
Labor Market and racism: view of graduates from the racial quota system of the State University of Londrina

Mercado laboral y racismo: visión del sistema de cuotas raciales graduadas de la Universidade Estadual de Londrina

Mercado de trabalho e racismo: visão dos egressos do sistema de cotas raciais da Universidade Estadual de Londrina

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Abstract

This article seeks to understand how former students who entered the racial quota system at the State University of Londrina between 2010 and 2016 perceive the presence of racism in the labor market's mechanisms of selectivity. To this end, a bibliographic analysis, and data collection and organization of the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, the Institute of Applied Economic Research, the National Sample Survey of Households and the Newspaper Nexus was done. In a third moment, a script of questions was made and applied to the egress/racial quotations of the State University of Londrina. The research is characterized as quanti-qualitative, with emphasis on an interpretative approach, which aims to express the phenomenon studied, giving more freedom and new possibilities in understanding reality.

Keywords: Racial quotas; inequalities; employment; racism; University.

Resumen

El artículo trata de entender cómo perciben los antiguos alumnos que entraron a través del sistema de cuotas raciales en la Universidad Estatal de Londrina entre 2010 y 2016 la presencia del racismo en los mecanismos de selectividad del mercado laboral. Para ello, se realizó una revisión bibliográfica, recopilación y organización de datos del Instituto Brasileño de Geografía y Estadística, el Instituto de Investigación Económica Aplicada, la Encuesta Nacional de Hogares por

Muestreo y el Nexo Jornal. En un tercer momento, se preparó un guión de preguntas que se aplicó a los titulados de raza de la Universidad Estatal de Londrina. La investigación se caracteriza por ser cuanti-cualitativa, con énfasis en un enfoque interpretativo, que propone expresar el fenómeno estudiado, dando más libertad y nuevas posibilidades en la comprensión de la realidad.

Palabras clave: Cuotas raciales; desigualdades; empleo; racismo; Universidad.

Resumo

O artigo procura compreender como os/as ex-estudantes que ingressaram pelo sistema de cotas raciais na Universidade Estadual de Londrina entre 2010 e 2016 percebem a presença do racismo nos mecanismos de seletividade do mercado de trabalho. Para isso, foi feita uma análise bibliográfica, recolha e organização de dados do Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística, do Instituto de Pesquisa Econômica Aplicada, da Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios e do *Nexo Jornal*. Em um terceiro momento, foi confeccionado e aplicado um roteiro de perguntas aos/as egressos/as cotistas raciais da Universidade Estadual de Londrina. A pesquisa se caracteriza como quanti-qualitativa, com ênfase em uma abordagem interpretativa, que se propõe expressar o fenômeno estudado, dando mais liberdade e novas possibilidades no entendimento da realidade.

Palavras-chave: Cotas raciais; desigualdades; emprego; racismo; Universidade.

Introduction

This article presents part of the results of the research "Affirmative action policies in Higher Education: the performance in geographic space, in particular the labor market of racial quota students graduated from State University of Londrina in 2010 and 2016", linked to the aforementioned Institution.

From the implementation of several public affirmative action policies, with a focus on race, especially with regard to admission to Brazilian public universities, those who did not have the dimension of racism as a constituent of socioeconomic relations in Brazil believed that this action could suspend all barriers to the access of afro-descendants with higher education in the labor market.

As a methodological procedure, a bibliographical survey was carried out regarding the presence of black people in the labor market, using the texts of Almeida (2018), who discuss structural racism and how it impacts and inhibits rights and opportunities of the black population; Pereira (2011), who talks about racial discrimination that was perpetuated after the abolition of slavery, and Jaccoud and Beghim (2002), who demonstrate, through data exposure, the racial inequality present in the formal labor market of Brazil, among others. In addition, a questionnaire was formulated with six questions about the perception of affirmative action policies, the difficulties of student permanence during graduation and the prohibitions in the labor market. Of these, three were related to insertion in the labor market, having been applied in early 2018 to former racial quota students of State University of Londrina, graduated between 2010 and 2016, totaling 808 graduates. At the end of the opinion poll, only 200 people answered the questionnaire. Because of this, this research can be classified as quanti-qualitative, as it uses data measurement, but prioritizes an interpretive analysis, which proposes to express the phenomenon studied, giving more freedom and new possibilities in understanding reality.

It is worth remembering that the questions discussed in this article are those aimed at the labor market, focused on identifying the particularities of perception of the interviewees, that is, how they understand the facilities or difficulties encountered when searching for a job after graduating from undergraduate courses and, specifically, it is inferred that racism interfered in this process. It is also important to point out that one of them is exclusively focused on the racial issue, questioning whether the graduates believe that the labor market acts in a discriminatory way regarding people's color/race. Finally, the data obtained were organized into three tables, in order to facilitate its analysis, since some answers were very close.

At the end of the study, it was possible to prove some theories on how individuals understand, or not, the subtle mechanisms of action of structural racism

and how it crosses and determines all socioeconomic relations in Brazil, particularly in the labor market.

In a way, the research presents data to think about this conception, having as a general objective to understand how former students admitted through the racial quota system in State University of Londrina between 2010 and 2016 perceive the presence of racism in the mechanisms of labor market selectivity.

The black population in the labor market

The vision of the black person in Brazilian society and in the formation of Brazil was linked, throughout the slavery process, to submission and subordination, because, when freed, part of the former enslaved person, who worked in rural areas and was always classified as a terrible worker, he migrated to the cities in search of work. The problem was that, in these environments, working men and women needed better professional training, as unskilled labor was not well accepted (PEREIRA, 2011). It is important to add that the materiality of racism was also an obstacle to the entry of black people into the formal labor market.

According to D'Ávila (2006), even with the end, in theory, of the slaveholding structure, Brazil started to follow a concept of reading the population that grew all over the world, based on the existence of superior and inferior races. Thus, Brazilian economic and political agents internalized the belief that white people were superior to those of any other color or race. To refute the idea that the country would always be doomed to backwardness, since its population consisted mostly of black people, these same elites then came to believe in the fact that it was necessary to whiten Brazil and, through this strategy, racism guided some public policies in the country until the middle of the 20th century.

Concomitant to this, there was another idea that intoxicated intellectuals and politicians after the 1930s. According to Silva and Laranjeira (2007), from the beginning of the 20th century, Brazil believed to be an extraordinary country, and

this fact became it owes to the *mestizaje* present in the population, an idea that gained more prominence after 1945, with the end of World War II, considered by Gilberto Freyre as a response to the racial and ethnic conflicts that the world was facing at the time. According to him, the Brazilian population was constituted on a harmonious basis and without major setbacks, with a cordial environment for ethnic and cultural differences, for example, represented by the diversity of food and influences on the Portuguese language. Because of this, for a long time, Brazil characterized itself as a racial democracy. But, in the 1950s, studies and analyzes by intellectuals such as Fernandes and Bastide showed that the “racial democracy” exposed by Freyre was nothing more than a “myth”, as they demonstrated that color and race defined positions and facilities. or people's difficulties in accessing basic rights.

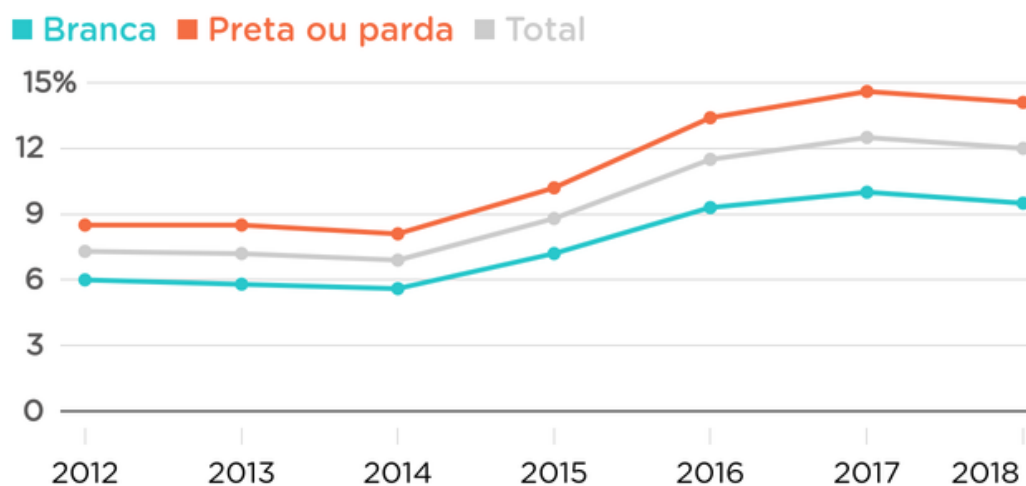
Therefore, it is observed that, even after some changes, in the late nineteenth century, Brazil still maintained its segregationist bases, as it is possible to see that, in general, structural racism set the tone for political and economic decision-making, continuing the maintenance of a structure of production and reproduction of inequalities, based on color/race, observed in various sectors of society, including the labor market.

For Martins (2012), with the growing industrialization of the country between the 50s and 80s, the vacancies occupied by black people were still those with the lowest remuneration, most of the times focused on manual work, as well as in the period. post-slavery abolition, thus remaining a racial inequality in the labor market. Because of this, it is possible to observe that, according to the Institute for Applied Economic Research (IPEA), in the early 1990s, the difference between the per capita income of Brazilian citizens, considering their color/race, was still discrepant, since whites had an average monthly income of R\$ 1,551.60, while blacks had an average income of R\$ 594.54 per month (IPEA, 1991).

When analyzing data from the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) and the Monthly Employment Survey (PME), Sabóia and Sabóia (2008) observe that,

with regard to occupied sectors, the most significant percentage is related to the category of blacks and brown people when linked to two fields, namely civil construction and domestic service, which are low-paid jobs, respectively, 10.3% and 11.2%, while white people occupy these positions in a lower percentage. Included in this factor is the fact that this population is the majority in Brazil, as shown by the survey conducted by the National Household Sample Survey (PNAD) in 2019, according to which 56% of the population declared themselves black (black and brown) (IBGE, 2019a). But, even so, when comparing average monthly incomes, even though the white population is in smaller numbers, their salaries are significantly higher, observing an even greater inequality when compared to gender categories, in which black women are at a disadvantage, as shown by the data from the Ethos Institute presented by Abramo and Farranha (2006) regarding the hourly earnings of the Brazilian population according to color, in which blacks receive, in general, 30% less than whites and, if the comparison takes Considering the gender category, black women receive the lowest wages, being on average 46% less than white men earn per hour worked.

Graph 1 – Unemployment rate by color or race in Brazil

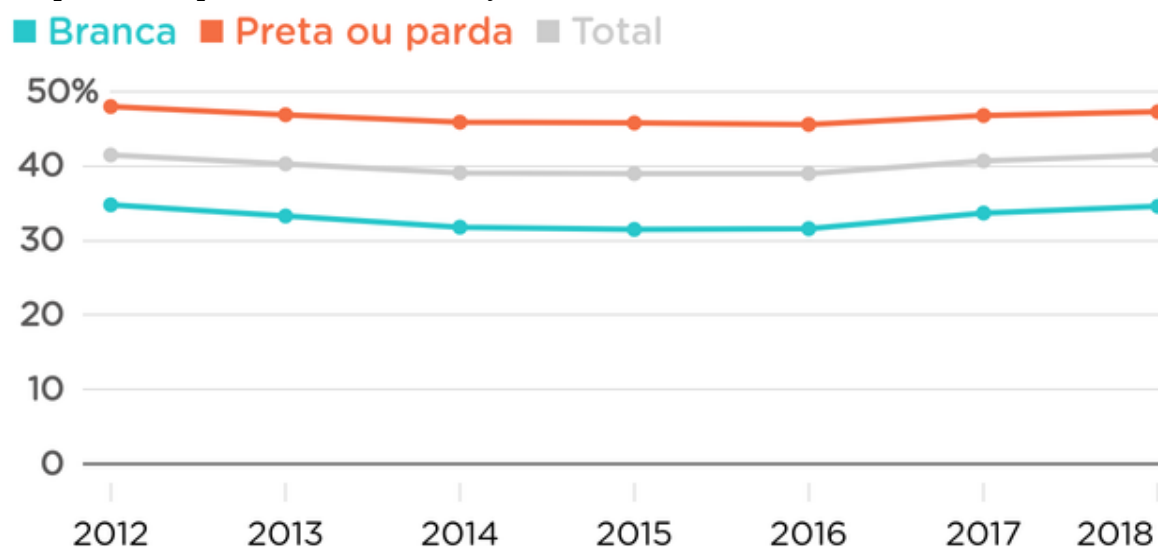


Source: Desigualdade (2019)

In this sense, it can be seen that the unemployment rate in the country has grown as a whole in the last six years, but the black population is still the most affected (IBGE, 2019b), as shown in Graph 1:

It can be seen, as shown in Graph 1, that, of the total black Brazilian population, in 2017, almost 15% of it was unemployed, while the total average was almost 3% less, since whites suffered significantly less from unemployment, reaching around 10% of the unemployment rate in the same year. In addition, the informality rate also maintained the same unequal dynamics, as it affected white, black and brown people differently (Graph 2).

Graph 2 – Proportion of workers by color or race in Brazil

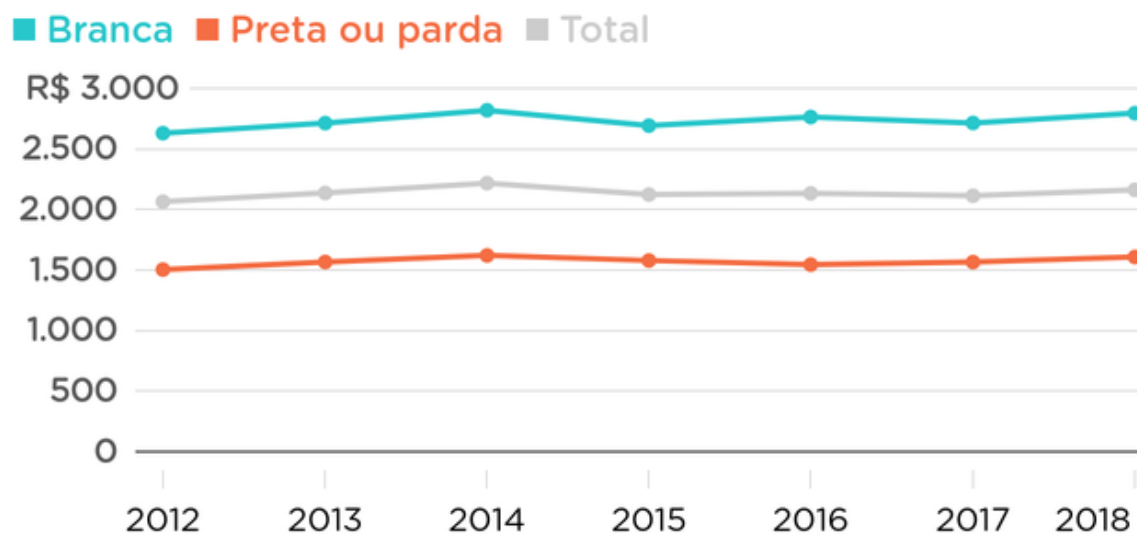


Source: Desigualdade (2019)

Graph 2 indicates the difficulty of blacks to access formal jobs, consequently they will seek to enter the informal market, reaching almost 50% of this rate between 2012 and 2018, while whites occupy less than 40% of these services, which include self-employed jobs, without a work card, domestic, auxiliary family member and unregistered employers (DESIGUALDADE..., 2019), that is, without labor guarantees.

As already pointed out, in data from IPEA (1991), the monthly income of people according to color or race, analyzed only among blacks, browns and whites, was unequal. Although more than 20 years have passed, this situation persists, as black people continue to have a much lower average monthly income than white people, as shown in Graph 3 (DESIGUALDADE..., 2019).

Graph 3 – Average real income by color or race in Brazil



Source: Desigualdade (2019)

As shown in Graph 3, the average income of white people reaches almost twice the income of black people, as it approaches three thousand reais in 2014 and 2018, while the average salaries of black people reach just over 1,500 reais in the same period (DESIGUALDADE..., 2019)

It is possible to see, therefore, that the labor market in Brazil maintains segregationist structures, and this is due "almost exclusively to racial discrimination generated in the labor market itself" (JACCOUD; BEGHIM, 2002, p. 30).

The labor market in the view of graduates from State University of Londrina: insertion difficulties and manifestation of racism

After applying online questionnaires with alumni who were admitted through racial quota to State University of Londrina, graduated between 2010 and 2016, 200 responses were obtained from more than 800 emails sent. The results to be observed in this work are related to the labor market, that is, how the racial quota students who graduated at State University of Londrina perceive the reception they had in the work environments, as well as the difficulties or facilities faced by them.

The first question refers to insertion in this market, establishing the obstacles encountered when looking for a job, as can be seen in Table 1:

Table 1- Answers to the question regarding entry into the labor market.

Are you currently employed? If so, did you have difficulty finding a job? Why?			
Answers	In numbers	In %	Justifications
No	27	13,5	No justification
No	3	1,5	Unemployed by choice
No	10	5	Doing postgraduation or another undergraduate course
Yes	160	80	

Source: Own elaboration (2020).

As can be seen in Table 1, only 20% of the interviewees were unemployed at the time they answered the questionnaire, and the majority (13.5%) did not justify the reason, and the rest remain in academia, whether taking another degree or in postgraduate courses (5%) or even unemployed by their own choice (1.5%). The other 80% of interviewees were employed, and there are several reasons why they understand the reception they received when entering the labor market. It should be taken into account that 91 of the 200 interviewees, that is, 45.5% did not specify the type of job, 30 of these people (15%) are civil servants, 12 (6%) are employed, although not in their graduation area, 8 (4%) work autonomously and 6 (3%) are involved in temporary jobs, such as internships and classes in the Simplified Selection Process. It can be observed that most of these people did not try to point out the difficulties or facilities that affected the search for jobs, specifying only what their respective areas of expertise were. But four of the interviewees (2%) pointed out that having graduated from State University of Londrina guaranteed some prestige at the time of hiring.

In addition, only one person (0.5%) highlighted, even though the question was not directly related to racism, the fact that he was already a victim of discrimination for not getting a job as a salesperson. When analyzing the resume, the company requested a photo of the candidate and, after sending the image, there was no further response from the employer. First, it is important to say that it is impossible to know

the reason for the company's non-return, but the role of institutional racism can give us some clues. This type of racism, according to Almeida (2018), is present in companies and institutions and segregates according to skin color, reserving decision-making and representational positions (salespeople, attendants, receptionists, etc.) for people who are not black.

Another extremely relevant factor for this analysis is the fact that only 3 of the interviewees (1.5%) are currently university professors. Even though it is a very low number, it is close to the average number of black professors in Brazilian public universities, as shown by Carvalho's research (2007).

On the other hand, Table 2 is specific to understand which factors these professionals attribute unemployment to.

Table 2- Answers to the question regarding unemployment

If the answer to the previous question is negative, to what do you attribute your unemployment?

Answers	In numbers	In %	Justifications
	6	13,3	Evasive/meaningless answer
	19	42,2	Difficulties in entering the labor market and economic crisis
	6	13,3	Newly graduated, taking a masters or another undergraduate degree
	6	13,3	Lack of specialized training
	1	2,2	Company closing
	1	2,2	Awaiting summoning from public tender
	2	4,4	Prejudice and discrimination by color and/or gender
	1	2,2	Unemployed by choice
	1	2,2	Disillusionment with the profession
	1	2,2	Studying for public tender
	1	2,2	On leave due to illness

Source: Own elaboration (2020).

Regarding Table 2, it should be noted that there were also responses from employed people who chose to justify the reasons why they attribute unemployment, so the value is greater than 40 responses (total unemployed graduates), totaling 45 responses, and 19 people (42.25) attribute unemployment to difficulties in entering the labor market in general, also taking into account the economic crisis, without realizing that blacks are the ones left behind in the face of a crisis of capital, because,

as shown by the data from IBGE (2019b), are the ones that suffer most from unemployment (64.2% of the unemployed population) and, consequently, make up the majority in informal work positions (47.3%), without labor rights and guarantees.

Then, a question was answered that asked the interviewees if they believed that the labor market selects people taking into account their skin color, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Answers to the question regarding selectivity in the labor market.

Do you think the job market selects people by color/race? Justify your answer.			
Answers	In numbers	In %	Justification
No answer	6	3	
No answer but justified	12	6	In the area in which he/she works, this problem doesn't exist.
Não respondeu, mas justificou	3	1,5	There is a preference for white, but it is not intentional / selection processes with curriculum inhibit discrimination by color / some groups are adopting more inclusive positions
Depends	6	3	Experience can contribute
Sometimes	3	1,5	There is prejudice on the part of some people
Doesn't know how to answer	1	0,5	The market is so demanding and so selective by its very nature
No	21	10,5	No justification
No	7	3,5	It's for competence/resume
No	1	0,5	Other factors influence more than skin color
No	1	0,5	It's a matter of recommendation
No	1	0,5	Never suffered discrimination in the labor market
Yes	3	1,5	But, being competent, there won't be so much difficulty
Yes	135	67,5	Job market selects by color/racist society/rooted prejudice/social, cultural and historical reasons

Source: Own elaboration (2020).

Based on the observation of Table 3, it is observed that the answers provided by the interviewed graduates were quite diverse, but what stands out is that more than 67% of them, that is, 135 of the participants believe that the labor market selects the people by skin color, and 135 emphasize that there is a preference for white people and that this is because racism is rooted in Brazil, considering it as an integral

part of social relations, since, as highlighted by Pereira (2011), the period after the abolition of slavery, it was created in the popular imagination that the figure of blacks consists of disinterested beings, who were unable to enter the labor market, specifically in formal jobs, but without discussing in depth this issue that, for Almeida (2018) happened due to the fact that society is based on racism to compose its unequal structure.

However, 8 of the interviewees (4%) said that they have never experienced this selectivity, but that they believe it exists, in addition to one person (0.5) having stated that there is a preference for white people at the time of hiring, but that this act by employers is unintentional, naturalizing once again racism, which shows itself as something structural, maintaining the unequal character of society without major questions, since even those who suffer from it believe it to be something common, banal (ALMEIDA, 2018).

However, it is seen that 11 (5.5%) of the people interviewed perceive racial discrimination on the part of employers, but they do not believe it is the main reason that influences the choice of an employee, but rather the competence, resume or indication. Therefore, according to Almeida (2018), even those who are directly affected by structural racism may not perceive it in their relationships, believing that discrimination only occurs due to class differences, for example.

Some claim the existence of racial discrimination in the labor market (4.5%), but do not specify why. Other people (1.5%) also point out that discrimination can sometimes occur, as there is prejudice in some people, but that this is not a general rule, considering racism as something irrational and individual, without reflecting that it is structural, that is, it is a structuring element of socioeconomic relations (ALMEIDA, 2018).

There are still three people (1.5%) who believe in racial discrimination in the labor market, but believe that this act is not intentional, highlighting moments when it does not occur, such as in the application of competitions, for example.

In addition, 21 (10.5%) of respondents answered that they do not realize that the labor market discriminates people by skin color, but they did not justify their answers. As in the answers to the previous question, there were also personal answers, for example: 12 people (6%) stressed that in the area in which they work professionally there is no problem of discrimination by color, without realizing that, as pointed out by Munanga (2012), racism is a perfect crime because, even though it is structural and permeates all instances of society, it is often so subtle that it goes unnoticed even by those who are discriminated.

In addition, 12 people use the merit argument to explain hiring in the labor market, that is, seven people (3.5%) believe that the choice of employers is made taking into account only the curriculum and competence of those who are looking for a job, three (1.5%) believe that the competence is sufficient to enter the labor market, one (0.5%) believes that the selection is made by indication and another respondent emphasizes that the labor market is selective with candidates in general, not realizing there is discrimination based on skin color, absorbing the idea of meritocracy that, according to Almeida (2018), is propagated by capitalist ideals with the help of the media, the educational and judicial system, which, for example, disclose what opportunities are reached by those who have tried harder than others, without evaluating the determinant inequalities.

From the analysis of these responses, it can be understood that, even though most respondents perceive the racism that prevents them from entering the labor market, some of them treat this fact as something understandable and natural, justifying unemployment with other issues, such as lack of training or class discrimination, for example. It is important to emphasize that, according to Almeida (2018), this is the very view of the capitalists, who justify unemployment and underemployment from the premise of merit, but this constitutes an untruth, since the mode of production and economic systems, however modern they are, are based on racism for their constitution, although in a veiled, sophisticated and discreet way, often passing as imperceptible to most people.

In addition, another fact that is quite clear, when comparing the data obtained during the research, is that some graduates, even having used the racial quotas policy to enter the University, do not perceive racism as a determinant for market entry of work, and this is due, as Munanga (2012) points out, to the fact that racism uses subtle methods to compose its actions.

Finally, from the above data, it is observed that, even after more than a hundred years since the end of enslavement and the improvement in educational levels, the black population accumulates a series of disadvantages, still receiving the lowest salaries, facing more difficulties to enter the The formal labor market makes up the group with the highest unemployment rates, that is, the racism that structures inequalities is particularly visible in the labor market. According to Martins (2014), this is due to the fact that racism, as it is structural, confines these people to informal services and underemployment, because, even if most of the graduates were employed at the time of the research, it is not possible to say that their incomes were equal to or higher than those of white people.

Final considerations

From the analysis of the results obtained during the research, it can be observed that the rate of former racial quota students from State University of Londrina who are currently employed is high, 80% of them. But this does not mean that all the jobs are in their graduation area and that the process to be able to enter the labor market was easy.

As it was possible to observe in the reported data, some of the interviewees presented personal justifications for the treatment of issues such as unemployment and the diversity of areas in which they are employed. But what stands out is the fact that 67.6% of former graduates believe that there is racial discrimination at the time of hiring and some stress that this is because racism in Brazil is rooted, characterized as an inheritance, and concluding that society as a whole is racist.

With this, it can be seen that not questioning such veiled racial prejudices and discriminations, but still felt by those who suffer them, gives rise to a society hierarchical in races, in which black people are always seen in the social imagination in situations of subordination, naturalizing their presence in more vulnerable environments, such as, for example, informal jobs.

Several measures, however, are being taken to change this situation, such as the establishment of affirmative action public policies so that historically subordinate populations can occupy spaces that were not previously guaranteed to them. It is important to emphasize that these policies to guarantee rights to the black population were only achieved due to the pressure of the Black Movement, because, according to Gomes (2017), it is due to the actions of this social movement that there is currently a trend towards the decolonization of knowledge, which expands the racial discussion to different instances of society.

Because of this, it is understood that, thanks to the performance of the Black Movement, graduates who were admitted through racial quota State University of Londrina, that is, who are qualified with Higher Education, are mostly employed and aware of the presence of racism in the labor market, but there is still a small portion that does not pay attention to the racial discussion, believing in the premise of merit, for example.

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Authors' Contribution

- 1- Bibliographic research, text elaboration and results discussion: author 1
- 2- Final analysis of results and text review: author 2