goal is to build a network of support among the Afro-Brazilian population that would help the community develop in solidarity.

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