

Through the Lens of Brazil: The Changing Dynamics of Human Rights and Global Philanthropy in Emerging Powers

Funder Learning Visit to Rio de Janeiro
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Anti-Discrimination, Racial Equality, and Marginalized Groups

An in focus discussion circle

Speakers: **Marcelo Paixao**, Activist and Professor of Economics and Sociology, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro

Neville Gabriel, Executive Director, Southern Africa Trust

- Marcelo Paixao began the conversation by presenting a number of statistics on racial equality in Brazil
 - Brazil has the second biggest Afro-descendant population in world (after Nigeria): 50.7% of total population.
 - Black and brown people are the majority in Brazil. In the 1990s, this was not the case.
 - In general, black and brown people live in the poorest areas of Brazil: the north and northeast.
 - The white populations are concentrated in the wealthier south and southeast.
 - Between 2003 and 2013 in the six biggest metro areas in Brazil, the earnings of the Afrodescendant labor force increased by 57%. Among whites, it increased only 31%.
 - The inequality between the earnings of the two groups is high (80%), but was higher (120%) before.
 - This happened because of a mandated increase of the minimum income. More black and brown people earned minimum income, so their incomes went up.
 - Bolsa Familia (a welfare program) benefited 11 M families. 7.3M Afrodescendant families received this (66.4% all beneficiaries).
 - The level of overall poverty has decreased.
 - Affirmative action in Brazil is very controversial.
 - In 2010, almost 1/3 of public universities adopted some kind of affirmative action.
 - After 2012, the national congress approved a new law that guaranteed affirmative action policies for all universities in country.
 - The universities have until 2016 to conclude this process.
 - Despite affirmative action in universities, in 2008, 92.3% of young Afrodescendants were not attending university.
 - 73.5% of the poorest 10% of Brazil's population are black and brown
 - Only 25% of the richest 10% are black and brown.
 - Black and brown people face an unprecedented level of violence: 52,000 homicides per year.

- The most affected are male Afrodescendants, making up 62.7% of homicide victims. White men make up 22.7% of homicide victims (2012 figures).
- Brazil's elected deputies are disproportionately white men. Below is the makeup of the 2006-2010 legislature:
 - 79.5% white men
 - 7.4% white women
 - 8.4% black and brown men
 - Less than 1% black and brown women
- Brazilian society has made positive steps in recent years that have benefited the black and brown population. However, many sense that there will be steps backward to come.
- Neville spoke about how both South Africa and Brazil share a marginalized majority.
 - In order to change this, we should focus on structural issues.
 - Julius Malema leads a political party called the Economic Freedom Fighters. They received more than 6% of the vote after existing for less than 8 months.
 - They call for economic freedom, a living wage for mine workers, and an end to joblessness and exclusion. In South Africa, overall, white areas are wealthy; black areas are impoverished.
 - The main opposition party is perceived to be the party of white privilege, but is now trying to attract an emerging black middle class.
 - Black people's views don't come through in media.
 - It's not possible to talk about racism without discussing xenophobia against African migrants.
 - In South Africa, there are two layers of civil society: One that is largely white-led. Other service delivery organizations are black-led and government supported.

Discussion and Q&A

- What do you think are most effective solutions? Where should money go?
 - Marcelo: We should focus on producing social inclusion through market programs such as minimum income and the Bolsa Familia cash transfer program.
 - Brazil also needs to work on radicalizing its democracy, and call upon new actors to participate.
 - The distributive policies used in other Latin American countries show the same limitations that the Brazilian experience is showing. This is an opportunity for collaboration.
 - Neville: We should focus on economic and social policies.
 - It's important to have abroad political agenda and broad organizing vision of where want to get to.
- Marcelo showed data on the race of the victims of homicide. Is there data on the perpetrators, and what are the legal remedies?
 - Marcelo: It is difficult to collect good statistics on violence. These numbers were from the health ministry.
 - In general this information is treated like a state secret.
 - Violence and corruption are linked with drug trafficking.
 - Not all violence is caused by the police, but they do play a big part.
 - The first law against racial discrimination was passed in the 1950s. In 1988's new constitution, racism was included as crime.
 - We must think about affirmative action as development policy (something important for the future), rather than just a compensatory policy

- Neville: African governments tend to listen to governments from the west. It is time for funders to figure out how play at the level of the people our governments listen to.
 - How can we hold international funders accountable to human rights issues in a country? We can say, “Until x issue is addressed, don’t fund there.”
 - There is less racism in countries where there is less inequality.
 - Some people manipulate race to their own purposes, but that doesn’t mean that these issues do not need to be addressed!
 - Human rights work is sometimes seen as northern stick used to beat poorer countries. If good policies are difficult to implement, it doesn’t mean we shouldn’t; we just have to work harder.
 - To radicalize our democracies, we need renewal of black economic consciousness: the creation of wealth by black people

Panelist Biographies:



Neville Gabriel
Executive Director, Southern Africa Trust

Neville Gabriel is the founding Executive Director of the Southern Africa Trust. He is also a trustee of the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa (OSISA) and the African Forum on Debt and Development (AFRODAD). He is a member of the board of the Goedgedacht Forum for Social Reflection, a senior fellow of the Synergos Institute, a member of the Africa Policy Advisory Board of Bono’s ONE campaign, and a member of the founding steering committee of the African Grantmakers’ Network. He was previously a trustee of the Southern Africa Trust and a founding non-executive director of the Southern African Regional Poverty Network. Neville previously worked at Oxfam as its southern Africa regional media and advocacy coordinator and at the Southern African Catholic Bishops’ Conference. He co-founded the Jubilee 2000 South Africa coalition for debt cancellation as part of the global Jubilee movement. He has a Bachelor’s degree in social sciences from the University of Cape Town, as well as Bachelor’s degrees in philosophy and religion from the University of Natal and St. Joseph’s Theological Institute.



Marcelo Paixão
Professor, Economics and Sociology, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro

Marcelo Paixão is currently an assistant professor at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro (UFRJ), where he teaches economics, social sciences, and a course on nation and nationality. He also coordinates the Laboratory of Economic Analysis, Historical, Social Statistics and Ethnic Relations, linked to UFRJ. He conducts research on ethno-racial inequalities, labor relations in the urban and rural crisis and the world of work. He was National Council for Scientific and Technological Development researcher between 2010 and 2012, and completed post-doctorate studies at Princeton University. Paixão graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in economics from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, a Master’s degree in production engineering from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, and a doctorate in sociology from the University Research Institute of Rio de Janeiro.